



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Developing a Framework for the Analysis and Evaluation of Quran Translations

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The purpose of the current study is to develop a comprehensive conceptual model for the analysis and evaluation of translations of the Quran. Seven Arabic-to-English translations of the Quran are analyzed in a descriptive-analytic way, considering the intra-textual semantic, discursive and syntactic relations. The analysis indicated that in translating and evaluating the translations of the Quran, the translators and evaluators might consider some significant features. These features and components are punctuation, interpretability, and structural aspects of language; loyalty to the meaning of the source text; style and the effect of different readings of the Quran; and the translators' record, the revelation and its subcategories. The study also shows that the translation of the Quran is possible and acceptable on the condition that the translator follows the given set of principles.

Keywords: Conceptual Model, Translatability, Translation, Quran, Evaluation.

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Introduction

The Quran has three features that make its translation a hard task. First is the rationale, not known to many humans, behind Allah's choice of words in the Quran. Second is its immortality, it's accessible to all human beings of all ages, a quality referred to in the first verse of the chapter Alforghan. Third is the fact that the Quran was sent to bring human beings out of "every kind of darkness" into the light of wisdom, which is referred to in the sixth verse of Chapter 14, Ibrahim (Baharzadeh 2000).

However, some translators themselves have confessed to the near impossibility of an accurate and comprehensive translation of the Quran. They have pointed to the verbal miracle of the Quran and stated that translation cannot convey such a miracle. Even if they have published some translations for those who do not speak Arabic, they have not titled those translations "The Quran". Arberry and Pickthall produced separate translations. Arberry's is titled *The Koran Interpreted*; Pickthall's is *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran*.

The fact that human beings have not been satisfied with only one translation of the Quran implies that some aspects of the Quran need interpretation and exegesis. This is so important that Bahrami (2001) refers to having a good knowledge of scriptural hermeneutics as the translator's responsibility, so that they can choose the best and closest equivalents to the source text in their translations.

One of the distinguishing features of a good translation is the creation of a text that can successfully communicate with its readers and takes into consideration their intellectual, linguistic and environmental conditions. This becomes more significant, particularly for the translation of religious texts, since the translator's lack of attention to semantic delicacies present in the text might color the reader's understanding of the source text. That is why, in spite of the uniqueness of the Quran's text, several translations of it have been done. The present study therefore aims to answer two basic questions with regard to existing Quran translations so that, based on the answers, a descriptive framework may be devised for comparative analysis of different translations of the Quran.

The Current Research

The purpose of the present study is to devise a model for translating the Quran and evaluating its translations.

Research Questions

1. Can we present a model or a framework with special criteria for translating and evaluating the translations of the Quran?
2. If yes, what is that model, and what are its criteria?

Methodology

The Analyzed Data

In the present research, seven Arabic-to-English translations of the Quran were analyzed. These translations were made by Arberry (1955), Shakir (1990), Abdullah

Yusuf Ali (1937), Aziz, Z., & Ali, M. (2010), Pickthall (1930), Sher Ali (2004), and Al-Hilali, M. T., & M. Mushin Khan (1996).

Analysis of the Data and Devising a Model

In the present study, the method of descriptive-analytic analysis was used. By considering syntactic, dialectic and semantic features of the Arabic language and of the target language, the researchers have distilled effective criteria for translating the Quran. A group composed of a scholar in the field of Quranic sciences and hadith and three scholars in the field of English language, all of whom have a good command of Farsi, met in a series of focus groups to analyze specific chapters of the Quran, among them “Al-Fatiha”, “Al-Baqara”, “Al-Tin” and “Al-Ikhlās”. They discussed the translation of every single word and phrase in each of the verses, and compared the closeness of each of the seven translations of the Quran to the real purpose hidden behind the lines of the verses. In some cases, the translators even proposed some alternative translations that could transfer all the affective semantic elements, including the connotation of the verses and the words, similes and metaphors employed in the original. As a result of these meetings and discussions, which lasted for two months, some criteria for evaluating translations were developed and used for the purpose of devising a framework for the translation and evaluation of translations of the Quran. For instance, one of these criteria was the effect of intertextuality, which refers to using other texts or other parts of the same text in order to understand the meanings of certain parts of the text. As an example, in the first chapter, “Al-Fatiha”, the words “those we gave blessings” could be translated by referring to the 70th verse of Chapter 4, “Al-Nisa”, which refers to five groups of people, the Prophets, the Truthful [ones], the Martyrs, the Righteous [ones], and those who obey Allah and His Messenger. Intertextuality, along with some other components introduced in the following parts of the article, are presented in a diagram. It provided a general picture of the discussions brought forth through the present research. Then, the researchers further analyzed each of the indicated components and criteria shown in the diagram. In some cases, they found other sub-categories for each of these criteria. For instance, in analyzing the component of aesthetics, the literary elements of the translations of the Quran, including the subcategories of aesthetics, were identified.

Results and Discussions

The results of the analysis of the translations indicated that there are some components helpful in the evaluation of the translations of the Quran. These components are as follows:

1. Punctuation

Punctuation is important to understanding the meaning of the lines. “La”, for instance, is a punctuation mark that, when written on a verse, shows that a pause is not allowed in this part of the verse and that any pauses there will lead to a change in meaning. Translators should consider such signs in order to prevent any vagueness

in the meaning and interpretation of the lines. For instance, in verse 43 of Chapter 4, Al-Nisa', it is written:

“O ye who believe! Approach not prayer when you are not in *full* possession of your senses” If you pause on the word "prayer," it may completely change the meaning, and the reverse of what is meant by the verse may be conveyed. Another example of the importance of punctuation is in Chapter 59, Al-Hashr, verses 7 and 8, where one should pause after the word “retribution”. Otherwise, it will change the meaning of the verse to: Allah is severe in retribution against the poor refugees. According to Shaker (2014), the two verses are as follows:

“Whatever Allah has given to his messenger as spoils from the people of the towns is for Allah and for the Messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, that it may not circulate *only* among those of you who are rich. And whatsoever the messenger gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain from *that*. And fear Allah; surely, Allah is severe in retribution. [These spoils are] for the poor refugees who have been driven out of their homes and their possessions while seeking grace from Allah and His pleasure, and helping Allah and His messenger. These it is who are true *in their faith*.”

Punctuation in the target language can be shown in different ways. For instance, in the English translation of the fifth verse of Al-Fatiha (“Thee alone do we worship and thee alone do we implore for help”), the translator can use a semicolon between “thee alone do we worship” and “thee alone do we implore for help,” which shows the independence of the two sentences. He or she can also use a colon, which indicates the relatedness and dependency of the two parts of the sentence. Of course, he or she should pay attention to the fact that in the past, in the Arabic language, there was no punctuation; commas and full stops were not used in Arabic. What exists here constitutes punctuation in Quranic Arabic and how it works. That is why a translator should pay attention to the fact that, in the past, they used the sign و instead of a full stop in Arabic. As a result, one may need to use a full stop, comma, semicolon or conjunction where و is used in the Arabic text. Another use of a pause is that which is shown by the sign م in the verses, an example of which can be seen in verse 9 of the second chapter, Al-Baqarah: “And the people, there are some who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day," while they are not at all believers.” In this verse one should pause on the word "believers,” and if one does not pause on this verse but continues and connects it to the next verse (“They would deceive Allah and those who believe, and they deceive none but themselves; only they perceive it not”), one completely changes the meaning of the verse, suggesting instead that the believers are those who deceive Allah. (Sajawandi 2001)

Interpretability

Interpretability refers to the epithets, names and scientific and natural realities which are far from the human beings’ full and only one understanding (Sajjadi 2000). This component possesses three aspects: One is how accurate a translator is

in finding the equivalents- the degree of equivalency can be ranked as excellent, good... Two is the translator's ability to transfer concepts using words from the source language in target language. Finally, there is the effect of intertextuality, which means the translator's willingness to refer to other texts or whether the translator has referred to other texts or parts of the same text for further understanding.

A problem exists for interpretability in the presence of decisive and analogous verses. The Quran's direct reference to decisive and analogous verses comes in the seventh verse of Chapter 3, Al-e-Imran,

He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book; in it there are verses that are decisive in meaning- they are the basis of the Book- and there are others that are susceptible of different interpretations. But those in whose hearts is perversity pursue such thereof as are susceptible of different interpretations, seeking discord and seeking *wrong* interpretations of it. And none knows its *right* interpretation except Allah and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge; they say, 'we believe in it; the whole is from our Lord.'- and none heed except those gifted with understanding.

Declarative verses say something authoritatively and do not even use similes for the better understanding of the reader. For an example of this case one can refer to verse 11 of Chapter 42, Al-Shura: "There is nothing whatever like unto Him."

On the other hand, there are some other verses in which concrete examples are used in order to make abstract concepts more tangible. For instance, in the verse "The hand of Allah is over their hands" (Chapter 48, verse 10), a concrete physical example is used, likening Allah to humans having hands, in order to convey the concept better and more clearly. This verse is an analogous verse, that is, the reader should not think that Allah is like a human being having a hand since- based on the previously mentioned verse, "There is nothing whatever like unto Him"- such an interpretation is thoroughly rejected. There are other examples of interpretability in the Quran as well. There are, for instance, some verses in the Quran which describe Heaven as a garden in which there are rivers of honey. These are examples of analogous verses.

But in the first verse of Chapter 112 of The Quran, Al-Ikhlās, Allah says: "Say: 'He is Allah, the One.'" In this verse, no simile is used and the translator should transfer the exact words without entering any interpretations of the line; the reason is that such verses are decisive verses (Taghavian 2001). Another example is verse 43, of the second Chapter of The Quran, Al-Baqarah, in which Allah says: "and observe Prayer and pay the Zakat." This is a decisive verse in which the words are not to be interpreted beyond what they mean; the translator does not need to interpret any similes or metaphors (Taghavian 2001).

1.1. Accuracy in Finding Equivalents

In translating the phrase each chapter starts with, Arberry uses “In the Name of God” in which the capital letter of the word “Name” refers to the Oneness of God. However, this is not a thoroughly accurate translation. It would be better to use the name which Allah Himself has chosen for Himself; that is, it is better to translate the line as, “In the Name of Allah.”

Another example can be found in the translation of the word "sirat", which some translators have translated as “path” and some as “way.” The semantic valence of both words is rich and complicated. Both words bring with them myriad associations, they exist in a web of cultural and literary allusions that the translator must navigate with sensitivity and purpose (e.g., in religious contexts, the word “way” automatically evokes Jesus’ assertion “I am the way, the truth, and the Life” (as it is formulated by Christians). As a Muslim translator, do I want to drive my text toward that association or away from it? Does using “way” overwrite one credal claim with another, or do I just lose my reader by bringing up the image of salvation through a person and all that entails?) From this point of view, the efficacy of the translator in identifying the most appropriate word could have a very significant effect on the quality of the translation. In translating the word "sirat" Arberry (1955), Shakir (1990), Pickthall (1930), Muhammad Ali (2010) and Sher Ali (2004) have used the word “path”, while in the translations of the Arabic Society under the auspices of the king of Saudi Arabia (1996) and Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1937), the more accurate word “way” is used.

Another example is the verse 62 of Chapter 2 of the Quran, Al-Baqara, in which Allah says “And the Jews and the Christians and the Sabians,” using the word “Nasara”. This word is used in reference to the Christians, the reason being that it comes from the word "Naseryeh" which is the name of an area in ancient Syria that was Jesus’ homeland. Some translators, rather than translating the verse as “and the Jews and the Christians and the Sabians” have translated it as “and the Jews and the Tarsa and the Sabians”. In other words, some translators construed the word as Tarsa, rather than Nasara. The word “Tarsa” is not a proper translation. The reason is that “Tarsa” means “monk” or “the one who fears Allah.” With regard to the reason for Christians being called “Nasara” in the Quran, Bistoni (2012) mentions three reasons. The first is that Jesus lived in a village called Nasereh (Jesus’ birthplace is called Nazareth in English). The second reason is because “Nasara” means assistance and cooperation, and since the followers of Jesus assisted and cooperated with each other, they were called “Nasara”. The third reason goes back to Jesus’ own words, as he referred to his followers as “Helpers of Allah” (Al-Saff, verse 14). For these reasons, translators should choose the best equivalent for Nasara, which is the one that refers to the Christians.

1.2. Accuracy of Transfer of the Meanings through Words

Transfer of meaning refers to the efficacy of the translator in accurately transferring meanings. One example of the Quran's words in this case is the word "Rabb", which refers to Allah, meaning "the Lord, the owner, and one who guides others towards perfection." (Makarem Shirazi 2006). Therefore, it includes two meanings in itself- one is "the owner", and the other is "the guide". When the word "Rab" is translated as "Lord", only fifty percent of its meaning, that is, "the owner", is transferred to the reader; while the other meaning, "the guide", is omitted from the target text.

Arberry, Shakir, Muhammad Ali, Pickthall, and Sher Ali have used the word "Lord" for translating the word "Rab" and, in keeping with what is mentioned above, convey only half of the meaning of the word in the source text. This is while Yusuf Ali and the Arabic Society of the King of Saudi Arabia have used the words "Cherisher and sustainer" for translating the word, which refers to both the meanings, "the owner and guide", but still does not include the meaning of "the One who brings about your perfection" in the target text.

Another example is the word "Al-Samad" which is used in Chapter 112, Al-Ikhlās. The word contains several meanings, including complete perfection, sovereignty, magnificence, and knowledge and wisdom ('Abd al-Walī, M., Ḥurrī, A 2010). In translating this word, Arberry has rendered it as "the everlasting refuge", Shakir and Muhammad Ali have translated it as "he on whom all depend" and Yusuf Ali has translated it as "the eternal, absolute". Pickthall has translated it as "the eternally besought of all" and the Arabic society of the King of Saudi Arabia has used the word "Al-Samad" and has explained it in parenthesis as "the self sufficient master whom all creatures need". Sher Ali, meanwhile, has translated it as "the independent and besought of all". As one can see, none of these translations has transferred the complete meaning of the word "Al-Samad".

Another example is verse 98 of Chapter Al-Isrā', in which the word "Rofat" includes two meanings, both "grinding" and "dispersing". Most Persian translators have not been able to transfer both meanings.

1.3. The Effect of Intertextuality

The simplest definition of intertextuality is "the effect of texts on each other" (Shuart-Faris and Bloome 2004). In other words, in order to understand the meaning of a text, the reader needs to refer to other texts and the definitions expressed in those texts. As a matter of fact, the ambiguous part of the text is turned to a puzzle which could be solved by referring to other texts or other parts of the same text. The importance of intertextuality is so great that Ibn-Kathir Damascus (1300-1373) considers the primary method for interpreting and understanding ambiguous parts of the Quran to be referring to other verses. As an example, for understanding the word "Yowm" in the verse, "malek youm adin" in the first Chapter, Al-Fatiha, one has to refer to Chapter 70, Al-Ma'arij. According to verse 4 of Chapter 70 Al-Ma'arij, the

word "youm" here does not mean a 24-hour day, rather it refers to the Last Day, which is equal to 50 thousand years.

Another example is the word "Naabod" which refers to "saying prayers." Referring to other verses, one can understand what is meant by "saying prayers" here. According to Khoie (2007), three meanings have been introduced for "saying prayers" in the Quran. Sometimes, it means obedience, as in verse 60 of Chapter 36, Ya Sin: "Did I not enjoin on you, O ye sons of Adam, that you worship not Satan- for he is to you an open enemy-" The second meaning of "saying prayers" is "surrender" which can be understood through verse 47 of Chapter 23 Al-Mu'minun: "and they said, 'shall we believe in two men like ourselves while their people are our servants?'" In addition, sometimes "saying prayers" is used to refer to "the act of worship" and "believe in", as can be seen in verse 36 of Chapter 13, Al-Ra'd: "say, 'I am only commanded to worship Allah and not to set up equals to Him.'"

In order to understand the meaning of the word "Nastaain" in the verse Eyyaka "nastaain, one should refer to verses 45, and 153 of Chapter 2, Al-Baqara, in which one is advised to seek help "with patience and prayer". In order to find the proper equivalent for the word "Serat" the translator needs to refer to such verses as verse 52 of Chapter Al-Shura, verse 126 of Chapter Al-An'am, verse 36 of Chapter Maryam, verse 61 of chapter Al-Ya Sin, and verse 153 of Chapter Al-An'am so as to understand that "serat" (meaning "way") refers to a virtual way. This shows the effect of intertextuality on translation.

2. *Structural Aspects of Language*

The structural aspects of language include syntactic elements and spelling, which should be paid attention to in both the source and target text.

2.1. *Syntactic Elements*

Syntactic elements cover aspects of a language that deal with its grammar. One aspect of syntax in Arabic is paying attention to conjugations. For instance, when we consider the word "Rahim", one can consider its conjugation, which comes from "faiil" which includes the concept of an action or a characteristic of somebody or something with itself and the word "Rahim" is always translated as merciful. But the word "Rahman", the conjugation of which is based on "Fa'lan," does not convey the meaning of being eternal but instead suggests profusion. Therefore, in light of their knowledge of conjugations in Arabic, the translator would translate rahman as "the most compassionate" (Anushirvani & Mohammad Baygi 2009).

Another example is nominal and verbal sentences. A nominal sentence is said to be more emphatic and permanent than verbal sentence, especially when the word "inna" appears at its beginning. For instance, in the phrase "Inn allazina kafaru" (Al-Baqarah, verse 6), the emphasis is on the fact that their disbelief is permanent.

Another example is the grammatical point that words such as "that" and "those" are used in Arabic to refer to the magnificence of something. For instance, in the verse "Zalikal kitabo lareiba fihe" meaning "that is a perfect book; there is no doubt

in it" (Al-Baqarah, verse 2). The word "Zalika" meaning "that" refers to the magnificence of the Quran. In translating this word, Arberry has used the word "that" while all the other translators whose translations are analyzed in the current research have used the word "this". The reason for this preference of the word "this" rather than "that" as the English equivalent of "zalika" might be rhetorically justifiable in that the word "this" can be more emphatic as it refers to something present.

The verse "Zalikal kitabo lareiba fihe hodan" (meaning "this is a perfect book, there is no doubt in it; it is a guidance") can be analyzed from two syntactic aspects. If we consider each of the sentences in this verse as a complete and independent sentence, that is, if we consider "this is a perfect book, there is no doubt in it;" as the first statement and "it is a guidance" as the second statement", one can interpret the verse as such "there is no doubt in this perfect book of guidance." But looking from another perspective in Arabic syntax, one can consider the first part, "this is a perfect book, there is no doubt in it," as a subordinate clause to the main clause of "it is a guidance" in which case the emphasis falls on fact that the Quran is a source of guidance. Since guidance is one of the most heavily emphasized features within the Quran itself, it may be better to consider the second analysis of the verse when translating it. However, considering the Arabic syntax, both interpretations of the verse, independent and dependent, are accurate and might be helpful to show what those two different versions would look like.

Another syntactic element of the Quran which should be considered while translating is paying attention to articles such as "al", which in English is replaced with the article "the" in order to refer to something which is already known. In the verse 92 of Al-Baqarah, for instance, it says "And Moses came to you with manifest Signs, then you took the calf for worship in his absence and you were transgressors." The word "Al-Ejl" ("the calf") is known here and refers to one particular "calf". Therefore, Arberry (1955), Shakir (1990), Yusuf Ali (1937), Muhammad Ali (2010), Pickthall (1930), Sher Ali (2004) and the Arabic Society (1996) have accurately translated the word as "the calf".

2.2. Orthography

With regard to spelling, one should pay attention to the fact that English words have two spellings, one British and the other American. What is important is that the translator should be consistent in using either British or American spelling. For instance, when one uses the word "labour" with its British spelling, all throughout the text they should be consistent in using the British spelling and avoid using "labor", which is its American spelling. In the source text also, sometimes some spelling changes have appeared because of changes in conditions. For instance, the word "serat" (way) was once spelled with the letter "sin" but due to some phonetic changes in the language, has changed to "serat" with sad. The translator should also consider this spelling change while translating the Quran.

Another example is “Admonish, therefore, for thou art but an admonisher; Thou hast no authority to compel them” (Chapter 88 Al-Ghashiyah, verse 21-22) in which Allah has used the letter "ص" for the word "moseiter". Since the word "moseiter" comes from the word "sitr" with "س", the word should have been spelled by the letter "س" but, most probably to reflect the Prophet's pronunciation, they have used "ص" rather than "س", since in Arabic the two letters are pronounced differently.

Another example with regard to spelling is related to words that can be connected to or separated from each other in writing. The translator should be alert to such spelling notes. For instance, the word mimma in the verse 3 of Al-Baqara is a combination of the two words "min" and "ma": “[the righteous] who believe in the unseen and observe Prayer, and "mimma razaghnahom yunfeghun" spend out of what We have provided for them”. The translator should pay attention to this while translating.

3. *Being Faithful to the Meaning*

Seven points should be considered with regard to the factor of faithfulness.

3.1. *Meticulousness in the Choice of Words*

The translator should choose a word that is closest to the meaning of the target word and conveys all the features and connotations of the original word to the reader. This should be paid attention to with regard both to words in the source text and words in the target text, so that one can choose the most accurate equivalents for the translation of words.

The words "enzar", for instance, has two parts to its meaning; one is “understands” and the other is “evades”. Motahhari (2014) believes that the best equivalent for the word is “warning”; therefore, the phrase “anzartahom” should be translated as “or we have caused them to evade [harm]”.

Another example is the word "Mottaghin" which has both positive and negative connotations. Motahhari (2012) has used the word “righteous”, while Taleghani (2002) has used the word “pious”; but the word itself is meant to describe a person who pays attention to themselves, does good and takes care to do his/her duty. Therefore, the translation which can be proposed for this word in English is “do their duties or they can be conscious of their duties, or just conscientious” which includes both the positive aspects of the word and doing good deeds, as well as avoiding the unclean; in this way the whole meaning of the word is kept and transferred in translation.

3.2. *Environmental and Social Style*

“Environmental and social style” refers to social and geographic characteristics of the readers. For instance, as Arabs have a close connection to deserts and camels, in Arabic there are a lot of words for camel- for example, ibel, jamal, nagheh-, each of which emphasizes one special characteristic of the animal. In some geographical parts of the earth such as the Arctic, however, there is no such animal. However, in the Arctic the residents have a special name for every kind of snow. Therefore, in

translating words which have several meanings and connotations in the source language but for which there is only one equivalent in the target language, the translator can use only one word in translation. For instance, in the verse 64 of Chapter 11, Hud, the word "nagheh" is used, which in Farsi can be translated only by the word "shotor" and in English, of course, there is only the word "she-camel":

'And O my people this is the she-camel of Allah as a Sign for you, so let her alone that she may feed in Allah's earth, and touch her not with harm lest a near punishment seize you.' But they hamstrung her; then he said, 'Enjoy yourselves in your houses for three days. This is a promise which is not a lie.'

Pay attention to the following two verses: "do they not then look at the camel, how it is created" (verse 17, Al-Ghashiyah) Moreover "...nor will they enter Heaven until a camel goes through the eye of a needle." (verse 40, Al-A'raf). In these two verses also the words "ibel" and "jamal" both refer to "camel", but there is only one word in English for them.

Another example is the word "Al-Salat" which in Farsi is referred to as "namaz" so as to be understandable for the Persians' former religion. Before the advent of Islam, the Persians were followers of Zoroaster. The word "serat" is translated into Farsi as "pol" (meaning bridge) although it does not have such connotation in Arabic, because it fits with the Zoroastrian religion in which there is the Chinvat Bridge. (Mohammad Beigi 1999)

Another instance which can be referred to is the verse, "He it is who made the sun radiate a brilliant light and the moon reflect a luster" in which the words "ziya" and "noor" are used, for which many of the translators have used the word "rowshanaie". Only when these two words are used together have they translated them differently to distinguish them from each other. As an example, Khoramshahi (1993) has used the word "rowshan" as the equivalent for "ziya" and the word "taban" as the equivalent for "noor" in order to differentiate the extremely dazzling light (ziya) from the merely bright light (noor). However, when these two words are not used together, the same translator has not differentiated them from each other and has used one word for both of them.

3.3. Text and Discourse

The kind of text and the discourse affects the choice of words, structures and manner of expression. As an example, when the translator is translating a religious text, they need to use structures and terms which have religious connotations. The word "salvation" has different connotations for Muslims than it does for Christians, though it exists as a term in both religions. In the Bible (John 11-12) the word salvation refers to eternal life, the prerequisite of which is following Jesus' words and instructions since he saves us from the hideousness of sins and forgives the Original Sin and leads humans to eternal life.

Another example is the word "asmaehem" for which the translators have used the two words "ear" and "hearing". Here the word hearing is more extensive than the

word “ear”. In fact, “ear” is a part of the hearing system in the human body. Based on the text one can understand that it meant the ear as part of the hearing system of the body. Therefore, in the verse 7 of Al-Baqarah— “Allah has set a seal on their hearts and their ears, and over their eyes is a covering and for them is a great punishment”— “same” means ear as part of the body that can be understood based on the text that is also referring to ear and eye. Another example is the word “bless” which is specifically used in religious texts when they are referring to kindness and benediction. Another example is the word “except” for which the translators use the word “save” that is a bit archaic.

Linguistic and non-linguistic structure can also affect the translation. Linguistic structure refers to the context around a word and non-linguistic structure refers to anything other than words that affects the meaning of a sentence. One example of a linguistic structure which affects the translation is the antonyms which can be found in such verses as verses 31 and 32 of Chapter 75, Qiyamah, in which Allah says: “For he neither accepted the truth, nor offered Prayers; but he rejected the truth and turned his back.” In this verse, the words "sedgh" and "Kezb", which are antonyms in Arabic, and similarly the words "Sala" and "tawala" constitute the meaning of the sentence.

3.4. Phonetic Effects

Phonetic effects should also be paid attention to while translating the Quran. The word "sirat" for instance, in the phrase “the way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings” was in fact "sirat" with "sin" which comes from "sirt" which means “embracing”. But based on sound replication the sounds of a word are changed to make pronunciation easier. The word appears with the spelling of "sirat"— that is to say, the phonetic changes have affected the spelling of the word, and this may mislead the translator.

With regard to the phonetic effect of the words, one can point to the effect of emphasize on words. In the eighth verse of Al-A'raf (وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ) if the emphasis is on word الوزن (the weighing) the meaning of the sentence in Arabic will be: “the weighing on that day will be definite and true” but if the emphasis is on الحق the meaning of the sentence is: “the deed will be weighed by Allah and it should be done” (Jawāhirī 2008).

3.5. Words: The Relation between Part and Whole

Some words are subcategories of other words, that is, the meaning of a word is included in another word. In other words, one word is more general and contains some other words in itself as well. For instance, the difference between the two words "sabil" and "serat" (way) is that "serat" contains the meaning of "sabil" as well; in fact, the word "serat" is more general and comprehensive. Another example is the word "Alrahman", which shows Allah's mercy which is open to all creatures, while the word "alrahim" refers to a special mercy which is open only to Allah's special believers (Makarem Shirazi 2006).

3.6. *Special Expressions*

Special expressions include some words or phrases that have no equivalents in the target language. One example is the word Allah, which has no equivalent in any language. We need to use some other words along with the translation of the word Allah in order to convey the special characteristics of Allah. Allah is a word which is more general and comprehensive than the word God. In contrast to God, it does not have any physicality. In Christianity, for instance, the concrete form of God is God the father, God the son, and the Holy Spirit, but in Islam there is no concrete form for God. In fact, Allah is a God on whom one can depend and whom one can ask for help. In contrast to other gods, He does not need to prove His existence through miracles. One cannot attribute human features to Him. It is because of these differences between the word God and Allah that the best equivalent is Allah itself. In The Quran, Chapter 27, Al-Naml, verse 9: “O Moses verily I am Allah, the Mighty, the Wise” and also Chapter Ta ha, verse 14: “Verily I am Allah; there is no God beside Me. So serve Me, and observe Prayer for my remembrance.” Allah refers to the name Allah which He has chosen for Himself and which refers to His oneness, which one should pay attention to in translation.

3.7. *History of Words*

An example of changes in the use of words is the difference between Old English and modern English. In Old English, words like “thy, thou, and thee” were used a lot, but nowadays there is no equivalent for these words in modern English and they are referred to as obsolete words. Of course, sometimes the translators use such words in translating ancient texts in order to show archaism of these texts. Therefore, there is no wonder why they use words like “Thee” in translating the word “Anta”. Another example is the word “succor” which is used in translating the word “nastain”. The word “succor” was used in old English as “refreshment” but now it means “give someone aid”. Another example is “unto” which in old English meant “to, until” but in modern English it is not used very much or at least does not have much use. Another example is the word “bestow” which in old English meant “putting a thing in a place” (like modern “stow”) but now in modern English it means “to give to a person”. The word “hast” is also old form of “have” or “has” which is not very much used in modern English. But, Arberry (1955), Shakir (1990), Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1937), Pickthall (1930), Sher Ali (2004) have used the word “hast” in translating the word “have”, in “anamta aleihem” meaning “to whom thou hast bestowed thy blessing”, which is used in present perfect tense in English, but at the same time also reminds us of the antiquity of the Quran.

Another example is the words “sayare” and “maeda” which in modern Arabic are used to convey the meanings “driving” and “eating”, respectively; in Quranic translations one cannot use their modern meanings (Alavi Nejad 2000).

In fact, changes in the meanings of words are one of the factors the translator should consider in both the target and the source texts. Consider, for example, verse 38 of Chapter Al-Isra', in which the word "makruh" has been used to refer to "a deed which goes against Allah's orders", like murder or adultery, rather than in its modern meaning of "a deed which it is better not to do" (a much milder degree of disapproval). The translator should be careful to use words that convey the hideousness of such deeds.

4. Style

The translator should consider style—, which includes aesthetic, rhetorical, and lexical aspects of words— as an important factor in translating the Quran.

4.1. Aesthetic and Rhetorical Aspects

As Maytham-ibn-Ali-ibn-Maytham Bahrani (2012) quotes, Ali ibn Abi Talib in *Nahj al-Balaghah* (vol 3 p. 481) quotes says: "the repetition of the Quran never tires anyone"; this is what Imam Ali says about the rhetorical effect of repetition within the Quran. One example of such repetition is that of the phrase "the most compassionate, the most merciful", which occurs in "In the Name of God, the most compassionate, the most merciful" at the beginning of the first Chapter, Al-Fatiha, and is also repeated after "Lord of all the worlds". The reason for the repetition of the phrase here is to emphasize the fact that at the same time that Allah is powerful, he is also compassionate and merciful. As a matter of fact, such repetition makes the concept more decisive and is not tiring at all.

In the Quran in verse 23 of the second Chapter, Al-Baqarah, Allah also says: "And if you are in doubt as to what We have sent down to Our servant, then produce a Chapter like it, and call upon your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful." The verse reflects eloquence and the rhetoric used in the Quran which shows that the best and the most magnificent words are selected in its composition, which nobody can bring something like it.

Using "iyyaka naabod" instead of "naabodok" shows the aesthetic beauty of the Quran. Here, the object of the sentence comes before the verb and not after it, as in "naabodok". This conveys the meaning that the act of worship is only worship of Allah; otherwise it would not convey such meaning. Here the translator must use words that show that we worship only Allah and nobody else. Pickthall, for instance, has used the word "alone" and Arberry has used the word "only" in his translation.

Another example which can be referred to in order to show the aesthetic beauty of the Quran is the use of similes and metaphors. For instance, using the verse "seratalmostaghim" or "the right way" is an example of a simile in the Arabic language, since there is no physical and concrete and tangible way to the Heaven, but rather it is referring to an abstract spiritual way. Another example is the verse 65 of Chapter Al-Saffat, where the fruit of the tree "Zughum" is likened to "the heads of serpents", which is a literary device used to increase the beauty of the Quran's

verses. The verse reads as follows: "The fruit thereof is as though it were the heads of serpents."

Another literary device used in the Quran is exaggeration. For instance, in the verse: "...nor will they enter Heaven until a camel goes through the eye of a needle" (verse 40, Al-A'raf) Allah has used exaggeration in order to show the impossibility of some people entering Heaven (Zarkob and Amini 2014).

4.2. The Extent of the Formality of the Text

Some words and structures make speech more formal. For instance, when one uses "whereof" instead of "of what" or "of which" it shows the formality of the speech. Another example is using the preposition "upon" which is, in comparison to "on", more formal.

4.3. Lexical Aspects

Concerning lexical aspects of Arabic language, the Quran follows the same phonetic sounds as exist in Arabic literature (Zarkashi 1997). In fact, in the Quran words have been used which are harmonious and bring about a pleasant voice, which itself adds to rhetorical brilliance of the Quran and is a miraculous aspect of it. Tehrani (1995) maintains that, for instance, in the Chapter Al-Najm words are chosen to bring some kind of rhythm to the verse:

"By the stemless plant when it falls, your companion has neither erred nor has he gone astray, nor does he speak out of his own desire; it is nothing but pure revelation that has been revealed by God. The Lord of mighty powers has taught him, the One Possessor of strength. So He manifested His ascendance over everything, and he revealed His Word when he was on the uppermost horizon, then he drew nearer to God; then he came down to mankind, so that he became, as it were, one chord to two bows or closer still. Then, He revealed to His servant that which He revealed."

One notices that all of the verses end with an "a" sound, which brings about a beautiful rhythm and makes the sound of the Quran pleasant for its readers and audience. Another example of such an effect is in the verses of Chapter Maryam, most of which end with an "a" sound

...this is an account of the mercy of thy Lord shown to His servant, Zakariah. When he called upon his Lord, a secret calling, he said, 'My Lord, the bones have indeed waxed feeble in me, and the head glistens with hoariness, but never, my Lord, have I been unblessed in my prayer to Thee.

5. The Effect of Different Readings

What is meant by "reading" is "reading aloud and listening to" the Quran in order to understand it, not for the beauty of the voice of the reciter (Alavi Nejad 2000). Fourteen different kinds of readings are offered for the Quran; they were done by seven readers of the Quran, each of whom had two narrators. The first reader was Aasem-ibn-bahdaleh whose first narrator was Hefs-ibn-Soleyman-ibn Al-Moghayareh and whose second narrator was Abobakr-ibn-Ayash. The second reader was Hamzeh-ibn-Habib-ibn Amareh whose narrators were Abo Muhammad

khalf-ibn-Hesham and Abo Isa Khaled-ibn-Khaled Soof, respectively. The third reader was AbolHassan Ali-ibn-Hamzeh known as Kasae, whose narrators were, respectively, Abo Omar Hefz-ibn-Omar (known as Al-Doori) and AbolHares Isa-ibn-Verdan Almadani, known as AbolHares. The fourth reader was Abo-Emran Abd-Allah ibn-Amer, whose narrators were, respectively, Abdo-Allah ibn Ahmad (known as Ibn Zekvaan) and Hesham ibn-Ammar Al-shami (known as Hesham). The fifth reader was Nafe ibn-Abdo-Al-Rahman and his narrators were Isa-ibn-Mina Al-madani, known as Ghaloon, and Abo-Saeed Osman ibn-Saeed Al-Mesri, known as Versh. The sixth reader was Abdo-Allah-ibn-Kathir ibn-Almotaleb Al-makki, whose narrators were, respectively, Abo-Al-Hassan Ahmad-ibn-Abdo-Allah, known as Al-Bazzi, and Abo-Amr Muhammad-ibn-Al-Rahman ibn-Muhammad, known as Ghanbal. And finally the seventh reader was Abo Amr-ibn-Al-Ala, whose narrators were Abo Amr Hafs ibn-Amr, known as Aldoori, and Abo-Shoayb Saleh ibn-Ziad, known as Soosi, respectively (Pourfarzeb 1989). Hafiz also points to this tradition or narration of the Quran in the line:

“To thy complaint, love reacheth, if like Hafez

Thou recite the Quran with the fourteen traditions.” (Bell 1928).

An example of using these variant readings to inform translation arises in connection with two readings of the fourth verse of the first chapter of The Quran, Al-Fatiha, in which both the word “malik” and the word “maalek” are used. The word “maalek” refers to ownership and possession. When somebody is the owner of something, he both possesses it and reigns over it. Therefore, the word “maalek” includes the meaning of “malik” in itself as well. But this is not the case with the word “malik” since it means reigning over something. One can reign over something but not own it; that is, the word “malik” sometimes conveys the meaning of ownership and sometimes does not. Therefore, when one considers the reading semantically, the word “maalek” is a better and more appropriate word. Of course, one should pay attention to the fact that among the fourteen famous readings of the Quran, Aasem and Kasae both used the word “maalek”, while all the other readers, among them Hamzeh, Ibn-Amer, Nafe, Ibn-Kathir, Abo-Amr, used the word “malik”. But if we consider the reading grammatically and syntactically, the word “malik” is a more appropriate translation of the word, since in Arabic the word that is related to the concept of time is “malik” not “maalek” in “malik al asr” meaning the owner of time. Since “malik yowm al din”, meaning the Owner of the Day of Judgment, refers to the concept of time, it goes more with the Arabic syntax to consider the reading of “malik yowm al din” in translation.

Among the translations analyzed here, only Pickthall (1930) appears to have considered “maalek/malik yowm al din” in translating the line: the translation he offers for the word is “owner”. Meanwhile, the other six translators have used the word “master”, which is equivalent to the word “malik”. Another example is verse 4 of Chapter Al-Fil, in which two readings of one word are present: “striking them

against stones of clay.” If the word is read as "yarmihim" it means that Allah is the subject of the sentence, based on Arabic syntax and so Allah is striking them with stones of clay. If instead the word is "tarmihim" in Arabic, the subject of the verb must be feminine and the meaning of the sentence changes to “the birds strike them with stones of clay”.

Among other examples of different readings of the Quran which affect the meaning and thus the translation of the words, one can refer to “lamastom, lāmastom”, and “alriah, alrih” (Suyuti 1990).

6. The Translator's Record

With regard to the translator's record, one can say that the religion and mother tongue of the translators greatly affects their translations. The translator tries to translate the verses based on their own worldview. Furthermore, the extent of the translator's familiarity with the target language, and the common aspects of the translator's mother tongue and the target language are very helpful in the process of translation.

Arberry was a British Orientalist who was Christian and had studied Arabic and Farsi and this had an extensive effect on his translations. For instance, in translating the word "Allah" Arberry has used the word “God” which is more in line with his own religion. Arberry has not paid much attention to the semantic difference of the two words, “Allah” and “God” and has translated the word to “God” for the Christian readers of the text.

You should pay attention to the fact that mastery of the Arabic language improves the translator's understanding of the meaning of the source text. However, one can be definitely sure about the accurate transfer of the meaning from source language to target language, only on the condition that the translator has a good mastery of the target language as well. Among the translations which were analyzed in the current study, Shakir was a native speaker of Arabic and this could affect his understanding of the Quran's verses. On the other hand, since he was not a native English speaker, this could also affect his ability in conveying the meanings (which he understood well in the Arabic text) to English. Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Muhammad Ali lived in India and were Indians. Yusuf Ali was Muslim; but Muhammad Ali was a follower of the Ahmadiyya sect. Sher Ali was Pakistani and a follower of the Ahmadiyya sect. All three of them may have faced problems transferring the concepts into English because their mother tongue was not English. Pickthall was Muslim and a native English speaker who may not have had any problem in translating the words into English, but may have had problems in understanding Arabic texts.

Among the effects of the translators' record and life, one can refer to the point that Yusuf Ali lived in the West for many years and was closely familiar with western culture and life, which affected his translation in such a way that in his translation of the Quran he used words that are more in accordance with

Christianity. For instance, in referring to the Prophet Mohammad he used the word “apostle” that was used in order to refer to Jesus’ twelve apostles. That is why Picktall has criticized Yusuf Ali for his use of such words in his translation of the Quran (Nassimi 2008).

His lack of mastery over the English language, according to Irving (1985) (quoted in Nassimi (2008)), made his translation full of redundancies. An example of wrong translation in Yusuf Ali’s translation of the Quran could be his translation of the second verse of the second Chapter, Al-Baqarah, “This is the book. In it is guidance sure without doubt to those who fear God,” in which he interpreted the reason for there being no doubt in the uniqueness of the Quran as its being a guidebook for the humans. While it is due to its being sent from Allah and most translators have also translated the verse with the second interpretation. (Nassimi 2008)

Among the translators of the Quran who were not Muslim, one can mention Muhammad Ali, who was a follower of the Ahmadiyya sect and whose religion has affected his translation. For instance, he has changed or has not translated well the verses which refer to Jesus or Muhammad as being Allah’s prophets. For instance, in verse 60 of Al-Baqarah, which refers to one of the miracles of Moses in which he struck the rock with his rod and there gushed forth from it twelve springs, the translator avoids translating the verse. In verse 102 of Al-Baqarah, he avoids translating Harut and Marut’s beings Angels of Allah. He also denies the fact that Jinn listen to the Quran (referred to in verse 1 of Chapter Jinni) and he also denies the killing of Abrae’h’s army by swarms of birds and does not mention it in his translation. Among other translators of the Quran who are not Muslim, one can also refer to Sher Ali who is a follower of the Ahmadiyya sect (Kidwai 1988)

According to Kidwai (1988), Arberry is another translator of the Quran who is not Muslim and has made inaccurate translations of some parts of the Quran. For instance, he translates Chapter Al-Enfal, verse 59 of the Quran thus: ‘And thou are not to suppose that they who disbelieve have outstripped Me; they cannot frustrate My will’. According to Kidwai, however, the correct translation of the verse should be: ‘Let not those who disbelieve deem that they have escaped Me’.

Another example is that in translating the phrase “the illiterate Prophet” Arberry has used the phrase “the ordinary prophet” and has emphasized the ordinary human character, rather than the illiteracy of the prophet.

7. *The Revelation of the Verses of the Quran*

The "circumstances of revelation" or "occasion of revelation" of the verses refers to the reason and the situation under which the verses were revealed to the prophet. Mohammad Bagher Mohaghegh (1985) in the Book Mohaghegh's Interpretation notes that if there was a reason behind the revelation of Chapter Al-Ikhlās, there should be an antecedent for the pronoun “He” (in the verse: “Say He is the One” which, he believes, refers to Allah.)

Another example is Al-Baqarah, verse 41:

And believe in what I have sent down which fulfills that which is with you, and be not the first to believe therein, and barter not My Signs for a paltry price, and take protection in Me alone.

While translating this verse, one should pay attention to the fact that the people to whom this verse is addressed are the unbelievers who derided the Quran because there are some references to bugs and spiders in it. Answering these unbelievers, Allah revealed these verses to Prophet Muhammad (Makarem Shirazi 2006).

Another example with regard to revelation is the verse 104 for Al-Baqarah, in which Allah says: "O ye who believe! Say not 'Ra'ina' but say, 'Unzurna' and hearken and for the disbelievers is a painful punishment." In translating this verse, one should be aware of the circumstances of its revelation. Allah has forbidden the use of the word "Rai'na" and the reason is that this word has two meanings, the second of which was used by the Jews to scold the Muslims, while its first meaning refers to "giving time". The Muslims used the word in its first meaning in order to ask the Prophet to introduce his ideas more slowly so that they would have more time to comprehend those ideas. This is while the word could also mean "scold us". Although the first meaning of the word is "giving time", Allah forbids Muslims from using the word and asks them to use the word "Unzurna", which has only one meaning which is "giving time" and by which the Jews could not scold Muslims anymore (Makarem Shirazi 2009).

Another example of the circumstances of revelation being relevant to the translation of the Quran is verse 158 of Al-Baqarah, which says:

Surely, Al-Safa and Al-Marwah are among the Signs of Allah. It is, therefore, no sin for him who is on pilgrimage to the House, or performs 'Umrah, to go round the two. And whoso does good beyond what is obligatory, surely then, Allah is appreciating, All-Knowing.

The reader who reads this verse may ask him/herself, "Why it is said in this verse that 'It is, therefore, no sin for him who is on pilgrimage to the House, or performs 'Umrah, to go round the two'?" One should pay attention to the cause of revelation of this verse. According to Ibn Kathir Damascus this verse was revealed to the prophet because some Muslims thought that going round Al-Safa and Al-Marwah was a sin, as between the two places there were two idols named "As'af", on Al-Safa, and "Naeleh," in Al-Marwah. Since the act of worship in these two places was one of the things done before Islam, the Muslims considered the act of worship there to be sinful. Then this verse was revealed to the prophet, countering this belief and allowing the Muslims to worship Allah between these two places (Ibn Kathir Damascus 1998).

Conclusion

The first question of the current research was whether or not one could identify a framework with special factors for translating the Quran. The answer to the question

is that, through the discursive, semantic and syntactic analysis referred to above, one can. The second question was, "If the answer to the first question is yes, what is that model and what criteria does it have?" The answer is that one can consider eight factors significant in the translation of the Quran, all of which may have subcategories, and that some of these factors may overlap. These factors are: punctuation, interpretability, and structural aspects of language; loyalty to the meaning of the source text; style and the effect of different readings of the Quran; and the translators' record, the revelation and its subcategories. According to linguistic analysis of the source and target languages, the present study concludes that, although the translation of the Quran is a difficult and complex task, the difficulties can be alleviated to some extent through linguistic analysis of both the source and target languages. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned points, one can identify different factors that are influential for translators in translating the Quran and that can also be very effective for scholars in the field of translation studies to evaluate the translations of the Quran.

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ارائه چارچوبی برای تحلیل و ارزیابی ترجمه‌های قرآن

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هدف از انجام این مطالعه ارائه چارچوبی مفهومی و جامع برای تحلیل و ارزیابی ترجمه‌های قرآن بود. هفت ترجمه عربی به انگلیسی قرآن به شیوه تحلیلی - توصیفی با در نظر گرفتن روابط نحوی، معنایی، گفتمانی تجزیه و تحلیل شدند. نتایج نشان داد که در ترجمه و ارزیابی ترجمه‌های قرآن، مترجمان و ارزیابان عناصر و مؤلفه‌هایی را باید در نظر بگیرند. این عناصر و مؤلفه‌ها شامل علائم سجاوندی، تاویل پذیری، جنبه‌های ساختاری زبان، وفاداری به معنای متن مبدأ، سبک و تأثیر قرائت‌های مختلف قرآن، پیشینه مترجمان و شأن نزول آیات و زیر مجموعه‌هایشان است. نتایج همچنین نشان داد که ترجمه قرآن با در نظر گرفتن این مؤلفه‌ها توسط مترجم امکان‌پذیر و پذیرفته است.

واژه‌های کلیدی: مدل مفهومی، ترجمه‌پذیری، ترجمه، قرآن، ارزیابی.

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