



## Metaphor Translation between Literal and Interpretive Rendering: A Comparative Analytical Study

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### ترجمة الاستعارة بين النقل الحرفي والنقل التأويلي: دراسة تحليلية مقارنة

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#### Abstract

This study concerns the translation of metaphors in the Holy Quran. It evaluates the translation of metaphor in seven English versions of the Quran. The different kinds of metaphors in both Arabic and English as well as the methods of translating them are explored. Metaphors in the Holy Quran have been analyzed according to the theoretical stipulations proposed by Arab rhetoricians, and in this thesis two reputable interpretations (tafsirs) of the Quran are employed in the analysis) Tafsir al-Jalayn and (Tanwir al Miqbas min Tafsir Ibn Abbas) (Utilizing Newmark's (1988) metaphor translation strategies, seven different English translations of metaphors with different metaphorical images are evaluated to determine their success in managing metaphors in the Quran. By applying the third strategy, the study discovered that it could be the closest one to the sacred text. Ultimately, this research confirms that no single strategy is universally better. Rather, effective metaphor translation needs a context-dependent, reader-conscious, and theologically informed approach. It is suggested that future translations of the Qur'an, particularly those intended for educational or devotional uses, embrace a more interdisciplinary methodology, one that integrates linguistics, theology, and literary analysis. This approach would help bridge the divide between the sacred source and the varied global audience of the Qur'an.

**Keywords:** Metaphor, Quranic Rhetoric, Translation, Simile, Translation strategies.

#### المخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة ترجمة الاستعارات في القرآن الكريم، حيث تقيّم ترجمة الاستعارة في سبع ترجمات إنجليزية للقرآن. وقد تم مناقشة الأنواع المختلفة من الاستعارات في كل من العربية والإنجليزية، بالإضافة إلى استراتيجيات ترجمتها. وقد تم تحليل الاستعارات في القرآن الكريم وفقاً للأسس النظرية التي وضعها البلاغيون العرب، كما تم الاعتماد على تفسيرين معتمدين في التحليل، هما: تفسير الجلالين وتنوير المقياس من تفسير ابن عباس. وبالاستناد إلى استراتيجيات ترجمة الاستعارة التي قدمها نيومارك (1988)، تم تقييم سبع ترجمات إنجليزية مختلفة للاستعارات ذات الصور المجازية المتعددة، من أجل التحقق من مدى نجاحها في التعامل مع الاستعارات في النص القرآني. وتوصلت الدراسة من خلال تطبيق الاستراتيجية الثالثة إلى أنها قد تكون الأقرب في الحفاظ على قدسية النص. وتؤكد هذه الدراسة في نهايتها أنه لا توجد استراتيجية واحدة يمكن اعتبارها الأفضل بشكل مطلق، بل إن ترجمة الاستعارة بفعالية تتطلب مقاربة حساسة للسياق، تراعي القارئ، ومبنية على أسس لاهوتية. ويوصى بأن تتبنى ترجمات القرآن المستقبلية، لا سيما تلك المخصصة للأغراض التعليمية أو التعبدية، منهجاً متعدد التخصصات يدمج بين علم اللغة، وعلم العقيدة، والتحليل الأدبي. إذ من شأن هذا النهج أن يساهم في سد الفجوة بين النص المقدس وقراء القرآن الكريم من مختلف أنحاء العالم.

## Introduction

Metaphor translation is frequently perceived as one of the broad issues of “untranslatability.” This is because metaphors are usually linked with indirectness; hence, it's difficult to translate. It is also often influenced by culture. Thus, the translator has to carefully consider how to translate metaphors. This study analyzes metaphor translation in the Holy Quran using a framework proposed by Peter Newmark (1988). It's shown that seven procedures are used to translate the metaphors: replicating the same image in the TL, substituting the SL image with a common TL image, rendering a metaphor by simile, transforming the metaphor into sense, and deleting the metaphor. The possible causes to employ these specific procedures are that the SL images are universal, the SL images have wide meant or quality, the SL images are unclear, the SL images are offensive, and the SL images are religious terms. This study uses corpus-based analysis and computer technology that could be helpful to identify easily the relative verses containing metaphors with their translations.

## Objectives of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine how seven English translators (Sahih International, Pickthall, Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Sarwar, Muhsin Khan, and Arberry) have rendered these metaphors into English.
- To analyze the translation strategies employed by each translator according to Peter Newmark's (1988) model for metaphor translation.
- To evaluate the frequency and consistency of each translator's use of Newmark's strategies across different types of Quranic metaphors.
- To assess the effectiveness and faithfulness of each translation in conveying the intended meaning, imagery, and rhetorical impact of the original Arabic metaphors.
- To investigate the influence of the translators' backgrounds (e.g., linguistic, cultural, or ideological) on their translation choices regarding metaphor.
- To contribute to the field of Quranic translation studies by providing a corpus-based comparative analysis that may inform future translation efforts and pedagogical practices.

## Importance of study

This study provides an objective and scientific analysis of the translation of metaphors in the Holy Quran. Also, this study examines seven translations on the website in question to clarify the extent to which the various translators were aware of metaphors as a linguistic phenomenon. This may help professionals, translators and scholars who are interested in Quranic translation. Furthermore, this research contributes to Muslims' task to convey the message of the Quran to non-Arabic speakers as clearly as possible.

## Limitation of the Study

The researcher selects Quranic Corpus as a tool for analyzing a sample of metaphors in the Holy Quran. Furthermore, this study is restricted to the seven translations offered at website in question. They are of these translators according to the arrangement of the website: Sahih International 1997, Picthall 1930, Yusuf Ali 1934, Shakir1999, Muhammed Sarwar 1981, Muhsin Khan1996 and Arberry 1955. Generally, these translations were chosen because:

- These English translations are widely recognized and respected by both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences, and they are considered complete scholarly works.
- The chosen translations are commonly used by both academic and general readers, and they are frequently found in mosques and university libraries.
- The translators of these versions come from diverse linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds.
- The selected metaphorical verses are drawn from various chapters of the Qur'an, allowing for a broad and comprehensive analysis of metaphor usage across different contexts.

## Justification of the study

Numerous studies in the field of translation have examined and evaluated various works from multiple perspectives. However, despite the significant development in translation studies, research specifically addressing the translation of the Qur'an remains relatively limited and often lacks depth. In the case of Qur'anic translation, most existing studies tend to focus on the general characteristics of the text, while only a few have explored the specific challenges involved in translating Qur'anic metaphors. This study seeks to fill that gap by comparing seven English translations of the Qur'an, allowing for a broader examination of translation strategies and approaches. Nevertheless, the analysis will primarily rely on Peter Newmark's (1988) framework for translating metaphors.

## Research Questions

Research questions are interrogative statements or questions which a researcher seeks to answer. This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- How have the seven English translators (Sahih International, Pickthall, Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Sarwar, Muhsin Khan, and Arberry) rendered these Quranic metaphors in their translations?
- Which of Newmark's (1988) metaphor translation strategies have been employed in each translation, and how frequently is each strategy used?
- To what extent do the translators succeed in conveying the intended meaning, stylistic effect, and rhetorical force of the original metaphors?
- According to Newmark's third strategy, to what extent does this strategy may solve this problem?

## Review of Literature:

- Dwl Nuril Handayani, (2008)., The Metaphors in Surah Al-Baqura., State Islamic University. Malang This study aims to answer these questions: What are the verses that include metaphors in Surah Al-Baqura? What are the types of metaphors? What are the meanings and interpretations of those metaphors? The study concludes that there are three types of metaphors in Surah Al-Baqura in twenty-one verses. It is written in Arabic and studies metaphors monolingually.
- In his study, Hani Elimam (2016) investigates the translation of metaphors in the Holy Qur'an by analyzing three English versions: Al-Hilali & Khan (2000), A. Ali (2001), and Yusuf Ali (2004). Using Newmark's (1988) metaphor translation strategies as the analytical framework, Elimam concludes that the faithful translation strategy, Newmark's third proposed approach, is the most suitable for conveying Quranic metaphors in English. His methodology, based on detailed comparative analysis, serves as a foundational reference for this study, which expands the scope by examining seven translations rather than three.
- Similarly, Sumaya Ali Najjar (2012) explores the complexities involved in translating Quranic metaphors by focusing on a selected set of metaphors from three prominent English translations of the Qur'an. Her research also investigates how native English speakers interpret these metaphors, uncovering significant issues in understanding due to mistranslation or conceptual misalignment. Najjar's findings emphasize that semantic misunderstanding and loss of metaphorical meaning are frequent, often stemming from cultural and linguistic gaps. This study builds on her work by not only analyzing more translations but also by offering deeper insight into the strategies employed and their impact on meaning.

## The Method of the Study

The study adopts Peter Newmark's translation theory (1988). It is a key figure in translation studies, especially known for his practical approach that bridges linguistic precision and communicative effectiveness. His theory is mainly presented in his influential book: A Textbook of Translation. Newmark suggests seven strategies for translating metaphors will be mentioned later in the methodology.

## Significance of Newmark's Theory:

It balances between faithfulness to the source and clarity for the target audience. Also, it combines linguistic analysis with practical application. It is still widely used in the study of Qur'anic translation, literary texts, and metaphor research. This theory offers flexible strategies that allow translators to adapt to different text types and cultural challenges.

## Methodology

This study adopts an analytical-descriptive approach, utilizing the Quranic Arabic Corpus as a primary tool to facilitate detailed comparison among seven English translations of selected Qur'anic verses. The core focus of the study is the analysis and application of Peter Newmark's third metaphor translation strategy: translating a metaphor by simile while retaining the image. This strategy is particularly relevant when a direct metaphor is too obscure, culturally specific, or challenging for the target audience to grasp. By converting the metaphor into a simile, the translator maintains the rhetorical image while making it more comprehensible and pedagogically effective. As Newmark (1988, p. 91) explains:

*"This procedure is particularly useful for pedagogic and informative texts, or where the metaphor is difficult to understand."*

Simile, as a rhetorical device, is among the most powerful and universal figures of speech, found across languages and literary traditions. It involves an explicit comparison between two different things, typically using connectors such as "like" or "as." In Arabic rhetoric (al-balāghah), simile (al-tashbīh) holds a central place, especially in classical Arabic prose, poetry, and the Qur'an. It is commonly expressed through particles such as "ka-" (like) or "mithl" (similar to).

According to al-Jurjānī in *Asrār al-Balāghah* (p. 88):

*“Simile is a statement that two different things are alike in a certain respect, expressed with a comparative particle.”*

Traditional Arabic rhetoric divides simile into four main elements:

Al-Mushabbah (the compared)

Al-Mushabbah bihi (the compared-to)

Adāt al-tashbīh (the particle of comparison)

Wajh al-shabah (the common attribute)

### **Analytical Steps of the Methodology:**

#### **Contextual Tafsir Analysis**

Each verse is analyzed based on classical Arabic tafsir (exegesis), with particular focus on the interpretation of the metaphor within its context and *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* (occasions of revelation).

Reference Tafsir Sources

The primary tafsir sources are:

a. *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, with its English translation by Feras Hamza (2007).

b. *Tanwīr al-Miqbās min Tafsīr Ibn ‘Abbās* by al-Fayrūzābādī, with English translation by Mokrane Guezzou (2007).

Other tafsir works are consulted where needed to ensure accuracy and depth.

#### **Metaphor Classification**

The metaphorical expressions in each verse are classified according to Arabic rhetorical categories (e.g., *isti‘ārah*, *tashbīh*).

#### **Metaphor Interpretation and Analysis**

Each metaphor is explained and analyzed in relation to its linguistic, cultural, and theological dimensions.

#### **Identification of Translation Strategies**

Each of the seven translations is examined to identify which of Newmark’s metaphor translation strategies has been used. These are:

- Rendering the metaphor exactly as it appears in the source language, preserving the original image without modification.
- Substituting the original metaphorical image with a more familiar or conventional image from the target language that conveys a similar meaning.
- Transforming the metaphor into a simile, while keeping the original image intact in the translation.
- Translating the metaphor or simile as a simile accompanied by an explanatory sense, or in some cases, rendering a metaphor along with its underlying meaning.
- Replacing the metaphor with a non-figurative expression, conveying only the intended meaning without the figurative imagery.
- Reproducing the original metaphor along with its intended meaning, thus combining both image and explanation in the translation.
- Removing the metaphor entirely if it is deemed repetitive, unnecessary, or too difficult to render accurately in the target language.

#### **Comparative Evaluation**

The seven translations are compared to determine which versions best preserve the original meaning and impact of the Qur’anic metaphor.

#### **Application of Newmark’s Third Strategy**

The third strategy (metaphor → simile) is applied by the researcher to translate the metaphors in selected verses. The purpose is to evaluate whether this strategy enhances clarity and comprehension for modern English-speaking readers.

## Data Analysis

The first verse:

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَاسْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا

**Sahih International:** He said, "My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white, and never have I been in my supplication to You, my Lord, unhappy.

**Pickthall:** Saying: My Lord! Lo! the bones of me wax feeble and my head is shining with grey hair, and I have never been unblest in prayer to Thee, my Lord.

**Yusuf Ali:** Praying: "O my Lord! infirm indeed are my bones, and the hair of my head doth glisten with grey: but never am I unblest, O my Lord, in my prayer to Thee!

**Shakir:** He said: My Lord! surely my bones are weakened and my head flares with hoariness, and, my Lord! I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee:

**Muhammad Sarwar:** and said, "My Lord, my bones have become feeble and my hair has turned white with age. Yet I have never been deprived in receiving from You the answer to my prayers.

**Mohsin Khan:** Saying: "My Lord! Indeed my bones have grown feeble, and grey hair has spread on my head, And I have never been unblest in my invocation to You, O my Lord!

**Arberry:** saying, 'O my Lord, behold the bones within me are feeble and my head is all aflame with hoariness. And in calling on Thee, my Lord, I have never been hitherto unprosperous.

### Tafsir al-Jalayn

He said "My Lord truly the bones all the bones within me have become feeble weak and my head is alight with grey hair shayban" a specification derived from the subject of the verb in other words hoariness has spread throughout his hairs just as a spark of fire spreads through firewood and I wish to supplicate to you and I have never been in my supplications to You my Lord unsuccessful that is I have never been disappointed in the past so do not disappoint me in what follows (Hamza, 2007, p. 327).

#### Tanwir al Miqbas min Tafsir Ibn Abbas

(Saying: My Lord!) O my Lord! (Lo! the bones of me wax feeble) my body has become weak (and my head is shining with grey hair, and I have never been unblest in prayer to You, my Lord) he said: my prayers were never rejected by You, O my Lord (Guezzou, 2007, p. 326).

We find here that the first interpretation mentions the metaphorical image of the verse and its elements the tenor which is the hoariness and the vehicle which is the fire and the ground which is the glistening and seed of spreading. Whereas the second tafsir neglect it at all.

### Context and Metaphor

This verse refers to Prophet Zakariyya as he earnestly prayed to Allah Almighty to bless him with offspring, despite his old age and lack of children. In his supplication, he used a metaphorical expression to politely and humbly convey the effects of aging and to appeal for divine mercy.

### Type of Metaphor

Implicit metaphor is used in the verse: « my head is white and hoary », where the verb (flare up) is used to refer to the fire, but the fire is not mentioned here. The tenor here is the "hoary" and the vehicle is the "fire" which is referred to through the verb "اشتعل", and the ground is "the sparking and flaming and the speed of spreading". This metaphor makes the image more effective and active.

### Commentary

-International translate it to head saying that it filled with white, he does not use hair nor hoary. His translation does not carry any metaphorical figure. (Fifth strategy)

-Bicthall gives the meaning of head by using "hair", and the verb "shining" to convey the meaning of sparking. (Fifth strategy)

-Yusuf Ali mentions the intended meaning of head which is "hair", also he takes into consideration the metaphorical image of shining by using the verb "glisten" which clarifies the metaphorical aspect of the image. (Fifth strategy)

-Shakir convert the metaphorical image in TL by using "head" and the verb "flare" which means in Cambridge dictionary "to burn brightly either for a short time or not regularly", where here the verb "flare" to some extent carries the same metaphorical features of "اشتعل" in SL; the speed of spreading. (First strategy)

-Sarwar interprets the meaning of head by using hair and how it becomes white instead of using hoariness. He introduces the spreading aspect and neglect sparking. (Fifth strategy)

-Khan uses the verb "spread" one of the aspects of metaphor and neglect the other side which is "lightening" for converting the metaphor into a sense. (Fifth strategy)



Arbery seems with Sarwar the only translators who get the metaphorical image in TL, since he uses "head" and the adjective "aflame" to convey one of the features "brightness" with "speed", and he uses the determiner "all" to describe the meaning of spreading. (First strategy) Assessment This verse contains a vivid metaphor, as the Arabic word "وَاشْتَعَلَ", literally translated as "flared up", does not merely indicate spreading, but rather likens the spread of grey hair to the way fire rapidly consumes wood. Among the translators analyzed, it appears that **Sarwar** was the only one who accurately conveyed the metaphor's intended imagery. The other translators either highlighted the rapid appearance of grey hair or emphasized its brightness, but failed to capture both aspects simultaneously. In doing so, they rendered the metaphor into plain meaning and lost the richness of the original image. A more effective rendering would have involved a literal translation of the metaphor while also incorporating the simile, such as:

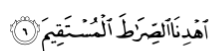
**"And my hair is shining with hoariness like flames."**

This translation successfully merges **two strategies**, literal metaphor reproduction and metaphor-to-simile conversion, thereby preserving the original rhetorical effect.

Such an approach can be achieved through a careful analysis of the metaphor's components, **tenor, vehicle, and ground**, rather than simplifying the metaphor by identifying missing elements and rephrasing it as a simile. This aligns with **Newmark's third strategy**, as illustrated in the translation: **"My hair has become white, like a fire spreading across my head."**

**The second Verse:**

Chapter (1) sūrat l-fātiḥah (The Opening)



**Sahih International:** Guide us to the straight path -

**Pickthall:** Show us the straight path,

**Yusuf Ali:** Show us the straight way,

**Shakir:** Keep us on the right path.

**Muhammad Sarwar:** (Lord), guide us to the right path,

**Mohsin Khan:** Guide us to the Straight Way

**Arberry:** Guide us in the straight path,

### Tafsir al-Jalayan

Guide us to the straight path that is 'show us the way to it' (Hamza, 2007, p.1)

*Tanwir al Miqbas min Tafsir Ibn Abbas*

(Guide us to the straight path) guide us to the established religion that you are pleased with, i.e., Islam. It is also said that this means: make us firm in holding fast to it. It is also said that the straight path refers to Allah book, and guidance to this means guidance to that which it prescribes as lawful or unlawful and to the exposition of its content (Guezou, 2007, p. 2). According to Ibn Abbas mentions the elements of metaphor; tenor which is the Allah book, the vehicle which is the straight path and the ground which is "straightness". Where Tafsir al- Jalayan neglects the metaphor of the verse.

### Context and Metaphor

According to Al-Wahidi (2008) in *Asbab al-Nuzul*, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to hear a voice calling out to him, saying "O Muhammad!" whenever he went out. Upon hearing this mysterious call, he would quickly retreat in fear. Waraqah ibn Nawfal then advised him not to flee, but instead to remain where he was and listen to the message being conveyed. On the next occasion, when the Prophet heard the voice again, calling "O Muhammad!", he responded, saying, "Here I am, I hear and obey your call." The voice then instructed him to declare: "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

Then he said; Say (1) (All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists). (2) The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. (3) The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e., the Day of Resurrection). (4) You (Alone) we worship, and you (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything). (5) Guide us to the straightway. (6) The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray. (7). So, the straightway here is a metaphor which is borrowed for religion or guidance (p. 1).

### Type of Metaphor

The metaphor is implicit metaphor here in the verse: Guide us to the "straight way, because the borrowed from is omitted "straight path" to mention on of its meaning companies. The Arabic expression "الصراط المستقيم" in English literally means the "Straight way. The tenor of this metaphor is "الصراط المستقيم"

and the vehicle is 'the tangible straight path', the ground is "guidance true and straightness". It is used metaphorically to represent guidance and true religion, as both share the same ultimate purpose, leading individuals to Paradise.

### Commentry

- International translates it literally. (First strategy)
- Picthall uses the verb "show" to give the meaning of "guide", he introduces the metaphor in a sense. (fifth strategy)
- Yusuf uses the same verb "show" which clarifies the meaning of guide, and uses the noun "way" instead of "path". If we turn to the differences between "path" and "way", we will find that path is more precise than way, because way describes more than one connected road, but we use "path" to describe just one singular road. (fifth strategy)
- Shakir tries to give a sense of metaphor through using the verb "keep". (fifth strategy)
- Sarwar deals with metaphor like Intrnational by using "guide" which more accurate than keep. (First strategy)
- Khan uses the same strategy and the same words. (First metaphor).
- Arbery follows the same strategy, but he uses different preposition which is "in" instead of "on". Often, we use "on" with roads and ways, the translator chooses this preposition may be to attract us to a specific path. (First strategy)

### Assessment

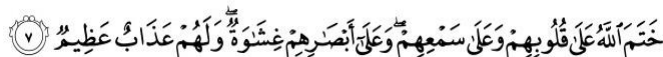
It is evident that none of the translators fully captured all the possible meanings of the verse or its metaphor. This limitation stems from their reliance on their own interpretations of the tafsir, such as Al-Jalalayn or others. A more effective translation of this verse would encompass all potential meanings, including concepts like "religion" or "the straight path leading to paradise or hell."

Applying Newmark's third strategy:

'Guide us like travellers along the straightway'

### The Third Verse:

#### Chapter (2) sūrat l-baqarah (The Cow)



**Sahih International:** Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil. And for them is a great punishment.

**Pickthall:** Allah hath sealed their hearing and their hearts, and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be an awful doom.

**Yusuf Ali:** Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur).

**Shakir:** Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing and there is a covering over their eyes, and there is a great punishment for them.

**Muhammad Sarwar:** God has sealed their hearts and hearing and their vision is veiled; a great punishment awaits them.

**Mohsin Khan:** Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearings, (i.e. they are closed from accepting Allah's Guidance), and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be a great torment.

**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.

### Tafsir al-Jalayn

God has set a seal on their hearts impressing on them and making certain that no good enters them; and on their hearing in which He has deposited something so that they cannot profit from the truth they hear; and on their eyes is a covering that is a veil so that they do not see the truth; and for them there will be a mighty chastisement that is intense and everlasting M,p. 3)

### Tanwir al Miqbas min Tafsir Ibn Abbas

(Allah hath sealed their hearts), stamped their hearts, (and their hearing, and on their eyes, there is a covering), on their eyes there is a shield (and theirs will be an awful doom) an awful torment in the Hereafter. This refers in particular to the Jews Ka'b Ibn al-Ashraf, Huyayy Ibn Akhtab and Judayy Ibn Akhtab. It is also said that it refers to the idolaters of Mecca 'Utbah [Ibn Rabi'ah], Shaybah [Ibn Rabi'ah] and al-Walid [Ibn al-Mughirah] (Guezzou, 2007, p. 4). Context and Metaphor.

Allah the Almighty in this verse addressed the prophet Muhammad, describing for him the people who reject faith or the disbelievers by different characteristics including the sealing of their hearts, hearing, and eyes and many other characteristics that follow in the subsequent verses.

## Type of Metaphor

This is an implied metaphor, because the literal meaning of "خَتَمَ" (sealed) refers to physically sealing something to prevent access, such as sealing a document or a container. However, in the verse, hearts, hearing, and sight are metaphorically sealed, meaning that these people are prevented from accepting guidance or truth. The implied comparison: The hearts, hearing, and sight of the disbelievers are compared to objects that can be physically sealed, preventing anything from entering. The tenor (borrowed for) is the hearts, hearing, and sight of the disbelievers, the vehicle (the borrowed from) which is omitted something that is literally sealed shut, such as a letter or a container. The ground (The contextual clue) is the fact that hearts, ears, and eyes are not things that can literally be sealed, proving that this is figurative language. The metaphor here emphasizes their complete rejection of guidance, just as a sealed container cannot receive anything inside, their hearts, ears, and eyes are completely blocked from accepting truth. Furthermore, it shows the permanence of their disbelief. A "seal" suggests something final and difficult to undo, reinforcing their stubbornness and unwillingness to listen. It Creates a vivid mental image: This metaphor makes the concept of spiritual blindness and ignorance more tangible and impactful

## Commentary

-International translates verb "خَتَمَ" to "has set a seal", i.e. literary translation neglecting the metaphor of this verb. (First strategy)

Picthall follows the same strategy and translates it to "hath sealed". (First strategy) Yusuf also translates it literary to "has set a seal". (First strategy)

Shakir adopts the same strategy in conveying the metaphor. (First strategy) Sarwar uses the same verb as an equivalent to "خَتَمَ". (First strategy)

Khan translates the verb literally, but he gives a sense to clarify the meaning of this metaphor by adding "closed to accept Allah's guidance". (Sixth strategy)

Arbury uses literally translation. (First strategy)

## Assessment

There is a metaphor because hearts cannot be sealed or stamped. However, the purpose is marking their hearts so the angels can differentiate between those people who do not believe in Allah, do not listen to the voice of truth, and cannot tell the difference between right and wrong, and those who are believers in Allah, who listen to and implement the teachings of Islam, and who can see the right from wrong. So, hearts cannot be written on, but the purpose of the metaphor here is to also mark the believers' hearts by something good, such as belief for the angels to recognize them too.

All translators did not translate the metaphor properly through the literal translation. If a non-Arab reader reads this translation, s/he will not be able to understand the meaning of the verse not to mention the metaphorical image, except Khan used the sixth strategy of Newmark's (1988) metaphor translation, which is translation of metaphor literally plus sense. As mentioned earlier, this was a good technique to explain the metaphor.

However, by not including the third part of the verse and not linking all of them together, the meaning may be vague to a non-Arab reader when reading the third part of the verse and of course will not be able to understand why such example stands for the mentioned metaphor.

Applying Newmark's third strategy:

'Their hearts are as if sealed, and they are like being covered with a veil, so they cannot perceive guidance'

## Discussion:

Translating metaphorical language in the Qur'an presents significant challenges due to the richness of imagery, rhetorical depth, and theological weight embedded in the original Arabic. This discussion focuses on the application of Newmark's third strategy, translating metaphor by simile while retaining the image, to evaluate how this approach can clarify, preserve, and transmit metaphorical meanings more effectively for target language (TL) audiences.

Verse One: Zakariyya's Aging (Maryam: 4)

The verse uses a vivid metaphor, "وَأَشْنَعَلَ الرَّأْسَ شَيْبًا", where the verb "أَشْنَعَلَ" (flared up) metaphorically describes the rapid and intense spread of hoariness, likening it to fire spreading in wood. Most translators, as shown, chose literal or sense-based renderings (Newmark's strategies 1 and 5), which sacrificed either the visual imagery or the rhetorical power of the metaphor. While Shakir and Arberry partially retained the metaphorical tone by using verbs like "flare" and "aflame", none of the translations conveyed the full metaphorical resonance.

Applying Newmark's third strategy, as in the suggested rendering "my hair has become white, like a fire spreading across my head", enhances both the pedagogical clarity and rhetorical intensity of the verse. This simile-based approach maintains the vivid imagery of fire (vehicle) and connects it more explicitly to the tenor (hoariness), allowing TL readers to grasp the emotional and visual power of



Zakariyya's plea. This strategy effectively bridges cultural-linguistic gaps by combining metaphorical richness with interpretive accessibility.

Verse Two: The Straight Path (Al-Fatiha: 6)

In this verse, the phrase "الصراط المستقيم" is metaphorically used to represent divine guidance, the true religion, or the path to salvation. Most translators rendered it literally (strategy 1) or shifted subtly toward an interpretive translation (strategy 5), replacing metaphor with meaning. However, such renderings tend to lose the rhetorical resonance and the spiritual journey implied in the metaphor of a "straight path".

Applying Newmark's third strategy, "guide us like travellers along the straightway", invites the reader to enter the metaphorical space of spiritual navigation. This simile captures the journeying aspect of religious guidance, emphasizing the believer's role as a seeker of the divine destination. It also preserves the Qur'an's didactic and moralistic tone, making it suitable for pedagogical purposes and cross-cultural understanding. Through this lens, the Qur'anic metaphor becomes more than a static image; it evolves into an active narrative of movement, struggle, and divine assistance.

Verse Three: Sealing of the Hearts (Al-Baqarah: 7)

This verse employs an implied metaphor through the verb "خَتَمَ" (He has sealed), suggesting that the hearts, ears, and eyes of disbelievers are spiritually blocked. Most translators used literal renderings (strategy 1), resulting in semantically accurate but figuratively opaque translations. Only Khan attempted to clarify the metaphor by adding explanatory sense elements (strategy 6), but even this fell short of engaging the metaphor as a dynamic image.

Using Newmark's third strategy, "their hearts are as if sealed, and they are like being covered with a veil, so they cannot perceive guidance", unpacks the metaphor into a simile, making the figurative implication explicit. The comparison with a sealed object or veiled perception guides the TL reader toward understanding the spiritual state described. This approach not only clarifies the intended meaning but also evokes the emotional and spiritual blockage the Qur'an seeks to portray, thus enhancing both cognitive comprehension and rhetorical appreciation.

## Discussion

Across the three verses, the consistent use of Newmark's third strategy reveals its pedagogical strength and rhetorical efficacy. By transforming metaphor into simile, translators can retain both the aesthetic power and semantic clarity of the Qur'anic text, especially when the metaphor in the SL is culturally bound or complex. This strategy serves as a valuable tool for Qur'an translators who aim to mediate between fidelity to the source language and accessibility for the target audience.

The findings suggest that while literal translations may preserve structural fidelity, they often obscure the figurative depth and emotional resonance of Qur'anic metaphors. Therefore, when properly applied, simile-based translation emerges as a context-sensitive and audience-aware solution, particularly effective in conveying metaphors that involve sensory imagery, psychological states, or abstract theological concepts.

## Conclusion

This discussion has examined the translation of metaphors in three selected Quranic verses through the lens of Peter Newmark's (1988) metaphor translation strategies. The analysis has shown that Quranic metaphors often convey profound and complex spiritual meanings, which pose significant challenges for translators, particularly when trying to maintain both the metaphorical image and the intended message.

In the first verse (Surah Maryam: 4), the metaphor of the hair "flaring up" with hoariness reflects aging through the imagery of fire. While most translators employed Newmark's fifth strategy by converting the metaphor into sense, only a few, such as Arberry and Shakir, attempted to retain elements of the original metaphor. The most effective approach appeared to be a combination of literal translation and simile, aligning with Newmark's third strategy.

In the second verse (Surah Al-Fatihah: 6), the metaphor of the "straight path" represents divine guidance or the true religion. Although several translators rendered it literally, they failed to convey the full metaphorical implication, such as the ultimate goal of salvation or the religious connotation. The analysis showed that literal translation (first strategy) without explanatory context may obscure the metaphor's depth. Newmark's third strategy again offers a more effective approach by rephrasing the metaphor with an analogy, enhancing clarity for the target audience.

In the third verse (Surah Al-Baqarah: 7), the metaphor of the heart being "sealed" illustrates the spiritual blindness and rejection of divine guidance. All translators rendered the metaphor literally, but only Khan added explanatory information, aligning with Newmark's sixth strategy (literal translation plus sense). This approach partially preserved the metaphorical force while aiding comprehension, but still lacked full integration of the metaphor's visual and emotional weight.

Overall, the study reveals that while literal translation can sometimes retain the metaphorical structure, it often fails to transmit the underlying meaning or emotional resonance of Quranic metaphors. Newmark's third strategy, replacing the metaphor with a simile while preserving its image and meaning, proves to be the most suitable method in many cases, as it maintains the rhetorical effect and enhances comprehension for non-Arab readers. The findings suggest that metaphor translation in the Quran requires careful analysis of both the linguistic form and the theological context to strike a balance between faithfulness to the source text and accessibility in the target language.

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