



An Analysis of Six English Translations of Qur'ānic Proper Nouns in Ligh of Chesterman's Translation Strategies

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the strategies employed in translating Qur'ānic proper names, using Chesterman's (1997) model as the theoretical framework. To achieve this, 100 Arabic proper nouns were purposively sampled to analyze the frequency and distribution of translation strategies across six English translations of the Holy Qur'ān. The translations considered were those by Yusuf Ali (1934), Pickthall (1930), Saffarzadeh (2001), Arberry (1973), Qarai (2003), and Shakir (1993). After identifying all proper names, the translation strategies utilized by each translator were coded and compared. The findings revealed that all translators relied on three primary strategies: loan translation, paraphrase, and synonymy, though their usage varied in frequency. Loan translation emerged as the most frequently used strategy among all translators, whereas paraphrase was the least used, except in the cases of Saffarzadeh and Shakir. Specifically, Saffarzadeh applied paraphrase and synonymy with equal frequency, while Shakir favored paraphrase over synonymy. In conclusion, the analysis showed that all six translators employed only three of the strategies outlined in Chesterman's (1997) model. Loan translation was the predominant strategy, followed by synonymy and paraphrase, with the latter two varying slightly in their order of frequency among Saffarzadeh and Shakir.

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1. Introduction

Although the Holy Qur'ān was revealed to humanity over thirteen centuries ago, many aspects of this sacred text remain undisclosed. Religious texts, and the Holy Qur'ān in particular, are rich with culture-specific terms that require careful attention from translators, as readers may struggle to comprehend these concepts. The strategies used to translate such terms often depend on the specific text type (Newmark, 1998, as cited in Moradi & Sadeqi, 2014).

According to Schwarz (2003, as cited in Al-Yahya et al., 2010), translation involves navigating between two languages and their respective cultural frameworks, making an accurate translation crucial to achieving a balance between the two. He further explained that it is necessary to reevaluate English lexicons and translations to identify their specific characteristics. Schwarz also stated, "Transferring cultural features into the target language is the thorniest task a translator may encounter. Nonetheless, there are strategies to address these elements. These strategies assist the translator in transferring the cultural features of the source language into the target language with maximum clarity" (p. 24).

Rezvani and Nouraey (2014) emphasized the significance of shifts in translation within the context of culture-specific elements. They acknowledged that the Holy Qur'ān has been translated from Arabic, its source language, into many other target languages. In this regard, Rezvani and Nouraey (2014) argued that, during the translation of the Holy Qur'ān, the language and culturally bound linguistic and rhetorical characteristics are "inimitable and unproduceable in other languages to a satisfactory level in order to achieve equivalence" (p. 73). They further stated, "The Qur'ānic intricacies have no equivalents in the target language and represent unique examples of linguistic and cultural untranslatability" (p. 73).

Regarding the abundance of proper names in the Holy Qur'ān, Abu-Mahfouz (2011) argued that some proper names refer to individual people, while others denote historical locations or events. In this context, there are generally two standard approaches for handling proper names: if a proper name has a standard English equivalent, the translator should use that equivalent (Dickins, Herve, & Higgins, 2002, as cited in Abu-Mahfouz, 2011, p. 5). For example, al-Masjid al-Aqsā (المسجد الاقصى) is commonly known in English as 'al-Aqsa Mosque', al-Masjid al-Haram (المسجد الحرام) is referred to as Mecca, Yājūj and Mājūj (ياجوج ماجوج) are known as Gog and Magog, and Saba (سبأ) is referred to as Sheba. However, literal translation and transliteration should be avoided, as these techniques can negatively impact the readability of the target text. For instance, Arberry (1980) translates Al-Mash'ar al-Haram (المشعر الحرام) literally as 'The Holy Way Mark', which can confuse readers, making it difficult for even Muslims to fully understand the translation (p. 198).

Similarly, Al-Hilali and Khan (2009) use transliteration for all proper names, often presenting their standard English equivalents in brackets. This approach is less effective, as it clutters the translation with unnecessary brackets and does not provide clear information to the target readers. If the translators aim to familiarize the target audience with Arabic names, these names could be listed along with their English equivalents in an appendix at the end of the translation. Alternatively, the translator might include the phrase 'the people of' before Thamood (ثمود) to clarify the intended meaning, such as 'the people of Thamood', offering further explanation. This technique would effectively convey the meaning of the translation without hindering the target audience's understanding.

The present study aims to examine how elements of the original text, the Holy Qur'ān, are translated from the source language into the target language. The primary focus of this study is to describe and compare the translation strategies employed by six professional translators in rendering Qur'ānic nouns and proper names, using the taxonomy proposed by Chesterman (1997). Specifically, the study seeks to identify the similarities and/or differences among the translators in their application of strategies when translating proper names in the Holy Qur'ān.

2. Review of literature

According to Mirza Suzani (2008), the translation of proper nouns has long been a controversial and widely debated issue. Moreover, in relation to translatability, proper nouns can be classified from various perspectives (Mirza Suzani, 2009). In this context, a substantial body of research has examined the translation of proper nouns in the Holy Qur'ān. For instance, using Chesterman's (1997) model, Mirza Suzani (2023) conducted a study analyzing translation strategies for Allah's attributes in the Holy Qur'ān. The findings revealed that only six out of ten strategies were employed when translating Allah's attributes of acts. Among these, "transposition" and "emphasis change" were not significantly utilized, while the other four strategies—"synonymy," "paraphrase," "transliteration," and "expansion"—were applied to varying degrees.

Another study on the translation of divine names in the Holy Qur'ān was conducted by Asadi Amjad and Farahani (2013), who examined the translation of these names from Arabic into English in the works of Shakir (1993), Qarai (2003), and Nikayin (2006). Their findings revealed that the use of divine names in the Holy Qur'ān is unique, inimitable, and unparalleled, making it impossible to compare with any other context. Describing the challenges faced, Asadi Amjad and Farahani (2013) noted, the Arabic morphological patterns, such as "ism al-mobalegheh" (Hyperbolic Name, e.g., الغفار) and "sifat al-Moshabbahah" (Perpetual Attribute, e.g., العليم), presented significant challenges for translators. These patterns possess specific weights and effects within the Arabic language structure that could not be accurately replicated in English (p. 140).

Similarly, Abu-Mahfouz (2011, cited in Abdelaal & Rashid, 2015) identified several semantic issues in Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English translation of the Holy Qur'ān. The problems highlighted were: (1) using a hyponym as an equivalent for a superordinate where the target language (TL) has an appropriate superordinate; (2) using a superordinate as an equivalent for a hyponym where the TL has a suitable hyponym; (3) translation through transliteration; and (4) inconsistency (Abu-Mahfouz, 2011, p. 67).

Al-Sowaid (2011) identified numerous challenges that translators may face when translating the Holy Qur'ān from Arabic into other languages, particularly concerning the translation of proper nouns, which are highly context-specific. Al-Sowaid's (2011) study was comprehensive, concluding that translators working from Arabic as the source language into English as the target language must address a range of complex issues that are not easily resolved. It was suggested that, to accurately convey meanings from the source language to the target language, additional explanations are necessary, as target readers may lack sufficient knowledge of proper nouns and their underlying meanings.

Another study by Al-Omar (2013, cited in Elewa, 2015) examined the transliteration of proper nouns from Arabic into English. He highlighted various differences between the two

languages, particularly in consonant and vowel usage. Additional challenges discussed included lexical stress, syllable structure, and structural constraints. Findings indicated that effective transliteration of proper nouns from Arabic to English requires not only a thorough understanding of the language's structural components but also a comprehensive grasp of its phonetic framework, which serves as a fundamental support for this process.

Davydov (2012, cited in Elewa, 2015) examined the translation of the Holy Qur'ān into Maninka, aiming to provide a comprehensive comparison between the two languages. The researcher analyzed various linguistic dimensions, including Qur'ānic terminology, the retention of loanwords, terminologization, the creation of neologisms, derivation by conversion, syntactical aspects, and textual analysis. The findings revealed significant differences between Arabic—the language of the Holy Qur'ān—and the target language, Maninka. Davydov concluded that these differences stemmed from coinage and the broader influence of the Arabic language itself (Davydov, 2012, cited in Elewa, 2015).

Considering the numerous differences between Arabic and English in the context of the Holy Qur'ān, Ghazalah (2004, p. 250) discussed the cultural distinctions between the two languages. He argued that certain cultural elements are highly specific and vary significantly from one language to another. Similarly, in addressing ideological differences, Rezvani and Nouraey (2014) suggested that the greater the linguistic disparities between two languages, the more pronounced the ideological differences and cultural shifts would be.

Overall, the primary focus of previous literature on translation has been to determine whether the meaning of terms rendered in the target text was conveyed accurately. However, the present study aims to take this a step further by examining the differences among translators in their application of strategies when translating proper names in the Holy Qur'ān from Arabic into English. Specifically, it seeks to investigate whether different translators employ similar types of strategies when rendering proper nouns from Arabic to English. In this regard, the study is concerned not only with the accuracy of meaning but also with the translation strategies utilized. With this in mind, the following research questions were posed:

- How did each translator use Chesterman's (1997) strategies in their renditions from Arabic to English?
- Are there any significant differences among the six translators in the application of Chesterman's (1997) strategies to translate Qur'ānic proper names from Arabic into English?

Such a study could hold theoretical significance, as its findings may help assess the applicability of Chesterman's (1997) model to Arabic texts. Furthermore, the results could prove valuable for translators, university instructors, translation students, syllabus designers, and others involved in the field of translation studies.

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus of the study

The corpus of the present descriptive-comparative study consisted of proper nouns in Arabic, including names of places, people, and attributes of God in the Holy Qur'ān. The data were collected from the Holy Qur'ān in Arabic and six English translations: Yusuf Ali

(1934), Pickthall (1930), Saffarzadeh (2001), Arberry (1973), Qarai (2003), and Shakir (1993). These translations were among the most well-known and widely used English renditions of the Holy Qur'ān. In addition to these six translations, Noor Comprehensive Commentary Software was employed to provide a more in-depth understanding of the proper nouns in Arabic.

3.2. Data collection procedure

In this study, purposive sampling was used for data collection. Researchers may choose purposive sampling when they specifically target certain corpora or groups that have unique characteristics. In this type of sampling, the corpus is intentionally selected based on its attributes. The primary objective of applying purposive sampling in this study was to gain a deeper understanding of proper nouns in Arabic within the specific Qur'ānic context. To achieve this, 100 proper nouns from the Holy Qur'ān were selected as the corpus to examine the frequencies of strategies used in six different English translations. The strategies were then coded, and the data were analyzed using the model proposed by Chesterman (1997).

3.3. Data analysis procedure

In this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. In the descriptive section, the frequency and percentage of the applied strategies were calculated. In the inferential section, several chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant differences among the translators in their application of strategy types.

3.4. Framework of the study

In the current study, a revised version of Chesterman's (1997) taxonomy for translation strategies was used as the theoretical framework. This model was considered the backbone of the study's framework, as it encompassed 28 strategies, making it a nearly comprehensive model for the translation of proper nouns. However, due to some limitations, several overlapping, redundant, or less relevant strategies, as well as those focusing on the translation of sentences rather than nouns, were excluded. To enhance the comprehensiveness of the framework, two additional strategies were incorporated—one from Farahzad (1995) and another from Newmark (1998). As a result, a revised version of Chesterman's (1997) model, consisting of ten strategies, was established. The strategy types in this revised model were presented as follows:

Literal Translation: According to Chesterman (1997), literal translation involves the translator adhering as closely as possible to the source text form, without necessarily following the source language structure.

Loan Translation: Loan translation refers to borrowing single terms and replicating the structure of the source text, which may be unfamiliar or foreign to the target reader (Chesterman, 1997).

Transposition: A term borrowed by Chesterman (1997) from Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), transposition refers to any change in word class, such as from adjective to noun.

Synonymy: In synonymy, the translator selects the closest alternative term that carries the same meaning but is not the direct literal translation of the source text word or phrase (Chesterman, 1997).

Antonymy: According to Chesterman (1997), in this strategy, the translator uses a word with the opposite meaning, often paired with a negation.

Hyponymy: Hyponymy involves using a member of a larger category (e.g., “rose” is a hyponym in relation to “flower”). Conversely, a hypernym is a related superordinate term that describes the entire category using a broader term (e.g., “flower” is a hypernym in relation to “rose”) (Chesterman, 1997).

Paraphrase: Paraphrase involves making a liberal, approximate translation of the source text’s meaning, where some lexical items may be modified or omitted (Chesterman, 1997).

Emphasis Change: Chesterman (1997) suggests that this strategy alters, increases, or decreases the emphasis of the thematic focus of the translated text in comparison to the original.

Transliteration: According to Farahzad (1995), transliteration and transcription are used for translating personal proper names. “The former occurs when the letters of the target language reflect the pronunciation of the proper name in the source language, while the latter is the replacement of one letter of the alphabet in the source language (SL) with another letter in the target language (TL)” (p. 43).

Expansion: Expansion involves adding elements in translation to convey additional meaning or clarification (Newmark, 1998).

4. Findings

Regarding the first question on the translators’ application of Chesterman’s (1997) strategies in their renditions, a key finding was that all six translators used only three of the strategies introduced by Chesterman (1997). In other words, out of the strategies proposed, only three were consistently employed by all six translators when translating the proper nouns of the Holy Qur’ān into English: loan translation, paraphrase, and synonymy. The frequency and percentage of the strategies used by each translator in their renditions are presented in Table 1.

Table1. The frequency and percentage of the strategies proposed by Chesterman (1997) in each translation

Translator Strategy	Shakir	Saffarzadeh	Qarai	Pickthall	Yusef Ali	Arberry
Loan translation	68 (68%)	68 (68%)	43 (43%)	41 (41%)	41 (41%)	40 (40%)
Paraphrase	16 (16%)	18 (18%)	20 (20%)	21 (21%)	22 (22%)	21 (21%)
Synonymy	16 (16%)	14 (14%)	37 (37%)	38 (38%)	37 (37%)	39 (39%)
Total	100 (100%)	100 (100%)	100 (100%)	100 (100%)	100 (100%)	100 (100%)

Table 1 shows that loan translation was the most frequently used strategy by all six translators. 'Paraphrase' was used minimally by all translators, except for Shakir and Saffarzadeh. Notably, Shakir used both 'paraphrase' and 'synonymy' equally, while Saffarzadeh employed 'paraphrase' more frequently than 'synonymy.' To determine whether there were significant differences among the six translators in their application of Chesterman's (1997) strategies for translating Qur'ānic proper names from Arabic into English, the following findings were revealed.

Table 2. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Shakir

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	68	33.3	54.80	2	0.000
Paraphrase	16	33.3			
Synonymy	16	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 2 show significant differences in the outcomes (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05). This suggests that Shakir applied the three strategies differently. The observed frequencies deviate significantly from the expected ones. The primary strategy used by this translator for translating Qur'ānic proper nouns is 'loan translation,' while the frequencies of applying the other two strategies, 'paraphrase' and 'synonymy,' are equal. In simpler terms, these results indicate that Shakir's use of loan translation is significantly different from what would be expected by chance.

Table 3. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Saffarzade

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	68	33.3	54.320	2	0.000
Paraphrase	18	33.3			
Synonymy	14	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 3 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies are significantly different. In other words, Saffarzadeh used the strategy types differently. 'Loan translation' is the primary strategy employed by Saffarzadeh in translating these nouns, while the frequencies for the other two strategies are relatively similar. In simpler terms, these results suggest that the frequency of using loan translation by Saffarzadeh is significantly different from what would be expected by chance.

Table 4. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Qarai

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	43	33.3	8.540	2	0.014
Paraphrase	20	33.3			
Synonymy	37	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 4 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.014 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies are significantly different. In other words, Qarai used the strategies differently. Qarai primarily applied 'loan translation' and 'synonymy' in translating proper nouns, but the frequencies with which they were applied vary. In simpler terms, these results suggest that the frequency of using loan translation by Qarai is significantly different from what would be expected by chance.

Table 5. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Pickthall

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	41	33.3	6.980	2	0.031
Paraphrase	21	33.3			
Synonymy	38	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 5 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.031 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies are significantly different. In other words, Pickthall applied the strategies differently. Similar to Qarai, Pickthall primarily utilized 'loan translation' and 'synonymy' in translating proper nouns, but the frequencies with which they were applied differ. Therefore, the frequency of using loan translation by Pickthall is significantly different from what would be expected by chance.

Table 6. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Yusef Ali

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	41	33.3	6.020	2	0.049
Paraphrase	22	33.3			
Synonymy	37	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 6 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.049 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies are significantly different. In other words, Yusef Ali applied the strategies differently. While 'loan translation' and 'synonymy' are the primary strategies used, the difference in their application by Yusef Ali remains significant. As a result, the frequency of loan translation used by Yusef Ali is significantly different from what would be expected by chance.

Table 7. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of strategy types by Arberry

Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	41	33.3	6.860	2	0.032
Paraphrase	22	33.3			
Synonymy	37	33.3			
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 7 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.032 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies differ significantly. In other words, Arberry used the strategies differently. Like the other translators, Arberry primarily applied the 'loan

translation' and 'synonymy' strategies, but the frequencies at which these strategies were applied were significantly different. As a result, the frequency of loan translation used by Arberry is significantly different from what would be expected by chance. In addition to the above tests, a number of chi-square tests were conducted to further explore the significant differences among the six translators in the application of Chesterman's (1997) strategies for translating Qur'ānic proper names from Arabic into English. The results of these tests are presented in the following.

Table 8. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of 'loan translation' by six translators

Strategy/Statistics	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Loan translation	301	99.9	77.80	2	0.031
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 8 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.031 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequency differs significantly from the expected frequency. Similarly, the translators applied the 'loan translation' strategy in significantly different ways.

Table 9. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of 'paraphrase' by six translators

Strategy/Statistics	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Paraphrase	118	99.9	51.4	2	0.025
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 9 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.025 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies differ significantly. In other words, the translators applied the 'paraphrase' strategy in different ways.

Table 10. Chi-square test to check the significance of difference in the application of 'synonymy' by six translators

Strategy/Statistics	Observed N	Expected N	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Synonymy	181	99.9	63.4	2	0.015
Total	100				

The results of the chi-square test in Table 10 indicate significant differences (Sig. = 0.015 < 0.05), meaning that the observed frequencies differ significantly. In other words, the translators used the 'synonymy' strategy in varying ways. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that all translators applied different strategies in their renditions (1997) with differing frequencies.

5. Discussion

The first research question of the study focused on how each translator applied Chesterman's (1997) strategies in their translations from Arabic to English. The results from various chi-square tests (Tables 2-7) showed that each translator used these strategies with different frequencies and percentages in their renditions of Qur'ānic proper nouns. A closer examination of the Qur'ānic proper nouns analyzed in this study reveals that not only did

the six translators employ different strategies compared to one another, but they also demonstrated individual shifts in strategy use. In fact, each translator relied on a distinct set of strategies from Chesterman's (1997) model to translate the proper nouns. As a result, although it may be necessary, and at times unavoidable, to use different strategies to translate these nouns, frequent shifts between strategies can lead to multiple equivalent terms for a single Arabic word, thus contributing to the existing ambiguity.

While some argue that using different synonyms for a word in the target language helps avoid repetition, as Abu-Mahfouz (2011) points out, the concept of perfect 'synonymy' in language is entirely rejected. An example provided by Abu-Mahfouz (2011) helps clarify this issue. He explains that the term "عزیز" ('Aziz) is translated in various ways, which exacerbates an already complex situation. For instance, Abu-Mahfouz (2011) notes that Arberry (1973) translates it as "The Governor" in verse (30) and "Mighty prince" in verse (78), while Pickthall (undated) translates it as "The ruler" in verse (30) and "ruler of the land" in verse (78) (p. 75).

Furthermore, Abu-Mahfouz (2011) asserts that some linguists convincingly argue that in the Holy Qur'ān, there is no such thing as perfect or complete synonyms. To determine whether two words are synonyms, we would need to consider all possible contexts in which the words might occur, but this is impossible. Therefore, "using different words as an equivalent for the same word in the SL text is, to say the least, confusing and unacceptable in an authoritative text like the Holy Qur'ān and adds to the burden of understanding the translated text" (Abu-Mahfouz, 2011, p. 77). Other studies on divine names in the context of the Holy Qur'ān conclude that properly conveying the meaning of proper nouns from the source language to the target language requires further explanation or translation equivalence, as target readers may lack sufficient knowledge of these proper nouns and their underlying meanings (Asadi Amjad & Farahani, 2013; Al-Sowaid, 2011).

In a study conducted by Abu-Mahfouz (2011, cited in Abdelaal & Rashid, 2015), several problems related to the semantic aspect of translating the Holy Qur'ān from Arabic to English are identified. These include: 1) using a hyponym as an equivalent to a superordinate when the target language (TL) has an equivalent superordinate; 2) using a superordinate as an equivalent to a hyponym when the TL has an equivalent hyponym; 3) translation by transliteration; and 4) inconsistency.

In the current study, a significant issue identified is the inconsistency observed not only among the six translators but also within each individual translator's work. Such inconsistency can lead to the use of different equivalents for a single Qur'ānic term, potentially resulting in misunderstanding, ambiguity, or confusion for the reader. Therefore, great care must be taken when translating proper nouns in the Holy Qur'ān.

The second research question addressed the existence of significant differences among the six translators in their application of Chesterman's (1997) strategies to translate Qur'ānic proper nouns from Arabic into English. The findings revealed that all translators used only three of the ten strategies proposed by Chesterman (1997), namely 'loan translation,' 'paraphrase,' and 'synonymy.' Furthermore, all translators employed 'loan translation' far more frequently than the other strategies. Although 'loan translation' was the most frequently used strategy, the other two strategies were not applied in the same way. According to the results of the chi-square tests, there was a significant difference in the use

of the three strategies—‘loan translation,’ ‘paraphrase,’ and ‘synonymy’—across the translated versions.

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that the proper nouns in the Holy Qur’ān have prompted the use of various translation strategies. This variety in strategy application has led to considerable differences in the English terms used to refer to a single concept in Arabic. For instance, “الموتكة” is translated as ‘the overthrown cities’ by Yusef Ali and Qarai, ‘Al-mu’tafikah’ by Pickthall, ‘the city of people of Lut’ by Saffarzadeh, and ‘the subverted cities’ by Arberry. Similarly, the proper name “يحيى” is translated as ‘Yahya’ by Yusef Ali, Shakir, and Saffarzadeh, and ‘John’ by Arberry, Qarai, and Pickthall. In this case, some translators used ‘loan translation,’ while others applied the strategy of ‘synonymy.’ Such strategy shifts may confuse inexperienced readers of the Holy Qur’ān, leading them to believe that Yahya and John are different individuals. Likewise, rendering the single word “عزيز” (‘Aziz’) in six different ways—‘chief,’ ‘the great Aziz,’ ‘ruler,’ ‘Aziz,’ ‘chieftain,’ and ‘governor’—may cause hesitation among readers, who might wonder if all these terms refer to the same Arabic noun.

On the other hand, a consistent set of words is used when the translators apply similar strategies. For example, the term “ملك الموت” is translated into English as ‘death’s angel’ or ‘the angel of death’ because all six translators employed the ‘paraphrase’ strategy to render this term into English. Similarly, the term “زبور” is consistently translated as ‘Psalm’ by all the translators through the strategy of ‘synonymy.’ There are also instances where slight variations in the applied equivalents do not lead to significant differences in meaning. For instance, the term “جَنَّت” is translated through ‘paraphrase’ using expressions such as ‘garden dense’ by Shakir, ‘garden luxurious’ by Yusef Ali, ‘garden of thick/crowded foliage’ by Pickthall and Saffarzadeh, and ‘garden of luxuriant’ by Arberry. Similarly, the term “روح القدس” is translated by all translators through ‘paraphrase’ as ‘The Holy Spirit’ in English.

Applying different words to refer to a single Arabic term, if not considered outright wrong, could still be confusing for readers who may switch between various translations. While differences in how these proper nouns are rendered across languages are a common issue, the deviation in translation methods can create confusion for ordinary readers. This conclusion is supported by Saffarzadeh (2001), who argues that the greatest values of the Holy Qur’ān—specifically, the Divine Names known as *Asmā ul Hosnā* in Arabic—have often been inadequately translated by many commentators and translators. This issue has contributed to confusion and highlighted the incompleteness of the meanings conveyed by words used to render these Qur’ānic proper nouns and concepts. Saffarzadeh maintains that “any translation void of attention to these meanings, which usually confirm and complete each verse, loses a substantial part of its validity” (Saffarzadeh, 2001, p. 1542). Therefore, it can be concluded that not only the meaning of these words is crucial for their translation into the target language, but the strategies employed also play a critical role in ensuring the accuracy and correctness of the translated terms.

5. Conclusions

This research provides valuable comparative insights into the most widely used English translations of the proper nouns in the Holy Qur’ān. Based on the findings of the study, it was observed that the ‘loan translation’ strategy was the most frequently applied by the translators. Following this, ‘synonymy’ ranked second and ‘paraphrase’ ranked third.

Regarding the individual renditions of each translator, it was found that ‘loan translation’ was the most frequently used strategy by all three translators. Meanwhile, ‘paraphrase’ was the least frequently used, with all translators except Saffarzadeh and Shakir employing it. Saffarzadeh used both ‘paraphrase’ and ‘synonymy’ equally, while Shakir used more ‘paraphrase’ than ‘synonymy.’ This suggests that all six translators applied only three of the strategies outlined in Chesterman’s (1997) model. Finally, ‘loan translation’ and ‘synonymy’ ranked as the second and third most frequently used strategy types, respectively, by all translators except for Saffarzadeh and Shakir.

To examine the types of strategies used by the six translators in the English translation of proper Arabic nouns in the Holy Qur’ān, it was found that all translators employed three strategies: ‘loan translation,’ ‘paraphrase,’ and ‘synonymy.’ All translators used ‘loan translation’ far more frequently than the other two strategies. However, with the exception of Shakir, who used ‘paraphrase’ and ‘synonymy’ equally, and Saffarzadeh, who used ‘paraphrase’ more than ‘synonymy,’ all other translators preferred ‘synonymy’ over ‘paraphrase.’

Since the proper nouns in the Holy Qur’ān were translated using different strategies by the translators, there is a wide variety of English terms used to refer to a single Arabic word. This inconsistency could be confusing for readers and may lead to misinterpretation. The results further indicate that each translator might arbitrarily apply a range of available strategies to translate proper nouns. Such inconsistencies can result in multiple English equivalents for a single Arabic term, which could contribute to the ongoing ambiguity.

The findings of the present study may have various implications. The results could be theoretically significant, as they can be used to assess the applicability of Chesterman’s (1997) model to Arabic texts. Furthermore, the model’s suitability for comparative studies (Arabic text versus English text) can also be examined. This study may also serve as a valuable resource for familiarizing students with applicable translation strategies. Additionally, the inconsistencies observed in the translations of individual translators highlight the need for more systematic translation education and careful considerations prior to translating religious texts. The findings are also important because they provide clear evidence of the challenges translators in the field of religious studies may face when applying each framework or model. Understanding these potential issues can assist translators who plan to use these models in their work. To address these challenges, Abdul-Raof (2001) recommended that Qur’ān translators need “an advanced knowledge in Arabic syntax and rhetoric in order to appreciate the complex linguistic and rhetorical patterns of Qur’ānic structures” (p. 2).

The study is also pedagogically significant. Translators, university instructors, translation students, syllabus designers, and others involved in the field could benefit from the findings of this study. The results may encourage language teachers to adopt a more systematic approach when planning their translation programs. Additionally, the findings can assist teachers in structuring their lesson plans more effectively by providing them with insights into the problem areas that may arise when translating the proper nouns of the Holy Qur’ān. Syllabus designers can also utilize the results of this study to revise textbooks and syllabi for translation courses. Additionally, policymakers in the fields of language and translation can benefit from this research. The study highlights the role that considering different translation strategies plays in rendering proper nouns into other languages. This research is especially valuable for those seeking deeper knowledge, as it helps them place the differences in translations and meanings in proper perspective. Furthermore, policymakers

in education can use the findings to inform their decision-making processes. By doing so, they can help reduce confusion and frustration among readers, fostering a better understanding and appreciation of the works produced by various translators. Finally, this study may be considered as an important step to encourage translation teachers and learners in our country to have more active roles in their translation process via implementing each model.

Despite the valuable insights provided by the study, like any other research, it has some limitations, a few of which are outlined here. Due to time constraints, only one hundred proper nouns and names from the Holy Qur'ān were analyzed; with a larger corpus, more generalizable results could be obtained. Additionally, because of the limited time, the study was unable to explore the reasons behind the inconsistencies among different translators and within individual translators. With more time, more conclusive results could have been drawn, and the sources of these differences could have been more thoroughly investigated. Furthermore, this study did not focus on identifying the one translation that could be considered the best or most reliable in terms of the paradigms of interpretations and translations of the Qur'ānic proper nouns and names.

Considering the above points, several potential areas for future research can be explored. First, various specialists may apply different models to the same set of data to assess the applicability and effectiveness of each model. Second, researchers could examine other variables, such as translators' gender, background, experience, and ideology, as intervening factors to investigate how these elements influence the application of translation strategies. Third, further studies could be conducted to analyze issues related to translating linguistic phenomena such as polysemy, antonymy, metonymy, collocations, and lexical ambiguity in the Holy Qur'ān. Finally, this research could be extended not only to Arabic and English but also to Arabic and other genetically unrelated languages, offering a broader perspective on the challenges of translation.

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