

Translating the Holy Quran: A Comparative Analysis of Al-Fatiha Verse from Arabic to English

Mostafa Mohamad Hassan Zadeh¹, Anita Lashkarian^{2*}, Mahmood Sadeq Zadeh³

¹ MS Student, Department English Translation College of Humanities Yazd, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Yazd, Iran.

^{2,3} Department English Translation College of Humanities Yazd, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Yazd, Iran.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 28 July 2017

Received in revised form 30 Sept 2017

Accepted 17 Nov 2017

Keywords:

Al-Fatiha verse,

Almyzan commentary,

Nida theory,

Formal correspondences,

Dynamic correspondences.

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to investigate the problems of translating AL-Fatiha verse through the analysis of four translations of Holy Quran. The translation of holy Quran from Arbery (1955), Pickthal (1930), Shakir (2003), and Yousef Ali (1983) were selected. **Methodology:** In order to have a general view of this verse the interpretations of Almyzan Commentary were presented. Moreover, these translations were analyzed according to Nida theory of translation. This theory analyzed the weak and strong points of each translation comparatively. **Results:** Finally, the selection of the best equivalences to the AL-fatiha verse's words based on Eugene Nida's theory is done. **Conclusion:** It seems that in the Pickthal and Yousef Ali translations more "formal correspondences" are used, since they are faithful to the structure and the word order of the source language, however, they did not transfer the literary form of the surah. On the other hand, the last two translations are the ones that are more "dynamic". They are based on the structure of the target language; also have more information for better understanding of the readers.

1. Introduction

The Quran is Allah's Speech that He has revealed to our Prophet, Mohammad. It starts with Surah (chapter) Al-Fatiha and ends with Surah An-Nas. Muslims and most Western scholars of Islam believe that the Arabic Qur'an that exists today is the authentic version of the sacred text that was transmitted by Prophet Muhammad. Manafi Anari (2012) states that „, the very word of Allah is matchless and inimitable in both its content and form. It is not only the content of Quran which is from Allah, the container is also divine and these two cannot be separated from each other"". Pickthal (1930) believed that Quran is not an inimitable symphony and the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy.

Although it is recommended that every Muslim read and understand the Holy Quran in its original Arabic script, most countries of the world that have a Muslim population are not able to read Arabic. The language of Quran, style and translation are central to the main objectives of encouraging a concentrated study of the Holy book in the world of Islam.

Translations of The Quran are interpretations of the scripture of Islam in languages other than Arabic. Quran has been translated into most African, Asian and European languages. Translation of The Quran has always been a problematic and difficult issue in Islamic theology. Since Muslims revere The Quran as miraculous and inimitable (i'jaz al- Quran), they argue that the Quranic text cannot be reproduced in another language or form. Furthermore, an Arabic word, like a Hebrew or Aramaic word, may have a range of meanings depending on the context - a feature present in all Semitic languages, when compared to the moderately analytic English, Latin, and Romance languages - making an accurate translation even more difficult (Fatani, 2006).

According to modern Islamic theology, The Quran is a revelation in Arabic, and therefore it should only be recited in the Arabic language. Translations into other languages are necessarily the work of humans and no longer possess and maintain the uniquely sacred character of the Arabic original. Moreover, these translations necessarily change the meanings, often called "interpretations" or "translation[s] of the meanings" (with "meanings" being ambiguous between the meanings of the various passages and the multiple possible meanings with which each word taken in isolation can be associated.

* Corresponding author: Anita_Lashkarian@webmail.yazd.edu

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24200/jsshr.vol6iss01pp1-8>

And also, but one possible interpretation cannot be claimed to be the full equivalent of the original. For instance, Pickthal (1930) called his translation *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran* rather than simply *The Quran*. The task of translation is not an easy one; some native Arab speakers will confirm that some Quranic passages are difficult to understand even in the original Arabic. A part of this is the innate difficulty of any translation; in Arabic, as in other languages, a single word can have a variety of meanings. There is always an element of human judgment involved in understanding and translating a text. This factor is made more complex by the fact that the usage of words has changed a great deal between classical and modern Arabic. But it is noteworthy that in spite of the fact that *The Holy Book* dates back to over 1400 years, it can be comprehensible to all speakers of Arabic all over the globe. Investigating the content and context usually requires a detailed knowledge of Hadith and Surah, which are they vast and complex texts. This introduces an additional element of uncertainty which cannot be eliminated by any linguistic rules of translation.

According to studies “the translations of the Qur'an have been significant and positive contributions to humanity. For many centuries, a great number of people from across the world have been introduced to the message of the Qur'an through its translations. The English translations of The Quran have exposed the message of The Quran to many people among the English-speaking population of the world in the last few centuries.”

English is now the most widely used language in the world. Muslims and non-Muslims, are learning the message of the Qur'an through its English translations. So, there is a serious need to review and assess the current English translations and to identify the features and trade-off of these translations, as well as to suggest ideas to contribute to the future translations of the Qur'an with better accuracy and quality. According to Nassimi, characteristic features of The Quran has been almost totally ignored by previous translators; it is therefore not surprising that what they have wrought sounds dull and flat indeed in comparison with the splendidly decorated original. For the Quran is neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both. Much effort has been undertaken by scholars in the research and study of the Bible such as Nida (1964), he translated and organized the translation of Bible, but unfortunately, not much is witnessed regarding the study of The Quran in translation. Therefore, the researcher has chosen Quran instead of Bible because it would be a novel and innovative work.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Statement of the Problem

According to Manafi Anari "in fact, each translation of Quran is an attempt to present the meaning of Allah's Book in English. Every translator has employed a different style of language in his rendering". The translation of Holy Quran goes back to many centuries, but Vaezi (2009) asserts that there are a lot of problems across the translated Holy Quran since quite a few translators such as the founder of the Qadiani (Ahmadiyya Movement) extract the translation of Quran from an unauthentic source, lacking proficiency in Arabic language, and lack of acquaintance to meaning and its commentary.

Some of the problems that exist in the translated Holy Quran is that there is no close and comprehensive translation of the Holy Book. The commentary and content of Surah has not been considered in some translations, and also there is no scientific and specific method for the translation.

Some of researchers such as Ansari (2012) point to untranslatability in The Quran because of its figurative language and literary speech. According to Emami usually the texts which are hardly related to a culture are untranslatable. But Ansari believes that many parts of Quran such as Yusuf surah can be translated. This study aimed to explore the four different translations of ALFatiha verse through their analysis based on the translations of

Holy Quran by Pickthal (1930), Arberry (1955), Yusef Ali (1983), and Shakir (2003). Moreover, the researcher would consider the interpretations of Almyzan Commentary to have an explicit understanding before comparing the different versions of the translated Quran in English. These translations are then analyzed with Nida's theory of translation. This theory analyzes the weak and strong points of each translation comparatively. Finally, the selection of the best equivalences to the Al-Fatiha verse would be identified based on Eugene Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence.

2.2 Purpose of Study

This research tried to evaluate the four available and accessible translations of Al-Fatiha verse from Arabic into English according to Nida's theory of translation and attempted to identify and determine the closest translation to the Glorious Quran. Furthermore, the verses were analyzed by comparing them with Almyzan commentary.

1. This research also tried to explore the extent to which the translator had succeeded in conveying the meaning/message of the surah through the particular style of the translations.

2.3 Research Questions

The present study attempted to find answers for the following questions:

1. Does Pickthal's (1930) translation of Al-Fatiha verse correspond to Almyzan commentary?
2. Does Arthur Arberry's (1955) translation of Al-Fatiha verse correspond to Almyzan commentary?
3. Does Yusuf Ali's (1983) translation of Al-Fatiha verse correspond to Almyzan commentary?
4. Does Shakir's (2003) translation of Al Fatiha verse correspond to Almyzan commentary?
5. to what extent Nida's theory of Dynamic / formal equivalence traces the correspondence between the Holy Quran and translated versions?

2.4 Research Design

This is a qualitative analysis which tries to evaluate the translation of Al-Fatiha verse from Arabic to English according to Nida's theory of translation. At first, in order to have a better comprehension of the named Surah, Almyzan commentary for AlFatiha verse is presented. Then, the selected translations

from Pickthal (1930), Arbery (1955), Yousef Ali (1983), and Shakir (2003) are analyzed by the application of Nida's theory. It is a comparative approach, i.e. four different English versions of Al-Fatiha verse are compared to determine whether these translations by various scholars are source-language oriented (Arabic) or target-language oriented (English).

3. Discussion and results

3.1 Data Analysis

The data were gathered and analyzed in a two-step process. In the first step, Al-Fatiha surah was read and analyzed word by word or phrase by phrase. The Surah's corresponding version of translations from Pickthal (1930), Arbery (1955), Yousef Ali (1983), and Shakir (2003) were reported and documented for further study. The data were identified on the criteria to investigate whether they are "dynamic or formal" to Persian language. Then, to be more concrete, the total number of the words in each translation were shown in a table to indicate whether the translators were faithful to the source text (formal correspondence), or they felt free in rendering the translations as compared to the source text (dynamic equivalence). Besme (Arabic) in the name of (Pickthal) in the name of (Arberry) in the name of (Yousef Ali) in the name of (Shakir)

All of the translations are the same. It means that the translation is acceptable for the most of The Quran translators. Allah (Arabic)

Allah (Pickthal)

God (Arberry)

Allah (Yousef Ali)

Allah (Shakir)

The origin of the word is elah, and all what is worshipped is so called, but only the truly worshipped God is named Allah. While "Allah" is Arabic for "God", there are differences between the God described in The Quran and the God revealed in the Bible. Arberry converts the original word Allah as God because he takes into account the reception of the word by the target reader in terms of its meaning in his culture so as to make the concept easily understand. But if it is compared, the word Allah to God in relation to their meaning, it could be understood that Allah is different from God because its religious components which do not exist in the source culture. Therefore, it could be concluded that the word God could be used as Allah but it should be mentioned in the footnotes used along the translation, the difference between Allah and God to show to the reader that the two terms are different at the level of doctrinal beliefs. Al_ Rahman (Arabic)

- a) The Beneficent (Pickthal)
- b) The Merciful (Arberry)
- c) Most Gracious (Yousef Ali)
- d) The Beneficent (Shakir)

All of the above translations seem to be correct from the aspect of meaning. The Most GRACIOUS and The Most MERCIFUL are two honorable names of Allah denoting that to Him all grace and mercy are attributed, in a way that becomes His Exaltation. The Most GRACIOUS is He whose Mercy prevails over everything in this world, and the most MERCIFUL is He who distinguishes the believers with His Mercy in the hereafter. According to Roushdy (2010). The name AL-RAHMAN can never be attributed to any one save Allah, but Raheem can be attributed to human beings. The meaning of the Beneficent is doing good or causing good to be done; conferring benefits kindly in action or purpose. Thus, it can be concluded that The Most GRACIOUS and The Beneficent can be the closest equivalent to Al_ Rahman

4- Al_ Rahim (Arabic)

- a) The Merciful (Pickthal)
- b) The Compassionate (Arberry)
- c) Most Merciful (Yousef Ali)
- d) The Merciful (Shakir)

Both the names al-Rahmân and al-Rahîm are derived from the Arabic word rahmah, meaning mercy. It has been advanced by some, like Abû `Alî al-Fârisî, and al-Warmî, that al-Rahmân denotes "general mercy for all of creation" while al-Rahîm denotes "specific mercy for the believers alone." Allah says: "And he is merciful (rahîm) to the believers." [Sûrah al-Ahzâb]. Another opinion is that the difference between them is that alRahmân denotes the presence of the attribute of mercy, while al-

Rahîm refers to the expression of Allah's Mercy and its effects on Creation. According to Ibn al-Qayyim as stated in his book Madârik al-Sâlikîn, Allah is al-Rahmân and al-Rahîm with respect to both this world and the next. So, the most MERCIFUL can be the closest equivalent to Al-Rahim.

5- Al hamd Allah (Arabic)

- e) Praise be to Allah (Pickthal)
- f) Praise belongs to God (Arberry)
- g) Praise be to Allah (Yousef Ali)
- h) All praise is due to Allah (Shakir)

In this part again, the difference of these translations is about using of Allah or God. Compared to God, it seems that Allah is the better translation. Because Allah is just focused on the single God in Islam.

6- Rabe Al_ Alamin (Arabic)

- a) Lord of the Worlds (Pickthal)
- b) The lord of all being (Arberry)
- c) The Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds (Yousef Ali)

d) The Lord of the worlds (Shakir)

The term Al-Alamin is dual form of the singular Alam which means world. But Alamin refers to all that is visible and invisible. In the exegesis of Ibn Kathir (1983) Al-Alamin refers to the world of human beings and the world of demons as well as anything created by God. According to these translations, the researcher considers that Pickthall, Yousef Ali and Shakir just imply the worlds, but Arberry point to everything in the world. Moreover, Yousef Ali tries to explain about the word of (Rab). So, his translation is dynamic. 7-Al_ Rahman Al-Rahim (Arabic)

- e) the Beneficent, the Merciful (Pickthall)
- f) The All merciful, the All compassionate (Arberry)
- g) Most Gracious, Most Merciful (Yousef Ali)
- h) The Beneficent, the Merciful (Shakir)

As stated earlier, According to Roushdy The name ALRAHMAN can never be attributed to any one save Allah, but Raheem can be attributed to human beings. Rahman predicates diversity and intensity and it devote to all human beings. So, it seems that All merciful and Most Gracious are acceptable than other ones. 8- Maleke (Arabic)

- e) Master of (Pickthall)
- f) O the Master of (Arberry)
- g) Master of (Yousef Ali)
- h) Master of (Shakir)

According to Seifeddine, Real master of every particle of dust in the universe can only be He who has created and nurtured it, whose mastery over everything is complete, having neither a beginning nor an end, covering the living and the dead, the apparent and the hidden, the seen and the unseen. On the contrary, the mastery of man is delimited by a beginning and an end; it has a 'before' when it did not exist, and an 'after' when it will exist no more. Man's mastery and control extends to the living, not to the dead, to the seen, not to the unseen, to the external aspect of things, not to the internal. All this would show to those who can see that the real Master of the whole universe, not only on the Day of Requital but even in this world, is no other than Allah. The phrase 'Master of the Day of Judgment' is a warning to man reeling in his forgetfulness and self-conceit, and an intimation that all his possessions, all his relationships with things and men are only short-lived, and that there shall come a Day when masters will no more be masters and slaves no more slaves, when no one will own anything even in appearance, and the ownership and mastery, apparent as well as real, of the whole universe will be seen to belong to none but Allah, the Exalted.

9- Yome Al_ Din (Arabic)

- e) The Day of Judgment (Pickthall)
- f) The Day of Doom (Arberry)
- g) The Day of Judgment (Yousef Ali)
- h) The Day of Judgment (Shakir)

The Day of Requital or the Day of Judgment is the Day appointed by Allah to recompense good or evil deeds. The verse qualifies Allah specifically as 'Master of the Day of Requital', and thus emphasizes a principle which is in itself of the highest import, and is particularly relevant to certain tendencies in the modern habits of thought. Contrary to the modern conviction which one finds reflected even in the so called new interpretations of Islam, individual or collective well-being is not the be-all and end-all of human existence, nor is the physical world the place where good or evil deeds are recompensed. The world is only the field of action, the place where one is required to perform one's duty, and not the place for receiving one's reward. The mere fact that man happens to be healthy and wealthy or powerful does not necessarily argue that he has won the pleasure and favor of Allah.

Similarly, the mere fact that a man happens to be ill or poor or weak or miserable does not by itself indicate that he is the object of Allah's wrath. Even in the case of worldly life, would it not be a platitude to remark that a man sweating in a factory or an office does not consider it a misfortune? In fact, try to deprive him of this opportunity to sweat, and you would have earned his deepest displeasure; for beyond all this toil he can glimpse the reward he is going to get after thirty days in the shape of his wages. It proceeds from this principle that the greatest sufferings in this world are the lot of the Prophets (A.S) and, after, them, of the men of Allah, and yet we see them quite content and even happy. In short, physical well-being or worldly glory or luxury is no sure indication of one's virtue and truthfulness, nor is sorrow and suffering that of one's misdeeds and falsity. It may, however, happen that a man receives some punishment or reward for his deeds in this world. This never is the full recompense, but only a faint model which has been manifested to serve as an intimation or warning. The Holy Qur'an has spoken very clearly on this point: "And We shall surely let them taste a nearer punishment (in this world) before the greater punishment (in the other world), so that they may return (to the right path)."

"Such is the punishment; and the punishment of the other world is certainly greater, only if they knew."

The sufferings of this world, as even its joys, are sometimes a trial, and sometimes a punishment, but never a full recompense, for the world is itself transitory. What really counts is the joy or suffering that will endure forever, and which one will come to know in the other world beyond this world.

Given the fact that good or evil deeds are not fully recompensed in this world, and the rational and just principle that good and evil not being equal in value, every deed should be rewarded or punished according to its nature, it readily follows that beyond this world there should be another world where every deed, big or small, good or evil, is to be judged, and then, justly rewarded or punished. This the Holy Qur'an calls Al-Akhirah: (The world-to-come), or Al-Qiyamah: (Doomsday or the Day of Judgment), or 'Yawm addeen, (Day of Requital). The whole idea has been explained by the Holy Qur'an itself:

"The blind are not equal with the seeing, nor the wrong-doers with those who believe and do good deeds. Yet you seldom reflect. The hour of retribution is sure to come, no doubt about it, yet most people do not believe." 10- Iyyaka Naabodo (Arabic)

- e) Thee (alone) we worship (Pickthall)
- f) The only we serve (Arberry)
- g) Thee do we worship (Yousef Ali)
- h) Thee do we serve (Shakir)

Pickthal (1930) and Arberry (1955) focus on the monotheism and try to stress on the (Tauhid) the oneness of Allah. Nothing else is as important as this one concept. It is the main theme of The Quran and this ayah makes an indirect reference to it. Yousef Ali (1983) and Shakir (2003) imply it just using Thee. The phrasing of the sentence has an effect on the meaning and it is here an allusion to the supreme Oneness of Allah, and the worship of Him alone. This verse is a start for a servant to plead and ask his needs from Allah. In fact, from here on, the tone of the statement changes. The former verses were the praise and attributes of Allah, and the statement of faith in his pure unity, consisting of a confession to the belief in the day of resurrection. But, from this verse on, it seems that the servant, with that firm foundation of belief in the knowledge of Allah, sees himself in front of him, the pure essence. He addresses him and speaks, firstly, about his own worship for him and, then, about his help which he seeks from him.

In other words, when the concepts of the former verses settle in one's soul, and his entire entity is enlightened with the light of Allah, the cherisher of the worlds, and when he recognizes his ' general mercy ' and ' specific mercy ', the individual transforms into a complete person from the point of ' belief ' and ' faith '. The prime fruit of this deep belief in monotheism, for a person, in one respect, is to be a pure true servant of Allah, free from any idol and idolatry, far from tyrants and lusts; and, on the other hand, to seek help only from his pure Essence.

In fact, the former verses state the unity of essence and attributes, while, here, the statement is regarding the Unity of Worship and Unity of Acts. ' Unity of Worship ' means that we acknowledge no person or thing worthy of worship other than Allah, whose commands alone do we obey and whose laws only do we follow, avoiding any kind of servitude and submission to other than him, the pure Essence. ' Unity of Acts ' means that we clearly recognize him as the only real ' author of causes ' in the world. it does not mean that we would refuse the world of ' cause ' and be neglectful of searching for the causes of things, but it means that we would believe that any effect from any cause is under his command. it is he who has given heat to fire, light to the sun, and vivacity to water.

The outcome of this belief is that one relies on Allah alone, and knows that all authority and power are his only. in his view, other than him is powerless, mortal and perishable. Allah is the only essence to be relied on and worshipped. it is only he who is deserving of man's reliance for everything. This kind of thought and belief sets man apart from anyone or anything else and joins him only to Allah. He obeys Allah even when he pursues after ' the world of ways and means ', i.e. he sees the power of Allah, the cause of causes, in control of the means.

This belief elevates the soul of man so high and the scope of his thought so broad that it reaches eternity and becomes free from any limited circumstances, in so far as, Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen, the master of the virtuous, Ali (a.s.), regarding Allah, says: " I worship you neither for the fear of the fire (of your hell) nor for the desire of your paradise, but I found you fit for worshipping and I

worshipped you." 11-Iyyaka nasta'in (Arabic)

- e) Thee (alone) we ask for help (Pickthal)
- f) Thee alone we pray for succour (Arberry)
- g) Thine aid we seek (Yousef Ali)
- h) Thee do we beseech for help (Shakir)

We have to confront different forces in this world, both the forces in nature and our innate, or inborn natural forces. To be able to challenge with these destructive, misleading factors, we need to be helped. Hence, we shelter under the protective umbrella of Allah. We get up every morning and repeat the verse / ' iyyaka na'budu wa ' iyyaka nasta'in / (thee (alone) do we worship and of thee (only) we seek help) to confess our servitude to Allah and to ask his pure essence help to make us successful in this great challenge. We do the same in the evening before we go to bed. We get up in the morning with his remembrance, and we go to bed in the evening with his remembrance, and each time we ask help from his pure essence. What an excellent state this is for the person who is in this stage of faith! He never bows to any tyrant. He never loses himself for the attraction of material gain, and as the Quran reveals about the prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), saying: "... Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for the Cherisher of the Worlds ", (surah Al-An'am no. 6, verse162). Therefore, the recitation of this holy Surah may provide the solution to all problems in our lives. It has plenty of properties which can bring us to safety. An example is from a narration cited by one of the companions of the prophet (p.b.u.h.). He said that in one of the battles, he was with the messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.). When the fight became difficult, he (p.b.u.h.) lifted his head and said: "O" master of the Day of judgement! Thee (alone) do we worship and of thee (only) we seek help ". At that moment the army of enemies was defeated and (many of them) were killed while the prophet (p.b.u.h.) and Muslims won. (2)

It is stated in another narration: "When a difficulty arises for a believing servant, and he recites this Holy verse, it will become easy for him". (3) 12-Ehdena (Arabic)

- e) Show us (Pickthal)
- f) Guide us (Arberry)
- g) Show us (Yousef Ali)
- h) Keep us (Shakir)

These three verbs are synonyms but it seems that the Pickthal and Yousef Ali translations are more acceptable than other ones.

Because they are concrete and other translations are abstract. 13-Sarat Al- Mostaghim (Arabic) e) The straight path (Pickthal)

- f) In the straight path (Arberry)
- g) The straightway (Yousef Ali)
- h) On the right path (Shakir)

Sheikh Salman al-Oadah (2013) states that the scholars of the Quran have made various comments about the meaning of the verse "Guide us to the Straight Path." Alî ibn 'Abî Tâlib and Ubayy ibn Ka'b explained it to be a request to be made firm and constant on the Straight Path. Ibn 'Abbâs said it was a request to be shown the way to the Straight Path or to be inspired to follow it. The scholars also disagreed in how they expressed the meaning of the "Straight Path". Some said it refers to the Quran. Others, like Ibn Mas'ûd, al-Hasan, and Abû 'Aliyah, said it refers to Islam. It is related that Ibn 'Abbâs described it as "the path to Paradise". All of these descriptions are true. Ibn Taymiyah (1993) says: "All the commentators of the Quran describe the Straight Path with some of its characteristics... Some of them describe the Straight path as Allah's Book or the act of following Allah's Book. Others say it

is the religion of Islam. There are those who say it is the Sunnah and the community that follows the Sunnah. Some describe it as the path of worship or the path of placing one's love, fear, and hope in Allah and obedience to his commands and prohibitions. Others say that it is following the Quran and Sunnah or obedience to Allah. The Straight Path is a name that embraces many characteristics." From this we should be able to see that this verse encompasses many meanings. Karimi (2009) concludes that the right way is more acceptable than other translations.

14-Sarat Al_Lazina (Arabic)

- e) The path of those (Pickthal)
- f) The path of those (Arberry)
- g) The path of those (Yousef Ali)
- h) The path of those (Shakir)

As you see, all the translations are the same. One of the meanings of (Path) is a course of conduct, the path of virtue so, from the aspect of meaning this word is correct.

15-Anamta Alayhem (Arabic)

- e) Thou hast favoured (Pickthal)
- f) Thou hast blessed (Arberry)
- g) Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace (Yousef Ali)
- h) Thou hast bestowed favours (Shakir)

Thou is referred to Allah, so, it is written with capital letter the path of those whom You have favored, with guidance (from Allah together with its relative clause is substituted by [Ghayri l-maghdubi 'alayhim]) not [the path] of those against whom there is wrath, namely, the Jews, and nor of those who are astray, namely, the Christians. The subtle meaning implied by this substitution is that the guided ones are neither the Jews nor the Christians. But God knows best what is right, and to Him is the Return and the [final] Resort. May God bless our lord Muhammad (s), his family and companions and grant them everlasting peace. Sufficient is God for us; an excellent Guardian is He. There is no power and no strength save in God, the High, the Tremendous. (Tafsir al-Jalalayn; source; underline emphasis ours).

(The path of those whom Thou hast favored), the Religion of those whom You have blessed with the Religion and who are the followers of Moses, before the blessings of Allah deserted them, in that He shaded them with a white cloud and sent down on them honey and quails when they were in the wilderness. It is also said that (the path of those whom Thou hast favored) refers to the prophets. (Not of those who earn Thine anger), not the religion of the Jews who earned Your anger, whom You forsook and whose hearts You did not protect until they became complaisant. (Nor of those who go astray), nor the religion of the Christians who erred from Islam. Amen: thus, shall be its custodians; it is also said that Amen means let it be so. It is also said that it means: O our Lord! Do with us as we have requested you. And Allah knows best'. (Tanwîr al-Miqbâs min Tafsîr Ibn 'Abbâs; source; underline emphasis ours)

17-Ghair Al-maghoob Alauhem (Arabic)

- e) Not the (path) of those who earn Thine anger (Pickthal)
- f) Not of those against whom thou art wrathful (Arberry)
- g) Those whose (portion) is not wrath (Yousef Ali)
- h) Not (the path) of those upon whom Thy wrath is brought down (Shakir)

According to almost all the commentators, God's "condemnation" (ghadab, lit., "wrath") is synonymous with the evil consequences which man brings upon himself by willfully rejecting God's guidance and acting contrary to His injunctions. Some commentators (e.g., Zamakhshari) interpret this passage as follows: "...the way of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings - those who have not been condemned [by Thee], and who do not go astray": in other words, they regard the last two expressions as defining "those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings". Other commentators (e.g., Ibn Kathir, 1983) do not subscribe to this interpretation - which would imply the use of negative definitions - and understand the last verse of the surah in the manner rendered by me above.

As regards the two categories of people following a wrong course, some of the greatest Islamic thinkers (e.g., Al-Ghazali or, in recent times, Muhammad 'Abduh) held the view that the people described as having incurred "God's condemnation" - that is, having deprived themselves of His grace - are those who have become fully cognizant of God's message and, having understood it, have rejected it; while by "those who go astray" are meant people whom the truth has either not reached at all, or to whom it has come in so garbled and corrupted a form as to make it difficult for them to recognize it as the truth (see 'Abduh in Manar)

18-Va La-Zalin (Arabic)

- e) Nor of those who go astray (Pickthal)
- f) Nor of those who go astray (Arberry)
- g) And who go not astray (Yousef Ali)
- h) Nor of those who go astray (Shakir)

The verbal noun meaning "astray" can refer to a broad range of straying from the path - from the slightest lapse of a believer to complete deviation from the Straight Path. As a term, it denotes returning to unbelief after belief and exchanging unbelief for belief (2: 108); associating partners with God either in His Essence or His Attributes or acts (4: 116); and rejecting faith in all or any of the pillars of faith, namely believing in the Existence and Unity of God (including Destiny), in angels, in all the Divine Scriptures and Prophets, without making any distinction among them with respect to believing in them, and in the Resurrection and afterlife. The followers of Jesus had first obeyed Jesus and followed his way heroically despite persecutions of the severest kind. However, since many among them later lapsed into deviations, God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, interpreted "those who are astray" as referring to those Christians (at-Tirmidhî, "Tafsîr al-Qur'ân," 2)

Accordingly, it seems that in the Pickthal and Yousef Ali translations more “formal correspondences” are used, since they are faithful to the structure and the word order of the source language, however, they didn’t transfer the literary form of the surah. On the other hand, the last two translations are the ones that are more “dynamic”. They are based on the structure of the target language, also have more information for better understanding of the readers. To show this being “dynamic” or “formal” more objectively, the number of words, in the original language (Arabic) and the translations, are indicated in the following table:

Table 1. The number of words in the surah

Surah	Total number of words in the “Source Language”	Number of words in the 1 st translation (pickthal)	Number of words in the 2 nd translation (Arberry)	Number of words in the 3 rd translation (Yousef Ali)	Number of words in the 4 th translation (Shakir)
Al_Fatiha	29	65	72	66	76

As it is shown, the numbers of words in the all renderings are almost equal, because it is a mystical and literary surah and the translators have to be more faithful to the words. However, in the second and fourth translation - (Arberry) and (Shakir) -, it seems further information is added, and it is obviously a dynamic translation. The numbers of the words in the first and the third ones are less than other two translations and more faithful to the structure of the source text (formal correspondence)

Therefore, this table shows that the first and the third translations have more “formal equivalences”, and the two ones have more “dynamic equivalences” and are more perceivable for the target readers.

3.2 Discussion

Usually translators try their best to find the most appropriate equivalents for the source text linguistic items. But the problem appears as there is no complete equivalence between the corresponding linguistic items of the two language systems, Arabic and English in the case of this study.

The problem is even aggravated as the Quranic Arabic is a Quranic-specific language. So, this would cause noticeable problems for The Quran translators. As the researcher's knowledge, there are few researches about the topic. As Reiss puts it, considering the semantic components of a text is a crucial factor for preserving the content and meaning of the original text and if the translator ignores them, much room will be left for criticism.

In order to find the answers of these research questions, qualitative and quantitative methods were used. At first, the words and verses will be compared qualitatively to find out whether they are more “dynamic or formal equivalences”.

Then, to be more concrete, the total number of the words in each translation will be shown in a „Table“ to indicate whether the translators were faithful to the source text (formal correspondence), or they felt free in rendering, and the translations are longer than the source text (dynamic equivalence).

According to Nida theory, the results of the study showed that two of the selected translations the (Pickthal and Yousef Ali) are formal and two other ones (Arberry and Shakir) are dynamic. The results of the study may have been affected by a number of specific constraints. One possible reason for this result might lie in the difference of translation methods for evaluation.

The number of surah might not have been adequate for the research. Having a larger number of subjects at our disposal may lead to a better overview of the topic. Moreover, the genre of the surah could change the results. According to Siddiek (2012), mystical and literary surah translators have to be more faithful to the words, but surah which is fables, so that more background information is needed to be given to the readers.

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the problems of translating ALFatiha verse through the analysis of four translations of Holy Quran. The translation of holy Quran from Arbery (1955), Pikthal (1930), Shakir (2003), and Yousef Ali (1983) were selected.

In order to have a general view of this verse the interpretations of Almyzan Commentary were presented. Moreover, these translations were analyzed with Nida theory of translation. This theory analyzed the weak and strong point of each translation comparatively. Finally, the selection of the best equivalences to the AL-Fatiha verse's words could be partially supported by Nida's theory.

The four research questions stated that the four translators are successful in conveying the message. The results of the research reject the idea. It seems that in the Pickthal and Yousef Ali translations more “formal correspondences” are used, since they are faithful to the structure and the word order of the

source language, however, they didn't transfer the literary form of the surah. On the other hand, the last two translations are the ones that are more "dynamic". They are based on the structure of the target language; also have more information for better understanding of the readers.

REFERENCES

- Ali, Y. 1983. Text, Translation and Commentary of The Holy Quran.
 Ansari, M. 2012. Khoramshahi's Creative Abilities in Translation of Quran.
 Arbery, A. 1955. The Quran interpreted. New York: Macmillan.
 Fatani, A. 2006. Translation and the Qur'an". In Leaman, Oliver. The Qur'an: an encyclopaedia. Great Britain: Routledge. 657–669
 Ibn Taymiyah, F. 1993. An introduction to the principle of Tafsir, Birmaingham: Al-Hidayah.
 Kathir Ibn, I. 1983. Tafsir Al- Quran Aladhim, Beirut: Dar Almufid.
 Manafi Anari, S. 2012. An approach to English translation of Islamic Texts 1. Iran: Samt.
 Nida, E.A. 1964. Toward a science of translation, Leiden: E.J. Brill.
 Pickthal, M. 1930. The glorious Quran, Tehran: Salehi.
 Shakir, M.H. 2003. The holy Quran. Qom: Ansarian.
 Siddiek, A. G. 2012. Viewpoints in the Translation of the Holy QURAN. International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 1(2), 18-25.
 Vaezi, M. 2009. Critic and assessment of holy Quran 's English translations from Al-Ensan verse.

How to Cite this Article:

Hassan Zadeh M.M., Lashkarian A., Sadegh Zadeh M., Translating the Holy Quran: A Comparative Analysis of Al-Fatiha Verse from Arabic to English, UCT Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research 6(1) (2018) 1–8.