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**& Scientific Research**  
**Al – Rayan University**  
**Faculty of Graduate Studies**



**An analytical study of the Semantic loss in five selected translations of the Holy Quran with reference to (Surat Maryam)**

**Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies at AL-Rayan University to complete the requirements for obtaining a Master's degree, in the field of English and Translation studies.**

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التي تقدمت بها الباحثة: ريم هادي عوض باجبر قد تمت مراجعته من الناحية اللغوية تحت إشرافي، بحيث أصبح ذات أسلوب علمي وسليم من الأخطاء اللغوية.

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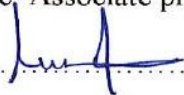
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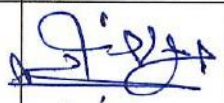

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## The Verse

﴿ إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴾ الشعراء: ٦٢

## **Dedication**

To my everlasting Love, Mother..



## **Acknowledgment**

The first and utmost gratitude is all to Allah Almighty, for his guidance and patience he gave to accomplish this work.

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## **Abstract**

An analytical study of the Semantic loss in five selected translations of the Holy Quran with reference to (Surat Maryam).

Master Thesis 2023

By

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The study of semantic loss in the Holy Quran's translations is crucial because it can lead to a translation that entirely fails to convey the Quranic text's authentic meanings. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the semantic loss and the reasons behind it in five different English translations of Surat Maryam. The authors of these translations are Dr. Al-Hilali & Dr. Khan, N. J. Dawood, George Sale, M. M. Ghali, and A. J. Arberry.

To achieve that aim, the analysis of semantic loss on the word level in these five translations of that surah, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach making use of the Quranic exegesis (known as Tafseer) and Arabic dictionaries in order to get full understanding of the intended meaning in its context. Moreover, the researcher referred to English Dictionaries to examine the accuracy of rendering the intended ST meaning into the TT.

The study revealed that both partial and complete semantic loss occurred in these five translations. However, partial loss seemed to be more frequent. The analysis also showed that the primary cause of the semantic loss was a failure to comprehend the Quran's intended meaning within its context.

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Approval of the Proofreader	a
Approval of the Abstract Proofreader	b
Approval of the Scientific Supervisor	c
The Discussion Committee Decision	d
Authorization to Publish the Scientific Thesis	e
The Verse	f
Dedication	g
Acknowledgment	h
Abstract	I
Table of Contents	j
List of Tables	m
List of Figures	n
List of Abbreviations	o
<b>1.Chapter One: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction	2
1.1 Background of the study	2
1.1.1 Arabic	2
1.1.2 The Qur'anic Language	3
1.1.3 Problems of Translating the Quran	5
1.1.3.1 Stylistic problems	5
A. Formality vs. Informality	5
B. Rhythm	6
C. Ambiguity	6
D. Ellipsis	7
1.1.3.2 Syntactic problems	8
A. Tenses	8
B. Condition	10
1.1.3.3 Semantic problems	11
A. Metaphor	11
1.1.3.4 Lexical problems	12
A. Synonymy	12

B. Polysemy	13
C. Culture Specific and Bound words	14
1.1.4 Semantic loss	16
1.1.5 Gain	17
1.2 Surat Maryam	18
1.3 Background of the Translators and Their Translation Work	19
1.3.1 A. J. Arberry	19
1.3.2 George Sale	20
1.3.3 Hilali and Khan	21
1.3.4 N. J. Dawood	22
1.3.5 M. M. Ghali	22
1.4 Statement of the Problem	23
1.5 Objectives of the Study	24
1.6 Questions of the Study	24
1.7 Significance of the Study	25
1.8 Limitations of the Study	25
1.9 Definitions of Terms	25
<b>2. Chapter Two: Literature Review</b>	
2.0 Introduction	28
2.1 concept of Translation, its Main Theories and Strategies	28
2.1.1 Concept of Translation	28
2.1.2 Translation theories	29
2.1.3 Translation strategies	38
2.2 Translation of sacred texts including the Holy Quran	41
2.3 Semantic loss	44
2.4 Empirical Studies	45
2.5. The conceptual Framework	52
<b>3. Chapter Three: Methodology</b>	
3.0 Introduction	54
3.1 Research Design	54
3.2 Samples	54
3.3 Instrument	55
3.4 Data Analysis	55

<b>4. Chapter Four: Data Analysis</b>	
4.0 Introduction	57
4.1 Analysis	57
<b>5. Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendation</b>	
5.0 Introduction	99
5.1 Summary of the Study	99
5.2 Findings and Conclusion	100
5.3 Recommendations	101
5.4 Suggestions for further research	102
List of Sources & References	103
Abstract in Arabic Language	111

## List of Tables

<b>Table No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
4.1	Item 1: The Bassmallah	57
4.2	Item 2: Verse 1	59
4.3	Item 3: Verse 2	60
4.4	Item 4: Verse 3	62
4.5	Item 5: Verse 6	64
4.6	Item 6: Verse 10	66
4.7	Item 7: Verse 11	67
4.8	Item 8: Verse 12	69
4.9	Item 9: Verse 14	71
4.10	Item 10: Verse 16	73
4.11	Item 11: Verse 20	74
4.12	Item 12: Verse 21	76
4.13	Item 13: Verse 23	78
4.14	Item 14: Verse 26	79
4.15	Item 15: Verse 28	81
4.16	Item 16: Verse 35	83
4.17	Item 17: Verse 39	84
4.18	Item 18: Verse 41	86
4.19	Item 19: Verse 46	87
4.20	Item 20: Verse 47	89
4.21	Item 21: Verse 61	91
4.22	Item 22: Verse 65	93
4.23	Item 23: Verse 75	95
4.24	Results of the analysis	97

## **List of Figures**

<b>Figure No.</b>	<b>Caption</b>	<b>page</b>
2.1	Catford Typology of Translation	30

## **Table of Abbreviations**

### **Symbols**

### **Nomenclatures**

SL	Source Language
TL	Target Language
ST	Source Text
TT	Target Text
Pbuh	Peace be upon him



# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **Introduction**

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the background of the study, the problem, objectives and the questions it aims to answer. It also refers to the significance of the study and its limitation.

### 1.1 Background of the study.

Language is an amazing instrument that shapes our perceptions of and interactions with the outside world, as well as defining our humanity. It's a complex communication system that lets us share our ideas, feelings, and thoughts. Language has many different forms and purposes, ranging from spoken words to written texts and signed gestures.

According to Fromkin and Roadman (1999), language is the foundation of human existence; each language has a unique structure, grammar, and vocabulary, and its power stems from its meanings and functions, which enable communication.

Verderber (1999) defined language as " the body of words and the system for their use in communicating that are common to the people of the same community or nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural tradition" (p.52). According to Richards et al. (1992), language is "the system of human communication which consists of the structured arrangement of sounds (or their written representation) into larger units" (p. 196).

#### 1.1.1 Arabic

Arabic is a Semitic language that first appeared in the mid-ninth century BCE in northern Arabia and Sahara Southern Levant. Al-Huri (2016, p.29) stated that:

Among Semitic languages, Arabic has been described as the most widely spoken with a number of over 330 million speakers according to the CIA report for 2008 besides being the sacred language of more than a billion Muslims around

the world. It is the sixth most widely spoken language in the world and one of the six official languages of the United Nations. Of the 330 million native speakers of Arabic, many millions are Christians and few are Jews. However, the great majority of Arabic speakers are Muslims. Arabic is spoken not only in one variety but also rather in different varieties across the Arab World.

Arabic is the only Semitic tongue which has remained uninterruptedly alive for thousands of years; and it is the only living language which has remained entirely unchanged for the last fourteen centuries (Asad, 1980).

Al-Gousi (2016) claims that the characteristics of the Arabic language make it one of the world's most distinctive languages. While some of its specific features are syntactic, others are semantic. One of Arabic's specific semantic characteristics is that it is an expressive language because so much of its vocabulary cannot be translated or transferred. It conveys the intended meaning in the most accurate and straightforward manner possible.

Another characteristic of Arabic referred to by Al-Gousi (2016) is its comprehensiveness. The language has a large vocabulary and each word has a distinct meaning and connotations, for example, there are various interpretations and synonyms of the word **حزن** such as **الغم، الشجن، الترح، الأسى،** etc. The Arabic language has an effect on its readers' emotion and feelings since it is rhetorical language in which metaphors and many other figures of speech are widely used. Morphology in Arabic has an important rule. Nouns, verbs and adjectives are inflected for person, number, gender and case and it has a flexible word order.

### **1.1.2 The Qur'anic Language**

It is indisputable that the Qur'an is a literary masterpiece. Beyond question is the fact that it is a singular and unmatched perfection of language, style, eloquence, and power that the eloquent peoples of the Arabian Peninsula in the 7<sup>th</sup> century had never encountered before.(Saeh,2015).

From a linguistic perspective, the Qur'an is neither poetry nor prose, but it captures the lovely aspects of both in a way that makes it more graceful than poetry and

more flowing than prose. "The Qur'anic Arabic is distinguished by sublimity and excellence of sound and eloquence, rhetoric and metaphor, assonance and alliteration, onomatopoeia and rhyme, ellipse and parallelism. The Qur'an's language is so unparalleled in both its expression and significance that no translator or commentator could ever fully translate it into any other language." (Ahmed,2005).

The untranslatability of the Qur'anic language was also confirmed by Asad (1980) who stated in his forward that the arrangement of the Quran words within sentences, the rhythm and sound of its phrases and their syntactic construction, the way a metaphor almost imperceptibly flows into a pragmatic statement, and the use of acoustic stress to alludes to concepts that are implied but not explicitly stated makes the Qur'anic language unique and untranslatable.

The singularity and uniqueness of the Quranic language style is consisted of the unity of sentences, the harmony of structure, and the greatness of eloquence.

According Laghrissi (2019) the Qur'anic sentences exhibit precision mastery in their composition, as evidenced by the precise system that places each word in its proper syntactic position and the intention behind any structural changes. These characteristics are also present at the word level. As a result, the Qur'anic composition occurs in a marvelous way that deviates from the accepted structure of all Arabic speech and bases its expressive technique on a foundation that is distinct from the everyday Arabic

Similarly, Abdul-Raof (2004) states that the language of the Quran is a rainbow of syntactic, semantic, rhetorical, phonetic, and cultural features that are distinct from other types of Arabic discourse." In a similar vein, Philips (1997) contended that the literary style, rhythm, and rhyme of the Quran are what make it miraculous.

The Quranic language is rich in vocabularies, which refer to specific ideas with more details. Ali (1938, p.xvi) stated that "the rich vocabulary of the Quran distinguishes between things and ideas of a certain kind by special words, for which there is only a general word in English. Instances are Rahman and Raheem (most merciful)".

### 1.1.3 Problems of Translating the Quran

Translating the Holy Quran from Arabic into English is accompanied with so many linguistic difficulties. Problem related to the style, lexicon, syntax, and semantics occur when interpreting the meaning of the Holy Quran in English.

#### 1.1.3.1 Stylistic problems

Stylistics according to Crystal (1988) is " a branch of linguistics which studies the features of situationally distinctive uses (varieties) of language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for particular choices made by individual and social situations"(p.x). Style is a part of meaning, it is one of the problems that face the translators which may affect the meaning strongly. Among the stylistic problems are the degree of formality and sound including the rhythm, ambiguity and ellipsis.

#### A. Formality vs. Informality

Joos (1962, as cited in Ghazalla, 1995) stated that there are five degrees of formality as follows:

Frozen Formal	فصيح جداً
Formal	فصيح
Informal	غير فصيح
Colloquial	عامي
Vulgar or Slang	سوقي

The style employed in the Holy Quran is so lofty and frozen formal. This formality contributes a lot in conveying the meanings attended by Allah. The translators find it difficult to find an equivalent for this formal sublime style in the target language and consequently this results in a loss of the intended meaning.

## B. Rhythm:

Rhythm and rhyme are rhetorical devices, which cause a big challenge for the translators to render to the TL; here are some examples from the Holy Quran in which translators failed to maintain them in the ST:

﴿ مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ ﴿١٩﴾ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ ﴿٢١﴾ ﴾ (الرحمن: ١٩ - ٢٠)

"He has set free the two bodies of flowing water, meeting together (19) between them is a barrier which they do not transgress" (Yusuf Ali)

﴿ ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِمَّنْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ ﴿٥٣﴾ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴾ (البقرة: ٥٢ - ٥٣)

"Even then we did forgive you there was a chance for you to be grateful (52) and remember we gave Moses the scripture and the criterion (between right and wrong): there was a chance for you to be guided aright" (Yusuf Ali). Bousalem & Mahiou (2016, p. 3).

## C. Ambiguity:

According to Hudson (2000), "ambiguity exists when a form has two or more meanings" (p313). He classified ambiguity as two types" lexical ambiguity and structural ambiguity" (p.313) the lexical ambiguity according to him includes: homographs, homophones, homonymy and polysemy whereas the structural ambiguity includes: grouping ambiguity and function ambiguity" (pp.313-314).

Ambiguity in the Holy Quran can arise due to various factors, such as the use of metaphorical language, historical and cultural context or the presence of linguistic nuances. Additionally, some verses may address general principles or universal concepts that require further elaboration or contextualization for a complete understanding.

Abdul-Raof (2001) stated that "structural ambiguity requires careful exegetical exploration in order to decide its accurate meaning in the target text; a Quran translation which lacks reference to Quran exegesis leads to innovations and inaccuracies" (p.74).

There are many examples of ambiguity in the translations of the Holy Quran, here is an example stated by Sadiq (2008):

﴿ يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي مَوْلَىٰ عَنْ مَوْلَىٰ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴾ (الدخان: ٤١)

"The day a patronize will not avail any patronized thing ( Ghali )

Sadiq (2008) discussed the example he stated that "any patronized thing" is rendered literally and syntactically vague. Patronized does not refer to the thing, it refers to someone who is in need for support by the patronize. The translation does not render the meaning accurately, it can be simply translated as "the Day (when) a supporter will not benefit anyone asking for support anything" (Sadiq 2008, p. 43). The translator should adapt simplicity in translating the Holy Quran to obtain clarity and avoid ambiguity.

#### **D. Ellipsis:**

Ellipsis is the omission of some parts of a sentence, which can be understood from either the surrounding text or the situation itself. In this case, the translator is dealing with incomplete text, which causes a problem in translating the sacred texts. The translator, therefore, has to know the omitted words, then restructure the source text to be able to translate it to the target language.

According to Massoud (1988) Arabic is full of ellipsis so, when translating from Arabic into English the translator should take a great care to make the implicit in Arabic explicit in English (p.23).

Sadiq (2010, p.33) presented many examples of ellipsis in the Holy Quran, for example:

﴿ وَسَأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعَيْرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴾ (يوسف: ٨٢)

"Ask at the town where we have been and the caravan in which we returned, and (you will find) we are indeed telling the truth" (Yusuf Ali). As shown in this verse, there is ellipsis or omission of the word (people). The complete form of this sentence is (ask the people in the town – واسأل اهل القرية). The word people is ellipsed, since its ellipsis will not change or affect the meaning of the verse. It is better when translating this verse into

English to add the ellipsed word for the target reader to understand the meaning correctly. In this case, the word-for-word translation or literal translation is not accepted.

### 1.1.3.2 Syntactic problems

In translation, differences between languages pose various problems; the number of these problems depends on the degree of relatedness between the source language and the target language. In the case of Arabic and English they are from two different families, which will increase the number of syntactic problems, the most common ones are tenses and conditions.

#### A. Tenses:

According to Sadiq (2010), tense is the grammatical realization of location in time and how location in time can be expressed in language. In English, there are 12 tenses most of which have no equivalents in Arabic, for instance: the present continuous and the present perfect. In Arabic the past tense refers to the past, present or future time, if the translator failed to capture the intended reference to time, this may cause a serious semantic loss.

As-Safi (2006, p.6) gave an example of the word جاء Jaa'a in the translations of the Holy Quran with good explanation:

﴿ وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ ﴾ (الأعراف: ١١٣)  
﴿ وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ ﴾ (ق: ١٩)  
﴿ وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ﴾ (الإسراء: ٨١)  
﴿ وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا فَتَحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا ﴾ (الزمر: ٧١)

In the above, four verses the verb Jaa'a refers to the past, present, present perfect and future tenses respectively:

1. "The sorcerers came to Pharaoh."
2. "And the agony of death comes in truth."



3. "say: truth has (now) come and falsehood has vanished."

4. "And those who disbelieve will be driven in throngs to hell, till they have come to it, the gates therefore, will be opened." (translated by As-Safi)

The translator of the second verse failed to capture the present tense:

"And the stupor of death will bring truth (before his eyes)" (Yusuf Ali)

"And the stupor of death will come in truth" (Hilali & Khan)

The fourth verse refers to the judgment day where the future tense is more suitable, whereas Pickthall used the present tense:

"And those who disbelieve are driven unto hell in troops till, when they reach it, and the gates therefore are opened"

Abdel-Haleem (as cited in Ali et. al. 2012, p.588) argued that there is a shift in tenses in the Holy Quran from the past tense to the imperfect tense in purpose to achieve an effect which results in some syntactic problems while translating to English, he gave example to support his point of view as follows:

﴿ إِذْ جَاءُوكُم مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونًا ﴾ (الأحزاب: ١٠)

"Behold! They came on you from above you and from below you, and behold, the eyes became dim and the hearts gaped up to the throats, and ye imagined various (vain) thoughts about Allah!" (Yusuf Ali).

Ali et al. (2012) stated that the verb جاءوكم (comes against you), زاغت (grew wild), and بلغت (reached) are in the past tense, but the verb تظنون (think) shifts to the present tense. This shift is for conjuring an important action in the mind as if it were happening in the present. These tenses would not be suitable to translate them literally from Arabic to English because the shift is needed some times to render the meaning as accurate as possible.

## B. Condition:

Condition is considered another syntactic problem where avertable loss occurred in translation due to the differences between Arabic and English syntax system. For example: there are four types of condition in English: real, probable, improbable and impossible. The verb form in the conditional clause and main clause determines each type of condition. The conditional particles 'if' and 'unless' do not play any role in the determinacy of any of the above types. Sometimes the auxiliary verbs 'were', 'had' or the modal verb 'should', are used instead of the particles in the dependent clauses.

Whereas in Arabic according to As-Safi (2006, p.8) there are only two main types of conditions: real and impossible. They are both determined by the conditional particles 'إن' 'in', 'إذا' 'ithaa' and 'لو' 'law'. The first two particles in Arabic denote the first two types in English, while the third Arabic particle denotes the other two types in English and requires prefixing the main verb with 'laam', 'لم' for example:

﴿ فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴾ (البقرة: ٢٤)

In the Holy Quran, only 'إن' and 'لو' are used for explicit condition while 'إذا' is a temporal particle, sometimes with implicit condition, equivalent to when for example:

﴿ وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا ﴾ (النساء: ٨٦)

Here are three examples of the translations of a Quranic verse from Surat Al-Baqarah stated by Boussalem and Mahiou (2016) where the translators used the impossible condition, which semantically contradicts the second part of the verses because Allah is capable to do everything:

﴿ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَرِهِمْ إِنَّا اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴾ (البقرة: ٢٠)

"And if Allah willed, he will take away their faculty of hearing and seeing, for Allah hath power over all things" (Yusuf Ali)

"Had God willed, he would have taken away their hearing and their sights. Truly God is powerful over everything" (Arberry)

"And if Allah willed, He could have taken away their hearing and sight. Certainly, Allah has power over all things" (Hilali and Khan).

### 1.1.3.3 Semantic problems

Semantics is known as the science of meaning in language. Many scholars have provided several definitions for the term semantics, according to Harford et al. (2007) "semantics is the study of meaning in a language" (p.1). The meaning of study in this definition is trying to set up theories, which are suitable for all languages according to the semantic facts. Crystal (1991) argued that semantics is one of the main branches of linguistics, which studies the meaning (p.310). According to Yule (2010), semantics is concerned with the aspects of meaning in language. It deals with the description of words and sentences (p.112).

Semantics is the study of meaning at word, phrase, sentence levels and larger units of discourse. Translators always face semantic problems due to the lack of equivalence in the target language especially when translating the Holy Quran because of the complexity of some words. Metaphor and polysemy is a common semantic problems in translation.

#### A. Metaphor:

Metaphor is " a word or phrase used to describe something else, in a way that is different from its normal use, in order to show that the two things have the same qualities and to make the description more powerful" as stated in Cambridge Dictionary. Metaphors (مجاز in Arabic) along with other rhetorical usages are an important part of language style; in the Quranic texts, they play an important role in different interpretations of the Holy Quran. The use of metaphors in the Holy Quran is a serious problem encountered by translators, which may result in semantic loss; therefore, the translators should consider it while translating the Quranic verses. Here are a following example discussed by Ali et al. (2012 , p. 589).

﴿ أَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهَ أَبِيكُمْ ﴾ (يوسف: ٩)

"Kill (you) Joseph, or cast him forth into some land, that your father's face may be free for you, and therefore you may be a righteous people (Arberry).

Arberry translated the metaphorical expression, *yakhlo lakum wajh abeekum* "وجه أبيكم يخلو لكم" literally in the verse, which is completely out of context. The "your father's face may be free for you" which is considered a literal translation may not be clear to the target reader. In this Quranic verse, the metaphorical expression means that the care and attention of their father will be passed on to them after they kill their brother Joseph, who received more care from Prophet Jacob (their father).

Another example from Surat Al- Imran the metaphorical expression, *la ta'akulu ar-riba* "لا تأكلوا الربا" is translated literally as eat and devour

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُّضَاعَفَةً ﴾ (آل عمران: ١٣٠)

"You who have believed, do not eat riba, double (and) redoubled" ( Ghali )

"O believers, devour not usury, doubled and doubled" (Arberry)

Almisend (2001) investigated how translators interpret the metaphors in Surat Al-Hajj. He found that the appropriate way to translate the metaphor is to explain or paraphrase the translation to make it more comprehensive for the target audience. (Ali et al. 2012, p. 589).

#### 1.1.3.4 Lexical problems

Lexical and morphological problems are among the prominent problems in translation in general and in translation of the Holy Quran in particular. These lexical problems may include synonymy, polysemy, culture-specific words, etc..

##### A. Synonymy

A frequently encountered problem in translating from Arabic into English is synonymy. According to Shunnaq (1992), the minute variations among cognitive synonyms make translating them difficult. For instance, it is impossible to understand the subtle distinction between *يغبط* [yaghbit] and *يحسد* [yahsud] without having a thorough understanding of the variations between Arabic synonyms. Because of this, translators sometimes use the word "envy" to mean both, even though this is entirely

inaccurate because the first word, **يغبط** [yaghbit], implies something positive, whereas , whereas the latter word, **يحسد** [yahsud], has a negative implication (Shehab, 2009).

In the Holy Qur'an, synonyms present a more complex problem. Certain Qur'anic words are occasionally rendered as synonyms by translators even though they are not. It can also be challenging to translate verbs that appear to be synonymous. For example Arberry interpreted **يقسم** *yuqsim* and **يخلف** *yahlif* as synonymous and translated them as "swear." However, the two verbs have different meanings in Arabic. The Holy Qur'an the verb **يقسم** *yuqsim* to believers and **يخلف** to refer to hypocrites and disbelievers (Shehab, 2009). Unlike English, Arabic has a lot of synonyms among which there are subtle differences, and this complicate the task of the translator.

### **B. Polysemy:**

Crystal (1991) described polysomy as "a lexical item which has a range of different meanings" (p.267). According to Kalakattowi (2005) polysemy is "a phenomenon in which a word has several different meanings that are closely related to each other" (p.4). It is considered as one of the linguistic and semantic features of the Holy Quran in which the translator may face difficulty to render the intended meaning of the word because it is not easy to distinguish between the various senses and meanings of this word. We can find many examples of polysemic words in the Holy Quran, for instance: as stated in Ali et al. (p.589-590) the polysemic word **أمة** "umma" has nine various meanings rather than people. It can refer to the leader of a group of people who guide them to the right path and teaches them what is right and what is wrong in their life and religion.

﴿ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَّلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ ﴾ (النحل: ١٢٠)

"Abraham was indeed a model, devoutly obedient to Allah, (and) true in faith, and he joined not gods with Allah" (Yusuf Ali)

"Surely, Abraham was a nation obedient unto God, a man of pure faith and no idolater" (Arberry).

Arberry's translation has a complete loss in meaning and it is so out of context, the word **umma** in this verse dose not refer to nation. (Ali et al., p.589).

Another example of the word 'ummah', which refer to a period of time:

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ ﴾ (يوسف: ٤٥)

"But the man who had been released, one of the two (who had been in prison) and who now bethought him after (so long) a space of time, said: ' I will tell you the truth of its interpretation: send ye me (therefore)'" (Yusuf Ali) (Ali et al., year p.589).

Another case of the word 'ummah' refers to the religion that some people follow

﴿ بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴾ (الزخرف: ٢٢)

"Nay but they say, ' we found our fathers upon a community, and we are guided upon their traces' " (Arberry)

A literal translation of this verse was adapted by Arberry to render the meaning, however, it was not suitable in this case because it does not reflect the meaning intended, that is beliefs, or religion not community. A communicative translation was a better choice. It should be comprehended that the translator must pay attention to the phenomenon of polysemy in the Holy Quran and try to use exegesis books to distinguish between the various polysomic meanings of the word to give an accurate translation to the verse. (Ali et al., 2012).

### C. Culture Specific and Bound words

According to Sadiq (2008), the culture-bound words are "those words that are deeply rooted in a given culture" (p.52) Therefore, only the people of that culture can understand it as it's colored by the features of that culture.

Sadiq (2008, p.53) discussed an example regarding cultural words as follows:

﴿ وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ ﴾ (لقمان: ١٨)

He stated that the word *تصعر* is related to the culture of desert, it is used as a verb from the noun *الصعر*, which is a disease that affects camels and twists their necks.

The affected camel with this disease walks with straight forward chest and a twisted neck to the right or to the left side in a funny way.

It is translated by Pickthall as "turn not thy cheek in scorn toward folk"

Moreover, by Ali as "turn not thy cheek (for pride) at men"

Arberry "turn not thy cheek away from men in scorn"

Ghali "do not turn your cheek away haughtily from mankind"

None of these translations succeeded to give the intended image of the affected camel that appears in a funny way.

Another cultural word is *الموءودة* that means the infant girl who is buried alive.

﴿ وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ ﴿٨﴾ بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ ﴿٩﴾ ﴾ (التكوير: 8-9)

This word is deeply related to the culture of pagan Arabs when they used to kill their daughters that way fearing the shame. It is translated by Arberry as "the buried infant", and by Irving as "the buried girl"

These translations have not rendered the complete meaning of the word and it just indicate the burial which can be understood as she might be buried after she died and does not give the idea that she's been killed by burying her alive.

Another example discussed by Bousalem & Mahiou (2014) is the verse:

﴿ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْغَمَامَ ﴾ (البقرة: ٥٧)

The word *غمام* in the Arabic culture reflects bounty and goodness as they live in a desert in hot weather and the clouds refer to what may cooling this hot weather. The word *غمام* is translated as 'clouds' in almost all the Quranic translations, which may be misunderstood as punishment from God rather than bounty due to the climatic differences in some regions known for their cold and wet weather. All these problems discussed above leads to loss in translation especially semantic loss.

#### 1.1.4 Semantic loss

Dickins et al. (2002) claimed that translation loss is "the incomplete replication of the ST in the TT that is inevitable loss of textuality and culturally relevant features" (p. 21). Nida is a rich source of information regarding problems and solutions encountered with loss of meaning in translation, especially when it comes to the concepts and terms in the SL with no direct equivalence in the TL, which stands as an obstacle in the way of the translator. Loss occurs in any kind of translation due to the cultural, linguistic and rhetorical texts such as the sacred texts of the Holy Quran. Loss refers to the disappearance of specific features in the TL text, which exist in the SL text. It is impossible for the TL to be identical to the SL; every language in the world has its own environment, rules and properties.

Loss can be either partial or complete; however, the partial loss appears to be common and frequently occurs. In the case of translating the meaning of the Holy Quran, which is a highly complex and full of rhythm and rhetorical characteristics, the loss is a very serious problem. According to Baker (1992), there are two types of loss the inevitable loss and the avertable loss. Those types can be recognized on the semantic, syntactic, stylistic, textual and morphological levels.

Inevitable loss occurs as a result of the divergent systems and differences between the SL and the TL regardless of the level, skills or the competence of the translator. This type is more encountered while translating because it is inevitable that there is no language, which typically matches another language even if they are among the same family. Therefore, the translator tend to use compensatory strategies.

Abdelaal (2017) argued that the reason behind semantic loss is the "differences in mapping vocabularies between the different languages and the differences of the semantic fields between the SL and the TL (p. 6)." Another reason is when a single lexeme has more than one meaning

The main cause of this type of loss is *untranslatability* especially at the cultural and linguistic levels. The cultural untranslatability is caused by the cultural gap between the source and the target culture, which leads to the absence of a relevant situational feature equivalent in the target language, which is present in the source language. This leads to the fact that there are some concepts which are exclusive to a specific language, due to that the loss occurs.



On the other hand, the avertable loss is a result of the translator's failure to achieve the most accurate equivalence. Therefore, it depends heavily on the translator's competency. If the translator is not able to choose the suitable equivalence, here the avertable loss occurs.

### **1.1.5 Gain in translation**

According to Hervey and Higgins (1992) "seeking to minimize differences, 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" (p.24).

As the loss is an expected result of the numerous differences between any SL and TL especially when dealing with sacred texts, however gain in translation is not an elusive task. Consequently, in order for a translator to achieve this, they should enrich the target text or to clarify what is ambiguous in the source text. According to Bassnett (2002) "the translator can at times enrich or clarify the SL text, moreover, what is often seen as 'lost' from the SL context may be replaced in the TL context" (p.38). Nida and Taber (1969) assured the same opinion when they stated, "whereas one inevitably loses many idioms in the process of translation, one can also stand to gain a number of idioms" (p. 106).

It is to comprehend that a translator ought to adopt some certain strategies and solutions in order to produce as accurate translation as possible, such as compensation, paraphrasing, annotation and explanation.

Explanation is one of the most strategies used in translating the Holy Quran, in which a translator attempts to create "equilibrium or balance between the SL aesthetic and cultural values which are acceptable or unacceptable in the TL (As-Safi, 2011, p. 59)", by using compromise strategies to explain and clarify the vague words of the ST.

As an example of applying the explanation strategy, in his translation of the Holy Quran, Yusuf Ali used commentaries at the end of verses which have ambiguous terms, for instance in Surat Al-Baqarah, verse (185), the word Alfurqan "الفرقان":

﴿ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ﴾  
(البقرة: ١٨٥)

"Ramadhan is the month in which was sent down the Quran, a guide to mankind, also clear signs for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong)"

Furqan means the standard or criterion by which we judge between right and wrong. Ali provided a short explanation of the word, judgment between right and wrong to avoid ambiguous meaning for the target reader.

## 1.2 Surat Maryam

Surat Maryam is one of the chapters in the Holy Quran that was revealed to prophet Mohammed (pbuh) in Mecca as unanimously agreed by Quran scholars. Based on the story of Jafar Bin Abi Taleb when he recited some verses from the Surah to Al-Najashi ,the king of Ethiopia, when Muslims migrated to his land, and that was before the prophet's migration to Madinah (Tantawi, 1998, p. 9).

Surat Maryam has ninety-eight verses and it is included in the sixteenth part, especially after Surat Al-Kahf (The Cave). Therefore, it is the nineteenth Surah according to the Othmani Quran order of the Surahs.(Al-Thalabi, 2002, p. 205).

According to Tantawi (1998), Surat Maryam is the only Surah that is named after a woman, Maryam (Mary) the mother of Isa (Jesus) (pbuh). She is also the only woman whose name is mentioned in the Holy Quran, due to her high standing in Islam. (p. 9).

Al-Rajihi (n.d.), stated some of the numerous topic of Surat Maryam, and here is a brief mention of them: The story of Zechariah when he asked Allah - the Almighty - for a son, and Allah's response to him despite his old age and the sterility of his wife. The story of Maryam, and how her son Isa (pbuh) was born as a prophet and the denial of the Christians belief that Isa is the Son of God. The story of Abraham (pbuh) with his father and his advice to him, along with an explanation of the advice that Abraham gave to his father. The stories of a number of prophets, such as: the story of Mosa and Haroun, the story of Ismaiel, and the story of Idris, with some brevity. An explanation

of the fate of believers and unbelievers on the Day of Resurrection, and how each group will be led to its refuge.

Al-Wahidi (1411 H, p. 308-310) discussed some sayings of the prophet (hadiths) that have been mentioned in the Sunnah which explain the reasons for the revelation of some verses of Surat Maryam. Verse 66

وَيَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَإِذَا مَا مِيتُ لَسَوْفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيًّا ﴿٦٦﴾

was revealed when Ubayy Ibn Khalaf denied resurrection after death. He took worn-out bones and crumbled them in his hands, and said: Muhammad claimed that we will be resurrected after death (Al-Wahidi, 1411 H).

### **1.3 Background of the Translators and Their Translation Work**

#### **1.3.1 A. J. Arberry:**

Arthur John Arberry, often referred to as A. J Arberry. He was a well-known British orientalist. He was a scholar of Arabic and Islamic studies. Arberry was born in 1905 in Portsmouth, England. He received his education of Arabic and Persian studies at Cambridge University. He obtained his Doctorate in Semitic languages from the University of London. After that, he went to Cairo and served as the head of the classic department. According to Bousalem and Mahio (2014) when he returned to Pembroke in 1947, he became 'Sir Thomas Adams professor of Arabic'.

Although Arberry was a non-Muslim, his translation work is considered one of the most authoritative and faithful translation of the Holy Quran by many Muslim scholars. According to Khan, (1997, as cited in Nassimi, 2008), "Arberry himself criticized other non-Muslim, Quran translators for their failure to do justice to the accuracy, rhetoric and artistry of the original text" (p. 55).

Arberry (1980, p. 25) stated that:

my chief reason for offering this view version of a book which has been translated many times already is that in no previous rendering has a serious attempt been made to imitate, however, imperfectly, those rhetorical and rhythmical patterns which are the glory and the sublimity of the Koran .

Although, according to Nassimi (2008), Arberry in his translation gathered some verses without dealing with each verse separately and maintaining its number. It also carries some mistranslations, for instance, the Title of Surat Al-Room which means the Romans is mistranslated as "The Greeks" and the phrase Al-nabi Al-Ummi النبي الأُمِّي in verse 7 Surah number, 157 is mistranslated as "the prophet of common folk". Moreover, his translation "suffers from lack of experiential and sensible access of the subject matter" Nassimi (2008, p. 56).

From Muslims point of view, and regarding the translatability of the Holy Quran and that it can be interpreted only, Arberry entitled his translation work "The Quran Interpreted", which was published at first time in 1955.

### **1.3.2 George Sale:**

George Sale was an English scholar and orientalist born in 1697 in Kent, England. It is worth mentioning that he was a member of a society for promoting Christian knowledge and had trained as a solicitor in his early life.

His translation work was the second English translation of the Holy Quran Al-Azzam (2005). Sale's translation served as a reference for English readers almost until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He is most known for his translation of the Holy Quran into English. His translation work entitled "The Koran, commonly called the AlCoran of Mohammed" was first published in 1734.

His translation carries within it grave mistakes and errors as a result of two reasons, the first reason according to Hosni (1990) is that his translation is not direct process from the original text, as he did not grasp the Arabic language. His translation is based on Marracci's Latin translated version of the Holy Quran which was published in 1698.

The second reason, as Ashaer (2013) stated is that Sale assures that he lacked time to consult any public libraries nor to refer to any of the Holy Quran exegesis while translating

Another reason according to Al-Malik (1995) is that he dealt with the Quranic text too literally. The translation work of George Sale is a biased work and anti-Islamic since it has unnecessary cases of omission and mistranslations. "It suffers from biases

against Islam to the extent that Sale criticizes Ross for not being anti-Islamic enough" (Nassimi, 2008, p. 50).

### **1.3.3 Hilali and Khan**

Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan were two prominent well-known scholars who collaborated to produce a widely spread English Translation of the Holy Quran.

Dr. Al-Hilali was a Moroccan scholar and native Arabic speaker who was born in 1311 A.H., 1935. He memorized the Holy Quran at the age of 12. He pursued an education of Islamic studies like the Quranic science along with Arabic grammar. After obtaining his higher studies in Egypt and Berlin, he became a respected Islamic scholar in Islamic Fiqh (Jurisprudence) and Tafseer.

Dr. Muhammad Mohsin Khan was a Muslim Pakistani scholar who was born in 1345 A. H., 1927. He received his education from Punjab University and obtained his M.B.B.S., after that he went to the UK and completed his post-graduate diploma in chest diseases. He served as a physician in Saudi Arabia ( Hilali & Khan, 1993, p.xiv).

He translated Saheeh Al-Bukhari and completed his work in 1969. After correcting and revising his translation work of Saheeh Al-Bukhari by Dr. Al-Hilali, they "used to come across the translations of the meanings of some verses of the Quran, some of them translated wrongly and some needed clarifications" (Hilali & Khan, 1993,p.xi).

Hilali and Kan concluded that the mistranslations of the Holy Quran is due to the lack of understanding the exact meaning.

Hilali and Khan have translated the Holy Quran in a readable and simple language based on the Quran exegesis using commentary and explanatory notes, which helped to understand the context and the intended meaning of the verses. The Arabic words which are difficult to translate are kept in Arabic and explained between parentheses.

Nassimi (2008, p.84-85) stated that:

Hilali and Khan's translation was published in 1974 under the title Explanatory English translation of the meaning of the Holy Qur'an: a summarized version of ibn

Kathir supplemented by at- Tabari with comments from Saheeh Al-Bukhari. It was re-issued in 1976 while the second revised edition was published in 1978.

#### **1.3.4 N. J. Dawood:**

Nessim Joseph Dawood, known as N. J. Dawood, was an Iraqi-Jewish and native Arabic speaker. Kidway (1987, as cited in Nassimi 2008) assured that Dawood is the only Jew who translated the Holy Quran into English language.

His first translation work was one of the best-selling translations and was available in The Pinguin edition (London, 1956). This edition reflects his biases against Islam, which is clear in the introduction along with adapting different order for the chapters (Surahs).

According to Hosni (1990), Dawood did not follow the original known order of Surahs in his first translation work of the Holy Quran . Dawood has produced a new different order because he believed that there is no need or clear purpose to have the original order as it is.

Nassimi (2008) stated that Dawood in his 1990 edition, rearranged the Surahs following the original Quranic order. According to Ashaer (2013) one grave mistake of Dawood's translation is that he did not deal with each verse as a separate entity, she gave example from Surat Yusuf that he jumped from verse 88 to verse 94 and the rest of verses between those two are joined together using connectors which are not found in the source text.

Al-Sowaidi (2008) stated that Dawood mistranslated the Holy Quran in some Surahs for instance, Al-Baqarah (2:9) and Al-Aaraf (7:31), etc., his translation is "marred by serious mistakes" Nassimi (2008, p.56).

#### **1.3.5 M. M. Ghali**

Mohammed Mahmoud Ghali, known as M. M. Ghali, was an Egyptian scholar and translator known for his translation of the Holy Quran into English. He was born in Egypt in 1920. He studied English language and literature, in which he obtained a bachelor's degree from Fouad I University (currently Cairo). After that, he moved to the UK to complete his education. He studied postgraduate studies in the field of English language and phonetics at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom, then moved

to the United States, where he obtained master's and doctorate degrees in linguistics from the University of Michigan, and from there to Japan, where he studied phonetics in Japanese universities.

In his professional life, he taught English, linguistics, and phonetics at the universities of Cairo and Al-Azhar in Egypt, and at King Saud and King Abdulaziz in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for half a century.

Ghali's main approach in translating the Holy Quran is the distinction among Quranic synonyms. There is no word that can replace another word, no matter how similar they are in the Holy Quran. This study of such differences represents an integrated approach to transferring the meanings of the Quran to English.

This approach led to one of the most accurate translations of the Holy Quran, in which Ghali worked solo for 7 continuous years, relying on over 20 previous translations.

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

This study investigates and assesses the semantic loss in five selected English translations of Surat Maryam at the word level. It particularly seeks to identify the type of semantic loss that occurs in the targeted Surah i.e. complete loss or partial loss and the reasons behind this loss. Moreover, the current study aims to identify the best strategy that can be used to overcome semantic loss.

Religious text translation is extremely difficult because there are many factors that must be taken into account by the translator. This is especially true of Quranic texts, where it is necessary to provide an appropriate equivalency that both conveys the intended message and has the same effect on the reader. This is especially true because the language of the Holy Quran is seen as a linguistic miracle making it totally distinct from other books. This problem is confirmed by so many scholars and researchers such as Khalaf & Yusoff, (2012) who state that translating the Holy Quran is challenging due to the existence of certain Qura'nic lexicons that are unique to the Qur'an and lack English equivalents. For instance, the Qur'anic word **تَيَمَّمُوا** [tayammamoo] does not have an equivalent word in English. The original meaning of this word may therefore be lost in any attempt to translate it into English. Similarly, Abdul-Raof, (2004) and AlQinai, (2011) state that there are some mistranslations and deviations in the English

translations of the Holy Quran attributing them to the translators' failure to consult the interpretations of the Holy Qur'an, ignorance of Arabic linguistics, and an inability to interpret and communicate the subtleties of words with multiple meanings.

This study is hoped to be of importance to translation students, who may find themselves involved in translating religious texts such as the Holy Quran as it will provide them with significant linguistic features of religious texts, the translation hindrances expected to be found in such texts and the appropriate translation procedures to overcome them.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the current study are as follows:

1. To investigate if there are any semantic loss occurred in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam.
2. To identify the type of semantic loss (partial or complete) that occurred in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam.
3. To identify the reasons behind the semantic loss in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam.
4. To identify the best strategies that can be used to overcome semantic loss in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam.

### **1.6 Questions of the Study**

This current study aims at answering the following questions:

1. Is there any semantic loss occurred in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam?
2. What are the types of semantic loss that occurred in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam?
3. What are the reasons behind the semantic loss in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam?
4. What are the best strategies that can be used to overcome semantic loss in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam?



### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study is of importance as it shows how semantic loss may result in a distorted inaccurate translation of SL text. This study makes a considerable contribution to the fields of religious studies and religious text translations. It examines how accurately the meaning of Surat Maryam—a text with great religious and cultural significance—is conveyed. Preserving the meaning of its verses would be crucial to the Quranic message because it vehemently opposes the notion that Isa (Jesus) is the son of Allah and vigorously defends monotheism, which is the central idea in Islam..

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

The current study focuses only on the semantic loss at the word level in five selected English translations of surat Maryam. These translations are as follows::

1. A. J. Arberry , The Quran Interpreted.
2. George Sale , The Koran.
3. M. M. Ghali , Towards Understanding The Ever-Glorious Quran.
4. Hilali and Khan , Interpretations of the Meanings of the Noble Quran in English language.
5. N. J. Dawood ,The Quran.

The investigation will include only translations of 23 (including the Basmalah) verses in Surat Maryam and 34 words within these verses.

### **1.9 Definitions of Terms**

**Semantics:** "The relationship between signs or symbols created by human beings and their referents, corresponding roughly to what people usually think of meaning" ( Nida,1964, p.34).

**Semantic loss:** or translation loss, according to Dickens (2002, p. 21) "translation loss means the incomplete replication of the ST in the TT, that is the inevitable loss of textually and culturally relevant features".

**Quran exegesis (Tafseer).** It is defined by the North East Islamic Community Center (n.d) as: a branch of science, which explains the Holy Quran, the Sacred Book of Allah in a manner which people are able to understand

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Literature Review**

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### **Literature Review**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter, which reviews the literature related to the topic of the current study, is composed of four sections: The first section reviews the concept of translation and its main theories. The second section reviews the translation of sacred texts in general and the Holy Quran in particular. The third section reviews the semantic loss. The last one reviews the empirical studies related to the semantic loss in the translation of the Holy Quran.

#### **2.1 Concept of Translation, its Main Theories and Strategies**

In our interconnected and globalized world, translation is of great importance to bridge the gaps between diverse cultures, languages and societies. The art of translation has a rich and varied history that spans centuries. From ancient civilizations to modern era, translation has served as a catalyst for cultural exchange and spreading religions. Translation has been a powerful tool in spreading Islam by making its religious texts, including the Quran and Hadith, accessible to diverse audience.

##### **2.1.1 Concept of Translation**

The concept Translation has the interest of many language experts and different translation scholars have discussed and defined it from different point of views.

Translation in general is known as the transference of speech from one language to another. The meaning of the word speech according to Arnold (1926, as cited in Assi, 2021) is "an expression for a collection of single words, each one of which corresponds to some particular meaning, either literally or morphologically" (p. 161).

Translation was discussed by Ghazalla (1995) who emphasized on the transmitting of the meaning of (SL), the language that we translate from, to the (TL), the language we translate into. For him, " translation usually refers to all the processes

and methods that used to render and/or transfer the meaning of the source language text into the target language as closely, completely and accurately as possible" (p.1).

Nida and Taber (1969) argued that "translation is a process of transferring message from the source language into the target language"(p. 15). In other words, translation conveys meaning through written and spoken language, message in the original language that understood by many speakers of the other languages.

According to Snell-Hornby (1988) translation is "a complex act of communication in which the Source Language–author, the reader as translator and translator as Target Language–author and the Target Language– reader interact" (p. 81). Translation is therefore a complex process in which authors, translators and readers interact with one another.

Newmark (1988) considered translation as an act of "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text" (p.5).The translator's duty, therefore, is to faithfully transfer both the meaning and the message of the (SL) into the (TL).

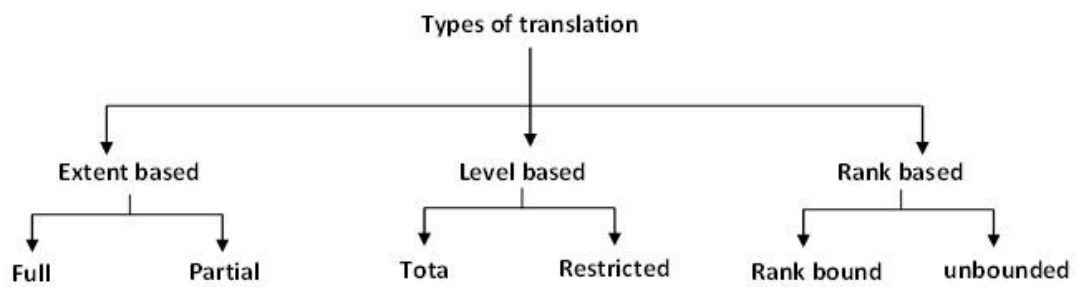
Catford stated that "translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by an equivalent textual material in another language (TL)" (1965, p. 20). Catford's definition leads us to a highly disputable issue in translation in general, and the translation of the Holy Quran in particular, which is "equivalence".

### **2.1.2 Translation theories**

Catford (1965) in his book ' A linguistic theory of translation ', introduced and set a theory of translation. His approach is analytical. According to him translation is an operation between two different languages, therefore he began to discuss language "Clearly, then, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language- a general linguistic theory" (Catford, 1965, p. 1). According to him, language is:

1. " A type of patterned human behavior ".
2. " A way in which human beings interact in social situation ".
3. An activity related to vocal movements and actual events ".

Catford believes that the act of translation can be proceed between any two languages whether they were related or unrelated. He adapts the linguistic approach which he sees as a question of replacing the SL linguistic units with TL equivalent units without reference to factors such as context or connotation. He has contributed to the field of translation by giving broad types of translation including extent, levels, and ranks.



*Figure 1: Catford Typology of Translation*

**Full:** if the whole text is rendered from SL to TL.

**Partial:** when a part of the SL is left untranslated and rendered to the TL as it is.

**Total:** when the SL text is translated into TL on all levels i.e. grammar, lexis and graphology.

**Restricted:** when the SL text is translated into the TL with focus only on one level.

**Rank bound:** when the SL text is translated at the same rank of TL i.e. sentence to sentence and word to word.

**Unbounded:** it is known as free translation.

According to Newmark (1981, p.19, as cited in As-Safi, 2011):

translation theory is concerned mainly with determining appropriate translation methods for the widest possible range of texts or text-categories. It also provides

a frame work of principles, restricted rules and hints for translating texts and criticizing translations, a background for problem solving.

Newmark (1988, p. 6) argues that translation is:

Firstly, a science: which refers to the knowledge of the facts as well as the language which describe them.

Secondly, it is a skill: which refers to appropriate usage of knowledge.

Thirdly, an art: it refers to the creativity of the translation.

Lastly, a matter of taste: which refers to the individual differences that leads to meritorious translation.

To him the process of translation should be done in four levels:

1. The textual level:

It is the base level when you translate the SL text into its ready TL equivalents (p.22).

2. The referential level:

It refers to the awareness of the type of the text that may affects the meaning (p.22).

3. The cohesive level:

It is the level when combing the tow previous levels, it refers to both the structure and the mood of the text (p.23).

4. The level of naturalness:

To make sure that your translation makes sense and reads naturally in ordinary language (p.24).

One of the most problematic areas in the field of translation theory is equivalence. The term equivalence is known as the stator condition of being equal. According to Hatim and Mason (1990) equivalence is "the closest possible approximation to (ST) meaning" (p. 8).

The concept of equivalence is undoubtedly one of the most challenging and controversial aspects of translation theory. It is generally understood to refer to the

relationship between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) in terms of their meaning. Hatim and Mason (1990) defined equivalence as "the closest possible approximation to (ST) meaning" (p. 8).

Jakobson focused on the issue of equivalence in translation between words in different languages and came to the result that there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code-units. According to him, "translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes."(1959, p. 233) this leads us to wonder how the messages can be equivalents in the (ST) and the (TT) while the cods are different.

Jakobson demonstrated that " from a grammatical point of view languages may differ from one another to a greater or lesser degree, but this does not mean that a translation cannot be possible" (Leonardi, 2000). This means that a translator may face the problem of the lack of equivalence in the (ST). Jakobson provided a number of examples through comparing English and Russian Language structures and explained that in such cases, when there is no literal equivalence for a particular (ST) word or sentence, it is the translator's duty to choose the most suitable strategy to render the meaning to the (TT) as accurate as possible.

Hatim and Munday (2004) observed that Jacobson discussed the problem of equivalence and introduced the notion of "equivalence in difference" which focuses on "differences in the structure and terminology of languages rather than the inability of one language to render a message that has been written in another language" (Al-Sowaidi, 2011, p. 29).

Many scholars have introduced the term equivalence with different classifications that still some of them have common sharing factors that can be obvious to anyone studying them in depth.

In his book *Towards a science of translating*, Nida (1964) introduced two types of equivalence : " formal equivalence" which is " basically source oriented ; that is designed to reveal as much as possible the form and content of the original message" (1964, p. 165). It focuses on the form and content of the source text. And, whereas the "dynamic equivalence" defined as "the closest natural equivalence to the source language message" (1964, p. 166). Furthermore it is more biased toward the target text and target culture, and tries to create the same effect experienced by the source language



reader. Nida explained that the main difference between those two approaches is the purpose of the translation.

Some translation scholars have argued about this classification of Nida . Hatim and Mason (1990, p. 8) claimed that the full accurate equivalence cannot be achievable because there is no perfect match of the formal and dynamic equivalence in the (TL) to the (SL). It would be very problematic to produce a flawless formal and dynamic equivalence since languages considerably differ from each other at the pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic levels. The loss of the intended message of the (ST) would definitely occur.

Newmark (1981) called for the use of the term 'semantic' instead of 'formal' ,and 'communicative' instead of 'dynamic'. Whereas Catford (1965) argued for 'formal' and 'textual' equivalence.

According to Newmark semantic translation is a process of rendering the semantic and syntactic structures of the (SL) to the (TL) as accurate as possible (1981, p. 39). It is a (SL) bias and loyal to the TL culture. On the contrary, the communicative translation has a SL bias. It tries to draw the same impact on the (TL) reader to that experienced by the (SL) reader (p. 39).

Farghal and Shunnaq (1999) argues for three types of equivalence:

1. Formal equivalence:

Which is the literal equivalence that captures the the form of the SL e.g. deadletter = حرفاً ميتاً (p.7).

2. Functional equivalence:

It captures the function of the SL expression and renders it into TL expression that provides the same function e.g. deadletter = حبراً على ورق (p.8).

3. Ideational equivalence:

It renders the communicative sense of the SL expression regardless of its function and form e.g. deadletter = غير مفعلة (p.8).

Hatim (2001, p. 28) pointed out, in his textual approach of equivalence, that equivalence in translation might be achieved at any or all of the following levels:

(SL) and (TL) words have the similar orthographic or phonological features (formal equivalence);

(SL) and (TL) words referring to the same thing in the real world (referential or denotative equivalence);

(SL) and (TL) words triggering the same or similar association in the minds of the speakers of two languages (connotative equivalence);

(SL) and (TL) words being used in the same or similar contexts in their Respective languages (text-normative equivalence);

(SL) and (TL) words having the same effect on their respective readers (pragmatic or dynamic equivalence) Al-Sowaidi (2011, p. 30).

In her book *In other words*, Baker (1992) discussed the concept of equivalence intensively in a way that can be a reference to the researchers regarding the translation field which is the conceptual framework of the current study. She defined equivalence at word level, above word level, grammatical equivalence, textual equivalence and pragmatic equivalence:

(i)The problem of equivalence at the word level should have the componential analysis of the word in mind. It should also be involved with the question of number, gender and tense of the word concerned.

(ii) Grammatical equivalence is concerned with the question of diversity of grammatical categories across languages. She observed that grammatical rules may vary across languages and pose some problems in finding a direct correspondence in the (TL). She also claimed that different grammatical structures in the (SL) and the (TL) may bring about remarkable changes in the way the message is carried across.

(iii) Textual equivalence involves the equivalence between a (SL) text and a (TL) text in terms of information and cohesion of the text.

(iv) Pragmatic equivalence refers to implicatures and strategies of avoidance during the translation process. Implication is not about what is explicitly said but about what is implied. A translator needs to work out implied meanings in translation in order to get the (ST) message across. In other words, the role of translators is to recreate the author's intention in another culture in such a way that it enables the target culture reader to understand it clearly. (Al-Swaidi, 2011, p. 31).

Baker (1992) has divided equivalence at the word level into sub-types:

1. One to one equivalence:

When the (SL) has a single expression for a (SL) single expression, e.g. door: قلم رصاص pencil: باب

2. One to-part of one equivalence:

When the (TL) expression renders only a part of the meaning of the (SL) expression, e.g. the Arabic word الغيب is rendered to English as ' the unseen ' but the unseen covers only a part of the meaning of الغيب which means the whole that is not known to anyone except Allah.

3. One to-many equivalence:

When the term (SL) has more than one expression into the (TL), e.g. aunt: خالة، عمّة and niece: ابنه أخ، ابنه أخت

4. Nil equivalence:

When the term in (SL) does not exist in the (TL), e.g. العمرة، الإحرام

As far as non-equivalence at word level is concerned, Baker (1992) has shed the light on the common problems encountered by the translator regarding non-equivalence. According to her, nonequivalence occurs when there is no direct equivalence in the (TL) for a word in the SL. Here are the problems discussed by Baker:

1. Culture specific concepts:

When there is a (SL) concept strongly related to the (SL) culture and has no direct equivalence in the (TL), e.g. social, religious terms and types of food.

2. The (SL) concept is not lexicalized in the (TL):

When the (SL) word is not lexicalized in the (TL) even if it is easy to be understood for the majority, e.g. the English word 'standard' means ordinary, but not lexicalized in Arabic (p. 21).

3. The (SL) word is semantically complex:

This is one of the most common problems that translators sometimes are not able yet to recognize whether the word is semantically complex i.e. ,loaded with many semantic features, or not, until they start to search for an equivalence for it.

4. The source and target languages make different distinctions in meaning:

When the (SL) or (TL) has more or fewer distinctions in meaning, e.g. Indonesian language has distinction between going out in the rain with the knowledge that it is raining (hujan-hujan) and going out to the rain without the knowledge that it is raining (kehujan) (p.22).

5. The target language lacks a superordinate:

When the (TL) has a specific word (hyponymy) but no general word (superordinate).

6. The target language lacks a specific term (hyponymy):

This type is more common than the previous one. It is when language has a general word (superordinate) but no specific one (hyponymy) e.g. English language has various hyponyms under the term 'house': bungalow, cottage and lodge etc. (p. 23).

7. Differences in physical or interpersonal perspective:

The physical and interpersonal perspective might be given more attention in one language than in another one. It is related to where people or things are in a relation to another one or place, e.g. the pairs of words: take\bring, come\go and arrive\depart. (p. 23).

8. Differences in expressive meaning: when the prepositional meaning can be the same in both (TL) and (SL), but the expressive meaning differs between them, e.g. حسد، غبطة.

9. Differences in form:

When the (TL) has no equivalence for the (SL) forms, e.g. some prefixes and suffixes in English language has no direct equivalence in other languages, for instance, 'able' (breakable-readable) 'ish' (foolish-stylish).

10. Differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms:

Even if the (TL) has a ready equivalence for a form used in the (SL), there might be differences in the purpose or the frequency of using it, e.g. the English continuous (ing) form is used more frequently than in German.

11. The use of loan words in the (SL).

These different approaches of equivalence in translation support the view of Snell-Hornby (1995, p. 22) which is equivalence is an illusion. According to him, the term equivalence "presents an illusion of symmetry between languages, which hardly exists beyond the level of vague approximation and which distorts the basic problems of translation". Abdul-Raof (2001, p. 4) and Newmark (1988, p. 35) described the term equivalence similarly, the former as 'mirage' and the latter as 'a dead-duck-either too theoretical or too arbitrary'.

The above-mentioned views about the equivalence in translation leads us to take into consideration the universal linguistic fact that among the same language there is no absolute synonymy between two lexical items. This leads us to believe that the lack of equivalence in translation regarding different languages is an expected linguistic phenomenon. According to Larson (1984, p. 155) "there is no exact equivalence between the words of one language and the words of another languages". The differences between languages in the pragmatic, semantical and syntactical levels are the main reason behind the lack of equivalence. These differences in the pragmatic, semantic and syntactic levels lead us to the issue of non-equivalence and untranslatability in translation among different languages.

These limitations got a translator restricted to them. As Al-Sowaidi (2011) commented on this issue, he stated, "The translator has to free him\herself from these restrictions in order to achieve an acceptable and affective translation by emphasizing the linguistic and cultural changes which are inevitable in any process of translation". (p. 31).

### **2.1.3 Translation strategies**

Venuti (1995) introduced two broad translation strategies the ' domestication' and 'foreignization'. He explained the ' domestication' as " an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target language cultural values, ' bring the author back home', while 'foreignization ' is an ethno deviant pressure on those cultural values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text ' sending the reader abroad' " (p. 17).

Domestication is TL bias which makes the text as close as possible to the TL culture, whereas Foreignization is SL bias which keeps the culture specialty of the SL.

Newmark (1988) in his book *A textbook of translation* suggested a number of strategies which he introduced as procedures:

1. Transference: to transfer a SL word to TL text as a translation procedure (p.81).
2. Naturalization.
3. Cultural Equivalent.
4. Functional equivalent.
5. Descriptive equivalent.
6. Synonymy: refers to the near TL equivalent to the SL word (p.84).
7. Through-translation: refers to the literal translation of common collocations, names of organizations etc (p.84).
8. Shifts or transpositions: refers to the change in grammar from SL to TL (p.85).
9. Modulation: variation through changes of perspectives or point of views (p.88).

10. Recognized translation: to choose the accepted translation of any institutional term (p.89).
11. Translation label: a temporary translation that can later be discreetly withdrawn (p.90).
12. Compensation: when a lost part of the meaning is compensated in another part (p.90).
13. Componential analysis: splitting up the lexical unit into its semantic features (p.90).
14. Reduction and Expansion.
15. Paraphrase.
16. Adaptation.
17. Couplets: couplets, triplets, and quadruplets is to combine two, three or four of the above mentioned procedure (p.91).
18. Notes, Additions, Glosses.

Baker (1992) introduced some other strategies that according to her are the most used by translators.

1. Translation by a more general word:

This strategy is used when the (TL) lacks hyponymy that exists in the (SL); therefore, a more general word (superordinate) is used for the (SL) hyponymy.

2. Translation by a more neutral\less expressive word"

This strategy uses a neutral word when the (SL) word is too negative or too direct. It is used to avoid the transference of wrong expressive meaning or to avoid the transference of the author's feeling to make acceptable translation for the audience.

3. Translation by cultural substitution:

According to Baker "this strategy involve replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target language item which does not have the same

prepositional meaning but is likely to have similar impact on the target reader (Baker, 1992, p. 31).

4. Translation using loan word or loan word plus explanation:

The translators to keep the local taste of the (SL) use this borrowing strategy. The translator can follow the loan word with explanation to make its meaning clear for the target reader.

5. Translation by paraphrase using a related word:

The translators use this strategy when the (SL) word is lexicalized in the (TL) but with different form.

6. Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words:

The translators can use this strategy when the (SL) word is not lexicalized in the (TL) at all.

7. Translation by omission:

According to Baker (1992) translation with omission is allowed only in few cases: when there is no close equivalence in the (TL), when paraphrasing is difficult, a (SL) idiom can be omitted for stylistic reasons (p. 77).

Farghal and Shunnaq (1999) has also contributed by suggesting some translation strategies as follows:

1. Naturalization and Arabicization:

Naturalization: is a strategy where the SL usage is rendered into normal TL usage e.g. negotiable = قابل للتفاوض (p.35).

Arabicization: ia a strategy where the SL spelling and pronunciation is rendered to Arabic ones e.g. garage = كراج (p.35).

2. Culture approximation:

Is a strategy where the SL culture expression is rendered to a culture substitute in the TL e.g. God = الله (p.37).



### 3. Descriptive translation:

It is a strategy where the SL expression is paraphrased in the TL by describing it e.g. " زكاة " compulsory charity is Islam when income conditions are met " (p.39).

### 4. Lexical creation:

It is a strategy where the translator come up with new translation for a SL culture-specific items e.g. الأَخ بالرضاعة = breast-brother (p.41).

### 5. Managing:

It is a strategy when the translator translate according to his\her own goals or ideas e.g. Isreal = الكيان الصهيوني (p.41).

## **2.2 Translation of sacred texts including the Holy Quran**

The translation of sacred texts has been investigated in a wide range of Arabic and English studies. Since the translation is not only a process of rendering the words from the (SL) to the (TL), a translator should take into account the various influential factors that would be encountered in the

Almost all of the researches and studies regarding the translation of sacred texts have confirmed that the sacred texts should be translated as accurately and precisely as possible. As a result, the translation of sacred texts is not an easy task and regarded as the most challenging process of translation due to the sensitivity of these particular texts.

After discussing the classification of equivalence and translation approaches in the previous section, it is clear that Nida argued for formal equivalence (SL biased) and dynamic equivalence (TL biased). On the other hand Newmark introduced them as semantic (SL biased) and communicative (TL biased) along with domestication and foreignization approach. Still the question that is the most appropriate regarding the translation of sacred and religious texts in general and the Holy Quran in particular.

Regarding the translation of sacred texts including the Holy Quran, Venuti's orientation is more acceptable and applicable as the culture and structure are part of the

singularity of the sacred text. His way of thinking about domestication as a cause of loss in both the text and its culture lead to reject many other methods of translation which cause the loss of the source culture. This poses a problem when the cultural point is as important as the message or is a parcel and significance part of it. These methods for instance: transplantation, which are adapted more than transliteration. The foreignization approach adapts formal/ semantic equivalence.

Unlike Vinuti, Nida (1964) called for the domestication in the translation of the Bible. He called for the focus on the meaning and effect of the (ST) when translating to the (TT) regardless of the style. According to him "correspondence in meaning must have priority over correspondence in style [...] sacrifice of meaning for the sake of reproducing the style may produce only an impression and fail to communicate the message" (p. 134). The domestication approach adapts the dynamic equivalence.

Some scholars rejected his ideas, for instance: Kirk (2005) and Marlowe (2012) who accused him of cutting the close relation between meaning and style, which will lead to a considerable amount of loss. The use of dynamic equivalence can lead to unfaithful translation.

Rhodes (2009) has investigated the history of translating the Bible from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. He stated that, "An accurate translation is one that communicates to today's readers the same meaning that the original author's text conveyed to his original readers. Most Bible scholars say Bible translations should aim to remain faithful to the original meaning of the text..." (2009, p. 17).

Rhodes (2009) believed that " the translator is obliged to convey in clear and readable form, not only the meanings of individual words or phrases but something also of the structure, rhythm and emotive elements of the original text" (p. 25).

According to Leonardi (2000), the formal equivalence is usually adapted in Biblical and sacred text translations. By focusing on translating the message from the (SL) to the (TL) and remaining the original grammatical and wording structure as much as possible.

Newmark (1984) preferred semantic translation regarding the translation of religious texts. He stated that 'semantic translation' is acceptable to all readers "all who have ears to hear" (1984, p. 48).

Before discussing other strategies regarding the translation of the Holy Quran in particular, it is worth digressing a little to present the opinions of Islamic scholars regarding translating the Holy Quran.

Muslims scholars argued about translating the Holy Quran and took two opposing opinions. Some rejected the idea of translating the Holy Quran because of its sacredness, while others goes with the opinion of translating the Holy Quran with maintain the meaning and the power of the original by reflecting the concepts, traditions and culture of the source language while respecting the norms, naturalness and typicality of the target language.

Ashaer (2013) discussed that, regarding the translatability and legitimacy of translating the Holy Quran, Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies (2009), mentioned an example of Imam Shatby who argued that the translation of the Holy Quran is unachievable due to the senses the Holy book has which are exclusive to the Quranic language in Arabic. According to encyclopedia (2009) Al-Azhar, the authoritative center of Islamic studies, has validated Pickthall's translation of the Holy Quran under the condition that the translated version will not carry the title of ' The Quran' it should point out to the work as a translated version " translation or interpretation of the meaning of the Quran".

Husain (2006, as cited in Ashaer, 2013) gave examples of the modern scholars who were with rejecting the idea of translating the Holy Quran among them were Mohammed Albany, Mohammed Rida and Muhammed Sulaiman. On the other hand, Husain mentioned some other scholars who agreed on translating the Holy Quran "is a necessity" because it is the word of Allah to all humanity and it is Muslim's duty to spread it.

Regarding the era of the life of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh), Mahmoud (2008) discussed that the prophet in order to spread the Islam all over the world agreed to translate some verses of the Holy Quran to other languages. He gave an example; when Ja'far Bin Abi Taleb migrated to Abyssinia and recited some verses of Surat Maryam to the Emperor of Abyssinia, he translated the verses into Abyssinian language.

He added some other cases when the prophet wrote letters and sent it to " Hiraql (the Emperor of Roman Empire), Kisra ( King of Persia ) and Al-Muqaosas ( the Ruler of Copt) " (2008, p. 1851).

To conclude, there was a disagreement on the acceptability of translating the Holy Quran that still agreeing on translation predominates in this regard.

Regarding the translation of the Holy Quran in particular, Al-Maraghi (1936) argued that the translation (of the Holy Quran) is not a mere process of rendering the original text to a new target text due to the fact of the impossibility of rendering the original meaning completely (p. 5). He made it clear that translation is one shade of interpretation in the first place.

According to Abdul-Raof (2001, p. xiv-xiii) the Quranic texts stands as a genre with its special phonetic, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and rhetorical features. He calls for the translation of the Holy Quran to be run on a particular translation theory. Moreover, he stated that in order to maintain the "rhetorical, linguistic and socio-cultural norms", the translator should refer and depend heavily on the interpretations of the Holy Quran i.e. exegesis books. He stated, "because of the very linguistic and textual nature of the Quran, the only way to convey the intended message to the target language reader is to resort the explanatory translation" (as cited in Assi, 2021, p. 16).

Given this, the appropriate translation approach for the Holy Quran is foreignization with referring to the exegesis.

### **2.3 Semantic loss**

Nida (1994) stated that "the relationship between words in two different languages does not correspond to one-to-one sets or even one-to-many sets. In addition, there are a lot of fuzziness, obscurity, and ambiguity in the boundaries between any two languages" (p. 10). As a result of these complications of word's structure, translators seem to encounter various problems related to semantic loss or loss of meaning while rendering the meaning from the SL into the (TL). The (TL's) linguistic system sometimes does not represent all the loaded meaning within the (SL) words. For

instance, English grammar in some cases lacks the plural forms while it could make a big difference of the meaning in the (SL), (Abdul-Raof, 2004).

According to Ameel, et. al. (2009) "Languages map words in different ways; a concept that can be expressed by just one word in English may be expressed by many words in another language" (p. 45). As an example the English word 'wood' can be translated into Arabic language with different lexemes as **أبنة**, **حطب**, **خشب**, this issue regarding vocabularies may lead to semantic loss in some cases.

Newmark (1991) argued that there is an inevitable loss of meaning due to over translation (increased details) and under translation (increased generalization). He believed that the choice of words by the translator plays a significant role regarding the semantic loss.

Al-Masri (2009) claimed that "Semantic losses, cultural losses or in equivalences, can result from overlooking the literariness or figurativeness of the source text" (p. 8). Translators sometimes are not aware of the rhetorical devices of figures of speech existing in the (SL) text. Accordingly, the loss occurs in literary translation when translators have difficulties in understanding the symbolic meaning. We can categorize semantic loss into two groups: linguistic loss (which includes semantic or syntactic loss) and cultural loss. The semantic loss can refer to lexical and morphological whereas cultural loss refers to cultural specific and cultural pound words. Baker (1992) argued that cultural problems that she has categorized to cultural specific and cultural pound words are a reason behind semantic loss in literary translation.

## **2.4 Empirical Studies**

This section deals with a number of previous studies regarding the semantic loss in the translations of the Holy Quran with short description of the studies and their importance to the current study:

Abu-Sayyidah (2005) conducted a study entitled '*An analysis on the Quality of Surah Yassin*'. After analyzing and comparing Mohammed Ali's, Hilali, and Khan's translations of Surah Yassin, the researcher concludes that all the three translators have different skills in translating Yassin Surah. The researcher finds many differences in

their translations. For example, Mohammed Ali uses the simple sentences in translating Surah Yassin. It means that he uses full translation because (SL) is as the original text whereas Hilali and Khan uses additional strategies in translating Surah Yassin to give more information, explanation and interpretation to the readers clearly in order to make easy in understanding the meaning message of Surah Yassin ( as cited in Alhaj, 2020, p. 9).

Al-Salem (2008), in a comparative study of five Quranic translations of metonymy, argues that the higher the quality of the text, the more difficult it is to be translated. "The translator must not only express the meaning of the text, but also maintain its style and spirit" (2008, p. 2).

Al-Salem introduced the definition of metonymy and its different types, using examples from the Quran. A metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word stands for another word that is closely related to it. Al-Salem mentioned a number of studies about the metonymic translation, including Newmark (1984), Larson (1998), Gutt (1992), and De Beaugrande (1978). She then presented the following linguistic problems faced by translators, as identified by Abdullah (1992). As "different semantic ranges, euphemisms, different classifications, different tropical expressions and the issue of equivalence."

Al-Salem investigated 30 examples of metonymy in Al-Baqara and other suras showing how the translators rendered the intended meaning of the ST into the (TT), The researcher used an example of a part-for-whole metonymy from "Al-Baqara". It is reflected in the word "اركعوا", which means "submit" and "pray", respectively, as in At-Tabary (2001) and As-Saboony (1981). This term is mistranslated when rendered to "bow your hands", which is completely wrong and contains different cultural features in the target language. Al Salem called for maintaining the meaning and the impact of metonymy through literal translation if it is possible. If literal translation fails in transferring the meaning, the word must be reduced to its intended meaning. Her idea of translating a sacred text as a kind of instruction manual shows her support for the approach that calls for preserving Quranic form and style as well as foreignization in translation.

In his PhD thesis entitled *Reasons for the Possible Incomprehensibility of Some Verses of Three Translations of the Meanings of the Holy Quran into English*, Al-Jabari

(2008) investigated the incomprehensibility of the translation of some verses of the Quran for some educated English people.

The study also investigated why some verses of the Qur'an do not convey the meaning. Al Jabari has selected three translations for his research; Al-Hilali, Yusuf Ali and Arthur. Al Jabari has taken some translated verses of their own and put them into a questionnaire. He shared the questionnaire among well-educated native English speakers to find out to what extent the translations in the questionnaire were comprehensible for them.

For him, "the extent to which the extracts included in the questionnaire were incomprehensible was extremely shocking" (p. 237). He stated that the comprehension was less than 5% because the translators used poor quality English.

The main results that caused the ambiguity were peculiar style, literal translation of some idioms and fixed expressions, cultural differences, old-fashioned words usage, transliteration that failed to convey meaning to the (TL) readers, and unusual orthography. Incorrect use of punctuations and excessive use of bracketed explanations.

Mahmoud (2008) introduced his study *Cultural and Pragmastic factors influencing translating Surat "An-Nas" of the Glorious Quran into English* in which he analyzed four English translations of Surat Al-Nas. According to Mahmoud, it is important to take both target culture and source culture into consideration. He used the example of the word "صدر" to explain his idea. The word is translated in the three selected translations as "Breast" except for Ali (1989) who used the term "Heart". This example shows the loss of cultural aspects of the (ST) since the translators misinterpret the connotative meaning of the word because the word "صدر" in Arabic does not mean the breast only; it refers to the heart as well.

Mahmoud (2008) claimed that maintaining invariability of the (SL) content when rendering the meaning to the (TL) is done by transferring the implicit meaning in the (ST) to an explicit meaning in the (TT). He assured that the verses in the Holy Quran carry out actions to achieve communicative purposes which are not clear in the lexical item of the verse.

Furthermore, Mahmoud (2008) shed the light on the stylistic aspects of the Surah. He states that two utterances may include the same information that have

different meanings due to their variation in style. He went with the idea of conveying impressions, feelings, attitudes and emotions along with meaning. The importance of this related study to the current investigation is that it calls for taking into consideration the content of meaning of the (ST) word while rendering it into the (TT) as well as Arabic stylistic and aesthetic qualities since they are conducive to the meaning of the text.

Hamed (2010) in his PhD thesis entitled *Problems of translating Figure of Speech* the researcher aimed to investigate the difficulties that are faced by the translators while translating the verses of the Holy Quran and the strategies adopted by the translators to help overcoming these obstacles.

Moreover, Hamed (2010) has recommended what he calls workable solutions. According to his thesis, he draw a conclusion that the Quran is untranslatable. He believes that the Quran is rich in itself, which means that there are some verses of the Holy Quran whose meaning can be explained by other verses at different situations of the Holy book.

The researcher pointed at the great importance of depending on the exegesis of the Holy Quran given by the companions of the prophet Mohammad (pbuh), such as Abdullah Ibn Abbas (1406 AH) also the explanations provided by Al- Tabieen ( those who comes after the age of the companions and followed them).

Ashaer (2013) in her study entitled *A semantic and pragmatic analysis of three English translations of Surat 'Yusuf'* the researcher aimed at analysing the semantic and pragmatic aspects of surat Yusuf by comparing three different translations of the surah which differ due to the religious background of the translators and their understanding of the religion.

The study shed the light on the failure in translation that causes loss in meaning on both levels, the semantic and pragmatic, in the light of Quran exegeses, books of grammar and dictionaries. As a result of her analysis Ashaer (2013) summaries the findings as follows:

Out of the 41 cases of semantic issues were studied in the *first 102 verses of the surah*, the first translator *Ali* was able to translate only 18 of them correctly and considered the best of the three. *Dawood* got 14 correct out of the total. Moreover, the



third translator *Sale* translated only 11 correctly, which makes him the least accurate translator.

This apparently lead to a number of conclusions; the researcher stated that " failures in translation are a result of the translators not referring to Quran exegeses which give the clear story, and lead to the exact meanings intended in the verses of the surah." Including the examples the researcher used to exemplify the idea is the word "ظن" which had been given two opposing meanings by Al-Waseet (1972) "to do without certainty and surety" or " to do with certitude". According to the exegeses books the meaning intended in the verse is the second one by Al-Waseet and the translations of the word were considered, judged and knew, the third word translation that considered the best translation to the researcher because it gives the exact meaning of sureness.

It is a translator's duty to distinguish which of the two meanings is intended in the (ST) with the help of exegeses books and the interpretation of the Holy Quran as well as Arabic grammar books.

Ashaer (2013) made it clear that we cannot apply only one method of translation when dealing with the Quran because in some cases more than one method is required. We may need literal translation, transliteration while in other cases communicative translation is needed. Another reason for the semantic loss is that Quran including some words with wide semantic range which cannot be translated with a single word accurately.

The importance Ashaer's study to the present study is reflected in the methodology adopted by the researcher in analyzing the texts semantically using the books mentioned above. The researcher called for a committee that shoulders the responsibility of revising the translations of the Holy Quran that can support the present study.

Abdelaal and Rashed (2015) conducted a study entitled *Semantic Loss in the Holy Qur'an Translation With Special Reference to Surah Al-WaqiAAa ( Chapter of The Event Inevitable)* This study revealed that the English translation of Surah al-WaqiAAa has a semantic loss. All or part of the loss occurred. However, partial losses tend to be more common than total losses. Additionally, translators may choose the wrong word in the semantic domain. Such imprecision in the chosen vocabulary leads to changes in

meaning. The source of the semantic loss seen in Surah al-WaqiAaa's translation in Yusuf Ali's translation was a number of non-equivalence issues.

Abdela'al and Rashed (2015) claimed that the loss of meaning was primarily due to cultural differences. The Quranic language has its own culturally bound dictionary. Another reason is the relative lack of knowledge of the science of the Holy Quran to the translators. The study showed that the translators have used many translation approaches, including literal translation, communicative and semantic translation. However, the former (literal translation approach) was rejected because it fails to translate the Holy Quran literally and the latter leads to a loss of meaning. Due to the complexity of the message conveyed in the Qur'an, Abdelaal and Rashed (2015) argued that the only acceptable translation is the exegetical translation "One is based on the exegesis book" and helps translators understand the exact meaning of (TT). Moreover, the translation of the Holy Quran should be done by a team of scholars who are experts in various fields of knowledge related to the Holy Quran.

Alhaj (2020) conducted a study entitled *A Pragma-Stylo-Semantic Analysis of Three Translations of the Meaning of Surat Al-Saffat into English: A Comparative Linguistic Study*. Aimed to explore the pragma-stylo-semantic obstacles of translating the meaning of the Holy Quran into English and the challenging task in translating Surah Al-Saffat, as well as investigating how the translators dealt with the linguistic, cultural, stylistic and pragmatic difficulties in rendering the meaning of the source text into English.

The researcher selected three English translations of 1. Mohammed A.S Abdel-Hakeem. 2. Mohammed M.Picktall and 3. Mohammed Khan and Mohammed Taj Al-din Al Hilali. The researcher purposefully selected ten verses from the targeted Surah to answer the research question. The study showed that the translations of the Surah have loss in the pragma-stylo-semantic meaning due to many factors such as lack of equivalence and the translation strategies adapted by the translators such as the literal translation which poses problems in different levels which are: the word, idiom, style and culture levels.

The researcher explained that "many Arabic constructions contain subtle shades of meaning which cannot be expressed in another language. Therefore, any translation

of the Holy Quran is essentially a mere explanation, paraphrase or interpretation of the meaning of the source text ". (p.90).

In her MA thesis entitled '*Semantic loss in the translation of divorce-related Qur'anic verses into English*', Assi (2021) investigates the semantic losses incurred in the translation of divorce-related Qur'anic verses that are found in the three chapters (Al-Baqarah, Al-Ahzab and Al-Talaq) 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 approach of equivalence (1992) and the emic-etic approach to translation.

The study proved that Qur'an translation cannot be processed away from its exegesis. Moreover, it showed that most losses are mainly because of the lack of equivalence in the (TL). The study maintained 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.

Assi (2021) analyzed twenty-four divorce-related verses in the Holy Quran classified into sub-topics which are Al-Eddah, spouses' rights in divorce, nursing and sustenance issues together with divorce-terms and conditions. For instance, Palmer translates the word "قروء" as "courses" and by Ghali as "periods". The word "قروء" has neither full nor one to one equivalence in the English language. The translators tried to render the (ST) word meaning by applying only one side of its denotative meaning which is ( the time of something) without taking into consideration the other semantic features of the word expressed in the exegesis books and dictionaries.

ElhajAhmed and El Halabi (2022) conducted a study *entitled Impact of Semantic Loss in the Holy Quran with Reference to Yusuf Ali's and Marmaduke Pickthall's Translations of Al-Nur Surah*. This study aims to identify the effects of semantic loss in Ali and Pickthall translations by analyzing 15 CSTs from Al-Noor Surah.

The researcher also investigated causes of loss related to mistranslations of the source text, which may lead to partial or total loss. The researcher also tried to explore

the extent to which Ali and Picksall were able to achieve cultural equivalence. Methods of comparative text analysis were used to answer the research question.

ElHajAhmed and El Halabi (2022) discussed that the translations of Ali and Pickthall have several sources of semantic loss. Ali's semantic loss in translation accounts for 40%, while Pickthall's loss accounts for 53.33%. The results revealed several sources of meaning loss, including culturally constrained terminology and a lack of knowledge of Arabic figurative expressions.

The researcher recommends that Quranic translators should be familiar with Quranic terminology as it is a genre with specific beliefs, practices, and cultural aspects. Translators also need to understand the semantic relationships between words and choose appropriate translations to avoid semantic loss. Translators should rely on exegesis to know the reason for revelation.

To conclude, translation in general is a very challengeable task because it is not limited to transfer individual words and lexemes. When dealing with sacred texts it becomes more difficult to the translator to produce the meaning to the (SL) as accurate as possible due to the great importance of it. The Holy Quran is regarded as a genre in itself according to the scholars and linguists, which rises the difficulties to the translator to deal with its linguistic environment.

This study deals with the translation of the Holy Quran, particularly with 'Surat Maryam' which has not been tackled by other researchers regarding the semantic analysis of the quality of its translations as in the previously mentioned ones. Hopefully, this study will contribute to the field of Quran translation and helps to raise the awareness of the important aspects of Surat Maryam to be understood more accurately by the (SL) readers.

## **2.5.The conceptual Framework**

Baker's (1992) typology of equivalence at word-level will be used as conceptual framework of the study regarding the selection of the problematic words in translation and the strategies suggested by her in order to overcome semantic loss.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methodology**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the methodology employed in conducting the current study. It includes the research design, samples, instruments, procedures and data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study aims at analyzing the five selected translations of Surat Maryam at word level. To achieve this objective, the researcher employed qualitative descriptive research design.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) defined qualitative research as “the one that refers to any kind of research that produces findings that are not attained by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification, instead the kind of research that produces findings arrived from real-world settings where the interest area is pronounced naturally” (p. 45).

According to Creswell and Clarck (2011) "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" (p. 53).

#### **3.2 Samples**

The researcher chose purposefully 34 Qur'anic words from 23 verses belonging to Surat Maryam and selected purposefully five English translations for these 34 words. The selected translations are made by the five well-known translators A. J. Arberry, George Sale, M. M. Ghali, Hilali & Khan and N. J. Dawood.

The researcher chose these words due to the fact that their translations involved semantic loss and chose those particular translators since they are among the most well-known translators of the Holy Quran.

Purposive sampling (also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling) is a type of non-probability sampling where you make a conscious decision on what the sample needs to include and choose participants accordingly (Creswell, 1994).

### **3.3 Instrument**

This research tends to be qualitative and descriptive in nature, and does not deal with numbers at all. According to Creswell (1994) the researcher in the qualitative research is " the primary instrument for the data collection and data analysis" ( p.51) therefore, the instrument of the current study is the researcher who has spent a great deal of time in reading, exploring and comparing the meaning of words in dictionaries referring to the exegesis books to achieve better understanding.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed according to Baker's (1992) typology of equivalence which offers a comprehensive classification of equivalence at word level, above word level, at textual level, at grammatical level, and at pragmatically level. This study focuses more on the problem of semantic at word level.

The researcher investigated the five translations of each word of the 34 selected words through consulting Arabic Dictionaries which are: Al- Waseet, Al-Raid, Al-Ghani. And English dictionaries which are: Cambridge, Longman and Merriam Webster. And consulting references of Qur'anic interpretation *Tafseer* books which are: Ibn Katheer, Al Tabari, Al Baghawi, Al Qurtubi, Al Saadi and Al Sharawi.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Data Analysis**



## CHAPTER FOUR


### Data Analysis

#### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher analyzed semantic loss in the five translations of the selected verses and words, from Surat Maryam. To find out the semantic loss and to determine the most appropriate translation, the researcher depended on the exegesis books of the Holy Quran known as *Tafseer* (interpretation and explanation), English-English dictionaries and Arabic-Arabic dictionaries . The analysis is also guided by Baker's typology of equivalence .

#### 4.1 Analysis

**Table 4.1 Item 1: The Basmallah**

<b>The Basmallah</b>	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem"
<b>Translations of the verse:</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate"
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"In the name of the most merciful God."

<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"In The Name of Allah, The All-Merciful, The Ever-Merciful."
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful."
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"In The Name Of God, The Compassionate, The Merciful"

**Analysis:**

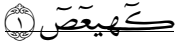
The Arabic Islamic expression, known as "Bassmallah," is frequently used before various Islamic cultural events as well as at the start of the Holy Quranic chapters (Surahs). It serves as a reminder of Allah's kindness and compassion for those who ask for his blessings and direction..

This Arabic phrase contains two adjectives that are used to describe Allah: "Merciful" and "Gracious~Compassionate." Sale translated both adjectives as "merciful," but this translation leaves the meaning unclear. Furthermore, the use of the superlative form "the most" can imply that other gods exist and that Allah is being contrasted with them in order to be perceived as the most merciful God and this is rejected in the Islamic dogma.

Ghali translated the adjective merciful as "All-Merciful" once and "Ever-Merciful" twice. Neither the intended meaning nor the distinction between the two adjectives are reflected in this usage.

Arberry and Dawood have rendered الرحمن الرحيم to mere adjectives 'the merciful/ the compassionate', which led to the loss of the intended exaggeration.

**Table 4.2 Item 2: Verse 1**

	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Kaaaf-Haa-Yaa-'Ayyyn-Saaad"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"Kaf Ha Ya Ain Sad"
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"C.H.Y.A.S."
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"Kaf, Ha, Ya, Ayn, Sad (These are the names of letters of the Arabic alphabet and only Allah knows their meaning here)."
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"Kaf- Ha-Ya-'Ain-Sad. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Quran, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings]".
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"Kaf hā' yā' 'ain ṣād."

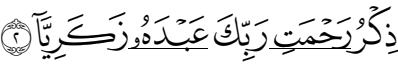
### Analysis:

This verse has started with كهيعص which is an example of the letters found at the beginning of twenty nine Surahs in the Holy Quran. These letters are called Al-Muqatta'ah المقطعة. While some interpreters attempted to decipher their meaning, others only acknowledged Allah as the source of their understanding..

Al-Sharawi states that these letters have to be recited separately along with the Arabic phonological system name for each letter. For instance, the letter أ is pronounced as "aa" in a word, but its name is "Alif." Al-Sharawi provided two instances from Surat 'Al-Sharah' and Surat 'Al-Baqarah' to bolster his argument. These Surahs started with "ألم," which is read in Surat "Al-Baqarah" as "Alif Lam Meem," but in Surat "Al-Sharah," it is read as one word, "Alam," which means "haven't we." We understand, therefore, that these letters ought to be transliterated as five distinct letters.

Since Sale translated the letters individually as "CHYAS," forcing the reader to recite it using the English letters, his translation is regarded as having a significant loss of meaning.

**Table 4.3 Item 3: Verse 2**

	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Zikru rahmati Rabbika 'abdahoo Zakariyya"
<b>Translations of the verse:</b>	

<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"The mention of thy Lord's mercy unto His servant Zachariah;"
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"A commemoration of the mercy of thy Lord towards his servant Zacharias when he called upon his Lord, invoking him in secret,"
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"(This is) the mention of your Lord's mercy to His bondman Zakariyya (Zechariah)"
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"(This is) a mention of the mercy of your Lord to His slave Zakariya (Zachariah)."
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"An account of your Lord's goodness to his servant Zacharias:"

**Analysis:**

All the four translators translated the word "رحمت" as "mercy." Merriam Webster defines mercy as "a blessing that is an act of divine favor or compassion," and Al-Waseet defines it as "the tenderness, kindness, and pity." These definitions are thought to be suitable translations for the term "رحمت".

Conversely, Dawood has interpreted the word "رحمت" incorrectly as "goodness."

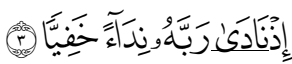
According to Cambridge Dictionary, it denotes "the individual attribute of moral excellence," which is deemed an interpretation taken out of context and does not imply that God performed the deed..

Another word in the same verse is the term "عبده," which signifies submissive servant. Hilali and Khan translate it as "slave." However, according to the Cambridge Dictionary. definition a slave " "a person who is legally owned by someone else and has no personal freedom"

Islam holds that everything is the property of Allah, including our bodies and souls, even though they are not compelled to serve him. Since people have complete freedom to make their own decisions, they are not, in the strict sense of the word, God's slaves. Humans are not considered slaves by virtue of their ability to choose. The term "slave" is a mistranslation because it connotes something other than worshiping and loving God, which are the central tenets of a relationship with God, and because it is frequently connected to an oppressive master..

Ghali translates the word "عبد" as "bondman," which is a synonym for slave in the Merriam Webster Dictionary. Arbberry, Sale, and Dawood, translated "عبد" as "servant." The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines "sevnat" as "a person who serves others," so in order to avoid misunderstandings by foreign readers they translated it in this less harsh way.

**Table 4.4 Item 4: Verse 3**

	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Iz naadaa Rabbahoo nidaaa'an khafiyyaa"

<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"when he called upon his Lord secretly"
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"When he called upon his LORD, invoking him in secret,"
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"As he called out to his Lord a concealed call."
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"When he called out his Lord (Allah) a call in secret,"
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"He invoked his Lord in secret,"

**Analysis:**

According to the exegesis books the word "نادى" in this verse, means "prayed,".

However, Arberrry and Sale translated the word it as "Called upon" . The definition of "called upon" according to the Cambridge Dictionary is "to ask someone to do something in a formal manner," which is inappropriate in this context.

Ghali, Hilali, and Khan translated it as "Called out". In the Cambridge Dictionary "called out" means "to say something in a loud voice," which is completely at odds with the rest of the verse (نداء خفيا).

The best translation may be that done by Dawood, who effectively conveyed the meaning as "invoked". Which according to the Cambridge Dictionary means "to request help from someone, especially a God, when you want to improve a situation."

**Table 4.5 Item 5: Verse 6**

<p>يَرِثُنِي وَيَرِثُ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ وَأَجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا ﴿٦﴾</p>	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	<p>"Yarisunee wa yarisu min aali Ya'qoob, waj'alhu Rabbi radiyya"</p>
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	<p>"who shall be my inheritor and the inheritor of the House of Jacob; and make him, my Lord, well-pleasing."</p>
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	<p>"who may be my heir, and may be an heir of the family of Jacob; and grant, O Lord, that he may be acceptable unto thee."</p>
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	<p>"Who will inherit of me and inherit (also) of the house of Yaaqûb; (Jacob) and make him, Lord, well satisfied."</p>
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	<p>"Who shall inherit me, and inherit (also) the posterity of Ya'qub (Jacob) (inheritance of the religious knowledge and Prophethood, not the wealth, etc.). And make him, my Lord, one with whom You are Well-pleased!"</p>
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	<p>"who will be my heir and an heir to the house of Jacob, and make him worthy, Lord, of Your pleasure."</p>



## Analysis:

The Arabic dictionaries indicate that the word 'آل' in this verse means the direct family or the whole tribe, and is often used as a way to show honor and respect to the family name to which it is prefixed. However, Sale failed to translate the word correctly by rendering it into 'family'. The word family, as stated in *Cambridge Dictionary*, refers to "a social group of parents, children, and sometimes grandparents, uncles, aunts, and others who are related". This definition indicates only a small group of people, which makes it an inaccurate translation due to the time gap between prophet Yaqoub and prophet Zakaryya.

Arberry, Ghali and Dawood chose the word 'house' as a translation for it. 'House' is defined by *Cambridge Dictionary* as "an important family, especially a royal one". The given example has made the difference between family and house very clear: "The British Royal family belong to the House of Windsor", which leads us to conclude that the word 'house' is the best translation.

Hilaly and Khan translated the word as 'posterity'. Looking up the word 'posterity' in *Cambridge Dictionary*, shows clearly the great semantic loss in this translation as it means "the people who will exist in the future", a meaning that contrast sharply the context, since the verse refers to previous generations.

Another word in the same verse whose translation resulted in semantic loss in one of the fifth translations is the word 'رضياً'. Despite the fact that its meaning in the exegesis is "acceptable to Allah", Ghali translated it as 'well satisfied'. The word 'satisfied' does not indicate the acceptance by Allah.

However, Arberry, Sale, Hilali and Khan and Dawood managed to render the exact intended meaning of that word. It was translated as 'well-pleasing' by Arberry, and as 'acceptable unto thee' by Sale. Both translations have provided the same meaning as acceptable to Allah. Similarly, Hilali and Khan translated it as 'one with whom you

are well-pleased', and by Dawood as 'worthy of your pleasure'. All these translations are considered to be acceptable translations.

**Table 4.6 Item 6: Verse 10**

<p>قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آيَاتُكَ لِلنَّاسِ لَيْلِ سَوِيًّا ۝</p>	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Qaala Rabbij 'al leee Aayah; qaala Aayatuka allaa tukalliman naasa salaasa layaalin sawiyyaa"
<b>Translations of the verse:</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"He said, 'Lord, appoint to me some sign.' Said He, 'Thy sign is that thou shall not speak to men, though being without fault, three nights.'"
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"Zacharias answered, O Lord, give me a sign. The angel replied, thy sign shall be, that thou shalt not speak to men for three nights, although thou be in perfect health."
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"He said, "Lord! Make for me (some) sign." Said He, "Your sign is that you shall not speak to (any of) mankind, though being in perfect shape, (i.e. being without fault, or defect; literally: in "perfect" mold) three nights.'"
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"[Zakariya (Zachariah)] said: "My Lord! Appoint for me a sign." He said: "Your sign is that you shall not speak unto mankind for three nights, though having no bodily defect.'"
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"Lord,' said Zacharias, 'give me a sign.' 'Your sign is that for three days and nights,' He replied, 'you shall be bereft of speech, though otherwise sound in body.'"

**Analysis:**

The word 'ألا', in this context, has a different meaning. As for Al-Sharawi and Al-Sa'adi it doesn't indicate an order to stop talking to people. It is to tell him that a something will happen to him against his will, and this would make him unable speak.

It is translated by Hilli & Khan, Sale, Ghali and Arberry as "shall not speak" which is an order to prevent him from speaking, consequently a part of the intended meaning is lost. Dawood translated it as 'you shall be bereft of speech'. In *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, "deprived or robbed of the possession or use of something". Thus, the word 'bereft' is the most appropriate translation of the word ألا according to the context.

**Table 4.7 Item 7: Verse 11**

<p>فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ﴿١١﴾</p>	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Fakharaja 'alaa qawmihee minal mihraabi fa-awhaaa ilaihim an sabbihoo bukratanw wa 'ashiyyaa"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"So he came forth unto his people from the Sanctuary, then he made signal to them, 'Give you glory at dawn and evening.'"
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"And he went forth unto his people, from the chamber, and he made signs unto them, as if he should say, praise ye God in the morning and in the evening."

<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"So he went out to his people from the Chamber, then he signified (Literally: revealed) to them, "Extol (your Lord) before sunrise and at nightfall."
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"Then he came out to his people from Al-Mihrab (a praying place or a private room, etc.), he told them by signs to glorify Allah's Praises in the morning and in the afternoon."
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"Then Zacharias came out from the Shrine and exhorted his people to give glory morning and evening."

#### **Analysis:**

The word **المحراب** is explained in the exegesis by Al-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi and Al-Sharawi as the place of prayer and worshipping whether in the house or in the masjid (mosque). It is translated as 'sanctuary' by Arberry. The meaning of the word 'sanctuary' as stated in *Merriam Webster Dictionary* is "the most sacred part in a religious building- the room in which general worship services are held", which makes it the most appropriate translation for that word.

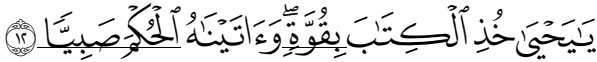
Sale and Ghali translated it as "chamber", it is defined by *Merriam Webster Dictionary* and *Cambridge Dictionary* respectively as "1. a room: especially a bedroom. 2. a hall of meetings", " a room used for a special or official purposes or group of people who for (part of) a parliament". This translation is obviously wrong and leads to a serious loss in meaning. Hilali and Khan used loan word with an explanation, which is also a good translation of the word '**محراب**'.

It seems that Dawood's religious background has affected his understanding of the word '**محراب**' as he translated it as 'shrine' which is defined in *Longman Dictionary* as

"a place that is connected with a holy event or a holy person and that people visit to pray". Cambridge Dictionary defined 'shrine' as "a special place in which you remember and praise someone who has died especially someone famous". So translating محراب into 'a shrine' is not an appropriate translation and a complete loss in meaning. The word 'أوحى', was translated correctly in all the selected translations except that of Dawood who omitted it.

The same verse includes the words 'بكرة' and 'عشيا'. The word 'بكرة' in Al-Raid Dictionary mean "the time between dawn and sunrise", while the word 'عشيا' means "the time from sunset to the darkness". However, the translators failed to specify the time and gave general words such as the word 'morning' and the word 'evening'. There is a serious loss in meaning in Hilali and Khan's translation of the word عشيا who translated it as "in the afternoon" which means the part of the day between noon and sunset.

**Table 4.8 Item 8: Verse 12**

	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Yaa Yahyaa khuzil Kitaaba biquwwatinw wa aatainaahul hukma sabiyyaa"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"O John, take the Book forcefully'; and We gave him judgment, yet a little child,"

<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"And We said unto his son, O John, receive the book of the law, with a resolution to study and observe it. And We bestowed on him wisdom, when he was yet a child,"
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"O Yahya, (John) take the Book powerfully." And We brought him judgment (when) a young boy,"
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"(It was said to his son): "O Yahya (John)! Hold fast the Scripture [the Taurat (Torah)]." And We gave him wisdom while yet a child."
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"To John We said: 'Observe the Scriptures with a firm resolve.' We bestowed on him wisdom,"

**Analysis:**


In this verse, the word 'بقوة' is explained by Ibn-Katheer as earnestly and with diligence, whereas Al-Tabari stated that it means "earnestly". Therefore, it should be comprehended that the word 'بقوة' does not indicate the physical action of taking or grabbing the book with power and force. It is translated by Arberry and Ghali literally as 'forcefully' and 'powerfully', which is far from the meaning in the exegesis and led to semantic loss. However,, Sale's and Dawood's translations of the word are considered more accurate.

Hilali and Khan have omitted the word 'بقوة' and substituted it with the word 'fast' this meaning is not the intended one and it can not be found in the books of tafseer.

The word 'الحكم' which is also mentioned in this verse is given two meanings in Al-Waseet Dictionary "1. the judgment and the knowledge- 2. the wisdom". As explained in the exegesis by Ibn-Katheer and Al-Tabari, the intended meaning is the 'understanding and knowledge', The word is translated by Sale and, Hilali and Khan as 'wisdom', and mistranslated by Arberry, Ghali and Dawood as 'judgment'.

The third word in this verse 'صبيًا' is not lexicalized in the English language and this complicate the translators' task . In Arabic, the word 'صبي' means a boy at the age of weaning. It is translated into the more general word 'child' by the four translators and omitted by Dawood. Thus its translations involve serious semantic loss.

**Table 4.9 Item 9: Verse 14**

	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Wa barram biwaalidayhi wa lam yakum jabbaaran 'asiyyaa"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"and cherishing his parents, not arrogant, rebellious."
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"and dutiful towards his partents, and was not proud or rebellious."

<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"And benign to his parents, and he was not arrogant, disobedient."
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"And dutiful towards his parents, and he was neither an arrogant nor disobedient (to Allah or to his parents)."
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"honouring his father and mother, and neither arrogant nor rebellious."

**Analysis:**

In Islam, the idea of bir al-walidayn, or ' بر الوالدين ' has gained a lot of significance. Al-Hasan Al-Basri defines it as "obeying the parents in everything they ask as long as it is not against Allah." This covers all the well-being and kindness shown to parents, such as maintaining their health, providing for them monetarily, following their instructions, praying for them in the event of their death, and generally being a decent person to uphold their good name.

The word ' برا ' is an adjective mentioned in verse 14 and 32, and translated by Arberry as 'cherishing' which according to Cambridge Dictionary means "to love, protect and care for someone or something that is important to you", a meaning that is considered very close to the original meaning of ' بر '. The same word is translated by Sale, and Hilali and Khan as 'dutiful'. When this word 'dutiful' is used for ( a person), it means 'obedient' and used for (of an action), it means done because it is necessary or expected". So this word does not indicate the moral side of the word برا. Ghali



translated it as 'benign' 'pleasant and kind'; 'not harmful or severe'. Dawood translated it as 'honoring' to show great respect for someone or something, especially in public. These definitions indicate only some of the aspects of the word 'بر'. And other aspects of its meaning are lost.

The idea of filial piety originated in Chinese culture and has since permeated Western societies. It is defined as "a set of norms, values, and practices regarding how children should behave toward their parents" and encompasses social and financial obligations as well as feelings of love and gratitude. Since this idea is a good cultural replacement, it will be a better translation for the word برا

**Table 4.10 Item 10: Verse 16**

وَأُذَكِّرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Wazkur fil Kitaabi Maryama; izin tabazat min ahlihaa makaanan sharqiyyaa"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"And mention in the Book Mary when she withdrew from her people to an eastern place,"
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"And remember in the book of the Koran the story of Mary; when she retired from her family to a place towards the east,"

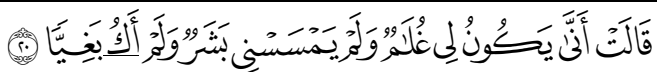
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"And mention in the Book Maryam (Mary) as she retired from her family to an eastern place."
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"And mention in the Book (the Quran, O Muhammad SAW, the story of) Maryam (Mary), when she withdrew in seclusion from her family to a place facing east."
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"And you shall recount in the Book the story of Mary: how she left her people and betook herself to a solitary place to the east."

**Analysis:**

The word 'اذكر' is found in five verses in this Surah. The word 'اذكر' according to Al-Raid has two different meanings; 'to mention' and 'to remember'. However, according to the tafseer books the intended meaning in this Surah is 'to mention', because the story is to be told for the first time, and the word 'remember' is used to remind someone of something has been previously mentioned before.

The word 'اذكر' is translated correctly by Arberry, Ghali, and Hilali and Khan as 'mention', and by Dawood as 'recount'. Both translations are considered accurate. In contrast to all the four translators, Sale translate that word as 'remember' and this translation results in semantic loss.

**Table 4.11 Item 11: Verse 20**

	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Qaalat anna yakoonu lee ghulaamunw wa lam yamsasnee bashrunw wa lam aku baghiyyaa"

<b>Translations of the verse:</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"She said, 'How shall I have a son whom no mortal has touched, neither have I been unchaste?'"
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"She said, how shall I have a son, seeing a man hath not touched me, and I am no harlot?"
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"She said, "However can I have a youth, and no mortal has touched me, neither have I been a prostitute?'"
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"She said: "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste?'"
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"How shall I bear a child,' she answered, 'when I have neither been touched by any man nor ever been unchaste?'"

**Analysis:**

In this verse the Arabic letter 'ن' is omitted from the word 'أكن' to be 'أك'. This omission in Arabic language indicates that the action has no possibility to happen. The Arabic linguists Al-Samurraie and Al-Marid said that the intended meaning of this omission is to deny any possibility of Maryam to be a prostitute and that she has never been (n.d). Therefore, the word never/ever is essential in this translation to complete the meaning.

Only Dawood has succeeded to capture the meaning accurately by adding the word 'ever', in his translation for that verse as following: "when I have neither been touched by any man nor ever been unchaste".

**Table 4.12 Item 12: Verse 21**

قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّنٌ ۖ وَلِنَجْعَلَهُ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Qaala kazaaliki qaala Rabbuki huwa 'alaiya haiyimunw wa linaj 'alahoo Aayatal linnaasi wa rahmatam minnaa; wa kaana amram maqdiyyaa"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"He said, 'Even so thy Lord has said: "Easy is that for Me; and that We may appoint him a sign unto men and a mercy from Us; it is a thing decreed."
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"Gabriel replied, so shall it be: Thy Lord saith, this is easy with Me; and We will perform it, that We may ordain him for a sign unto men, and a mercy from Us: For it is a thing which is decreed."
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"He said, "Thus (it will be). Your Lord has said, cSimple is it for Me, and that We may make him a sign for mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a Command decreed.""
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"He said: "So (it will be), your Lord said: 'That is easy for Me (Allah): And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (Allah), and it is a matter (already) decreed, (by Allah).'"

<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	<p>"Thus did your Lord speak,' he replied. "What is easy enough for Me. He shall be a sign to mankind and a blessing from Ourselves. Our decree shall come to pass.""</p>
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**Analysis:**

In this verse the word 'لنَجْعَلَهُ' means that God has already decided to make something. Arberry and Ghali have translated the word correctly as 'appoint' and 'make', whereas, Sale translated the word as 'ordain' which according to *Cambridge Dictionary* means "to make someone officially a priest, minister or rabbi in a religious ceremony". This word is largely out of context because the meaning in the verse is not to make Issa (pbuh) a priest and there is no ceremony.

In translating this word, Hilali and Khan also made a grave error when they translated it as "and (we wish) to appoint him." First of all, the word "wish" is inappropriate in the context of "لنَجْعَلَهُ," which denotes an already made choice. Second, since Allah has stated this, it is disrespectful to ascribe wishes to Allah.

The word 'آيَةً' is translated by all the five selected translators as 'a sign'. The word 'sign' in *Cambridge Dictionary* has many various meanings like "a written or printed mark that has a standard meaning", "something showing that something else exists or might happen or exist in the future". None of these definitions capture the complete meaning intended in the verse as explained by Al-Tabari and Al-Sharawi. The meaning of the word 'آيَةً' is an evidence of Allah's power; therefore, the literal translation as a sign would give a vague meaning in the context to the target reader.

To obtain an appropriate translation for that word, an explanation after the word 'sign' should be provided, or it should be paraphrased as 'an evidence of our absolute power'.

**Table 4.13 Item 13: Verse 23**

<p>فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ يَلَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٣﴾</p>	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	<p>"Fa ajaaa 'ahal makhaadu ilaa jiz'in nakhlati qaalat yaa laitanee mittu qabla haazaa wa kuntu nasyam mansiyyaa"</p>
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	<p>"And the birthpangs surprised her by the trunk of the palm-tree. She said, 'Would I had died ere this, and become a thing forgotten!'"</p>
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	<p>"and the pains of childbirth came upon her near the trunk of a palm-tree. She said, would to God I had died before this, and had become a thing forgotten, and lost in oblivion!"</p>
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	<p>"Then the birthpangs made her come to the trunk of the palm-tree. She said, "Oh, would I had died before this and become a thing forgotten, completely forgotten!"</p>
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	<p>"And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a date-palm. She said: "Would that I had died before this, and had been forgotten and out of sight!"</p>
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	<p>"And when she felt the throes of childbirth she lay down by the trunk of a palm-tree, crying: 'Oh, would that I had died before this and passed into oblivion!'"</p>

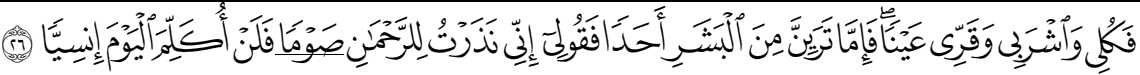
## Analysis:

The interpretation of أجاها by Ibn-Katheer, Al-Baghawi, and Al-Qurtubi is to drive her and force her to come to the trunk. Al-Sharawi also provided a detailed explanation of this verse, focusing on the term أجاها. He distinguished between the verb جاءها, which indicates that she came by her full will and desire, and the verb أجاها, which indicates that she was compelled to accept it and was dragged to the trunk against her will. It could therefore suggest that the word أجاها has a bad connotation.

The translations "came upon her" by Sale and "surprised her by the trunk" by Arberry do not accurately depict the birth pangs leading her to the trunk, which would have been a better place for her to eat and drink. Dawood translated it as "When she felt the throes of childbirth, she lay down by the trunk", but this translation does not convey any of the intended meanings; instead, it is understood as though she was already standing by the trunk.

Ghali's translation 'made her come to the trunk', and Hilali and Khan's translation 'drove her to the trunk' are more appropriate translations of the word 'أجاها'.

**Table 4.14 Item 14: Verse 26**

	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Fakulee washabee wa qarree 'ainaa; fa immaa tarayinna minal bashari ahadan faqoolee innee nazartu lir Rahmaani sawman falan ukallimal yawma insiyyaa"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	

<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"Eat therefore, and drink, and be comforted; and if thou shouldst see any mortal, say, "I have vowed to the All-merciful a fast, and today I will not speak to any man."
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"And eat, and drink, and calm thy mind. Moreover if thou see any man, and he question thee, say, verily I have vowed a fast unto the merciful; wherefore I will by no means speak to a man this day."
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"So eat and drink and comfort your eye, yet in case you ever definitely see any mortal, (Literally: any of the mortals) then say, "Surely I have vowed fasting to The All-Merciful, so I will never speak today to any human being.""
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"So eat and drink and be glad, and if you see any human being, say: 'Verily! I have vowed a fast unto the Most Beneficent (Allah) so I shall not speak to any human being this day. "
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"Therefore eat and drink and rejoice; and should you meet any mortal say to him: "I have vowed a fast to the Merciful and will not speak with any man today.""


### **Analysis:**

The word 'صوم' in Arabic is defined by *Al-Waseet Dictionary* as "the abstinence from food and drink for religious reasons", and "to refrain from speaking or doing something". According to the exegesis books , the meaning of the word 'صوما', 'to stop speaking'. it is translated by the five selected translators as 'fast' or 'fasting'. The word fast in the Western culture means 'a period during which someone does not eat, especially for religious reasons' as stated in *Longman Dictionary*. This meaning does



not match the intended meaning in this context. The word 'silence' could be an appropriate translation for the word 'صوما' in this context instead of fast.

**Table 4.15 Item 15: Verse 28**

 يَا أُخْتِ هَارُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكِ امْرَأَ سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكَ بَغِيًّا	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Yaaa ukhta Haaroona maa kaana abookimra'a saw'inw wa maa kaanat ummuki baghiyyaa"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"Sister of Aaron, thy father was not a wicked man, nor was thy mother a woman unchaste."
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"O sister of Aaron, thy father was not a bad man, neither was thy mother a harlot."
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"O sister of Harûn, (Aaron) in no way was your father a woeful person, and in no way was your mother a prostitute."
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	""O sister (i.e. the like) of Harun (Aaron) [not the brother of Musa (Moses), but he was another pious man at the time of Maryam (Mary)]! Your father was not a man who used to commit adultery, nor your mother was an unchaste woman.""
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"Sister of Aaron, <sup>1</sup> your father was never a whore-monger, nor was your mother a harlot.' 1. Muslim commentators deny the charge that there is confusion here between Miriam, Aaron's sister, and Maryam (Mary), mother of Jesus. 'Sister of Aaron', they argue, simply means 'virtuous woman' in this context."

## Analysis:

This verse causes a problem for translators due to the different interpretations of one of its words particularly the word 'أخت'. According to Ibn-Katheer, the word 'أخت' indicates the likeness between Maryam and Haroon in the righteousness. According to Tabari and Al-Qurtubi, the terms "أخ" and "أخت" denote the person's lineage, for instance, "يا أبا تميم" to denote a member of the Tameem tribe. They said she is descended from Haroon. She is the sister of prophets Haroon and Mousa, which provides another rationale for the word's use. However, this was rejected because of the great distance in time (600 years) between Haroon and Maryam.). According to Al-Saadi, Maryam has a brother of her own who is named after prophet Haroon.

Arberry ,Sale and Ghali translated the word directly as 'sister of Aron/ Harun' without pointing out to its various interpretations. Hilali and Khan, and Dawood have given better translations with explanation, especially Dawood when he added 'simply means 'virtues woman' in this context'.

Another word in this verse is the word 'سوء'. This word in the exegesis means 'fornicator man', and it is translated by Arberry as 'a wicked man'. In *Merriam Webster Dictionary* 'wicked' means 'morally very bad : Evil', and Sale translated it as 'a bad man'. A bad man in *Merriam Webster Dictionary* means "outlaw, desperado", and by Ghali "a woeful person" its meaning as stated in *Longman Dictionary* "very bad or serious- literary very sad: pathetic". All these translations produce a complete loss in the intended meaning.

On the other hand, Hilali and Khan, and Dawood translated it respectively as 'a man who used to commit adultery', 'a whore-monger'. Whoremonger means a person who consorts with whores; these are better translations and reflect the intended contextual meaning of the verse.

**Table 4.16 Item 16: Verse 35**

<p>مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ سُبْحَانَهُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٣٥﴾</p>	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	<p>"Maa kaana lillaahi ai yattakhiza minw waladin Subhaanah; iza qadaaa amran fa innamaa yaqoolu lahoo kun fa yakoon"</p>
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	<p>"It is not for God to take a son unto Him. Glory be to Him! When He decrees a thing, He but says to it 'Be,' and it is."</p>
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	<p>"It is not meet for God, that He should have any son: God forbid! When He decreeth a thing, He only saith unto it, be; and it is."</p>
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	<p>"In no way is it for Allah to take to Him a child. All Extolment be to Him! When He decrees a Command, then He only says to it, "Be!" and it is."</p>
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	<p>"It befits not (the Majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son [this refers to the slander of Christians against Allah, by saying that 'Iesa (Jesus) is the son of Allah]. Glorified (and Exalted be He above all that they associate with Him). When He decrees a thing, He only says to it, "Be!" and it is."</p>
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	<p>"God forbid that He Himself should beget a son! When He decrees a thing He need only say: 'Be,' and it is."</p>

### Analysis:

According to Al-Tabari and Al-Sa'adi 'سبحانه' is a word used to reject and deny the idea of God having a son. Sale and Dawood are incorrect in their translation of سبحانه into 'god forbid' because as stated in *Cambridge Dictionary* 'god forbid' is "a way of saying that you hope something does not happen" and according to *Longman Dictionary* it is "used to say that you very much hope that something will not happen". It is not correct to say we hope it will not happen, it is a well-established fact, since the beginning of creation, that Allah is needless to have a son.

Arberry's translation of this word into 'Glory be to Him' and Ghali's translation of it into 'All extolment be to Him' are better translations, whereas Hilali and Khan's 'Glorified' (and Exalted be He above all that they associate with him) with the explanation is considered the best among them.

It seems that an accurate translation would be 'greater is Allah', because the word 'سبحانه' in this context is not intended to give the literal meaning of the word.

**Table 4.17 Item 17: Verse 39**

<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Wa anzirhum Yawmal hasrati iz qudiyal amr; wa hum fee ghaflatinw wa hum laa yu'minoon"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"Warn thou them of the day of anguish, when the matter shall be determined, and they yet heedless and unbelieving."

<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"And do thou forewarn them of the day of sighing, when the matter shall be determined, while they are now sunk in negligence and do not believe."
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"And warn them of the Day of regret, as the Command is decreed, and they are in a state of heedlessness, and they do not believe."
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"And warn them (O Muhammad SAW) of the Day of grief and regrets, when the case has been decided, while (now) they are in a state of carelessness, and they believe not."
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"Forewarn them of that woeful day, when Our decree shall be fulfilled while they heedlessly persist in unbelief."


**Analysis:**

'الحسرة' in this verse, is "the deep feeling of regret that befalls the human soul when it misses out something that cannot be remedied" ( Al-Sharawi, n.d). Arberry has translated the word as 'anguish'. This word in *Cambridge Dictionary*, means "extreme unhappiness caused by physical or mental suffering". Based on these definitions, the word 'anguish' is not the intended meaning in this verse. Similarly, Sale has mistranslated the word as 'sighing', which does not indicate the aspects of meaning that are intended in the verse.

Ghali has translated it as 'regret'. In *Longman Dictionary*, the word 'regret' means, "a feeling of a sadness about something you have done and wish you had not done it". Again, his meaning does not express the intensive feeling of regret and the impossibility to change or remedy the situation.

Dawood's translated it into 'woeful', which according to *Longman Dictionary*, means "very bad or serious- literary pathetic". This meaning is not accurate in this context, and does not convey the intended message.

**Table 4.18 Item 18: Verse 41**

	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Wazkur fil Kitaabi Ibraaheem; innahoo kaana siddeeqan Nabiyyaa"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"And mention in the Book Abraham; surely he was a true man, a Prophet."
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"And remember Abraham in the book of the Koran; for he was one of great veracity, and a prophet."
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"And mention in the Book Ibrahîm; (Abraham) surely he was most sincere, a Prophet."
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"And mention in the Book (the Quran) Ibrahim (Abraham). Verily! He was a man of truth, a Prophet."
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"You shall also recount in the Book the story of Abraham: He was a saintly man and a prophet."

### Analysis:

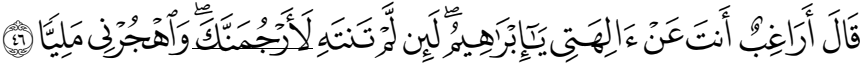
The word 'صديقاً' in this verse, according to Al-Sa'adi, Al-Baghawi and Al-Sharawi ,means the man who always tells the truth and also believe in what Allah says and in what the prophets says. Al-Sharawi elaborated more and gave an example to clarify the meaning he stated that Abu-Bakar Al-Siddiq أبو بكر الصديق (the companion of the prophet Mohammed 'pbuh') is called Al-Saddiq because he believed in what the prophet said.

Arberry's translation of this word into 'a true man' is vague in this context because a true man is usually associated with someone with strong personality, confidence and chivalry. Given this, the word being used is totally far from the meaning intended.

Sale's translation 'one of great veracity' and Ghali's 'most sincere' along with Hilali and Khan's 'most sincere' cover only one shade of the meanings of that word and lack other shades of its meaning. The translation of the word should capture both shades of the meaning to convey a complete message

Dawood has translated 'صديقاً' as 'a saintly man'. The word 'saintly' according to *Cambridge Dictionary* means "good, kind and patient". This word gives general meaning of a good man and does not specify the intended meaning.

**Table 4.19 Item 19: Verse 46**

	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Qaala araaghibun anta 'an aalihatee yaaa Ibraaheemu la 'il lam tantahi la arjumannaka wahjurnee maliyyaa"

<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"Said he, 'What, art thou shrinking from my gods, Abraham? Surely, if thou givest not over, I shall stone thee; so forsake me now for some while.'"
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"His father answered, dost thou reject my gods, O Abraham? If thou forbear not, I will surely stone thee: Wherefore leave me for a long time."
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"Said he, "Do you desirously shirk from my gods, O Ibrahîm? Indeed, in case you do not refrain, indeed I will definitely stone you; so forsake me for a long while.'"
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"He (the father) said: "Do you reject my gods, O Ibrahim (Abraham)? If you stop not (this), I will indeed stone you. So get away from me safely before I punish you.'"
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"He replied: 'Do you dare renounce my gods, Abraham? Desist, or I will stone you. Leave my house this instant!'"

### **Analysis:**

This verse is problematic in translation since the interpreters have disagreed on the meaning of one of its words particularly the word 'أرجمك'. According to Al-Tabari, Al-Baghawi and Ibn-Katheer, it means "to insult you with offensive words". However Al-Sa'adi and some others stated that the intended meaning is "to stone him". According



to *A-Raid Dictionary* the word "رجم" has two different meanings: to stone someone or

something as in the verse *وَجَعَلَهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيْطَانِ* and the second meaning is to insult and

curse someone or to talk about something you don't know" *وَيَقُولُونَ حَمْسَةً سَادِسُهُمْ*

*كَذَّبَهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ*

To translate the word *أرجمك* faithfully both aspects of meaning should be mentioned with an explanation or annotation.

The word 'ملياً', mentioned also in this verse, is defined by Al-Tabari as 'safely before I punish you', and by Al-Sa'adi as 'for a long while'. Sale and Ghali captured the second meaning in their translations, while Hilali and Khan's translation captured the first one. Arberry has mistranslated the word as 'for some while' in which the word 'some' does not indicate the long period of time. It seems that Dawood has misunderstood the meaning of 'ملياً'. He translated it as 'this instant', which is not one of meaning aspects of the word.

A better translation should preserve both aspects of meaning "for a long while (safely before I punish you)".

**Table 4.20 Item 20: Verse 47**

<i>قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا</i>	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Qaala salaamun 'alaika sa astaghfiru laka Rabbee innahoo kaana bee hafiyyaa"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A. J. ARBERRY</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">"He said, 'Peace be upon thee! I will ask my Lord to forgive thee; surely He is ever gracious to me.'"</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GEORGE SALE</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">"Abraham replied, peace be on thee: I will ask pardon for thee of my Lord; for He is gracious unto me."</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>M. M. GHALI</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">"He said, "Peace be upon you! I will soon ask my Lord to forgive you; surely He has been Ever-Hospitable to me."</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">"Ibrahim (Abraham) said: "Peace be on you! I will ask Forgiveness of my Lord for you. Verily! He is unto me, Ever Most Gracious."</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>N. J. DAWOOD</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">"Peace be with you,' said Abraham. 'I shall implore my Lord to forgive you: for to me He has ever been gracious."</p>

**Analysis:**

According to the interpretations of Al-Sa'adi, Al-Qurtubi and Ibn-Katheer the phrase **سلام عليك** is not meant to be a greeting to his father. The meaning of **سلام** عليك is 'I guarantee that I will no more bother you and I will leave you peacefully'. Although the translators used the word 'peace be upon you' as a translation for that

phrase except Dawood, who gave a very close translation to the intended contextual meaning.

Regarding the translation of the word 'أستغفر', it worth mentioning that there is a difference between the words 'المغفرة' and 'العفو'. The word 'المغفرة' means: "to abolish the spiritual torment" while العفو means: to abolish the physical torment". According to *English Language Learners Website* the word pardon is "generally related to a change in punishment or consequences" whereas forgive: is "generally related to a change in feelings or perspective". Arberry, Ghali, Hilali and Khan, and Dawood translated it successfully; on the other hand, Sale has mistranslated the word 'أستغفر' as "to ask pardon". This is considered a partial loss in meaning because they are still synonyms and reflect the targeted concept in the context but with some differences.

**Table 4.21 Item 21: Verse 61**

<p>جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ عِبَادَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَأْتِيًا ﴿٦١﴾</p>	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	<p>"Jannaati 'adninil latee wa'adar Rahmaanu ibaadahoo bilghaib; innahoo kaana wa'duhoo ma'tiyyaa"</p>
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	<p>"Gardens of Eden that the All-merciful promised His servants in the Unseen; His promise is ever performed."</p>
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	<p>"Gardens of perpetual abode shall be their reward, which the Merciful hath promised unto his servants, as an object of faith; for his promise will surely come to be fulfilled."</p>

<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"Gardens of Adn (Eden) that The All-Merciful promised His bondmen in the Unseen; sure it is that His promise is forthcoming."
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"(They will enter) 'Adn (Eden) Paradise (everlasting Gardens), which the Most Beneficent (Allah) has promised to His slaves in the unseen: Verily! His Promise must come to pass."
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"the gardens of Eden, which the Merciful has promised on trust to His servants. His promise shall be fulfilled"

**Analysis:**

Translating the word 'الغيب' is very problematic since it's a comprehensive word. It is an Islamic term that refers to hidden everything that can neither be known nor be recognized. It includes what cannot be seen, heard or touched. The concept in Islam refers also to the divine realm which includes the paradise, hell, angels and the demons as well as the future events and the day of judgment. In other words, it refers to everything that no one knows except Allah.

The word 'الغيب' is translated by Arberry, Sale, and Hilali and Khan as 'the unseen'. Thus, 'unseen' covers only a part of the meaning of 'الغيب' as explained previously. This leads to a partial loss in meaning. Sale and Dawood translated the word with a communicative manner as 'as an object of faith' and 'on trust'.

Ibn-Katheer, Al-Sa'adi, and Al-Tabari, referred to the fact that adding the letter 'ب' before 'الغيب' has given the word two shades of meaning. Firstly, this promise is about

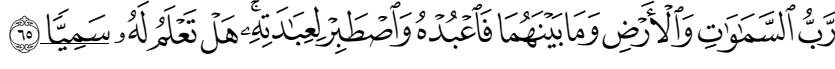
something in a divine realm, secondly is that the servants of Allah have believed and trusted His promise of something beyond their perception which is a proof of their strong faith and trust of Allah.

Dawood's translation 'on trust' captures the second shade of meaning which is very important. According to *Cambridge Dictionary* 'on trust' means 'to believe that something is true although you have no proof', this is an accurate word choice ,however; it still lacks the first shade of meaning.

On the other hand, Sale's translation 'as an object of faith' seems to be influenced by his religious background. In Christianity, the object of faith is God and his promises, although some believe that the object of faith is Jesus Christ. This translation is rejected due to the disruption in meaning.

A better translation can be paraphrased as ' Gardens of Eden (in a divine realm unknown to Ye) which the Merciful has promised on trust to His servants'.

**Table 4.22 Item 22: Verse 65**

	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Rabbus samaawaati wal ardi wa maa bainahumaa fa'bud hu wastabir li'ibaadatih; hal ta'lamu lahoo samiyyaa"
<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"And thy Lord is never forgetful, Lord He of the heavens and earth and all that is between them. So serve Him, and be thou patient in His service; knowest thou any that can be named with His Name?"
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"He is the Lord of heaven and earth, and of whatsoever is between them: Wherefore worship Him, and be constant in his worship. Dost thou know any named like Him?"

<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"The Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. So worship Him, and (endure) patiently, constantly in His worship. Do you know of any that is given His namesake?"
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, so worship Him (Alone) and be constant and patient in His worship. Do you know of any who is similar to Him? (of course none is similar or coequal or comparable to Him, and He has none as partner with Him). [There is nothing like unto Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer]."
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. Worship Him, then, and be patient in His service; for do you know any other worthy of His name?"

**Analysis:**

The word 'سميا' in this verse is mentioned previously in verse (7) when Allah has answered prophet Zakaryya's prayers to have a son, and gave him good tidings of a son, his name is to be Yahya, and told him that 'لم نجعل له من قبل سميا'. It was translated by Arberry, Sale, Ghali, Hilali and Khan and Dawood respectively as follows:

1. "No namesake have we given him aforetime"
2. "We have not caused any to bear the same name before him"
3. "No namesake have we given him earlier"
4. "We have given that name to no one before (him)"
5. "A name no man has borne before him".

The meaning of سميا depends on the context in which it occurs. In this context, and according to most of the exegesis, the meaning of 'سميا' refers to the name not the

qualities that are given to other prophets before him, therefore, the most related and suitable meaning is the namesake which makes all the five translations appropriate and convey the intended meaning.

The word *سميا* in verse (65) '*هل تعلم له سميا*' has another context which affected its meaning. According to the exegesis, it refers to the qualities that include his singularity of his name.

Arberry's translation of the phrase '*هل تعلم له سميا*' is 'knowest thou any that can be named with his name' and Sale's 'Dost thou know any named like him?' Ghali's 'Do you know of any that is given His namesake?'. All these translations covers only the least of the meaning and do not give a complete message.

Hilali and Khan's translation 'Do you know of any who is similar to him' adapted the most agreed upon meaning of the word '*سميا*'.

Dawood in his translation 'do you know any other worthy of His name?' seemed to understand the need of reflecting both shades of meaning. By using the word 'worthy' he referred to the qualities of Allah, and he followed the word 'worthy' with 'his name'. It is the best translation among the five that succeeded to join both meanings in one sentence.

**Table 4.23 Item 23: Verse 75**

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ مَدًّا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ إِمَّا الْعَذَابَ وَإِمَّا السَّاعَةَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرُّ مَا كَانُوا وَأَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا ﴿٧٥﴾	
<b>Transliteration of the verse</b>	"Qul man kaana fidda laalati falyamdud lahur Rahmaanu maddaa; hattaa izaaw raaw maa yoo'adoona immal 'azaaba wa immas Saa'ata fasa ya'lamoona man huwa sharrum makaananw wa ad'afu jundaa"

<b>Translations of the verse</b>	
<b>A. J. ARBERRY</b>	"Say: 'Whosoever is in error, let the All-merciful prolong his term for him! Till, when they see that they were threatened, whether the chastisement, or the Hour, then they shall surely know who is worse in place, and who is weaker in hosts.'"
<b>GEORGE SALE</b>	"Say, whosoever is in error, the Merciful will grant him a long and prosperous life; until they see that with which they are threatened, whether it be the punishment of this life, or that of the last hour; and hereafter they shall know who is in the worse condition, and the weaker in forces."
<b>M. M. GHALI</b>	"Say, "Whoever has been in errancy, then indeed The All-Merciful will grant him an extension of days (Literally: extend for him an extension "of days") until, when they see what they were promised, whether the torment or the Hour, then they will soon know who is in an eviler place and weaker in hosts.'"
<b>HILALI &amp; KHAN</b>	"Say (O Muhammad SAW) whoever is in error, the Most Beneficent (Allah) will extend (the rope) to him, until, when they see that which they were promised, either the torment or the Hour, they will come to know who is worst in position, and who is weaker in forces."
<b>N. J. DAWOOD</b>	"Say: 'The Merciful will bear long with those in error until they see the fulfilment of His promise: be it a worldly scourge or the Hour of Doom. Then shall they learn whose is the worse plight and whose the smaller following.'"



### Analysis:

The word 'الساعة' is a synonym of 'the day of judgment' and in the exegesis the word 'الساعة' in this context refers to the day of judgment. Arberry, Ghali and Hilali and Khan translated it literally as 'the hour'. This translation gives no meaning or understanding of the message here, and would not be comprehensible to the foreign reader. Therefore, an explanation is needed in this verse to communicate its meaning successfully.

Sales' translation 'the last hour' seems more comprehensible, however; it may still disrupt the reader to catch the meaning i.e. 'the last hour of what?' Dawood gives a better translation here as 'the Hour of Doom', 'Doom' as stated in *Cambridge Dictionary* "death, destruction or any bad situation that cannot be avoided". The day of doom is used as a synonym of the day of judgment which enable the expression 'the hour of doom' to convey the same meaning and same effect on the reader.

After analyzing the selected verses of Surat Maryam semantically, it is obvious that the translators translated some words wrongly and in some cases provided translations with partial semantic loss.

This analysis clarified several word-level equivalency problems which are classified by Baker (1992) Examples include culture specific concepts, SL concepts that are not lexicalized in the TL, SL semantically complex words, the SL and TL make different distinctions in meaning, the TL lacks a specific term (hyponymy) etc. These problems lead to misunderstandings about the meaning of words in their context as well as difficulties translating the verses.

**Table 4.24 Results of the analysis**

No. of analyzed words	No. of Correct translation	No. of translations with semantic loss	
		Partial	Complete
34	53	67	44

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 5.0 Introduction

This is the last chapter of the study. It provides an overall summary of the study, findings and conclusion. It also gives the recommendations for further investigation. This chapter also provides answers for the current study research questions which are as follows:

1. Is there any semantic loss occurred in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam?
2. What are the types of semantic loss that occurred in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam?
3. What are the reasons behind the semantic loss in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam?
4. What are the best strategies that can be used to overcome semantic loss in the five selected English translations of Surat Maryam?

#### 5.1 Summary of the Study

Since the Holy Quran's message is greatly influenced by the meaning transmitted in the translations, it is imperative to study semantic loss in the translations of the Holy Quran. In this study the researcher investigated the semantic loss at the word level in five English translations of Surat Maryam. These translations are for Arberry, Sale, Ghali, Hilali and Khan, and Dawood. To achieve the objectives of the current study, a qualitative research approach was adopted. The researcher based his investigation of the semantic loss on the Quran interpretations references known as books of Tafseer and on Arabic-Arabic dictionaries and English- English dictionaries. Baker's (1992) typology of equivalence was also adopted as a conceptual framework.

## 5.2 Findings and Conclusion

After analyzing the semantic loss in five English translations of 36 words in 23 verses (including the Basmallah) from Surat Maryam, the following results and findings were obtained:

It has been found that semantic loss was found in (111) translations out of (164) the total number of translations. This shows clearly that the five English translations of Surat Maryam included semantic loss and this is an answer for the first research question

Both types of Semantic loss occurred in these five translations. The number of the translations that included partial semantic loss is ( 67 ) while the number of the translations with complete semantic loss is ( 44 ). This finding is an answer for the second research question

It has been found that one of the main reasons behind semantic loss at word level is that the Holy Quran is full of words that are heavily loaded with meanings i.e. it has a wide semantic range that cannot be captured with a single target word, which mostly leads to a partial semantic loss.

Based on the analysis carried out in chapter four, it has been found that Loss in meaning is sometimes a result of not referring to the exegesis of the Holy Quran by translators. The exegesis provide explanations for the whole idea of each verse and give the appropriate meaning of the words regarding their intentions. It helps translators to capture the intended and appropriate meaning of words, which would enable translators to avoid committing mistakes in their translations. This factor may lead to a translation with complete semantic loss.

It is of a great significance for a translator of the Holy Quran to master both English and Arabic languages in order to have a complete understanding of the (ST) and the best word choice while rendering the intended meaning to the (TT). A wrong translation of the meaning is a result of unfamiliarity of the whole aspects of the meaning of words either in Arabic or English language.

It has been found that some translators fail to understand and consequently to translate the words in verses in their context to give the exact meaning intended for the given situation, as well as to refer to other verses, particularly the regulative ones. This is another reason behind semantic loss in these translations.

It becomes clear from analyzing Surat Maryam that the religious background of a translator can be a possible cause of affecting their understanding in some situations, which may result in loss of meaning.

The above mentioned findings provide a full answer for the third research question.

Based on the analysis of Surat Maryam translations, it has been found that most of the translators included in this study, apply some translation strategies which do not help in conveying the full meaning and this resulted in translation with semantic loss. The researcher suggests a solution to reduce the semantic loss while dealing with the Holy Quran texts which is the application of different translation strategies particularly the practical strategies that make use of explanation and paraphrasing. This finding is the answer of the fourth research question.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the analysis of the aforementioned Surah, the Holy Quran translations ought to be standardized and carried out by a committee responsible for ensuring their accuracy. The members of this committee should be extremely knowledgeable scholars in both Arabic and English. In order to determine the most likely interpretation and to provide comprehensive information about the interpretations of the Holy Quran and the reasons behind the revelations of each Surah and verse within it, this committee should also include a group of Islamic scholars, particularly scholars of the Quran. Additionally, in order to help achieve the best understanding of the Quranic texts, it is important to connect the ideas of the regulative verses and clarify the intended meaning of words in their context.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for further research**

Due to the limitation of the current study which focused on the semantic loss at the word level in the English translations of Surat Maryam, the researcher suggests conducting a study to trace the pragmatic loss in the English translations of this Surah;

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## الملخص

دراسة تحليلية لفقدان المعنى الدلالي في خمس ترجمات مختارة للقرآن الكريم (سورة مريم أمودجاً).

(رسالة ماجستير) 2023م - 1445هـ

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ريم هادي عوض باجبير

إشراف

د. خالد عوض بن محاشن

تعد دراسة الفقد الدلالي في ترجمات القرآن الكريم أمراً بالغ الأهمية؛ لأنها يمكن أن تؤدي إلى ترجمة تفشل تماماً في نقل المعاني الحقيقية للنص القرآني. ومن ثم، كان الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة الفقد الدلالي، والأسباب الكامنة وراءه، في خمس ترجمات إنجليزية مختلفة لسورة مريم. مؤلفو هذه الترجمات هم الدكتور الهلالي والدكتور خان، ن. ج. داود، جورج سيل، م. م. غالي، وأ. ج. أرييري.

ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، اعتمدت الباحثة في تحليل الفقد الدلالي على مستوى الكلمة، في هذه الترجمات الخمس لتلك السورة، منهجا كيفيا، مستفيدة من التفسير القرآني، والقواميس العربية؛ من أجل الحصول على فهم كامل لمعنى السورة ضمن سياقها. علاوة على ذلك، لجأت الباحثة إلى القواميس الإنجليزية لفحص مدى دقة ترجمة المعنى المقصود إلى النص الهدف.

كشفت الدراسة عن حدوث فقدان دلالي جزئي وكلي في هذه الترجمات الخمس، ومع ذلك، يبدو أن الخسارة الجزئية كانت أكثر تواتراً. وأظهر التحليل أيضاً أن السبب الرئيس للخسارة الدلالية هو عدم فهم المعنى المقصود للقرآن في سياقه.



الجمهورية اليمنية  
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي  
جامعة الريان  
كلية الدراسات العليا

دراسة تحليلية في فقدان المعنى الدلالي في خمس ترجمات مختارة  
للقران الكريم. (سورة مريم أنموذجاً)  
رسالة مقدمة إلى كلية الدراسات العليا بجامعة الريان لاستكمال نيل درجة الماجستير،  
في تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية والترجمة

إعداد

ريم هادي عوض باجبير

إشراف

د. خالد عوض بن مخاشن

أستاذ مشارك

جامعة حضرموت

1445/2023