

The Interpretation of Euphemism in the Holy Quran

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Abstract

The translation/interpretation of sacred texts is a thorny issue in translation studies as this type of translation involves dealing with words that represent real beliefs whose conveyance should be done accurately and adequately. The interpretation of the Holy Quran, which is the literal word of Allah, is no exception. This paper discusses the problematic issues and challenges in translating/interpreting sacred euphemistic expressions in the Holy Quran. It examines and analyzes these problems in terms of accuracy and quality. The data selected for this study comes from two different interpretations of two suras: Al-Nisa and Al-A'raf by Mustafa Khattab and Muhammad Mahmud Ghali. The taxonomy of translation techniques proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) is used as a theoretical framework in the current study. The study revealed that there were some interventional strategies used by the translators to transfer Quranic euphemistic expressions into English. These strategies include literal translation, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. It was also found that literal translation was the most used technique, followed by modulation and equivalence. In some cases, the literal translation of Euphemisms in some Quranic verses didn't work because the intended meaning couldn't be achieved in the TL. The study contributes to our understanding of the problems posed by euphemistic expressions in religious texts and the possible strategies that can be adopted to solve these problems.

1. INTRODUCTION

Translation plays a key role in understanding the Holy Quran teachings, especially for Muslims who do not speak Arabic. A common phenomenon in the Quran is the use of euphemisms. Euphemisms in the Holy Quran are challenging to translate due to the broad variety of social and cultural norms. It is very important when dealing with euphemisms to bear

this in mind because different or misleading interpretations of God's words could lead to unintended meanings.

The translation is crucially important as it is the only means of transferring the meaning of the Holy Quran instructions into other languages. Newmark (1988, p. 5) defines translation as "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text." However, sacred texts such as the Holy Quran pose problems for translators as the intended meaning, in many cases, cannot be achieved in the target language. Allaihy (2020) states that the translation of the Holy Quran is one of the hardest tasks that a translator may encounter.

As stated earlier, one of the most challenging aspects of the Holy Quran is the use of euphemisms. These expressions are problematic because, in many cases, they cannot be translated literally into the TL. This necessitates the utilization of some effective strategies to get the message across. This study examines the translation of euphemistic phrases in Suras Al-Nisa and Al-A'raf that have references to sexual intercourse, marital affairs, and excretory functions. The study explores and examines the strategies used to interpret these expressions from Arabic into English based on Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1- What types of strategies used by professional translators when translating/interpreting euphemistic expressions in Suras Al-Nisa and Al-A'raf? How did the translators deal with euphemisms in the Selected Suras?
- 2- How adequate are the translations of Quranic euphemisms?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.Euphemism

Euphemism is an English term derived from the Greek word *euphemismos*; *eu* means "good" and *phemi* means "speech." Therefore, the word literally means "good discourse" or "good speaking" (McArthur, 1992). Euphemism as a linguistic phenomenon has been defined by many scholars. Leech (1974, p. 53) defines it as "the habit of referring to anything disagreeable or indelicate in terms that make it sound more pleasant or acceptable than it really is". Cruse considers euphemism as "an expression that refers to something that people hesitate to mention lest it cause offence, but which lessens the offensiveness by referring indirectly in some way" (2006, p. 57). Also, Willis and Klammer (1981) perceive euphemism as a gently roundabout term or remark used instead of a more direct word or expression to make one's language delicate and inoffensive even to the most squeamish individual. Although these

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definitions appear to differ in terminology, they all have one thing in common: euphemism is a universal method of communication that seeks to make an unpleasant topic, word, or matter sound less unpalatable, upsetting, or insulting by sugarcoating it.

According to Alkire (2002, p. 1), euphemistic terms serve two purposes: “to soften the reality of what we are communicating to a certain listener or reader” and to “express what is socially difficult”. Many euphemisms are used to avoid directly addressing a social or cultural taboo. Others are used to avoid having to deal with harsh or unpalatable truths on a regular basis, so we use them to be polite and kind to others, or even to ourselves.

Rawson (2002) argued that euphemism is a universal linguistic phenomenon that is present in every language and is quite impossible for one to avoid using it on a daily basis. A word, a phrase, an expression, a term, or a figure of speech are all examples of euphemism; written or spoken remarks that are unpleasant, painful, terrifying, harsh, brutal, (too) direct, disrespectful, embarrassing, and/or disturbing *verbum proprium* need to be replaced with polite, tactful, mild, roundabout, indirect, pleasing, or inoffensive ones.

Euphemism is associated with the “avoidance of phrases of ill-omen during religious ceremonies,” according to the Online Etymology Dictionary; it is the substitution of a description of something or someone, used instead of the name to avoid revealing secret, holy, or sacred names. Therefore, euphemism interpretation is significant because it points in the direction of a cognitive level of wording, in which euphemism is not considered solely as language substitution. It takes things a step further by considering taboos and contexts.

Some euphemisms, notably in politics and sex, are coupled with sarcasm, mockery, and humour. This indicates that euphemism is used not simply to avoid taboo, as is the case most of the time, but also as a tool for indirect “bitter” criticism. Whether something is taboo or not is a matter of opinion. But that is not to say that it is unique or personal. Some taboos are universally agreed upon. Apart from that, linguistic and non-linguistic contexts or situations largely decide whether an expression is taboo, and if it is, how taboo it is. Hence, jargon is one of the factors in this circumstance. This implies that the need for euphemism is also relative and graded.

In Arabic, euphemism is a common linguistic occurrence. Arabic speakers rely largely on it in everyday communication to avoid taboo topics. Taboo avoidance in Arabic is motivated by the same globally recognized causes that make such phrases undesirable to all humans, namely humiliation, offence, profanity, fear, shame, superstition, and so on. In Arabic,

euphemism is used when discussing issues that are also related to universal non-linguistic areas, such as religion, sex, politics, excrement, and other delicate social interactions.

Alkenaya is one of the euphemism tools in Arabic. Al-shanaḡnaḡ (2011) defines alkenaya (al-kinayāh) in language as making a “statement about something while meaning something else.” Al-ḡayany (2014, p. 21) argues that alkenaya is “the use of polite words denoting the meaning instead of words set for the meaning.” Similarly, according to Al-Husseini (2007), in Arabic, the word alkenaya can be used to describe something that is socially offensive, unpleasant, or unacceptable.

2.2. Translatability of the Holy Quran

According to Abdul-Raof (2001), absolute symmetrical equivalence cannot be achieved for languages, whether at a micro- or macro-level. He argues that layers of meaning and the cultures in which they develop differ drastically. In other words, due to the huge linguistic and cultural gap between languages, it can be argued that “there is no one-to-one correspondence” between words and elements of meaning “within or across languages” (Baker 1992. P. 10).

Pym and Turk (2001, p. 273) state that “Translatability, inevitably coupled with untranslatability, is an operative concept in the sense that it actively helps structure an entire field of decisions and principles.” Baker (2011, p. 273) defines translatability as “the capacity for some kind of meaning to be transferred from one language to another without undergoing radical change.”

Baker (1992) argues that the concept of nonequivalence, or lack of equivalence, causes difficulty and problems when translating from one language to another. This issue can be found at all levels of language, from the word level to the textual level. Depending on the nature of nonequivalence, the type and level of difficulty may vary significantly. Different types of nonequivalence necessitate different techniques, some of which are simple to implement, while others are more involved and difficult to manage (Baker 1992, p. 20).

In the case of Scriptures, translators encounter many difficulties because these texts contain sacred themes that must be interpreted cautiously. Tibawi (2004), for example, opposed any effort to interpret the Quran because it would be hard to find counterparts in other languages due to the Arabic language’s voluminous vocabulary and because it is filled with metaphors. Similarly, Pickthall (2006) recognizes the issue of the untranslatability of the Quran and posits that, to the core belief of Shayks, the Quran is impossible to translate.

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Baker (2011) considers every Quran translation to be an exegesis or, at the very least, a translation based on the translator's knowledge and perspective. This sets forth that the existing translations of the Quran can be only a translation of the meaning of the Quran that is based entirely on the translator's interpretation.

According to Arberry (1973, p. x), the Holy Quran is neither prose nor poetry, but is, instead, a unique blend of both. Thus, translators cannot copy its shape because it is a Quranic-specific form with qualities of both prose and poetry, as well as a beautiful use of the native language's special properties. This brings up the issue of dealing with euphemisms in the Holy Quran. Euphemism is an obvious tactic used in the Holy Quran, the fundamental book of Arabs and Muslims.

Albanon and Abdul-Wahid (2022) pointed out that Quranic euphemisms represent highly subtle and rhetorical changes in meaning that are difficult to comprehend, especially for people who do not speak Arabic well. Cultural variations contribute to this load as well because euphemisms are sometimes organized in culture-driven idioms.

Al-Omouh (2011) explored and classified euphemisms in the language of the Holy Quran which involved a lengthy investigation of examples of euphemisms in four different translations of the Holy Quran and then classified them in terms of topics and levels of style. Al-Omouh's (2011) research focused on the etymology and semantics of each euphemism's occurrence, as well as the reasons and motivations for using such euphemistic language. According to Al-Omouh, euphemisms in the Holy Quran are classified as follows:

- 1) **Morality:** this covers topics such as sexual relations, adultery, women, body parts, and excretory functions.
- 2) **Hardships:** this involves references to sickness, disability, death, the day of judgement, divorce, panic, defeat, hunger, and poverty.

Olimat (2019) argues that a considerable number of euphemistic expressions are used in the Holy Quran. These expressions are related to sensitive and unspeakable topics. He stresses that sex and death are the most common euphemistic topics addressed by the Noble Quran. Based on the findings of his study, Olimat (2019) states that literal translation, idiomatic translation, and free translation were the most commonly used strategies by translators whereas word-for-word translation, faithful translation, semantic translation, and communicative translation were rarely used.

In all the studies reviewed here, euphemism in the Holy Quran is recognized as a challenging issue in translation. However, such studies remain narrow in focus on dealing with euphemistic expressions in the Noble Quran. In fact, there remain several aspects of euphemism about which relatively little is known. These aspects include the linguistic and cultural problems that euphemisms may cause when translating/interpreting the Holy Quran, and how these difficulties are solved by professional translators.

3. METHODOLOGY

As mentioned before, the main objectives of the current study are to identify the translation strategies utilized to transfer euphemism in two suras in the Holy Quran and examine the adequacy of the resulting interpretations of these expressions. This section sheds light on the data and methodological approach used in the current study.

3.1.Data

The corpus for the study is the Holy Quran: Suras Al-Nisa and Al-A'raf along with two English translations taken from *The Clear Quran* by Khattab and *Towards Understanding the Ever-Glorious Qur'an* by Ghali.

The translator of the first English version is Mustafa Khattab. He is a religious scholar originally from Egypt who holds Canadian citizenship. He is a well-known Muslim community leader who has served as a university chaplain and a mentor for Muslim youth. Mustafa is best known for his translations of the Quran in the famous series *The Clear Quran*. He graduated from the Faculty of Languages and Translation at Al-Azhar University and held several academic positions before serving as a religious leader in the United States and Canada.

The religious scholar who produced the second translation is Muhammad Mahmud Ghali, who has spent his entire career translating the Holy Quran. Ghali worked as a professor in the faculty of linguistics and Islamic studies. He studied phonetics at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom and the University of Michigan in the United States. Muhammad has released several publications and religious books in English and Arabic; however, his most well-known translation is *Towards Understanding the Ever-Glorious Quran*.

3.2.Methodological Approach

The process of collecting the data involves making a record of the euphemistic expressions in the selected suras from the Holy Quran along with their English translations/interpretations. Each example that includes euphemism is presented in a table which includes the Quranic verse (ayah) and its two English translations. Alsa'di's (2001) book, *Tafseer of the Holy Qur'an*, is used as a reference when addressing the context of some verses.

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In seeking answers to the research questions, the present study draws on the taxonomy of translation strategies proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). Vinay and Darbelnet proposed two main translation strategies: direct translation (literal is used as a synonym for direct translation) and oblique translation. The two techniques include seven steps, three of which are covered by direct translation: borrowing, calque, and literal translation. In addition, oblique translation includes four more procedures: transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation (Munday 2016, p. 88). A qualitative research approach is adopted in this study, which involves comparing two English translations/interpretations of two suras: Al-Nisa and Al-A'raf.

3.3. Analysis

In this section, an in-depth analysis is provided for examples that contain euphemistic expressions. The presentation of the examples will be in accordance with the research design mentioned in the Methodology Section.

The euphemisms in examples 1 and 2 are “وَاللّٰتِي يَأْتِيْنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ” (ya'tayna alfāḥishata) and “يَأْتِيَانَهَا” (ya'tiyāniha). According to Sa'di (2001), the verses in these examples refer to adultery, which is described as obscene because of its ugliness. Ghali adopted the literal strategy to render euphemisms in the two verses. He used "who came up with obscenity" to interpret “ya'tayna alfāḥishata” and “ya'tiyāniha”, while Khattab adopted the strategy of modulation, in which "ya'tiyāniha" is translated into English as "sin" and "ya'tayna alfāḥishata" as "who commit illegal intercourse".

Example 1

"وَالَّذَانِ يَأْتِيَانَهَا مِنْكُمْ" سورة النساء- ١٦	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab
And (as for) the two of you <u>who come up with (an obscenity)</u>	And the two among you who <u>commit this sin</u> —discipline them

"وَاللّٰتِي يَأْتِيْنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ" سورة النساء- ١٥	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab

And (as for) the ones of your women who <u>come up with the obscenity</u> , (i.e., illegal sexual intercourse, abomination)	'As for' those of your women <u>who commit illegal intercourse</u>
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Example 2

The euphemism at hand in Example 3 is the word أَفْضَى (afdā.) In Sa'di (2001), the interpretation means engaging in sexual relations, which are forbidden in Islam without marriage. The verse discusses divorce and prevents husbands from reclaiming dowries provided to their spouses. Ghali adopted the literal technique, "gone privily," which might confuse the readers regarding the meaning, while Khattab somehow managed to render the euphemism and adopted explicative modulation and used the closest words "enjoyed each other intimately" to clarify the intended meaning.

Example 3

"وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ" سورة النساء - ٢١	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab
and each of you has already <u>gone privily with the other</u>	after having <u>enjoyed each other intimately</u>

The euphemisms found in Examples 4 and 5 are دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ (dakhaltum bihinna) and اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ (āstamta'tum bihi.) According to the commentary in Sa'di (2001), both euphemisms mean the act of having sexual relations via physical contact. Ghali adopted a fairly literal approach in translating the phrase using the verbs "been into" and "enjoy." In contrast, Khattab adopted the strategy of equivalence as an oblique technique, which is shown in the use of "consummated marriage" to refer to intercourse in both verses. In the two verses, Khattab succeeded in re-expressing the ST by mentioning marriage, clarifying the intended meaning for non-Arabic speakers. Ghali did the same with the euphemistic expression in Example 5, in which a reference to marriage was made.

Example 4

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" مِّن نِّسَائِكُمُ اللَّاتِي دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ فَإِن لَّمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ " - النساء- ٢٣	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab
women <u>whom you have been into</u> –yet, in case you have not been into them, (Literally: entered with)	if you have <u>consummated marriage</u>

Example 5

" فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً " - النساء- ٢٤	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab
So (with) whomever of these (women) you <u>enjoy the privilege of marriage</u> , then bring them their rewards as an ordinance	Give those you have <u>consummated marriage</u> with their due dowries

In Example 6, according to Sa'di's interpretation, the euphemism "الشهوات" (ash-shahawāt,) which has a negative connotation in the Arabic language, represents whoever obeys their lusts and ignores Islamic commands, like sinners. According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1961), "lust" means intense or unbridled sexual desire. Ghali employed the adaptations techniques to manage the pragmatic sense and delivered the expression to the target audience, using the accurate connotation "lust." In Khattab's interpretation, because the word "الشهوات" (ash-shahawāt) has a negative meaning, he attempted to manage the intended meaning by using "desire," which has a general connotation.

Example 6

" الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهَوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا " - النساء- ٢٧	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab
and (the ones) who closely <u>follow (their) lusts</u>	but those who <u>follow their desires</u>

The euphemistic expression in Example 7 is a Qur'anic phrasal verb, used in this verse to euphemize the idea of sexual intercourse. This phrasal verb is related to marital affairs, وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ (wāhjarūhunna fī lmaḍāji'i.) This verse advises husbands to sleep in separate beds as a kind of emotional punishment of their rebellious wives (Sa'di, 2001). Both translations employ literal translations; Ghali used “forsake,” and Dr. Khattab used “do not share.” which might not show the intended meaning and God's instructions in the original language.

Example 7

" وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ - النساء - ٣٤ "	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab
then admonish them and <u>forsake</u> them in their beds, (Literally: a madajic = reclining) and strike them, (i.e., hit them lightly)	'first', 'if they persist, ' <u>do not share</u> their beds, 'but if they still persist, ' then discipline them 'gently'

Example 8 includes two euphemistic expressions: one is related to sexual intercourse, لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ (lāmustummi alnnisā,) and the other refers to excretory functions, الْعَائِطِ (al-gā' it.) The verb lāmasa means “to touch.” Modulation techniques were used in Ghali’s translation. The verb “contact” was used to render the euphemism “lāmasa” without any explanations or extra translation techniques to make up for the loss of meaning, which might cause confusion for target readers. The same can be said about the second euphemistic expression, “al-gā' it.” which was replaced with the target language item “privy,” which dilutes the euphemism.

With the same text shown in Example 8, Khattab used the adaptation technique to render the euphemistic expression into English. He successfully applied a euphemistic expression by using “been intimate” to refer to the extramarital affairs. An equivalent euphemism in English was used in the other euphemistic expression, “relieved yourselves.”

Example 8

"...أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُم مِّنَ الْعَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ " النساء - ٤٣ "	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab

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(in case) any of you comes from the privy, or you have had contact with women	have relieved yourselves, or been intimate with your wives and cannot find water
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Example 9 includes euphemistic expression relating to genitals, سَوَاءُتَهُمَا (sawa'atuhumā); it means the private parts of humans were exposed after they ate from that particular tree (Sa'di, 2001). Ghali adopted literal techniques without providing non-Arabic speakers with any further explanation to clarify the meaning. He used the dictionary's direct definition of the term "their shameful parts" (denotative meaning), which may denote some sort of shame when certain body parts are mentioned. Khattab did not interpret it euphemistically, which is an overt translation. However, he clarified the intended meaning used "their nakedness".

Example 9

" فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوَاءُتِهِمَا " الأعراف- ١٩	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab
Then Ash-Shaytan (the all-vicious, i.e., the Devil) whispered to them (both) to display to them that which was overlaid (i.e., hidden) from them <u>of their shameful parts</u>	Then Satan tempted them in order to expose what was hidden of <u>their nakedness</u>

In Examples 10 and 11, تَأْتُونَ (ta'tūna) is derived from the verb "atā," base form "atiyan." This term means "came," and in this context, it means "bring" something that did not exist before. The second verse is a question meant to emphasize how shocking people became with this immorality and to be the example for other people to follow (Sa'di, 2001).

In Example 10, both Ghali and Khattab adopted the strategy of equivalence, in which أَتَأْتُونَ (ata'tūna,) was translated into English as "Do you commit". However, in Example 11, they adopted different techniques. In Ghali's version, the literal technique was used to render the euphemistic expression لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً into English as "come up with lust to men." Khattab, on the other hand, opted for modulation, through which the expression was transferred into English as "lust after men."

Example10

" وَلَوْ طَأَّ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ " الأعراف- ٨٠	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab
<u>Do you commit</u> (literally: come up with the obscenity) such obscenity as in no way has anyone in the worlds ever gone before you (perpetrated) it?	<u>Do you commit</u> a shameful deed that no man has ever done before?

Example 11

" إِنِّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ " الأعراف- ٨١	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab
you indeed <u>come up with lust to men</u> , apart from (i.e., instead of) women	You <u>lust after men</u> instead of women!

The euphemistic phrase in example 12 is *تغشاهَا* (tuḡshāhā,) which literally means “to cover.” This verse tells the story of the creation of Adam and Eve from a single soul by Allah Almighty. According to Sa'di, the word “tagshaha” refers to sexual intercourse (2001).

Ghali transferred the expression euphemistically as “enveloped her” using modulation. The second part *حملت حملا خفيفا* was translated into English as “she bore a light burden”, using the dictionary equivalent, since it is “ḥam’lan” (حَمَلًا), not “ḥem’lan” (جَمَلًا). The word “burden” refers to duties, tasks, and responsibilities, but not a child. The intended meaning is that she had an easy pregnancy.

In Khattab’s interpretation, the term “united”, which has a general meaning, was used to render the Quranic euphemistic expression. It is followed by a literal translation “carried a light burden.” As an equivalence of " حملت حملا خفيفا " .

Example 12

" فلما تغشاهَا حملت حملا خفيفا " الأعراف- ١٨٩	
Dr. Muhammad Ghali	Dr. Mustafa Khattab

<u>Then as soon as he (intimately) enveloped her, she bore a light burden</u>	<u>he had been united with her; she carried a light burden.</u>
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4. DISCUSSION

The current research seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- What types of strategies used by professional translators when translating/interpreting euphemistic expressions in Suras Al-Nisa and Al-A'raf? How did the translators deal with euphemisms in the Selected Suras?
- 2- How adequate are the translations of Quranic euphemisms?

With regard to the first question, four strategies were used by Arab Translators to interpret euphemistic expressions in the selected data. These strategies include literal translation, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. Some of these methods of translation were more frequently utilized than the other because translators tackled a variety of euphemistic expressions. It's worth mentioning that other strategies included in Vinay and Darbelnet's taxonomy were not used by the translators (i.e., borrowing and transposition).

The strategy of literal translation, as shown in Figure 1, was by far the most frequently adopted technique by Ghali with a percentage of 66.6. This may suggest that euphemistic expressions were easy to transfer or that they were complicated and could only be rendered by the strategy of literal translation. In addition, modulation is the second most commonly used strategy by Ghali (16.6 percent). This strategy was used to make the resulting translation comprehensible to the intended readers, especially if the euphemistic expressions are complicated and couldn't be translated directly into the TL, as in Example 8.

It was also found that the strategies of equivalence (8.3 percent) and adaptation (8.3 percent) were the least used techniques by Ghali. Ghali adopted these two techniques to transfer the pragmatic sense of the SL euphemistic expressions so that the target audience could understand the connotative meaning (see Example 6).

On the other hand, the strategy of modulation, as can be seen from Figure 1, was the most used strategy by Khattab with a percentage of 41.6. By utilizing this strategy, Kattab attempted to clarify the intended meaning. This is evident in Examples 1, 3, and 11 in which the euphemistic expressions were preserved in the TL. Equivalence came second with a percentage of 33. Khattab used this method of translation to bridge the cultural gap and get the message across as in Examples 4 and 5. As for literal translation (16.6 percent), Khattab used this strategy either because the ST element was straightforward and didn't pose any problems

(see Example 12) or because such an element is problematic as in Example 7, in which the intended meaning couldn't be preserved in English.

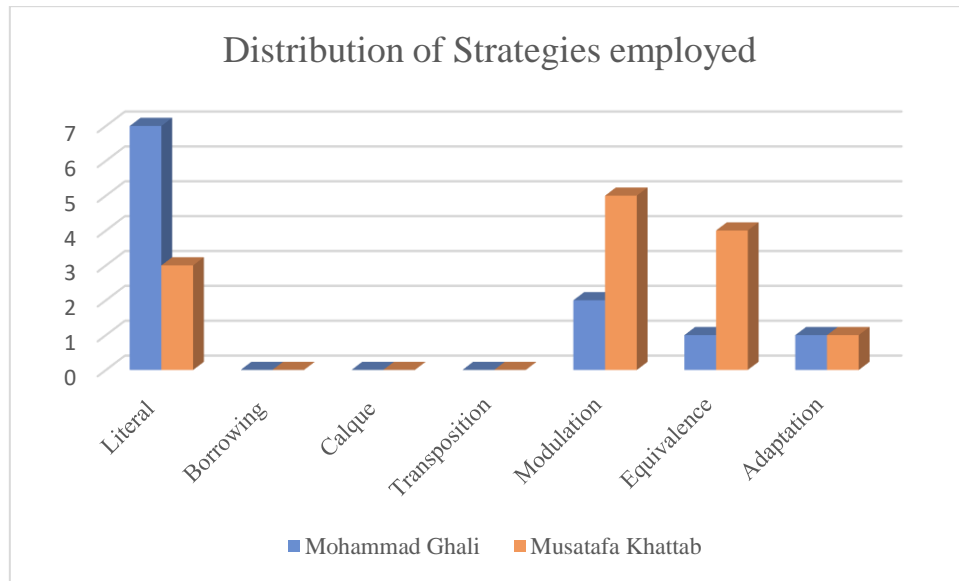


Figure 1. *Frequency of the strategies used in translating euphemism.*

Generally speaking, Ghali employed the direct method of translation with most of his translations (63.6%). Literal was the primary and only strategy utilized in the literal category. Other strategies also employed by Dr. Ghali were modulation, equivalence, and adaptation, which can be categorized as oblique strategies, accounting for 36.4%. In contrast, Dr. Khattab's translations of the selected data showed a tendency to prefer oblique techniques (modulation, equivalence, adaptation), which represent 76.9% of the strategies used.

With respect to the second research question, the main purpose of translating/interpreting religious texts is to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between the two languages and cultures. In the case of the Holy Quran, bridging this gap required the utilization of some interventional strategies. In this regard, the findings revealed that the translators, in many cases, succeeded in preserving euphemisms in the TL and guiding the intended readers so that they could comprehend the message. This is evident, for example, in the translation/interpretation of euphemism in Example 3, in which Khattab managed to preserve the euphemistic word أَفْضَى (afdā) by utilizing the strategy of explicative modulation.

The translators' efforts to interpret and preserve euphemism in the Quranic verses is also evident in the treatment of some challenging words that have connotative meaning. An example of this is the interpretation of the word الشهوات, which has a negative connotation in

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Arabic. This negative connotation was preserved in English by Ghali and Khattab through the use of the English equivalents 'lust' and 'desires' (see Example 6).

However, in contrast to the adequate translation/interpretation of some instances of euphemism in the selected data, some euphemistic expressions were rendered literally into English. These translations were not very successful despite the obvious efforts made by the translators. The loss of the intended meaning of some euphemisms resulted from the semantic and cultural nature of these elements (see example 7).

The findings of the current study have significant implications for the understanding and treatment of euphemism in religious text, especially in the Holy Quran. In addition, The analysis of instances of euphemism undertaken here, has extended our knowledge of the problems that euphemistic expression cause in translation and the possible strategies that can be adopted to solves these problems.

5. CONCLUSION

This research explored the translation of euphemisms in two suras (Al-Nisa and Al-A'raf) in the Holy Quran. The study examined the strategies used by two translators: Ghali and Khattab. It also investigated the extent to which the translations/interpretations of the euphemistic expressions in the ST were transferred adequately. The findings of the study revealed that euphemisms in the Holy Quran were challenging for the two translators who used some interventional strategies in order to preserve euphemism and guide the TL readers. Some of these strategies were effective in interpreting euphemisms in the selected Quranic verses whereas other techniques failed to convey euphemistic expressions and their connotative meaning.

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