

**An-Najah National University  
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**Semantic Loss in the Translation of  
Divorce-Related Qur'anic Verses into English**

**By  
Razan Basheer Ahmad Assi**

**Supervisor  
Dr. Ekrema Shehab**

**This Thesis is Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Applied Linguistics  
and Translation, Faculty of Graduate Studies, An-Najah  
National University, Nablus, Palestine.**

**2021**

# **Semantic Loss in the Translation of Divorce-Related Qur'anic Verses into English**

**By  
Razan Basheer Ahmad Assi**

**This Thesis was Defended Successfully on 07/04/2021 and approved by:**

**Defense Committee Members**

**Signature**

**1- Dr. Ekrema Shehab / Supervisor**



.....

**2- Dr. Mohammad Thawabteh / External Examiner**



.....

**3- Dr. Rami Qawariq / Internal Examiner**



.....

## **Dedication**

To the greatest parents ever, who are my strength. You are my ultimate love.

To my gorgeous sisters, Sara, Diana, Zain and Sana, who were the bond that I leaned on. I love you.

To our little babies, Karma, Kinda and Firas, who were the joy in every despair. You are the flavor of my life.

To my great Supervisor, Dr. Ekrema Shehab, the best supervisor ever, for his support, quick and honest response.

To my brother-in-law, Wasef, who was my online book reference.

Last but not least, to my friends, who were the light in every darkness.

To all those who gave me their help, love and support. I hence, dedicate this work to you.

## **Acknowledgments**

My gratitude is all to Allah Almighty who gave me the strength and enough patience to accomplish this work.

My thanks also go to my beloved family; my patient mom and dad, my ever-kind sisters, and my sincere friends. This is for their love and support during this long journey.

My gratitude is also directed to my supervisor Dr. Ekrema Shehab, who consistently provided me with his valuable advice and support. He was very patient, stirring and honest. His efforts should always be appreciated.

## الإقرار

أنا الموقّعة أدناه، مقدّمة الرسالة التي تحمل العنوان:

**فقدان المعنى الدلالي في ترجمة الآيات**

**القرآنية المتعلقة بالطلاق إلى اللغة الإنجليزية**

## **Semantic Loss in the Translation of Divorce-Related Qur'anic Verses into English**

أقرّ بأنّ ما اشتملت عليه الرسالة إنّما هو نتاج جهدي الخاص باستثناء ما تمّت الإشارة إليه حيثما ورد وأنّ هذه الرسالة ككل أو أيّ جزء منها لم يقدّم من قبل لنيل أيّ درجة علمية أو بحث علمي لدى أيّ مؤسسة تعليمية أو بحثيّة أخرى.

### **Declaration**

The work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

Student's Name: **Razan Basheer Ahmad Assi** اسم الطالب:

Signature: ..... توقيع:

Date: **07/04/2021** التاريخ:

## Tables of Contents

NO.	Contents	Page
	Dedication	iii
	Acknowledgments	iv
	Declaration	v
	Table of Contents	vi
	Abstract	vii
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>		<b>1</b>
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Statement of the problem	5
1.3	Purpose of the study	7
1.4	Significance of the study	8
1.5	Research questions	9
1.6	Limitation of the study	9
1.7	Methodology	10
<b>Chapter Two: Review of literature and theoretical framework</b>		<b>13</b>
2.1	Literature review	13
2.1.1	Sacred text and Qur'an translation	13
2.1.2	Problems of translating the Holy Qur'an	16
2.1.3	Semantic loss in the translation of the Holy Qur'an	19
2.2	Theoretical framework	24
<b>Chapter Three: Data Analysis</b>		<b>29</b>
3.1	al-Eddah verses	30
3.2	Spouses' rights verses	36
3.3	Nursing and sustenance issues verses	42
3.4	Divorce terms and conditions verses	45
<b>Chapter Four: Conclusions and Recommendations</b>		<b>58</b>
4.1	Conclusions	59
4.2	Recommendations	60
	References	62
	المراجع العربية	67
	الملخص	ب

**Semantic Loss in the Translation of  
Divorce-Related Qur’anic Verses into English**

**By**

**Razan Basheer Ahmad Assi**

**Supervisor**

**Dr. Ekrema Shehab**

**Abstract**

The task of translating the Holy Qur’an is very challenging, but it is essential because of the widespread of Islam in many parts of the world. The spread of Islam raises the need for offering an accurate and meaningful translation of Qur’anic verses due to the existence of non-native Arabic readers who come from different backgrounds. Several attempts have been made to translate the Qur’an but a good translation of the study’s data (divorce-related verses) is yet to come. Most of the existing translations have shown different semantic losses which result from the differences between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). This study aims at investigating semantic losses incurred in the translation of divorce-related Qur’anic verses into English by analyzing two different translations of these verses by two well-known translators: Palmer (1880) and Ghali (2008). The analysis of the examples follows the qualitative prescriptive approach and is guided by Baker’s (1992) approach of equivalence (Baker, 1992) and the emic-etic approach to translation.

The study finds that Qur’an translation cannot be processed away from its interpretation. Moreover, it finds that most losses are mainly because of the lack of equivalence in the TL. The study maintains that to

overcome the problem of semantic loss in the translation of divorce-Qur'anic verses, translators should opt for the strategy of descriptive translation to convey the semantic import of these verses and communicate their meaning to TL readers.



## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

The Holy Qur'an is the revelation from Allah on His Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh). It is the central religious book of Muslims that includes regulations and restrictions to be followed in many life-events. The Holy Qur'an is a unique book. No literary work resembles it. Abdul-Raof (2001: 3) states that "Qur'anic discourse is inimitable". This miraculous book is a guidance for mankind as it includes a lot of teachings, historical events, morals and Shari'ah laws.

The researcher here is concerned with the topic of divorce within the Qur'anic verses in which many instructions and commands are stated for Muslims to be followed in divorce and other divorce-related issues. These issues include the duration that a divorced woman shall abide (al-Eddah), the expenses that the husband carries (Nafaqah), the nursing issues, the return of a divorced wife to her husband and many other divorce-provisions.

Divorce is defined as the act of terminating the marriage contract which is conducted between spouses (az-Zuhaily, 1985: 356). For Muslims, divorce and post-divorce procedures and conditions are regulated and stated in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah (what is cited from Prophet

Muhammad's literature) which are used as the base of Civil Status Laws in legal courts of Islamic countries.

Since the ultimate aim of the translation process is to communicate, communication must be informative and fruitful to the degree of the original work. Hatim and Mason as cited in Bassnett (1991) point out that "translation is an act of communication" and this justifies why the translation process and translators, in general, must take into consideration all areas of linguistics from semantics and pragmatics to cross-cultural communication (1991: 181).

Following that, translation in the main sense is "communicating the overall meaning of a stretch of language" as well as "decoding the units and structures which carry that meaning" (Baker, 1992: 10). Thus, a translation of a religious book like the Qur'an has "to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original" (Newmark, 1982: 39).

Translation is a necessity due to the existence of different languages and cultures; it is crucial too to have a translation of the Holy Qur'an since not all Muslims are native Arabic speakers. The fact that the lexical items of the Holy Qur'an can be interpreted into more than one meaning has resulted in a huge number of Qur'anic translations; each with its own features and linguistic characteristics.

The Qur'an is written in classical Arabic in a rhetorical, aesthetic and stylistic way that reflects the beauty of the Arabic language. Qur'an's translation falls within the paradigm of sacred text translation which is a very challenging area to work with. Abdelaal (2018: 1) explains that "the problem is more aggravated when the translation occurs from a sacred and sophisticated text such as the Holy Qur'an" because it is hardly possible to find a translation that perfectly matches the original. Therefore, Abdelaal and Rashid (2016: 1) state that "a translator mostly needs to either sacrifice form or meaning".

Having said that, translating religious books in general and the Qur'an, in particular, results in many linguistic and cultural problems. This is because there is no recognizable translation that resembles the eloquence of the original verses. Indeed, a translator can sacrifice neither form nor content. Both form and content in the Qur'anic text are in equal necessity. Any sacrifice of one of them leads to a distortion of the original message. This illustrates what is meant by "translating the untranslatable" (Allaithy, 2019: 6). A translation of the Qur'anic verses is no more than fully explaining their semantic meanings because a reading for one of the Qur'an's translations is limited for the purpose of comprehension and the main reference remains the original Arabic written Qur'an (Abd-Rahman & Ibrahim, 2009: 18).

Many previous studies have examined translation losses that occur in the translation of the Holy Qur'an; these losses could be either grammatical

or semantic. Dickins, Hervey & Higgins (2002: 21) define translation loss as “the incomplete replication of the ST in the TT- that is inevitable loss of textuality and culturally relevant features”. Grammatical loss (the loss in aspect, gender, tense, conjunctions, syntactic order, plurality, duality) may lead to semantic loss which is related to the denotative and connotative meaning, rhetorical devices and so on. Abdelaal (2017) states that semantic loss could also result from the “differences in mapping vocabularies between the different languages and the differences of the semantic fields between the SL and the TL” as well as, having more than one meaning from the same lexeme (2017: 6).

The importance of fully rendering the semantic meaning into the TL here lies in the actual importance of the ST meaning. Lexical items within divorce verses are sometimes semantically complex vocabularies. This should be reflected precisely in the TT in order to avoid mistranslation and semantic losses.

In this study, the researcher deals with data that is taken out of twenty-four divorce-related verses. These verses are chosen out of three Qur’anic Chapters (al-Baqara, al-Ahzāb, and al-Talāq) and their translations by E. Palmer and M. Ghali. These verses are classified into categories and analyzed in order to identify the semantic losses which result from their translation. The translations’ contribution in conveying the Qur’anic meanings to the TL is also examined. Dickins, Hervey & Higgins (2002: 21) describe translation loss as “inevitable” and then, it cannot be

avoided but we can, instead, concentrate on reducing it and trying to save what can be saved from the ST.

The main concern here is to identify how specific choices made during the process of translation affect the intended meaning of regulative verses like divorce verses and if these choices help to give clear and precise comprehension of instructions stated by Allah in these verses.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Translators usually encounter several problems in this area. First of all, English lacks some Islamic terms and suffers from the absence of some counterparts which poses non-equivalence problems. Abdul-Raof (2001: 1) argues that “Qur’anic expressions and structures are Qur’an-bound and cannot be reproduced equivalently to the original in terms of structure, mystical effect on the reader, and intentionality of source text”. This problem is very common in the field of regulative divorce-verses because some divorce terms are neither existing nor are used in the TL, culture and systems.

For example, the following verse is from al-Baqara chapter in which the word (قُرُوء) (qurū’) has no word-to-word equivalence in both the English language and culture:

**The verse:** (وَالْمُطَلَّاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ) (Al-Baqara:228)

**Transliteration:** “walmutalaqatu yatarabaşna bi’anfusiĥina thalathatu qurū’in”

**Palmer’s translation:** “Divorced women must wait for themselves three courses and it is not lawful to them that they hide what God has created in their wombs...” (Palmer, 1880: 33).

**Ghali’s translation:** “And Divorced women shall await by themselves for three periods; and it is not lawful for them to keep back what Allah has created in their wombs...” (Ghali, 2008: 36).

The word (qurū’) here is the plural form of the word (qur’) which means either menstruation or purity. So, when divorce occurs, divorced women have to wait a period of time (e.g. before remarrying) which is controlled by the meaning of the word “qurū’”. The calculations then will differ between the first meaning (three menstruation periods) to the second meaning (three purity periods). Thus, the vagueness of the original term leads to a semantic loss. Therefore, it leads to poor translations and Consequently poor implementation of God’s laws.

The Holy Qur’an originally has multiple interpretations which poses a challenge to the translator determining the precise interpretation of a verse in its specific context. It also requires a very good command of the Arabic language to achieve full comprehension. Abdelaal and Rashid (2015: 1) explain “there are some deviations and under-translations as a result of not referring to the interpretations of the Holy Qur’an”. As a result

of the multiple interpretations for specific divorce-terms that are originally controversial for the interpreters, translators get into trouble producing the intended meaning in the Target Text (TT). At this stage, semantic losses appear and vary according to the translators' knowledge of both source and target languages as well as source and target cultures. Hence, not all translators are perfectly bicultural or bilingual. Moradi and Sadeghi (2014: 1735) argue that "the mistranslation of one cultural item could result in the complete distortion of the meaning". At this point, the importance of culture appears because a translator needs to investigate the deep cultural meaning of the source text (ST) in order to reflect it to the (TT). This cannot be done without an "insider" perspective of the culture (Almanna, 2014: 1). The real problem in this specific case which the thesis deals with is in the translators' choices made while translating such regulative verses. These choices have various effects on the semantic meaning and the overall understanding of Qur'anic divorce-instructions.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

This study examines, identifies and describes the semantic losses which appear in divorce discourse between the Arabic Qur'anic text and the two English translations (Palmer's and Ghali's translations). Besides, it discusses the Qur'anic meanings and interpretations of the chosen divorce verses in the light of the Qur'an's exegeses. Moreover, the study tends to figure out how specific translators' choices in the TT affect our comprehension of the meanings (as Qur'an readers) which consequently

cause semantic losses. If need be, the study also tries to suggest some alternative translations that may better convey the intended meaning as the researcher believes. This is done according to well-known Qur'an exegeses and interpretations. The data of the study is analyzed in the shadow of Baker's equivalence theory and emic-etic approach (see section 2.2).

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

This study will contribute to the benefit of sacred text translation especially to Qur'an's translation field. It will redound the knowledge of those translators who want to correctly convey Qur'anic meanings in divorce discourse and to enhance their choices regarding translating such regulations. Also, it will promote the quality and accuracy of translating divorce-regulations stated in the Holy Qur'an by highlighting some decisions that translators take. Consequently, this will assist non-native Arabic Muslims who seek a full understanding of divorce legislation which is originally mentioned in the Qur'an. Moreover, it will be a great addition to the knowledge of non- Muslim English natives who want to deepen their recognition of Islam. To that end, the study will analyze and evaluate two English translations in which the findings of this study will offer possible translations for better renderings of such legislations.



### **1.5 Research Questions**

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do word-choice of multi-meaning terms affect the semantic meaning in Qur'an especially in divorce-related verses?
2. What are the functions of those terms especially in divorce discourse and its translation?
3. What strategies do the translators adopt and follow in translating the chosen verses?
4. Do the selected translators succeed in conveying the intended exact meaning of divorce verses? If yes, how? If no, what are the suggested translations instead?
5. What are the possible procedures that may minimize the semantic loss that is likely to occur?

### **1.6 Limitations of the study**

This study is meant to search in the field of semantic losses that are likely to occur in translating divorce-related verses in the Holy Qur'an. It is concerned with studying two translations for two authoritative translators (Edward Palmer 1880 and Muhammad Ghali 2008). The researcher here is not underestimating these translations. Instead, the researcher is trying to provide the precise semantic meaning of those verses to improve the

quality of future translations. The suggested translations and interpretations are made by the researcher's own opinion based on extensive study of various Qur'an exegeses and interpretations as it is clarified below. The researcher here is not referring to more interpretations and translations from other sources due to the space limitations.

### **1.7 Methodology**

This study falls within the prescriptive paradigm of a qualitative method which is suitable for the Holy Qur'an's translation since the study suggests alternative translations.

Creswell and Clark (2011: 53-106) state that "the qualitative method is the only valid method when the quantitative measurements do not fit or when the topic of the study requires a complex detailed understanding". The study runs on a prescriptive, analytical and evaluative approach in which the data used is collected from three different Qur'anic chapters: al-Baqara, al-Aḥzāb and al-Talāq.

The researcher deals with examples from twenty-four verses (Ayāt) related to divorce discourse (which are chosen by topic). These verses start from verse number 226 to 241 in al-Baqara. One verse is taken from al-Aḥzāb; it is verse number forty-nine and seven verses are taken from chapter al-Talāq; these verses are from 1-7. Two different translations for these verses are analyzed and assessed. Examples from other Qur'anic

chapters and their translations by different translators are sometimes used as clear evidences to enrich the discussion.

The first chosen translation is by Edward Henry Palmer (*A Translation of the Qur'an*) in 1880. Palmer is an English orientalist who was born in Cambridge, England 1840. He mastered French and Italian languages and obtained his Master's Degree from St John's College where he cataloged Arabic, Turkish and Persian manuscripts. Moreover, he was influenced by his teacher Sayyid Abdallah from whom it was his starting point of oriental studies. He was also an editor of Name List of Palestine Exploration (Wikipedia). Palmer's translation of the Qur'an is chosen in this study since he is a non-native Arabic speaker. However, his translation is somehow a shortened one, and it does not sufficiently use Qur'an's interpretations and exegeses. Moreover, lexical items are heavily repeated and not rightly chosen in this translation.

The second translation is by Muhammad Mahmud Ghali (*Towards Understanding the Ever Glorious Qur'an*) in 2008. Ghali was born in Egypt in 1920. He was a professor of linguistics and Islamic studies at Al-Azhar University. He spent more than twenty years trying to interpret Qur'anic meanings into English. He authored sixteen books in Islamic studies. Ghali's translation was taken here since Ghali is a native Arabic-Muslim speaker while his translation has some equivalence problems in the TL (Wikipedia).

The translators are chosen because they are from different backgrounds and each of them has a name in the history of translating the Holy Qur'an. There is also a great time-gap between the two translations by which Qur'anic meanings are being investigated in a wider sense. Finally, the study's data is analyzed based not on the researcher's own opinion but in the shadow of a number of the Holy Qur'an interpretations and exegeses including the following:

- “*Safwat at-Tafasiir*” (2004) by Muhammad Ali as-Saboony
- “*Tafsir ash-Sha'rawi*” (1991) by Muhammad Mutawali Al-Sha'rawi.
- “*Tafsiir Ibn Katheer*” by Imad Ad-Din.
- “*al-Kashaaf*” (1987) by az-Zamakhshari.
- “*Aljami' li ahkam al-Qur'an*” (2006) by al-Qurtubi.

The processing of data is as follows: the verse, its transliteration, the two different translations by Palmer and Ghali are provided. Then, the contextualized divorce Arabic terms in the verses are analyzed and their various interpretations are highlighted. This is done based on exegeses and interpretations of the Qur'an. This will help to reach the exact meaning of the terms as it is intended in the verses. The verses are to be analyzed and interpreted both as whole units in their contexts (the overall meaning of the verse) and separately (separate terms from these verses are taken). Finally, a suggestion for a better translation is sometimes provided by the researcher.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

This chapter deals with the previous Arabic and English studies related to semantic loss of Qur'an translation. It is divided into three sections: sacred texts and Qur'an translation in Arabic and English studies, studies on problems of translating the Holy Qur'an and studies on the semantic loss in the translation of the Holy Qur'an. Moreover, the second part of the chapter deals with the theoretical framework of the study.

#### **2.1 Literature Review**

##### **2.1.1 Sacred texts and Qur'an translation**

Many previous Arabic and English studies have examined the issue of translating sacred texts. Translation is not merely a process of transferring words from one language into another. It is a more complicated process that should take into consideration a long list of influential factors. Therefore, we can define translation as “the transference of speech from one language to another”. “Speech” in this definition and in every language is “an expression for a collection of single words, each one of which corresponds to some particular meaning, either literally or metaphorically” (Arnold, 1926: 161).

Generally, most studies have approved that religious texts should be translated as precisely and accurately as possible into the TL. This makes

sacred texts' translation a more challenging process because these texts are highly sensitive and critical. There is no way to achieve full equivalence. Having said that, translations are considered as approximations; no more no less.

Few studies and researches were concerned with the issue of the Qur'an's translation since the early Islamic ages. However, the widespread of Islam around the world has paved the way for more translations of the Qur'an to appear. Since then, more studies were and are still examining Qur'an's translation issues and studies on the translation of the Qur'an were the most controversial. Sacred texts in general and the Holy Qur'an, in particular, have their own styles which add a miraculous flavor to their reading. Moreover, it stimulates deep thinking and arouses the need for acquainting its actual meanings. This can be attributed to the fact that the process of translating the Qur'an is critical and encounters many linguistic problems and other problems as well.

Islamic scholars pointed to the fact that the sacredness of the Holy Qur'an differs from any other sacred text. This is due to the fact that Qur'an is used as a religious reference for all Muslims in their daily worship works (e.g. prayers) (Abdul-Rahman & Ibraheem, 2009: 18).

They also argued that Qur'an translations have to occupy a minor degree by which it never equals the original. This illustrates the idea of untranslatability. The idea that the Holy Qur'an is forbidden to be

translated was approved by some Islamic scholars. They thought so in order to keep Qur'an's originality and rhetorical styles which are unique in Arabic as well as in other languages. This was actually proved because almost all translations of the Holy Qur'an are associated with the original Arabic text of the Qur'an (Abdul-Rahman & Ibraheem, 2009: 18-20).

Abdul-Wahaab states that the process of translating sacred texts is just a process of transferring and converting from one language to another. He adds that whatever was the ability of the translator or the degree of faithfulness to the original, there must be a deviation from the original and this depends upon the translators' abilities as well as the source and TTs' features (1987: 3).

Two important perspectives on Qur'an's translation were offered by Shakir (1926) and al-Maraghi (1936). In Arnold (1926), Shakir states that the aim of translation is achieved by transforming the original text into a new text by switching the original into a new text functionally and semantically. He concludes that it is impossible to translate the Qur'an by literal one-to-one rendering (Arnold, 1926: 161-162).

Al-Maraghi states that translation is not done by switching the original text to a new text because it is almost impossible to completely render the original meaning (1936: 5). In this sense, translation is one shade of interpretation. In fact, they are two sides of the same coin.

Abdul-Raof states that the Qur'anic discourse is a very particular discourse with its semantic, syntactic, prosodic, pragmatic, phonetic and rhetorical features. He argues that Qur'an's translation should run on a special translation theory. He also maintains that in order to meet "TL linguistic, rhetorical and/ or socio-cultural norms", the translation should completely depend and be supported by Qur'anic exegeses and interpretations. He points out that "Because of the very linguistic and textural nature of the Qur'an, the only way to convey the intended message to the target language reader is to resort to explanatory translation" (2001: xiv-xiii).

### **2.1.2 Problems of translating the Holy Qur'an**

The Qur'anic discourse is a unique genre. The term "genre" is defined by many scholars. One of these definitions is by Hatim and Munday (2004: 88). They define genre as "a conventionalized form of speaking or writing which we associate with particular communicative events". This indicates that the meaning of expressions which are used in the Qur'an is associated with particular communicative occurrences.

Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002: 3) determine that any text of whatever genre is, has different "salient" textual features which accordingly allow the translator to identify the text's genre and strategies s/he is going to use. Dickins et. al. (2002: 175) state "different STs require different strategic priorities".



Because this genre is unique, many studies have examined and are still examining the problems that occur in translating the Qur'an into English. Ali et.al (2012: 588) state that the translation of the Holy Qur'an may encounter many linguistic problems among them are syntactic, semantic and lexical problems. These arise as there are no two languages which are "identical either in the meaning given to the corresponding symbols or in the ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences". Lexical items are hard to render as the lack of equivalence is the major problem while translating the Holy Qur'an expressions. For example, the absence of some Islamic terms' counterparts in English presents a serious problem; the translation of the word (ma'rūf: معروف) into English gives only an approximate meaning of it (Ali et al., 2012: 588).

Jaber (2010: 945) states that most of the Qur'an's translations consider conveying "the meaning of the message of the ST (SL), but not as encapsulated within its rhetorical style forgetting that form and content in the Qur'anic text are inextricable". This expresses the idea that form and content are highly linked and cannot be rendered separately. So, achieving such a matchless, highly expressive form of the Qur'an remains problematic.

Abdul-Raof (2001) adds another problematic issue of Qur'anic translation. It is the one that occurs when ignoring the phonaesthetic effect and rhetorical devices while rendering the ST into the TL. These qualities as Abdul-Raof describes are the qualities that constitute the texture of the

Qur'anic text because the Qur'an is "extensively fortified with linguistic and rhetorical devices". "Therefore, the Qur'an itself will be lost when translated; its unique linguistic architecture, rhetorical beauty, music, and prototypical texture will be wasted" (ibid, 2001: 40).

Von Denffer (1983: 143) as cited in Aldahesh (2014: 27) indicates that "[t]here is agreement among Muslim intellectuals that it is impossible to transfer the original Qur'an word by word in an identical fashion into another language". He refers this untranslatability due to many reasons:

- The narrowing down of the meaning of some Qur'anic expressions to specific concepts in a foreign language would lead to miss out other important dimensions.
- Words of various languages do not express all the shades of meanings of their counterparts, although they may express specific concepts.
- The transformation of the Qur'an in a different language would therefore result in confusion and misguidance.

Abdelaal highlights that some problems of translation occur since some translators do not take into consideration Qur'anic interpretations and explanations which are considered as the basis of translating this unique and sophisticated text (2015: 2).

Following that, Abdul- Raof approves that there are some deviations and mistranslations which are generated out of not referring to the Holy Qur'an's exegeses and interpretations as well as lack of understanding of Arabic linguistics, and inability to decode and convey the nuances of words which carry multiple meanings (2004: 91-106).

### **2.1.3 Semantic loss in the translation of the Holy Qur'an**

This section deals with the previous Arabic and English studies that deal with semantic loss as a problem resulting from the translation of the Qur'an.

Many Muslim interpreters of the Qur'an have spent days and nights trying to figure out the hidden meanings of Qur'anic verses. They have found out a lot of its regulations, miraculous rhetoric and linguistic secrets. Yet, there are more and more to be discovered because it is the immortal Book of *Allah* which is full of science and wisdom. Each reader of the Holy book is an interpreter. This fact has resulted in the number of Qur'an interpretations and exegeses which exist nowadays.

Ash-Sha'rawi (1991: 9) discusses the concept of 'deconstruction'; he explains that if Qur'an can be interpreted into just one interpretation, then Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh) should have the primacy over all to firstly interpret it. However, the availability of the multiple readings for specific lexemes in some verses proves the divine miracle of the Qur'an (Hnaiti & Abdul-Rahman, 2017: 99).

The various readings and understandings of most -if not all- verses including divorce-related verses have led to the variety of interpretations for these verses. This is considered as a real problem for non-Muslim and non-native translator to decide which meaning is to be highlighted and what lexical item is to be used to carry the original semantic value. It also presents a problem for a non-native Arabic Muslim reader in finding and discovering the closest equivalent meaning of the original meaning in the TL and culture, especially in the absence of such equivalents. For example, the following verse is from chapter al-Nisā’:

“الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ” (Al-Nisā’:34)

Transliteration:

“Arrijalu kawwamūn ‘ala annisā’”

It is translated into:

“Men are **in charge** of women” (Pickthall, 1930)

“Men are **caretakers** of women” (Usmani, 2007)

“Men are the **protectors** and **maintainers** of women” (Yusuf Ali, 1968)

These three different translations indicate three different understandings of the word (قَوَّامُونَ) (kawwamūn) in which each translator has made up his mind to translate it as such.

Divorce-related verses have also controversial interpretations and translations. Some Islamic jurists have adopted the surface meaning of verses and they have not taken into consideration other underlying meanings. Some of them did so in order to facilitate these (Shari'a) provisions. For example, jurists disagree on how many times divorce occurs according to the spelled-formula used in a situation: divorce a woman three times with one word or divorce a woman three times with separate words at the same time are considered to be one divorce or 3 divorces (ash-Sha'rawi, 1991: 990).

Translation is considered as one of the most complex language-processing operations because it attempts to achieve accuracy of the message as well as of form. Baker (1992: 19) states that for a translator to actually has a good translation, s/he should pay attention to “appreciating the value that a word has in a given system and developing strategies for dealing with the non-equivalence”. Hereby, the semantic meaning is one among many linguistic aspects in which we as translators have to care about its transference to the TL. Besides transferring the semantic meaning, we also should care about the transference of the effect that a ST has on its reader and try to create an equivalent effect on the TL reader. Newmark (1988) discusses the idea of “securing the equivalent effect” in his communicative and semantic translation approaches which were widely used to render the closer syntactic and semantic structures of the original or to have the same effect of the original.

Thus, each translation of the Qur'an may have a problematic issue in one way or another since the Qur'an has culturally-based expressions that indicate that each term is used and interpreted differently across cultures. In case the source term exists in the TL and culture, a translator is more likely to render its cultural and semantic meaning. If not, then an outsider translator's understanding will depend merely on a cultural insider translator. al-Masri states "a translator has to assume the role of a cultural insider for both texts in order to render a culturally more faithful translation" (2009: 8). This means that translators should play multiple and mutual roles between insiders' and outsiders' perspectives.

Some problematic issues that a translator may encounter could be lexical, syntactic, and semantic ones. These linguistic features are less likely to be transferred into a TT without causing a translation loss. Baker corroborates that "it is virtually impossible to offer absolute guidelines for dealing with the various types of non-equivalence which exist among languages" (1992: 17).

So, what should be pointed out here is that every lexical choice or linguistic feature is employed in the verses in a very critical and fixed manner. Thereby, these choices give different meanings depending on the condition /case that is specified in the verses. This is merely explained by Koller (1979) and his concept of "equivalence relation" which sheds the light on the historical-cultural conditions under which texts and their translations are produced/ received, as well as a range of potentially

conflicting linguistic- textual and extra-textual factors and circumstances (Hatim, 2001: 28).

Most translation studies have highlighted two main concepts: form and content (meaning); this caused form-based translations and content-based translations to emerge. For instance, Catford (1965) as cited in Abdelaal (2016: 2) believes that “full equivalence in meaning and form in the [TT] cannot always be fully achieved as it is difficult to transfer the form and meaning from a SL into a TL”.

Abdelaal (2016: 3) argues that some grammatical losses contribute to partial or complete semantic losses because “Style in the Qur’anic language is a principal component of meaning”. This occurs due to the different nature of Arabic and English. Arabic has its unique styles of conveying meaning through form. However, when translators try to convey the original meaning, they mostly cause some shades of meaning to be distorted or the ST style and form to be ruined.

One of the Arabic styles which is employed in the Qur’anic discourse is foregrounding and backgrounding. Arabic tends to foreground the most important information in the sentence while the case is different in English. This is not haphazard; this style is employed for communicative purposes (Abdelaal, 2016: 4).

Hervey and Higgins’ perception of “loss” reveals that “an important corollary of this concept of translation loss is that it embraces any failure to

replicate a ST exactly, whether this involves losing features in the TT or adding them” (1992: 24). This shows that the term “loss” comprises both meanings: loss and gain. This leads us to the fact that “seeking to minimize difference, to save ST elements from disappearance, requires a closer attention to the properties of the text; to know what can and should be saved, one has to know what features are there, and what their functions are” (Hervey et.al., 1992: 24).

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

This thesis studies semantic losses that result from the translation of divorce-related verses. Moreover, it tends to find and discover the causes of those losses by adopting Baker’s theory of equivalence and non-equivalence (1992) as well as an emic and etic approach to translation.

Baker’s (1992) typology of equivalence is the most relevant theory for this study because it offers a comprehensive typology of equivalence which exhaustively discusses and clarifies non-equivalence problems at different levels. This typology starts at the word level, above word level, textual level, grammatical level and pragmatic level. Moreover, Baker points out equivalence problems between Arabic and English as she illustrates different strategies used by translators and suggests others in order to overcome these non-equivalence problems.

Abdelaal points that Baker’s approach “does not only deal with equivalences at lower levels such as the word level and above-word levels



but also at the phonic and graphic and prosodic levels. Besides, it pays attention to the equivalences at higher levels such as the grammatical (i.e., morphological and sentential), the semantics, discoursal, intertextual and the register levels” (2017: 9-10).

Abdelaal and Rashid (2015: 4) in their study describe Baker’s belief of the concept “equivalence” as “relative because it is affected by many linguistic and cultural factors” and that “she adopts a neutral approach in her notion of equivalence”. In addition, her theory is very applicable and practical. For example, her category of the non-equivalence at the word level is classified into eleven categories as follows (Baker, 1992: 21-26):

1. “Cultural specific concepts”
2. “SL concepts are not lexicalized in the TL”
3. “Semantically complex SL words”
4. “Different distinctions in meaning in the SL and the TL”
5. “The TL lacks a superordinate (Superordinate)”
6. “The TL lacks a specific term (hyponym)”
7. “Interpersonal or physical perspective differences”
8. “Differences in expressive meaning”

9. “Differences in the form: it is hard to find equivalent forms in SL and TL”
10. “Differences in frequency and purpose of using specific form”
11. “The use of loan words in the SL”

Baker states that non-equivalence at the word-level means “that the TL has no direct- equivalent for a word which occurs in the [ST]” (Baker, 1992, p. 20). On the other hand, textual equivalence is the equivalence that can be achieved between a ST and a TT in terms of cohesion and information.

Away from Baker, many scholars have studied and examined the concept of “equivalence” and each one of them has his/her own contribution in unveiling its controversial nature. The numerous number of theories on this topic tells how much it occupies a central position among translation studies. Equivalence theories were proposed differently by different scholars. For example, Jakobson (1959/2000) points out that there are three kinds of translation include intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic translation. However, he states that there cannot be full equivalence between two words. This does not mean that he goes for the impossibility of translation but rather he discusses languages’ differences of structure and terminology (1959/2000: 114). On the other hand, Koller “distinguishes five different types of equivalence: (a) denotative equivalence involving the extralinguistic content of a text, (b) connotative

equivalence relating to lexical choices, (c) text-normative equivalence relating to text-types, (d) pragmatic equivalence involving the receiver of the text or message, and finally, (e) formal equivalence relating to the form and esthetics of the text". His contribution has brought the translators' attention to a variety of methods that can be used to achieve equivalence (1979: 186-191).

The analysis of the study's data also carries on according to the emic- etic approach. This approach adopts a cultural analysis for texts charged with cultural terms and issues between Arabic and English languages. "A translator needs to probe the deep symbolic level of the language in the [ST] in order to capture the cultural implications meant by the author" (Almanna & Farghal, 2015: 151). In order to achieve that, a translator should approach a text from an "insider" perspective.

The text of the Holy Qur'an is highly charged with cultural issues, especially divorce discourse because Arabic culture outsiders "conceptualize their experience of the world in a different way" (Almanna et.al, 2015: 152). Nida and Reyburn (1981: 2) conclude that the difficulties that emerge out of cultural differences "constitute the most serious problem for translators and have produced the most far-reaching misunderstandings among readers".

'Emic' corresponds to the idea of 'insider'. However, 'etic' stands for 'outsider'. Mason (2014: 1) discusses that "Etic approaches involve

analyzing cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who does not participate in the culture being studied [...]. In contrast, emic approaches involve investigating and explaining cultural patterns from the standpoint of one immersed within a culture”.

This leads us to the fact that Qur’anic translators who considered as ‘insiders’ have to be familiar with the culture and context of this discourse. On the other hand, outsider translators have to adopt an insider perspective in order to be acquainted with such discourse.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Data Analysis**

This chapter deals with analyzing different examples taken from the twenty-four divorce-related verses in the Holy Qur'an which are likely to involve semantic loss. It also compares and evaluates two different translations. The analysis of the verses is informed by their semantic implications and interpretations.

Divorce discourse includes many sub-topics that are related to divorce. For instance, al-Eddah, spouses' rights in divorce, nursing and sustenance issues and divorce-terms and conditions.

The sections below are classified according to the previous categorization of divorce issues above. The analysis is conducted according Baker's concept of equivalence as well as the emic- etic approach to translation. The processing of data is as follows: the verse, its transliteration, the two different translations by Palmer and Ghali are provided. Then, an analysis and a comparison of the two translations are given in the light of Qur'an exegeses. Finally, a suggestion for a better translation is sometimes provided by the researcher. Each verse carries certain semantic values that are generated through the context and the dictionary meaning for the words and books of interpretations.

### 3.1 Al-Eddah verses

#### Example 1:

"وَالْمُطَلَّاقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ **قُرُوءٍ** وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَنَّ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ" (البقرة: 228)

#### Transliteration:

“walmutalaqatu yatarabaşna bi’anfusihina thalathata **qurū** wala yahilu lahunna ’an yaktumna ma khalaqa Allahu fī arhamihinna ‘in kunna yu’minna billahu walyawmi alākhir wabu’ulatihunna ‘ahaquu biradihinna fī dhalika in ‘aradū islahā walahunna mithlu alladhi ‘alayhinna bilma’ruf walirijali ‘alayhina darajah walluhu ‘azīzun hakīm”

**Palmer’s translation:** “Divorced women must wait for themselves three **courses** and it is not lawful to them that they hide what God has created in their wombs...” (1880: 33-34).

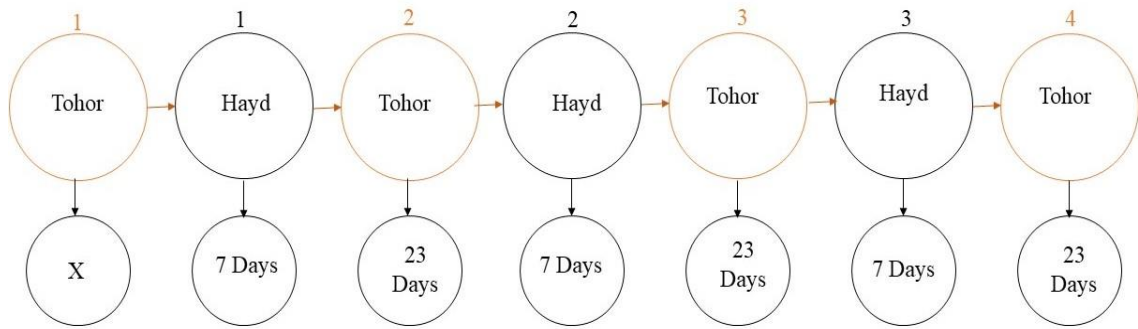
**Ghali’s translation:** “And Divorced women shall await by themselves for three **periods**; and it is not lawful for them to keep back what Allah has created in their wombs...” (2008: 36).

The word (قُرُوءٍ) (qurū’) is defined as the plural noun of (قُرْءٍ) (qur’) which means either menstruation (الحيض) (al-Hayd) or purity (الطهر) (at-Tohor). The plural of purity periods means (قُرُوءٍ) (qurū’) while the plural of menstruation periods means (أَقْرَاءٍ) (aqrā’) (as-Saboony, 2004: 119).

The intended meaning of the original verse is that Muslim-divorced women whose husbands had an intimate relation with should wait a period of time until they can marry again or they can stay back again with their husbands unless this time is expired. This period of time is called al-Eddah (العِدَّة) in Islam (az-Zuhaily, 1985: 625).

The word (قُرُوء) (qurū') is a specific divorce term (it is not mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'an) and it is also a special term in Arabic. However, as-Saboony states that its original meaning is controversial. Indeed, some Islamic doctrines (Hanafi and Hanbali) adopted the interpretation of (ثَلَاثَةُ قُرُوءٍ) (thalathata qurū'in) as three menstruation periods. Therefore, a divorced woman should wait a time of three of them (ثَلَاثَ حِيَضٍ) (thalathu hiyaḍ) to be able to re-marry; if her husband did not return her within this time (2004: 119). Others (Shaf'i and Maliki) said that (ثَلَاثَةُ قُرُوءٍ) (Thalathata qurū'in) means three purity periods (ثَلَاثَةُ أَطْهَارٍ) (Thalathatu At-hār).

This raises the problem of the exact time a divorced woman should abide by which is called (العِدَّة) (al-Eddah). If we adopt either the thoughts of Hanafi and Hanbali or the Shaf'i and Maliki's, the "waiting time" (al-Eddah) will vary according to the following chart:



**Chart (1): Average-woman monthly period.**

The starting point of calculation will be X because divorce may occur at any time only in the purity period (Tohor) (Ibn- Katheer 270). If we assume that divorce takes place a week after a woman finishes her menstruation days. Then x is sixteen days. Three menstruation periods (Hayd) equal eighty-three days; while if we take the interpretation of three purity periods (Tohor), a woman should wait for seventy-six days. Then, there is a difference of seven days between the two meanings.

These variations are proved by Qur'anic verses, Prophet Mohammad's traditions (Pbuh), and past incidents. Most Islamic scholars have adopted that the intended meaning of (qurū') is (Hayd) because three menstruation periods are longer than three purity periods which allows the husband more time to revise himself and think carefully before his separation from his divorced wife which is consistent with the aims of "al-Eddah" and "Shari'a" Divorce and separation are not preferred, and the idea of lengthening the waiting time serves the interests of both parties (the husband and the wife), too (Abu-Lihyeh: 10-7).



This variation of time should be reflected by the translators' choice of words and translation strategies. Palmer used the word (courses) as a translation of (فُرُوء). "Courses" carries different semantic meanings according to Almajrid English dictionary. It could mean an academic subject, doses of a specific drug given to a patient, a path, a group of lectures and lessons, menstruation and many others (B'albaki, 1995: 224). On the other hand, Ghali translated it into "periods" According to B'albaki "period" means the full-stop sign, duration of something for example (menstruation), a lesson, the time of a moon cycle around a planet, era, etc. (1995: 674).

We can infer that these two terms which have been used in translations have many different meanings, among them is menstruation. However, they do not carry the meaning of purity at the same time. Thus, they differ from the source term which carries completely two opposite meanings. In the light of the previous meanings, both translations pose a problem for non-native Arabic Muslim speakers who are new to Islam and for their ability to understand and follow the intended meaning of this verse. Palmer and Ghali's use of (three periods and three courses) does not specify the meaning of three menstrual periods or even for three purity periods. So, both clash with the fact that the ST word is interpreted into two different meanings and as a result leads to two different waiting times after divorce. This is absent in the translations and caused semantic loss.

The word (قُرْوَة) has neither full nor one to one equivalence in the English language. Both translators tried to convey the source term meaning by taking only one side of its denotative meaning which is (the time for something) without paying attention to the word's full meaning based on exegeses and dictionaries. So, they have used a direct counterpart and ignored the double meaning that the ST word carries. A translator's duty is to provide the TL reader with full-clear comprehension of the word in the verse because a foreign reader, for instance, may accidentally interpret it as the time taken by a moon to complete three cycles around a planet.

Because these verses are regulative ones in which Allah states instructions to be followed by divorced women, a mistranslation is not allowed here but a specification is crucial to be added next to the source term in the TT. Thus, they need to provide the double meaning of the SL term or to use footnotes in order to explain both meanings or to maintain its semantic and phonological features in the TT. In fact, accuracy here is in great demand because non-native Muslims' understanding of the Holy Qur'an is the ultimate aim of translation. As Yunus says "the translation is constituted by the intention to help Muslims in understanding Qur'an" (1981: iv).

The word (qurū') in the ST is functioning as a 'communicative clue' which "aimed at guiding the audience to the correct interpretation of the utterance" (Hatim, 2001: 102).

According to Gutt's typology of communicative clues (Gutt 1998 cited in Hatim, 2001: 103), the word (قُرُوء) is located at the level of sounds (phonological level). However, its semantic meaning is very relevant to be translated and therefore is necessary despite the non-existence of a TL equivalent. Then, a transliteration of the source word in the TT is needed because it is "rewarding for the reader to learn that a particular name carries given connotations" (Hatim, 2001: 104).

This loss resulted because of the lack of cultural competence in specific cultural terms. This problem of non-equivalence is produced by Baker who relates it to the common type of culture-specific concepts when "the source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture" (1992: 21). Palmer (1880) who presents the culture-outsider does not sufficiently participate in the culture of Islam (specifically divorce discourse) from an insider perspective. Mason (2014: 1) states that the etic approach includes analyzing cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who does not participate in the culture being studied. However, Ghali who participates in the culture as an insider has shrunk the semantic gap but he hasn't filled it up. He used a more domesticated term "periods" for the TL reader.

### **Suggested translations for the word (قُرُوء) (qurū'):**

One good suggestion for a better rendering of the word (qurū') is to use transliteration "Divorced women shall await by themselves three

**qurū'in**” while explaining its controversial meanings by footnoting as follows:

(The word refers to two opposites meanings, menstruation and purity. Each meaning has its supporters with their justifications).

### 3.2 Spouses' rights verses

#### Example 1:

"وَالْمُطَلَّاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَنَّ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ" (البقرة: 228)

**Transliteration:** “walmutalaqatu yatarabaşna bi’anfusihina thalathatu qurū wala yahilu lahunna ’an yaktumna ma khalaqa Allahu fī arhamihinna ‘in kunna yu’minna billahu walyawmi alākhir wabu’ulatihunna ‘ahaquu biradihinna fī dhalika in ‘aradū islahā **walahunna mithlu alladhi** ‘alayhinna **bilma’rūf**walirijali ‘alayhina **darajah** walluhu ‘azīzun hakīm”

**Palmer’s translation:** “Divorced women must wait for themselves three courses; and it is not lawful to them that they hide what God has created in their wombs, if they believe in God and in the last day. Their husbands will do better to take them back in that (case) if they wish for reconciliation; **for, the same is due to them as for them; but the men should have precedence over them.** God is mighty and wise” (1880: 34).

**Ghali's translation:** "And Divorced women shall await by themselves for three periods; and it is not lawful for them to keep back what Allah has created in their wombs, in case they (really) believe in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have truer (right) to restoring them in such time, in case they are willing to do righteousness. **And they (the women) have (rights) like (the obligations) they are under with beneficence; and men have a degree above them;** and Allah is Ever-Mighty, Ever- Wise" (2008: 36).

The Just Allah by his words in the Holy Qur'an states that mankind - men and women- was created from the same spiritual nature; this creation from a single soul emphasizes the idea of Divine equality regarding gender in society. This can be found and approved in chapter Al-Nisā':

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا" (Al-Nisā:1)

This verse discusses the fact that men and women are created to be equally treated. Equality between men and women also involves having gender-suitable social roles that each party should bear during the marriage as well as after divorce. Those roles are also clarified in al-Baqara verse 228 as it is shown above.

The intended meaning of the verse is that women should be treated by their husbands kindly and harmlessly as they (women) treat them, and they should have the same rights as the responsibilities which are carried

out by them for their husbands. However, men have to do more duties; duties that concern marital sustenance, protection, security, and others. The degree mentioned in the verse is meant to be a commissioning one, not an honoring one because men are different in their creation features given to them by Allah (as-Saboony, 2004: 120).

In the first part of the verse (وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ), Allah Almighty firstly mentioned that women have rights (وَلَهُنَّ) (walahunna) as He delayed the part of what responsibilities should women do for men (عَلَيْهِنَّ) (‘alayhina). The intended rhetorical foregrounding of (وَلَهُنَّ) has an important function. It emphasizes that men are not preferred by Allah over women as many think. What they should get precedes what they have to perform. The function of foregrounding and backgrounding is to set the focus of the message on a fixed part.

Most people misinterpret this part of the verse by referring to the next part of the same verse (وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ) and to other verses in the Qur’an like (الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ ) (أَمْوَالِهِمْ) (Al-Nisā:34)

These two verses are taken by men as proof of their superiority (Ibn-Katheer: 271). However, the actual case is that Allah assigned to men the duties mentioned previously which are compatible with their abilities such as the physical ability. So, the Just Allah assigned to women some responsibilities and also assigned to men some duties (Aman, 2012). The

Qur'an makes it clear that the only basis of superiority of any human over the other is piety but not gender, color or nationality.

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ" (Al-Hujurat:13)

Palmer's translation (**for, the same is due to them as for them**) is ambiguous. Firstly, it does not show and clarify what exactly the thing which should be the same between spouses. Moreover, the referents of the pronoun (**them**) are not fixed; which pronoun refers to women and which one refers to men. This point refers to what Abdul-Raof called "structural ambiguity" which "requires careful exegetical exploration in order to decide its accurate meaning in the TT" (Abdul-Raof, 2001: 74). It is also known that there is no grammatical equivalence between Arabic and English in the field of person; the pronoun (them) can be either interpreted as (هُنَّ) or (هُم). Thus, the function of starting with women's rights implied in the original text is lost in the translation. Also, the way into which those rights should be given (بِالْمَعْرُوفِ) is omitted in the TT and this resulted in a great loss.

In the second part of his translation (**but the men should have precedence over them**), the phrase (precedence over) means to have the right of being first and having priority over something (B'albaki, 1995: 715).

This meaning is inconsistent with the Divine equality regarding gender which is clear in the Holy Qur'an. As a result, this translation causes a semantic loss and subsequently leads to misinterpretation of this part of the verse.

Ghali in his translation of the first part of the verse (**And they (the women) have (rights) like (the obligations) they are under with beneficence**) starts with women as in the original text but he mentioned that women are under obligations. This poses a semantic gap and leads to imperfect interpretation because the original verse means that women have rights on their husbands as to the responsibilities they serve to them.

(Obligations) as a lexical word is completely different from (responsibilities). Obligations mostly refer to something legal; it is what has been imposed by contract or custom and mostly introduce bad consequences if they have not been followed. However, Allah has not imposed such obligations on women; women are not obliged to do some duties (Abdul Kafi, 2018). Instead, they are responsible to do back what is done to them.

The other part of the verse (**and men have a degree above them**) shows a literal translation of the source word (دَرَجَةٌ). This translation emphasizes the mistaken comprehension of men's superiority and does not indicate exactly the intended meaning of the ST. Gender racism is



impossible to be practiced by Allah who among his Divine names are The Just (al-Adl) (العدل), and The Equitable (al Muqsit) (المُقْسِط).

In Palmer's case, the translator should make it clear to the target reader which noun is being referred to, and he should take into consideration the interpretations and exegeses of the verse to be able to reflect it clearly in the translation. It is also required to understand the verse in reference to other verses (in its co-texts) and to draw conclusions according to the overall meaning. So, the original text's intentions when this text was produced are violated. The cohesion along with the coherence of the text are not maintained. The ambiguous use of the pronoun (them) led to that violation.

Ghali made the noun which is being referred to clear but there was a clash in the use of the concept "obligations" that are imposed similarly on the two parties (men and women) and his literal transference of the word "دَرَجَة" was not successful. Both translators have gone too literal by taking what is on the surface without going deep into the word's associated meanings. This resulted in a non-textual equivalence according to Baker (1992).

### **Suggested translation:**

A translator can explain and elaborate in the translation for a better comprehension of the ST. This is to produce a more acceptable translation for a TL reader. Even if the source word has a target equivalent, it does not

lead to the intended meaning. So, translation by illustration as Baker suggested is a “useful option” (Baker, 1992: 42).

“Women have the same rights as the responsibilities they carry out for men, and men are responsible for their wives (because of their abilities)”.

### 3.3 Nursing and sustenance issues verses

#### Example 1:

”وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِكَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُتِمَّ الرَّضَاعَةَ..“ (البقرة: 233)

**Transliteration:** “wal walidatu yurdi‘na awladdahunna ḥawlaynikamilayni liman ‘arada an yuttima arrada‘a...”

**Palmer’s translation:** “Mothers must suckle their children **two whole years** for one who wishes to complete the time of suckling;” (1880: 35).

**Ghali’s translation:** “And (women) giving birth, shall suckle their children **two rounds completely**” (2008: 37).

This verse means that women who give birth must suckle their babies two full (ḥawl) whether they are still married or divorced; this is done when parents decide to complete the full nursing time (as-Saboony, 2004: 125).

The word (ḥawl) (حَوْل) has no full lexical equivalence in the English language. The only similar word in English which corresponds to the three different Arabic versions of (حَوْل), (عام) and (سنة) is (year).

For an average reader, these three Arabic versions are synonyms. In fact, they are not. If they were so, then why are these three versions exist in Arabic? This multiplicity points out a slight difference between the terms. Interpreters of the Holy Qur'an have more than one opinion relating to these terms. The first one discusses that the word (سنة) refers to the solar calendar in which a year equals 365 days and a quarter. However, (عام) refers to the lunar calendar in which it equals 354 days. These two calendar systems have a difference of 11 days and a quarter (Aqel, 2016). The other point of view reflects that the word (سنة) in the Holy Qur'an is associated with severe bad circumstances and evil, while the term (عام) is associated with goodness and prosperity. For example, Allah describes the hard time in which Fir'on and his people lived by the use of (سنة): "وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ" (Al-A'raf:130). On the other hand, Allah states in chapter (Yusuf:47-49): "قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأْبًا فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ" and "ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعَصِرُونَ". These two verses show the difference of using (سنة) and (عام) as mentioned above (Kayali, 2015).

Apparently, both Palmer's and Ghali's translation seem to be identical in their rendering of the source phrase "حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ". Palmer states that women should suckle their children two years, while Ghali points out to the same meaning by the use of a footnote "two years" (Ghali, 2008: 37). On the other hand, the lexical meaning of the term (حول) which is used in

this verse in the Holy Qur'an is also interpreted by other verses from the Qur'an itself. Allah states in chapter al-Ahqāf that the duration of pregnancy and nursing time equals thirty months. (Al-Ahqaf:15)" وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا "

It is interpreted with the verse from chapter al-Baqara which the study discusses.

(Al-Baqara: 233) "وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ".

The interpretation of these two verses together tells us that if we omit the pregnancy time which is 9 months, the rest then is 21 months. These 21 months are two ḥawl; one ḥawl is 10 months and a half. Even if the pregnancy time is less than 9 months, the rest will be different than what is meant by (سنة) and (عام) (Aqel, 2006).

Palmer's use of "year" and Ghali's use of "round" along with "year" in a footnote reflect the denotative and direct meaning without referring to the terms' associations and Qur'anic use. The problem arises here because the TL lacks a specific term (hyponym). For Baker (1992: 23), a language may have many hyponyms of a word for which it is difficult to find precise equivalents in other languages. This is the case here; English as a TL tends to have a general word (year) but lacks specific ones (عام) and (حول).

### Suggested translation:

A translator can elaborate in a footnote on the connotative meaning that the three terms carry while he can probably use transliteration of the word (حول) in the text as “two complete hawl”.

### 3.4 Divorce terms and conditions verses

#### Example 1:

”الَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِنْ فَاءُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ“ (البقرة: 226)

**Transliteration:** “liladhīna yu’ulūna min nisa’ihim tarabuṣu ‘arba’ata ashhurin fa in fa’ū fa inna Allaha ghafūrun raḥīm”

**Palmer’s translation:** “Those who **swear off** from their women; they **must wait** four months; but if they **break their vow** God is forgiving and merciful” (1880: 33).

**Ghali’s translation:** “For the ones who **foreswear** their women (is) a **wait** of four months; so in case they **concede**, then surely Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Ever- Merciful” (2008: 36).

The verse discusses a case that is done by men towards their wives. It could be a preparation for divorce or completion of the marriage contract. This verse means that those men who swear not to have an intimate relationship with their wives must wait a period of 4 months to fulfill their oath. After this duration, they can decide either to return to their wives or to divorce them (as-Saboony, 2004: 117-118).

In Arabic language (الإيلاء) means to swear. However, in this context, it means swearing to be away from any intimate relationship with the wife. Moreover, (الْفَيْء) means to return or to have this kind of relationship again with the wife.

We can infer from the previous meanings and interpretations that the Qur'anic word (يُؤْلُونَ) (yu'ulūna) generally means to swear but here it is implied specifically to mean quitting wives' intimacy relationship (ترك وطء (الزوجة)). On the other hand, the return in (فَاءُوا) is not a return from the oath itself but it carries the meaning of returning to practice this kind of relation by which the oath is renounced and canceled then.

Islamic interpreters have various perspectives regarding this verse. Some of them differentiate between (الحلف) and (الإيلاء) by the duration in which the husband swore by. The first condition occurs when a husband swears for a period of more than 4 months, he must wait 4 months. When this period is over, he must go back to his wife or divorce her even though the period in which he swore by is more than 4 months. If he does not do so, the judge decides the husband's wife be divorced.

The second one is when a husband precisely swears for a period of 4 months. For some interpreters -who agree that the husband after this period should stop and decide whether to return his wife or to divorce her-, this is not considered under the category of (أَيْلَاء) and the husband is not considered (مُؤْلِيًا) because the continuity of this duration is a condition for

requesting him to return or to divorce. However, other interpreters see that the husband is not obliged to stop the duration after waiting 4 months because he is considered (مُؤَلِّياً). When the period passes, the wife already is divorced.

The third case is when a husband swears for a period of fewer than 4 months but he returns to his wife before the deadline of these months. The husband then is not (مُؤَلِّياً) but (حَالِفاً) (al-Qurtibi, 2006: 22-34).

This leads us to the fact that the meaning of (oath) (اليمين) differs from (الإيلاء) that is implied in the verse. In addition to the concept (الفيء) which means to do the action of return not in the oath but return to the intimate relationship with the wife. By doing so, the oath is already not fulfilled.

Palmer renders (يُؤْلُونُ) as (swear off). In this context, we have to differentiate between the verb (swear) and the phrasal verb (swear off). (Swear) means “to utter or take solemnly (an oath)” or “to put to an oath”, while (swear off) means “to vow to abstain from” (Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary).

For a target reader, this can be interpreted generally in many ways; is it a swear from a man for not harming his wife? Or is it a swear-off from having an intimate relationship with her? The source word is a very specified term in Arabic since it carries the meaning of quitting intimacy with the wife (الوطء) (sexual intercourse) (Abdul-Mun’im: 486).

Consequently, his translation of (فَأُؤَا) into “break the vow” is also too general since breaking this vow especially means to do again what a man already swears off by (to do what he already swore not to do). In other words, breaking the vow that is mentioned in this verse means having an intimate relationship with the wife again.

Ghali’s translation for this part of the verse implicates a misunderstanding of the Qur’anic word because (foreswear) means “to make a liar of (oneself) under or as if under oath” or “to reject or renounce under oath”. This meaning is not completely intended from the words of Allah; No one can take an oath if he originally intends to deny his oath (Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary).

Consequently, to “concede” an oath that is not already taken is not possible because these issues are taken admittedly with full and honest intentions. Our Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh) says “إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ” “أَمْرٍ مَا نَوَى”.

The researcher here would also like to shed the light on the Qur’anic term “تَرْبُّصٌ” which indicates to wait patiently on something. Palmer’s translation (must wait) gives a more flavor of patience and of an insisting matter than Ghali’s translation “a wait”.

=The semantic losses appear here due to non-equivalence. For example, (wait) and (يتربص) both have the same propositional meaning, but



they have different expressive meaning. The element of patience in (يتربص) is stronger than it is in (wait) (Baker, 1992: 13-24).

The other issue is that the SL makes different distinctions in meaning. For example, it makes a distinction between the concept (الإيلاء) and the other concept (الحلف) which is considered as an important distinction. However, English does not make this distinction with the word (swear) (Baker, 1992: 22).

### **Suggested translation:**

As Baker suggests, we can overcome the problem of not having the same expressive meaning by adding a modifier or an adverb. As for the other problem which appears in translating the source word (يُؤْلُونَ), Baker suggests using the strategy of translation by addition (1992: 23-42). “For those who swear **not to have an intimate relationship** with their wives, they have to wait **patiently** for four months. However, if they return (change their minds) during this period. Allah is ever-forgiving, ever-merciful”.

## Example 2:

**Table (1): Verses include “al-ma‘rūf”**

Verse Number	Occurrence	Transliteration	Meaning and interpretation	Palmer's Translation	Ghali's Translation
1.al-Baqara 228	وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ	“walahunna mithlu alladhi ‘alayhinna bil <b>ma‘rūf</b> ”	The reference of rights between spouses is due to the current habit at a specific place and time	omitted	With beneficence
2.al-Baqara 229	فَأِمْسَاكِ بِمَعْرِوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِحْ بِإِحْسَانٍ	“fa imsakun bi <b>ma‘rūfin</b> aw tasrehun bi ihsan”	Living in a good, kind way	in reason	beneficence
3.al-Baqara 231	فَأَمْسِكُوا هُنَّ بِمَعْرِوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرِوفٍ	“fa amsikūhuna bi <b>ma‘rūfin</b> aw sariḥūnna bi <b>ma‘rūf</b> ”	Be kind and do not cause harm	kindly/in reason	beneficence/ beneficence
4.al-Baqara 233	وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ	“wa ‘la almawlūdu lahu rizquhunna wa kiswatuhuna bil <b>ma‘rūf</b> ”	According to what is common to all without extravagance or stinginess	in reason	beneficence
5.al-Baqara 233	سَلَامْتُمْ مَا اتَّيْتُمْ بِالْمَعْرِوفِ	“sallamtum ma ‘ātaytum bil <b>ma‘rūf</b> ”	What you have agreed on	in reason	With beneficence
6.al-Baqara 234	فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرِوفِ	“fima fa’alna fi ‘anfusiḥinna bil <b>ma‘rūf</b> ”	What it is allowed for women in Islam of clothes, perfumes and makeup. (in a way is not prohibited)	in reason	With beneficence
7.al-Baqara 235	إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا	“‘ila an taqūlū qawlan <b>ma‘rūfa</b> ”	According to what Islam allowed us to do	reasonable speech	beneficent saying
8.al-Baqara 236	عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ قَدْرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدْرُهُ مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرِوفِ	“‘la almūsī‘i qadaruhu wa ‘la almuqtiri qadaruhu matāan bil <b>ma‘rūf</b> ”	Refers to what customs say and it varies according to people’s status	in reason	With beneficence
9.al-Baqara 241	وَلِلْمُطَلَّاقَاتِ مَتَاعٌ بِالْمَعْرِوفِ	“wallimuṭalaqati mata’un bil <b>ma‘rūf</b> ”	As the husband can afford	in reason	With beneficence
10.al-ṬalĀq 2	فَأَمْسِكُوا هُنَّ بِمَعْرِوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرِوفٍ	“fa amsikūhuna bi <b>ma‘rūfaw</b> fariquhunna bi <b>ma‘rūf</b> ”	To treat them kindly without harm, and to provide them sustenance	kindness/ kindness	beneficently/ beneficently
11.al-ṬalĀq 6	وَاتِمِرُوا بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْمَعْرِوفِ	“wa ‘itamirū baynakum bi <b>ma‘rūf</b> ”	Each party should deal with the other according to the benefit and interest of both.	In reason	beneficently

The word (المعروف) occurred 41 times in the Holy Qur'an –to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Sixteen times are within divorce-related verses. The repetition of such a word in the Qur'an indicates the fact of having more than one meaning. It is implied in different contexts throughout the Qur'anic texts. This is proved due to the miraculous features of the Qur'an besides its linguistic I'jaz. However, there is no way to have redundancy and aimless repetition in the Word of Allah. All verses in which the word (بِالْمَعْرُوفِ) occurs are presented in Table 2 above. Their meanings and interpretations as they existed in as-Saboony and as-Sa'dy's exegeses books and their transliteration and translations are also given in the same table.

We can infer that this word is implied with completely different meanings among these repetitions. These meanings can be classified into three categories: The first category refers to the habits and customs of a specific place and time (العرف); the second category refers to kindness (الإحسان) and the third refers to the legislations of Islam (التشريع). The contexts of verses refer to different meanings and interpretations. Some verses relate to materialistic issues such as marital sustenance, and rights. In those verses, Allah has not made it a must on husbands to give a fixed amount of something that is specified in the verse, but instead, Allah has made it open and flexible to the customs and people's conditions which vary from time to time and from one place to another to make things easier for people (az-Zuhaily, 1985: 769, as-Sa'dy, 2002: 102). These examples

are explained in the above table which are example number one, four five, eight and nine. However, in other verses that relate to moral and ethical issues. Allah has used the word (al-ma'rūf) to mean kindness or legislation of Islam (what is allowed and what is prohibited to be done) because it all has to do with the way we deal with each other. Examples number two, three, ten and eleven in Table 1 above relate to the meaning of kindness while examples number six and seven relate to the meaning of Islam's legislation.

For instance, the meaning of (بِالْمَعْرُوفِ) in the verse “فِيمَا فَعَلْنَا فِي ” (example 6 in the above table) relates to what is allowed for women in Islam of clothes, perfumes and makeup in a way that is not prohibited (as-Sa'dy, 2002: 107). This is stated in al-Waseet Dictionary because one meaning of the verb's root is to wear perfumes (2004: 595).

The word (الْمَعْرُوفِ) in Arabic dictionaries originally refers to multiple meanings among them are “smell, known and agreed on, what is known to be good in mind and Islam, etc.” (al-Waseet, 2004: 595).

Ghali translated the term (الْمَعْرُوفِ) similarly in every repetition. He used different derivations of the word benefit (beneficence, beneficently) which means kindness. This usage refers only to one category of the word's meaning seven though the word in the ST originally has various meanings. This translation causes useless redundancy as it causes the original implication to be lost and consequently the regulations which are stated

seem to be unclear. In fact, the source word is not redundant because the all-knowing Allah repeats it to emphasize that each repetition triggers a new interpretation. So, it is not enough to translate a verse like “وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ” into “And it is for the man to whom children are born to offer them provision and raiment with **beneficence**” because kindness is not intended here. Instead, the father should provide sustenance according to the current custom in a community/country (example 4 in the above table).

On the other hand, Ghali’s translation of “فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ” into “beneficence” (example 3 in the above table) seems to fit here as it is the perfect equivalence of the word in this context.

Palmer translated this word differently. He used the phrase “in reason” for most occurrences of the word “بِالْمَعْرُوفِ”. The phrase “in reason” means “sensible”. According to Almajrid Dictionary (2000: 763), sensibility is to judge something by mind or senses. However, it is not governed by any place’s customs and habits. This arises the problem of what amount of sustenance is considered sensible or insensible. He hits the intended meaning in some contexts in which the source meaning indicates kindness. He used “kindness and kindly” to indicate that the right way of dealing with women is with kindness. He omits the source term in the verse which talks about the rights that women have on their husbands “وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ” (see example 1 in section 3.2 above).

Both translators went on translating the lexical repetition without paying attention to its intended function in the ST. The repetition in the Qur'an has different functions as Abdul-Raof states. Firstly, it is a device for achieving cohesion. "Moreover, the occurrence of these particular Qur'anic ties or expressions is context-sensitive... employed to realize a purposeful communication". Secondly, it contributes to the function of the text's genre. The genre of Qur'anic discourse is characterized by its syntactic, phonetic and rhetorical features in which this repetition is considered to be one component of the rhetoric that the language of the Holy Qur'an has (2001: 63).

To conclude, a translation of the Qur'anic verses which is not done in light of the exegeses seems inaccurate. Abdul-Raof explains that "a Qur'an translation which lacks reference to Qur'an exegesis leads to innovations and inaccuracies" (Abdul-Raof, 2001: 74).

### **Suggested translation:**

A suggested translation for each occurrence depends on the context of the verse and its interpretation. So, we can translate the word (بِالْمَعْرُوفِ) to what is meant by instead of transfer it literally.

For example, a suggested translation for the verse "وَالْمُطَلَّاتِ مَتَاعٌ" (example 9 in Table 2 above) could be "and divorced women should have sustenance as husbands can afford".

**Example 3:**

" لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ قَدَرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرُهُ مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ" (البقرة: 236)

**Transliteration:** "la junaḥa 'laykum In ṭalaqtumu InnIsā'a ma lam **tamasūhunna** aw tafridū lahunna farīda wa mati'uhunna 'ala almūsi'i qadaruhu wa 'ala almuqtiri qadaruhu matā'an bil ma'rūfi ḥaqan 'ala almuḥsinīn"

**Palmer's translation:** "It is no crime in you if ye divorce your women ere you have yet **touched** them, or settled for them a settlement. But provide sustenance for them; the wealthy according to his power, and the straitened in circumstances according to his power, must provide, in reason; a duty this upon the kind" (1880: 36).

**Ghali's translation:** "There is no fault in you in case you divorce women as long as you have not **touched** them nor ordained any marriage portion for them; and allow for their (necessary) enjoyment, the affluent man according to his determined means, and the one in reduced circumstances according to his determined means, an enjoyment with beneficence, a truly (binding) right on the fair- doers" (2008: 38).

The verse here describes one of divorce terms and conditions which states that men can divorce their wives before having sexual intercourse with them and before setting them any amount of money as a marriage payment (dowry) (المهر). Then, there is no fault on them by doing so but

they have to pay them something out of a good intention and kind treatment (المُتعة) (as-Saboony, 2004: 125).

The Arabic language has various meanings of the source word (مَسَّ). It means “to take”, “to touch”, “to harm”, “become insane”, “require” and many other meanings (B‘albaki, 1995: 1028). The meaning then is specified by the context in which the word is used. However, the implication of this word in the Qur’anic context is different from its implication in any other text’s type.

Both translators rendered the source word into the TL by using the word (touch) which means “to contact” or “the state of having physical touching” (B‘ablbaki, 1995: 1028).

As the researcher discussed before, the same lexical item could carry various shades of meaning that could be more general or more specific in this unique discourse. In this case, the source word carries a more specific meaning which is having an intimate relationship. The verse is not intended only to describe a state of touching but a narrower sense of intimate contact between spouses (Abdul-Mun’im: 281).

The loss here is generated out of not referring to the Qur’an’s interpretations and exegeses since it is the main reference for every accurate translation of the Qur’an.



Non-equivalence problems arise in this specific case since the word (تَمَسُّوهُنَّ) is a culture-specific concept as it relates to a religious belief which is rarely understood by people from other cultures like English readers. The source word does not have a target equivalence that carries the same semantic meaning at the word level (Baker, 1992: 21).

**Suggested translation:**

We can overcome the problem of not having a full equivalence in the TL by a cultural substitutional concept that carries the intended meaning of the source word.

“There is no fault on you if you divorce women unless you have not had an **intimate relationship** with them nor set any marriage payment for them...”.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Studying semantic loss in the Holy Qur'an has great significance because semantics is a core component of the language by which Qur'anic verses can be interpreted and consequently translated properly. This study has shown semantic loss that occurred in two translations of the Holy Qur'an by Palmer (1880) and Ghali (2008) and the reasons behind this loss in the light of the Qur'an's exegeses. The problem of "loss" appears in the first place due to the absence of some equivalents in the TL and the fact that the Qur'an's exegeses are not consulted.

The study adopted a prescriptive and contrastive analysis of two translations of twenty-four divorce-related verses by two different translators of the Holy Qur'an that are found in the three Chapters (al-Baqara, al-Ahzāb and al-Talāq). The analysis of the verses was at four levels which included: pointing to the problematic word in the verse and its implications, examining its different exegeses and discussing and evaluating its translation by the two different translators and where possible offering a better rendering that reflects a more accurate meaning.

The problem of the Qur'an's translation is characterized by non-equivalence due to the differences between Arabic and English languages. So, translators have to try their best to maintain the actual intended meaning of the verses and their effect on the target reader and their

functions in the TL. This is required especially when the verses being translated are regulative ones as in the study's case because the Holy Qur'an is a sacred, sensitive text which does not tolerate any human interference.

#### **4.1 Conclusions**

The quality of translations is assessed and judged depending on Qur'an's exegeses and interpretations. This can lead us to the following conclusions:

- 1- Translators of the Holy Qur'an should have extensive knowledge in both Arabic and English languages for better renderings of the Qur'an's expressions. Moreover, they have to consider the denotative meaning along with the connotative meaning that the expressions carry for successful translations.
- 2- The translation of the Qur'an mainly depends on the interpretation of its semantic meaning and Arabic rhetorical devices such as repetition, foregrounding and backgrounding in which the translator should focus on to understand the possible meanings that a word may carry depending on its context of occurrence.
- 3- Literal translation and direct equivalence are not the best way to translate Qur'anic specific terms. A translator should absorb the

term's denotative meaning and its interpretation to take into consideration when translating.

- 4- Rhetorical devices like foregrounding and backgrounding are very important in understanding the intended meaning of a verse. So, a translator should maintain them in the TT as for cohesive devices like repetition.
- 5- Most of the Qur'anic terms have to be understood through their context of situation as well as by referring to other verses, especially in regulative verses.
- 6- Palmer's translations seem to lack the required knowledge of the Arabic language and Qur'an's interpretations. This was clear in his translation of the words (المعروف) and (يُولُون), (حَوْل), (فُرُوء).
- 7- Ghali's literal renderings of the expressions reflect his insufficient knowledge of the English language and culture and Qur'an's exegeses. This was clear in his renderings of (تَمَسَّوْهَن), (درجَة), (تَرَبُّص) and (المعروف).
- 8- The strategies that are suggested to compensate for semantic loss depend mainly on the translation by addition and explanation.

## 4.2 Recommendations

The analysis of the two different translations by the two translators highlights the following:

- 1- There should be professional people whose job is to revise and evaluate Qur'an's translations to avoid producing poor translations which are not suitable for the words of Allah. Those people have to make sure that different Qur'anic expressions are translated according to their interpretations and intended meanings.
- 2- A translator of the Qur'an into English has to be an expert in its eloquent styles and marvelous meanings. S/he should be an expert in both Arabic and English languages in order to render correct translations.
- 3- A translator of the Qur'an also has to remember that any Qur'an's translation needs to be read as a whole unit along with Qur'anic interpretations. This means that there is no good translation that can be produced away from Qur'an's interpretations because Qur'anic translations are considered interpretations rather than translations.
- 4- The Qur'anic text is sensitive. This fact should push translators to investigate the meanings of the Qur'anic lexical items and to look for the available lexical choices in the TL based on these meanings.
- 5- Communicative translation is recommended here because the meaning of divorce-related terms can be well conveyed in their actual context of use.

## References

- Abdelaal, N. M & Rashid, S. (2015). “Semantic Loss in the Holy Qur’an Translation with Special Reference to Surah Al Waqiaaa”. *Sage Open*. 1-10.
- Abdelaal, N. M & Rashid, S. (2016). “Grammar-Related Semantic Losses in the Translation of the Holy Qur’an, with Special Reference to Surah Al A’araf (The Heights)”. *Sage Open*, 1-11.
- Abdelaal, N. M. (2017). “Grammatical and Semantic Losses in Abdel Haleem’s English Translation of The Holy Qur’an”. Malaysia: Universiti Putra.
- Abdelaal, N. M. (2018). “Translating connotative meaning in the translation of the Holy Qur’an: Problems and Solutions”. *Arab World English Journal for translation of literary studies*. Malaysia.
- Abdul-Raof, H. (2001). *Qur’an translation: discourse, texture and exegesis*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.
- Abdul- Raof, H. (2004). *The Qur’an: Limits of Translatability*. Cambridge University Library.
- Ali, A. & Brakhw, M. & Bin Nordin, M. & Shaikh Ismail, Sh. (2012). “Some Linguistic Difficulties in Translating the Holy Qur’an from Arabic into English”. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*. Vol. 2, No. 6.

- Aldahesh, A. (2014). “(Un)Translatability of the Qur’ān: A Theoretical Perspective”. *International Journal of Linguistics*. The University of Sydney, Australia. Vol. 6 No. 6.
- Ali, Y. M. (1968). *The Holy Qur’an: Text, Translation and Commentary*. Beirut.
- Allaithy, A. (2019). “Challenges in Translating the Qur’ān – Translating the Untranslatable: Omission/ Ellipsis”. The American University of Sharjah. Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Almanna, A. & Farghal, M. (2015). “An Emic-Etic Approach to Translating Cultural Expressions between Arabic and English”. *Jordan Journal of Applied Science “Humanities Series”*, Volume 17, Issue 1, pp. 151-160.
- Al-Masri, H. (2009). “Translation and Cultural Equivalence: A Study of Translation Losses in Arabic Literary Texts”. *Journal of Language & Translation*, Cornell University. 7-44.
- Arnold, T. W. (1926). “**On The Translation of The Koran [Qur’an] into Foreign Language**”. Translated from Muhammad Shakir’s article. Egypt: *Cairo Press*.
- Baker, M. (1992). *In Other Words*. London: Routledge.
- Bassnett, S. (1991). *Translation Studies: Revised Edition*. London: Routledge.

- Creswell, J. W. & Clark, V. P. (2011). *Choosing a mixed-methods design. In designing and conducting mixed-method research*. Sage Open. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.
- Denffer, A. (1983). *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān: An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur' n*. United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation.
- Farahani, M. (2013). "Problems and Strategies in English Translation of Qur'anic Divine Name". Iran: *International Journal of Linguistics*.
- Ghali, M. (2008). *Towards Understanding The Ever- Glorious Qur'an*. Egypt: Dar An-Nashr Liljamiat.
- Gutt, E. (1998). *Pragmatics aspect of translation*.
- Hatim, B. & Mason, IAN. (1997). *The translator as a communicator*. New York: Routledge.
- Hatim, B. & Munday, J. (2004). *Translation: an advanced textbook*. USA & Canada: Routledge.
- Hatim, B. (2001). *Teaching and Researching Translation*. Malaysia: Pearson Education.
- Hervey, S. & Higgins, I. (1992). *Thinking French Translation: A Course in Translation Method: French to English*. New York: Routledge.



- Jaber, I. (2010). “Translating the genre of Qur’an: the challenge of translating the inimitable”. *Journal of college of education for women*. Baghdad University, Vol. 21 (4).
- Jakobson, R. (1959/2000). *On linguistics aspects of translation*. In Venuti, L. (ed.) (2000). *The Translation Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge.
- James, D. & Hervey, S. & Higgins, I. (2002). *Thinking Arabic translation*. London: Routledge.
- Koller, W. (1979). *Equivalence in translation theory*, translated by Chesterman, A. In Chesterman, A. (ed.) (1989) pp. 99-104. *The concept of equivalence and the object of translation*.
- Mason, A. (2014). “Overcoming the “dual-delivery” stigma: A review of patient-centeredness in the Costa Rica medical tourism industry”. *The International Journal of Communication and Health*. Vol.4.
- Moradi, M. & Sadaghi, H. (2014). “*Translation of culture-specific phrases in the Holy Qur’an*”. Finland: Academic Publisher Manufactured.
- Nida, E. & Reyburn, W. (1981). *Meaning Across Cultures*. American Society of Missiology Series, No. 4. New York: Orbis Books.

- Newmark, P. (1982). *Approaches to translation*. Pergamon Press Ltd.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *Approaches to translation: a textbook of translation*.
- Palmer, E. (1880). *The Qur'an*. Britain: The Clarendon Press.
- Pickthall, M. (1930). *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*.
- Usmani, M. T (2013). *Qur'an-e-Kareem*.
- Yunus, M. (1981). “*Pelopor Pola Baru Penulisan Tafsir al-Qur'an Indonesia*”. IlmuUshuluddin. Journal. 2 (3): 323-343 cited in Bustam, B.& Astari, R. (2018). “*Meaning differences between two Qur'an translations in activism era in Indonesia, ideology in translation analysis*”. Ahmad Dahlan University.

### Electronic sources

- Alkayali, A. (2015). “*علي منصور كيالي الفرق بين العام و السنة و الحول و*”. Retrieved from: <https://fc.lc/o2n5>.
- Aman, M. (2012,8,4). “*توضيح لسوء فهم تفضيل الرجال على النساء عمر عبد*”. Retrieved from: <https://fc.lc/4EphIqC>.
- Aqel, M. (2016,9,13). “*الفرق بين السنة والعام والحول والحجة*”. Retrieved from <https://fc.lc/r6H3CN>, on 1/2/2021.

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammad\\_Mahmoud\\_Ghali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammad_Mahmoud_Ghali). Retrieved on 11/10/2020.
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward\\_Henry\\_Palmer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Henry_Palmer). Retrieved on 11/10/2020.
- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>. Retrieved on 7/2/2021.

### المراجع العربية

- القرآن الكريم.
- ابن كثير، عماد الدين. تفسير القرآن العظيم. دار احياء الكتب العربية.
- أبو لحية، نور الدين. آثار حل عصمة الزوجية. دار الكتاب الحديث.
- البعلبكي، منير (1995). المورد، قاموس عربي- انكليزي. دار العلم للملايين. بيروت، لبنان.
- الحنيطي، سناء. عبد الرحمن، ابتهاج (2017). "أثر اختلاف القراءات القرآنية في الوصول إلى الحكم الشرعي عند الإمام الشافعي - أمثلة من سورة البقرة تطبيقاً". المجلة الأردنية في الدراسات الإسلامية. مج (13)، ع (2).
- الزحيلي، وهبة (1985). الفقه الاسلامي وأدلتها. دار الفكر للطباعة والتوزيع والنشر بدمشق. سوريا.
- الزمخشري، أبو القاسم محمود بن عمرو بن أحمد (1987). الكشف عن حقائق غوامض التنزيلوعيون الأقاويل في وجوه التأويل. دار الكتاب العربي-بيروت، الطبعة الثالث.

- السعدي، عبد الرحمن بن ناصر (2002). *تيسير الكريم الرحمن في تفسير كلام المنان*. دار السلام للنشر والتوزيع. السعودية.
- الشعراوي، محمد متولي (1991). *تفسير الشعراوي*. أخبار اليوم، ادارة الكتب والمكتبات.
- الصابوني، محمد علي (2004). *صفوة التفاسير، تفسير القرآن الكريم*. دار أحياء التراث العربي. لبنان.
- عبد الرحمن، أكمل خزيري. و إبراهيم، مجدي حجي. (2009). "المبادئ الأساسية في ترجمة القرآن الكريم في ضوء معطيات دراسات الترجمة الحديثة". *عين مجلة الجمعية العلمية السعودية للغات والترجمة*. العدد الثالث.
- عبد المنعم، محمود. *معجم المصطلحات والألفاظ الفقهية*. جامعة الأزهر - القاهرة.
- القرطبي، أبي عبد الله (2006). *الجامع لأحكام القرآن*. مؤسسة الرسالة - بيروت. الطبعة الأولى، الجزء الرابع.
- المراغي، محمد مصطفى. (1936). "بحث في ترجمة القرآن الكريم وأحكامها". مطبعة الرغائب، مجلة الأزهر.
- *المعجم الوسيط* (2004). مجمع اللغة العربية. مطبعة الشروق الدولية، القاهرة، مصر. الطبعة الرابعة.

جامعة النجاح الوطنية  
كلية الدراسات العليا

## فقدان المعنى الدلالي في ترجمة الآيات القرآنية المتعلقة بالطلاق إلى اللغة الإنجليزية

إعداد

رزان بشير أحمد العاصي

إشراف

د. عكرمة شهاب

قدمت هذه الأطروحة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في اللغويات التطبيقية والترجمة، بكلية الدراسات العليا، في جامعة النجاح الوطنية، نابلس - فلسطين.

2021

## فقدان المعنى الدلالي في ترجمة الآيات القرآنية المتعلقة بالطلاق إلى اللغة الإنجليزية إعداد

رزان بشير العاصي

إشراف

د. عكرمة شهاب

### المُلخَص

تُعَدُّ ترجمة القرآن الكريم مُهمة صعبة للغاية ولكنها ضرورية؛ وذلك بسبب الإنتشار الواسع للإسلام في كثير من أنحاء العالم، حيثُ أدى هذا الإنتشار إلى ظهور الحاجة لتوفير ترجمة دقيقة وذات معنى للآيات القرآنية؛ وذلك بسبب وجود قُرَّاء من غير الناطقين باللغة العربية من ثقافات مختلفة.

بُذِلَتْ عِدَّةُ محاولاتٍ لترجمة القرآن، لكنَّ الترجمة التي تَعكس المعاني الصحيحة للآيات المتعلقة بالطلاق لم تُوجد بعد، حيثُ كُشِفَتْ مُعظم الترجمات الحالية عن وجود فقدان في المعنى الدلالي والنتاج عن الاختلافات الموجودة بين اللغة المنقول منها والمنقول إليها. ولهذا تَهْدَف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصِّي فقدان المعنى الدلالي الذي يحدث في ترجمة الآيات القرآنية المتعلقة بالطلاق إلى اللغة الإنجليزية، من خلال تحليل تَرْجَمَتَيْن مُخْتَلِفَتَيْنِ لِمُتَرْجِمَيْنِ مَعْرُوفَيْنِ وهُمَا إدوارد بالمر (Palmer) ومحمد غالي (Ghali).

تَتَبَنَّى هذه الدراسة منهجاً وصفيّاً نوعياً، بحيث يتم تحليل الأمثلة في ظِلِّ منهج بيكر للتكافؤ (Baker 1992)، بالإضافة إلى منهج (emic- etic) للترجمة (المنهج الداخلي) (الاستبطاني) والمنهج الخارجي في دراسة الثقافة).

لَخَصَّت هذه الدراسة إلى استحالة ترجمة القرآن بمنأى عن تفسيراته، بالإضافة إلى أنَّها وَجَدَتْ أَنَّ فقدان المعنى في أغلب الأحيان يَحْدُثُ نَتِيجَةً لِعَدَمِ وُجُودِ مكافئ في اللغة المُراد الترجمة إليها.

تُوصِي الدراسة بضرورة اللجوء لاستراتيجية الترجمة الوصفية؛ وذلك لنقل المعنى الدلالي الذي تحمله الآيات المُتعلقة بالطلاق وإيصال معانيها لِللغة المُستهدفة ومن أجل التغلب على مشكلة فقدان المعنى الدلالي في ترجمة مثل هذه الآيات.