

# Translation of Metaphor in the Qur'an: A Comparative Study of Three Selected Translations

Ali Hashim Hammoodi and Mohamed Abdou Moindjie

School of Languages, Literacies, and Translation, University Sains Malaysia, Malaysia.

Emails: aliinizi72@gmail.com, mohdmoindjie@usm.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i3/22921>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i3/22921

*Published Online:* 17 September 2024

## Abstract

This study is a qualitative descriptive study, which is intended to compare the translation of metaphor in three selected English translations of the Holy Qur'an. The three translations of the Holy Qur'an are the translation done by George Sale, which was published in 1821; the second translation is the translation done by A. J. Arberry, which was published in 1955; and the third translation is the translation done by Muhammad Asad, which was published in 1980. These three translations make up the corpora of this investigation. The paper describes the translation procedures used in translating metaphors, following Newmark's (1981) and Nida's (1964) theories of equivalence. The paper focuses on one variable of metaphor, which is the explicit metaphor. The data are identified, selected, and collected manually, using purposive sampling. The study reveals that the translation of metaphors in the Holy Qur'an based on the three prominent English translations selected for this study consists of a complex interplay between adequacy and acceptability. The translators' choices demonstrate varying degrees of adherence to the source text's linguistic and cultural features (adequacy) and adaptation to the norms and expectations of the target language (acceptability). This suggests that the nature of translating Quranic metaphors is complex, with each translator making different choices in their attempt to balance faithfulness to the source text with comprehensibility for the target audience. The predominance of Newmark's 1st and 4th strategies suggests a general tendency to either maintain the original metaphorical image or convert it into its underlying sense, depending on the specific context and the translator's judgment.

**Keywords:** Qur'an Translation, Equivalence, Explicit Metaphor, Adequacy, And Acceptability.

## Introduction

Metaphor has historically been associated with metaphorical language, but more lately, it has also been seen as a kind of artistic creation that is distinct from everyday language (Murray & Moon, 2006). Newmark acknowledges that even though the primary challenge of translation is the selection of the appropriate strategy for a given material, translating metaphor is the most significant problem in particular (Newmark, 1988). Metaphor translation problems can

arise while translating any two languages, but they can often be more noticeable when the languages in question are as culturally and linguistically dissimilar as English and Arabic (Dickins et al, 2017). The process of translating SL metaphors into TL metaphors is known as metaphorical translation. Metaphors are often employed as decorative devices; thus, they are not always inventive (Faruquzzaman et.al, 2019). There is no denying that metaphors are found in all languages; yet, certain conceptual metaphors are thought to be universal or shared by many cultures, while others are specific to one or the other. Because of this, one of the most difficult problems in translating is achieving cultural and cognitive equivalency in target materials, particularly when there isn't a direct grammatical and semantic relationship between the metaphors (Hastürkoğlu, 2018).

The translation of metaphors from Arabic to English in the context of the Qur'an presents unique challenges due to the linguistic, cultural, and religious significance of the text. The Qur'an is rich in metaphorical language, which serves to convey complex theological concepts and moral teachings. These metaphors are deeply rooted in the Arabian culture and the Arabic language, making their translation into English and subsequent re-translation into modern Arabic a complex endeavor (Wilson, 2014).

One of the primary challenges in translating Qur'anic metaphors is the preservation of their original meaning and impact. As Abdul-Raof (2013) notes, Qur'anic discourse is characterized by "unique linguistic and rhetorical features" that are often lost in translation. Metaphors, being culturally bound, may not have equivalent expressions in the target language, leading to potential misinterpretations or loss of nuance.

The cultural context plays a crucial role in the translation process. As Al-Zoubi, Al-Ali, & Al-Hasnawi (2007) argue, understanding the cultural background of both the source and target languages is essential for accurate translation of metaphors. This is particularly important in the case of the Qur'an, where metaphors often draw on specific cultural and historical references from 7th-century Arabia. Besides, the religious and sacred nature of the Qur'an adds another layer of complexity to the translation process. Translators must be sensitive to the theological implications of their choices and strive to maintain the spiritual essence of the text (Mahmoud, 2018).

Thus, this study aims to compare the translation of metaphors in three notable English translations of the Holy Qur'an, spanning more than a century and a half. The translations under examination are those by George Sale (1821), A. J. Arberry (1955), and Muhammad Asad (1980). These works represent different periods and potentially different approaches to Qur'anic translation, offering a rich ground for comparative analysis. By focusing on explicit metaphors, this study seeks to identify and analyze the translation procedures employed by these translators in rendering Qur'anic metaphors into English. The theoretical framework for this analysis is primarily based on Newmark's (1981) translation procedures and Nida's (1964) theory of equivalence. These seminal works in translation studies provide a robust foundation for examining the strategies used in translating metaphors across languages and cultures. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, this study aims to shed light on the various techniques employed by translators in dealing with the complexities of Qur'anic metaphors. It also seeks to provide insights into the evolution of Qur'anic translation practices and the challenges faced in preserving the metaphorical richness of the original text.

The following inquiries, as well as the answers to those inquiries, are going to be the primary focus of this investigation:

- a- How do translators use strategies to translate metaphors in the Qur'an?
- b- To what extent do the translators manipulate adequacy and acceptability?

### **Literature review**

The translation of metaphors from Arabic to English in the Holy Quran presents a complex set of challenges that have long been the subject of scholarly debate and research due to its complexity and significance. These difficulties arise from the unique linguistic, cultural, and theological aspects of the Quranic text, making the task of accurately conveying its metaphorical content in other languages, particularly English, a formidable endeavor. There are numerous recent studies that concentrate on the challenges associated with translating metaphors in general and Qur'anic metaphors in particular. Most of the latter research addressed the concept of Qur'anic metaphor as a whole rather than focusing on particular categories. Additionally, these investigations provide a single translation theory's perspective on the phenomena of Qur'anic metaphor translation. These include: Al Farisi (2020), Almisned, (2001), Alshehab (2015), Al-Sowaidi et al. (2021), El Omari (1989), Elimam (2016), El-Zeiny, (2011), Ereksoussi (2014), Faraj & Ahmed (2018), Ibrahim (2017), Ketabi & Mohaghegh (2013), Khalid & Hammood (2018), Maula (2011), Mohamed (2023), Najjar (2012), Sardaraz, K., & Ali, R. (2019), and Zahid, (2020).

Some of these studies have evaluated existing English translations of the Quran in terms of their treatment of metaphors. Mahmoud (2018) compares three widely-used English translations of the Quran, analyzing their approaches to metaphor translation. He finds significant variations in how metaphors are handled, ranging from literal translations to paraphrasing and explicitation. El Omari (1989) also conducted a comparative study of metaphor translations in different English versions of the Quran. The research highlighted the variations in translation strategies and their impact on the target text's reception. Similarly, Najjar (2012) examines a sample of Quranic metaphors across multiple English translations, identifying patterns and inconsistencies in translation strategies. Her work highlights the ongoing challenges in achieving consistent and accurate translations of Quranic metaphors, emphasizing the importance of preserving the cognitive mappings underlying these metaphors in the target language.

Various approaches to translating Quranic metaphors have been proposed and analyzed in the literature. Zahri (1990) advocates for a literal translation approach, arguing that it best preserves the original meaning and structure of the Quranic text. However, this view has been challenged by other scholars who argue that literal translation often fails to convey the intended meaning of metaphors. In contrast, Al-Azzam (2005) proposes a more flexible approach, suggesting that translators should prioritize conveying the meaning over preserving the exact form of the metaphor. He argues that this approach allows for a more accurate transmission of the Quranic message to English-speaking audiences. Aldahesh (2006) introduces the concept of "metaphor explicitation" as a strategy for translating Quranic metaphors. This approach involves making implicit information in the source text explicit in the target text to ensure clarity of meaning. El-Zeiny (2011) investigated the translation of conceptual metaphors in the Quran, arguing for a cognitive approach to metaphor translation that considers the underlying conceptual structures. Ereksoussi (2014) examined the challenges of translating metaphors in the Quran, particularly those related to

abstract concepts. The study proposed a framework for approaching such translations based on cognitive and cultural considerations. Al Farisi (2020) investigated the translation of metaphors in the Quran, focusing on the strategies used by translators to render these figurative expressions in English. The study highlighted the importance of cultural awareness in metaphor translation, emphasizing that literal translations often fail to capture the intended meaning.

The importance of cultural and linguistic knowledge in translating Quranic metaphors is a recurring theme in the literature. Faiq (2004) emphasizes that translators must have a deep understanding of both Arabic and English cultures to effectively bridge the gap between the two languages. Khalid and Hammood (2018) focused on the translation of color-related metaphors in the Quran, emphasizing the need for cultural sensitivity in rendering these expressions in English. Faraj and Ahmed (2018) analyzed the strategies used in translating Quranic metaphors, emphasizing the role of context in determining the most appropriate translation method. Ibrahim (2017) explored the translation of metaphors in the Quran from a semantic perspective, highlighting the importance of preserving semantic features in the target language. Maula (2011) examined the translation of metaphors in the Quran from a linguistic perspective, highlighting the role of linguistic structures in shaping metaphorical expressions and their translations. Al-Jabari (2008) focuses on the linguistic aspects of metaphor translation, highlighting the differences in metaphorical systems between Arabic and English. He argues that these differences often necessitate a shift in the metaphorical expression when translating from Arabic to English. Ketabi and Mohaghegh (2013) investigated the translation of animal-related metaphors in the Quran, revealing the cultural specificity of many such metaphors and the challenges they pose for translators. Elimam (2016) focused on the pragmatic aspects of metaphor translation in the Quran, emphasizing the importance of preserving the intended effect of the original metaphors in the target language. Mohamed (2023) conducted a comprehensive analysis of metaphor translation strategies in the Quran, proposing a multi-dimensional approach that considers linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic factors. Zahid (2020) analyzed the translation of metaphors in the Quran from a stylistic perspective, emphasizing the need to preserve the rhetorical and aesthetic features of the original text in translation. Alshehab (2015) analyzed the translation of metaphors in the Quran from a cognitive linguistics perspective. The study revealed that conceptual metaphor theory could provide valuable insights into the translation process, helping translators identify underlying conceptual mappings.

Other scholars have identified the difficulties inherent in translating Quranic metaphors. Al-Hasnawi (2007) argues that the main challenge lies in the cultural gap between the source language (Arabic) and the target language (English). He emphasizes that Quranic metaphors are deeply rooted in 7th-century Arabian culture, making them particularly challenging to convey accurately in English. Almisned (2001) also examined the difficulties faced by translators when dealing with Quranic metaphors, particularly those rooted in Arabic culture. The research underscored the need for translators to possess a deep understanding of both source and target cultures to effectively convey metaphorical meanings.

One of the primary difficulties in translating Quranic metaphors is the linguistic gap between Arabic and the target language. Arabic, as the language of the Quran, possesses unique rhetorical and stylistic features that often do not have direct equivalents in other languages. As Abdul-Raof (2013) points out, "Quranic discourse is characterized by a linguistic and rhetorical blend of peculiar features" (p. 37). These features, including intricate word choices,

syntactical structures, and phonetic patterns, contribute to the metaphorical richness of the text but pose significant challenges for translators. Sardaraz and Ali (2019) explored the translation of embodied metaphors in the Quran, highlighting the challenges posed by culturally specific bodily experiences in metaphor formation and translation.

The cultural context in which Quranic metaphors are embedded presents another layer of difficulty. Many Quranic metaphors draw on 7th-century Arabian cultural references, concepts, and imagery that may be unfamiliar or carry different connotations for modern readers, especially those from non-Arab backgrounds. Al-Hasnawi (2007) argues that "the main problem a translator faces in translating Arabic metaphors into English is the cultural gap between the two languages". This cultural disparity can lead to misinterpretations or loss of nuance in translation.

Theological considerations add further complexity to the translation process. The Quran is considered by Muslims to be the direct word of God, and its metaphors often carry deep spiritual and doctrinal significance. Translators must grapple with the challenge of preserving these theological nuances while making the text accessible to readers in the target language. As Mahmoud (2018) notes, "translators of the Quran face the dilemma of either being loyal to the source text and producing a literal translation or being loyal to the target reader and producing a comprehensible translation".

The polysemous nature of many Arabic words used in Quranic metaphors presents another significant challenge. A single Arabic word may carry multiple meanings or connotations, all of which could be relevant to the metaphor's interpretation. Translators must often choose a single English equivalent, potentially limiting the metaphor's depth and interpretive possibilities. Zahri (1990) highlights this issue, stating that "the multiplicity of meaning is a characteristic feature of the language of the Quran".

Another difficulty lies in the structural and grammatical differences between Arabic and English. Arabic's rich system of verb forms, for instance, allows for nuanced expressions of action and state that may not have direct equivalents in English. This can lead to what Baker (2011) terms "loss of meaning" in translation, where certain aspects of the original metaphor are inevitably omitted or altered in the target language.

The issue of interpretation also poses a significant challenge. Quranic metaphors often allow for multiple valid interpretations, and different schools of Islamic thought may emphasize different aspects of a metaphor's meaning. Translators must navigate these interpretive traditions while striving for accuracy and objectivity. As Aldahesh (2006) observes, "the translator's task becomes more complicated when dealing with a sacred text like the Quran, where any misinterpretation may lead to serious consequences".

Furthermore, the aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of Quranic language, which often contribute to the power and memorability of its metaphors, are extremely difficult to replicate in translation. The Quran's unique prosody, rhyme schemes, and phonetic patterns are integral to its metaphorical expressions but rarely survive the translation process intact. Al-Azzam (2005) argues that "the aesthetic value and the emotive effect of the original are usually sacrificed" in translation.

While these studies collectively highlight the multifaceted nature of metaphor translation in the Quran, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach that considers linguistic, cultural, cognitive, and pragmatic factors, none of the studies mentioned above investigated the interplay of adequacy and acceptability in the translation of metaphors in the Holy Qur'an. This study attempts to explore these two concepts in the translations under examination by

George Sale (1821), A. J. Arberry (1955), and Muhammad Asad (1980). Thus, this study aims to shed light on the various techniques employed by translators in dealing with the complexities of Qur'anic metaphors. It also seeks to provide insights into the evolution of Qur'anic translation practices and the challenges faced in preserving the metaphorical richness of the original text.

### **Methodology**

The corpus of the study is the Arabic Holy Qur'an and three English translations which are the translations done by George Sale, Arthur John Arberry, and Muhammad Asad. The study follows a qualitative approach. It analyzes the collected samples to uncover the intended meaning of the Qur'anic metaphor and consequently compares the three English translations. The data is identified manually by the researcher depending on authentic exegesis and eloquence Arabic books without using any type of software. The manual collection is one of the fundamental characteristics of the qualitative approach (Cresswell, 2018). The study is going to adopt AbdulRaof's categorization of Arabic metaphors (2006), which he divides into six major categories, explicit, implicit, proverbial, enhanced, naked, and absolute metaphors. This study is going to investigate the interplay of adequacy and acceptability following Newmark's (1988) and Nida's (1986) theories of equivalence. The analysis of the data will be in light of Newmark's (1980) procedures which he suggested to translate metaphor. Purposive sampling is being used in the study because it is an effective sampling technique for studies involving texts rather than individuals since it enables the purposeful selection of samples that are pertinent to the research question while removing superfluous or unnecessary samples (Palinkas et al., 2015).

### **Newmark's procedures for translating metaphor**

Newmark (1980) presented a comprehensive analysis of the translation of metaphor, wherein he outlined a set of seven distinct processes for effectively translating metaphorical expressions. The items were enumerated following the individual's personal preference in the following manner:

- 1- To replicate the source language's image in the target language. The translator has the option to substitute the image in the source language (SL) with a conventional target language (TL) image that is in harmony with the TL culture.
- 2- To transform the metaphor in the source language into a simile while preserving the intended image.
- 3- To translate the metaphor (or simile) of the source text into simile plus sense (or perhaps a metaphor plus sense).
- 4- To transform a metaphor into sense.
- 5- Deletion, which is a procedure a translator tends to if the metaphor is deemed redundant or unnecessary, along with its intended meaning, as long as the source language text does not hold authoritative or expressive value (i.e., it is not primarily a reflection of the writer's personality).
- 6- The utilization of a consistent metaphor in conjunction with the perception of sense (Newmark, 1980).

### **Results**

Table 1 answers the research questions accordingly. The first table shows the occurrences of metaphor which the researcher chose using the purposive sampling procedure, as well as the

strategies that were used by the chosen translations. The second table shows the interplay of adequacy and acceptability.

Table 1

*Metaphor Occurrences and Translation Strategies Used to Translate Them*

Samples	Sale	Arberry	Asad	1 <sup>st</sup> strategy	4 <sup>th</sup> strategy	5 <sup>th</sup> strategy
Chapter 2, verse 2.	Newmark's 5 <sup>th</sup> strategy	Newmark's 5 <sup>th</sup> strategy	Newmark's 5 <sup>th</sup> strategy	1	2	0
Chapter 2, verse 10	Newmark's 1 <sup>st</sup> strategy	Newmark's 1 <sup>st</sup> strategy	Newmark's 1 <sup>st</sup> strategy	3	0	0
Chapter 2, verse 16	Newmark's 4 <sup>th</sup> strategy	Newmark's 4 <sup>th</sup> strategy	Newmark's 4 <sup>th</sup> strategy	2	1	0
Chapter 2, verse 18	Newmark's 1 <sup>st</sup> strategy	Newmark's 4 <sup>th</sup> strategy	Newmark's 4 <sup>th</sup> strategy	1	2	0
Chapter 2, verse	Newmark's 1 <sup>st</sup> strategy	Newmark's 4 <sup>th</sup> strategy	Newmark's 4 <sup>th</sup> strategy	1	2	0
Total				8	7	0

**1- Chapter 2, the cow, verse 2:**

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ

**The Translation:**

- a- G. Sale: this book.
- b- Arberry: this is the book.
- c- Muhammad Asad: this divine writ.

In this verse, Allah is saying that the Qur'an is a great book and that there is no doubt that it is from God, so it is not right for anyone to doubt it due to its clarity. The righteous benefit from it through useful knowledge and righteous deeds, and they are those who fear God and follow His rulings. The demonstrative (ذَلِكَ) can be etymologically divided into (ذَا) which is used to refer to closeness and can be translated into (this) if the letter (ك) is added to it and you say (ذَلِكَ) it will refer to the middle distance which has no equivalent in English, and if you added the letter (ل) and you say (ذَلِكَ) it will refer to the remote which is translated into (that) (Al-Andalusi, 2000). All the demonstratives mentioned previously are used to refer to a singular masculine object. Sale and Asad chose the demonstrative (this), as they might have understood that the reference in the verse is to the Qur'an which was close and within reach for everyone. Arberry, on the other hand, chose (that) which delivers the intended meaning of the original text. His translation coincides with Newmark's first strategy of replicating the same image in the target text. There is a metaphor in using (ذَلِكَ) (that) instead of (هَذَا) (this), "the use of the demonstrative here is intended to glorify the Book" (Tafsir al-Jalalayn, 2007). This meaning in the original text was maintained by Arberry's translation, while it was lost in Sale's and Asad's translations.

The appropriate translation is (that is the book), which was performed by Arberry, as the same sense is available in the TL, as the demonstrative (that) can be used for "indicating a person or thing assumed to be known or to be known to be such as is stated. Often implying censure, dislike, or scorn; but sometimes commendation or admiration. They are frequently standing

before a noun or noun phrase in apposition with another” (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). Two translators, mainly Sale and Asad, either didn’t recognize that there is a metaphor in this verse or transformed the metaphor into a sense that is not intended in the verse, a procedure that produced a loss of the intended meaning in the SL text. This transformation can be related to Newmark’s fourth strategy of metaphor translation.

## 2- Chapter: 2 the cow, verse 7:

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةً وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ.

### The Translation:

- a- G. Sale: GOD hath sealed up their hearts and their hearing; dimness covereth their sight, and they shall suffer a grievous punishment.
- b- Arberry: God has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a covering, and there awaits them a mighty chastisement.
- c- Muhammad Asad: God has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes is a veil, and awesome suffering awaits them.

This verse is talking about the disbelievers and how Allah sealed their hearts and hearing and put a cover on their eyes as a result of their disbelief and intransigence after they saw the right path, so He did not grant them guidance. They had extreme torture in hellfire (The Simplified Exegesis, 2009). In this verse, the likened is maintained, which is (ختم الله على قلوبهم) and the likened-to is ellipted, which is (نور). The metaphor in this verse is performed by likening the (heart قلب) to a sealed bowl, the openings of which are all closed, thus, their hearts did not let light come in (Al-Sabuni, 1997). All three translations chose the same strategy, i.e. Newmark’s first strategy, which is reproducing the same image in TL. Sale’s choice of words like (hath) and (covereth) is related to old English, a language which is regarded as ambiguous for modern English speakers. The word (seal) in English has a plethora of meanings, one of which is the figurative meaning “That which (seals a person’s lips), an obligation to silence, a vow of secrecy; esp. the seal of confession or the confessional. Also (often with allusion to the seven seals), that which prevents the understanding of the Holy Scripture or some other book.” (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). Arberry’s translation can be regarded as word-for-word translation since the original text has the preposition (على) which is translated into (on), but this structure affected the English verb, therefore, Arberry changed the verb from (sealed), which is past tense, into (has set a seal on), which is past perfect tense. The original text says (ختم الله) which is translated as (Allah sealed), which was the choices of Sale and Asad, who omitted the preposition (على) or (on).

## 3- Chapter 2, the cow, verse 10:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ.

### The Translation:

- a- G. Sale: There is an infirmity in their hearts, and God hath increased that infirmity, and they shall suffer a most painful punishment because they have disbelieved.
- b- Arberry: In their hearts is a sickness, and God has increased their sickness, and there awaits them a painful chastisement for that they have cried lies.
- c- Muhammad Asad: In their hearts is a disease, and so God lets their disease increase and grievous suffering awaits them because of their persistent lying.

The context in this verse is about the hypocrites, it tells that in their hearts are suspicion and corruption, thus they were doomed by sins which bring forth their punishment, and Allah has increased their suspicion and they will have a painful punishment for their lies and hypocrisy (The Simplified Exegesis, 2009). The explicit metaphor in (مرض) is performed by likening (disbelieve الكفر) to (sickness المرض), then the likened-to (disbelieve الكفر) was ellipted, and the likened (sickness المرض) was maintained. Sale used the word (infirmity), which means: "A special form or variety of bodily (or mental) weakness; an illness, disease (obsolete) now, especially a failing in one or other of the faculties or senses" (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). This usage seems to be obsolete now, although it delivers the meaning to a great extent. This procedure can be related to Newmark's first strategy, which is replicating the same image of the source text into the target text. We may find such usage of the word in several works, such as William Cowper in his letter to Newton 1790: "The voice of the Almighty can in one moment cure me of this mental infirmity." (Ella, 2001). This choice can, to an extent, deliver the original SL sense, but the usage is obsolete now, although it might have been in use in the 19th century at the time of Sale. It is noted that Sale changed the word structure of the SL text, which starts with a prepositional phrase (في قلوبهم مرض), into a demonstrative phrase (there is an infirmity in their hearts) which does not give the assertion and importance that the original phrase gives, therefore, there is an obvious loss in meaning. Arberry, on the other hand, uses the word (sickness), which is: "The state of being sick or ill; the condition of suffering from some malady; illness, ill health" (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). This usage was transferred to be figuratively used to indicate another meaning, such as the (Young Revenge 1721 play): "I urged him to it, knowing the deadly sickness of his heart" (Young, 2019). The procedure Arberry adopted can be related to Newmark's first strategy as well. Muhammad Asad translated the word using 'a disease', which is used figuratively as: 'A deranged, depraved, or morbid condition (of mind or disposition, of the affairs of a community, etc.); an evil affection or tendency.' (Simpson & Weiner, vol.04, 1989). We may find such usage in 1844 Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay: 'The disease with which the human mind now labours is want of faith.' (Emerson & Lee, 2011). This usage can deliver a close meaning in a good way, although the sense it delivers in the TL is different from the sense in the SL. This procedure can be related to Newmark's fourth strategy, which is transforming metaphor into sense. It is likely that translating the word (مَرَضٌ) into 'malady' is a better way to deliver a closer meaning from the SL in the TL. It means: 'A specific kind of ill health, an ailment, a disease.' It may be used figuratively as: 'A morbid or depraved condition (e.g. of mind, morals, social arrangements, etc.); something that calls for a remedy.' (Simpson & Weiner, vol.09, 1989). It is possible to see such usage of the word, as in 1687 Dryden Hind's: 'The matron was not slow to find what sort of malady had seized her mind' (Dryden et al., 1852), in 1751 Homilies's rebellion: 'The cure of our intellectual maladies' (Johnson et al., 2012), in 1786 John Bonnycastle's letters in astrology: 'Astrology is another malady of weak minds' (Lilly, 1980), and in 1857 Carlyle's Signs of the Times 'Our spiritual maladies are but of Opinion' (The Edinburgh Review, 1872). It is worth mentioning that the pronunciations of both words (i.e., malady and marred) are so close, and that may propose a mutual etymological origin, Greek in our example. However, the research is not related to the etymological and historical origins of the words.

The structure of the source text starts with a prepositional phrase, which indicates affirmation and importance since the regular place of the prepositional phrase is not at the beginning of the sentence in Arabic. The prepositional object (مرضٌ) has the diacritic of (تنوين الضم) which

indicates greatness and exaggeration (Ibn Ashur, 1984). Sale ignored the source text's grammatical structure and did not pay attention to the intended meaning of the diacritic of (مرضٌ). Arberry and Asad, on the other hand, followed the source text's grammatical structure, as they started with the prepositional phrase. Although they maintained the emphasis intended in the SL text by starting with the prepositional phrase, still, they still did not deliver the intended meaning of the diacritic of (مرضٌ).

#### 4- Chapter 2, the cow, verse 16:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَتْ تِجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ

##### The Translation:

- a- G. Sale: These are the *men* who have purchased error at the price of *true* direction, but their traffic hath not been gainful, neither have they been *rightly* directed.
  - b- Arberry: Those are they that have bought error at the price of guidance, and their commerce has not profited them, and they are not right-guided.
  - c- Muhammad Asad: (for) it is they who have taken error in exchange for guidance, and neither has their bargain brought them to gain, nor have they found guidance (elsewhere).
- The context is dealing with those hypocrites who sold themselves in a losing bargain; they took disbelief and left faith. Thus, they gained nothing but lost guidance, and this is the utmost loss (The Simplified Exegesis, 2009). The verb (اشترُوا), which means (bought) or (purchased) is used metaphorically in the Qur'anic verse, as it is not used in its literal meaning. The metaphor here is in the verb (اشترُوا) which means (purchased) and metaphorically means exchange, just like a person who exchanges a thing that he does not want with a thing that he wants, thus the hypocrites exchange the true guidance from Allah with the misguidance of their satans (Ibn Ashur, 1984). Sale and Arberry used the verbs (purchased) and (bought) which indicate exchange. This procedure can be regarded as the first strategy of Newmark. Asad, on the other hand, used the verb (exchange) which directly delivers the intended meaning. This procedure is in line with the fourth strategy of Newmark. It is worth mentioning that the verb form of the original text is past tense, and all translators used the past perfect tense in the target tense. The past perfect tense gives an extra meaning to the target text, a thing that can be regarded as an over translation, for this extra meaning is not intended in the source text. The metaphor can also be found in the usage of the phrase (فَمَا رَبِحَتْ تِجَارَتُهُمْ), which proposes the metaphoric exchange of giving guidance as a price to get an error, although it is in abstract things the Qur'an exemplifies it as concrete substances. This exchange is just like making trade through selling and buying to gain profit. Allah negates this profit and negates the guidance as well. Sale's choice can deliver the meaning, as the word (traffick) can be used (with sinister or evil connotation: Dealing or bargaining in something which should not be made the subject of trade) (Simpson & Weiner, vol.18, 1989). Such usage can be found in 'the English Theophrastus: They make a Traffick of Honour and pay for it with the wind of fair Words' (Boyer et al., 1708). Sales procedure can be related to Newmark's first strategy, while Arberry and Asad's procedures can be related to Newmark's fourth strategy.

**5- Chapter 2, verse 18:**

صُمُّ بُكْمٌ عُمِّي فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ

**The Translation:**

- a- G. Sale: They are deaf, dumb, and blind, will they not repent.
- b- Arberry: Deaf, dumb, blind, so they shall not return.
- c- Muhammad Asad: deaf, dumb, blind – and they cannot turn back.

The verse is talking about the hypocrites. They are too deaf to hear the truth in a pondering way, dumb to talk the truth, and blind to see the light of guidance, therefore they cannot go back to the belief, which they left and replaced by misguidance (The Simplified Exegesis, 2009). And the reference to them came in the form of an eloquent simile. Their lack of feeling was likened to the deaf, dumb, and blind, that is each one of them had all three characteristics combined. This is the same as the reference reported in the plural form after a subject that is a noun indicating plural. The meaning is that each one of them is like a deaf, dumb, or blind person, and the meaning is not based on the individual reference, so it is not understood that some are deaf, some are mute, and some are blind, but all of them are having these attributes (Ibn Ashur, 1984). All translators replicated the source image in the target text, keeping the same words, mainly (deaf, dumb, and blind), as they have the exact metaphorical reference in the target language.

It can be noticed that Sale's translation converted the metaphor into a simile as he mentioned the subject and the verb (they are). It is well-known that the Arabic metaphor is based on simile. It is performed by omitting the first part, which is the topic, i.e. (they) in our case. It can be regarded that what Sale did is a type of overtranslation of the source text. Arberry and Muhammed Asad, on the other hand, kept the original structure of the SL text, although they used the verb return/turn to translate the literal meaning of the original Arabic verb (يرجعون), but the context tells that this verb is not used literally but metaphorically, as it is used in other places in the Qur'an to refer to repentance and compunction (Ibn Ashur, 1984). Again, Sale translated the sense of the verb, i.e. repent. That is another method of Newmark, which is using the same metaphor, joined with sense, to implement the image. We may find, though, an obsolete usage of the word (return) in archaic instances, such as William Caxton's 1878 (The Golden Legend or the Lives of the Saints): 'the two said sons Marcus and Marcillianus were so abashed and their hearts mollified, that almost they were returned from the Christian faith'. This usage cannot deliver the intended meaning of the original SL text, as it denotes the reverse meaning, which is leaving the right path and going to the wrong path, as shown in the example above. This process can be regarded as undertranslation and it can produce a loss of meaning.

The Arabic structure starts with the predicate that indicates the deletion of the subject, which in this case is (they). Sale ignored this allusion and mentioned the subject in his translation, a procedure which Newmark defines as 'over translation'. Arberry and Asad translated the verse in a word-for-word form, deleting the subject and starting with the predicate, which is not a regular structure in English.

Based on the analysis of the selected materials, the data shows that the most commonly used strategy across all three translators was Newmark's 1st strategy (reproducing the same image in the target language), which was used 8 times. The second most common was Newmark's 4th strategy (transforming metaphor into sense), used 7 times. It is also noticed that Newmark's 5th strategy was not used by any of the translators in the samples analyzed. In

the first sample, all three translators chose Newmark's fourth strategy, which is transforming metaphor into sense. Still, their choice of the demonstrative gives a different reference than what was intended in the original text. In the second sample, all three translators chose the same strategy, i.e., Newmark's first strategy, which is reproducing the same image in TL; the choice of terms was variant. The researcher proposed the term 'malady,' which gives the same intended symbolic reference of the SL. In the third sample, all three translators also chose Newmark's first strategy of reproducing the same image in the TL, although each one of them chose a different term to perform this reproduction. In the fourth sample, all three translators also chose Newmark's first strategy of reproducing the same image in the TL, although each one of them chose a different term to perform this reproduction. In the fifth and last sample, Sale chose Newmark's second strategy of converting metaphor into simile, as he mentioned the subject, which was deleted in the source text. In contrast, Arberry and Asad chose Newmar's first strategy of replicating the same picture in the target language. Moreover, all of them chose the same terms to deliver the source text's image.

In addition, the data shows that there is some sort of consistency among translators. For example, in some verses (e.g., Chapter 2, verse 2), all three translators used the same strategy (Newmark's 5th strategy). In other verses (e.g., Chapter 2, verse 10), there was complete consistency, with all translators using Newmark's 1st strategy. However, the results show that there are some variations with regard to the approach adopted. For some verses (e.g., Chapter 2, verses 18 and 25), there were differences in approach, with Sale using Newmark's 1st strategy while Arberry and Asad used the 4th strategy.

The analysis of the data also shows that Sale's translations sometimes used older English terms or structures, which may have been more acceptable to his contemporary audience but less so for modern readers. Arberry and Asad often stayed closer to the original Arabic structure, prioritizing adequacy over acceptability in some cases.

Furthermore, the data demonstrate that the translators generally attempted to preserve the metaphorical nature of the original text, but their approaches varied. In some cases, the metaphorical meaning was lost or altered in the process of translation, particularly when prioritizing literal meanings over figurative ones. The data also revealed ongoing challenges in translating culturally specific metaphors and maintaining the nuances of Arabic linguistic structures in English.

Besides, the data reveals that there is some sort of balance between adequacy and acceptability. The translations showed varying degrees of balance between maintaining faithfulness to the source text (adequacy) and creating comprehensible, natural-sounding English (acceptability). This balance varied not only between translators but also between different verses for the same translator.

To sum up, the findings demonstrate the complex nature of translating Quranic metaphors, with each translator making different choices in their attempt to balance fidelity to the original text with comprehensibility for the target audience. The predominance of Newmark's 1st and 4th strategies suggests a general tendency to either maintain the original metaphorical image or convert it into its underlying sense, depending on the specific context and the translator's judgment.

## Conclusion

The translation of metaphors in the Quran, as evidenced by the analysis of selected verses from three prominent English translations, reveals a complex interplay between adequacy

and acceptability. The translators' choices demonstrate varying degrees of adherence to the source text's linguistic and cultural features (adequacy) and adaptation to the norms and expectations of the target language (acceptability). With regard to adequacy, there are several instances, particularly in the translation of explicit metaphors, the translators opted for Newmark's first strategy of reproducing the same image in the target language. This approach leans towards adequacy, as it attempts to preserve the original metaphorical structure and cultural references of the Quranic text. Besides, the word-for-word translations provided by Arberry and Asad in some verses (e.g., Chapter 2, verse 18) prioritize adequacy by maintaining the original Arabic sentence structure, even when it results in less natural English syntax.

For acceptability, the use of Newmark's fourth strategy, transforming metaphor into sense, as seen in some translations, represents a shift towards acceptability. This approach prioritizes comprehensibility for the target audience over strict adherence to the source text's form. In addition, Sale's occasional use of older English terms (e.g., "infirmity" in Chapter 2, verse 10) represents an attempt at acceptability for his contemporary audience, though this choice may reduce acceptability for modern readers. Further, the analysis reveals that translators often struggle to balance adequacy and acceptability. For instance, in Chapter 2, verse 2, all three translators chose acceptability over adequacy in their choice of demonstratives, potentially losing some of the original metaphorical meaning. The varying strategies employed by translators in rendering the same metaphors (e.g., in Chapter 2, verse 16) demonstrate the ongoing challenge of finding an optimal balance between preserving the source text's features and creating a comprehensible target text. The data also indicate that the choices made in pursuit of adequacy or acceptability can lead to gains or losses in meaning. For example, the literal translation of certain verbs (e.g., "return" in Chapter 2, verse 18) may preserve adequacy but at the cost of losing the metaphorical sense intended in the original, thus reducing acceptability.

Thus, it can be concluded that the translation of Quranic metaphors involves a delicate cooperation between adequacy and acceptability. While striving for adequacy helps preserve the unique linguistic and cultural features of the Quranic text, a degree of acceptability is necessary to ensure comprehension and resonance with the target audience. The variations observed across different translations highlight the ongoing challenge of finding an optimal balance between these two concepts in the translation of sacred and metaphorically rich texts like the Holy Quran. Future research and translation efforts may benefit from a more systematic approach to balancing adequacy and acceptability, perhaps developing specific guidelines for handling different types of Quranic metaphors in translation.

It is expected that this research will contribute to the academic community by providing a moderate analysis of the metaphor and how the translator should manipulate the concept of adequacy and acceptability to produce a better translation of the metaphor in general, and the Qur'anic metaphor in specific. Further research should be done on how to translate the Qur'anic metaphor and the theories that are utilized by translators to produce an accurate and acceptable translation.

## References

- Abdul-Raof, H. (2013). *Qur'an translation: Discourse, texture and exegesis*. Routledge.
- Abdul-Raof, H. (2006). *Arabic rhetoric is a pragmatic analysis*. Routledge.
- Al Farisi, M. (2020). The impact of using foreignization and domestication on the translation accuracy of the Quranic metaphor (kinayah) verses. *Humanities and Management Sciences - Scientific Journal of King Faisal University*, 21(1), 319–332. <https://doi.org/10.37575/h/rel/1966>
- Al-Azzam, B. (2005). Certain terms relating to Islamic observances: Their meanings with reference to three translations of the Qur'an and a translation of Hadith. *Baal*, 1-18. p. 8.
- Aldaresh, A. Y. (2006). *Translating idiomatic English phrasal verbs into Arabic*. University of Western Sydney. p. 63.
- Al-Hasnawi, A. R. (2007). A cognitive approach to translating metaphors. *Translation Journal*, 11(3). p.12.
- Al-Jabari, R. (2008). *Reasons for the possible incomprehensibility of some verses of three translations of the meaning of the Holy Quran into English* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Salford (United Kingdom)).
- Almised, O. A. (2001) *Metaphor in the Qur'an: an assessment of three English translations of surat Al-Hajj* (MA Thesis). Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham ETheses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/1663/>
- Alshehab, M. (2015). Two English translations of Arabic metaphors in the holy Quraan. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 4(Special Issue), 295–306.
- Al-Sowaidi, B., Mohammed, T., & Banda, F. (2021). Translating conceptual Qur'anic metaphor: A cogno-translational approach. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 10(1), 161–173.
- Al-Zoubi, M. Q., Al-Ali, M. N., & Al-Hasnawi, A. R. (2007). Cogno-cultural issues in translating metaphors. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 14(3), 230-239.
- Arberry, A. J. (1955). *The Koran interpreted*. Allen & Unwin.
- Asad, M. (1980). *The message of the Qur'an: The full account of the revealed Arabic text accompanied by parallel transliteration*. Book Foundation.
- Baker, M. (2011). *In other words: A coursebook on translation*. Routledge.
- Bale, A., & Sobeki, S. I. (2021). *Medieval English travel: A critical anthology*. Oxford University Press.
- Dickins, J., Hervey, S. G. J., & Higgins, I. (2017). *Thinking Arabic translation: A course in translation method: Arabic to English*. London: Routledge.
- Elimam, H. (2016). *Translation of metaphor in the holy Quran*. Unpublished MA Thesis. American University of Sharjah, UAE.
- El-Omari, L. M. (1989). *Qur'anic metaphor in translation*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Al-Yarmouk University, Jordan.
- El-Zeiny, I. (2011). Criteria for the translation and assessment of Qur'anic metaphor: A contrastive analytic approach. *Babel*, 57(3), 247–268. doi:10.1075/babel.57.3.01zei
- Ereksoussi, Z. M. (2014). The translation of Qur'an metaphors: Procedures and examples. *Journal of Languages and Literatures*, 13, 48-99, Um Al-Qura University.
- Faiq, S. (2004). *Cultural encounters in translation from Arabic*. Multilingual Matters.
- Faraj, S. A. M., & Ahmed, M. A. (2018). Difficulties encountered in translating metaphor in the Holy Quran. *SUST Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies*, 19(2), 161–168.

- Faruquzzaman, Md. Akan, Rezaul, Md. Karim & Abdullah Mohammad Kabir Chowdhury. (2019). An Analysis of Arabic-English Translation: Problems and Prospects. *Journal of Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 10 (1): 58-65.
- Hastürkoğlu, G. (2018). Incorporation of conceptual metaphor theory in translation pedagogy: A case study on translating simile-based idioms. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 38(4), 467-483.
- Ibn-Yusuf, A.-H. Al-A. M. (1993). *Tafsir al-Bahr al-muhit*. Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiya.
- Ibrahim, A. A. M. (2017). The problem of translating metaphoric expressions in the Holy Qur'an into English. *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education*, 4(11), 9–14. <https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0411002>
- Jalaluddin, S. M. ibn S., & Ahmad, M. J. M. (1989). *Tafsir al-Jalalain*. Dar al-Fikr.
- Ketabi, S. & Mohaghegh, A. (2013). Qur'anic metaphors and their English and Persian translations: Dead or alive? *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 5(2), 105-122. *Linguistics*, 38:4, 467-483, DOI: 10.1080/07268602.2018.1510728
- Mahmoud, M. M. (2018). Challenges of translating Islamic religious texts: A case study of Qur'anic metaphors. *Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies*, 2(4), 94-106. p. 97.
- Maula, A. (2011). A metaphor translation of the holy Qur'an: A comparative analytical study. Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah.
- Mohamed, D. A. (2023). Translation of dead metaphors in the Qur'an: An eclectic approach. 250–227 ,(38)38. <https://doi.org/10.21608/jwadi.2023.295151>
- Murray, K., & Moon, R. (2006). *Introducing Metaphor*. Routledge.
- Najjar, S. A. (2012). *Metaphors in translation: An investigation of a sample of Quran metaphors with reference to three English versions of the Quran* (PhD Thesis). United Kingdom: Liverpool John Moores University.
- Newmark, P. (1980). *The Translation of Metaphor*. Babel, 26(2), 93–100.
- Newmark, P. (1988). A textbook of translation. Prentice Hall.
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), 533-544.
- Sabuni, M. A. (1981). *Şafwat al-Tafāsīr. Dār al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*.
- Sale, G. (1734). *The koran: Commonly called the alcoran of Mohammed: Translated into English immediately from the original Arabic, with explanatory notes taken from the most approved commentators, to which is prefixed a preliminary discourse*. London, England: Printed for L. Hawkes, W. Clarke, and R. Collins.
- Sardaraz, K., & Ali, R. (2019). A cognitive-semantic approach to the interpretation of death metaphor themes in the Quran. *Journal of Nusantara Studies*, 4(2), 219-246.
- Sardaraz, K., & Ali, R. (2021). Dichotomy of language and thought in the interpretation of metaphor in the Quran. *Journal of Nusantara Studies (JONUS)*. 6(1), 95–117. doi: 10.24200/jonus.vol6iss1pp95-117
- Simpson, J. A., & Weiner, E. S. C. (1989). *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Clarendon Press.
- The Holy Qur'an.
- The Simplified Exegesis, (2009). King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an - Saudi Arabia.

- Wilson, M. B. (2014). *Translating the Qur'an in an Age of Nationalism: Print Culture and Modern Islam in Turkey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zahid, A. (2020). *A Model for Metaphor Translation from English Literature into Arabic* (Doctoral dissertation, Durham University).
- Zahri, M. (1990). *Metaphor and translation*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Modern Languages. University of Salford. p.76.