

# **Investigating the Challenges of Translating Arabic Collocations into English with Reference to the Quran**

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## Abstract

This study examined the extent to which Quranic collocations fit into the general theory of collocation. It explored the importance of demystifying the collocational and phraseological theoretical base in order to facilitate the task of translators to deal more efficiently with collocation and phraseology from a Quranic perspective. This study assessed the difficulties and challenges of translating Quranic collocations from Arabic into English, focusing on five selected English translations of the Quran to evaluate the degree of faithfulness and accuracy in rendering the Quranic collocation into English.

Despite the extensive research and interest that translation and collocations generate, there is little consensus and a degree of inconsistency regarding the way collocation and translation are defined and explained, making conclusive empirical evidence difficult to reach. Research on collocation has not quite managed to move the debate beyond merely defining and classifying collocations. Although publications and interest in collocation are prolific, too many grey areas still prevail, and many questions remain unanswered. There is a degree of stalemate in the phraseology debate, often yielding fragmented literature and inconclusive empirical evidence. Research on collocation remains stuck at the level of description, definition and prescription. Similarly, translation studies' research scope is limited to comparative analysis of language pairs, examining their cross-linguistic and cultural differences. Throughout its long history, translation studies have never been free from conflicting views. Translation is one of the most researched topics and no other topic has involved theorists and practitioners as much as the translation debate, specifically those who claim that translation is an art and those who believe that translation is a science.

Based on the purpose of the study, the nature of the problem and the research questions, qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews with translation specialists and Imams as users of English translations of the Quran, to gauge their views and perceptions regarding the accuracy and clarity of Quranic collocations translated in English. This was supported by qualitative analysis of a sample of Quranic collocations from the five selected English translations of the Quran.

The findings suggest that the translation of the Quran in English is still a work in progress. Views are polarised between those who advocate as close a rendering of the Quranic text as possible and those who believe in a 'natural style'. Findings revealed that literal translation appears to be the preferred method in translating Quranic collocation and that there is some dissatisfaction among interview participants regarding the quality of English translations of the Quran, which are deemed to be useful but flawed, in conveying accurately the meaning of collocations. This view is supported by the text analysis and literature findings. Participants were unanimous that the proliferation of translations of the Quran is positive but stressed that quantity does not always mean quality. Findings from interviews suggested that there is little co-operation and coordination between the different translators or translation bodies regarding the translation of the Quran. Most participants agreed that the type and nature of English language used by some translators of the Quran is often archaic and not user friendly which makes it hard to understand. Excessive use of footnotes in some translations can be a source of distraction. Findings indicated loss of the implicit meaning of Quranic collocations is caused by insufficient knowledge of the Quran and failure to check reliable exegesis as a source of interpretation of Quranic collocations. Findings revealed that linguistic competence in Arabic and English is not a licence to translate the Quran. Knowledge of the religious, rhetorical and cultural background is necessary in order to produce a readable and meaningful translation of the Quran.

This study is pertinent because it has several practical implications. Firstly, it will benefit translators of the Quran by providing fresh insights on how to deal with some of the challenges of translating Quranic collocations. Secondly, it will provide a platform for further research on translating Quranic collocations and addressing the current shortcomings. This study has also expanded the extant literature on translating Quranic collocations to benefit future researchers.

## Outputs and dissemination of research

Much of the theoretical and practical content of this study has been published in refereed and specialised linguistics and translation journals.

**Badr**, H. and Menacere, K. (2019). Demystifying Phraseology: Implications for translating Quranic phraseological units. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies (ALLS)*. Vol (10) Issue (1).

**Badr**, H. and Menacere, K. (2019). Assessing the Translation Quality of Quranic Collocations: For better or for worse. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (ijllt)*. Vol (2) Issue (2).

## Declaration

This is to declare that this thesis is my own work. I am solely responsible for the whole content of this research. All the verbatim extracts have been highlighted and the sources have been acknowledged in the thesis. To the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning.

Signature: *Hassan Badr*

Date: June 2019

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Outputs and dissemination of research .....	iii
Declaration .....	iv
Acknowledgements .....	v
List of Tables.....	xi
List of Figures.....	xi
Transliteration Symbols.....	xi
Chapter One.....	1
Introduction .....	1
1.1 Purpose of the study .....	1
1.2 An overview of the key literature .....	2
1.3 Research questions .....	4
1.4 Research objectives.....	5
1.5 Statement of the research problem .....	5
1.6 The selected versions of English translations of the Quran.....	6
1.7 Why is this study worth undertaking? .....	9
1.8 Structure of the study.....	10
1.9 Chapter summary .....	12
Chapter Two.....	14
Quranic Language and Translation .....	14
2.0 Introduction.....	14
2.1 The complexity of the Arabic language .....	14
2.2 Varieties of Arabic.....	15
2.3 The nature of Arabic of the Quran.....	16
2.4 The impact of the Quran on Arabic .....	16
2.5 To translate or not to translate the Quran.....	18
2.6 Reasons for translating the Quran: past and present veiw s .....	23
2.7 A historical overview of Quran translations .....	25
2.8 Summary of the chapter.....	27
Chapter Three .....	29
Translating Quranic Collocation into English: making the right connection .....	29
3.0 Introduction.....	29
3.1 Defining collocation.....	32
3.2 Research into collocation remains inconclusive .....	43
3.3 Collocations: selection criteria and eligibility .....	47
3.3.1 Non-compositionality vs Compositionality criteria .....	49

3.4 Positioning Quranic collocation within the broad collocation debate.....	52
3.5 Identifying Quranic collocations .....	55
3.5.1 Method for selecting Quranic collocations .....	56
3.6 Method of assessing Quranic collocations in English .....	61
3.7 Translating Quranic collocation .....	61
3.8 Demystifying Quranic phraseological units.....	74
3.8.1 The Phraseological units muddle.....	77
3.8.2 The Phraseological units in the Quran.....	79
3.8.3 Antonymy in the Quran.....	84
3.8.4 Translating Quranic Phraseological units.....	90
3.9 Concluding remarks .....	91
Chapter Four .....	94
An overview of translation dynamics .....	94
4.0 Introduction.....	94
4.1 Understanding and defining of translation .....	95
4.2 The notion of text typology .....	98
4.2.1 Text types.....	98
4.2.2 Text typologies .....	99
4.3 The debate over the translating approach.....	102
4.4 Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) .....	113
4.4.1 The notion of translation quality assessment .....	115
4.4.2 The search for a translation quality assessment model .....	118
4.4.3 Reiss and Vermeer's model of translation assessment.....	119
4.4.4 House's translation quality assessment.....	122
4.4.5 Nord's quality assessment model .....	128
4.4.6 Waddington's model of translation assessment.....	129
4.5 Summary of the chapter.....	131
Chapter Five.....	132
Translating Quranic collocations from the perspective of Arabic studies.....	132
5.0 Introduction.....	132
5.1 Collocation: lexical relations.....	139
5.2 An overview of key literature on translating Arabic-English collocations.....	142
5.2.1 Collocation in Quranic text.....	147
5.3 Methodological approaches and literature.....	156
5.3.1 Previous methodological approaches .....	158
5.4 Research methodology and methods.....	159
5.4.1 Justification for selecting qualitative approach for this study .....	160
5.4.2 The evaluation framework used for text-based analysis .....	161

5.4.3 Evaluation processes .....	163
5.4.4 Participants' selection criteria .....	165
5.4.5 Criteria for selection of bilingual Imams .....	166
5.4.6 Appropriateness of the selected method: semi-structured interviews.....	166
Chapter Six .....	168
Assessing a sample of Quranic collocations.....	168
6.0 Introduction.....	168
6.1 Translation quality assessment.....	168
6.2 The relevance of translation quality assessment.....	171
6.3 What constitutes good translation? .....	175
6.4 Criticism of Translation Quality Assessment .....	176
6.5 Assessment framework adopted by this study .....	178
6.5.1 Assessment processes.....	179
6.6 Summary .....	242
Chapter Seven .....	244
Interview analysis.....	244
7.0 Introduction.....	244
7.1 Justifying the selection of the qualitative method .....	244
7.2 Justification for selecting exploratory research.....	245
7.3 Interview sample size.....	247
7.4 Participants' profiles.....	247
7.5 Selection criteria of participants .....	248
7.6 Interview themes and questions.....	249
7.7 Method of evaluating qualitative interview data .....	251
7.8 Generalisability of qualitative data.....	252
7.9 For the purpose of this study.....	253
7.9.1 Generalisability in the present study .....	254
7.10 Analysis of the interviews.....	256
7.11 Summary of the data analysis of the interviews .....	267
7.11.1 Themes and findings emerging from the interviews.....	269
7.12 Data analysis from interviewing Imams as end users of the Quran in English ....	272
7.12.1 Participants' profiles and selection criteria .....	272
7.13 Analysis of the interviews.....	273
7.14 Summary of the analysis of the interviews .....	284
7.15 Themes and findings of the interviews .....	286
Chapter Eight .....	288
Conclusion and Recommendations .....	288
8.0 Introduction.....	288

8.1 Positioning this study within the debate of translating Quranic collocations.....	288
8.2 Linking key literature to the findings of this study .....	291
8.3 The main failings of the five translations selected for this study .....	293
8.4 Linking findings to the study objectives .....	296
8.5 Summary of key findings.....	299
8.6 Recommendations .....	302
8.7 Contribution to knowledge.....	304
8.7.1 Theoretical contribution .....	304
8.7.2 Practical contribution .....	305
8.8 Limitations of the study .....	305
8.9 Suggestions for future research .....	306
References.....	308

## List of Tables

1.1 The five translations selected for the study.....	6
2.1 Types of Arabic: Classical, modern standard, and varieties of Arabic.....	16
2.2 Translators' views about translating the Quran.....	22
3.1 Definitions of collocation.....	37
5.1 Labels of collocations.....	133
5.2 Commonly held views on translation of collocation .....	141
5.3 Key authors on Quranic lexical collocations .....	154
6.1 The good and the bad of Translation Quality Assessment (TQA).....	174
6.2 Elements of good and bad translations.....	175
6.3 Views on Translation Quality Assessment.....	176
6.4 Translation quality assessment model.....	180
6.5 Exegetical sources checked during the process of TQA .....	183
7.1 Participants' profiles – translation specialists .....	246
7.2 Issues of qualitative research.....	254
7.3 Qualitative findings that emerged from interviews with translators .....	268
7.4 Summary of qualitative interviews .....	285

## List of Figures

1.1 Translators' backgrounds.....	9
1.2 Structure of the study.....	13
3.1 Nida and Taber's (1969) translation process.....	109
3.2 Covert and overt errors.....	127

## Transliteration Symbols

The following table shows the Arabic alphabet and the corresponding International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols used for transliteration for this thesis.

?	الهمزة	d	ض
b	ب	t̤	ط
t	ت	z̤	ظ
θ	ث	ʔ	ع
ʒ	ج	ɣ	غ
ħ	ح	f	ف
x	خ	q	ق
d	د	k	ك
ð	ذ	l	ل
r	ر	m	م
z	ز	n	ن
s	س	h	هـ
ʃ	ش	w	و
ʂ	ص	y	ي

The vowels are:

ـَ (short) = /a /

ـِ (long) = / a:/

ـُ (short) = / u /

ـِ (long) = /u:/

ـِ (short) = / i /

ـِي (long) = / i:/

و - = /aw/

ي - = /aj/

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of the study

This study examines the extent to which Quranic collocation fits into the general theory of collocation. It explores the importance of demystifying the collocational and phraseological theoretical base in order to facilitate the task of translators and second language learners and deal more efficiently with the challenging language aspects of collocation and phraseology. It aims also to assess the difficulties and challenges of translating Quranic collocations from Arabic into English focusing on five of the most referred to translations of the Quran in English.

Despite prolific publications and the growing interest that research on collocation and phraseology generates, too many grey areas still prevail, and many questions remain unanswered (Firth, 1957; Lyons, 1977; Halliday, 1966; Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Sinclair, 1966; Herbst, 1996; Palmer, 1981; Benson et al, 1997; McKeown and Radev, 2000; Aitchison, 2003; Newmark, 1988; Baker, 1992; Meer, 1998; Gitsaki, 2017; Brezina et al, 2015). Moreover, there is a degree of inconsistency and stalemate in the collocation debate, often yielding fragmented literature and inconclusive evidence (Sinclair, 2004; Baker et al., 2008; Xiao and McEney, 2006). It is worth remembering that collocations are lexical items that are joined or combined on an arbitrary basis and that there is “no semantic explanation” (Carter, 1998:56) as to why certain words collocate; word choice is constrained, not by semantic or grammatical features, but merely through usage.

Similarly, Baker (1992) states, that collocation is basically a lexical relation which is not rule governed, but tendency governed. The tendency of certain words to co-occur regularly is based on arbitrary restrictions (why some words collocate while others do not). Thus, unlike grammatical rules, collocations form what is typical or untypical rather than what is admissible or inadmissible. As a result, research on collocation and phraseology remains stuck at the level of description and prescription. Similarly, research on translation studies rarely moves beyond comparative analysis of language pairs, examining their cross linguistic and cultural differences. The literature does not have a strong theoretical base and is largely anecdotal, lacking empirical data from which to draw clear-cut conclusions on the key issues of translating phraseology.

The thrust of this study focuses on five selected English translations of the Quran to assess the degree of faithfulness and accuracy in rendering the Quranic collocation and phraseology into English. It investigates the type of constraints in translating Arabic collocations in the Quran. It mainly assesses the degree of accuracy, fluency and fidelity of conveying the meaning of Quranic collocation into English. It identifies and discusses the translating methods used to transfer the meaning of collocations (e.g. word-for-word, free translating approaches etc.). Finally, it provides appropriate and concrete alternative solutions for translating Arabic collocations into English whenever necessary.

## **1.2 An overview of the key literature**

It seems appropriate from the outset to understand how collocation as a complex word combination is defined and the underlying difference in the acquisition of collocations between Arabic and English.

Although the notion of collocation as a research area in corpus linguistics has covered plenty of mileage, since Palmer (1933:13) referred to this language feature as “*odd comings together-of-words*”. Later on, Firth (1968:182) produced one of the most widely cited definition “*you shall know a word by the company it keeps*”, it is still the subject of conflicting views, limited theoretical base and little empirical research evidence to support it. Every word in a language can be said to have a range of items with which it is more or less compatible or in co-habitable agreement. In the generic sense, collocation denotes the habitual occurrence by mutual consent of certain words whose meaning depends on the words occurring next to each other. In other words, collocations represent word combinations that are in a stable relationship and are in frequent use. Collocating is words joined together in phrases or sentences to form semantically unified expressions. However, collocation is an overarching term which overlaps in meaning and in practice with *language chunks, cliché, collocation, extended lexical unit, fixed expression, formulaic sequence, idiom, idiomatic expression, lexical/lexicalised phrase, multi-word units, phraseme, phraseology, phraseological unit, phrasal lexical item, phrasal lexeme, prefabricated chunk, prefab word, word partnerships, preconstructed lexical items*. As can be seen this array of blurry labels does not inspire confidence in the novice translator nor the language learner. It must be stressed that despite the different nuances in meaning and scale of variations in the range of arguments put forward, there is a general consensus that:

- a) A collocation is a lexical unit that consists of two or more elements that frequently go together. The function of and the rationale for using a collocation i.e. the aim of combining two or more words is to convey a

specific communicative purpose or transmit a precise meaning that is not as clearly conveyed by single separate words.

- b) Collocations can be found in most languages with varying frequencies.
- c) Collocating can be both a creative word combination process or fixed phraseological units a) *blue= paint, eyes, shirt, cars* b) *blue= laws, movie*
- d) The meaning of collocation or phraseological units must be inferred from the constituents in their context of occurrence e.g. *blue-sky thinking*

For the purpose of this study, collocation is defined as the habitual co-occurrence or a combination of certain words in a language in order to convey a particular meaning. It is a linguistic phenomenon which exists in almost every natural language. This explanation and definition of collocation does not differ in form and content from the theoretical base of collocation. Collocation is considered a basic component for the cohesion and coherence of a text. In terms of translation, it represents a challenge for translators.

### 1.3 Research questions

1. To what extent does the general theoretical base of collocation fit that of the Quran. In other words, does the theoretical knowledge base of collocation match that of Quranic collocations?
2. What are the challenges of translating Quranic collocations from Arabic into English?
3. What are the methods used for rendering collocations in the Quran?
4. What are the perceptions and views of translation specialists and Quranic translation users about translations of collocation in the Quran?

## **1.4 Research objectives**

In order to answer the above questions, this study has set the following objectives:

1. To critically review the literature related to translation studies and collocation studies.
2. To determine whether the theoretical base on collocation matches that of Quranic collocations.
3. To assess five translations of the Quran to determine the degree of accuracy and fluency.
4. To evaluate the methods used for rendering collocations in the Quran.
5. To gauge the perceptions and views of translation specialists and Quranic translation users about translations of collocation in the Quran.
6. To provide recommendations based on the findings of this study on how to effectively convey the meaning of Quranic collocations.

## **1.5 Statement of the research problem**

Translating the Quran from Arabic, which is a Semitic language, into English is difficult because of linguistic and cultural incongruence. Thus, words are combined in utterances to form semantically unified expressions and to convey a specific meaning. However, there are linguistic constraints on the way words combine - constraints of positions and relationships with other words to create stretches of coherent and meaningful discourse. Such linguistic and cultural differences dictate different ways of expression. In other words, what collocates in Arabic may not be the same in English. This study examines translating collocation from Arabic into English in five existing translations of the Quran. In particular, the study concentrates on the challenges and constraints of translating

Arabic collocation in the Quran into English. This study aims at investigating collocations in the Quran as a source of difficulty for translators in terms of structure, content, style and culture. Many current English translations of the Quran lack consistency, while others lack quality in parts. Some of the translators use archaic language which makes it difficult for the reader to understand, while others use a simplified literal translation which often leads to the loss of the nuances of meaning of language from SL to TL. This is sometimes due to the translator's inadequate knowledge of the two languages, unfamiliarity with the subject matter or poor cultural awareness which often leads to misinterpreting and misunderstanding of the source language collocation that distorts the message in the target language.

### 1.6 The selected versions of English translations of the Quran

In the history of translations of the Quran, it is thought that there are over forty versions of the Quran in English. It is beyond the scope of this study to assess all the existing translations of the Quran. For the purposes of this study, the five translations selected are as follows:

**Table 1.1: The five translations selected for the study**

<b>Translators</b>	<b>Titles</b>	<b>Date of Edition</b>	<b>Publishers</b>
<b>Arberry</b>	<i>The Koran</i>	1955	<i>Oxford University Press</i>
<b>Ali</b>	<i>The Holy Quran</i>	1934	<i>Shaik Muhammad Ashraf Publishers of Lahore</i>
<b>Abdel Haleem</b>	<i>The Quran</i>	2011	<i>Oxford University Press</i>
<b>Asad</b>	<i>The Message of the Quran, Translated and Explained</i>	1980	<i>Andalus Press</i>
<b>Khan and Al-Hilali</b>	<i>Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Quran</i>	1999	<i>Maktaba Dar-us-Salam</i>

Source: Developed by the researcher

on the market today, the average reader is confused and may find it difficult to decide which one to use and which one best suits their needs. Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that deciding which English version of the Quran is better or more accurate than another is open to debate. Suffice to say that no translation is perfect; each has its strengths and weaknesses. It is worth mentioning that the English versions of the Quran selected for the current study have been produced within the last 80 years. The rationale for selecting the five English versions of the Quran is summed up as follows:

*Yusuf Ali (1934):*

- one of the most widely used translations in English-speaking countries. It is one of the most popular translations among Muslims and non-Muslims because it is one of the earliest translations of the Quran made by a Muslim translator.

*Arberry (1955):*

- the first English translation made by an English translator who is a scholar of Arabic. In addition, Arberry's translation is considered one of the most respected translations achieved by non-Muslim translators and a key reference of Islam.

*Asad (1980):*

- The translator of this version of the Quran relies on his own understanding and interpretation of the Quranic text and context rather than using the traditional interpretation and explanation of the Quran. *“Asad sought to depart from the traditional exegetic approaches and reflected*

*independent thought” (Khaleel, 2005:48). This version does not follow the majority viewpoint of other Muslim scholars.*

*Khan and Al-Hilali (1999):*

- *This translation of the Quran is the most widely published translation because Saudi Arabia reprints and distributes millions of copies of it throughout the world. In addition, this English version of the Quran is carried out by two experts: an Arab translator (Al-Hilali) and a Muslim scholar who mastered English.*

*Abdel Haleem (2011):*

- this translation is a recent English translation of the Quran. This version of the Quran characterises a translation style, which is viewed as a reader-oriented translation.

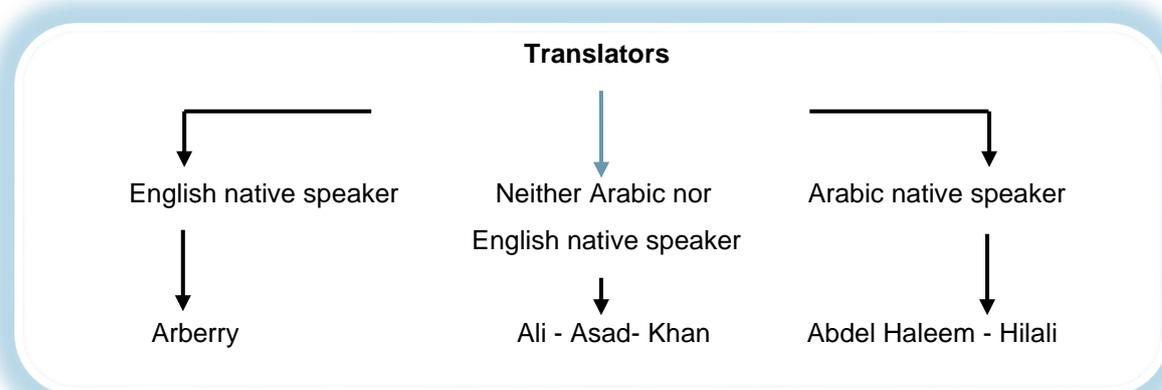
In short, these translations have been chosen due to a number of considerations:

1. They are known among researchers for their relative accuracy. In other words, they are not known to include any deliberate deviations.
2. A preliminary comparison of these translations of a random selection of Quranic collocations reveals that they use different ways of translating, which means the translators were independent and did not copy from each other.
3. The renditions selected for this study were done by translators of different tongues and cultural backgrounds.

This study intends to assess the accuracy and faithfulness of translating collocations in the above five versions. These translations are widely used

translations of the Quran. In addition, translation students, who are interested in Quran translation, usually consult these translations. The purpose of selecting translators from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds is to have a representative sample of the various available translations of the Quran. For example, Arberry is an English native speaker. Other translators such as Ali and Asad are neither Arabic nor English native speakers, while some are Arabic native speakers such as Abdel Haleem and Hilali.

**Figure 1.1- Translators' backgrounds**



**Source: Developed by the researcher**

### 1.7 Why is this study worth undertaking?

The significance of the current study stems from the fact that little research has been conducted on assessing the quality of English translations from the Arabic collocations into English with reference to the Quran. Translation plays a vital role as a means of communication between different languages and cultures. Throughout history, translation has been regarded as a key source of knowledge exchange amongst peoples. The past fifty years have witnessed increasingly rapid advances in the field of translation studies. This has a direct bearing on the issue of translating the Quran in terms of the accuracy and fluency. There are many studies about translations of the Quran, focusing on various language

elements such as repetition (Ali, 2006), proverbs (Alamy, 2018), euphemisms (Alqahtani, 2018), metaphors (Najjar, 2012); however, the translation of collocation in the Quran remains under-researched.

The investigation of this topic contributes to the enhancement of the quality and accuracy of the translations of the meanings of the Quran. This study addresses the challenges facing translators when translating collocation from Arabic into English in the Quran. This study expands the literature on the topic of translating collocations of the Quran into English. In addition, this study benefits future researchers through in-depth investigation of collocations in the Quran.

## 1.8 Structure of the study

This section briefly provides an overview of the study. This study consists of eight chapters:

**Chapter One** provides the background information as an introduction to the thesis. It formulates the nature of the problem that the study seeks to address and what would be the key implications of the study. It sets the aims, questions and objectives of the study. It explains the rationale for conducting the current research and gives an outline of all the chapters.

**Chapter Two** aims at giving background information about the nature and types of Arabic language. In addition, it provides a brief summary of the argument about whether the Quran should be translated to non-Arabic speakers or whether, as some argue, the Quran should not be subject to translation, as loss of meaning in translation is inevitable. The current study positioned itself within the above-

mentioned debate. The main historical milestones of the translations of the Quran have also been presented in this chapter.

**Chapter Three** critically reviews the literature of collocation studies. It explores the importance of demystifying the collocational and phraseological theoretical base in order to facilitate the task of translators to deal more efficiently with collocation and phraseology from a Quranic perspective. It appraises the related debates and linkage between authors focusing on collocations and translation. The literature informs the research objectives and highlights gaps in previous studies, adding value to the current research.

**Chapter Four** reviews the literature of translation studies in line with the objectives of this research. It compares and contrasts the views of translation theories and techniques that are relevant to the topic of the study. It also identifies the gaps in previous studies, adding value to the current research.

**Chapter Five** provides a synthesis of previous studies involving research on collocation with particular focus on collocation in translation from Arabic into English. It demonstrates the limitations and strengths of previous research

**Chapters Six** evaluates the translation of Quranic collocations across five English versions of the Quran. The aim is to investigate the quality of translation as a product, highlighting the different challenges and difficulties faced by the translators of the Quran, focusing on collocations.

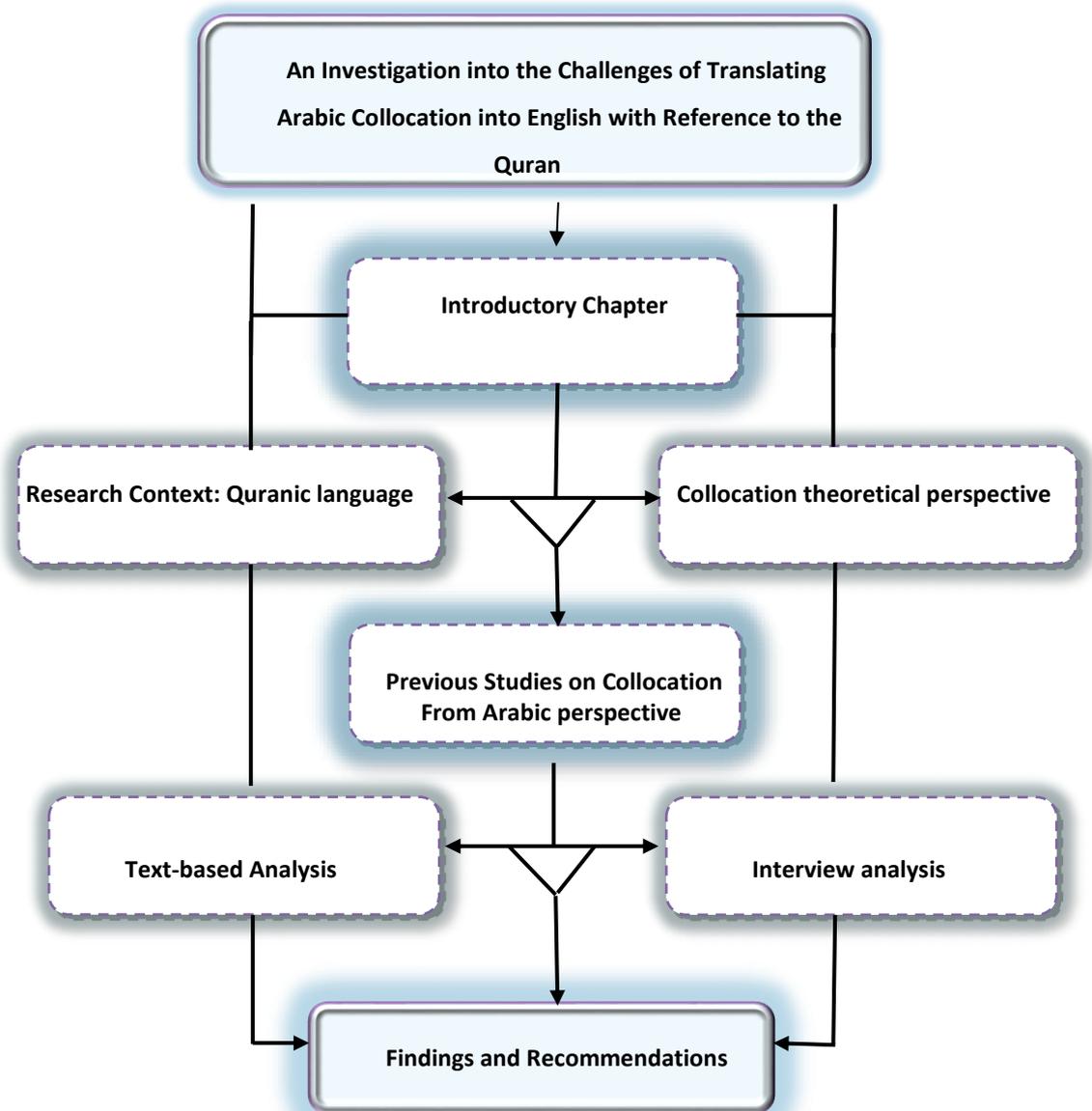
**Chapter Seven** interprets the results of the qualitative data, obtained through the semi-structured interviews. These interviews involved seven translation specialists, including Abdel Haleem, one of the translators of the five translations of the Quran selected by this study.

**Chapter Eight** draws conclusions from the key findings obtained from the qualitative approach starting with text analysis of a sample of Quranic collocations as well as highlighting the main issues in terms of accuracy and fluency of the selected five English translations. It also interprets the key findings from the two sets of interviews. The research limitations of the study are highlighted. It also outlines the potential contribution being made to the existing knowledge and then presents potential future research areas within the field, along with reasoning of their implications and suitable recommendations.

### **1.9 Chapter summary**

This research aims to contribute to the translation debate by finding out how collocations have been used in the Quran in order to make recommendations on how to improve the quality of translating Quranic collocations into English. This chapter presented the pertinent background information for this study. It provided a brief background about the area of research. It set clear research objectives and research questions. This introductory chapter explained the motivation behind this study in that the translation of Quranic collocations from Arabic into English is under-researched.

Figure 1.2: Structure of the study



Source: Developed by the researcher

## Chapter Two

### Quranic language and translation

#### 2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide background information about the nature and types of Arabic language. Secondly, it provides an overview of the debate about whether the Quran should be made accessible in translation to non-Arabic speakers or whether, as some argue, the Quran should not be tampered with, as loss of meaning in translation is inevitable. Finally, it provides the main historical milestones of the translations of the Quran.

#### 2.1 The complexity of the Arabic language

Arabic language is a Semitic language like Amharic, Tigrinya, Hebrew and Aramaic. Today, it is spoken across the Middle East, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. According to Ethnologue (2015), the estimated total population of Arabic first language speakers in the world is 340 million in the countries of the Arab League in 2014. Arabic is written from right to left and it consists of 28 letters. Arabic written text appears without vocalic signs i.e. without vowels, because, as Menacere (1991:180) points out “*Arabic vowels are not part of the writing system in the same way as say French or English*”. Arabic is one of the world's most widely used languages and is the official language for many countries such as Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, etc. Arabic is one of the main six major languages that are used in the UN meetings; the other five are Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

## 2.2 Varieties of Arabic

Broadly speaking, there are two versions of Arabic: (1) Classical Arabic and (2) Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Classical Arabic is the eloquent Arabic language and its structural and metaphorical beauty is related to the Quran. Modern Standard Arabic is based on Classical Arabic. However, it is free from complicated syntax i.e. it uses simple word order and no cases. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) borrows new lexical items such as 'brain drain', 'give the green light' and grammatical borrowings e.g. the passive construction in which the agent becomes the subject of the action. For instance:

A. The demonstrators stormed the embassy. (Active)

**Subject**                      **Verb**                      **Object**

B. The embassy was stormed by the demonstrators. (Passive)

**Subject**                      **Verb**                      **Agent**

C. اقتحم المتظاهرون السفارة

D. اقتحمت السفارة من قبل المتظاهرين

Although the passive voice construction in the sentence (D) is acceptable and used in modern Arabic, it remains untypical according to Classical Arabic because passive in Arabic language is generally agentless.

Regarding varieties of Arabic, there are different types of Arabic language spoken across many different nations and regions around the Arab world, most commonly throughout northern Africa and the Middle Eastern nations. Consider the table below:

**Table 2.1- Types of Arabic: Classical, modern standard, and varieties of Arabic**

<b>Classical Arabic</b>	<b>Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)</b>	<b>Varieties of Arabic</b>
The Quran	Language of Education and Media	Libyan, Algerian, Tunisian, Moroccan, Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, Iraqi, Kuwaiti, Yemeni, Saudi Arabian etc.

**Source: Developed by the researcher**

### **2.3 The nature of Arabic of the Quran**

As the Quran has been revealed in Arabic, a unique relationship between the Arabic language and the Quran has been developed. Arabic provided an effective medium for communicating the message of the Quran. It has a great deal of flexibility in its expressions and its capacity in terms of morphological derivation, acoustic characteristics and richness of vocabulary (Killeen, 2004). On the other hand, the Quran helped Arabic to acquire an important status as one of the principal world languages (El Sayed, 1988). It is noteworthy that the type of Arabic used in the Quran is considered difficult for current generations to learn due to the complexity of its grammar and syntax. (Haeri, 2003).

### **2.4 The impact of the Quran on Arabic**

Arabic has had a great influence on the lives of pre-Islamic Arabs. It was the spoken language of Arab tribes. In the pre-Islamic era, poetry dealt with a wide range of topics such as praise, eulogy, defamation, and love and prose, which are based on subject matters, like superstition, legends, parables, and wisdom tales (El Sayed, 1988). The Quran has given Arabic an official status of a sacred

language. Muslims believe that the Quran (which literally means reading) is the word of God. It is a complete message of God revealed through the Archangel Gabriel to the Prophet Mohammed in Classical Arabic.

The Quran was different and unusual from anything before, even in its themes. Arabs use Arabic to express their emotions in themes such as longing for the beloved, love, long journey adventures in the desert or eulogy, beside the usage for the needs of daily life. The Quran has promoted the Arabs' thinking to higher and more complicated and delicate topics concerning the creation of the universe. The Quran's main themes are centred on the oneness of God, His limitless power, basics of faith and worship, the afterlife, stories of previous prophets, and social justice for all. El Sayed (1988:07) points out that

*“In its external form the Quran is neither poetry nor prose. It is not poetry because it does not observe the metre and rhyme of poetry and it is not prose because it is not composed in the same way in which prose was customarily composed.”*

The eloquence and fluency of the meaning and expression of the Quran impressed Arabs. The Quran helped Arabs to reinforce a deep understanding of the richness and beauty of Arabic. The unique and everlasting relationship between the Quran and Arabic language enables the latter to expand beyond the borders of the Arabian Peninsula. Many verses have expressed this inseparable special relationship. For example:

كِتَابٌ فَصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

*Kita:bun fuṣilat ḡaya:tuḡu qurḡanan Ṣarabi:yan l:qawmin yaṢlamuwna*

*A Scripture whose verses are made clear as a Quran in Arabic for people who understand (Q 41:03).*

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

*ʔina: ʔanzalna:hu qurʔanan ʕarabi:yyan laʕalakum taʕqilu:wna*

*We sent it down as an Arabic Quran, in order that you may learn wisdom*

(Q12:02).

In the pre-Islamic era, few Arab people could read or write. Cultural practices and traditions were passed on from generation to generation orally. The Quran encouraged the change in Arabia from an illiterate to a literate community. In many verses, it encourages them to read, learn and acquire knowledge. For example:

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

*yarfaʕi lla:hu llaʕiyina ʔamanu:w minkum wa llaʕiyina ʔuwtu:w lliʕilma daraja:tin*

*God will raise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge (Q58: 11).*

Having acquired the privilege of being sacred through its engagement with the Quran, Arabic language gained the status of being a prerequisite for performing prayers. However, an issue has been raised among Muslims scholars on the topic of whether the language of the Quran is translatable or untranslatable.

## **2.5 To translate or not to translate the Quran**

This section provides a brief account of the debate with respect to translating the Quran. Since the revelation of the Quran, the issue of translating it into other languages has been a controversial topic amongst Muslims scholars. Conservative Muslim scholars hold the view that the Quran is the word of God revealed in Arabic, therefore no one is allowed to tamper with it to translate it into other languages. On the other hand, there are Muslims scholars who advocate

the idea of translating the Quran into other languages to spread the word of God, to be accessible to non-Arabic speakers.

The traditional Muslim scholar Al-Ghazali (1072) in his book *إلجام العوام عن علم الكلام*. *To intercept the Public from theology*, makes a theological argument that may be taken to mean that the Quran is untranslatable. He holds the view that believers must abstain from changing the Arabic wording of what has been transmitted to them, or from translating its meaning into any other language. He argued that although some Arabic words have equivalents in other languages, speakers of those languages are not used to using these words metaphorically, as Arabs do. Al-Ghazali gave an example between Arabic and Persian with regard to the translation of the Quran, that some Arabic words have equivalent Persian words but the Persians are not accustomed to using them metaphorically, as the Arabs do. Therefore, if the translator used the Persian word, only the literal meaning of the Arabic word would be fulfilled in the translation whereas what is meant in the Quran is the metaphorical meaning. The problem would arise with other languages as well. According to Al-Ghazali, translation of the Quran may affect the Divine attributes; therefore, it must be avoided and strict adherence to the Arabic maintained (Tibawi, 1962).

Sheishaa (2001) supported Al-Ghazali's view. He also emphasised that the Quran for Muslims is a book of guidance and a source of divine knowledge. Sheishaa (2001) points out that the same verse in the Quran can accept various interpretations. Accordingly, the process of translating the Quran affects this Quranic peculiarity as it reduces the reader's understanding to the translator's understanding.

According to Islamic exegetes, Quranic verse sometimes accepts more than one explanation; therefore, it is difficult for a translator to capture all meanings in one translation. This argument centres the debate of untranslatability of the Quran, as translation cannot reproduce a photocopy of the original; it therefore, cannot tell the whole truth.

Despite the view of some Muslim scholars that the Quran must not be translated, other Muslims scholars support translating the Quran into other languages in order to make the word of God accessible to everyone. Therefore, the Quran has been translated into different languages in Europe and Asia. However, these works are considered commentaries or interpretations of the original text. Furthermore, these translations cannot be used for prayer and ritual purposes, as they are ultimately human work that do not possess the uniquely sacred character of the Arabic original.

As for the scholars of Al-Azhar, the issue of translating the Quran was summarised in 1936 when a heated controversy broke over on the matter of translatability of the Quran. A consensus view amongst Muslim scholars seems to be that the Quran is untranslatable. However, the translation of the meanings of the Quran or its interpretation is permissible. In this context, the late Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Shaltut (1936) approached the issue of translating the Quran. He discusses two methods of translation. The first method of translation can be called word-for-word translation, which tries to transfer the exact meaning, style and effect of the original into the target language so that the target language becomes identical to the source language. For Shaltut, this type of translation is unlikely to produce a meaningful message when translating Arabic metaphor and

allegory, and other rhetorical devices in the Quran. The second method, which can be called free translation, is to interpret the meaning of the Quran in other languages. Shaltut suggests this method to be adopted for translating the Quran because it focuses on rendering meanings of the Quran rather than accuracy as literal translation does. (Al-Jabari: 2008).

Mawdudi (1988) rejects literal translation in the Quran. He argues that literal translation method fails to match the literary force, fluency, eloquence and style in the Quranic text whereas free translation is reasonable as it enables the translator to add some words in order to clarify the source text so that translation can be meaningful to the reader (cited in Al-Sahli: 1996). Thus, free translation sounds an appropriate technique to be adopted in translation of the Quran for Shaltut (1936) and Mawdudi (1988). However, there is no clear pre-requisite condition, which forces the translator to adopt one method or another. Thus, the translator should translate as literally as possible and as free as necessary.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above debate is that Muslim scholars are almost unanimous on the issue that the Quran cannot be translated into other languages. However, they agree about translating the meanings of the Quran for non-Arabic speakers to understand the message of Islam. They stress that any of these translations can never be dealt with as a substitute for the original.

Challenges that Quran translators encounter can be grouped into lexical, rhetorical, structural, and stylistic, which form obstacles to achieving adequate translation in terms of form and content. Abdelwali (2007) points out that the

versatility of Quranic words and styles cannot be captured in most of the English translations of the Quran. Abdul-Raof (2005) states that untranslatability of the Quran is ascribed to the Quranic-specific cultural expressions and Quranic-specific linguistic patterns which the TL linguistic norms cannot domesticate. The table below shows comments by translators of the Quran after their experience of translating the Quran:

**Table 2.2: Translators' views about translating the Quran**

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Difficulties and challenges experienced during the translation</b>
<b>Arberry</b>	2008	The eloquence and rhetoric of the Quran is untranslatable.
<b>Ali</b>	2000	Only a faint reflection of the original may be achieved with respect to the rhythm, music and exalted tone in the Quran. In addition, the meaning of the verses is enlarged as one's capacity for understanding increases.
<b>Abdel Haleem</b>	2004	Translation of the Quran is only an interpretation and an attempt to explain.
<b>Asad</b>	1980	The distribution of words in a sentence, the rhythm and the sound of its phrases and syntactic construction as well as the metaphor flows, and the use of acoustic stress which is not only in the service of rhetoric but also as a way of alluding to unspoken but clearly Implied ideas. In the foreword to his book Asad states that the Quran is 'impossible to reproduce'
<b>Khan and Hilali</b>	1983	We are aware of the fact that a translation of the meanings of the Quran, however accurate it may be, must fall short in conveying the wealth of meaning the text of the original conveys. In addition, the meaning conveyed by translation is only the sum total of what the translator has understood from the text, which cannot escape defects and drawbacks that are inherent in every human endeavour.

**Source: Developed by the researcher**

## 2.6 Reasons for translating the Quran: Past and present views

Muslims firmly believe that the Quran is the word of God revealed to the prophet Mohammed in the Arabic language. They also believe that the Quranic message must be accessible to everyone. Consider the following verse from the Quran:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا

*qul ya: ?ayuha: llna:su ?iniy rasu:wlu llahi ?ailaykum zami:yʕan*

*Say, O humankind! Verily, I am an apostle of God to all of you. (Q07:158).*

Historically, the issue of preaching the divine message to non-Arabs who are unable to understand Arabic was not very pressing, until Muslims came in close contact with non-Arabs, notably Persians, after the death of the Prophet Mohammed. However, the data reported appear to support the assumption that Salman Alfarisi, the Prophet's companion, translated portions of the Quran during the life of the Prophet. He translated the Opening Sura (Al-Fatiha) into Persian when Persians who converted to Islam asked him to translate some of the Quranic verses and the Prophet did not raise any objection. Also, Ja-far bin Abdi Talib translated certain verses pertaining to Maryam (Mary) Surah in the court of the Negus (the king of Abyssinia) during his stay in that land (Tibawi, 1962).

Abu Hanifa, (700 – 67 A.D), was the first to raise the issue of translating the Quran into Persian because he was of Persian origin. Abu Hanifa did not allow the translation of the Quran as a whole. For Abu Hanifa, the purpose of translating portions of the Quran was just to help non-Arab Muslims who wished to recite in prayer certain short surahs or verses. He issued a fatwa that Persians could recite The Opening Surah *سورة الفاتحة* in Persian in their prayer. However, his two main

disciples, Abu Yusuf and ash-Shaibani, went further than their master as they both gave permission to recite the translated Quran in prayer in case of inability to recite it in Arabic. Hanafi's argument was that since prayer is in communion with God, it is lawful either through the original language for those able to recite in Arabic, or via the translated version for those who are unable to do so (Sheishaa, 2001).

Interpreting and explaining the Quran in Arabic or in any other language thus started during the days of the Prophet and has been continued up to the present day, but the debate is ongoing regarding an agreed interpretation of the Quran. This claim is supported in the following Quranic verse:

وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ

*wa ma: yaʿlamu taʿwylahu ʔila llahu wa llrasixu:wna fiy llʕilmi yaqu:wluwna*

*ʔamna: bihi:*

*Only God knows its interpretation. And those firmly rooted in knowledge say, we believe in it. (Q 03: 07).*

For this study, the Quran is a text that has the characteristic of sacredness. Therefore, both the message and the word are believed to be holy. The sacred words of the source text cannot be rendered into the words of the target language without losing their divine value. The rationale, however, for Muslim translators to translate the Quran into other languages in the modern era stems from the following reasons:

- to assist non-Arab Muslims to understand the meanings of the Quran through faithful translations.

- to counteract the rise of some sectarian movements within Islam or outside the fold of Islam, such as the Qadianis, who were active in translation into European languages to proclaim their ideological uniqueness (Sheishaa, 2001).
- to offer alternatives to translations of the Quran published by non-Muslims, many of which contain distortions that have led to misunderstanding of the Quranic meanings.

## 2.7 A historical overview of Quran translations

Over the centuries, non-Muslim translators have translated the Quran numerous times and these translations were not error-free. Therefore, the need for research on the subject of translation of the Quran in terms of accuracy and fluency still generates great interest from academics as well as translation users. Kidwai (2000) discusses the weaknesses of some translations in terms of mistranslation and misinterpreting: for instance, Ross (1649), Sale (1743), Rodwell (1861), Palmer (1880), Arberry (1955) and Dawood (1956). The following was translated by Sale (1743):

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

*ya: ʔayuha: llna:su ʕabudu:w rabakum llaḏiy xalaqakum wa llaḏiyina min qablikum laʕala:kum tataqu:wna*

O men of Mecca serve your Lord who hath created you, and those who have been before. You peradventure ye will fear Him (Q 02: 21, Sale, 1734).

The expression ‘O people’ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ is used in the Quran to address all people without exception. It is not exclusive to the people of Mecca as translated by Sale.

Alexander Ross made the first English translation of the Quran in (1649). Ross's translation was based on the French translation of André de Ryer while Sale (1734) presented another English version of the Quran. According to Khalaf and Yusuf (2010), Sale's translation is considered the second version of the Quran in English and remained for centuries one of the most popular translations in the UK and the USA. Sale's translation of the Quran was reprinted repeatedly until the first half of the twentieth century and is still available for consultation in academic libraries (Abdel Haleem, 2011).

Rodwell's translation of the Quran was undertaken in 1861. In this version, Rodwell rearranges the traditional order of Surahs (chapters) into what he considered to be a reasonable order. This translation was followed by another translation by E.A. Palmer in 1880.

The survey conducted by Kidwai (2000) about muslims' translations of the Quran in the period from 1905 to 1959 showed some translations, such as those carried out by Pickthall (1930) and Ali (1934), stand out above other translations in terms of faithfulness and readability. Pickthall (1930) was the first English muslim who undertook a translation of the Quran. Pickthall's translation is loaded with archaic biblical English that hinders the understanding of the average reader. For example:

وَأَوْحِيَ إِلَىٰ نُوحٍ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَن قَدْ آمَنَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

*wa ʔuwħiya ʔila nu:wħin ʔanahuw lan yuwħmina min qawmika ʔila man qad  
aʔmana fala tabtayħis bima: kanu:w yafħalu:wna*

*And it was inspired in Noah, (saying): No-one of thy folk will believe save him who hath believed already. Be not distressed because of what they do (Q 11:36)*

In addition, the notes to clarify the circumstantial setting of the surahs and Quranic allusions were very brief. Nevertheless, this version of the Quran is still very popular. Ali's translation (1934) is a widely-used version of the Quran. It is entitled *The Holy Quran: Text, Translation and commentary* and has appeared in numerous editions.

In spite of the great efforts exerted to produce appropriate translations for the meanings of the Quran, these translations still lack exactness in terms of accuracy and fluency because of either omissions, mistranslations or misinterpretations, and they are often lacking explanatory notes.

## **2.8 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter has explored and contributed to clarifying the debate on the translatability of the Quran by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars. Two conflicting viewpoints have been discussed:

1. Some hold the view that the Quran should not be translated because it is untranslatable according to the Islamic scholars and translators who have experienced translating the Quran.
2. Others believe that it is permissible, from the Islamic point of view, to translate only the meanings of the Quran in order to make it accessible to non-Arabic speakers.

This study takes the view that what is said in one language can be said in another. The Quran in translation is not perfect but it is better than nothing. If loss of

meaning in translation is inevitable in view of the discrepancies and incongruities that exist between Arabic and English, the translator's aim is to minimise the loss of meaning when translating the Quran by seeking to convey not just the meaning but also the message of the Quran. This study assesses five translations of the meaning of the Quran into English conducted by Muslims and non-Muslim translators are discussed.

To conclude, the key issue is not whether the Quran should be translated or not, it is about the quality and accuracy of the translation. It is also about what attributes and characteristics are required for anyone wishing to undertake the translation of the Quran. Should the translation of the Quran be an individual endeavour, or should it be teamwork involving diverse expertise? Translating the Quran by an individual translator, no matter how competent, is a huge challenge and bound to yield controversies as no individual is able to fully understand and interpret the Quran in the original. Therefore, the production of a flawless translation of the Quran, as many hope to see, has proved to be difficult to achieve.

## Chapter Three

### Translating Quranic Collocation into English: making the right connection

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the theoretical base of collocations and seeks to find out the extent to which Quranic collocations demonstrate similar characteristics. Language is a means of communication, conveying meaning, describing reality and expressing complex human thoughts and views in a wide variety of ways. Collocations are part of that process and can be said to provide language users with a way of representing the world, achieved by exploiting compositionality. Compositionality can be defined as the principle through which the meaning of a complex expression is determined by the meanings of its constituent elements and the rules that fuse them are arbitrary and not part of the grammaticality conventions (Manning and Schütze 1999). This view is supported by Jackson (1988: 99) who states that: “A *collocation* is an arbitrary and recurrent word combination.” In other words, using and combining language items in such a way as to express a complex meaning, is habit- rather than rule-driven. Halliday’s example of ‘*strong vs. powerful tea*’ (Halliday 1966: 150) illustrates the situational view of language. This restriction also applies to both Arabic and French:

Collocate	English	Arabic	French
tea	<b>Strong</b> not <i>powerful</i>	قوي شاي ثقيل not قوي شاي ثقيل	<b>Fort</b> not <i>puissant</i>
	<b>Weak</b> not feeble	ضعيف شاي خفيف not قوي شاي ثقيل	<b>Léger</b> not <i>faible</i>

According to Saussure (1959), everything in language is interrelated, i.e. everything holds together because language is a structured system and the meaning of language is ordered in ways which make it possible for the speakers to understand it. Every word in a language can be said to have a network of items with which it is more or less compatible. These are known as collocations. Some words go together and enjoy the company of each other. They form a good functional partnership, 'pay-and-display, pay zone, pay structure, pay the piper, pay through the nose' etc. The same applies to Quranic collocations *قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ qadama şidqin*, *مُبَوَّأً صِدْقٍ mubawaʔ şidqin*, *مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ muxraʒa şidqin*, *لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ lisa:na şidqin*, *مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ maqʕadi şidqin*.

The following table shows the verses of the Quran with the collocate *صدق*

Collocate صدق	Sura	Transliteration
وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ	ywns, 10:2	<i>wa bafir llađiyna ʔamanuw ʔana lahum qadama şidqin ŕinda rabihim</i>
وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مُبَوَّأً صِدْقٍ	ywns, 10:93	<i>wa laqad bawaʔna baniyʔ ʔisra:ʔiyla mubawaʔa şidqin</i>
وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَدْخِلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَأَخْرِجْنِيْ مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ	'l'ʔsr'ʔ, 17:80	<i>wa qul rabi ʔadxilni:y mudxala şidqin waʔaxriʒni:y muxraja şidqin</i>
وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِّن رَّحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا	mrym, 19:50	<i>wa wahaḅna: lahum min raḥmatina: wa ʒaʕalna: lahum lisa:na şidqin ʕaliya:</i>
فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ	'lqmr, 54:55	<i>fiy maqʕadi şidqin ŕinda mali:ykin muqtadir</i>
وَعَدَّ الْصِدْقَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ	'l'ʔḥq'f, 46:16	<i>waʕda llşidqi ʔlađiy kanu:w yu:wʕadu:wna</i>

Other words feel less connected or unnatural together and less authentic, creating stilted and ambiguous context. They create a collocational clash. *Travail / emploi précaire* = (word for word) *precarious work* but the French is referring to ‘*casual work or job insecurity, temporary work*’ depending on the context, while in Arabic the reference is to unstable employment وظائف غير مستقرة *waza:ʔif yyr mustaqira*.

The term collocation comes from the Latin for ‘place together’. Collocations were first identified by Palmer (1933, as cited in Nation, 2002: 317) as a string of words that “*must or should be learned or is best or most conveniently learned as an integral whole or independent entity, rather than by the process of piecing together their component parts.*” However, collocation was first used in its linguistic sense by Firth (1957), who is credited with coining the term, and whose phrase “*You shall know a word by the company it keeps*” is widely cited as a canonical reference and tends to be alluded to in every study related to phraseology, collocation and multiword expressions. Therefore, combining or stringing language elements freely and randomly in language production often yields unnatural, ambiguous or simply meaningless sentences e.g., ‘*the mat lay under the cat*’ and ‘*the table stood over the dog.*’ Instead, meaning is created through formalised word combinations: ‘*the cat sat on the mat*’ and ‘*the dog lay under the table.*’

In substance, there are linguistic constraints on the way words combine and co-occur, constraints of positions and relationships with other words to create stretches of coherent and meaningful discourse. Consider the following: *hot spot, hot pot, hot head, hot dog, hot air, hot bed, hot line, hot stuff*. Permutations of the language items yield unnatural combinations (e.g. *spot hot*). Moreover, in this

example in French, *mes propres mains* (my own hands) yields a very different meaning when ordered *mes mains propres* (my clean hands).

In short, language elements are combined in a certain way in order to convey the speaker's intention and meaning, which is not always accessible to others. As Moon, (2008: 243) points out: “[Words] are interconnected, not isolates ... meaning is derived from context, and collocation is key.” Most of the knowledge which humans require derives not from unorganised or unstructured arrays and random language items but from organised information input. As Stewart (2010: 56) put it ‘*No word is an island*’.

### 3.1 Defining collocation

It is appropriate from the outset to explain the concept, the nature and the meaning of collocation. A broad literature already exists on collocation, but the added value of this study is that it contributes by positioning and focusing on the collocations of the Quran. A plethora of definitions have been put forward to clarify the various shades of meaning and significance of collocation. In fact, there are almost as many different definitions as there are authors who have attempted to define it. Collocation is basically a lexical partnership between words that are expected to match regularly with some other words to form a meaningful semantic unit. However, this special relationship between words is based on typicality and is subject to some constraints which determine whether words can be matched or naturally co-occur to convey meaning. Sinclair (1966: 411) points out that the association between lexical items is more flexible than that of grammatical classes, because “*there are virtually no impossible collocations, but some are much more likely than others.*” In support of this view, the classic example of

'blond' comes to mind. The combination of terms '*blond horse*' is unusual and unnatural. Thus, the meaning of collocation must not be viewed simply in terms of word associations but, according to Palmer (1986: 79), the meaning of collocation is "*idiosyncratic and cannot be predictable from the meaning of the associated words.*" Moreover, researchers stress that collocations are often domain specific. Thus, the word *file*, collocates with verbs such as *create*, *delete*, *save* when discussing computers, but not in other sublanguages (McKeown and Radev, 2000). Nation (2001: 318) highlights the importance of collocations by putting forward the following views:

1. Language knowledge is collocational knowledge.
2. All fluent and appropriate language use requires collocational knowledge.
3. Many words are used in a limited set of collocations and knowing these is part of what is involved in knowing the words.

Thus, meaning comes from word association and partnership and must be understood and interpreted within the context of occurrence. Moreover, the meaning of collocations is rarely straightforward and must not be taken at face value. For instance, *fat chance* may be rendered in Arabic as (unlikely) غير مُحتَمَل *yyr muħtaml*. This suggests that collocational meaning is not distributed identically in every language. There are many ways of expressing the same idea. For instance, *fast food* instead of *rapid food*, whereas in Arabic *rapid/quick food* مأكولات سريعة *maʔkula:t sariyʕa* is accepted and used in signage on *fast food* restaurants. In contrast, the French, who pride themselves of having the best gastronomy in the world, reluctantly refer to it as: '*restauration rapide*' (rapid food). Thus, Firth (1968:30), stresses that the meaning of a word or a text is

obtained through a “*mutually congruent series of levels*”, these levels being contexts of situation, syntax, phonology, phonetics, and collocation.

For the purpose of this study, a collocation consists of words which are habitually combined and matched together to convey meaning by association. According to Meer, (1998: 313) collocations are simply: “*words habitually grouped together in clusters that are not considered idioms proper but are yet felt to be frequent and apparently belonging to the set of ready-to-hand units of language comprising more than one word.*” Similarly, Benson (1990: 23) argues that “*A collocation is an arbitrary and recurrent word combination.*” In the same vein, Baker, (1992: 48) suggests that collocations have the features of being “*largely arbitrary and independent of meaning and do not follow logically from the propositional meaning of a word.*”

Collocational processing knowledge is important in understanding meaning, for as Harris (1968) points out, meanings of words are determined to a large extent by their collocational patterns. Firth (1957: 11), as pointed out earlier, indicated that “*we best know the meaning of a word not by examining it in isolation but by the company it keeps.*” Firth (1957) seems to capture the essence of collocation and unites both academics and educationalists regarding the core meaning of collocation. However, collocation is an umbrella term covering a wide range of labels, some common terms being: *language chunk, cliché, collocation, extended lexical unit, fixed expression, formulaic sequence, idiom, idiomatic expression, lexical/lexicalised phrase, multi-word unit, phraseme, phraseology, phraseological unit, phrasal lexical item, phrasal lexeme, prefabricated chunk, prefab word partnerships, preconstructed lexical items.*

Choueka (1988: 67) explains “*Collocation refers to the combination of words that have a certain mutual expectancy. The combination is not a fixed expression but there is a greater than chance likelihood that the words will co-occur.*” In contrast, Halliday (1966: 153) views lexis as complementary to, but not part of, grammatical theory. He coined the notion ‘set’ as an extra dimension of the collocability of words. Therefore, a collocation in Halliday’s definition is “*a linear co-occurrence.*” Later, Halliday and Hasan (1976: 320) introduced collocation as one of five general categories of cohesive devices for achieving lexical cohesion in the text: reference, ellipsis, substitution, lexical cohesion, and conjunction. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 287) describe ‘*collocation*’ or ‘*collocational cohesion*’ as: “*A cover term for the cohesion that results from the co-occurrence of lexical items that are in some way or other typically associated with one another, because they tend to occur in similar environments.*” Halliday and Hasan (1976: 287) give examples such as ‘*candle, flame, flicker*’, and ‘*hair, comb, curl, wave*’. According to them, such patterns “*occur freely both within the same sentence and across sentence boundaries; they are largely independent of the grammatical structure.*”

As already acknowledged, research on collocation is prolific, examined extensively from all angles and perspectives by linguists such as Firth (1957), Lyons (1977), Halliday (1966), Halliday and Hasan (1976), Sinclair (1966), Herbst (1996), Palmer (1981), Benson et al (1997), McKeown and Radev (2000), Aitchison (2003), Newmark (1988), Baker (1992), Meer (1998), Gitsaki (2017), Bond (2018), Brezina et al (2015), Sinclair (2004), Baker et al. (2008), Xiao and McEnery (2006).

Evidence from the literature related to collocation shows that collocation is an overarching term which has a plethora of definitions. It is an unclear concept with various labels though general consensus is that collocating is a process of joining words together in phrases or sentences to form semantically unified expressions. Every word in a language can be said to have a range of items with which it is more or less 'comfortable'. A range of items here refers to the set of collocates i.e. words which are associated with that particular word. As Van Roey (1990: 46) states: "*[collocation is] that linguistic phenomenon whereby a given vocabulary item prefers the company of another item rather than its 'synonyms' because of constraints which are not on the level of syntax or conceptual meaning but on that of usage.*" McKeown and Radev (200: 67) stress the difficulty in determining what is acceptable collocation, although it is clear that collocations occur frequently in similar contexts, which makes it observable. Thus, McKeown and Radev (2000: 67); view collocations as "*those word pairs which occur frequently together in the same environment, but do not include lexical items which have a high overall frequency in language.*"

However, a solid theoretical base is still elusive because collocation represents an interface between language in use, and the diverse and creative shades of meaning which are being continuously generated, e.g. *top up cards, air miles, cyber cafés, blue sky thinking, spin doctor, etc.*, remain challenging.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the range of views above is that no one has provided a holistic account of collocation dimensions, simply because this language phenomenon is at once too broad, slippery and lacks focus and consensus. Research on collocation so far, is yet to capture the full story about this complex aspect of language. In short, there is no one-to-one correspondence

between two collocations across languages. A single collocation in one language may require two or more sentences to express the same meaning in another language, e.g. *take a chill pill* = *cálmate!* = *calmez-vous!* (Calm down)

Clearly from the range of definitions given, although researchers and educationalists may differ in the wording, they use to define collocation, their explanations are similar in many ways. Their definitions tend to share common features or even overlap in their use of key terms, making identical points in different ways. They are neither new nor original. The following table illustrates, in addition to the above, a sample of the most commonly used collocation definitions in the literature:

Table 3.1 Definitions of collocation

Authors	Definitions of collocation
Firth (1957: 196)	Collocation is “the company that words keep” or “actual words in habitual company.”
Firth (1957: 12)	“Collocations of a given word are <u>statements of the habitual and customary places of that word</u> ”
McCarthy (1990: 12)	Collocation is ‘... <u>a marriage contract between words</u> , and some words are more firmly married to each other than others’
Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992: 21)	Collocations are “ <u>strings of words that seem to have a certain mutual expectancy</u> , or a greater-than-chance likelihood that they will co-occur in any text”
Hoey, (1991: 6-7)	Collocation is “... <u>the relationship</u> a lexical item has with items that appear with greater than random probability in its (textual) context”
Hoey, (2005: 5)	So, our definition of collocation is that it is <u>a psychological association between words</u> (rather than lemmas) up to four words apart and is evidenced by

	their occurrence together in corpora more often than is explicable in terms of random distribution.
Kjellmer 1987: 133)	A collocation is <u>a sequence of words</u> that occurs more than once in identical form and is grammatically well-structured
Kjellmer (1994: 67)	'All two-word sequences appearing more than two times'
Sinclair (1991: 170)	"Collocation is <u>the co-occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text</u> . The usual measure of proximity is a maximum of four words intervening"
Jones and Sinclair (1974: 19)	"Significant" collocation is <u>regular collocation between items, such that they occur more often than their respective frequencies</u> and the length of the text in which they occur would predict
Howarth (1996: 37)	Collocations are " <u>fully institutionalised phrases, memorized as wholes</u> and used as conventional form-meaning pairings"
Lewis (2000: 29)	Collocation is — words <u>which are statistically much more likely to appear together than random</u> chance suggests
Stubbs (2001: 29)	Collocation is 'frequent co-occurrence of words'
Choueka (1988: 67)	"A collocation is <u>a sequence of two or more consecutive words, that has characteristics of a syntactic and semantic unit</u> whose exact and unambiguous meaning or connotation cannot be derived directly from the meaning or connotation of its components"
Stubbs (2001: 19)	'Collocation is a <u>relation between words in a linear string: a node predicts that a preceding or following word also occurs</u> '
Cumming (1986:67)	' <u>Lexical restrictions (restrictions which are not predictable from the syntactic or semantic properties of the items)</u> on the modifiers of an item; for example, you can say answer the door but not answer the window'

Bartsch (2004: 76).	<u>Lexically and/or pragmatically constrained recurrent co-occurrences of at least two lexical items</u> which are in a direct syntactic relation with each other”
Teubert (2004: 187)	<u>a combination of words that are "ready-made chunks of language"</u> and different from single words; these ready-made chunks are called collocations
Jackson (1988: 96)	" <u>the combination of words that have a certain mutual expectancy.</u> The combination is not a fixed expression, but there is a greater than chance likelihood that the words will co-occur."
Izwaini (2015: 71)	<u>“the habitual co-occurrence of words and a manifestation of the idiomatic usage of the language.”</u>
Aisentadt (1981: 54)	defines restricted collocations as "a type of <u>word combination consisting of two or more words, unidiomatic in meaning,</u> following certain structural patterns, restricted in commutability not only by semantics, but also by usage"
Cowie, 1981: 224)	<u>‘A composite unit which permits the substitutability of items</u> for at least one of its constituent elements (the sense of the other element, or elements, remaining constant).
Cruse (1986: 40)	The term collocation will be used to refer to <u>“sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur”</u>
Benson (1990: 23)	A collocation is <u>“an arbitrary and recurrent word combination”</u>
Lyons (1977: 613)	Holds a similar view to Firth, stating: “that there is frequently so high a degree of interdependence between <u>lexemes which tend to occur in texts in collocation with one another that their potentiality</u> for collocation is reasonably described as being part of their meaning”
Manning and Schütze (1999: 151).	A collocation is an <u>expression consisting of two or more words that correspond</u> to some conventional way of saying things”

Smadja (1993: 143).	"A <u>collocation is an expression consisting of two or more words that correspond to some conventional way of saying things</u> "
Halliday (1966:158)	Collocation is " <u>a linear co-occurrence relationship</u> among lexical items which co-occur together", whereas the 'set' is "the grouping of members with like privilege of occurrence in collocation"
Halliday and Hasan (1976:158)	'any set of words whose members participate in a semantic relation'.
Durant (2009:158)	states that " <u>collocations are sets of two or more words</u> which appear together more frequently than their individual frequencies would lead us to expect"
Herbst (1996: 390)	Describes collocation as "a certain lack of semantic predictability or transparency" ... " <u>idiosyncratic</u> " ...and <u>knowledge about the individual word that cannot easily be described in general rules</u> "
McKeown and Radev (2000: 03)	"Collocations are typically characterised as arbitrary, language-(dialect) specific, recurrent in context, and common in technical language"  "those word pairs which occur frequently together in the same environment, but do not include lexical items which have a high overall frequency in language"
Aitchison (2003: 85)	" <u>collocations that are associated with different forms reflect different meanings of the word itself</u> "
Osisanwo (2003: 32)	words that <u>naturally or regularly go together are said to collocate</u>
Van Roey (1990: 46)	[collocation is] that linguistic phenomenon whereby a given <u>vocabulary item prefers the company of another item rather than its 'synonyms'</u> because of constraints which are not on the level of syntax or conceptual meaning but on that of usage.
Benson, Benson, and Ilson (1986: ix)	"In English, as in other languages, <u>there are many fixed, identifiable, non-idiomatic phrases and constructions.</u>

	Such groups of words are called recurrent combinations, fixed combinations, or collocations"
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Source: Compiled by the present researcher

Many of the above definitions of term collocation, seem broad and overlapping in form and content, often giving the impression of *déjà vu*, as having been repackaged and recycled from earlier definitions. Though formulated differently, most definitions share common themes. Some view collocations as chunks of language, strings of words or association between words to “*mutual expectancy*” of co-occurrence. Others refer to collocations as networks that words build, relationships and partnerships between words, metaphorically as ‘*a marriage contract between words*’, ‘*the company that words keep.*’

There is a consensus regarding the marked and explicit features of collocations, and that collocations occur frequently, which makes them perceptible. The key themes that emerged from the collocation debate are the same as those already known to define the meaning of collocation:

- A combination of words that co-occur with predictable expectancy
- A group of words which occur together frequently
- Habitual co-occurrence of words
- A close relation between words
- Co-occurrence of two or more words
- A sequence of words
- An expression consisting of two or more words
- A relationship a lexical item has with items

- Arbitrary language recurrent in context
- Word association
- Word partnership

It is probably fair to say that the above range of statements sound familiar. A collocation by any other name is still a word association that forms a semantically unified expression. This study contributes to the above list and suggests that collocation consists of a lexical item that builds a close network with other items to produce a meaningful unit. Some linguists go even as far as to suggest that knowledge of language depends on collocational knowledge (Ellis 2001). Others believe that one of the key requirements for a speaker's fluency and accuracy of language use is collocational knowledge (Pawley and Syder 1983).

One of the flaws that emerges from the collocation debate is that some collocations do not exhibit clear trends and show some unpredictability and variability, the interpretation of which can be a cause of concern to translators. Herbst (1996: 390) for instance, views collocations like idioms as the combination of words which to some extent is neither transparent nor predictable. This view leads to the concept of the 'arbitrariness' of combination of collocations. This study argues that collocation is too multifaceted to be pinned down to a single definition and takes the view that collocation differs according to the language, the purpose and context in which it occurs. Take, for instance, the following collocation variations:

English	<i>the engine <u>runs</u></i>
French	<i>the engine <u>walks</u></i> (le moteur marche)
Spanish	<i>the engine <u>functions</u></i> (motor funciona)
Arabic	<i>the engine <u>works</u></i> يشتغل المحرك <i>yaftayil llmuħrik</i>

This study is pressing the point that collocations in one language may be alien or untypical in another. For instance: 'road rage' is referred to in French as *l'agressivité au volant* (being aggressive at the wheel) and in Arabic as الغضب أثناء القيادة *aḡaḡabu ʕθna:ʕa alqya:da* (being angry while driving). Similarly, in French *allumer la lumière* = is switch on the light, whereas in German it is = make the light = *anmachen* and أشعل الضوء *aʕʃaʕla llɖuwʔ* in Arabic (*set the light*). To shrug one's shoulder, becomes in German: *mit den achseln zucken* literally to twitch the shoulder and in Arabic هز كتفيه *hzza katifyhi* (*to shake one's shoulder*).

It can be concluded that there is no universal definition of collocation that applies across languages. While there is common agreement on the general and generic meaning, there are still different nuances of meaning of the term. It reflects the diversity of stakeholders who are contributing to this research area (e.g. academics, translators and language teachers). Their main expertise and their different interests in addressing the issue of understanding, analysing and translating collocations differs in scope and relevance. Therefore, to produce meaning and make themselves understood, speakers must observe the conventions of language.

### **3.2 Research into collocation remains inconclusive**

The collocation debate has generated a profusion of definitions, some of which have become so blurred and distorted that they have become ineffectual, defeating the purpose of creating a definition. The scale of lexical ambiguities and the woolliness of some of the definitions was illustrated earlier. This is not to denigrate research on collocation which has produced some interesting insights beyond the generic sense. However, it is not free from criticism. For instance,

Nesselhauf (2003: 224) supports the view that research on collocation is fragmented, inconsistent and “*unsatisfactory either because of the data-elicitation methods used or because of the vague definition of the concept of collocation.*” Many of the collocation definitions contain loose and imprecise use of terminology e.g. McKeown and Radev (2000: 03) state that collocations are “*those word pairs which occur frequently together in the same environment, but do not include lexical items which have a high overall frequency in language.*” The challenges of getting a clear grasp of collocations should not be underestimated. For instance, Wray (2000: 465) identifies over 47 different terms related to collocations. She takes a broader view, using the term “*formulaic sequence*” to cover the range of items “*used to describe aspects of formulaicity in the literature*” (2000: 464), defining it as: “*a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from the memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation and analysis by the language grammar.*” To add to the confusion. Cowie (2009) uses different terminology and differentiates between chunks of language as ‘*set phrases and set sentences*’, while Nation (2001) uses the term collocation to describe both. Nation and Meara (2002: 36) view *language units* as *multi-word units*. Furthermore, they use other different labels to refer to collocation such as ‘*pre-formulated language, formulas, and lexical phrases.*’ In view of this scepticism, Nation (2001: 317) voices his concern saying that “*a major problem in the study of collocations is determining in a consistent way what should be classified as a collocation.*” Fontenelle (1994: 9) clearly stresses that: “*It should now be clear that there is no such thing as a clear, noncontroversial and all-embracing definition of a collocation. This very notion should be conceived as a rather fuzzy*

*area along a cline ranging from totally free combinations on the one hand to completely fixed multi-word units on the other.”*

Firth’s view of collocation is not immune to criticism. For instance, Lyons (1966: 295), levelled some harsh criticism at Firth’s view of meaning in general and collocation in particular, arguing that: *“Although he devotes considerable space to a discussion of his concept and constantly refers to the ‘ collocational level’ as intermediate between the grammatical and the situational, he never makes clear how the notion of collocation fits into his general theory.”*

Thus, there is little consensus among researchers regarding the erratic and vague terminology as to what constitutes collocation, *‘single blocks, individual blocks of language, prefabs etc.’* Further conflicting views emerge regarding formulaic expression inconsistency and wide variation of the labels used to explain phraseological units. It is probably fair to say that the collocation theoretical debate has hit a conceptual impasse. This study argues that there are still many questions which remain unanswered regarding the nature of collocation and why some lexical items keep the company of one collocates rather than another, and what attracts one word to cohabit with another word more frequently than by chance. The collocation debate as has been demonstrated is rather disjointed and there is no united front in the literature in terms of terminology. Nor does it identify precisely what a collocation unit is, and what criteria must be filled for the unit to be considered collocation.

The difficulty of identifying other key indicators that explain collocation characteristics other than habitual co-occurrence is another issue. Hasan later (1984) acknowledged that her original definition of collocation is too broad;

therefore, she used the term '*lexical chain*' which does not preclude confusion as this new label is rather vague. In the same vein, Cowie (1981; 1994) argues that collocations are found in the 'fuzzy' area on a continuum between free combinations and idioms. Definitions tend to provide a general understanding of what collocation is. It covers all types of lexical co-occurrence. Within the umbrella term of the phraseological tendency, however, there are a number of terminological problems: both 'phraseology' and 'collocation' have been used in different ways and sometimes interchangeably. The multiplicity of terms has been seen as proof of inconsistency. Some researchers muddled the debate by viewing collocations and idioms as two sides of the same coin or two ends of the same continuum, with collocations on one end, pure idioms on the other end, and figurative idioms in between (Cowie, 2009, Wray, 2008). Wray (2008: 10) adds to the conflicting debate by labelling the two ends as "*the contentious and the uncontentious,*" with pure idioms existing on the latter end and collocations on the former. However, Nesselhauf (2003: 227) believes that the boundary between collocations and idioms is blurred: "*the line between collocations and idioms ... is not rigid.*"

To sum up, the term 'collocation' in its linguistic sense has since its inception by Firth in the 1950's, covered a lot of mileage and witnessed a boom in publications providing fresh insights, but it is probably fair to say that many authors fell short of reaching a consensus or providing further empirical evidence from what is already known on the complex nature of this word association. Conflicting positions and even fuzziness still exist surrounding this linguistic phenomenon. Some position collocation in a continuum or as an extension with fixed phrases attributing to it a hint of figurativeness. Others contend that when pairings of

words are expected and predictable, and where change or modification is not permissible except possibly in tense, it may be erroneous to treat it as a collocation.

### **3.3 Collocations: selection criteria and eligibility**

There is always a debate over which criteria are fit for purpose in deciding which combination/association/network of words is deemed to be a collocation. According to Bolinger (1976: 1) "*language does not expect us to build everything starting with lumber, nails, and blueprint, and rather it provides us with an incredibly large number of prefabs.*" Research on collocation has so far provided neither a master plan nor a measurement by which a collocation can be identified accurately and consistently according to clear benchmarks. No approach suggested is better than another or more appropriate for identifying collocation. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses which actually vary depending upon the type of the language and the nature of the text under consideration.

Researchers such as Jones and Sinclair (1974), Bond (2018), Brezina et al (2015), Sinclair (2004), Baker et al. (2008), Xiao and McEnery (2006), Firth (1957), Lyons (1977), Halliday (1966), Halliday and Hasan (1976), Sinclair (1966), Herbst (1996), Palmer (1981), and Benson et al (1997), have put forward determinants to corroborate the extent to which an association or a sequence of words is considered a collocation: a) Frequency trend and b) Phraseology trend. However, deciding on what constitutes a collocation is still a grey or a rather fuzzy area ranging from totally free word combinations to completely fixed multi-word units. In short, collocations operate on a continuum; at one end lie the

phraseological units or idiom-like collocations and at the other end lie free combinations.

a) Frequency trend. This view suggests that collocation can be identified as words which frequently co-occur together, as a kind of partnership. (Jones and Sinclair, 1974; Bond, 2018; Brezina et al, 2015; Sinclair, 2004; Baker et al., 2008; Xiao and McEnery, 2006; Firth, 1957; Lyons,1977; Halliday,1966; Halliday and Hasan,1976; Sinclair, 1966; Herbst, 1996; Palmer,1981; Benson et al, 1997; etc.). However, as Palmer (1981) suggests, there is no rule to offer a semantic explanation for the type of relationship between the items of the collocational set. For example, there is no semantic explanation for why 'flock' goes with 'sheep', 'herd' goes with 'cows', 'shoal' goes with 'fish' and so on. Moreover, Palmer (1984), points out that some collocates are more arbitrary than others. For instance, the expression is '*tall people*' not '*high people*', although tall and high are synonyms.

b) Phraseology trend. This refers to restricted collocations whose lexical items or clusters are fixed or idiom-like or as Cowie (2009: 67) puts it, have invariable opaque combinations and '*an element of figurativeness.*' Thus, collocation has an embedded aspect of an 'idiomatic' element, e.g. hire and fire, no win no fee, armchair conscience. Moon (1997: 44) states that multi-word items have some degree of "*institutionalisation, fixedness, and non-compositionality*" which distinguishes them from "*other kinds of strings*". This suggests that some collocations, in addition to constraints of partnership, have some degree of figurativeness. Schmitt (2000: 77) also states that besides words co-occurring together, "*there must also be an element of exclusiveness.*" Schmitt (2000) goes

on to argue that the fact that words in a collocation co-occur frequently implies that they are stored, and therefore retrieved when necessary as a single unit in the mind. However, according to Biber et al. (1999: 990), phraseological units are simply, “*recurrent expressions, regardless of their idiomaticity, and regardless of their structural status. [They] are simply sequences of word forms that commonly go together in natural discourse.*” This view is consistent with evidence from corpus analysis and psycholinguistics. As Hoey, (1991: 6-7) points out, collocation does not occur randomly but occurs “*with greater than random probability in its (textual) context*”. In other words, collocation consists of a word association, which is not formed by chance or randomness.

### **3.3.1 Non-compositionality vs Compositionality criteria**

Linguists have relied on the following three criteria in determining collocations (Benson, 1989; Cowie, 2009; Makkai 1972). These are non-compositionality, non-substitutability and non-modifiability.

Non-compositionality: implies that the meaning of a collocation or an expression is neither easily accessible nor graspable, as it is not determined by the individual meanings of the constituent parts of the expression. In other words, they are expressions whose meaning cannot be deduced from its constituent parts. They are to be understood as a ‘set’, as a unit, like a clause whose form and lexical content are fixed (Velasco 2016; Pawley 1983). Such ‘sets’ or fixed phraseology units with “figures of speech” undertones are not mere linguistic features serving emotive or literary purposes but correspond to mental “figures” grounded in cognition (Papafraou 1996; Lakoff 1987; Gibbs, 1994). More often than not, there is a gap between the explicit meaning of what is said and the implicit meaning of what they meant. There is a lot more to understanding these sets

than focusing on their surface meaning. Translators must distinguish between what is said and what is communicated and demonstrate their ability to interpret and evaluate in order to extrapolate what the phraseological units mean, rather than what the words or phrases might mean by themselves: for instance, "*Rich dummy, kangaroo court, small change candidate, stream of abuse, barrage of criticism*". Another problem area regards ill-formed expressions as they tend to flout the grammatical rules of language e.g. *blow someone to kingdom come, by and large, the world and his wife*.

Moreover, the English language abounds in nautical and weather expressions, thus, when translating these English phraseological units, there is no alternative but to borrow foreign nautical words fully or paraphrase them e.g. "*to weather the storm, to feel under the weather, to sail close to the wind, between the devil and the deep blue sea, clean bill of health, go overboard, know the ropes*", etc. Each of these collocations / phraseological units involve a hint of a figurative feature so that the translator or reader must go beyond the surface meaning of words and work out the figurative meaning and create a contextually appropriate meaning. Because the meaning of these phrases cannot be construed from the meaning of its individual words, the figurative interpretation of the sentence differs from the literal one. The meaning to be taken from it is not built up compositionally from the meanings of words included in the utterance, for example, *a penny for your thoughts, break a leg*. Rather, the figurative- and idiom-like phrases require a non-compositional interpretation. As a result, the meaning of the whole can be quite distinct from the meanings of the words included within the figurative/idiomatic expressions. This distinction between figurative/idiomatic

expression and compositionality is an important component of the classical figurative-literal distinction. Figurative language can be seen as using words in ways that stretch beyond their real, literal meaning, for instance, *'piece of cake'* meaning something is easy to do; *'thick skin'* meaning 'not easily upset or offended by criticism.' As Crystal (2003:163) points out: *"Two central features identify an idiom. The meaning of the idiomatic expression cannot be deduced by examining the meanings of the constituent lexemes. And the expression is fixed, both grammatically and lexically. Thus, 'put a sock in it!' means 'stop talking' and it is not possible to replace any of the lexemes and retain the idiomatic meaning. Put a stocking in it or put a sock on it must be interpreted literally or not at all."* This view seems to imply *that* words have more than one sense i.e. a lexical item may have several meanings other than that which most readily comes to mind.

In the light of the above debate and in view of the conflicting arguments put forward by linguists, it is difficult to draw a coherent interpretation. This suggests that phraseological units with figurative nuances is a fragmented area of research with blurred lines between frequently fixed co-occurrence sequences or combination of words and free word combination.

Compositionality: in contrast, compositionality means that the meaning of the constituent parts of an expression and the way they are syntactically combined determines the meaning of the expression (Makkai, 1972; Lakoff, 1987; Gibbs, 1994).

### 3.4 Positioning Quranic collocation within the broad collocation debate

This section attempts to link the general theoretical base of collocation to that of the Quran in order to find out where Quranic collocations fit within the broad collocation debate. It also seeks to demonstrate whether Quranic collocations are in line with the widely accepted set of criteria for determining collocations. Although research on phraseological units is pervasively acknowledged as an established area in almost all language fields (e.g. Cowie, 1994; Baker, 1992; Granger & Meunier, 2008; Meunier & Granger, 2008; Römer & Schulze, 2009), there is paucity of collocational and phraseological studies in Arabic /English. The language of the Quran is more formulaic than any other discourse (Bannister 2014). Quranic collocational and/or phraseological units are consistent with the following collocation norms:

- 1) Strings of words that seem to have a certain mutual expectancy
- 2) Habitual co-occurrence of words
- 3) Frequent co-occurrence of two or more words
- 4) A sequence of words that frequently co-occur together
- 5) An expression consisting of two or more words that go together
- 6) A close relationship a lexical item has with other items
- 7) Arbitrary language items recurrent in context
- 8) Word association, word partnership with a hint of figurativeness

The following Quranic collocations support the evidence of frequency and co-occurrence of Quranic collocations. Consider for instance the collocate: **حق** - its word associations exhibit the close relationship a lexical item has with other items:

Collocations	Transliteration
الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ أُولَئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ	<i>allaḏyina ḡatayna:humu lkitaba yatlu:wnahuw ḡaqa tilawatihī 'ḡuwlaḡika yuwḡminu:wna bihi</i>
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ	<i>Ya: 'ḡayuḡa: llaḏiyina ḡamanuw 'taquw llaha ḡaqa tuqa:tih wala tamuwtuna 'ḡila wa 'ḡantum muslimuwna</i>
وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ	<i>wa ma: qadaruw llaha ḡaqa qadrihi</i>
فَرِيقًا هَدَىٰ وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلَالَةُ	<i>fariyqan ḡada wa fariyqan ḡaqa ḡalayhimu lldalalatu</i>
أَلَا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ	<i>'ḡala ḡina waḡda llahi ḡaqaḡ walakin 'ḡakḡarahum la yaḡlamu:wna</i>
وَكَثِيرٌ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ	<i>Wa kaḡiyrun ḡaqa ḡalayhi llḡaḡa:bu</i>
قَالَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَغْوَيْنَا	<i>qala llaḏiyina ḡaqa ḡalayhimu llqwalu rabana: haḡwḡulaḡi llaḏiyina 'ḡywayna:</i>
إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ	<i>'ḡina haḡa lahu:wa ḡaqa llyaqi:yni</i>
وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَعْلُومٌ	<i>Wa llaḏiyina fiy 'ḡmwa:lihim ḡaqaḡ maḡlu:wm</i>
إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْقِصَصُ الْحَقُّ	<i>'ḡina haḡa la huwa llqasaḡu llḡaqa</i>
فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ	<i>fa waqaḡa llḡaqa wa baḡala ma kanu:wa yaḡmalu:wna</i>
وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَع دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ	<i>wa yuri:ydu llahu 'ḡan yuḡiqa llḡaqa bi kalima:tihī wa yaqḡaḡa da:bira llka:firi:yina</i>
هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ	<i>huwa llaḏiy 'ḡarsala rasu:wlahuw bi llhuda wa di:yni llḡaqa</i>
فَذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رُبُّكُمْ الْحَقُّ	<i>fa ḡalikumu llahu rabukum llḡaqa</i>
قَالَتْ امْرَأَةُ الْعَرِيزِ الْأَنْ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ	<i>qa:lat amra'ḡatu alḡaziyz alḡana ḡaḡḡaḡa alḡaqa</i>
وَيُجَادِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ	<i>wa yuza:dilu llaḏiyina kafaru:wa bi llba:ḡili liyudḡiḡu:w bihi llḡaqa</i>
وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ	<i>wa yaḡlamu:wna 'ḡana llaha huwa llḡaqa llmubi:yn</i>
قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبْفِئُ بِالْحَقِّ عِلْمَ الْعُيُوبِ	<i>qul 'ḡina rabiy yaḡḡifu billḡaqa ḡalamu llyuyu:wbi</i>

Similarly, the collocate طيبة clearly demonstrate that Quranic collocations fit in with the broad collocational feature suggested by the literature:

Collocations	Transliteration
هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً	Huna:lika daʕa: zakariya: rabahu qa:la rabi hab liy min ladunka <u>ḍuri:yatan ṭayibatān</u>
وَمَسَاكِينَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ	wa masa:kina ṭayibatān fiy zana:ti ʕadnin wa riḍwa:nun mina llahi 'ʔakbar
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَجَرِينَ بَحْمٍ بَرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ	ḥata 'ʔiḏa kuntum fiy llfulki wa zara:i:yana bihim <u>bi ri:yhin ṭayiba</u>
أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ	'ʔalam tara kayfa ɗaraba llahu maṭalan kalimatan ṭayibatān ka fazaratin ṭayibatān
مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَنَخْنِئْهُ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً	man ʕamila ʕa:liḥan min ḏakarān 'ʔw 'ʔunṭa wa huwa muwʔminun fa lanuḥiyānahuw <u>ḥaya:tan ṭayibatān</u>
فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُبَارَكَةً طَيِّبَةً	fa salimu:w ʕala 'ʔanfusikum taḥi:yatan min ʕindi llahi <u>muba:rakatan ṭayibatān</u>
وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ	wa llxabiyu:wna lilxabiyatā:ti <u>wallṭayba:tu liltayibiyna wa lltybu:wna liltayba:ti</u>
فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ	Fatayamamu:w ʕaʕiydan ṭayban fa msaḥu:w bi wuzu:whikum wa 'ʔaydi:yikum
وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ	wa llbaladu llṭayibu yaxruzu naba:thuww bi 'ʔiḏni rabihi
وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا	wa kulu:w mima: razaqakum llahu <u>ḥalalan ṭayiban</u>

إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ	'?ilayhi yaşadu <u>llkalimu lltayibu wa llşamalu</u>  <i>llşa:lihu yarfaşuhu</i>
كُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ بَلَدَةً طَيِّبَةً وَرَبِّ غَفُورٌ	<i>Kulu:w min rizqi rabikum wa şkuru:w lahu</i>  <u><i>baldatun tayibatun wa rabun yafu:wrun</i></u>

The Quran is considered one of the most important sources of collocations in Modern Standard Arabic, as it possesses a large stock of phraseological units (Bannister 2014; Badr and Menacere, 2019). The Quran contains a high ratio of collocations, idioms and prefabricated phrases. These lexical items co-occur with a high degree of regularity, thus forming a special bond and providing syntactic contexts for each other. Although Arabic and English have different thought processes and operate from different mind-sets, they may share some features in how collocations are used in terms of function and key components. In the case of the Quran collocations, they fit well within the broad collocation criteria concerning recurrent co-occurrence patterns of meaning elements. This will be supported by concrete evidence in the following sections.

### 3.5 Identifying Quranic collocations

Lack of reliable and viable cursors for clearly determining the boundaries of phraseological units, across languages, is a well-acknowledged limitation. This semantic underdetermination might lead to the conclusion of 'fence sitting' that some words may encode both literal and figurative meanings (Baker, 1992; Biber et al. 1999; Cowie, 2009; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). The reason that can be evoked is that the formation of phraseological units or lexical collocations is not rule-driven but arbitrary combinations of language items, based on the assumption of frequency, high probability of co-occurrence and are context-

bound. Quranic collocation is viewed as one of the most powerful and persuasive means of expression which contributes to the ingeniousness of the Quran (Dweik and Abu Shakra, 2011; Abdel Haleem, 2009; Abdul-Fattah and Zughoul, 2003; Pahlavannezhad & Nadernezhad, 2012). This makes the task of identifying collocations based on an accurate set of criteria rather challenging. Research has found that a large proportion of the Quran is made up of collocational elements. The Quran encompasses a whole range of recurrent word combinations and many of the words form part of a frequent and habitual word-combination in one way or another. Some authors (Dweik & Abu Shakra, 2011; Abdel Haleem, 2009; Abdul-Fattah & Zughoul, 2003; Pahlavannezhad & Nadernezhad, 2012) suggest that the Quran contains excessive collocational expressions in order to be persuasive, informative and influential.

### **3.5.1 Method for selecting Quranic collocations**

This study argues that using a clear benchmark or pattern that identifies precisely collocations remains a contentious area with too many questions still unanswered particularly regarding the criteria of frequency. The challenge stems from the fact that collocations are arbitrary and not rule-driven. In other words, the forms and combinations of words of a collocation do not follow a prescriptive pattern or rules. Native speakers internalise them throughout the natural acquisition process; however, they do not come naturally for foreign language learners (Howart, 1996; Baker, 1992; Biber et al. 1999; Cowie 2009, etc.)

Thus, the debate over the threshold for a word association, sequence or combination to be deemed or classified as a collocation is still open. How can it be determined if a certain number of occurrences is frequent or not? These

questions have also been echoed by Clear (1993: 277) who argues that: “*the terminology is not well established yet, and it is by no means clear whether the observation of a single co-occurrence in a corpus should be ignored or whether the single instance should be taken to be one of many more which might have occurred.*” Clear (1993) opted for a threshold value of three, ignoring pairs appearing fewer than three times in the corpus. For practical reasons, the current study has applied Clear’s (1993) requirement for a collocate occurring three times, in other words, focusing on a word combination in the Quran which presents a frequency higher than three to be considered a collocation. The aim is to find out whether word combinations occur together more often than chance.

The way collocations bind together with other language elements, and how the different parts of the Quran are interconnected and explain each other, make any translation tentative. Every Quranic collocation has ‘a cohesive force’ and involves a unique encounter with language and a process of conveying a specific communicative purpose. The collocations’ resonance and rhythm help in the memorisation of the Quranic verses. There is a strong bond that exists between words within the Quranic collocation. The way patterns of collocability are distributed between Arabic and English differ in terms of restrictions of positions and relationships, for example, in the Quran, ‘*عاهد عهدا*’ *ʿa:hada ʿahdan* (to make a promise) and *نقض عهدا* *naqada ʿahadan* (to break a pact). In seeking the equivalent collocation in English, a different verb is used to collocate with *promise*, which is *break*. Similarly, with the expression *break the law*, the use of a different verb may be necessary in Arabic, so it makes sense, *يخالف القانون* *yuxa:lifu ʾlqa:nuwn* ‘*contradict the law*’. Furthermore, consider the following Quranic collocations:

فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا

*fadarabna: ʕala ʔaḏa:nihim fiy llkahfi siniyna ʕadada:*

*Then We draw (a veil) over their ears, for a number of years, in the Cave, (so that they heard not). [Ali, 18:11].*

The translator seems to have struggled to convey accurately the meaning of the Arabic collocation *فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا*. The translator suggested ‘to draw a veil over the ears’ which misses the meaning, creating a collocational clash. Rather than seeking a close equivalent collocation in English, the translator should have used a different verb that collocates with *ears* such as *cover, plug, stop, and close*.

The Quran includes a plethora of collocations containing the collocate *ضرب* *ḍaraba* denoting a variety of meaning depending on the context:

Collocate <i>ضرب</i>	Sura	Transliteration
وَإِذْ اسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ	'lbqrt, 2:60	<i>wa 'ʔiḏi ʔstasqa mu:wsa liqawmihi faqulna: ʔdrib bi: ʕaṣa:ka llḥaʒara</i>
فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ	'lʕr'ʔ, 26:63	<i>fa'ʔawḥayna: 'ʔila mu:wsa 'ʔan 'drib biʕaṣa:ka 'lbaḥra</i>
وَضَرَبْتَ عَلَيْهِمُ الدَّلَّةَ وَالْمَسْكَنَةَ وَبَأْوَأُوا بَغْضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ	'lbqrt, 2:61	<i>wa ḍaribat ʕalayhimu 'lḏ:ilatu wa 'lmaskanatu waba'ʔuw biyaḍabinm m:ina 'llahi</i>
لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَحْصَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ	'lbqrt, 2:273	<i>Lilfuqara:ʔi 'laḏiyana 'ʔuḥṣiru:w fiy sabiyli 'llahi la yastatiyʕu:wna ḍarban fiy 'l'ʔardi</i>
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا	'lns'ʔ, 4:94	<i>Ya: 'ʔayuha: llaḏiyana ʔamanu:w 'ʔiḏa ḍarabtum fiy sabiyli llahi fatabayanu:w</i>
فَاضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ وَاضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ	'l'ʔnf'l, 8:12	<i>Fa:dribu:w fawqa ll'ʔaʕna:qi wa dribu:w minhum kula bana:nin</i>

كَذَّٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ	'lrʕd, 13:17	<i>kaðalika yaðribu llahu llħaqa wa llba:ṭila</i>
فَضْرَبْنَا عَلَىٰ آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا	'lkhf, 18:11	<i>faðarabna: ʕala ʔaða:nihim fiy llkahfi siniyina ʕadada:n</i>
أَنْ أَسْرِبِعِبَادِي فَأَضْرِبُ لَهُمْ طَرِيقًا فِي الْبَحْرِ يَبَسًا	th, 20:77	<i>'ʔan 'ʔasri biʕiba:diy fa:drib lahum tariyqa:n fiy llbaħri yabasa:n</i>
وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ	'lnwr, 24:31	<i>wa lyadribna bixumurihina ʕala zuyu:wbihina</i>
وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يَخْفِيْنَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ	'lnwr, 24:31	<i>wala yadribna bi'ʔarzuliħina liyuʕlama ma: yuxfi:yina min zi:ynatihina</i>
فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضْرِبِ الرِّقَابَ	mħmd, 47:4	<i>fa'ʔiða laqytumu llaðiyina kafaru:w faðarba llriqa:bi</i>
فَضْرِبْ بَيْنَهُمْ سُوْرًا لَّهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَوَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ	'lhdyd, 57:13	<i>faðuriba baynahum bisu:wrin lahu ba:bun ba:ṭinuhu fiyhi llraħmatu wa za:hiruhu min qibalihi llʕaða:bu</i>
وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوْهُهُمْ وَأَذْبَابَهُمْ	'l'ʔnf'l, 8:50	<i>wa law tara 'ʔið yatawafa llaðiyina kafaru:w llmalaʔikatu yaðribu:wna wuzu:whahum wa 'ʔadba:rahum</i>
فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَرْبًا بِالْيَمِينِ	'lʕ'ft, 37:93	<i>fara:ya ʕalayhim darba:n billyami:yini</i>

Similarly, the noun + adjective Quranic collocation رِيحٌ عَقِيمٌ *ryħun ʕaqymun* has an expressive metaphorical meaning. English uses different adjectives to collocate with the noun *wind* such as *fierce, gale-force, high, stiff, strong, terrible* to reflect the strength of the wind. These adjectives, however, only partially communicate the intended meaning of the Quranic collocation رِيحٌ عَقِيمٌ *ryħun ʕaqymun*. Moreover, the metaphorical purpose of the adjective عَقِيمٌ *ʕaqim* in رِيحٌ عَقِيمٌ *ryħun ʕaqymun* remains absent in the English equivalent adjective. Consider other collocations involving the collocate رِيحٌ *ryħ*:

Collocate ريح	Sura	Transliteration
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِّ وَجْرَيْنَ بِهَمَّ بَرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ	ywns, 10:22	ħata 'ʔiða kuntum fiy llfulki wa zarai:yina bihim <u>biri:yħin</u> <u>taybatin</u>
وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ دَعَاؤُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِنِ أَنْجَيْتَنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ	ywns, 10:22	wa fariħu:w biha: za:ʔatha riyħun řa:sifun wa za'ʔahum llmawzu min kuli maka:nin wa řanu:w 'ʔanahum 'ʔuħiyta bihim dařawu: llaha muxliři:yina lahu lldiyana layʔin 'ʔanjaytana: min hađihi lanakuwnana mina llřa:kiri:yina
وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعَيْرُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمُ إِنِّي لَأَجِدُ رِيحَ يُونُسَ	ywsf, 12:94	wa lama: fařalati llřiyru qa:la 'ʔabuwhum 'ʔiny la'ʔařidu <u>riyħa yuwsu:fa</u>
فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحْسَاتٍ	fřlt, 41:16	fa'ʔarsalna: řalayhim <u>riyħan řarřaran</u> fiy 'ʔaya:min na:ħ isatin
وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ	'lđ'ry't, 51:41	wa fiy řa:din 'ʔiđ 'ʔarsalna: řalayhimu <u>llri:yħa llřaqi:yma</u>

One of the key themes that transpires from the above sample of collocations is that Quranic collocation features are consistent with the broad theoretical base on collocations, but they are also unique in the sense that they are used in a divine and creative way to convey a particular purpose. The way collocations are formulated or put together is distinctive and the way meaning is distributed and emphasised may well be untranslatable in English. Quranic collocational meaning is slippery, and there is a tendency to leave out significant information during the translation process; there is always more to say than the explicit meaning. Quranic collocations have multiple senses or as Menacere, (1999, 353) put it “*Word combinations have a galaxy of meanings and these are not static or frozen.*” In addition, the Quran resorts to frequent use of emotive and highly

figurative language. In contrast English tends to avoid excessive collocational and figurative language.

### **3.6 Method of assessing Quranic collocations in English**

This study neither attempts to identify all the collocations of the Quran nor measures the collocational density of the Quran text statistically. This study adopts purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is based on the researcher's own judgment, also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling. The aim was to produce a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative. This study aimed to evaluate the quality of five English translation of the Quran focusing on collocation, to determine the degree of faithfulness in terms of the overall message which is being conveyed. It highlighted the gain or loss incurred in the translating process and assessed the degree of the deviation from SL message if any. It also identified the various collocation difficulties faced by the translator in terms of structure, stylistic fluency and naturalness.

### **3.7 Translating Quranic collocation**

There is a plethora of studies that have investigated collocations from different perspectives and different contexts, focusing mainly on EFL learners' proficiency and fluency in the learning of this important language feature. Some put forward strategies on how collocation should be learnt and taught. In contrast, research on how to translate collocations, and in particular the translation of Quranic collocations, is limited to very sporadic and fragmented articles with little substance, which propose a number of different approaches and strategies to their translation. Translating Quranic collocation presents difficulties beyond those encountered in dealing with collocations in other languages owing to the

style and complex structure of the Quran. Translating Quranic collocation carries with it a warning, the risk of loss of meaning and vagueness and as such, it has been considered as one of the toughest challenges facing the translator. It has been treated as a part of the more general problem of untranslatability.

Some collocations are translatable, but many collocations cover certain areas of experience which may be categorised, lexicalised and distributed in completely different ways by different languages. Certain semantic combinations or associations made in Arabic may not be made by another language. The collocations of the Quran contain words and meanings which embody a specific message. To translate Quranic collocations efficiently, it is important to be aware and sensitive to the implicit shades of meaning that words may have. Take for example the collocate مَاءٍ مَّهِينٍ *Mā'in*. Like many collocations of the Quran, it fulfils the criteria of frequency, domain specific, transparency, close relationship with other items, arbitrary language items recurrent in context, word partnership with a hint of figurativeness etc.

- مَاءٍ مَّهِينٍ *ma:ʔin mahynin* *an extract of underrated fluid*
- مَاءً حَمِيمًا *ma:ʔan ḥamiymn* *boiling water*
- مَاءً غَدَقًا *ma:ʔan ḡadaqan* *abundant water*
- مَاءً فُرَاتًا *ma:ʔan fura:tan* *sweet water*
- مَاءً تُجَاجًا *ma:ʔan θʒa:ʒan* *pouring down*
- مَاءٍ دَافِقٍ *ma:ʔin da:fiqin* *spurting fluid*
- مَاءٍ مَسْكُوبٍ *ma:ʔin masku:wbin* *constantly flowing water*
- مَاءٍ مَعِينٍ *ma:ʔin maʕi:ynin* *flowing water*

Views on the best way to translate collocations differ widely.

- a. Some claim that a collocation should be translated by an equivalent collocation in the target language.

- b. Others suggest that in the case of sensitive texts, such as the Quran, a word for word or faithful translation is necessary so as not to distort the word of God.
- c. Many argue, that it is paramount to understand, interpret and re-express the collocation in meaning only i.e. reduce to sense, meaning only, not form.

The issue of the quality of Quranic collocations in English is a matter of degree and is difficult to measure. Which is the best approach for translating Quranic collocations is still open to debate and often generates conflicting views. Gloss or word for word translation of Quranic collocations is neither ideal nor the worst approach. This study argues that there is no such a thing as a faithful translation. All translations are inevitably flawed. The following illustrates how Quranic collocations were dealt with by five different translators who struggled to be consistent and coherent. Translation is not just a matter of carrying over words from SL to TL: it is a matter of making understandable a whole message.

ماء	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
خُلِقَ مِنْ مَاءٍ دَافِقٍ	'lq'rq, 86: 6	He is created from <u>a drop emitted-</u>	he was created of <u>gushing water</u>	he has been created out of <u>a seminal fluid</u>	He is created from <u>spurting fluid</u>	He is created from <u>water gushing forth</u>
ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ	'lsjdt, 32: 8	And made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a <u>fluid despised</u>	then He fashioned his progeny of an extraction of <u>mean water</u>	then He causes him to be begotten out of the essence of a <u>humble fluid</u>	then made his descendants from <u>an extract of underrated fluid</u>	Then He made his offspring from semen of worthless water (male and female sexual discharge)

<p>كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ</p>	<p>mḥmd, 47: 15</p>	<p>be compared to such as shall dwell for ever in the Fire, and be given, to drink, <u>boiling water</u>, so that it cuts up their bowels (to pieces)?</p>	<p>Are they as he who dwells forever in the Fire, such as are given to drink <u>boiling water</u>, that tears their bowels asunder?</p>	<p>Are they as he who dwells forever in the Fire, such as are given to drink <u>boiling water</u>, that tears their bowels asunder?</p>	<p>How can this be compared to the fate of those stuck in the Fire, given <u>boiling water</u> to drink that tears their bowels?</p>	<p>(Are these) like those who shall dwell for ever in the Fire, and be given, to drink, <u>boiling water</u>, so that it cuts up their bowels?</p>
<p>وَأَنْ لَوْ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَاهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا</p>	<p>'ljn, 72: 16</p>	<p>And God's Message is): "If they (the Pagans) had (only) remained on the (right) Way, We should certainly have bestowed on them <u>Rain in abundance</u>.</p>	<p>Would they but go straight on the way, We would give them to drink of <u>water copious</u>,</p>	<p>[KNOW,] THEN, that if they [who have heard Our call] keep firmly to the [right] path, We shall certainly shower them with <u>blessings abundant</u></p>	<p>If they had taken to the right way, We would have given them <u>abundant water</u> to drink</p>	<p>If they (non-Muslims) had believed in Allah, and went on the Right Way (i.e. Islam) We should surely have bestowed on them <u>water (rain) in abundance</u></p>
<p>وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ شَامِخَاتٍ وَأَسْقَيْنَا كُم مَّاءً فَرَاتًا</p>	<p>'lmrsl't, 77: 27</p>	<p>And made therein mountains standing firm, lofty (in stature); and provided for you <u>water sweet (and wholesome)</u> ?</p>	<p>Set We not therein soaring mountains? Sated you with <u>sweetest water</u>?</p>	<p>and have We not set on it proud, firm mountains, and given you <u>sweet water</u> to drink?</p>	<p>Did We not place firm, lofty mountains on it and provide you with <u>sweet water</u>?</p>	<p>And have placed therein firm, and tall mountains; and have given you to drink <u>sweet water</u>?</p>
<p>وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً نَّجَاجًا</p>	<p>'lnb'?, 78: 14</p>	<p>And do We not send down from the clouds <u>water in abundance</u>,</p>	<p>and have sent down out of the rainclouds <u>water cascading</u></p>	<p>And from the wind-driven clouds We send down <u>waters pouring in abundance</u>,</p>	<p>Did We not send water <u>pouring down</u> from the clouds</p>	<p>And have sent down from the rainy clouds <u>abundant water</u></p>

<u>وَمَاءٍ</u> <u>مَسْكُوبٍ</u>	'lw'qʕt ,56:31	By <u>water</u> <u>flowing</u> <u>constantly</u>	and <u>outpoured</u> <u>waters,</u>	and <u>waters</u> <u>gushing</u>	<u>constantly</u> <u>flowing</u> <u>water</u>	By <u>water</u> <u>flowing</u> <u>constantly</u>
مَنْ وَرَائِهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَيُسْقَى مِنْ مَاءٍ صَدِيدٍ	'ʔbr'hy m,14:16	In front of such a one is Hell, and he is given, for drink, <u>boiling</u> <u>fetid water.</u>	beyond him Gehenna, and he is given to drink of <u>oozing pus,</u>	with hell awaiting him; and he shall be made to drink of <u>the</u> <u>water of</u> <u>most bitter</u> <u>distress,</u>	Hell awaits each one; he will be given <u>foul water</u> to drink	In front of him (every obstinate, arrogant dictator) is Hell, and he will be made to drink <u>boiling,</u> <u>festering</u> <u>water.</u>
قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مُعِينٍ	'lmlk, 67:30	Say: "See ye?- If your stream be some morning lost (in the underground earth), who then can supply you with <u>clear-flowing</u> <u>water?"</u>	Say: 'What think you? If in the morning your water should have vanished into the earth, then who would bring you <u>running</u> <u>water?"</u>	Say [unto those who deny the truth]: "What do you think? If of a sudden all your water were to vanish underground, who [but God] could provide you with <u>water</u> from [new] <u>unsullied</u> <u>springs?"</u>	Say, 'Just think: if all your water were to sink deep into the earth who could give you <u>flowing</u> <u>water in its</u> <u>place?"</u>	Say (O Muhammad <u>ﷺ</u> ): "Tell me! If (all) your water were to be sunk away, who then can supply you with <u>flowing</u> <u>(spring)</u> <u>water?"</u>
فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ	mḥmd, 47:15	in it are rivers of <u>water</u> <u>incorruptible</u> ; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes;	therein are rivers of <u>water</u> <u>unstaling,</u> rivers of milk unchanging	wherein there are rivers of <u>water which</u> <u>time does</u> <u>not corrupt,</u> and rivers of milk the taste whereof never alters	rivers of <u>water</u> <u>forever</u> <u>pure,</u> rivers of milk forever fresh	in it are rivers of <u>water the</u> <u>taste and</u> <u>smell of</u> <u>which are</u> <u>not changed;</u> rivers of milk of which the taste never changes;
وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنْ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جِبَالًا وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ	q, 50:9	And We send down from the sky <u>rain charted</u> <u>with</u> <u>blessing,</u> and We produce	And We sent down out of heaven <u>water</u> <u>blessed,</u> and caused to grow	And We send down from the skies <u>water</u> <u>rich in</u> <u>blessings,</u> and cause	and how We send <u>blessed</u> <u>water</u> down from the sky and grow with it	And We send down <u>blessed</u> <u>water (rain)</u> from the sky, then We produce

		therewith gardens and Grain for harvests;	thereby gardens and grain of harvest	thereby gardens to grow, and fields of grain,	gardens, the harvest grain	therewith gardens and grain (every kind of harvests) that are reaped.
فَفَتَحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَاءٍ مُنْهَمِرٍ	'lqmr,54 :11	So We opened the gates of heaven, <u>with water pouring forth.</u>	Then We opened the gates of heaven <u>unto water torrential,</u>	And so We caused the gates of heaven to open <u>with water pouring down in torrents,</u>	So We opened the gates of the sky <u>with torrential water,</u>	So We opened the gates of heaven <u>with water pouring forth.</u>

There are discrepancies and variations in the way the collocate مَاءٍ *Mā'in* 'water' was translated, particularly in the example, *ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ* *thuma zaʿala naslahu min sula:latin min ma:ʿin mahynin*. Ali suggests 'quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised'. One of the reasons why this translation does not make much sense, is that translating collocations depends on the way the collocation itself is perceived and understood. Translating is not about producing the same as the original, it is about conveying the sense and essence of the original text. Translation values accuracy, flair and precision over fluency. The closest meaning was produced by Khan & Hilali: 'He made his offspring from semen'. Thus, translating collocation is not a simple matching between pairs of languages, but rather a product of the dynamic process of communication. This underscores that what forms a semantically correct meaning in one language, may not be the same in another. This constitutes a challenge for the translators from Arabic into English and across other languages.

Quranic collocation is created in a particular textual and contextual setting in a language that is unique in the sense that it aims to convey a specific message.

Grasping the meaning of word association and language components is challenging as the Quran has its own unique stock of collocations. The meaning of collocations of the Quran is more than simply what the individual words actually mean. According to Hoffmann (2007:33) *“Even prolonged cooperation between an expert team in the Arabic language, theology, philosophy, history, anthropology, psychology, sociology, literature, physics, and biology would never arrive at final conclusions.”* As the Quran clearly states: وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا <sup>٥٥</sup> - *wa ma: yaʿlamu taʔwylahu ʔila llahu wa llrasixu:wna fiy llʕilmi yaquwlu:wna ʔamna bihi* - *No one knows its hidden meanings except God. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord" (translated by Yusuf Ali).*

English and Arabic users employ their respective languages from different grammatical systems and from different mind sets and from disparate thought processes; each operates from a different worldview so transferring Arabic collocation into English often leads to loss of meaning. (Amer and Menacere 2013) as demonstrated by the following verses:

لباس	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
لِبَاسِ الْجُوعِ	'Inhl, 16:112	taste of hunger	garment of hunger	misery of hunger	garment of famine	the extreme of hunger (famine)
لِبَاسِ التَّقْوَى	'l'ʔr'f, 7:26	raiment of righteousness	garment of Godfearing	garment of God-consciousness	garment of God-consciousness	raiment of righteousness
هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ	'lbqrt,2:18 7	They are your garments and ye are their garments	They are a vestment for you, and you are a	They are as a garment for you, and you are as a	They are [close] as garments to you, as you are to them.	They are <i>Libas</i> [i.e. body cover, or screen, or <i>Sakan</i> ], for

			vestment for them	garment for them		you and you are the same for them.
وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا	'Inb'?, 78:10	and made the night as a covering	and We appointed night for a garment	and made the night [its] cloak	give the night as a cover	and have made the night as a covering (through its darkness)

As can be seen, differences in the way the collocational patterns are formed and the way they are distributed in Arabic Quranic text can cause serious challenges to the translator who may produce odd collocations in the English T.L., particularly in the case where there is no match between Arabic and English collocations and meaning is often obtained from the wider area and beyond the scope of context. Collocation implicitly restricts the language user or translator to place randomly any word next to any other word, and options and choices are context specific. Carter, (1998: 66) supports this view arguing that the language user must: “*piece together such ready-made ‘prefabricated’ units appropriate to a situation*” due to their idiosyncratic nature.

In this case, the translators experienced some challenges in rendering the collocate لِبَاسٌ *liba:s* which implies something much more profound than the actual surface and literal meaning. The meaning of the term لِبَاسٌ *liba:s* serves a specific communicative function and should have been extrapolated from various other sources, because translating is not mechanical. It is a process of interpreting, negotiating meaning and accommodating the source language information so that it makes sense and it fits with the TL norms and usage. It could be argued that the translators aimed at achieving accuracy at the expense of naturalness in

T.L. The five translators decided to opt for a faithful translation, staying close to the original. Literally the term لِبَاسٌ 'liba:s' refers to 'an item of clothing', 'dress' but in this context this collocation has a much wider semantic scope. As for لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ liba:sal zuwʿi was rendered 'garment of hunger' 'garment of famine.' This is a process of stringing word for word translations of the Quranic collocation in English, thus, creating a meaningless collocation in the TL. No word association or construction, or collocation of one language can have a matching equivalent in another. Meaning in this example needs to be inferred from other sources rather than directly transferred and taken at face value from the original.

In translating Quranic collocations, it may be necessary to use quite a different form to express meaning. There are different ways and forms of conveying the same idea. Hence, lack of comprehension of the source text often leads to stilted or distorted meaning in TL. In the above collocation لِبَاسٌ 'liba:s' was metaphorically used to refer to a man and woman in their relationship to each other, each protects the other for better or for worse هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ – hunna liba:sun lakum wa 'antum liba:sun lahuna . This collocation was rendered as:

- *They are your garments and ye are their garments*
- *They are a vestment for you, and you are a vestment for them*
- *They are as a garment for you, and you are as a garment for them*
- *They are [close] as garments to you, as you are to them.*
- *They are Libas [i.e. body cover, or screen, or Sakan], for you and you are the same for them.*

The translators have approached this collocation in different ways, but their attempts remain vague. Considering that the Arabic uses a collocation which is

forceful and charged with meaning, the translators fell short of achieving this. It feels like there is a dumbing down of the original. Some accuse translators of short-changing the TL receptors/readers; this may be true in the case of translating Quranic collocations.

This study takes the view that the extent to which a collocation is alien or acceptable in T.L. depends on the overall effect it has on the receptors. The way information is conveyed differs from language to language. This study argues that Quranic collocations are context sensitive; they serve a specific communicative purpose. Translators need to understand how collocations are formulated and how they are embedded in the Quranic verses to convey deep, implicit meaning and should not be interpreted at face value. Translating Quranic collocation starts with grasping and unpacking the collocational word combination rather than taking across what the words or phrases might mean by themselves. For instance, consider the following collocate شجرة *Ja3aratun* (tree) as it appeared in the Quran

شَجَرَةَ الْخُلْدِ	<i>Ja3arati llxuldi</i>	<i>the Tree of Eternity</i>
شَجَرَةَ مُبَارَكَةٍ	<i>Ja3aratin muba:rakatin</i>	<i>a blessed Tree</i>
شَجَرَةَ أَقْلَامٍ	<i>Ja3aratin 'ʔaqlamun</i>	<i>the trees on earth were pens</i>
شَجَرَةَ الزَّقُّومِ	<i>Ja3aratu 'ʔzaqu:wmi</i>	<i>the Tree of Zaqqum</i>
شَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ	<i>Ja3aratin ʔayibatin</i>	<i>a goodly tree</i>
شَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ	<i>Ja3aratin xabi:y0atin</i>	<i>an evil tree</i>
الشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ	<i>aJa3arata lmalʕu:wnata</i>	<i>the Cursed Tree</i>
الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ	<i>ʔaJa3ari ll'ʔaxɗari</i>	<i>the green tree</i>
شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَّفْطِينِ	<i>Ja3aratan min yaqʔi:ynin</i>	<i>plant of the gourd kind</i>

شجرة	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
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<p>فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةٍ الْخُلْدِ وَمَلِكٍ لَا يَبْلَى</p>	<p>th, 20:120</p>	<p>But Satan whispered evil to him: he said, "O Adam! shall I lead thee to <u>the Tree of Eternity</u> and to a kingdom that never decays?"</p>	<p>Then Satan whispered to him saying, 'Adam, shall I point thee to <u>the Tree of Eternity</u>, and a Kingdom that decays not?'</p>	<p>But Satan whispered unto him, saying: "O Adam! Shall I lead thee to <u>the tree of life eternal</u>, and [thus] to a kingdom that will never decay?"</p>	<p>But Satan whispered to Adam, saying, 'Adam, shall I show you the <u>tree of immortality</u> and power that never decays?'</p>	<p>Then <i>Shaitan</i> (Satan) whispered to him, saying: "O Adam! Shall I lead you to <u>the Tree of Eternity</u> and to a kingdom that will never waste away?"</p>
<p>كَانَهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ</p>	<p>'Inwr, 24:35</p>	<p>the glass as it were a brilliant star: Lit from a <u>blessed Tree</u>, an Olive, neither of the east nor of the west</p>	<p>the glass as it were a glittering star) kindled from a <u>Blessed Tree</u>, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West</p>	<p>the glass [shining] like a radiant star: [a lamp] lit from a <u>blessed tree</u> – an olive- tree that is neither of the east nor of the west</p>	<p>a glass like a glittering star, fuelled from a <u>blessed olive tree</u> from neither east nor west</p>	<p>the glass as it were a brilliant star, lit from a <u>blessed tree</u>, <u>an olive</u>, neither of the east (i.e. neither it gets sun-rays only in the morning) nor of the west</p>
<p>وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَفْلَاحٍ وَالْبَحْرِ يَمْدُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ</p>	<p>lqm'n, 31:27</p>	<p>And if all <u>the trees on earth were pens</u> and the ocean (were ink), with seven oceans behind it to add to its (supply), yet would not the words of God be exhausted (in the writing)</p>	<p>Though all the trees in <u>the earth were pens</u>, and the sea- seven seas after it to replenish it, yet would the Words of God not be spent.</p>	<p>And if all <u>the trees on earth were pens</u>, and the sea [were ink], with seven [more] seas yet added to it, the words of God would not be exhausted</p>	<p>If all <u>the trees on earth were pens</u> and all the seas, with seven more seas besides, [were ink,] still God's words would not run out</p>	<p>And if all <u>the trees on the earth were pens</u> and the sea (were ink wherewith to write), with seven seas behind it to add to its (supply), yet the Words of Allah would not be exhausted</p>
<p>أَذَلَّكَ خَيْرٌ نَزْلًا أَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ</p>	<p>'lq'f't 37:62</p>	<p>Is that the better entertain- ment or <u>the</u></p>	<p>Is that better as a hospitality, or <u>the Tree</u></p>	<p>Is such [a paradise] the better welcome – or <u>the [hellish] tree</u></p>	<p>Is this the better welcome, or <u>the tree of Zaqqum</u></p>	<p>Is that (Paradise) better entertain- ment or <u>the tree of</u></p>

		<u>Tree of Zaqqum?</u>	<u>of Ez-Zakkoum?</u>	<u>of deadly fruit?</u>		<u>Zaqqum (a horrible tree in Hell)?</u>
<p>أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ صَرَّبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفُرْعَاهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ</p>	'?br'hym ,14:24	Seest thou not how God sets forth a parable? - A goodly word like <u>a goodly tree</u> , whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens	Hast thou not seen how God has struck a similitude? A good word is as <u>a good tree</u> -- its roots are firm, and its branches are in heaven	ART THOU NOT aware how God sets forth the parable of a good word? [It is] like <u>a good tree</u> , firmly rooted, [reaching out] with its branches towards the sky,	[Prophet], do you not see how God makes comparisons? A good word is like <u>a good tree</u> whose root is firm and whose branches are high in the sky	See you not how Allah sets forth a parable? - A goodly word as <u>a goodly tree</u> , whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the sky (i.e. very high).
<p>وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِن فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ</p>	'?br'hym ,14:26	And the parable of an evil Word is that of <u>an evil tree</u> : It is torn up by the root from the surface of the earth: it has no stability.	And the likeness of a corrupt word is as <u>a corrupt tree</u> -- uprooted from the earth, having no establishment	And the parable of a corrupt word is that of <u>a corrupt tree</u> , torn up [from its roots] onto the face of the earth, wholly unable to endure.	but an evil word is like <u>a rotten tree</u> , uprooted from the surface of the earth, with no power to endure	And the parable of an evil word is that of <u>an evil tree</u> uprooted from the surface of earth having no stability.
<p>وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي آرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ</p>	'l'?sr'?,1 7:60	Behold! We told thee that thy Lord doth encompass mankind round about: We granted the vision which We showed thee, but as a trial for men,- as also <u>the Cursed Tree</u> (mentioned) in the Quran	And when We said to thee, 'Surely thy Lord encompasses men,' and We made the vision that We showed thee and <u>the tree cursed</u> in the Koran	And lo! We said unto thee, [O Prophet:] "Behold, thy Sustainer encompasses all mankind [within His knowledge and might]: and so We have ordained that the vision which We have shown thee	O[Prophet] We have told you that your Lord knows all about human beings. The vision We showed you a was only a test for people, as was <u>the cursed tree</u> [mentioned] in the Quran.	And (remember) when We told you: "Verily! Your Lord has encompassed mankind (i.e. they are in His Grip)." And We made not the vision which we showed you (O Muhammad as an actual

				- as also <u>the tree [of hell,] cursed</u> in this Qur'ān		eye-witness and not as a dream on the night of <i>Al-Isra'</i> ) but a trial for mankind, and likewise <u>the accursed tree</u> ( <i>Zaqqum</i> , mentioned) in the Quran
الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تُقَدُّونَ	ys,36:80	The same Who produces for you fire out of <u>the green tree</u> , when behold! ye kindle therewith (your own fires)!	who has made for you out of <u>the green tree</u> fire and lo, from it you kindle.'	He who produces for you fire out of <u>the green tree</u> , so that, lo! you kindle [your fires] therewith."	It is He who produces fire for you out of <u>the green tree</u> — lo and behold!— and from this you kindle fire	He, Who produces for you fire out of <u>the green tree</u> , when behold! You kindle therewith.
فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ - لَلَبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ - فَنَبَذْنَاهُ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ وَأَنْبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجْرَةً مِّنَ يَقْطِينٍ	'Is'f't,37: 146	And We caused to grow, over him, a spreading plant of the <u>gourd kind</u> .	and We caused to grow over him <u>a tree of gourds</u> .	and caused <u>a creeping plant to grow over him</u> [out of the barren soil].	and made <u>a gourd tree</u> grow above him	And We caused <u>a plant of gourd</u> to grow over him.

As can be seen, Quranic collocations /phraseological units reflect the wealth of the language of the Quran, displaying the archetypes of Islamic principles. The Quranic collocations شَجَرَةَ الْخُلْدِ *ja3arati llxuldi* and شَجَرَةَ مُبَارَكَةٍ *ja3aratin muba:arakatin* can be translated literally as *the tree of eternity* or *the tree of life* or, as referred to in the Bible, as *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Similarly, - وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ - *wa lja3arata lmal'cuwnata fiy llqur?ani* - as *the cursed tree*. However, in reference to the collocation شَجَرَةُ الرَّقُومِ *ja3aratal zaqu:wmi* the five

translators did not try to explore beneath and beyond the word sequence شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ *Ja3aratal zaqu:wmi*. Instead they kept the original as illustrated below:

the Tree of Zaqqum?

the Tree of Ez-zakkoum?

the [hellish] tree of deadly fruit?

the tree of Zaqqum

the tree of Zaqqum (a horrible tree in Hell)?

The translators transferred the form of the word but have fallen short of conveying the meaning and spirit of the word which led to ambiguity and confusion, except perhaps Khan and Hilali who put between brackets an explanation of what the tree of Zaqqum refers to - *a horrible tree in Hell*. The best approach when dealing with Quranic collocations in translation is to consider the degree of translatability i.e. whether the equivalent expressions enjoy the same stylistic value in their respective contexts and cultures. This often involves adjusting or rephrasing as necessary to avoid mistranslation or unnatural expression in TL.

### 3.8 Demystifying Quranic phraseological units

The way language users conceptualise and perceive reality through various linguistic manifestations and mechanisms still generate plenty of interest from both linguists and educationalists. Phraseology can be said to be one of those pervasive language functions that speakers make use of to express a specific communicative purpose. These are used either spontaneously or intentionally to make conversations 'interesting'. It is what makes people actually engage in and enjoy conversations (Nerlich, and Clarke 2001). Different tags have been

attached to refer to this word association such as: *recurrent word-combination, word association, recurrent multi-word sequences, set expression, set phrase, idiomatic phrase, multi-word expression, multiword utterance, phraseological units, formulaic language, phrasemes, idiomatic expressions, idioms, collocations, and/or poly-lexical expressions, sometimes simply idiom, etc.*

Research on phraseology is sometimes conflicting, sometimes complementary, and at other times overlapping saying what has already been said time and time again (Cowie 1991, Howarth 1998; Kjellmer 1994, Sinclair 1991, Stubbs 2001 etc). As a result, the phraseology debate appears at times vague and its terminology is often intermingled or put in the same basket partly because of the nature of the topic itself and partly because of insufficient knowledge base regarding phraseological units. This can be corroborated by the fact that different authors have come to very comparable findings and conclusions. For instance, Kunin (1970:210) refers to phraseological units as '*semi-idioms*'. According to Kunin (1970), "*a phraseological unit is a stable combination of words with a fully or partially figurative meaning*". Thus, phraseology units are often described as constrained multiword expressions with emotive nuance through metaphoric or idiomatic meaning. According to Mel'čuk (1995:7) '*A phraseological expression, or phraseme, is thus a multiword utterance featuring some unpredictable properties, i.e., a constrained utterance, or a multiword utterance that is not free*'. Similarly, Moon (1997:43) views multiword units as '*sequences of words which semantically or syntactically form a meaningful or inseparable unit*' that can be *lexical units or idiom like phrases.*' For instance, '*ghost writer*', '*basket case*', '*rogue state*', '*miscarriage of justice*', etc.

It seems therefore, that some phraseology units carry a special meaning often consisting of figurative shades of meaning communicating an emotive language function. This is explained by Naciscione (2001:53) who argues that the cognitive and communicative purpose of phraseology units is achieved because language users make use of both the literal and the figurative meaning. “*A phraseological unit may extend across sentence boundaries and even large stretches of text, creating a continuity, a web of unique interrelationships of figurative and direct meanings, and associative links.*” There are some word combinations and phraseological units which have an emotive value often used to convey a particular communicative function, for example: ‘*The icing on the cake*’. The particular form by which a meaning can be expressed differs from language to language, for instance, in French, the imagery changes to ‘*La cerise sur le gâteau*’ (*cherry on the cake*), while the expression, ‘*Pied noir*’ literally means, ‘*black foot*’ but it actually refers to ‘*former French settlers in Algeria.*’

As can be seen, many view some word combination or phraseology units as functioning as semantically inseparable word association operating as single entities, as free combination or as ready-made units (Moon, 1997; Kunin, 1970; Sinclair, 1991; Stubbs, 2001). Consider for instance the following examples, *green light, green fingers, flesh and blood, bog standard, low life*. These phraseological units are a form of loaded language whose main function is to persuade, express emotions or arouse feelings. ‘*back seat driver, break a leg, keyboard warrior, etc.*’ Phraseological units consist of 1) denotative meaning which is deduced from a whole phrase as a single inseparable unit and 2) connotative meaning which belongs to the whole word combination ‘*red tape*’ ‘*tiger mother.*’ In other words, phraseological units refer to word combinations

carrying both a primary meaning and a secondary meaning or a literal and a figurative meaning, where the figurative meaning is predominant, e.g. *flesh and blood*, *blue blood*, etc.

Moreover, phraseological units are context specific i.e. they are used in specific contexts and are non-variable, or fixed sets: *Small fry*, *dress to kill*, *bread and butter*.

As can be seen, phraseology is not an entirely unexplored topic but scholars are still undecided about what criteria to use that determine that a particular word combination can be classified as a phraseological unit. The phraseology debate has been investigated from a wide range of perspectives.

### **3.8.1 The Phraseological units muddle**

Although, research on collocation has come a long way providing fresh insights and interesting and useful knowledge benefitting both linguists and language learners, several grey areas remain unresolved and as such it is still one of the most challenging language features. The muddle starts with determining why certain set of words enjoy each other's company and bond well together while others clash. What is the boundary between collocation as a free word combination and a fixed set of phraseological units with a figurative shade of meaning? Although Sinclair (1991), one of the leading authorities on word combinations, indicates that there are two levels which can be used to determine and interpret the meaning of a language text, namely, the Open Choice Principle and the Idiom Principle, there is a fine line between the two options as they are neither uniform nor standardised. Thus, the many questions remaining unanswered, leads to the conclusion that the phraseological units debate is still

open, and different labels will continue to be used randomly and interchangeably to refer to them: *set expression, idiom, set phrase, word association, fixed word-groups, multiword expressions (MWEs) and multiword (MW) patterns, readymade phrases, phraseological units* etc. These function as a vehicle to convey all possible nuances of meaning without a chance of reaching a consensus about a universal term for these word combinations. Thus, the boundary between collocations and phraseological units with a hint of figurativeness is not clear-cut, it is a blend or hybrid mix. However, this terminological vagueness is just a reflection of language in a real communicative setting and attaching a particular label is of little importance because a phraseological unit by another name is just a word combination. Phraseological units often overlap because communication takes place in interactive and varied ways. As Steyer (2015: 7) points out: “*Multiword expressions (MWEs) and multiword (MW) patterns are not clear-cut and distinct entities. On the contrary, fragments and overlapping elements with fuzzy borders are typical for real language use. This means that there really are no MWEs as such. In real communicative situations, some components are focused while others fade into the background.*”

In short, phraseological units may consist of a range of figurative hints aimed at achieving special effects. Consider for instance the following examples - *cheap and nasty* or *cheap and cheerful; fish and chips, airing cupboard*. In the case of ‘*airing cupboard*’, it would not make much sense when translated in Arabic because it is difficult to conceptualise or have a mental image of what the phrase relates to.

### 3.8.2 The Phraseological units in the Quran

In general, language is inherently ambiguous. Many people find it difficult to express or understand fully the meanings of the things they say or write. Understanding how the language of the Quran is communicatively used and how its collocations and rhyming patterns are structurally distributed to convey a particular message is a prerequisite to translating. One of the salient attributes of the Quran is that it is a closed corpus in the sense that since its revelation and inception, it has not been subject to modification, expansion or change. Its authority, its authenticity and its transparency is undisputed. لا جدال في النص (the Quranic text is beyond dispute). As clearly emphasised in the Quran, “*This is the Scripture in which there is no doubt, containing guidance for those who are mindful of God, who believe in the unseen...*” (, 2:2-3)

ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُوْنَ الصَّلٰةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ

*ǒalika llkita:bu la rayba fiyhi hudan lilmutaqi:yna llaǒiyina yuw?minu:wna bil ǒayybi  
wa yuqi:ymuwna llšlata wa mima: razaqna:hum yunfiq:wna*

Most of the Quranic text is formulaic language and is self-contained by nature consisting of subtle use of style and diction and is also characterised by frequent repetitions of structures or the same phrases, to the extent that the Quran may be considered, as Arberry (2008:1) put it, as “*neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both.*” Some word combinations such as الحياة *lħaya:t* (Life) are repeated 145 times and الموت *lmawt* (Death) also occurs 145 times.

According to Bannister’s (2014) study, *An Oral-Formulaic Study of the Quran*, the Quran is imbued with phraseological units, and it also displays many of the features of oral composition (Bannister 2014: 230) “*the Quran is steeped in*

*formulaic diction.*” Thus, much of the language of the Quran consists of short discrete units which need to be understood as formula or phraseological units and not as individual words. This unique rhythmic style of the Quran makes it easier to memorise, which has been the main source of its preservation.

As can be seen, the following formulaic units show regularity and consistency of phraseology units combining with the collocate قول *qawl*.

Collocate/ قول	Sura	Translation	Transliteration
يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ	'?br'hym,14:27	God will give firmness to those who believe in the <u>firmly rooted word</u> .	<i>yu?abitu llahu lla?diyina ?amanu:w bilqawli ll?a:biti</i>
فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا	'l'?sr'?, 17:23	Be not harsh with them but <u>speak to them respectfully</u> .	<i>fala taqul lahuma: '?ufin wala tanharhuma: wa qul lahuma: qawlan kariymn</i>
فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَيِّنًا	ṭh, 20:44	<u>Speak to him gently</u> .	<i>Faqu:wla lahu qwlan lyynan</i>
إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا	'lmzml,73:5	We shall send a <u>momentous message</u> down to you	<i>'?ina sanulqiy ?alayka qawlan ?aqiylan</i>
إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلٌ فَضْلٌ	'lṭ'rq,86:13	This is <u>truly a deceive statement</u>	<i>'?inahuw laqawlun fa?slun</i>

This word association which is regularly used under the same metrical, rhythmic way is deeply woven into the fabric of the Quran whose aim is to express a specific communicative purpose. The density and pervasiveness of rhymed prose and phraseological units create, in many verses, a mesmerising effect which is inimitable in any other form of literary work.

In addition, some Quranic phraseological units are transparent and explicit. They have become part of everyday language; some people use them unaware of their Quranic origin. Consider for instance the following examples:

Phraseological collocations	Sura	Translation	Transliteration
وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ	'lbqrt,2:216	You may dislike something although it is good for you	<i>wa ʕasa 'ʔn takrahu:w fayʔan wahuwa xayrun lakum</i>
ضَعْفَ الطَّالِبِ وَالْمَطْلُوبِ	'lhj,22:73	How feeble are the petitioners and how feeble are those they petition!	<i>ḍaʕufa llta:libu wa llmaṭlu:wbu</i>
أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادٍ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ	'ʔbr'hym,14:18	The deeds of those who reject their Lord are like ashes that the wind blows furiously on a stormy day	<i>'ʔaʕma:luhum karama:din aʕtdt bihi llri:yħu fiy yawmin ʕa:ʕifin</i>
إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ	'lhjr't,49:12	Some assumptions are sinful.	<i>'ʔina baʕḍa llʒani 'ʔiḍmun</i>
فَأَمَّا الرِّبْدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً ۗ وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ	'lrʕd,13:17	The froth disappears, but what is of benefit to man stays behind.	<i>fa'ʔama: llzabadu fayadhabu zuʕa:ʔan wa'ʔama: ma: yanfaʕu llna:sa fayamkuḍu fiy ll'ʔarḍi</i>
وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا	'ʔl ʕmr'n,3:103	Hold fast to God's rope all together, do not split into factions.	<i>wa 'ʕtaʕimu:w biħabli llahi zamiyʕan wala tafaraqu:w</i>

Bannister's (2014) study suggests that 'Medinan' Quran verses generally have higher formulaic densities and make more consistent use of formulaic diction. As demonstrated, the above phrases or word combinations possess a figurative meaning which cannot be deduced from the individual components or literal meaning of the constituent parts. It is this blend of divine character and linguistic specificity that gives the Quranic language its central untranslatable essence. Phraseology in the Quran is a linguistic force and thought-provoking word combination to express or describe a specific situation. Collocations or phraseology units serve a specific communicative function. Phraseological units are an integral part of the language of the Quran and must be interpreted in the context in which they occur; they cannot be translated in isolation.

Phraseological collocations	Sura	Translation	Transliteration
يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ	y'fr,40:19	God is aware of the most furtive of glances, and of all that hearts conceal.	yaʕlamu xa:ʔyʔinata ll'ʔaʕyuni wama: tuxfiy llʕudu:wru
أَيُّجِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا	'lhjr't,49:12	Would any of you like to eat the flesh of your dead brother?	'ʔayuħibu 'ʔaħadukum 'ʔan ya'ʔkula laħma 'ʔaxiyhi maytan
وَأَشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا	mrym,19:4	And my hair is ashen grey.	wa'ftaʕala llra'ʔsu fayban

Many parts of the Quran are characterised by the use of:

- a) formulaic and emotive use of language such as phraseology units which have enriched modern standard Arabic which adopted them:

Phraseological collocations	Sura	Translation	Transliteration
ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبِ وَالْمَطْلُوبِ	'lhj,22:73	How feeble are the petitioners and how feeble are those they petition!	ḍaʕufa llṭa:libu wa llmaṭlu:wbu
حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ	'l'ʔr'f,7:40	Even if a thick rope were to pass through the eye of a needle.	ħata yaliḡa llzamalu fiy sami llxiya:ṭi
وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ	'lhj,22:30	Shun false utterances.	waʕtanibu:w qawla llzu:wri
وَلَا تَصَعَّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ	lqm'n,31:18	Do not turn your nose up at people	wala tuʕaʕira xadaka lilna:si

- b) phraseology units express a range of emotions and evoke feelings

Phraseological collocations	Sura	Translation	Transliteration
وَبُرِّ مُعْطَلَةٌ وَقَصْرٍ مَشِيدٍ	'lhj,22:45	How many deserted wells; how many lofty palaces	wa biyʔrin muʕaṭalatin waqaʕsrin maʕi:ydin

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ	'ʔl ʕmr'n,3:185	Every soul will taste death.	<i>kulu nafsin ḏa:ʔyqatu llmawti</i>
صَرَخَى كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلِ خَاوِيَةٍ	'lh'qt,69:7	So that you could have seen its people lying dead like hollow palm-trunks	<i>ʕarʕa ka'ʔanahum 'ʔaʕja:zu naxlin xa:wiyatin</i>

c) The components of the Quran phraseology units are used in creative and sophisticated ways. The meaning they carry or emphasise may well be untranslatable in another language. Consider the following examples which demonstrate the use of figurative meaning:

Phraseological collocations	Sura	Translation	Transliteration
وَإِخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَانِي صَغِيرًا	'l'ʔsr'ʔ,17:24	<u>And lower your wing in humility towards them in kindness</u> and say, 'Lord, have mercy on them, just as they cared for me when I was little.	<i>wa'xfiḏ lahuma: zana:ħa llḏuli mina llraħmati waqul rabiyy 'rħamhuma: kama: rabaya:niyy ʕayiyran</i>
وَأَمَّا تُعْرِضَنَّ عَنْهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَيْسُورًا	'l'ʔsr'ʔ,17:28	But if, while seeking some bounty that you expect from your Lord, you turn them down, then at least <u>speak some word of comfort to them.</u>	<i>wa 'ʔima: tuʕriḏan ʕanhum 'btiya:ʔ raħmatin min rabika tarzu:wha faqul lahum qawlan maysuwrān</i>
وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسِطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَحْسُورًا	'l'ʔsr'ʔ,17:29	Do not be tight-fisted, nor so open-handed that you end up blamed and overwhelmed with regret.	<i>wala tazʕal yadaka maylu:wlatan 'ʔila ʕunuqika wala tabsuṭha kula llbaṣṭi fataqʕuda maluwman maħsuwrān</i>

d) Phraseology units extend the use of language to include figures of speech, imagery, metaphor etc.

Today's reality and world view is constantly changing, and language is used in a creative and innovative way to match and keep up with the new changes. Thus, language goes through a process of recreating, readjusting, adapting and

accommodating the new information so that it fits with today's norms and usage, e.g. *noughties, multi-tasker, solution-provider, web-master, chip and pin*, but the language of the Quran is immutable; it largely stays the same because it is conceptualised and designed to fit all ages and times. The language of the Quran is timeless, and its message is eternal and universal, transcending time and place. It provides guidance on every walk of human life. In terms of translation; conclusions about what the components of the phraseological units mean by themselves should not be drawn in haste. What they are saying needs to be worked out to convey the spirit of the word, not the form of the word

### 3.8.3 Antonymy in the Quran

In addition to phraseological units, collocations and other word combinations, the Quran makes extensive use of antonymy. Antonymy is described as the semantic relation that lexical items with opposite meaning form a close relationship with each other. Antonymy is viewed by many authors as one of the most important semantic relations between words and/or word-senses (Murphy, 2003; Jones et al., 2012; Cruse, 1986). Antonym can be defined as lexical pairs which express opposite or incompatible meanings, e.g. *In sickness and in health, for better or for worse, war and peace*

Antonyms are pairs of words often used in the Quran to achieve rhetorical effects. For instance, the term Sky 'سَمَاء' *sama'* is often associated with its opposite Land 'أَرْض' *'ard* and the term Secretly 'سِر' *sir* is combined with two different antonyms: Openly 'جَهْر' *zahra* and Openly 'عَلَانِيَةً' *'ala:nyatan*. Consider the following sample of Quranic antonyms:

Antonyms Collocates	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ	'lhjr,59 :20	Not equal are the <u>Companions of the Fire</u> and the <u>Companions of the Garden</u> : it is the <u>Companions of the Garden</u> , that will achieve Felicity.	Not equal are the <u>inhabitants of the Fire</u> and the <u>inhabitants of Paradise</u> . The <u>inhabitants of Paradise</u> -- they are the <u>triumphant</u> .	Not equal are <u>those who are destined for the fire</u> and <u>those who are destined for paradise</u> : those who are destined for paradise – it is they, they [alone] who shall triumph [on Judgment Day]!	There is no comparison between <u>the inhabitants of the Fire</u> and the <u>inhabitants of the Paradise</u> . The <u>inhabitants of Paradise</u> are the <u>successful ones</u> .	Not equal are the <u>dwellers of the Fire</u> and the <u>dwellers of the Paradise</u> . It is the <u>dwellers of Paradise</u> that will be <u>successful</u> .
الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالصَّرَّاءِ وَالكَاظِمِينَ الْعَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ	'?l ʕmr'n, 3:134	Those who spend (freely), whether <u>in prosperity</u> , or <u>in adversity</u> ; who <u>restrain anger</u> , and <u>pardon (all) men</u> ; - for God loves those who do good;-	who <u>expend in prosperity and adversity</u> in almsgiving, and <u>restrain their rage</u> , and <u>pardon the offences of their fellowmen</u> ; and God loves the <u>good-doers</u>	who spend [in His way] <u>in time of plenty and in time of hardship</u> , and hold in check their anger, and pardon their fellowmen because God loves the <u>doers of good</u> ;	Who give, both <u>in prosperity and adversity</u> , who <u>restrain their anger</u> and <u>pardon people</u> - God loves those who do good.	Those who spend [in Allah's Cause - deeds of charity, alms, etc.] <u>in prosperity and in adversity</u> , who <u>repress anger</u> , and who <u>pardon men</u> ; verily, Allah loves <u>Al-Muhsinun</u> (the good-doers).
الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ	'lbqrt, 2:274	Those who (in charity) spend of their goods by night and by day, <u>in secret and in public</u> , have their reward with their Lord: on them shall	Those who <u>expend their wealth</u> night and day, <u>secretly and in public</u> , their wage awaits them with	Those who spend their possessions [for the sake of God] by night and by day, <u>secretly and openly</u> , shall have their reward with their <u>Sustainer</u> ; and	Those who give, out of their own possessions, by night and by day, <u>in private and in public</u> , will have their reward with their	Those who spend their wealth (in Allah's Cause) by night and day, <u>in secret and in public</u> , they shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no

		be no fear, nor shall they grieve.	their Lord, and no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow.	no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve.	Lord: no fear for them, nor will they grieve.	fear, nor shall they grieve.
هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ	'lhdyd, 57:3	He is the <u>First and the Last</u> , the Evident and the Immanent: and He has full knowledge of all things.	He is the <u>First and the Last</u> , the Outward and the Inward; He has knowledge of everything.	He is the <u>First and the Last</u> , and the Outward as well as the Inward: and He has full knowledge of everything.	He is the <u>First and the Last</u> ; the Outer and the Inner. He has knowledge of all things.	He is the <u>First (nothing is before Him) and the Last (nothing is after Him)</u> , the Most High (nothing is above Him) and the Most Near (nothing is nearer than Him). And He is the All-Knower of everything.
هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ	'lhdyd, 57:3	He is the First and the Last, the <u>Evident and the Immanent</u> : and He has full knowledge of all things.	He is the First and the Last, the <u>Outward and the Inward</u> ; He has knowledge of everything.	He is the First and the Last, and the <u>Outward as well as the Inward</u> : and He has full knowledge of everything.	He is the First and the Last; <u>the Outer and the Inner</u> . He has knowledge of all things.	He is the First (nothing is before Him) and the Last (nothing is after Him), the <u>Most High (nothing is above Him) and the Most Near (nothing is nearer than Him)</u> . And He is the All-Knower of everything.
رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ	qryf,10 6:2	Their covenants (covering) journeys by <u>winter and summer</u>	Their composing for the <u>winter and summer</u> caravan!	Secure in their <u>winter and summer</u> journeys.	Secure in their <u>winter and summer</u> journeys	We cause) the (Quraish) caravans to set forth safe <u>in winter (to the south), and in summer (to the north without any fear)</u>

<p>رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا</p>	<p>'lmzml ,73:9</p>	<p>(He is) Lord of <u>the East and the West</u>: there is no god but He: take Him therefore for (thy) Disposer of Affairs.</p>	<p>Lord of <u>the East and the West</u>; there is no god but He; so take Him for a Guardian.</p>	<p>The Sustainer of <u>the east and the west</u> [is He]: there is no deity save Him: hence, ascribe to Him alone the power to determine thy fate.</p>	<p>He is Lord of the east and west, there is no god but Him, so take Him as your Protector.</p>	<p>(He Alone is) the Lord of <u>the east and the west</u>, <i>La ilaha illa Huwa</i> (none has the right to be worshipped but He). So take Him Alone as <i>Wakil</i> (Disposer of your affairs).</p>
<p>وما يستوي الأعمى والبصير</p>	<p>f'tr,35: 19</p>	<p><u>The blind and the seeing</u> are not alike.</p>	<p>Not equal are <u>the blind and the seeing</u> man.</p>	<p>For [thus it is:] <u>the blind and the seeing</u> are not equal.</p>	<p><u>The blind and the seeing</u> are not alike</p>	<p>Not alike are <u>the blind</u> (disbelievers in Islamic Monotheism) and the <u>seeing</u> (believers in Islamic Monotheism).</p>
<p>وَلَا الظُّلُمَاتُ وَلَا النُّورُ</p>	<p>f'tr,35: 20</p>	<p>Nor are <u>the depths of Darkness and the Light</u>;</p>	<p><u>the shadows and the light</u>,</p>	<p>nor are <u>the depths of darkness and the light</u>.</p>	<p>Nor are <u>darkness and light</u></p>	<p>Nor are (alike) <u>the darkness</u> (disbelief) and <u>the light</u> (Belief in Islamic Monotheism).</p>
<p>وَلَا الظُّلُّ وَلَا الْحَرُورُ</p>	<p>f'tr,35: 21</p>	<p>Nor are <u>the (chilly) shade and the (genial) heat of the sun</u>:</p>	<p><u>the shade and the torrid heat</u>;</p>	<p>nor <u>the [cooling] shade and the scorching heat</u>:</p>	<p><u>Shade and heat</u> are not alike</p>	<p>Nor are (alike) <u>the shade and the sun's heat</u>.</p>
<p>وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ</p>	<p>f'tr,35: 22</p>	<p>Nor are alike <u>those that are living and those that are dead</u>.</p>	<p>not equal are <u>the living and the dead</u>.</p>	<p>and neither are equal <u>the living and the dead</u> [of heart].</p>	<p>Nor are <u>the living and the dead</u>.</p>	<p>Nor are (alike) <u>the living</u> (believers) and <u>the dead</u> (disbelievers).</p>
<p>قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ</p>	<p>'lm'y? dt,5:1 00</p>	<p>Say: "Not equal are <u>things that are bad and things that are good</u></p>	<p>Say: <u>The corrupt and the good</u> are not equal.</p>	<p>Say: There is no comparison between <u>the bad things and the good things</u></p>	<p>Say [prophet], <u>Bad cannot be likened to good</u></p>	<p>Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "Not equal are <u>Al-Khabith</u> (all that is evil and bad as regards</p>

						things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.) and <i>At-Taiyib</i> (all that is good as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods, etc.),
يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌُ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌُ	'ا ʕmr'n, 3:106	On the Day when some faces will be (lit up with) white, and some faces will be (in the gloom of) black	the day when some faces are blackened, and some faces whitened.	on the Day [of Judgment] when some faces will shine [with happiness] and some faces will be dark [with grief]	On the Day when some faces brighten and others darken.	On the Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) when some faces will become white and some faces will become black
وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَّ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَجَحْرًا مَخْجُورًا	'lfrq'n, 25:53	It is He Who has let free the two bodies of flowing water: <u>One palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter</u>	And it is He who let forth the two seas, this one <u>Sweet, grateful to taste, and this salt, bitter to the tongue</u>	AND HE it is who has given freedom of movement to the two great bodies of water – <u>the one sweet and thirst-allaying, and the other salty and bitter</u>	It is He who released the two bodies of flowing water, <u>one sweet and fresh and the other salty and bitter.</u>	And it is He Who has let free the two seas (kinds of water), <u>one palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter</u>
وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۗ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ	fʕlt,41: 34	Nor can <u>goodness and Evil</u> be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better	Not equal are the <u>good deed and the evil deed.</u> Repel with that which is fairer and behold	But [since] <u>good and evil</u> cannot be equal, repel thou [evil] with something that is better	<u>Good and evil</u> cannot be equal. [prophet], repel evil with what is better	The <u>good deed and the evil deed</u> cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better
وَسَبِّحْهُ بِكُرَّةٍ وَأَصِيلًا	'lʔhz'b ,33:42	And glorify Him <u>morning and evening.</u>	and give Him glory at the <u>dawn and in the evening.</u>	and extol His <u>limitless glory from morn to evening.</u>	And glorify Him <u>morning and evening</u>	And glorify His Praises <u>morning and afternoon</u> [the early morning ( <i>Fajr</i> ) and ' <i>Asr</i> prayers].

<p>وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ</p>	<p>'ا ʕmr'n, 3:104</p>	<p>Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, <u>enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong</u></p>	<p>Let there be one nation of you, <u>calling to good, and bidding to honour, and forbidding dishonour;</u> those are the prosperers.</p>	<p>and that there might grow out of you a community [of people] who invite unto all that is good, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong</p>	<p>Be a community that calls for what is good, <u>urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong:</u> those who do this are the successful ones.</p>	<p>Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good <u>enjoining Al-Ma'ruf</u> (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) <u>and forbidding Al-Munkar</u> (polytheism and disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful.</p>
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As the above table shows there is a plethora of Quran antonyms, this concurrent use of lexical combinations with opposite meaning can be rather complex to grasp and render efficiently in English, as highlighted in the above five translations. This view is supported by Al-Kharabsheh and Al-Jdayeh (2017:1) who point out that: *'Quranic antonymy represents a case of semantic non-identity, where two distinct levels of inverse semantic duplicity exist simultaneously: an overt one at the basic level, and a covert one at the metaphorical level'*.

The above translations of Quranic antonyms are inevitably just approximations. The incompatible information contained in these antonym pairs in the Quran is more extensive than a translation can convey, as will be explained in depth in the assessment of the five translations.

### 3.8.4 Translating Quranic Phraseological units

The translator of the Quran has both the duty and the responsibility to convey the true message because if he/she misreads, misunderstands or misinterprets a word or a message, he/she leads many others astray or may lead to misunderstanding. Translators need to be aware of the difference between taking Quranic phraseology units literally and taking them figuratively. The process of interpreting the meaning using different sources in order to unravel the expressive and meaningful nature of the intended message, is a prerequisite. Translating is exchanging of information and interacting between the SL and TL texts. The aim is to explain and make the meaning accessible. Quranic phraseological units are characterised by

- a) the existence of extended meaning
- b) they convey what the message means as opposed to what the words mean
- c) understanding is whole phrasal unit-oriented information processing, not a word matching between language items.
- d) phrasal units need to be understood in their actual context of occurrence.

Quranic collocations, phraseology units are an amalgam of complex, covert, figurative, associative and factual language which can be challenging to understand, let alone translate. This study holds the view that the task of translating the Quran is too overwhelming and important to be undertaken by one individual; a collective and team effort and resources can help in achieving a quality translation with confidence. Two views regarding the current translations of the Quran emerged from assessing the quality of translating collocations and phraseology units: a) there is an assumption translating the scripture of such

magnitude can be achieved successfully by one individual. b) the other view that translating the Quran is much more complex. There is no master plan and there are no fast-track solutions to address the challenges except through joining forces to form a task force involving a range of experts. Translating the Quran involves a unique encounter with abstract and complex language features conveying specific communicative purpose. Translating the Quran is not so much about producing sameness between SL and TL, but it is about conveying the gist of what was said in SL as efficiently and as closely as possible.

In short, the Quranic text has a high density of vocabulary, morphology and syntactic structures. The Quran is said to have unique features in terms of eloquence and style, which distinguish it from any other literary Arabic text. Some word combinations of the Quran aim to create several contextual meanings within the same verse.

In conclusion, the five translations of the Quran are undoubtedly useful but there is plenty of room for improvement for each one of them. Slippery language, distorted meaning and incoherence in parts seem to be evident in most of the translations of the Quran. The slipperiness of language is everywhere, as T.S. Eliot summed up: *“words, strain, crack and sometimes break, slip, slide, perish, decay with imprecision, will not stay still.”*

### **3.9 Concluding remarks**

Research on collocations as a recurring word combination has a broad scope with the dual purposes of contributing to the theoretical knowledge base on collocation and to make collocation learnable and teachable to second language learners. Research on collocations is polarised between those who examined

them from a statistical perspective, as frequency-based lexical units, while others viewed them from a conventional perspective as usage-based lexically restricted units (Granger and Paquot, 2008).

Although collocation in its generic sense is understood to mean a close relationship that words form and which then frequently appear together, it is often used as an umbrella term to refer to a wide variety of labels such as: 'phraseological units, language chunks, extended lexical units, fixed expressions, formulaic sequences, predictable pattern, etc. Many definitions of phraseological units tend to overlap. Wray (2000: 465) highlighted some 50 terms that have been used to refer to phraseological units. Many studies on collocations and phraseological units are written in a language that is either ambiguous or highly jargonistic. There is a need to demystify and standardise the research and move it beyond what is already known and established as the base.

The assessed sample of Quranic collocations across five translations have their strengths but they also have their weaknesses and limitations. The English translations of the Quran and collocations in particular, tend to be influenced by 'word-for-word' translation. In the main, the translators were not exploratory enough and stayed close to the source language, rendering the word rather than the meaning of Arabic into English, translating the message and providing the gist of what was said in Arabic, seeking to preserve the sense as much as possible. A "thought for thought" translation would be the best choice to accurately convey what the original collocation says. Some translators have underestimated the complexity of translating Quranic collocation. Thus, any future translation of the Quran should be a collective effort not an individual

endeavour. The translator should translate the embedded message of the collocation, not the form of the word combination, the matter not the manner. To translate the meaning not the word should be the main aim of the translator.

## Chapter Four

### An Overview of Translation Dynamics

#### 4.0 Introduction

Since this study deals with translation, this chapter reviews the literature on translation studies in line with the objectives of this research. It will compare and contrast the views of translation theories and techniques that are relevant to the topic of the study. This study aims to examine the difficulties and challenges of translating Quranic collocations from Arabic into English. It is mainly concerned with assessing the degree of accuracy and fidelity in conveying the meaning of Quranic collocation focusing on five widely used translations from Arabic into English. It also identifies and discusses the translating methods used to transfer the meaning of collocations e.g. literal translation or free translation, etc.

Translation plays a vital role in the world allowing communication between people with different languages to take place. Throughout history, speakers of different languages communicated with the help of translators/ interpreters. Translation is the oldest profession in the world, or as Valery Larbaud put it - *Le plus vieux métier du monde n'est pas ce qu'on pense, c'est celui de traducteur (The oldest profession in the world is not the one you think; it is that of the translator)*. Thus, interpreters and translators make an essential contribution to communication in government, business, human services and international relations.

As a result, translators have always been called upon to break down language barriers and facilitate communication. Without translators, communication between monolinguals and speakers of foreign tongues would become almost

impossible. In today's complex world, people depend on translation more than ever due to globalisation and high levels of migration and flux of refugees, especially within Europe. Communication among these speakers of different languages is made possible thanks to translation. Hatim and Munday (2004) point out that translation has a huge effect on everyday life that ranges from the translation of a key international treaty to a multilingual poster that welcomes customers to a restaurant. In addition, the ever-increasing number of organisations entering the international arena and the growing human interaction of different cultural backgrounds through social media has made translation one of the central aspects of globalisation (Cronin, 2003).

#### **4.1 Understanding and defining of translation**

Translation is an overarching term, which means different things to different people. The diversity and extensive number of definitions that exist in the literature reflect the nature of the topic of translation, which gives an impression that it is fragmented and lacks a universal interpretation.

There is a huge number of definitions of translation, which is understandable as there are vast differences in the materials to be translated while the needs of the target language readers/ receptors are also different and diverse. The meaning of translation depends on who you ask to define it, each seeming to have his or her own view of what it means to translate. However, there are some common and overlapping meanings of translation. For instance, to translate may mean to transfer, to convey, to convert, to interpret, to copy, to imitate, to domesticate, to foreignise, to replace, to import, to export, to transform, to render, to change etc.

Etymologically, 'translation' means 'carrying across' or 'bringing across'. In modern Arabic *tarjama and turjuman* refer to 'transferring across of ideas', in other words, to make one person's thoughts, experience and culture known to another. The term translation in English originated around 1340, and is said to stem either from Old French translation or more directly from the Latin translation ('transporting'), which is derived from the verb 'transfer' ('to carry over'). Translation is defined as a process of transferring a message from one language to an equivalent message in another language. Various useful definitions of translation have been put forward. However, it would be beyond the scope of this study to review all the existing translation definitions; instead, it will refer to those, which are widely cited in translation studies research.

Jakobson (1959/2000: 114) in his paper 'On linguistic aspects of translation', categorises translation into three types:

- (1) **intralingual** translation, or 'rewording': an interpretation of verbal signs of the same language';
- (2) **interlingual** translation, or 'translation proper': 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language'; and
- (3) **intersemiotic** translation, or 'transmutation': 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems'.

Intralingual translation occurs in one language i.e. to rephrase an expression in order to explain something that has been either said or written. Intersemiotic translation occurs when a written text is translated into a piece of music or a painting. This study is concerned with the second type in which the act of translating takes place between two languages.

For Catford (1965), translation is a substitution of 'textual material' in a certain language with equivalent 'textual material' in another language. Newmark (1988) holds the view that translation is to convey the meaning of a text into another language in the way that conforms to the author's intention. Nida (1969) states that translation is 'reproducing' in the target language the most natural equivalent of the source language message, both in term of meaning and style. Clearly noted from these definitions is that translation is a process through which meaning is transferred from a language, to its meaning counterpart, into another language. The meaning, however, is highly context-dependent. In this respect, Newmark (1988: 7) says, "*translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language.*" It is clear that these definitions are more or less the same. For example, the term 'equivalent' is used by Catford and Nida; 'textual material or text' is adopted by Catford while Newmark prefers the phrase 'written message' or 'text' and Nida favours the term 'SL message'; 'replacement' is used by Catford and Newmark while Nida uses the term 'reproducing'.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above range of definitions is that they all tend to overlap in terms of meaning. Each one seems to take the same idea and relabel it as if it is new. The definitions are evidently based on equivalence between the source text and the target text. However, there is no general agreement on the nature of translation equivalence. This study argues that meaning comes from different sources. The translator must exploit and make use of any potential knowledge, be it contextual or general, to render the information from source language into target language as accurately and as fluently as possible.

Translation is a multifaceted term and as such, it is difficult to be covered by a single definition. For the purpose of this study, Translation is a complex network, which consists of a process of conveying the same information expressed in the original language (SL) to the target language (TL). It is also a bilingual communicative activity and an intercultural process, bridge building between cultures.

## **4.2 The notion of text typology**

### **4.2.1 Text types**

It is widely accepted that translating is not only a process of substituting words from the SLT to the TLT, but it is a process of rendering meaning from SL to TL. In translating a text, conveying the SL message into the TL requires considering a number of essential aspects such as the setting (the region), the author (social class of the writer), and the language that the author uses for certain purposes of communication (text type). This section presents different text types and clarifies their importance for translators to produce a successful translation. Knowing the type of text under translation would help the translator to identify the type of the vocabulary determined because of the subject matter, in addition to, the language and procedures she or he needs to convey the desired meaning. A text as a means of communication carrying a certain message usually includes a subject matter and some implicit culturally-bound references associated with the language and the culture of the SLT. The text is generally understood as a whole of organised linguistic elements that can form a communicative function. According to Aziz and Lataiwish (2000), it is divided into informative and creative. Informative texts focus on content and their main function is descriptive. They aim at transferring information to the reader. Scientific, technological, commercial,

geographical, historical texts are considered informative. Creative texts aim at achieving artistic and aesthetic effect more than conveying information. They emphasise form rather than content, although the content may also be important. This dichotomy, however, is not of that clarity with the Quranic text because the Quranic text has characteristics that both the message and the words expressing the message are sacred; therefore, content and form are of equal importance.

Taking into consideration the type of the text and the purpose for which it is created would be useful to identify the translation procedure in the target text. Nord (2001: 38) says, *“Text-type classifications sharpen the translator’s awareness of linguistic markers of communicative function and functional translation units.”* However, the notion of a text type remains complex as most people relate text type with specific content: for example, film review, police report, and recipe. Furthermore, the same content may allow a variety of text types (Sager, 1997).

#### **4.2.2 Text typologies**

The text typology, suggested by Reiss (1989), was originally intended as a set of guidelines for practising translators. It was introduced to establish a general correlation between text type and translation method. It proposes that the main function of the source text needs to be preserved in the translation. For example, in the case of informative texts, the translator’s main job is to achieve semantic equivalence and then concentrate on connotative meanings and aesthetic values (Hatim and Munday, 2004). In expressive texts, the translator should preserve aesthetic effects in addition to semantic content, whereas in operative texts, the translator needs to render the extra-linguistic effect; for instance, persuasiveness, which is achieved at the expense of both form and content.

Thus, translation is called successful when: it provides direct and full access to the content of the source language informative texts; when it transmits a direct impression of the artistic form of expressive texts; when it produces, a text from which the desired response of operative texts is achieved (Reiss 1989). However, Reiss points out that a translator needs to bear in mind that there are also compound types in which the three communicative functions mentioned (transmission of information, creatively expressed content and impulses to action) are all present, e.g. a didactic poem or satirical novel. In such cases, the translator's task is to identify the predominant function and choose the translation strategy accordingly. Metaphors in predominantly expressive texts should be rendered metaphorically, whereas in predominantly informative texts they may be modified or even omitted altogether (Reiss, 1971). As all texts are a sort of hybrid, this predominance of a certain rhetorical purpose in a specific text plays a crucial role in assessing the text type 'identity' (Hatim and Munday, 2004).

According to Hatim and Munday (2004), text typology is of a great importance for a translator; however, it has not received rapt attention in the translation studies literature. This is probably because: (1) the notion of text type is wide-ranging to the extent that it includes a great deal of text-form variants. The 'instruction' text is varied according to its genres, for example, legal acts, technical instructions, sermons and political speech etc. (2) the substantial difficulty related to text typologies is the issue of 'hybridisation' in which a certain text may include several different types e.g. an instruction manual may include conceptual exposition, description and instruction (Hatim and Munday, 2004).

Although the topic of text typology is a subject of debate among translation scholars, whether classification of texts would be practically useful for translators or not, it remains essential for the translator to know the major text types.

One advantage of this text-typology is that it assists to list each text type under a function. The functional typology; however, overlooks how these functions are rhetorically being represented in the text. It seems that applying one translation approach to a whole text would be potentially risky. It appears that most texts have a dominant text type; however, they will probably have different text types, which are present to a certain degree in the same text. Such overlap can be commonly found in informative and operative texts where informative content contains persuasive components in it; for instance, a sermon in which both religious information (content-focused) is delivered alongside the attempt to convince the audience of a particular way of behaving is an example of that (Munday, 2001). Reiss does not introduce a translation approach for each text type, but suggests a translation method for each text type. For informative texts, she proposes that translation should be in '*Plain prose*' with no redundancy and with the use of explication if required. With regard to expressive texts, Reiss proposes, '*identifying method*', where the translator adopts the standpoint of the ST author. For operative texts, she suggests that "*adaptive, equivalent effect*", where the translator should produce the desired response in the TT receiver (2000 cited in Munday, 2001, 75).

In the light of these considerations, the conclusion that can be drawn is that the translator, as a text analyst, should identify the type and the format of the text he aims to translate. As regards the Quran, it is a religious text that occupies a

special position in terms of text-type. The translator of the Quranic text should take into account the degree of translatability i.e. whether the equivalent expressions are accurate and enjoy the same stylistic value in their respective contexts and cultures. The main objective is to convey the actual meaning of the word not the form of the word.

### **4.3 The debate over the translating approach**

Translation has always been an indispensable tool of communicating between any languages. However, the division between the free and literal approach to translation continues to be a point of debate among both academics and practitioners. There has never been a consensus with regard to which is the best approach to perform translation. There are as many views as there are authors each putting across their argument to suit their purpose. Two schools of thought dominate the main debate. The first one believes that to translate, one needs to stick closely to the SL text to show loyalty and faithfulness in terms of form and content. The other one refutes the literal and close approach suggesting that this is unreliable and likely to produce meaningless translation; the only sensible approach to translate is to express the thoughts of the SL into TL (Baker, 1992).

At loggerheads are those who are in support of free translation and those who are in favour of literal translation, each putting forward a defence. Translating freely often leads to obscuring the meaning of the target message, owing to the translator's unfaithfulness to the source text. They claim that translation will be partly based upon the translator's understanding and interpretation. In contrast, translating literally is viewed as an insufficient and ineffective method. They argue that any translation, which does not succeed in conveying the meaning of the

source text in an intelligible and understandable form to the target language receptors, will fail to achieve its purpose.

Scholars depict these two methods in different terms; however, the concept remains roughly the same. For example, word-for-word translation vs. sense-for-sense translation, source-oriented translation vs. target-oriented translation (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995), formal equivalence vs. dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964), semantic translation vs. communicative translation (Newmark, 1998), overt translation vs. covert translation (House, 1997), foreignisation vs. domestication (Venuti, 2000), etc.

It seems that the translation scholars who are in favour of literal translation are mostly Bible translators or those who have been influenced by this traditional model. Forrest (2003) stands out as a striking example; however, he disagrees with Bible translators in terms of the matter of grammar and readability. Forrest (2003) believes that the objective of any good translation is to produce the most literal translation possible in the most readable way. In other words, the translator must follow the exact words of the original text. It should be said that the bias towards formal equivalence to the original, which is of great importance for them, stems from their concern about the sacred texts. Forrest (2003, 01), quoting R.C. Sproul, says, *“the only way to believe anything in the scripture is to believe it literally because the word literal means as it is written.”* Forrest (2003) argues that, as dynamic translation requires discovering the meaning of the passage before translating, it is therefore, partly based upon the translator's understanding and interpretation which is a highly questionable way of translating the scriptures.

The serious disadvantage of the dynamic approach, according to Forrest (2003), lies in giving the meaning of the text rather than a translation of what is literally said. In his argument, Forrest (2003) points out that the disagreement among many translations of the Bible on the market today is attributed to the dynamic approach where the translator goes beyond his role and becomes an interpreter of the scriptures. With regard to dynamic translation, Forrest (2003) indicates that it can be helpful, as a commentary on the text, but the translator should go to the literal translation first. Vinay and Darbelnet (cited in Venuti, 2000: 130), define literal translation as *“the direct transfer of a SL text into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate TL text in which the translators’ task is limited to observing the adherence to the linguistic servitudes of the TL.”* The translator, therefore, must work within limits as s/he is not free to adapt the language to his/her understanding. Newmark (1991) believes that when it comes to a full translation of a worthwhile and important text, the primary aim is to achieve accuracy. He views accuracy as a compromise between content and form. Newmark (1991: 124) states that:

*“If one looks for a yardstick, a general basis to judge a translation, there is nothing concrete but literal translation. When you ask how close, how faithful, how true a version is in relation to the original, you can have nothing else in mind except the spirit of the original.”*

Newmark (1991) argues that literalism, in most cases, retains the facts and the main syntax as well as the quality words that state the feeling of the text. Along similar lines, he argues that (1991: 124) *“If the genius or the particular of the foreign language is to be preserved, cleanly and straight, only two procedures can preserve it, transference and literal translation.”* According to Newmark

(1991), literal translation is a basic procedure at a word level; however, it is difficult to adopt above word level unless it is the most appropriate alternative to transfer the SL meaning. This study views literal translation as an effective and workable tool if it appropriately conveys the meaning of the source text.

Newmark (1991) adds another essential point that the translator should be faithful to the author out of loyalty to the readership who wants to know exactly what the author wrote. Nonetheless, he proposes a model of translation in which he grades between the two extremes: Semantic versus Communicative translation. Semantic translation takes into account the aesthetic value of the SL text, compromising on meaning where necessary. It is also more flexible and creative than the faithful translation. In this type of translation, a cultural word is unlikely to be translated by an equivalent cultural word. Communicative translation attempts *“to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership”* (Newmark, 1998: 47). In other words, it exerts nearly the same effect on its readers as that on the readers of the source text. Communicative translation is readership-oriented. It addresses itself completely to the target reader who would anticipate a generous transfer of the SL elements into their culture.

Nabokov (1992 cited in Baker, 1998: 125) states that the person who wishes to translate a ‘literary masterpiece’ in one language into another has only one task ahead. It is to produce *“with absolute exactitude the whole text, and nothing but*

*the text, the term “literal translation” is tautological since anything but that is not truly a translation but an imitation, an adaptation or a parody”.*

Arnold (1862) was a prominent supporter of the literal approach in translation. Arnold took a firm stand upon close adherence to the form of any original. Arnold strongly rejected the idea that any translation should have essentially the same effect upon the average reader as it had for the original receptor. Arnold (1962) was not translating for ordinary people but for a particular audience who knew the original. He suggests that a translation should approximately reproduce the effect of the original for *‘the competent scholar’*. Arnold (1861 cited in Nida 1964) had been severely criticised by Magnus (1931) for having rules, which only conveyed the text and slighted the spirit of the original work.

It appears that there is an inconsistency with this theoretical knowledge, which is proving hard to put into practice. The literal translation approach can fail to capture connotative or implied meanings of the original. According to Nida (1964), the English Revised Version of the Bible (1881, 1885) is an example of the undesirable effect of literal translation. It is still popular among students who study Greek and Hebrew; however, it has never been popular with the English-speaking Christian community, for it does not communicate effectively due to its 16<sup>th</sup> century forms and the literal, awkward syntax (Nida, 1964). Similarly, fifteen years later, a small group of translators published a so-called *Concordant Version in English*, in which they attempted to translate the same Greek or Hebrew term by the same English word. Moreover, they tried to match grammatical forms and even employ the same word order whenever possible. Trying to be literal in

conveying the form of the message caused distortion of the message itself and the results were lamentable (Nida 1964).

According to Nida (1964), anyone who observes the literal translations of the Bible or any other work translated literally would come to the conclusion that literal translation is pointless with regard to clearly and accurately communicating the meaning of God's inspired and authoritative Word. Among those who rejected the literal translation approach was Dryden (1680 cited in Lefevere, 1992). Dryden was among the small number of translation scholars who dissented against the literal translation method. Dryden classified translation into three types. (1) Metaphrase: word-for-word or literal translation. (2) Paraphrase: translation with latitude where the author is preserved in view by the translator, but his words are not strictly followed, and (3) Imitation: the translator assumes liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as deemed appropriate.

Dryden (1680) argues that it is impossible for the translator to communicate the form and the content of the original successfully and effectively at the same time. He states that the translator would face too many difficulties with regard to the thoughts of the authors, and their words, and to find the counterpart to each in another language. Along these lines, Dryden (1680 cited in Lefevere, 1992:103) describes it as "*much like dancing on ropes with fettered legs.*" He rounds off the argument by saying that "*imitation and verbal version are, in my opinion, the two extremes which ought to be avoided*". Pope (1715) supports Dryden's view, claiming that literal translation can never be as elegant as the original. He argues, "*the fire of the poem is what the translator should principally regard, as it is most*

*likely to expire in his managing*" (cited in Nida, 1964:18). Campbell (1789) suggests three steps for translating the Bible. (1) the translator must provide a representation of the original. (2) the translator's translated version must be as much as possible consistent with the original which includes the author's spirit and manner. (3) the translator must be sure that the translated version meets the quality of the original so as to be natural and easy.

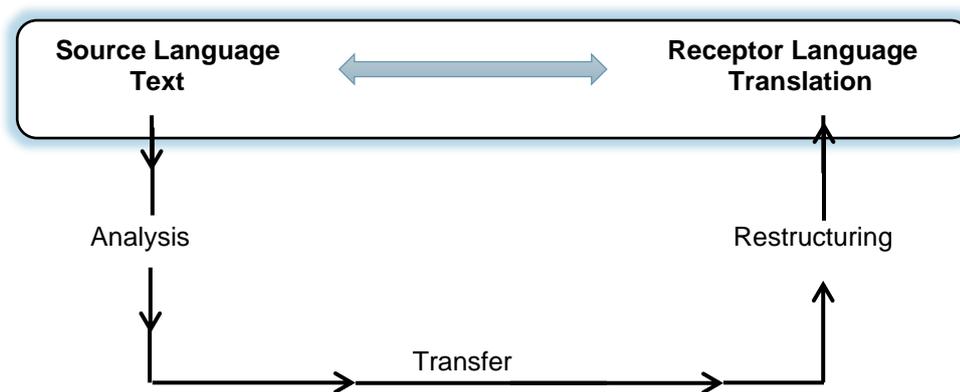
Nida and Taber (1969) argue that this type of translation (literal translation) is either unnatural or misleading. They (1969: 101) assert, "*Contextual consistency is more important than verbal consistency, and that in order to preserve the content it is necessary to make certain changes in form*".

Nida and Taber (1969), propose some new concepts as requirements for a satisfactory translation. They have brought new concepts to the translation field such as dynamic equivalence, equivalent effect and the three-step process of translating that has an impact on shifting the traditional view that put too many demands on the reader to decode the translated text. Nida and Taber (1969:12), define the process of translation as: "*Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style*".

Nida and Taber (1969) provide the concept of naturalness and suggest three basic stages that necessarily take place in the translation process: *analysis, transference and restructuring*. According to Nida and Taber (1969), the translator must adhere to these steps to gain the natural response of the target

reader. First, the translator analyses the SL message in its simplest and structurally clearest form. Secondly, s/he transfers it at this level. Thirdly, s/he restructures it into the receptor language to the most appropriate level of the intended audience. The following diagram represents this process:

**Figure 3.1: Nida and Taber's (1969) translation process:**



**Source: Nida and Taber (1969)**

Nida (1964) distinguishes between two types of equivalence: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence:

1. Formal equivalence (literal translation)

It is traditionally described as 'faithful translation'. It is an attempt to achieve equivalence at both content and form levels. In other words, it is the closest possible match of form and content. This type of translation equivalence is concerned with translation that provides a faithful picture of the figurative language used in the source text. Formal equivalence consists of a TL item that is closely correspondent to the SL word or phrase. Formal correspondence is not possible in many cases. According to Nida and Taber (1969), formal equivalence is desirable when the translator aims at achieving it, especially in creative writings where the emphasis is rather on aesthetic effect than on

achieving dynamic equivalence. Despite this, Nida and Taber (1969: 201), admit that *“formal equivalence causes a distortion in the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language”*, which ultimately distorts the original message and causes the receptor to misunderstand.

## 2. Dynamic equivalence (non-literal translation)

The dynamic equivalence principle is often viewed as opposite to formal equivalence. The basis of dynamic equivalence in translation is assumed to be ‘functional equivalence’. The translator, who adopts dynamic equivalence in his/her translation, seeks to translate the meaning of the original text in such a way that produces the same effect on the target text reader as the one obtained by the source text reader. Nida and Taber (1969: 24) state, *“Dynamic equivalence can be defined in terms of the degree to which receptors of the message in the receptor language responded to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language”*. The translator’s task is more difficult than the author’s because the translator is a captive to the author’s ideas. The translator is obliged to convey the ideas of the SLT into the TLT with great care given to the linguistic and cultural aspects of the TL.

It appears that sticking to one approach in translating a text may cause weaknesses in translation. Based on the evidence currently available, this research will make use of each type of translation on condition that it appropriately conveys the meaning of the original.

Thus, translation as a process is not only a matter of transferring linguistic elements of two texts in two languages; it is also a matter of treating two texts in

terms of the cultural differences because the bond between language and culture is inseparable. Menacere (2012) points out that language is best to be described as a part of culture where the translator must focus not only on the linguistic features of the two languages, but also on the features of the two cultures as well.

The relationship between the intention of the source text author and the response of the first language receptor is basic, as without it, the communication process would fail. The source text writer always bears in mind his/her receptors. The message, therefore, is made and prepared in a way that is appropriate to obtain the highest degree of understanding. By employing dynamic equivalence, the translator can compare the equivalent effect rather than compare the degree of agreement between the original text and the target text.

Nida and Taber (1969: 99) argue that the misconception of using the literal translation approach is because *“some translators know so much about the subject that they unconsciously assume the readers will also know what they do, with the result that they frequently translate over the heads of their audience”*. Another exponent of the free translation approach is Baker (1992). Baker (1992:11) argues, *“there is no one-to-one correspondence between orthographic words”*. She states that literal translation is impossible in most cases, because the choice of a suitable equivalence in a given text depends on a wide variety of factors. Some of these factors may be strictly linguistic while others may be extra-linguistic. Thus, it is not wise to pick up words from the dictionary and put them denotatively in the target text. Baker (1992: 21) states,

*“the source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question maybe abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food”*. In the same vein, Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002: 97) argue against the literal translation method, pointing out *that “in translation, lexical loss is very common... It arises from the fact that exact synonymy between ST words and TT words is relatively rare”*.

With regard to the concept of loss and gain. Nida (1969) suggests that the translator should have good knowledge of the SL and TL cultures. However, it is very difficult to find lexical equivalents between SL culture and TL culture since they are different from one another in terms of cultural features. In this respect, Ghali (2008: ix) says,

*“some of the main difficulties in a translation of the meanings of the Quran into English are the differences between the two languages, most of which is the fact that Arabic has a wealth of basic vocabulary and a rich morphological and syntactic structure.”*

The translator, therefore, needs to add or omit some information to provide natural translation for his/her audience. Nida (1969: 105) says, *“when transferring the message from one language to another, it is the content which must be preserved at any cost”*. According to Nida (1969), the ultimate purpose of translation is to make the TLT reader feels that the text in hand is not like translated text. Hence, in translation practice, the principle of loss and gain is inevitable. On these grounds, Nida and Taber (1969) argue that literal translation is mostly a distortion of the original message. They lay great stress on the

translator to strive for equivalence rather than identity, for it is the content of the message that is of great significance.

By taking a middle-ground position, Catford (1965) does not reject literal translation completely. Catford (1965) points out that formal equivalence (literal translation) can be achieved if both the SL and TL operate with the same rank of grammatical units. Catford divided grammatical units into five ranks: *sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme*. Regarding the topic of this research, the difficulty lying behind translating Quranic collocations is that these collocations are used in an unconventional text in which meanings cannot be narrowed to one interpretation because of the context that allows various interpretations. The translator, therefore, must consider the context as a key element alongside the linguistic and cultural aspects to achieve the closest possible equivalence in the TL.

On the basis of the critical review of the two extreme approaches discussed above, this study is in favour of neither the literal translation method nor free translation approach, but it accepts a flexible approach which is to translate as literally as possible and as free as necessary.

#### **4.4 Translation Quality Assessment (TQA)**

Translation quality assessment is a major area of interest in the field of translation. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest from professional translators and their clients, translation researchers, and translation trainees. The aim is to develop objective-based model of evaluation rather than rely on the personal expertise and intuition becomes a basic requirement. The consensus among translation scholars for a translated text to be good,

satisfactory, and acceptable exists. Yet, research has shown that an agreement over general accepted criteria that can be adopted as a tool of evaluating the quality of translation remains an issue of ongoing debate (Williams, 2009). As Halliday (2001: 14) puts it, *“it is notoriously difficult to say why or even whether, something is a good translation”*. House (1981:127) said that the question *“what is a good translation?”* is the key question that requires an answer. Melis (2001:237) points out *“Nowadays, and despite the enormous advances in literary criticism, translation criticism is either non-existent or, if practised at all, is carried out in a subjective, undisciplined/ad hoc fashion.”*

A considerable amount of literature has been published about approaches and models of assessing a translated work. Yet, it is thought that, to design a one-size fits all translation quality assessment model is an endeavour that seems difficult to undertake. Still, translation quality assessment (TQA) has been studied by many researchers (e.g. Reiss and Vermeer, 1984; House, 1997; Nord, 1997; Lauscher, 2000; Brunette, 2000; Waddington, 2001; Melis and Albir, 2001; Rothe-Neves, 2002; Colina, 2008; Thelen, 2009; Williams, 2009; Berghammer and Langdon-Neuner, 2013; Drugan, 2013). Thelen (2009:411) argues that

*“it is difficult - if not impossible - to formulate one uniform translation quality assessment model that can be used to assess all types of translation assignment and be applied to any translation situation and that can measure the translation competence of any individual translating.”*

Melis (2001) suggests that evaluation of translation is related to three areas of translation:

- Evaluation of published translations
- Evaluation of professional translators' work
- Evaluation in translation teaching

The current study concerns the evaluation of five published translations of the Quran focused on collocational units. The next section discusses the notion of translation quality assessment.

#### 4.4.1 The notion of translation quality assessment

To date there has been confusion over a precise definition to describe translation quality assessment in translation studies. The process of assessing the quality of a translated text has been labelled by researchers as an act of “*assessment, evaluation, criticism, revision, and analysis, etc*” (Behrouz, 2016:78). According to Behrouz (2016), these terms have been used interchangeably to refer to the same evaluation process. Yet, researchers (such as McAlester, 1999, Brunette, 2000, Arango-Keeth and Koby, 2003) try to identify each term in order to remove vagueness between them.

McAlester (1999) draws a distinction between the following terms: *assessment, evaluation, criticism and analysis*. In McAlester's (1999) demarcation, translation *assessment* is an umbrella term that encompasses the other three steps of assessment: (a) translation *evaluation*, is to put a value on a translation; (b) translation *criticism*, is to state the appropriateness of a translation; (c) translation *analysis*, is to explain in detail the relationship between the target text and the factors involved in its production, including the source text, without making any judgement. According to McAlester (1999:169), these three procedures of translation quality assessment can be put in order, as “*evaluation presupposes*

*criticism, and criticism presupposes analysis*". However, it should be taken into account that McAlester's procedures are proposed to measure the translation competence of the translators instead of measuring the quality of the product (translated text) itself. On this matter, Arango-Keeth and Koby (2003:119) propose the term *evaluation* is used to cover the process of evaluating the "*translation competence assessment*" for educational purposes. In contrast, the term *assessment* is meant to verify the suitability of the translated text (the product) to be submitted to a client. In this sense, it is labelled "*translation quality assessment*."

In the same context, Brunette (2000) makes an attempt to offer an adequate explanation in terms of interpreting the term 'translation assessment'. Brunette (2000:169) thinks that the main cause of confusion is due to "*the degree of subjectivity that is present in any kind of human judgement*". In order to make a distinction between evaluation of the translation as 'a process' and assessing the quality of the translation as 'a product', Brunette (2000:170) suggests five assessment procedures: "*Pragmatic revision, translation quality assessment, quality control, didactic revision, and fresh look*."

*Didactic revision* procedure is proposed to support trainee translators to enhance their translation skills. For Brunette (2000), at this stage, the whole translated text is compared cautiously with the original by translation instructors. According to Brunette (2000:173), *translation quality assessment* procedure is meant for "*determining of the quality of the translated text in terms of the productivity of translators and the quality /price ratio of translations*." *Quality control* procedure is allocated in order to verify the compliance of a sample of the translation with predefined criteria so that time and resources can be saved. Comparing the

translated text with the source text is not necessary. However, the stage of the quality control can be extended from a partial monolingual reading to a bilingual revision of a sample of segments of translation (Brunette: 2000). *Pragmatic revision* is similar to the *Didactic revision* in the sense that they both involve a careful comparison of the translated text with the source text. Yet, the pragmatic revision procedure focuses more on improving the quality of the translated text. The *fresh look* procedure is used according to Brunette (2000), as an independent reading of the translation (target text) in order to ensure that it meets the requirements of the initiator of the translation.

In her study, Brunette (2000) made a distinction between different procedures of translation assessment. However, it seems that a full description of each assessment procedure is not yet offered, for instance, what exactly form the main components of each individual procedure and how they are exercised. In addition, Brunette seems to have overlooked the importance of measuring the translation quality and to measure the translators' productivity separately. She rather puts them together under one classification of the translation quality assessment. Behrouz (2016:81) points out that *"there is a fundamental difference between translation quality assessment and translation competence assessment, and they should not be conflated with each other."*

On the other hand, Chesterman (1997), argues that the term *quality* is ambiguous. If the quality means the nature and characteristics, in this sense the assessment is 'descriptive' and the assessor's role is only to say *that "a given translation is of such-and-such a type, that it has such-and-such features, that it has such-and-such an effect on the target culture"* (Chesterman, 1997:118).

According to Chesterman (1997), this method is adopted if the assessor seeks to know the translator's concept of equivalence through identifying the translator's decisions. Here, the focus is on describing the decision and the translator, and knowing why s/he takes that decision. Then, segments of the target text (solutions) are paired with segments of the source text (problems). Consequently, the relationships between the pairs of corresponding segments are examined. The *quality* in its second sense is evaluative, not only descriptive. Assessment of quality, in this regard, is carried out in terms of how good or bad the translation is, if it conforms to required standards, particular values etc. Such evaluative assessment could be negative or positive.

In short, it can be seen that, from the literature, there is a terminological confusion about the definition of 'assessment and quality' in the field of translation studies.

#### **4.4.2 The search for a translation quality assessment model**

The basic premise for designing a quality assessment model is to establish standards by which translation may be assessed effectively. The literature shows that over the past four decades a number of models suggested by scholars for different purposes, such as Nord (1991), House (1997), Waddington (2001), have mainly centered on evaluating students' translations while others such as Reiss and Vermeer (1984) proposed qualitative models in order to develop a systematic method to evaluate translations. Still, having one master model that evaluates any translation remains elusive. Furthermore, these proposed models of assessing the quality of translation are often criticised for not providing help in practical terms (Vallès: 2014). The next section presents a number of quality assessment models.

#### 4.4.3 Reiss and Vermeer's model of translation assessment

According to Schaffner (1998), this approach represents a shift in translation studies from linguistic oriented notions to a functional and socio-cultural oriented framework. Skopos theory is proposed by Vermeer (1978). This theory is claimed to be a *“framework for a general theory of translation”* (Nord, 2012: 27). Vermeer's view on this general approach is to present an alternative to translate, without merely relying on the linguistic level. Vermeer (2000) claims that *“Linguistics alone won't help us; first, because translating is not merely, and not even primarily, a linguistic process. Secondly, because linguistics has not yet formulated the right questions to tackle our problems. So, let's look somewhere else”* (cited in Stajszczak, 2011: 11).

Skopos theory has integrated with the functionalist approach of Reiss' text-types and language function to present a functional and target-reader oriented translation model (Stajszczak, 2011). Since then, Skopos theory has been referred to as a paradigm shift in translation studies, namely, from linguistics to functionalism. This is because it claims that translation lies between extra-linguistic factors (culture and client) and textual factors (the 'purpose' of a text) (Nord, 2012; Sunwoo, 2007). Vermeer uses the Greek word 'Skopos', that literally means 'a purpose', as a technical term, and claims that any translation is an action and goal-oriented; therefore, any translating action needs to have a purpose, or a Skopos (De Leon, 2008) which plays a role as *“the prime principle determining any translation process”* (Nord, 1997 cited in Masduki, 2011).

Reiss and Vermeer (1984), in their functional theory of translation, claim that it is the Skopos (purpose of a translation) that is all-important. The way the translated

text is adapted to target language and culture norms is the yardstick for evaluating a translation. Reiss and Vermeer (1984) model gives the main role to Skopos. The source text is of a secondary importance; it is reduced to a 'source of information' that the translator may change as s/he sees fit (Baker 2001).

In the Skopos theory, in order to have a Skopos or a purpose, it requires one significant consideration:

- A high need of practical experiences for a translator in understanding what is intended to be achieved in the target text (Green, 2012:109).

Yet, Skopos theory attempts to preserve equivalence between the original and the target text; still, Skopos theory merely regards a source text as an 'offer of information' to which it will eventually be simulated, as a whole or partially, into an offer of information in a target text by taking into account the target language and culture. (Reiss and Vermeer 1991; Sunwoo, 2007; Munday, 2008).

From Skopos theory's viewpoint, a translation product (Translatum) does not need to have a similar functional equivalence to a source text. Vermeer points out that a translator defines the function of the translation product through "*a translation brief*." (Green, 2012: 109). In the framework of Skopos theory, the cultural aspects of original and target language are considered to a great extent; still, Skopos theory concentrates more on the target culture. Vermeer (2000) defines "*a translation brief*" as an "*instruction, given by oneself or by someone else, to carry out a given action, in this connection: "to translate"*" (Vermeer, 2000 cited in Jensen, 2009: 11). In this context, 'a translation brief' may or may not be explicitly stated, namely, by a request (Nord: 2006) and can take a form of writing or speaking (Jensen, 2009: 11). Yet, 'a translation brief' is regarded essential in

the Skopos theory, as it serves as a guide for translators (Nord, 2006; Green, 2012). Without having ‘a translation brief’, a translator cannot establish the Skopos (Nord, 2006; Jensen, 2009) and make a decision upon which method or strategy should be applied according to the intended Skopos (Nord, 2006; Chesterman, 2007 in Jensen, 2009).

Skopos theory has been criticised by supporters of equivalent-based theories of translation. A major criticism that Skopos theory has received is on the definition of translation and its viewpoint towards the source text, namely, the “*dethronement*” of the source text (Schaffner, 1998: 237). Another problem with the Skopos theory is that it is thought to go above the limits of translation proper. As a result, it makes “*the contours of translation, as the object of study ... steadily vaguer and more difficult to survey*” (Koller, 1995 in Nord, 2012: 27). According to (Green, 2012: 111; Schaffner, 1998: 237), this may bring the translation product closer to be an ‘adaptation’ rather than a ‘translation’. Schaffner (1998) points out that the source text should be the first step to set out in the translation process despite the purposes of the texts produced during the translation process.

Oversimplification as a permanent characteristic in functionalism has also been criticised by Newmark (1991, cited in Schaffner, 1998: 237) who argues that oversimplification emphasises on the message and overlooks the richness of meaning to the detriment of the source text.

The important aspect among these criticisms is that Skopos theory is inapplicable to literary texts and religious texts, as these texts contain stylistic and expressive

language, so equivalence may not be achieved (Green: 2012). Sunwoo (2007) has also questioned the unclear guidelines for applying Skopos theory during the translation practice. In other words, what step-by-step procedures that have to be made during the translation process are not clear.

#### 4.4.4 House's translation quality assessment

This model is based on pragmatic theories of language use. House (1997), from the outset, argues that meaning must be preserved across two languages involved in the translation process. House (1997) categorises the meaning into three aspects: semantic, pragmatic and textual.

- The semantic aspect: this refers to the relationship of linguistic units 'words' to their referents 'things' in the outside world; in other words, any possible word that human mind can construct. For this aspect, equivalence can be easily seen to be present or absent and this is one of the reasons that it has been given preference in translation assessment.
- The pragmatic aspect: House (1997: 30) defines pragmatics as "*the study of the purpose for which sentences are used, of the real-world conditions under which a sentence may be appropriately used as an utterance.*" For her, pragmatic meaning is "*the particular use of an expression on a specific occasion*" which is of great value in translation, as the translation here, deals with language in use (House, 1977, 27). House (1997) points out that it is necessary in certain kinds of translation to aim at equivalence of pragmatic meaning at the expense of semantic meaning where in such

cases a translation is regarded as a primarily pragmatic reconstruction of its original.

- The textual aspect: generally, a text is any stretch of language in which the individual components relate to one another and form a cohesive whole. According to House (1997: 31), in the process of text constituting, various relations of co-textual references take place, for example: theme-rheme sequences, anaphora, ellipses, co-references, and substitutions, which all account for the textual meaning that should be preserved equivalents in translation. For House, this aspect, though necessary, is neglected in evaluating translations.

House (1997) holds the view that equivalence sought should be an equivalence of function. In other words, both the source and the target texts must fulfil the same function and the text's function can only be made explicit through a detailed analysis of the text itself. In her model, House (1997), claims that it is different from other translation quality criteria that seek to achieve equivalence in terms of either the writer's intention, an item that is not open to empirical examination, or the reader's responses, which poses problems to be measured.

House (1977) stresses the importance on the function of a text: *“the application or use of what the text has in the particular context of a situation”* (House, 1977: 37). Each text is an individual text created in a unique situation, and to determine the function of the text, it is necessary to refer the text to the situation. In order to achieve this, the notion of situation has been divided into three specific situational dimensions (House, 1977, 45):

- (A) **Field:** the subject matter, which can be a novel, poem, play etc.... or a social action, which can be specific, general, popular etc.
- (B) **Tenor:** writer's or translator's provenance and stance. It is the social role relationship between addresser and addressees. It is *symmetrical* when the text includes features referring to solidarity and equality. It is *asymmetrical* when the text contains features pointing to authority relationship. It indicates further to *the social attitude* in which the text includes features referring to the degree of social distance or proximity, i.e. the five styles of formality: frozen, formal, consultative, casual and intimate. The frozen style is the most formal. It is a pre-mediated "*literary style*". It can manifest in products of art meant for the education of readers and it may be used in business letters, to express the social distance between writer and reader. For the formal style, the addressee participation is to a great degree omitted. Formal texts clearly demonstrate advance planning by being well-structured, elaborate, logically sequenced and strongly cohesive. The consultative style is the most neutral style. It is the norm of conversations between strangers, which is marked by the absence of formal or informal markers. The addresser using this style does not assume that he/she can leave out certain parts of his message, which he might be able to do in a socially closer relationship where much of the message is understood. Casual style is especially marked by various degrees of implicitness, in which the addresser may indulge because of the level of intimacy between himself/herself and the addressee(s). Casual style is used with friends or '*insiders*' of all kinds with whom the addresser has something to share. "*Ellipses*,

*contractions and use of collocations are markers of casual style.*” In other words, intimate style is language used between people who are personally very close to each other with the maximum-shared background being available (House, 1997: 42).

(C) **Mode:** Mode is defined as “both the channels, spoken or written, which can be “*simple*”, for instance, “*written to be read*” or “*complex*”, for instance, “*written to be spoken*”. As for participation, it can be “*simple*”, for example, “*a monologue*” with no addressee participation “*built into the text*” or “*complex*” with various addressee - involving mechanisms characterising the text (House, 1997:42).

In addition, House (1997) depends on her native speaker intuition and on the judgments of other native speakers, which are taken as presumptions. According to House (1977), equivalence relations between two languages are not absolute; they rather fall on a scale of more or less equivalent items which runs from more to less probable. The degree of probability here is judged according to a subjective, hermeneutic element as the native speaker intuition.

House (1998:199) made a distinction between two basic types of translation, *overt* translation and *covert* translation:

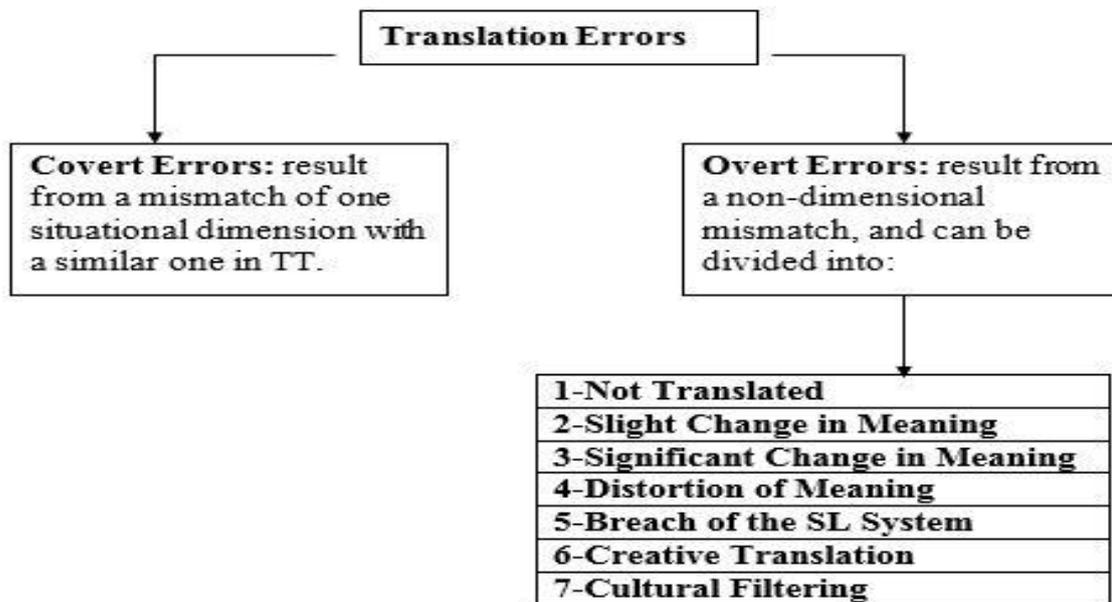
*“An overt translation is required whenever the source text is heavily dependent on the source culture and has independent status within it; a covert translation is required when neither condition holds, i.e. when the source text is not source culture specific.”*

Thus, functional equivalence is only possible in overt translation, which is more difficult than covert translation. According to House (1997) differences in the cultural presuppositions of the source and target language communities may require the translator to apply a *cultural filter*, namely, a set of cross-cultural dimensions along which members of the two cultures differ in socio-cultural predispositions and communicative preferences. However, this can make it difficult to evaluate, as it will involve assessing the quality of the cultural filters introduced in translation (Baker, 2001).

House (1997) categorised two types of errors:

- Covert errors: those which result from a mismatch of one situational dimension with a similar one in TT,
- Overt errors: those which result from a non-dimensional mismatch. Such errors can be divided into seven categories of:
  1. Not translated
  2. Slight change in meaning
  3. Significant change in meaning
  4. Distortion of meaning
  5. Breach of the SL system
  6. Creative translation
  7. Culture filtering

Figure 3.2: Covert and overt errors



Source: (House, 2009: 35)

House (1996: 37) suggests that texts must be appropriately analysed before functional equivalence is established, and “*the source text is analysed prior to the translation.*” The reason for this is that only the source text analysis can give a precise idea of the equivalence which is to be searched for in translation. The source text analysis “*results in a statement of the individual textual function of the text*” (House, 1997: 110).

The resulting textual profile of the original characterises its function, which is then taken as the norm against which the translation is measured; the degree to which the textual profile and function of translation match the profile and function of the original, is the degree to which the translation is adequate in quality. In evaluating the relative match between original and translation, a distinction is made between dimensional mismatches. Dimensional mismatches are pragmatic errors that have to do with language use; *non-dimensional mismatches* are mismatches in

denotative meanings of the original and translation elements and breaches of the target language system at various levels. The final qualitative judgement of the translation then consists of a listing of both types of errors and of a statement of the relative match of the two functional components.

According to Vallès (2014), House's model complexity and the lack of specific weight for mismatches and errors is one of the aspects that has attracted most criticism from academics. The model is not able to provide a final objective assessment of the quality of a translation which is common to non-quantitative assessment models.

#### 4.4.5 Nord's quality assessment model

Nord's approach (2001) has been designed to help translation teachers in assessing and grading their trainee students' translations. For Nord (2001: 163) the model is an attempt to *"exclude intuition from TQA and teaching."* Nord's model of text analysis in translation involves extratextual and intratextual factors that should be analysed in the source text and the target text and then compared. Nord (2001) employs functionality in her model, as suggested by Reiss and Vermeer (1984). According to Nord (2001:28), functionality is *"the most important criterion for translation."*

Nord (2001) suggests that the basic idea is that a translator should firstly create a ST profile; secondly, a TT profile, and then compare them. Subsequently, the translator *"places a cultural filter between ST and TT"* (Nord, 2001: 16). Nord's model can be summarised as follows:

*"in a translation-oriented analysis, we will first analyse these factors [the communicative situation and the participants in the communicative act]*

*and their function in the ST situation and then compare them with the corresponding factors in the (prospective) TT situation” (Nord’s 2001:15).*

It seems that Nord’s model corresponds to some extent with House’s model (1997). House (1997: 42) points out that

*“by using situational dimensions for opening up the source text, a particular text profile is obtained for the source text. This profile which characterises the function of the text is then the norm against which the quality of the translation text is to be measured.”*

A difference emerged in terms of ‘emphasis’ when comparing the two models. It appears that House’s model (1997) puts more emphasis on the ST while Nord’s (2001) lays more emphasis on the TT function. As the aim of the analysis, in the present study, is mainly to determine the possible deviations in meaning with regard to five existing versions of the Quran, focusing on collocations, it hence appears that the required criteria of analysis are different from both Nord’s model and House’s models.

#### **4.4.6 Waddington’s model of translation assessment**

Waddington (2001) presents a model according to which translation can be assessed. Waddington’s model is meant to provide teachers of translation with a method to evaluate students’ translations (Waddington, 2011). According to Waddington (2011) one of the problems of teaching and assessing students’ translations into a foreign language is the number of language errors produced, which can make students less eager to learn. Waddington (2011) suggests a positive approach of assessment such as the one introduced by Hewson (1995) as a solution. Hewson (1995) makes a distinction between purely linguistic errors

and major translation problems. Hewson (1995) proposes that a sensible assessment of students' translations should not penalise linguistic errors. Instead, students should be given credit for appreciating and solving the translation problems involved.

Based on this proposal by Hewson (1995), Waddington (2011) suggests a double marking scale:

- negative for clear errors and failure to recognise translation problems
- and positive for identifying and solving specific translation problems

Some researchers such as Shahraki and Karimnia (2011) believe that Waddington's model (2001) makes the process of assessing a translation less subjective, as the translations are assessed according to some pre-set criteria. However, in terms of application of Waddington's model, Shahraki and Karimnia (2011) applied Waddington's model on the Persian translation of George Orwell's 1984, by Baluch. They concluded that Waddington's model is still incomplete with regard to translation shifts and additions. Furthermore, they assert that the model is highly academic-bound and cannot be applied to real cases of translation evaluation, outside the academic context. In addition, they criticised the model for being too general which increases the elements of subjectivity, since understanding the evaluation parameters is completely left for the evaluator with the lack of detailed descriptions.

To sum up, some of the commonly used models on translation quality assessment are highlighted in this section. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the criteria for assessing a piece of translation are still fuzzy and hard to achieve a consensus on so far. There is no objective benchmark according to

which evaluators can assess translation. Although, there are some models that are less subjective than others and assess translation relying on some criteria, the existing methods of assessment proved to be insufficient and they more suitable within an academic context, rather than being appropriate for general use for translation quality assessment (Shahraki and Karimnia, 2014).

#### **4.5 Summary of the chapter**

The first part of this chapter examined some definitions of the term translation, highlighting the various congruous and conflicting views expressed by translation experts and scholars. This was followed by a brief discussion about types of texts, typologies and the translator. Then it provided a discussion over whether translation should be source language oriented (literal translation) or target language oriented (free translation), the topic which researchers never get tired of researching and writing about. Views over the typical and perfect method by which the source text must be translated, is still inconclusive and seems unattainable among researchers. Conflicting views appear obviously when the discussion is related to religious texts. This study views that the translator should utilise all available translation tools for transferring the meaning in an appropriate and understandable way to the recipients in the target language. The faithfulness should be given to the message, the essence of the meaning, not to the form. The second section sheds light on the concept of 'quality assessment' of translation. This section reaches to the conclusion that every model seemingly has its strengths and weaknesses and a robust quality assessment model in the field of translation is still difficult to achieve.

## Chapter Five

### Translating Quranic collocations from the perspective of Arabic studies

#### 5.0 Introduction

Collocation as a research topic is not new. It has been extensively debated in academic literature. This language phenomenon has covered plenty of mileage, since Palmer (1933:13) referred to this language feature as “*odd comings together-of-words*”. Later on Firth (1968:182) produced one of the most widely cited definition “*you shall know a word by the company it keeps.*” However, collocation is still a subject of considerable speculation and lacking a solid theoretical base. In its generic sense, there is a consensus - collocation denotes the habitual occurrence and mutual cohabitation of certain words whose meaning depends on the words occurring next to each other. In other words, collocations represent word combinations that are in stable relationship and are in frequent use. Some view collocations as chunks of language, strings of words and association between words to “*mutual expectancies*” of co-occurrence (Firth, 1957:195). Others refer to collocations as networks that words build relationships and partnerships between words. However, research on collocation appears like a complex mosaic. The narrow scope of the literature is demonstrated by the different labels and descriptions used to define collocation. It remains an area of research with many grey areas. It is true to say that collocation and phraseology have become a part of the language jargon, but academics have not agreed upon a single, consistent definition of collocation as demonstrated by the following table, which illustrates some of the main labels given to collocation:

Table 5.1 Labels of collocations

A string of words that go together	Palmer (1933)
“The company that words keep” or “actual words in habitual company.”	Firth (1957)
words habitually grouped together in clusters	Meer, (1998)
Collocation is ‘...a marriage contract between words, and some words are more firmly married to each other than others’	McCarthy (1990)
Collocation is “... the relationship a lexical item has with items that appear with greater than random probability in its (textual) context”	Hoey, (1991)
prefabricated language	Pawley & Syder (1983)
phraseological units	Cowie (1981)
Arbitrary and recurrent word combination.	Jackson (1988)
lexical phrases that go together	Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992); Nattinger, (1988)
co-selection of words	Sinclair (1996)
multi-word units	Lewis (2001; 1993)
conventionalised forms, ready-made utterances	Wray (2002)
word partnerships	Mudraya (2006)
fossilized structures	Hall (2009)
Formulaic sequences	Wray (2000)

collocations are also called: bound', 'fixed', 'frozen', 'set', 'routine' or 'stereotype expressions	Baker (1982)
A combination of words that have a certain mutual expectancy.	Choueka (1988)
'A cover term for the cohesion that results from the co-occurrence of lexical items that are in some way or other typically associated with one another,	Halliday (1976)
linguistic phenomenon whereby a given vocabulary item prefers the company of another item rather than its 'synonyms'	Van Roey (1990)
Word pairs which occur frequently together in the same environment	Radev (2000)
Words which are statistically much more likely to appear together than random chance suggests	Lewis (2000)
Collocation is 'frequent co-occurrence of words'	Stubbs (2001)

Source: compiled by the present researcher

As can be seen, the above table highlights some of the key labels attached to collocation which demonstrates that collocation is a multidimensional term which is understood, explained and interpreted differently and from several perspectives. Broadly speaking the definitions have added some value and fresh insights to the literature, but many of these definitions appear to overlap. Others, are just recycled ideas, said by someone else using different wording and some lack precision. They have their merits as they contribute to the collocation debate but without adding much to what is already known. Each author seems to put their own touch and spin on the way the term collocation is defined to give it a

new shade of meaning but ultimately the terms and the wording for describing and interpreting collocation have many similarities. This often indicates a sense of confusion and lack of a standardised and workable definition which leads to overextension of the boundaries and meaning of collocation.

The following section provides a synthesis of previous studies involving research on collocation with particular focus on collocation in translation from Arabic into English. Although, there is an increasing awareness and understanding of the importance and benefits of conducting research on phraseology in the Arabic speaking world, the literature on collocation involves mainly Indo-European languages. In contrast, research involving the translation of Arabic collocations remains under-researched. There has been a trickle rather than a steady stream of publications and papers on translating Arabic-English collocations.

The literature reveals that several studies have been carried out on collocations involving Arabic-English, to serve academic fields such as translation, lexicography and language pedagogy. This section sheds light on researchers' views about collocational structures as a problematic area for translators. Abu-Ssyadeh (2007), Beekman and Callow (1974), Newmark (1988), Baker (1992), Dollerup (1994), Hatim and Mason (1997), Snell-Hornby (1995), Seretan and Wehrli (2006), Heliel (1990), Chukwu (1997), Ghazala (2004), Shraideh and Mahadin (2015), Hashemi et al. (2011), Gadalla (2009), Altuwairesh (2016), Gorgis and Al-Kharabsheh (2009), Nofal (2012), and Dweik and Abu Shakra (2011) regarded collocations to be problematic when translating from one language into another.

Abu-Ssyadeh (2007) points out that collocation is an indispensable and important feature, which exists across languages. Abu-Ssyadeh (2007:70) mentions that 'interest' and 'awareness' of the study of collocation stem from its important role in the process of foreign language learning and translation. Beekman and Callow (1974) indicate that translating collocations is a fascinating aspect within the work of translators, which gauges their overall competence in translation. According to them (1974:163), "*translating collocations takes a high degree of expertise because there often little or no equivalence between collocational ranges of the equivalent words within languages.*"

Newmark (1988) argues that the difficulty in rendering collocation lies in the arbitrary relation between collocates in which at least one of the lexical items moves from its primary meaning to a secondary meaning. This suggests that collocations are language-specific and culture-bound. Newmark (1988: 213) adds that:

*"Translation is sometimes a continual struggle to find appropriate collocations, a process of collocating appropriate nouns with verbs and verbs with nouns, and, in the second instance, collocating appropriate adjectives to the nouns, and adverbs or adverbial groups to the verbs."*

Ghazala (2004:19) points out that collocations are "*the source of its beauty in the sense of being aesthetic, expressive and hence, rhetorical*". For example,

- migration of scientists = brain drain
- in good health = alive and kicking.

This suggests that collocations are more influential and expressive on the reader/listener than the ordinary language. Abu-Ssyadeh (2007), Beekman and Callow (1974), Newmark (1988), and Ghazala (2004) draw attention to the importance of collocation as a linguistic feature which is obviously touched by foreign language learners and translators. Collocation can be used to gauge language proficiency of either a foreign language learner or a translator.

Snell-Hornby (1995:122) advises that collocation should not be transferred immediately from the source text into the target text, as transferring a source language collocation automatically to a target language could produce a collocation that is *“unnatural and obscure”*. According to Seretan and Wehrli (2007: 02), this is because collocations *“are unpredictable for non-native speakers and usually do not have a literal translation”*. Falling into the trap of literal translation of collocations is due to the fact that *“translators sometimes get quite engrossed in the source text and may produce the oddest collocations in the target language for no justifiable reason”* (Baker, 1992:54). Baker (1992) suggests that confusing source language and target language patterns can be avoided if the translator is conscious to the potential influence that the collocational patterning of the source text can have on him/her.

Hatim and Mason (1990), consider collocations as a major problem in translation in terms of producing the appropriate collocations in the target language. For them (1990: 204), *“there is always a danger that, even for experienced translators, source language interference will occasionally escape unnoticed and an unnatural collocation will flaw the target text.”* Baker (1992:55) suggests that translators should avoid carrying over source-language collocations that are

untypical of the target language, “*unless there is a very good reason for doing so*”.

Collocation is a linguistic feature that is “*largely arbitrary*” (Baker, 1992:48). Baker (1992:49) gives examples about the English verb ‘deliver’ and the nouns that collocate with it and how the verb ‘deliver’ is translated into a different verb in Arabic in each case as follows:

- To deliver a letter = يسلم خطاب *yuslimu xiṭa:bn*
- To deliver a speech = يلقي خطبة *yulki: xiṭbatun*
- To deliver news = ينقل أخبار *yanqulu ?axba:rn*
- To deliver a blow = يوجه ضربة *yu:wʒhu ḍrbatn*
- To deliver a verdict = يصدر حكما *yuşdiru ḥukmn*
- To deliver a baby = يولد امرأة *yu:wliḍu ?imra'?tn*

The last example ‘to deliver a baby’ is translated into يولد امرأة *ywali:du ?imra'?tn* in Arabic ‘to deliver a woman’, which means, “*to deliver a woman or assist a woman in a childbirth*” (Baker, 1992:49). In Arabic culture, the focus is on the woman in the process of the childbirth while the focus is on the baby in the English culture. This example shows the role of the culture in creating collocational structure. In this regard, Baker (1992:59) states: *yuslimu xiṭa:bn*

*“some collocations reflect the cultural setting in which they occur. If the cultural settings of the source and target languages are significantly different, there will be instances when the source text will contain collocations which convey what to the target reader would be unfamiliar associations of ideas.”*

Thus, it can be concluded that from one language to another, words differ in their collocability; namely what collocates in one language does not necessarily collocate in another. Translating collocations from Arabic into English can create a linguistic and cultural challenge for translators due to linguistic and cultural gaps between these two languages. Collocations are “*a direct reflection of the cultural setting in which they are embedded*” (Baker, 1992:49).

### 5.1 Collocation: lexical relations

According to Ibrahim (2003:82), the types of ambiguities the translators face in treating collocations are “*the outcome of the multifarious semantic or lexical interrelations into which collocates, as components of the resulting collocations, enter.*” This section highlights Quranic collocations with synonymous, antonymous and metonymous relationships.

#### a. Synonymous collocates

Ullmann (1977: 143), suggests that the point of interest in discussing the collocability of synonymic patterns is that ‘broad’ can be replaced by ‘wide’ in “*the broadest sense of the word or the widest sense of the word*”, whereas the same is not true in “*five feet wide,*” where ‘wide’ cannot be replaced by ‘broad’.

According to Ullmann (1977: 155), the collocability of synonymous patterns is “*on the whole a stylistic device*”. For example,

- شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا      a law and a path      [rʕatn wa minha:ʒan      (Q 05: 48)
- مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا      an abode and a station      mustaqrn wa muqa:man      (Q 25: 66)
- تَحِيَّةً وَسَلَامًا      a greeting and peace      tahyi:tn wa salaman      (Q 25:75)

## b. Antonymous collocates

Regarding oppositeness of meaning, Ibrahim (2003) points out that antonyms are pertinent to the question of lexical collocability. Ibrahim (2003) gives the following patterns of lexical collocability that are of antonymous nature:

- *left-right opposition*
- *give the pros and cons of*
- *everything is upside down*
- *top-down and bottom-up analysis.*

Patternings of lexical collocability of antonymous nature contribute to explaining the meaning, as the meaning of a word can be understood from the meaning of its opposite. Consider the following examples from the Quran,

- شَقِيٌّ وَسَعِيدٌ      *wretched and happy*      [aʃi:y wa saʕi:yd      (Q11: 105)
- الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ      *the evil and the good*      alxabyi:tu wa llʔayibu      (Q5: 100)
- السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ      *the heavens and earth*      alsma:wa:ti wa lʔrḍa      (Q24: 35)
- الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ      *the East and the West*      alm[riqi wa llmayribi      (Q2: 115)
- زَفِيرٌ وَشَهيقٌ      *sighing and groaning*      zafi:yr wa [ahi:yq      (Q11: 106)

## c. Metonymous collocates

Metonymy is another type of sense relation. Yule (1997:122) describes metonymy as a “*type of relationship between words, based simply on a close connection in everyday experience*”. According to Yule (1997), firstly, it may be based on a container-contents relation as in ‘bottle’ and ‘coke’, or ‘can’ and ‘juice’. Secondly, it may be based on a whole-part relation as in ‘car’ and ‘wheels’, or ‘house’ and ‘roof’. Thirdly, it may be based on relationship in which a

representative-symbol relationship as in 'king' and 'crown'. Consider the following examples of a representative-symbol relationship from the Quran,

- يد مغلولة = البخل *tight-fisted = stingy* *alboxlu = ydun mylu:la* (Q 5:64)
- يد ميسوطة = الجود *open wide hand= generous* *alʒudu = yadun mabsutaturun* (Q5:64)

To sum up, collocability of lexical items produces kind of semantic relation. These semantic relations contribute to creating a sort of effect on the reader. Such complicated relationships between words cause a challenge for translators.

The following table shows a sample of the most commonly held views regarding translation of collocation in the literature:

Table 5:2 Commonly held views on translation of collocation

Authors	Translation of collocation
Beekman and Callow (1974: 163)	<i>Translating collocations takes a high degree of expertise because there often little or no equivalence between collocational ranges of the equivalent words within languages.</i>
Newmark (1988: 213)	<i>Translation is sometimes a continual struggle to find appropriate collocations, a process of collocating appropriate nouns with verbs and verbs with nouns, and, in the second instance, collocating appropriate adjectives to the nouns, and adverbs or adverbial groups to the verbs.</i>
Snell-Hornby (1995:122)	<i>Translators should not transfer collocations immediately from the source text into the target text, as transferring a source language collocation automatically to a target language could produce a collocation that is “unnatural and obscure”</i>
Seretan and Wehrli (2007: 02)	<i>Although they look similar to regular constructions, they are unpredictable for non-native speakers and usually do not have a literal translation.</i>

Samdja et al (1996:06)	<i>Collocations are 'domain dependent' often forming part of a sublanguage. Each domain includes a variety of phrases that have specific meanings and translations.</i>
Baker (1992:54)	<i>Translators sometimes get quite engrossed in the source text and may produce the oddest collocations in the target language for no justifiable reason.</i>
Hatim and Mason (1990:204)	<i>there is always a danger that, even for experienced translators, source language interference will occasionally escape unnoticed and an unnatural collocation will flaw the target text.</i>
Ibrahim (2003)	<i>the types of ambiguities the translators facing in treating collocations are "the outcome of the multifarious semantic or lexical interrelations into which collocates, as components of the resulting collocations, enter"</i>

Source: Compiled by the present researcher

Although the literature on collocations is expanding, little research studied the translation of collocations in the Quran. Therefore, the need to investigate the constraints of translating Quranic collocations into English is pertinent. From the findings of the current study, new insights into translating collocations in the Quran into English are achieved.

## **5.2 An overview of key literature on translating Arabic-English collocations**

In the past few decades, researchers working in the field of translation from Arabic into English developed a growing interest in studying syntagmatic relations of word meanings, especially collocation which creates a challenge and major hurdle in translation from Arabic into English.

Hashemi et al. (2011) assess collocational errors made by students who learn English as a foreign language. The findings of this study show that EFL students make unacceptable collocations in their writing and speaking because of: (1) the interference of their mother tongue, (2) lack of knowledge of collocation as a linguistic feature, and (3) depending on paraphrasing as an alternative strategy.

Similarly, Mahdi and Yasin (2015) examine the effect of mother tongue interference on the translation of English collocations into Arabic among Iraqi EFL students. The study shows that 67% of the participants fail to achieve the pass mark, and only 33% achieve an acceptable level of understanding and translation. The study finds that Iraqi EFL students can understand the selected collocations, but they have difficulties to correctly translate them into Arabic and it reveals that Iraqi EFL learners are incompetent in collation patterning and they tend to associate words inappropriately. In most cases, errors are made due to the tendency to literally translate the text. Likewise, in a study by Shraideh and Mahadin (2015) on the difficulties that BA and MA students at the University of Yarmouk face when translating collocations in political texts from English into Arabic, it concludes that many of the MA participants demonstrate knowledge of collocations in their translations while most of the BA participants show lack of knowledge of collocations.

Altuwairesh (2016) conducted a study to raise the awareness of English Language Teaching instructors of the concept of collocation, of its importance for learners at the Department of English Language and Translation in King Saud University to attain native-like proficiency, and to suggest ways to help learners develop collocational knowledge. Altuwairesh (2016) concludes that two challenges language instructors have to address when teaching collocations are the vast number of collocations that exist in the language and the fact that there is no typical method to teach collocations. The study suggests that foreign language learners should be made aware of collocations. Altuwairesh (2016) points out that consciousness-raising along with frequent exposure should be main steps in teaching collocations.

Alsulayyi (2015) conducted a study to investigate the production of English grammatical collocations amongst Saudi students specialised in English in the KSA and those in the UK. The study also shows the most frequent types of errors that may occur and the possible reasons for their occurrence. The researcher analysed essays written by the participants. The results reveal that Saudi EFL learners in the UK make grammatical collocation errors less than those who learn English in the KSA. According to Alsulayyi (2015), the highest number of errors in both groups was recorded on the grammatical collocation patterns, *noun + preposition* and *adjective + preposition*. The study concluded that L1 interference plays a crucial role in students' erroneous responses, especially with patterns that contain a preposition. For instance, the majority of *noun + preposition*, *adjective + preposition* and *preposition + noun* is used incorrectly throughout the essays. In addition, the lack of knowledge of grammatical collocations is another possible reason behind such errors. Alsulayyi (2015) recommended that, educational leaders, curriculum designers and teachers need to shed light on these types, especially as the English language curricula used in the KSA do not pay a great deal of attention to grammatical collocations. Gorgis and Al-Kharabsheh (2009) compare the output of two translation tasks in order to find out the extent to which students of translation can translate Arabic contextualised collocations into English properly; two conflicting views about carrying out a translation task are tested. The first holds that avoiding the use of a dictionary in test sessions, though not in translation classes, would save time and yield better translation products, whereas the second contends that recourse to a dictionary is unavoidable at any translation task, including tests. The results of this study have already been settled in favour of the mental lexicon rather than the dictionary.

In the same vein, Bahumaid (2006) undertook a study in which he examines the difficulty of rendering English collocations into Arabic and vice versa. The study investigates the process of rendering English-Arabic/Arabic English collocations that are metaphorical and cultural-bound. The study shows that even competent translators may stumble over the translation of these types of collocations. According to Bahumaid (2006), this is due to *“the lack of proper training in handling collocations at translator training institutions in the Arab region as well as the non-existence of Arabic-English collocational dictionaries”*.

Nofal (2012) studies the term “collocation” as a habitual association between words. He focuses on collocation to bring out its nature and significance to the translation and teaching/learning process. The most obvious finding from Nofal’s study (2012:78) is that *“collocation in Arabic is not as exclusively discussed as it is in English”*. Nofal claims that although English and Arabic classify collocation into various categories, these categories are not always synonymous with each other. In addition, it is noted that achieving exact equivalence for collocation in the target language is a major problem for students and teachers in learning/teaching process and for translators. Nofal (2012) suggests that collocation as a problematic area may be restricted to lexical choice. He provides an example of the word ‘knowledge’ and the words that collocate with it:

- He wants to grow his knowledge, for, he wants to develop/ increase his knowledge.

According to Nofal (2012) this is probably due to interference of mother tongue or lack of extensive reading of contemporary English and Arabic prose. He concludes that most linguists agree that:

- Collocation of both languages refers to the habitual co-occurrence of individual lexical items. For example, pretty girl, fish and chips...etc.
- Collocations are a type of syntagmatic lexical relations e.g. adjective + noun e.g. grave concern.
- Collocations are linguistically predictable in both languages i.e. fish and chips.
- In both languages, the verb of collocation can be substituted. For example, “to commit murder” and “to perpetrate murder”. Similarly, اقترف جرماً and ارتكب جرماً.
- Association of ideas i.e. whenever you mention a collocate, the other collocate immediately jump into your mind. For example, “keen competition”.
- In both languages, the lexemes are variable with other lexemes. The combination defines the meaning of the individual items. For example, the adjective *heavy* has many meanings according to the collocates: “heavy rainfall, heavy fog, heavy sleep, heavy meal, and heavy smoker”.
- Collocational in both languages is not only juxtaposition because it is mutual expectancy of two items or more. The two items can be separated in the sentence. For example:

(Q 13:31) وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا تُصِيبُهُمْ بِمَا صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةٌ

*As for the disbelievers, sudden calamity, because of their misdeeds, will befall them.*

*wala yaza:lu llaḏiyina kafaru:w tusi:ybuhum bima: şanaḥu:w ga:riḥatun*

Al Sughair (2011) studied the method the translators adopt to deal with English collocations when transferring them to the Arabic language, and whether the target text fulfils the linguistic and stylistic characteristics of the source text collocations or not. The study shows that calque translation (literal or word-for-word translation) seems to be the most frequent strategy in translating collocation in literary texts. Collocations are modified in translation and therefore both marked (or 'unusual collocations' Baker: 1992) and unmarked collocations have unmarked translations. In some cases, collocations end up as non-collocations in the target text.

Gadalla (2009) carries out a corpus-based study on collocations that include the word 'Allah' in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This study provides an analysis of the collocations involving the word Allah (God) in MSA based on online corpus collected by Al-Sulaiti (2006) and the concordance program prepared by Roberts (2004). The study identified the combinations that include the word 'Allah' in MSA in addition to their syntactic and semantic classification.

In summary, it has been shown from this review that a great deal of research on the translation problems of Arabic-English-Arabic collocations are confined to the investigation of university students' translation errors, with hardly any studies that give attention to collocations within a particular text type. The next section will discuss the studies conducted on translation of collocations in the Quranic text.

### **5.2.1 Collocation in Quranic text**

The literature review of Quranic collocation shows that some studies are carried out on collocations from the Quran. Yet, these studies on Quranic collocation are still few and under-researched (Al-Nasser and Khashan, 2008; Abdullah. 2010;

Dweik and Abu Shakra, 2011; Ebrahimi et al., 2012; Alshaje, 2014; Sharif and Salimi, 2016). The researcher of the present study follows in the footsteps of these researchers in an attempt to explore more about the concept of collocation in the Quranic text.

Newmark (1988) mentions that translators encounter various problems when translating collocations. These problems are ascribed to the variations of cultural and linguistic collocability between the source language and the target language. This can be problematic in translation. Consider the following examples of the noun قَوْلَا from Abdel Haleem's translation of the Quran. The noun قَوْلَا is replaced by a different equivalent in English:

- قَوْلَا نَقِيْلَا a momentous message *qawln θaqi:yln* (Q73:5)
- قَوْلَا بَلِيْعَا penetrating words *qawln bli:yiyn* (Q4:63)
- قَوْلَا عَظِيْمَا monstrous thing *qawln ʕzi:ymn* (Q17:40)

From a translation perspective, disparities of collocational ranges between languages is a source of difficulties for translators, especially between culturally distant and unrelated languages like English and Arabic. The difficulty is aggravated when rendering collocation from Quranic text due to the specificity of its words that are deeply rooted in Arabic culture. This section presents some key studies that are mainly carried out on collocations from the Quran.

Nasser and Khashan (2008) make lexical analysis of the adjective مُبِيْن *mubiyn* [lit: expressing things clearly] in the Quran. Al-Nasser and Khashan treated the word مُبِيْن as a nodal item or a fixed element in the collocational structure.

They point out that it is hard to give an account for the adjective *مُبِينٌ* *mubiyn* because of having very opposing meanings when it collocates with different nouns in the Quranic text. Al-Nasser and Khashan claim that the adjective *مُبِينٌ* *mubiyn* in the Quran shows a variety of senses and it does not lend itself easily to be reached in translation.

In the same context, for assessing the translations of collocations in the Quran, Abdullah (2010) highlights the renditions of some collocations in the Quran. The study only concentrated on analysing a few collocations of noun + adjective pattern. Abdullah (2010) deals with translated collocations in terms of finding identical equivalents in the target language, ignoring metaphorical or connotative meanings of words in the collocational structure that may oblige translators to seek the appropriate alternative structure to convey the intended meaning.

Dweik and Abu Shakra (2010) investigate the strategies used by students in translating specific lexical collocations selected from three religious texts - the Quran, the Hadith and the Bible. The data of the study composed of a translation test that comprised 45 short sentences of contextual collocations selected from the above-mentioned three religious texts and divided as 15 collocations per text. Students were required to translate these collocations from Arabic into English. The findings showed various strategies used by students in order to deal with the problems of rendering certain collocational expressions. Employed strategies were synonymy, generalisation, paraphrasing, deletion and literal translation. Moreover, the study indicated that the strategy of synonymy emerged as the most conspicuous one for translating lexical collocations while literal translation signalled the first adopted strategy in the translation of lexical collocations in the

Quran and in the Bible. Deletion emerged as the most obvious strategy in translating collocation in the Hadith. Dweik and Abu Shakra (2011) carry out a study regarding the problems that translation students at the universities of Petra, Yarmouk, and Jordan face when translating collocations that have cultural implications. The study conducted on a number of M.A translation students in order to investigate their awareness of collocations when translating religious texts such as the Quran, the Hadith (the Prophet Mohammed's sayings), and the Bible.

Dweik and Shakra (2011) select a purposive sample that comprised 35 students. The researchers constructed a translation test that consisted of 45 contextual short sentences randomly selected from the above-mentioned three religious texts and assigned 15 sentences from each religious text. According to Dweik and Shakra (2011), errors are attributed to the participants' unfamiliarity with collocations in the SL as well as in the TL and to their inability to identify collocations in SL text. They point out that M.A translation students commit lexical and semantic errors when rendering collocations of a religious nature. The findings of their study were summarised in two points: (1) translation students encounter difficulties in lexical and semantic collocations (2) translation students are not aware of the nature of lexical and metaphorical collocations.

In a similar context, Ebrahimi et al. (2012) conducted a study to examine the historical and semantic origin of lexical collocations that are used in the Orchard couplets (Boostan of Sa'di, Iranian poem). These collocations were inspired from the stories in the Quran. Ebrahimi et al. (2012) selected two English translation

versions of Boostan of Sa'di to address the meaning of some collocations from the Quranic text. These collocations were not constructed in the Quranic text, but they were created by the poet of Boostan of Sa'di. For example,

- عَصَا مُوسَى *staff of Moses*      Çəşə: Mu:wsa
- نَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ *Abraham's fire*      na:ru 'ʔibra:hi:yma

The study also traced the historical circumstances as a tool to reach to the intended meaning that author meant when creating these collocations in the poem. Ebrahimi et al. (2012) say that collocations in Boostan of Sa'di were formed from the semantic relations and historical information existing in the Quran and the reader of the poem must be familiar with the historical background of stories in the Quran to understand the intended meaning from these collocations.

Al-Sofi et al. (2014), investigate the problems that translators face when rendering Quranic collocations into English. They selected some cultural and figurative collocations from the Quran and compare their translations in two translations. The result of the study reveals that the problems of translating cultural collocations in the Quran are problematic due to using the literal translation method to carry over the meaning of cultural-specific collocations.

Alshaje (2014) examines the translation of some collocations in three English translations of the Quran. The purpose was to compare the translations and seek the closest to the Quranic meaning. Like Abdullah (2010), the study confined itself only to a limited number of collocations of a verb+noun pattern. Similarly, Khawaldeh's (2017) study explored the usage of metaphors in the Holy Quran within Charteris-Blak's framework by classifying metaphors in methodical order.

Such metaphors are organised into semantic allegories, or theoretical illustrations, or finally, key representations. The reason for this structure is to give elucidations, clarifications and the capacities of metaphor use in diverse classifications. The study uses this approach to figure out how far metaphorical entities in the Holy Quran could be categorised to provide a deeper understanding of the use of metaphors in the Holy Quran.

Albashir Mohammed Alahj and Ahmed Omer, (2017) investigated and analysed the incongruities and the disparities of meaning and style in translating Quranic euphemistic expressions into English, focusing on the work of Abdel Haleem, Pickthall, Khan and Taj Al-Din Al-Hilal. The paper, however, is limited in theoretical and practical scope.

Abdul Moid, (2018) examined common and popular English translations of the Quran to determine '*What is the Best English Translation of the Qur'an?*' Abdul Moid (2018) set the following criteria in choosing the best translation:

- 1. The translator or translators should, whether individually or collectively, be well versed in both Arabic and English. The more proficient the translator is in both, the better the representation of Allah's Divine Word will be.*
- 2. The translator should be well versed in the science of exegesis as laid out and developed historically by its masters. He should be able to identify differing linguistic interpretations, all possible meanings, and the explanations offered by the early Muslim scholars. All this should be available to the translator in the Arabic language. Translators that rely on English commentaries and secondary sources for their translation and notes will invariably be hampered. Every*

*additional layer of source material, in any academic field, increases the likelihood of error and misinterpretation.*

*3. The Quran was revealed in a clear Arabic. Its language is lucid, fluid, and deeply moving. It is impossible to convey the meanings of the Quran with full force in any translation. However, the better the English resembles the Quran's beauty of flow, simplicity of language, depth of meaning, and rhetorical effect, the better the translation. Therefore, the translator should know the principles governing the grammar and rhetoric of both languages.'*

In the same context, Zare (2016) carries out a comparative analysis study on some collocations in the Quran. She examines the possibility of losing the original features of Quranic collocations during the translation. Three Arabic-English translations conducted by Khan and Al-Hilali (1999), Pickthall (1938), and Yusuf Ali (1934-1938) are selected. The analysis framework is based on Vinay and Darbelenet's (1995) Model of Translation in order to identify strategies used during the process of translation. Zare concludes that some collocations in the Quranic text translated differently from one translator to another. Moreover, the translations of each translator are adapted to one of the different methods of Vinay and Darbelenet's Model of translation. Sharif and Salimi (2016) investigate two translations of the Quran to highlight the strategies used to convey the meanings of lexical collocations into English. To be more specific, the study sought to examine how Quranic lexical collocations with an 'antonym relationship' were translated into English. Lastly, Badr and Menacere (2019), examine a sample of Quranic collocations focusing on five selected English translations of the Quran to assess the degree of faithfulness and accuracy and to find out whether the final product is coherent, consistent, error-free, easier to read and

understand. The findings suggest that the translation of the Quran in English is still a work in progress, and it needs to be periodically evaluated and updated to reflect feedback provided from different perspectives and regions of the world. They argue that most English translations of the Quran show inconsistency in form and in content. Views are polarised between those who advocate as close a rendering of the Quranic text as possible and those who believe in a 'natural style' in the target text. It would seem that incremental improvements to the existing translations of the Quran are essential and this is a collective effort to provide clarity, naturalness, and accuracy. Findings indicated that there is some dissatisfaction from many receptors regarding the quality of English translations of the Quran which, while deemed to be useful, are flawed in transmitting the accurate meaning of collocations. The following table highlights some of key authors who investigated the translation of Quranic lexical collocations.

Table 5.3: Key authors on Quranic lexical collocations

Author	Date	Focus of the study	Country of study
<b>Badr and Menacere</b>	2019	Assessing the Translation Quality of Quranic collocations: For better or for worse	UK
<b>Zare</b>	2016	A Comparative Analysis of Collocation in Arabic-English Translations of the <i>Glorious Qur'an</i>	Iran
<b>Sharif and Salimi</b>	2016	An investigation of the applied strategies in translation of Quranic lexical collocations of the holy Quran	Iran
<b>Al-Sofi et al.</b>	2014	Quranic Collocations: A problem in Translation	Malaysia
<b>Alshaje</b>	2014	Issues in translating collocations of the holy Quran	India

<b>Ebrahimi, Pahlavannezhad and Nadernezhad</b>	2012	The analysis of Quranic collocations in the Orchard	Iran
<b>Dweik and Abu Shakra</b>	2011	Problems in translating collocations in religious texts	Jordan
<b>Abdullah</b>	2010	Assessing the translation of collocation in glorious Quran into English	Iraq
<b>Dweik and Abu Shakra</b>	2010	Strategies in Translating Collocations in Religious Texts from Arabic Into English	Jordan
<b>Nasser and Khashan</b>	2008	A study that provides lexical analysis of one Quranic collocation	Iraq

Source: Compiled by the present researcher

There are also infrequent articles dealing with the translation of metaphors in the Quran showing fragmented and inconsistent efforts with no clear methodological underpinning, focusing on just one or two verses of the Quran, e.g. Abdelaal, and Kaigama (2015) 'Investigating Metaphor Used in Surah Al-Hadid to Convey Abstract Meaning'; Abdel Tawwab Sharaf and Eldin (2014) 'A Cognitive Metaphorical Analysis of Selected Verses in the Holy Quran'; Abdul Muttalib, N. (2014) 'Rendering of Metaphor in Yasin Surat (Chapter 36) of the Holy Quran'. Al-Ustath No 210. Volume Two 2014 AD, 1435 AH 135; Moradi (2014) 'Translation of Culture-specific Phrases in the Holy Quran.' Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 4, No. 8, pp. 1735-1746, August 2014.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the literature, is that there is lack of consistency that previous studies demonstrated in terms of little theoretical base and erratic methodological underpinning. Moreover, the collection of data focused on a small sample of the Quranic features, instead of evaluating the

merits or demerits of the Quran in English and whether it is fit for purpose. The current study highlighted gaps and limitations that future studies need to address.

### **5.3 Methodological approaches and literature**

This study draws on previous and current state of knowledge in relation to Quranic translations focusing in particular on Quranic collocations in English. A systematic review of literature was conducted to produce research evidence on the topic under consideration, analysing how the issue of collocation is conceptualised within the literature and how research methods and theories have shaped the outcomes, strengths and weaknesses of the literature. In other words, it critically evaluated material that has already been published. This study builds on previous research regarding the broad concept of collocation and translation. It clearly demarcates the scope of the investigation and justifies those decisions. It positions the extant literature in a broader scholarly and historical context to critically examine the research methods used in existing literature.

The conclusion that can be drawn is that the collocation debate has generated a lot of interest from various stakeholders; educationalists, language learners, translators etc., as demonstrated by the prolific publications (Cowie, 2009; Wray, 2008; Nation 2001; Nesselhauf 2003, etc). Each author has their own perspective on what constitutes collocation. The term 'collocation' from a linguistic point of view, since its inception by Firth in the 1950's and engrained by his famous citation 'You shall know a word by the company it keeps,' has come a long way in providing fresh insights. However, there is little consensus among researchers as to what represents collocation, using a wide range of labels to refer it: 'A collocation is an arbitrary and recurrent word combination', individual blocks of

language, prefabs, phraseological units, word associations, formulaic sequence, idiom, idiomatic expression, lexical/lexicalised phrase, multi-word unit, phraseme etc.'. Evidence from the extensive literature suggests that the collocation theoretical debate has reached a conceptual stalemate, and many questions remain unanswered regarding the nature of collocation and why some lexical items keep the company of one collocates rather than another, and what attracts one word to cohabit with another word, while other words clash in the company of each other, more frequently than by chance (Badr & Menacere 2019).

Research on collocations is polarised between those who examined them from a statistical perspective, as frequency-based lexical units, while others viewed them from a conventional perspective as usage-based lexically restricted units (Granger and Paquot, 2008). Some researchers firmly believe that the frequency of co-occurrence of words in a text are viewed as a reliable criterion for defining collocations (Cowie, 2009; Wray, 2008; Nation 2001; Nesselhauf, 2003; Firth, 1957; Sinclair, 1991). Others put the emphasis on the syntactic and pragmatic relations between elements of a collocation (Nesselhauf, 2005). The key issue regarding the term collocation is that it is a multifarious and multidimensional concept which makes it hard to determine precisely and in a consistent way what should be categorised as a collocation. The fuzziness and elusiveness of collocation stems from the fact that it can stand as free word combinations, on the one hand, to completely fixed multi-word units on the other. Further conflicting views emerge regarding the formulaic expression inconsistency and the wide variation of the labels used to explain phraseological units. To get a sense of direction in this terminological maze, it can be argued that collocation basically refers to a group of two or more words that usually go together. In other words, it

is lexical partnership between words that are expected to match regularly with some other words to form a meaningful semantic unit (Badr and Menacere 2019). In short, research on collocation appears to be confined to the level of describing, defining and prescribing.

### **5.3.1 Previous methodological approaches**

A review of the current literature on translating collocations from Arabic into English with reference to the Quran reveals a limitation in depth and focus of existing research. Although, there is an increasing awareness and understanding of the importance and benefits of conducting research on phraseology in the Arabic speaking world, the literature on collocation involves mainly Indo-European languages. In contrast, research involving the translation of Arabic collocations remains under-researched. There has been a trickle rather than a steady stream of publications and papers on translating Arabic-English collocations.

What transpires from the existing overview of previous studies on Quranic collocations shows a fragmented area of research with limited scope. As demonstrated, only a handful of authors have examined the challenges of translating collocations with reference to Quranic text, yielding a partial not holistic view. It is worth noting that research on translating Quranic collocations seems to attract authors from Iran, Malaysia and India who have different linguistic backgrounds and experiences with the Quranic text in addressing the issue of Arabic collocation rather than from Arab scholars. Each has their own take which could be rather insightful. Moreover, most of the previous studies have

fallen short of exploring collocation as a complex construct which requires to be investigated from all angles through different stakeholders' lenses - linguists, translators and language learners. Instead, they mainly focus on defining collocation and providing two or three Quranic collocations as their sample of study. Conflicting views on collocations can be summed as follows:

- Collocation is a multidimensional term which is used and understood in many different ways and can be referred to by different labels (prefabricated lexical items, ready-made utterances, recurrent combinations, stock phrases, word combination of habitual co-occurrence)
- There is no definitive formulation and definition of collocation; it can be viewed and explained in many ways depending on the author and context in which it is used.
- Collocation lacks clarity as a concept. It is difficult to expect all the authors to share similar understanding, and it cannot be fully addressed from all perspectives. (Halliday 1966; Hoey 1991, 2005; Kjellmer 1987, 1994; Lewis 2000; Moon 1998; Sinclair 1966, 1987, 1991, 2004; Stubbs 1996, 2001; etc.).

The methodological approaches by the majority of studies are inconsistent and limited in scope. Many adopted the text analysis approach with one or two Quranic collocations without a clear theoretical or methodological framework (Al-Nasser and Khashan, 2008; Abdullah. 2010; Dweik and Abu Shakra, 2011; Ebrahimi et al., 2012; Alshaje, 2014; Sharif and Salimi, 2016).

#### **5.4 Research methodology and methods**

This section presents the qualitative methods adopted by the current study. Based on the purpose of the study, nature of the problem, and research questions, the philosophical paradigm underpinning this study is predominantly interpretivism because this study aims to find out about perceptions, interpretations and sense-making of Quranic collocations in translation.

The method adopted in this study uses a qualitative approach starting with text-based analysis of a broad sample of collocations from the five selected English translations of the Quran. The analysis of the qualitative data in Chapter 6 is supported in Chapter 7 by semi-structured interviews with translation specialists and bilingual Imams, as users of the English translation of the Quran, in order to gauge their views and perceptions regarding the clarity and accuracy of Quranic collocations translated into English. The descriptive data for this study were collected by using three research instruments of data collection that allow the researcher access to a comprehensive range of information to capture the full story and to overcome any potential deficiency as a result of employing a single method. The link between translators' perceptions and the views of the end users of English translations of the Quran is critical to sense-making and clarification on the translation of Quranic collocations and phraseology.

#### **5.4.1 Justification for selecting qualitative approach for this study**

According to Menacere (2016:25), the researcher selects a method based on its suitability to answer the research questions and objectives of the study under consideration: *'The selection of a method is fitness for purpose and this is largely contingent with the research aims, and the choice is always a compromise between a number of factors, including validity, reliability, and the access to data*

*and resources. It should be accepted that each method has its particular strengths and weaknesses.'*

Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) state that selecting the most suitable methodology and methods is still under discussion among researchers as implementing different methods will provide different perspectives on what is being studied. Many authors, such as Jankowicz (2005) and Robson (2011), emphasise that researchers are under no obligation to choose one method for one investigation and another for another investigation.

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate, since it facilitated the use of different research instruments and enabled the collection of more in-depth data which offered results with a greater perspective to address the research problem. With this method, the emphasis is placed on addressing the research problem, taking into account the participants' 'voice' by using a variety of data collection tools which provide additional support and evidence for the findings. Besides, it helps in minimising the researchers' individual biases.

#### **5.4.2 The evaluation framework used for text-based analysis**

Text analysis methods, often termed thematic analysis or qualitative content analysis, aim to identify common and conflicting features in qualitative data, before focusing on relationships between different parts of the data, thereby seeking to draw descriptive and/or explanatory conclusions clustered around themes (Gale et al, 2013). A qualitative approach is best as this study is exploring a subject about which not much is known in advance. The aim is to grasp the meanings, motives, reasons, patterns, etc. in order to capture the full story. In

qualitative content analysis, data are presented in words and themes, which makes it possible to draw some interpretation of the results.

In view of the proliferation of English translations of the Quran, a systematic and objective quality assessment framework of translation should be put in place to ensure that a translation meets the required quality standards and to address the flaws. However, to formulate one uniform and standardised translation quality assessment framework that can be used to assess all types of translation across languages, is unachievable (Badr and Menacere, 2019). Due to the complexity of the problem, the nature of collocation, and in order to have a comprehensive investigation regarding the challenges of translating Quranic collocations into English, text analysis is underpinned by semi-structured interviews with translation specialists and bilingual Imams.

A sample of Quranic collocations focusing on five selected English translations of the Quran are examined in order to assess the degree of faithfulness and accuracy and to find out whether the final product is coherent, consistent, error-free, and thereby easier to read and understand. The assessment framework suggested by this study takes into account the gain or loss incurred in the translating process and assesses the degree of the deviation from the meaning of the Quranic collocation. It identifies the various challenges faced by the translator in transferring Quranic collocations into English, to determine the degree of faithfulness in terms of the overall message which is being conveyed, focusing on lexical accuracy, grammatical correctness, stylistic fluency and naturalness.

This study seeks to find out whether the five selected English translations of the Quran focusing on collocations, have succeeded or fallen short of achieving their aim of meeting the expectations of non-Arabic readers/users of the English translations of the Quran, and to what extent the numerous weaknesses and flaws of the translation hinder communication. The justification of the chosen English versions of the Quran for the current study is given on pages 7 & 8.

### **5.4.3 Evaluation processes**

In order to evaluate if a translation's quality is fit for purpose or not, it is important to gauge its accuracy against the source text. Evaluation of the translation focuses on form and content (structure vs meaning) to determine whether the source of a text is captured in the translation and identifies nuances in semantic, contextual and pragmatic meanings. The concept of quality in translation broadly corresponds to product fitness for purpose – meaning that the product meets the readers' and users' requirements. In other words, a translation as a product meets the expectations and needs of the target audience by preserving the message of the original and producing a meaningful translation.

The Quranic collocations selected by this study are evaluated in terms of their accuracy and fluency, to

1. Identify the various linguistic difficulties faced by the translator focusing on collocation.
2. Assess the degree of fidelity and accuracy of the lexical items of the collocation
3. Evaluate the quality of translation as a product, highlighting the different strengths and weaknesses of TL.

4. Determine the degree of faithfulness in terms of the overall message, which is being conveyed.
5. Identify and discuss the translating processes and methods used to transfer the SL message, e.g. word for word, free, adaptation etc.
6. Assess the gain or loss incurred resulting from the translating process and assess the degree of the deviation from SL message.
7. Provide convincing and concrete alternative solutions whenever necessary.

Where Quranic collocation flaws are identified in translation, this study considers the importance of the negative effect that each loss of meaning has on the overall message and its impact on the receptors. Table 6.4 in the next chapter illustrates the translation quality assessment model developed by this study and informed by the literature.

In order to achieve its objectives, this study includes the following sources for analysis:

- i. A variety of dictionaries such as: *Al- Mu'jam al-wasit* (2008) and *Mu'jam al-lughah al-'Arabīyah al-mu'āširah* (2015). *Arabic-English Dictionaries: The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (2016) and *Al-mawrid Arabic-English Dictionary* (1996). These linguistic sources are deemed useful in terms of giving the meaning of the Arabic words as an individual and/or as a word combination. They provide the primary and the secondary meaning of the collocates under analysis and help the researcher assess the degree of accuracy of the translations of the collocational units under investigation.

- ii. Exegetical sources aimed at explaining and clarifying the meanings of Quranic collocations. The rationale for selecting the Tafseer works by Tafseer Al-Tabari, Tafseer Al-Qurtubi, Tafseer Ibn Kathir, Al-Tahir Ibn Ashur Tafseer Qutb is presented in Table 6.5 in Chapter 6.

Text-based analysis of samples of Quranic collocation is supported by semi-structured interviews. Chapter Seven interprets the results of the qualitative data, obtained through the semi-structured interviews. These interviews involved seven translation specialists, including Abdel Haleem, one of the translators of the five translations of the Quran selected by this study.

#### **5.4.4 Participants' selection criteria**

Semi-structured interviews with translation specialists and bilingual Imams as users of the English translation of the Quran were adopted in order to gauge their views and perceptions regarding the clarity and accuracy of Quranic collocations translated into English. The sample of interviewees (translation experts) is selected based on the following criteria:

- First-hand experience in dealing with translation studies and translation practice
- Experienced professionals in dealing with day to day translation activities in UK and at international level.
- Experience and awareness of English translation of the Quran and the issues or difficulties around rendering sensitive texts.
- Participants hold vital information in the area under investigation, some with expertise and direct involvement in the translation of the Quran.

Others have a major interest and knowledge of translation through teaching and practice.

- Semi-structured interviews in this study are viewed as a way of supplementing other collection methods, such as thematic and text analysis.

#### **5.4.5 Criteria for selection of bilingual Imams**

1. First-hand experience in dealing on a day-to-day basis with the Quran in English translation either in their Friday sermons or talking to worshippers.
2. Experience and knowledge of religious and linguistic matters in both Arabic and English.
3. Holding vital information in the area under investigation regarding the various challenges of understanding the Quran, having also a major interest and awareness about the importance and benefits of the accessibility of the Quran in English.

#### **5.4.6 Appropriateness of the selected method: semi-structured interviews**

There is neither a methodological nor a theoretical framework that is 'correct' and it is the researcher's choice to determine their own philosophical view and how that informs their research design to best answer the research question(s) under consideration. The selection of a particular method is fitness for purpose. There is a clear link between the research questions and the existing literature review conducted in the field of collocation and translation. The selected data collection methods are drawn in part from the literature review and relate to the research

problem. Thus, the methods are tailored to the questions this research is trying to answer.

The research aims to explore participants' knowledge, views, experiences, understandings, meanings, interpretations and their perceptions regarding the translation of Quranic collocations in English, in other words knowledge is expressed in 'words not numbers'. Thus, knowledge is fundamentally dependent not on numbers but on language, focusing on generating data obtained through interaction with translation specialists and end users of English versions of the Quran such as Imams, gauging their views and gaining access to their experiences, interpretations, meanings, and their perceptions.

The semi-structured interview was deemed an appropriate instrument and the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach is summed as follows:

- Gain diverse data through different lenses and about a range of interests related to Quranic translation;
- Achieve comprehensive understanding more fully and get a fuller research picture regarding translating Quranic collocations;
- Generate deeper and broader insights from different stakeholders;
- Enhance the significance of interpretation;
- The interviews allowed the researcher to ask some key questions about the proliferation of translations of the Quran into English, but at the same time the researcher was open to the interviewees' points which they wished to raise about any important, interesting and relevant aspects within the focus of the topic under consideration.

## Chapter Six

### Assessing a sample of Quranic collocations

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the translation of Quranic collocations across five English versions of the Quran. The aim is to investigate the quality of translation as a product, highlighting the different challenges and difficulties faced by the translators of the Quran, focusing on collocations. What actually constitutes a quality translation is the subject of on-going debate. The notion of quality is something that everyone knows exists, and they claim to know quality when they see it, but no one can provide clear parameters or express what it is in precise words. Thus, quality assessment of translation is a matter of relativity, it is a subjective issue simply because of lack of a reliable measurement framework. Firstly, because understanding and interpreting texts depends on individual skills and experience, most people get something from a text but not necessarily the same thing. Secondly, there are different ways and means of expressing a message in another language. The way people perceive, understand and produce language differs from speaker to speaker. However, as Jakobson (1971:33) points out “Languages differ essentially in what they must convey and not in what they may convey.”

#### 6.1 Translation quality assessment

A systematic and objective quality assessment framework of translation is hard to come by. Translation theorists and practitioners have yet to agree on the assessment criteria. It is an area of research which remains under-researched

and with few landmarks. In other words, there is neither a process nor a measurement by which translation experts can reliably determine for themselves the quality of a translation (Badr and Menacere 2019).

The following example of Quranic phraseology shows that any translation approach/method that focuses on the words and ignores the whole picture i.e. the whole context, inevitably produces a distorted meaning. Consider for instance, the assessment of the following phraseological units:

	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمْ شُؤَاظٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٍ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرُوا نِ	'Irhmn, 55:35	On you will be sent (O ye evil ones twain!) a <b>flame of fire (to burn) and a smoke (to choke)</b> : no defence will ye have.	Against you <b>shall be loosed a flame of fire, and molten brass</b> ; and you shall not be helped.	A <b>flash of fire will be let loose upon you, and smoke</b> , and you will be left without succour!	A <b>flash of fire and smoke</b> will be released upon you and no one will come to your aid.	There will be sent against you both, smokeless flames of fire <b>and (molten) brass</b> , and you will not be able to defend yourselves.

*fuwa:zun min na:rin wa nuħa:s*: this phraseological unit involves an inimitable encounter with lexical items which combine together to provide a specific communicative purpose. The five translators seemed to have overlooked how translating is a creative activity, a negotiating process which requires more than just a linguistic operation. The translators conveyed the surface or overt meaning *shall be loosed a flame of fire, and molten brass*. *fuwa:zun min na:rin* *شُؤَاظٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ* is a broad and ambiguous term that refers to *flames of fire*, but *nuħa:s* can be seen as a mistranslation. It does not mean *molten brass, copper* or any other metal as suggested by the translators and some of the Tafseer sources. The term *nuħas* implies *calamities, disasters*. The

translators have neither produced communicative accuracy and meaningful phraseology, nor naturalness, yielding instead strangeness and foreignness in the English version of the Quran. This study does not make any claim to hold the absolute truth, since the true meaning of Quranic verses only Allah knows وَمَا يَعْلَمُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ *wa ma: yaʿlamu taʿwilyahu ʿila llahu* ‘No one knows its hidden meanings except Allah.’ No translation of the Quran in English or any other language can claim to have preserved so faithfully the sense of the original (Badr and Menacere 2019).

Translating is not a form of duplication, particularly when dealing with sensitive texts like the Quran, but a means of conveying meaning. The translator’s main task is not so much about recovery but the discovery of meaning. The best approach when dealing with Quranic phraseology in translation is to consider the degree of translatability i.e. whether the equivalent expressions enjoy the same stylistic value in their respective contexts and cultures.

زرتم المقابر *Zurtum al maqaabir* posed another challenge for the translators.

	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
أَلْهَيْكُمْ أَلْتَكَاثُرُ حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ أَلْمَقَابِرِ	'Itk'θr, 102:2	Until ye <u>visit the</u> <u>graves.</u>	even till you <u>visit</u> <u>the tombs.</u>	until you <u>go</u> <u>down to your</u> <u>graves.</u>	until <u>you go into</u> <u>your graves.</u>	Until you <u>visit the</u> <u>graves (i.e.</u> <u>till you die).</u>

زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرِ *zurtumu 'Imaqa:bira* this phraseological unit carries a meaning quite different from its surface meaning. It has a form of euphemistic undertone about it. It is misleading to render it at face value as ‘visit the graves/tombs,’ as the literal translation, without regard to the connotative or contextual meaning, can be erroneous. Often translating the form, not the content or substance of what the

Quran actually says and means, has led to controversial arguments. *رُزُّنُمُ الْمَقَابِرِ* *zurumu 'Imaqa:bira* is used metaphorically meaning 'death and to die or 'going to the grave'. In terms of translation, it is important not jump to conclusions about what the Quranic collocation means overtly, but to work out what it is covertly saying. In other words, convey the spirit of the word not the form of the word to achieve meaningful and communicative translation.

This chapter is divided into two main parts: the first part consists of assessments of a sample of Quranic collocations using the text-based analysis method. The assessment tools include Arabic dictionaries and Tafseer reference sources (Tafseer is the Arabic word for interpretation) that provide the researcher with additional clarification and explanation to make an informed decision on the accuracy and fluency of Quranic collocations in English. The second part is given over to semi-structured interviews with translation specialists, including one of the key translators of the Quran in English, Abdul Haleem, as well as end users of the Quran in English, imams working in UK mosques, in order to gauge their views and perceptions regarding the difficulties in translating the Quran in general, and Quranic collocations in particular.

## **6.2 The relevance of translation quality assessment**

The depth of translation quality assessment literature suggests that this area of research has generated plenty of interest from academia and translation professionals (Larose, 1989; Nord, 1991; House, 1997, 2009; Williams, 2001, 2004; Newmark, 1988; Zehnalová, 2016). However, the various measurement criteria of translation quality remain shrouded in vagueness. They often appear too broad and some are unrealistic, while others are fragmented and inconsistent,

primarily because 'quality' is subjective. Moreover, quality appears to be a tag that people use or a label to which they attach meaning or parameters to suit their own purposes. Thus, the wide variations in descriptions of quality are understandable because quality, like beauty, is 'in the eye of the beholder.' Consequently, there is no universal consensus on what constitutes quality. According to Pfeffer and Coote (1991) quality is a 'slippery concept' as it is a difficult and elusive term to define. Quality has been defined from different perspectives and orientations, according to the person, the measures applied and the context within which it is considered. Therefore, the definition of quality might vary depending on the profession, service or industry, each having a different definition of the term quality. Since the criteria used to define the quality of a translation are not one size fits all, quality needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Translation quality assessment can be conducted on the assumption that the evaluator or assessor has clear criteria of assessment with which to assess the quality of given translation products. The question which remains unanswered is, are the benchmarks or standards against which translation products can be "measured" viable? According to Alina Secară (2005, 39), translation quality assessment is fit for purpose:

*"Quality in translation is certainly one of the most debated subjects in the field. The strong interest it continues to generate among different groups, from researchers and translation organisations to practitioners and translation teachers, has made it a field of inquiry on its own, called translation quality assessment (TQA). This interest is motivated by both academic and economic/professional reasons: the need to evaluate*

*students' work and the translation providers' need to ensure a quality product."*

There is need for quality control of translation. The quality of most services delivered and products provided undergo strict quality control, so why should translation as a production be an exception? According to Uszkoreit et al (2011:1)

*"High-quality translation is in greater demand today than ever before. Despite considerable progress in machine translation (MT), which has enabled many new applications for automatic translation, the quality barriers for outbound translations (i.e. translations to be published or distributed outside of an organisation) have not yet been overcome. As a result, the volume of translation today falls far short of what is needed for optimal business operations and legal requirements."*

A plethora of measures or labels are used to describe or qualify a piece of translation: *'Accurate, fluent, excellent, good, fair, satisfactory, poor, contains minor or major errors, natural, unnatural, mistranslated, under-translated, over-translated'* etc. Thus, more often than not the assessment of quality of a piece of translation remains impressionistic. The substantive gap arises out of the fact that there are several interpretations and measurements of translation quality assessment which makes Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) impractical in nature and the models become context-specific. The following table highlights the advantages and disadvantages of TQA:

Table 6.1: The good and the bad of Translation Quality Assessment (TQA)

<b>The good</b>	<b>Grey areas</b>
<p>(From Hönig 1997, 15) Users need it because they want to know whether they can trust the translators and rely on the quality of their product.</p>	<p>Vagueness of assessment criteria Lack of consensus amongst translation practitioners and theorists</p>
<p>Professional translators need it because there are so many amateur translators who work for very little money that professional translators will only be able to sell their products if there is some proof of the superior quality of their work.</p>	<p>Lack of a standardised terminology Quality is an ambiguous concept, it means different things to different people</p>
<p>Translation studies research needs it because if it does not want to become academic and marginal in the eyes of practising translators, it must establish criteria for quality control and assessment.</p>	<p>Confusion due to the existence of a plethora of assessment procedures resulting from different theoretical approaches to translation.</p>
<p>Trainee translators need it because otherwise they will not know how to systematically improve the quality of their work</p>	<p>Lack of a consensus regarding what translation competence involves.</p>
<p>Translation quality assessment models provide a structured way to assess quality. There are existing industry models which are mostly based on error typology</p>	<p>There is no practical quality control model that can deal with a variety of text types</p>

Developed by the researcher

### 6.3 What constitutes good translation?

Clearly, translation quality matters; however, views differ with regards to what constitutes a good translation. A translation may be judged as satisfactory by some but deemed inadequate by others. As Halliday, (2001:14) argues *“it is notoriously difficult to say why or even whether, something is a good translation.”*

Every translation is an act of communication, an interpretation and a creative process. The standard of final product depends on the individual translating skills and experience. According to Venuti (1995:1) fluency is key to translation: *“A translated text... is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent.”*

The following table reflects the subjective views of what makes a good and poor translation:

Table 6.2: Elements of good and bad translations

Good translation	Poor translation
<p>“a good translation is one that does not read like one” (Newmark 1988)</p> <p>If the translator’s primary aim is to produce in the TL the same meaning and impact of the SL, then quality should be measured in terms of whether it represents or carries the same value as the original</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• loss of information</li><li>• translation is inadequate when it fails to convey the gist of the SL</li></ul> <p>“all translations are partial” (Menacere 1999)</p>

Adapted by the researcher

## 6.4 Criticism of Translation Quality Assessment

The paradox of translation quality assessment stems from the fact that translation quality control is necessary but there is neither one best method to evaluate a piece of translation nor one size fits all model of translation quality assessment. In other words, there is no translation quality assessment model that is ideal and applicable to all language pairs and text types and as such is not free from criticism. Many argue that a zero defect in translation is an unattainable objective (Badr and Menacere 2019).

Table 6.3: Views on Translation Quality Assessment

Authors	Views on Translation Quality Assessment
House (2000: 2)	<i>'Anecdotal and subjective treatises on the merits and weaknesses of a translation, subjective and basically unverifiable statements of opinion'.</i>
Fawcett (1981:69),	<i>"translation quality assessment proceeds according to the lordly, but completely unexplained, whimsy of 'It doesn't sound right' "</i>
Chesterman (1997:121)	<i>"anything in the form of the translated text that triggers a critical reaction" in the assessor</i>
Bowker (2000, 183)	<i>"evaluation is one of the most problematic areas of translation"</i>
Zehnalová (2016:1)	<i>translation studies evaluation 'subjectivity of evaluation, vagueness of assessment criteria, lack of a standardized terminology and of attention from both researchers and practitioners) and how contemporary authors address these issues'</i>
Bassnett-McGuire, (1980:9)	<i>"a great stumbling block"</i> <i>"absence of a universal canon according to which texts may be assessed"</i>

Schäffner (1998, 4)	<i>“quality is not ‘objectively’ given, but depends on the text user and his/her assessment criteria”</i>
Snell-Hornby	<i>“a thorny problem”</i>
Sager (1989, 91)	<i>“there are no absolute standards of translation quality, but only more or less appropriate translations for the purpose for which they are intended.”</i>
Robert (2008, 3)	<i>“it will not come as a surprise that there is a halo of fuzziness around the concept of revision as well.”</i>
Arango-Keeth and Koby (2003, 117)	<i>“translation evaluation has remained the least developed, and for many scholars it is still perceived as a ‘probabilistic endeavour,’ one in which subjectivity constitutes the most salient criterion”</i>

Developed by the researcher

As can be seen, many authors seem to have issues with translation quality assessment, highlighting its flaws and limitations. The impression is given that translation quality assessment has become much talked about for the wrong reasons. Some focus on its ineffective measurement techniques and anecdotal set of criteria while others view the evaluation of translation quality as an unreliable instrument. This study argues that it is inevitable that any translation quality assessment model is prescriptive and anecdotal, but it is a ‘necessary evil’. As Uszkoreit et al (2011:2) point out:

*“Translation without quality is worthless. However, there is little agreement about what quality is and how to measure it. Quality expectations must be as clearly defined as other aspects such as deadline, price, and terminology. Stakeholders, from authors to human translators and translation technology developers, must be rewarded for their*

*contributions to quality. Expectations must be realistic for specific projects and constraints.”*

In today's world, people depend on translation more than ever due to globalisation and high levels of migration and immigration especially within the European Union. Communication among speakers of different languages is made possible thanks to translation. Thus, the translator is a communication facilitator (Menacere, 1999). Quality translation is in greater demand and in short supply. According to Newmark (1988, 41) the fuss over translation quality is over the top because he argues *“the majority of translations nowadays are better than their originals—or at least ought to be so.”*

### **6.5 Assessment framework adopted by this study**

Against this backdrop of Translation Quality Assessment, the assessment framework suggested by this study takes into account the gain or loss incurred in the translating process and assesses the degree of the deviation from the meaning of the Quranic collocation. It identifies the various challenges faced by the translator in transferring Quranic collocations into English, to determine the degree of faithfulness in terms of the overall message which is being conveyed, focusing on lexical accuracy, grammatical correctness, stylistic fluency and naturalness. This study believes that regular translation quality assessment is likely to lead to continuous improvement and provide perspectives that could potentially enhance translation as a product and benefit end users. There seems to be a number of studies which indicate that Bible translation undergoes regular evaluation to determine the quality of translation. Barnwell (1986: 23) for instance

suggests that there are three qualities of a good translation: a) clarity, b) naturalness, and c) accuracy. In contrast, a quality assessment regarding the existing translations of the Quran is overlooked.

This study attempts to find out whether the five selected English translations of the Quran focusing on collocations, have succeeded or fallen short of achieving their aim of meeting the expectations of non-Arabic readers/users of the English translations of the Quran and to what extent the numerous weaknesses and flaws of the translation hinder communication.

### **6.5.1 Assessment processes**

In order to evaluate if a translation's quality is fit for purpose or not, it is important to gauge its accuracy against the source text. Evaluation of the translation focuses on form and content (structure vs meaning) to determine whether the source of a text is captured in the translation and identifies blips in semantic, contextual and pragmatic meanings. The concept of quality in translation broadly corresponds to product fitness for purpose – meaning that the product meets the readers' and users' requirements. In other words, a translation as a product meets the expectations and needs of the target audience by preserving the message of the original and producing a meaningful translation.

Adopting a particular translation assessment framework is confined to a particular text type and is not always generalisable. The Quranic collocations selected by this study are evaluated in terms of their accuracy and fluency, to

- Identify the various linguistic difficulties faced by the translator focusing on collocation

- Assess the degree of fidelity and accuracy of the lexical items of the collocation
- Evaluate the quality of translation as a product, highlighting the different strengths and weaknesses of TL
- Determine the degree of faithfulness in terms of the overall message, which is being conveyed
- Identify and discuss the translating processes and methods used to transfer the SL message, e.g. word for word, free, adaptation etc.
- Assess the gain or loss incurred resulting from the translating process and assess the degree of the deviation from SL message
- Provide convincing and concrete alternative solutions whenever necessary

It is worth reiterating that there is no translating concept or method on which everyone agrees; thus, any evaluation is the individual's interpretation, and this study is no exception. When Quranic collocation flaws are identified in translation, this study considers the importance of the negative effect that each loss of meaning has on the overall message and its impact on the receptors.

The following table illustrates the translation quality assessment model developed by this study and informed by the literature.

Table 6.4: Translation quality assessment model

<b>Accuracy</b>	<b>Nature of the error</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lexical</li> <li>• Grammatical</li> <li>• Cultural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• False sense</li> <li>• Nonsense</li> <li>• Ambiguous or</li> <li>• Misleading</li> </ul>

<b>Fluency</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate register</li> <li>• Readability</li> <li>• Naturalness</li> <li>• Coherence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it easy to read?</li> <li>• Does the translation read well?</li> <li>• Has the translator preserved the foreignness of the SL text or has s/he adapted it to suit the TL stylistic norms?</li> <li>• Unnatural, clumsy</li> </ul>

Developed by the researcher

The evaluation of the translation method adopted by this study considers also the following aspects:

Whether the translator has

- misinterpreted
- deliberately overlooked
- seriously distorted
- misunderstood the SL information
- used an inadequate translating method e.g. word for word
- failed to check sources to make informed decisions.

and whether the above translation blips are due to:

- translator's insufficient competence in translation,
- inadequate knowledge of the two languages
- lack of familiarity with subject matter
- poor cultural awareness

To conclude, assessing a piece of translation is evaluating the translator's work. 'Evaluation' or 'assessment' of the quality of translation reflects a personal and prescriptive judgement; it is not universal. It inevitably uses subjective, loose and

ill-defined criteria. With no agreed standardised framework or method, any evaluation is the individual's interpretation. The main aim is to decide whether the piece of translation is fit for purpose i.e. has the overall communicative purpose of the SL text been rendered adequately in TL.

### **6.5.2 References and sources used for assessing the Quranic collocations in the five selected translations**

This study makes use of two key sources to achieve its objectives:

- 1) A variety of dictionaries such as: *Al- Mu'jam al-wasit* (2008) and *Mu'jam al-lughah al-'Arabīyah al-mu'āṣirah* (2015). Arabic-English Dictionaries: *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (2016) and *Al-mawrid Arabic-English Dictionary* (1996). These linguistic sources are deemed useful in terms of giving the meaning of the Arabic words as an individual and/or as a word combination. They provide the primary and the secondary meaning of the collocates under analysis and help the researcher assess the degree of accuracy of the translations of the collocational units under investigation.
- 2) Exegetical sources aimed at explaining and clarifying the meanings of Quranic collocations. The rationale for selecting the following list of five Tafseer works by Tafseer Al-Tabari, Tafseer Al-Qurtubi, Tafseer Ibn Kathir, Al-Tahir Ibn Ashur Tafseer Qutb is set out in the following table:

Table 6.5: Exegetical sources checked during the process of TQA

Author	Date	Title	Characteristics
<i>Tafseer Al-Tabari</i>	(270-310 AH) (883-923 A.D)	جامع البيان عن تأويل آي القرآن <i>zamiʕ al-bayan ʕn taʔwyl ayat al-Qur'an</i>	Tabari's comprehensive and widely cited interpretation of the verses of the Quran is considered by many scholars as one of the classics of Arabic and Islamic research that has been a fundamental reference of knowledge for scholars engaged in the tradition of Quranic exegesis.
<i>Tafseer Al-Qurtubi</i>	(610-671 AH) (1213-1272 A.D)	الجامع لأحكام القرآن <i>aljamiʕ li ʔahkam al-Quran</i>	It is a well-known commentary. One of the objectives of this Tafseer was to extrapolate juristic rulings from the Quran as well as providing the main acknowledged exegesis of the (verses). Qurtubi's work also contributed to the study of key areas in linguistics, as well as Hadith-based evidence to substantiate certain rulings held by some leading scholars of the past. It is a classic which is still referred to today.
<i>Tafseer ibn kathir</i>	(701-774 A H) (1300 -1373 A.D)	تفسير القرآن العظيم <i>tafsjr al-Qur'an ʔl-'azjm</i>	This is considered an outstanding and comprehensive exegetical reference even today, as it uses the Quran, the Sunnah to comment on the verses and it pays attention to the use of language and the reasons of revelations.

<i>Al-Tahir Ibn Ashur</i>	(1297-1393 AH) (1879-1973 A D)	<i>اتحرير والتنوير al -tahryr wal- tanwyr</i>	The book represents fifty years of his hard work. Ibn Ashur's approach is most notably characterised by his emphasis on the rhetorical aspect of the Quran, instead of relying completely on traditional interpretational narrations (riwaya) employed by other mufassirs (authors of Tafseer). The book is considered one of the most important contemporary Quranic exegesis to this day.
<i>Tafseer Qutb</i>	(1323-1385 AH) (1906-1966 A.D)	<i>في ظلال القرآن fj Zilal al -Quran</i>	Qutb is a modern Arab author who contributed to introducing a modern and different vision to the interpretation of the Quran. <i>في ظلال القرآن</i> <i>Fi Zilal al-Quran</i> is viewed as one of the most outstanding pieces of research dealing with the interpretation of the Quran.

### 1. أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ:

The following table shows some of the multiple uses of the collocate أَصْحَابُ in the Quran:

Quranic collocations	Transliteration	Quranic Collocations	Transliteration
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ	'ʔaʃħa:bu 'Ina:'ri	أَصْحَابُ مُوسَى	'ʔaʃħa:bu muwsay'ʔ
أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ	'ʔaʃħa:ba 'Iʒanati	أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ	'ʔaʃħa:bi 'Is:aʕiyri
أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ	'ʔaʃħa:bi 'Iʒaħiyimi	أَصْحَابِ الْقَرْيَةِ	'ʔaʃħa:ba 'Iqaryati
أَصْحَابِ الْأَسْبَتِ	'ʔaʃħa:bi 'Is:abti	أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ	'ʔaʃħa:bu 'Imaymanati

أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ	'ʔaʃħa:bu 'l'ʔaʕra'fi	أَصْحَابُ الْمَشَاةِ	'ʔaʃħa:bu 'lmaʃʔamati
أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ	'ʔaʃħa:bu 'l'ʔaykati	أَصْحَابُ الْقُبُورِ	'ʔaʃħa:bi 'lqubuwri
أَصْحَابُ الْكُفِّهِ	'ʔaʃħa:ba 'lkaħfi	أَصْحَابُ الْأَخْدُودِ	'ʔaħʃa:bu 'l'ʔuxduwdi
أَصْحَابُ مَدْيَنَ	ʔaʃħa:bi madyana	أَصْحَابُ السَّفِينَةِ	'ʔaʃħa:ba 'ls:afiynat
أَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ	ʔaʃħa:ba 'lra:si:	أَصْحَابُ الصِّرَاطِ السَّوِيِّ	'ʔaʃħa:bu 'lʃiraʔi 'lsawi:yi:

The explicit and implicit meaning of the collocates أَصْحَابُ:

Primary meaning	Secondary meaning
<b>صاحب</b> <i>ṣahib</i> : companion, comrade, friend; owner, possessor etc.	صاحب الجلالة His Majesty
	صاحب الأمر master
	صاحب العمل employer
	صاحب القرار decision maker

The collocational unit أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

*they who disbelieve, and deny Our revelations, they shall be companions of the Fire.  
They will abide therein forever.*

*wa'la:ḍiyna kafaruw wa kaḍa:buw bi ʔa'yatina 'ʔuwlaʔyika 'ʔaʃħa:bu 'lna:'ri hum fiyha  
xaliduwna*

The following represents a sample of Quranic collocates أَصْحَابُ 'ʔaʃħa:bu focusing on five selected English translations of the Quran to assess the degree of faithfulness and accuracy and to ensure that the final product is coherent, consistent, error-free, and easy to read and understand.

أصحاب	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ	'lbqrt, 2:39	those who reject Faith and belie Our Signs, they shall be <u>companions of the Fire</u> ; they shall abide therein."	for the unbelievers who cry lies to Our signs, those shall be <u>the inhabitants of the Fire</u> , therein dwelling forever.	those who are bent on denying the truth and giving the lie to Our messages – <u>they are destined for the fire</u> , and therein shall they abide.	those who disbelieve and deny Our messages shall be <u>the inhabitants of the Fire</u> , and there they will remain.	those who disbelieve and belief. Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) such are <u>the dwellers of the Fire</u> , they shall abide therein forever
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ	'lbqrt, 2:82	those who have faith and work righteousness , they are <u>companions of the Garden</u>	those that believe, and do deeds of righteousness -- those are <u>the inhabitants of Paradise</u>	those who attain to faith and do righteous deeds – they are <u>destined for paradise</u>	Those who believe and do good deeds will be <u>the inhabitants of the Garden</u>	those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, they are <u>dwellers of Paradise</u>
إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَا تُسْأَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ	'lbqrt, 2:119	We have sent thee in truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner: But of thee no question shall be asked of <u>the Companions of the Blazing Fire</u>	We have sent thee with the truth, good tidings to bear, and warning. Thou shalt not be questioned touching <u>the inhabitants of Hell</u>	We have sent thee [O Prophet] with the truth, as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner: and thou shalt not be held accountable for those who are <u>destined for the blazing fire</u>	We have sent you [O Prophet] with the truth, bearing good news and warning. You will not be responsible for <u>the inhabitants of the Blaze</u>	We have sent you (O Muhammad Peace be upon him) with the truth (Islam), a bringer of glad tidings (for those who believe in what you brought, that they will enter Paradise) and a warner (for those who disbelieve in what you brought, they will enter the Hell-fire). And you will not be asked about <u>the dwellers of the blazing Fire</u>

أَوْ نُلْعَنُهُمْ كَمَا لَعَنَّا أَصْحَابَ السَّبْتِ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا	'Ins'?,4:4 7	or curse them as We cursed <u>the Sabbath- breakers</u>	or curse them as We cursed <u>the Sabbath- men</u>	or We reject them just as We rejected those <u>people who broke the Sabbath</u>	We reject those <u>who broke the Sabbath</u>	or curse them as We cursed <u>the Sabbath- breakers</u>
وَتَادَى أَصْحَابِ الْأَعْرَافِ رَجَالًا يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ	'l'7r'f, 7:48	The <u>men on the heights</u> will call to certain men whom they will know from their marks	<u>the dwellers on the Battlements</u> shall call to certain men they know by their sign	<u>they who [in life] had possessed this faculty of discernment</u> will call out to those whom they recognize by their marks [as sinners]	And <u>the people of the heights</u> will call out to certain men they recognize by their marks	And the <u>men on Al-A'raf (the wall)</u> will call unto the men whom they would recognise by their marks
وَإِنْ كَانَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ نَظَالِمِينَ	'lhjr,15: 78	<u>the Companions of the Wood</u> were also wrong-doers	Certainly <u>the dwellers in the Thicket</u> were evildoers	And <u>the dwellers of the wooded dales [of Madyan, too,]</u> were inveterate evildoers	<u>The forest- dwellers,</u> too were wrongdoers	And <u>the dwellers in the wood [i.e. the people of Madyan (Midian) to whom Prophet Shu'aib (ؑ) was sent by Allah,</u> were also <i>Zalimun</i> (polytheists and wrong-doers, etc.).
أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنَ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا	'lkhf, 18:9	dost thou reflect that <u>the Companions of the Cave</u> and of the Inscription were wonders among Our Sign?	dost thou think <u>the Men of the Cave</u> and Er- Rakeem were among Our signs a wonder?	dost thou [really] think that [the parable of] <u>the Men of the Cave</u> and of [their devotion to] the scriptures could be deemed more wondrous than any [other] of Our messages?	Do you find <u>the Companions in the Cave</u> and Al- Raqim so wondrous among all Our other signs?	Do you think that <u>the people of the Cave</u> and the Inscription (the news or the names of the people of the Cave) were a wonder among Our Signs?
فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَصْحَابُ الصِّرَاطِ السَّوِيِّ وَمَنِ اهْتَدَى	th,20: 135	and soon shall ye know <u>who it is that is on the straight and even way,</u> and who it is that has received Guidance	and assuredly you shall know <u>who are the travellers on the even path,</u> and who is guided.'	you will come to know as to <u>who has followed the even path,</u> and who has found guidance!"	You will come to learn <u>who has followed the even path,</u> and been rightly guided	and <u>you shall know who are they that are on the Straight and Even Path</u>

فَلَمَّا تَرَآءَى الْجَمْعَانَ قَالَ أَصْحَابُ مُوسَى إِنَّا لَمُدْرَكُونَ	'lʃrʔ, 26:61	And when the two bodies saw each other, the <u>people of Moses</u> said: "We are sure to be overtaken."	when the two hosts sighted each other, <u>the companions of Moses</u> said, 'We are overtaken!'	as soon as the two hosts came in sight of one another, the <u>followers of Moses</u> exclaimed: "Behold, we shall certainly be overtaken [and defeated]!"	As soon as the two sides came within sight of one another, <u>Moses followers</u> said, 'we shall definitely be caught'.	when the two hosts saw each other, <u>the companions of Musa (Moses)</u> said: "We are sure to be overtaken"
إِنَّمَا يَدْعُو حِزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ	f'tr,35:6	He only invites his adherents, that they may become <u>Companions of the Blazing Fire.</u>	He calls his party only that they may be among <u>the inhabitants of the Blaze.</u>	He but calls on his followers to the end that they might find themselves among <u>such as are destined for the blazing flame</u>	Invites his followers only <u>to enter the blazing fire</u>	He only invites his <i>Hizb</i> (followers) that they may become <u>the dwellers of the blazing Fire.</u>
وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَاءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ	ys, 36:13	Set forth to them, by way of a parable, the (story of) <u>the Companions of the City.</u> Behold!, there came apostles to it	Strike for them a similitude -- <u>the inhabitants of the city,</u> when the Envoys came to it;	AND SET FORTH unto them a parable – [the story of how] <u>the people of a township</u> [behaved] when [Our] message-bearers came unto them	Give them the example <u>to the people to whose town</u> messengers came	And put forward to them a similitude; <u>the (story of the) dwellers of the town,</u> [It is said that the town was Antioch (Antakiya)], when there came Messengers to them.
أَصْحَابِ الْمَيْمَنَةِ	'lw'qʃt, 56:8	What will be <u>the Companions of the Right Hand?</u>	(O <u>Companions of the Right!</u> )	oh, how [happy] will be <u>they who have attained to what is right!</u>	Those on the right hand – <u>what people they are</u>	Who will be <u>those on the Right Hand?</u> (As a respect for them, because they will enter Paradise).
مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ	'lw'qʃt, 56:9	what will be <u>the Companions of the Left Hand?</u>	(O <u>Companions of the Left!</u> )	oh, <u>how [unhappy] will be they who have lost themselves in evil!</u>	Those on the left - <u>What people they are</u>	Who will be <u>those on the Left Hand?</u> (As a disgrace for them, because they will enter Hell).
قَدْ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْفُجُورِ	'lmmthnt ,60: 13	they are already in despair, just as the Unbelievers	who have despaired of the world to come, even as the unbelievers	just as those deniers of the truth are bereft of all hope of [ever	They despair of the life to come as the disbelievers	just as the disbelievers have been in despair about <u>those (buried) in</u>

		are in despair about <u>those (buried) in graves.</u>	have despaired of the <u>inhabitants of the tombs.</u>	again seeing] <u>those who are [now] in their graves</u>	despair of <u>those buried in their graves</u>	<u>graves</u> (that they will not be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection).
قَتَلَ أَصْحَابِ الْأَخْدُودِ	'lbrwj,85: 4	Woe to <u>the makers of the pit (of fire),</u>	slain were <u>the Men of the Pit,</u>	THEY DESTROY [but] themselves, <u>they who would ready a pit</u>	Damned were <u>the makers of the trench</u>	<u>Cursed were the people of the ditch</u> (the story of the Boy and the King).
وَأَصْحَابِ مَدْيَنَ وَكَذَّبَ مُوسَى فَأَمَلَيْتُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ	'lhj,22: 44	And the <u>Companions of the Madyan People;</u> and Moses was rejected (in the same way).	and <u>the men of Midian;</u> to Moses also they cried lies. And I respited the unbelievers	<u>and the dwellers of Madyan;</u> and [so, too,] Moses was given the lie [by Pharaoh]. And [in every case] I gave rein, for a while, to the deniers of the truth	<u>Midian.</u> Moses too was called a liar. I gave the disbelievers time	And <u>the dwellers of Madyan (Midian);</u> and belied was Musa (Moses), but I granted respite to the disbelievers
وَعَادًا وَثَمُودَ وَأَصْحَابِ الرَّسِّ وَقَرُونَا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ كَثِيرًا	'lfrq'n, 25:38	As also 'Ad and Thamud, and <u>the Companions of the Rass,</u> and many a generation between them	And Ad, and Thamood, and <u>the men of Er-Rass,</u> and between that generations a many	And [remember how We punished the tribes of 'ād and Thamūd, and <u>the people of Ar-Rass,</u> and many generations [of sinners] in-between	As We did for the people of 'Ad, and Thamud, and al-Rass, and many generations in between	And (also) 'Ad and Thamud, and <u>the dwellers of Ar-Rass,</u> and many generations in between
فَاتَجَنَّبَهُ وَأَصْحَابِ السَّفِينَةِ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا آيَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ	'lfnkbwt, 29:15	But We saved him and <u>the companions of the Ark,</u> and We made the (Ark) a Sign for all peoples!	Yet We delivered him, and <u>those who were in the ship,</u> and appointed it for a sign unto all beings	We saved him, together with <u>all who were in the ark,</u> which We then set up as a symbol [of Our grace] for all people [to remember].	We saved him and <u>those with him on the Ark?</u> We made this a sign for all people	We saved him and <u>those with him in the ship,</u> and made it (the ship) as an <i>Ayah</i> (a lesson, a warning, etc.) for the ' <i>Alamin</i> (mankind, jinns and all that exists).
أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ	'lfyl, 105:1	Seest thou not how thy Lord dealt with the <u>Companions of the Elephant?</u>	Hast thou not seen how thy Lord did with <u>the Men of the Elephant?</u>	ART THOU NOT aware of how thy Sustainer dealt with <u>the Army of the Elephant?</u>	Do you [prophet] not see how your Lord dealt with <u>the arm of the elephant?</u>	Have you (O Muhammad (ﷺ)) not seen how your Lord dealt with <u>the Owners of the Elephant?</u> [The

						elephant army which came from Yemen under the command of Abrahah Al-Ashram intending to destroy the Ka'bah at Makkah].
فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ	'Iqlm, 68:48	So wait with patience for the Command of thy Lord, and be not like the <u>Companion of the Fish</u>	So be thou patient under the judgment of thy Lord, and be not as <u>the Man of the Fish</u>	BEAR, THEN, with patience thy Sustainer's will, and be not like <u>him of the great fish</u>	Wait patiently [prophet] for your Lord's judgement: do not be like <u>the man in the whale</u>	So wait with patience for the Decision of your Lord, and be not like <u>the Companion of the Fish</u>

### **Assessment:**

The collocation أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ *ʔaṣḥā:bu 'Ina:'ri* is in *surat* (chapter) Al-Baqarah *ayah* (verse) 39. The word أَصْحَابُ *ʔaṣḥā:bu* is a plural form of the word صَاحِبٌ *ṣa:ḥīb*. The lexical item صَاحِبٌ *ṣa:ḥīb* literally combines with the lexical item أَنْارُ *'Ina:'ri* which in the Quranic context creates an additional figurative sense to the meaning of the word صَاحِبٌ *ṣa:ḥīb*, and serves a specific communicative purpose. The word أَصْحَابُ *ʔaṣḥā:bu* is intended not to be used in its commonly understood meaning. The Quran figuratively takes the characteristics of the meaning of the word أَصْحَابُ *ʔaṣḥā:bu* in order to employ them in this context to refer to the strong connection to the Fire.

The five translators dealt with this word combination in different ways. Ali produces a gloss translation for أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ *ʔaṣḥā:bu 'Ina:'ri* *companions of the Fire*, while Arberry, Abdel Haleem, and Khan and Hilali interpret أَصْحَابُ *ʔaṣḥā:bu* as *inhabitants and dwellers* of the Fire. By being adherent to the literal translation, translators attempt to preserve the original. The word combination أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ

*ʔaṣḥā:bu 'Ina:'ri* is understood as one unit, which refers to the people of the Fire or those who are destined for the Fire. Asad interprets أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ *ʔaṣḥā:bu 'Ina:'ri* interpretatively as one unit - *destined for the Fire* - that seems to convey the communicative function more than other translations. In translating Quranic collocation, attention must be paid to more than just what the words say. Translators must be alert to what is implied by the choice of words. The meaning of Quranic collocation is inherently ambiguous and is often imperceptible and open to interpretation and should not simply be rendered at face value. In addition, meaning is not ready made and carried across to the target language; it is achieved through an ongoing process of negotiation.

The main theme that emerges from the sample is that in translating the Quranic language, significant information is always left out; there is always more to say. Quranic collocations often mean much more than their surface words actually mean simply because no collocations of one language can have an absolute match in another. The particular form by which a meaning can be expressed is different from language to language. In terms of translation, it may be necessary to use quite a different form to express Quranic collocational meaning in English. As collocational meaning is not distributed identically in Arabic and English, there are many ways of expressing the same idea. The five translators seem to adopt a common assumption and hold the view that translation means sameness, i.e. true copy of the original and that translating the Quran like any source text is challenging but straightforward. It is a mechanical operation consisting of replacing and matching S.L. items with T.L. items.

The Quranic text is complex and multidimensional and collocation as a feature of language conveys a specific communicative purpose. This complexity provides a

challenging ground for the efficacy of translation. Consider for instance, كَصَاحِبِ الْخُوْتِ *kaṣa:ḥibi 'lḥuwti*. This collocation challenged the five translators who resorted to gloss translation except Abdel Haleem who went for a common-sense approach and provided the gist of what the Quran meant, not what is said, using 'like the man in the whale' in reference to Jonah who was swallowed by a large fish (whale). The same narrative is mentioned in the Bible.

- a) Companion of the Fish
- b) the Man of the Fish
- c) like him of the great fish
- d) like the man in the whale
- e) like the Companion of the Fish

The above example shows that transferring just the words in English often misses the meaning, the rhythmic and poetic effect of the Quran. One of the major challenges of translating the Quran is that each word has rarely a precise equivalent in English. Thus, to use the same words is not a sufficient guarantee of making the text accessible and understandable in the target language.

## 2. أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ:

وَتَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ رَجَالًا يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ

And the people on the heights call out to men whom they know by their marks

*wa na:da 'ʔaṣḥā:bu 'l'ʔaʕra:fi riʒa:ln yaʕrifu:wnahum bi si:yma:hum*

### **Assessment:**

There are disparities in translating the Quranic collocation أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ *'ʔaṣḥā:bu 'l'ʔaʕra:fi* in this context. Ali and Khan and Hilali translate the collocational component أَصْحَابُ *'ʔaṣḥā:bu* into *men*. With regard to the collocates الْأَعْرَافِ *'l'ʔaʕra:fi*, Khan and Hilali follow the meaning existed in the exegetical books (Tafseer books). They translate it into *the Wall*. Ali shares the same view as Abdel Haleem in rendering the collocates الْأَعْرَافِ *'l'ʔaʕra:fi* literally into *the*

heights. Yet, Abdel Haleem's translation is different in selecting the lexical item that is equivalent to the collocate أَصْحَابُ 'aṣḥābu. Abdel Haleem generalises the reference to include men and women in his translation. He, therefore, uses the lexical item *the people* as equivalent to the collocate أَصْحَابُ 'aṣḥābu. Asad's translation remains more independent than other translations, as it seems to reflect his understanding that it does not exist either in the primary or the secondary meaning of this Quranic collocation. Between word-for-word or sense-for-sense translation approaches, the translator of the Quran walks a tightrope; he/she must have a grasp of the centre of gravity, a sense of balance. The language of the Quran is used in an individual and creative way in order to convey a particular meaning and strike a chord to elicit and trigger a strong emotional response.

### 3. يَوْمٌ مَّجْمُوعٌ / يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُودٌ:

The following shows some of the multiple uses of the collocate يوم in the Quran:

Quranic collocations	Transliteration	Quranic Collocations	Transliteration
يَوْمِ الدِّينِ	yawmi 'ldiyini	يَوْمِ الظَّلَّةِ	yawmi 'lʒula:ti
يَوْمِ عَظِيمٍ	yawmin ʕaʒi:ymin	يَوْمِ الْفَتْحِ	yawma 'lfathī
يَوْمِ عَصِيبٍ	yawmun ʕaʒi:ybun	يَوْمِ حُنَيْنٍ	yawma ḥunayn
يَوْمِ غَاصِفٍ	yawmin ʕa:ʕi:ʕifin	يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ	yawmi 'l'aḥza:'bi
يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ	yawma 'lqi:yma:ti	يَوْمِ التَّنَادِ	yawma 'ltana:'di
يَوْمِ الْفُرْقَانِ	yawma 'lʕurqa:'ni	يَوْمِ الْوَعِيدِ	yawmu 'lwaʕi:ydi
يَوْمِ كَبِيرٍ	yawmin kabi:yri	يَوْمِ الْخُرُوجِ	yawmu 'lxuru:wji
يَوْمِ الْبَيْمِ	yawmin 'ʔali:ymin	يَوْمِ عَسِيرٍ	yawmun ʕasirun
يَوْمِ مُحِيطٍ	yawmin muḥi:yṭin	يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ	yawma naḥsin
يَوْمِ الْحَسْرَةِ	yawma 'lḥasrati	يَوْمِ التَّغَابُنِ	yawmu 'ltaya:'buni

يَوْمٍ عَقِيمٍ	yawmin ṣaḳi:ymin	يَوْمَ الْفَضْلِ	yawma 'lfaṣli
يَوْمٌ مَّجْمُوعٌ	yawmun maẓmuwṣun	يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُودٌ	yawmun maṣḥuwduḥ

The explicit and implicit meaning of the collocate يوم

Primary meaning	Secondary meaning
يوم Yawm: day (= 24 hours); age, era, time.	يوم أسود Black day
	يوم الاشغال Workday
	يوم عطلة Day off
	يوم حداد Day of mourning
	يوم وطني National holiday

The collocational unit يَوْمٌ مَّجْمُوعٌ / يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُودٌ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّمَن كَانَ يَتَّقِي ۚ يَوْمَ يَكُونُ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ يَوْمُ عَمَلِكُمْ ۚ وَكُلٌّ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّمَن كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

There surely is a sign for those who fear the punishment of the Hereafter. That is a day in which mankind will be gathered, and that is a day that will be witnessed.

'?ina fiy ḍalika la ḡa'yatan liman xa:'fa ṣaḍa:'ba 'lḡa'xirati ḍalika yawmun maẓmu:wṣun

lahu 'lḡa:'su wa ḍalika yawmun maṣḥu:wdun

The following represents a sample of Quranic collocate يوم yawm focusing on five selected English translations of the Quran to assess the degree of faithfulness and accuracy and to ensure that the final product is coherent, consistent, error-free, and easy to read and understand.

يوم	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ	'lf'tḥt, 1:4	Master of <u>the Day of Judgment</u>	The Master of <u>the Day of Doom</u>	Lord of <u>the Day of Judgment!</u>	Master of <u>the Day of Judgement</u>	The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of

						<u>the Day of Recompense</u> (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)
قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ	'Izumr, 39:13	Say: "I would, if I disobeyed my Lord, indeed have fear of the penalty of a <u>Mighty Day</u> ."	Say: 'Indeed I fear, if I should rebel against thy Lord, the chastisement of a <u>dreadful day</u> .'	Say: "Behold, I would dread, were I [thus] to rebel against my Sustainer, the suffering [which would befall me] on that awesome <u>Day [of Judgment]</u> "	Say, 'I fear the punishment of a <u>dreadful Day</u> if I disobey my Lord.	Say: "I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the torment of a <u>Mighty Day</u> ."
سِيءَ بِهٖمْ وَضَاقَ بِهٖمْ دُزْعًا وَقَالَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ	hwd, 11:77	he was grieved on their account and felt himself powerless (to protect) them. He said: "This is a <u>distressful day</u> ."	he was troubled on their account and distressed for them, and he said, 'This is a <u>fierce day</u> .'	he was sorely grieved on their account, seeing that it was beyond his power to shield them; and he exclaimed: "This is a <u>woeful day!</u> "	he was anxious for them, feeling powerless to protect them, and said, 'This is a truly <u>terrible day!</u> '	he was grieved on their account and felt himself straitened for them (lest the town people should approach them to commit sodomy with them). He said: "This is a <u>distressful day</u> ."
أَغْمَأْتُهُمْ كِرْمَادٍ أَشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ	'?br'hym, 14:18	their works are as ashes, on which the wind blows furiously on a	their works are as ashes, whereon the wind blows strong upon a	all their works are as ashes which the wind blows about	The deeds of those who reject their Lord are like ashes that	their works are as ashes, on which the wind blows furiously on a <u>stormy day</u>

		<u>tempestuous</u> <u>day</u>	<u>tempestuous</u> <u>day</u>	fiercely on a <u>stormy day</u>	the wind blows furiously on <u>a stormy day</u>	
فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ	'lbqrt,2:11 3	God will judge between them in their quarrel on <u>the Day of</u> <u>Judgment</u> .	God shall decide between them on <u>the Day of</u> <u>Resurrection</u> touching their differences.	it is God who will judge between them on <u>Resurrection</u> <u>Day</u> with regard to all on which they were wont to differ.	God will judge between them on <u>the</u> <u>Day of</u> <u>Resurrection</u> concerning their differences.	Allah will judge between them on <u>the Day of</u> <u>Resurrection</u> about that wherein they have been differing.
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ ءَامَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ	'l'nf'l,8:41	if ye do believe in God and in the revelation We sent down to Our servant on <u>the Day of</u> <u>Testing</u>	if you believe in God and that We sent down upon Our servant on <u>the day of</u> <u>salvation</u>	if you believe in God and in what We bestowed from on high upon Our servant on <u>the day</u> <u>when the</u> <u>true was</u> <u>distinguish</u> <u>d from the</u> <u>false</u>	if you believe in God and the revelation We sent down to Our servant on <u>the day of</u> <u>the decision</u>	if you have believed in Allah and in that which We sent down to Our slave (Muhammad  ) on the Day of criterion (between right and wrong).
وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيرٍ	hwd,11,3	But if ye turn away, then I fear for you the penalty of a <u>great day</u> .	But if you should turn your backs I fear for you the chastisement of a <u>mighty</u> <u>day</u>	But if you turn away, I then, verily, I dread for you the suffering [which is bound to	But if you turn away, I fear you will have torment on <u>a terrible</u> <u>Day</u> .	But if you turn away, then I fear for you the torment of a <u>Great Day</u> (i.e. <u>the Day of</u> <u>Resurrection</u> ).

				befall you] on that <u>awesome</u> <u>Day!</u>		
أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمِ الْبَيْتِ	hwd,11:26	"That ye serve none but God: Verily I do fear for you the penalty of a <u>grievous</u> <u>day.</u> "	Serve you none but God. I fear for you the chastisement of a <u>painful day.</u> '	that you may worship none but God – for, verily, I fear lest suffering befall you on a <u>grievous</u> <u>Day!</u> "	worship no one but God. I fear you will have torment on a <u>painful</u> <u>Day.</u>	"That you worship none but Allah, surely, I fear for you the torment of a <u>painful</u> <u>Day.</u> "
إِنِّي أُرْكَمُ بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمِ مُحِيطٍ	hwd,11:84	but I fear for you the penalty of a <u>day that will</u> <u>compass</u> <u>(you) all</u> <u>round.</u>	and I fear for you the chastisement of an <u>encompassing</u> <u>day.</u>	but, verily, I dread lest suffering befall you on a <u>Day that</u> <u>will</u> <u>encompass</u> [you with <u>doom!</u>	but I fear you will have torment on an <u>overwhelming</u> <u>Day.</u>	"That you worship none but Allah, surely, I fear for you the torment of a <u>painful</u> <u>Day.</u> "
وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ إِذْ قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ	mrym, 19:39	But warn them of the <u>Day of</u> <u>Distress</u>	Warn thou them of the <u>day of anguish</u>	hence, warn them of [the coming of] <u>the Day of</u> <u>Regrets</u>	Warn them [Muhammad ] of <u>the Day</u> <u>of Remorse</u> when the matter will be decided.	And warn them (O Muhammad  ) of the <u>Day</u> <u>of grief and</u> <u>regrets</u> , when the case has been decided, while (now) they are in a state of carelessness, and they believe not.

<p>حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمْ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمِ عَقِيمٍ</p>	<p>'lhj,22:55</p>	<p>until the Hour (of Judgment) comes suddenly upon them, or there comes to them the Penalty of a <u>Day of Disaster</u>.</p>	<p>until the Hour comes on them suddenly, or there shall come upon them the chastisement of a <u>barren day</u>.</p>	<p>until the Last Hour comes suddenly upon them and [supreme] suffering befalls them on a <u>Day void of all hope</u>.</p>	<p>until the Hour suddenly overpowers them or until torment descends on them on a <u>Day devoid of all hope</u>.</p>	<p>until the Hour comes suddenly upon them, or there comes to them the torment of <u>the Day after which there will be no night</u> (i.e. the Day of Resurrection).</p>
<p>فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَحَدَهُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمِ الْظُّلَّةِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ</p>	<p>'lf'r',26:1 89</p>	<p>But they rejected him. Then the punishment of a <u>day of overshadowing gloom</u> seized them, and that was the Penalty of a Great Day.</p>	<p>But they cried him lies; then there seized them the chastisement of <u>the Day of Shadow</u>; assuredly it was the chastisement of a dreadful day.</p>	<p>But they gave him the lie. And thereupon suffering overtook them on a <u>day dark with shadows</u>: and, verily, it was the suffering of an awesome day!</p>	<p>They called him a liar, and so the torment of <u>the Day of Shadow</u> came upon them— it was the torment of a terrible day</p>	<p>But they belied him, so the torment of <u>the day of shadow (a gloomy cloud)</u> seized them, indeed that was the torment of a Great Day.</p>
<p>قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِيمَانُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ</p>	<p>'lsjdt,32:29</p>	<p>Say: "On the <u>Day of Decision</u>, no profit will it be to Unbelievers if they (then) believe! nor will they be granted a respite."</p>	<p>Say: 'On the <u>Day of Victory</u> their faith shall not profit the unbelievers, nor shall they be respited.'</p>	<p>Say: "On the <u>Day of the Final Decision</u>, their [newly-found] faith will be of no use to those who [in their lifetime] were bent</p>	<p>Say, 'On the <u>Day of Decision</u> it will be no use for the disbelievers to believe; they will be granted no respite</p>	<p>Say: "On the <u>Day of Al-Fath (Decision)</u>, no profit will it be to those who disbelieve if they (then) believe! Nor will they be granted a respite."</p>

				on denying the truth, nor will they be granted respite!"		
<p>وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ بَسِيئًا وَصَافَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحَبَتْ تُمْ وَلَيْتُمْ مُدْبِرِينَ</p>	'Itwbt,9:25	<p>Assuredly God did help you in many battle-fields and on <u>the day of Hunain</u>: Behold! your great numbers elated you, but they availed you naught: the land, for all that it is wide, did constrain you, and ye turned back in retreat.</p>	<p>God has already helped you on many fields, and on <u>the day of Hunain</u>, when your multitude was pleasing to you, but it availed you naught, and the land for all its breadth was strait for you, and you turned about, retreating.</p>	<p>God has already helped you on many fields, and on <u>the day of Hunain</u>, when your multitude was pleasing to you, but it availed you naught, and the land for all its breadth was strait for you, and you turned about, retreating.</p>	<p>God has helped you [believers] on many battlefields, even on <u>the day of the Battle of Hunayn</u>. You were well pleased with your large numbers, but they were of no use to you: the earth seemed to close in on you despite its spaciousness and you turned tail and fled.</p>	<p>Truly Allah has given you victory on many battle fields, and on <u>the Day of Hunain (battle)</u> when you rejoiced at your great number but it availed you naught and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for you, then you turned back in flight.</p>

<p>وَقَالَ الَّذِي ءَامَنَ يَقَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ</p>	<p>y'fr, 40:30</p>	<p>Then said the man who believed: "O my people! Truly I do fear for you something like the <u>Day (of disaster) of the Confederates (in sin)!</u></p>	<p>Then said he who believed, 'My people, truly I fear for you the like of <u>the day of the parties.</u></p>	<p>Thereupon exclaimed he who had attained to faith: "O my people! Verily, I fear for you the like of what <u>one day befell those others who were leagued together [against God's truth]</u></p>	<p>The believer said, 'My people, I fear your fate will be <u>the fate of those others who opposed [their prophets].</u></p>	<p>And he who believed said: "O my people! Verily, I fear for you a fate like <u>that day (of disaster) of the Confederates (of old)!</u></p>
<p>وَيَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ</p>	<p>y'fr, 40:32</p>	<p>"And O my people! I fear for you a <u>Day when there will be Mutual calling (and wailing).</u></p>	<p>O my people, I fear for you <u>the Day of Invocation.</u></p>	<p>"And, O my people, I fear for you <u>[the coming of] that Day of [Judgment – the Day when you will be] calling unto one another [in distress]</u></p>	<p>My people, I fear for you on <u>the Day you will cry out to one another.</u></p>	<p>"And, O my people! Verily! I fear for you <u>the Day when there will be mutual calling (between the people of Hell and of Paradise).</u>"</p>
<p>وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ذَٰكَ يَوْمَ الْوَعْدِ</p>	<p>q, 50:20</p>	<p>And the Trumpet shall be blown: that will be <u>the Day whereof Warning</u></p>	<p>And the Trumpet shall be blown; that is <u>the Day of the Threat.</u></p>	<p>and [in the end] the trumpet [of resurrection ] will be blown: that will be <u>the Day of a</u></p>	<p>The Trumpet will be sounded: 'This is <u>the Day [you were] warned of.</u></p>	<p>And the Trumpet will be blown, that will be <u>the Day whereof warning (had been given) (i.e.</u></p>

		(had been given).		warning fulfilled.		the Day of Resurrection).
يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ يَوْمَ الْخُرُوجِ	q, 50:42	The Day when they will hear a (mighty) Blast in (very) truth: that will be the Day of Resurrection	On the day they hear the Cry in truth, that is the day of coming forth.	[and bethink thyself, too, of] the Day on which all [human beings] will in truth hear the final blast – that Day of [their] coming-forth [from death].	They will come out [from their graves] on that Day, the Day when they hear the mighty blast in reality.	The Day when they will hear <i>As-Saihah</i> (shout, etc.) in truth, that will be the Day of coming out (from the graves i.e. the Day of Resurrection).
مُهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِيبٌ	'lqmr, 54:8	Hastening, with eyes transfixed, towards the Caller!- "Hard is this Day!", the Unbelievers will say.	running with outstretched necks to the Caller. The unbelievers shall say, 'This is a hard day!'	running in confusion towards the Summoning Voice; [and] those who [now] deny the truth will exclaim, "Calamitous is this Day!"	rushing towards the Summoner. The disbelievers will cry, 'This is a stern day!'	Hastening towards the caller, the disbelievers will say: "This is a hard Day."
إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرَّصْرًا فِي يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ مُسْتَمِرٍّ	'lqmr, 54:19	For We sent against them a furious wind, on a Day of violent Disaster,	We loosed against them a wind clamorous in a day of ill fortune continuous,	Behold, We let loose upon them a raging stormwind on a day of bitter misfortune.	We released a howling wind against them on a day of terrible disaster.	Verily, We sent against them a furious wind of harsh voice on a day of evil omen and continuous calamity.

<p>يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ - ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّعَابِينِ</p>	<p>'lty'bn,64:9</p>	<p>The Day that He assembles you (all) for a Day of Assembly, - that will be a <u>Day of mutual loss and gain (among you)</u>.</p>	<p>Upon the day when He shall gather you for the Day of Gathering; that shall be <u>the Day of Mutual Fraud</u></p>	<p>[Think of] the time when He shall gather you all together unto the Day of the [Last] Gathering – that Day of <u>Loss and Gain!</u></p>	<p>When He gathers you for the Day of Gathering, <u>the Day of mutual neglect.</u></p>	<p>(And remember) the Day when He will gather you (all) on the Day of Gathering, that will be <u>the Day of mutual loss and gain (i.e. loss for the disbelievers as they will enter the Hell-fire and gain for the believers as they will enter Paradise)</u>.</p>
<p>إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ مِيقَاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ</p>	<p>'ldx'n,44:4 0</p>	<p>Verily <u>the Day of sorting out</u> is the time appointed for all of them</p>	<p>Surely <u>the Day of Decision</u> shall be their appointed time, all together</p>	<p>Verily, <u>the Day of Distinction [between the true and the false]</u> is the term appointed for all of them.</p>	<p><u>The Day of Decision</u> is the time appointed for all</p>	<p>Verily, <u>the Day of Judgement (when Allah will judge between the creatures)</u> is the time appointed for all of them,</p>

### **Assessment:**

These two seemingly simple terms *يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُودٌ / يَوْمٌ مَّجْمُوعٌ yawmun maʒmu:wʕun / yawmun mafhu:wdun* caused considerable trouble to the translators who felt compelled to expand and stretch the concise meaning of Arabic into long unnecessary stretches of sentences to get the message across. This may be viewed as overtranslation which consists of adding and padding the TL with

language items that are not in SL. This surplus information is either redundant or misleading. The five translators rendered *يَوْمَ مَجْمُوعٍ yawmun maʒmuwʕun* as ‘gathered together.’ This is viewed as ‘pleonasm’ which is the use of more words than are necessary to express meaning. It is considered needless repetition which is often referred to as tautology: the verb *gather* implicitly means *together*, therefore it does not need to be written explicitly.

#### 4. يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ:

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ مِيقَاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

surely *the Day of Decision* is the time appointed for all of them

'ʔina *yawma 'lfaʕli miyqa:tahum* 'ʔaʒmaʕi:yna

#### Assessment:

The first four translations seem concerned about the form of the word *الْفَصْلِ 'lfaʕli* and translated it faithfully, to the detriment of focusing on rendering the communicative meaning. They express in different ways the message of the Quran which results in clumsy and almost incoherent English e.g., ‘*the Day of sorting out is the time appointed for all of them*’. It would have been more appropriate to convey the spirit of what was said in simple form: *On the Day of Judgement everyone will be answerable for their deeds*. Khan and Hilali’s translation is the closest to the original; however, this version is too wordy, there are too many footnotes. Footnotes are useful but should be used sparingly as too many footnotes can distract the reader.

#### 5. يَوْمٍ عَقِيمٍ:

حَتَّىٰ تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمٍ عَقِيمٍ

until the Hour comes upon them suddenly, or there comes to them the torment of a barren day.

ħata ta'ʔti:yahumu 'Isa:ʕatu baʕtatan 'ʔaw ya'ʔti:yahum ʕaḏa:bu yawmin ʕaʕi:ymin

### **Assessment:**

It can be seen that there is a confusion amongst translators about the meaning of the Quranic collocational unit **يَوْمِ عَقِيمٍ** *yawmin ʿaqiymin*. According to the Tafseers, it refers to the day of judgement, as a last day: a day that has no night. However, Bin Ashur (1984) offered a different explanation in which he said that **يَوْمِ عَقِيمٍ** *yawmin ʿaqiymin* refers to the *battle of Badr*. The possibility of this interpretation was excluded in Al-Tabari's Tafseer.

The collocational unit **يَوْمِ عَقِيمٍ** *yawmin ʿaqiymin* is formed with a hint of figurativeness that cannot be achieved by literal translation. An example of literal translation here is Arberry's translation *barren day*. The scholars of Tafseer interpret **يَوْمِ عَقِيمٍ** *yawmin ʿaqiymin* to refer to the Judgement Day or the Day of Resurrection; however, Ali chose the word *Disaster* that does not seem to be an appropriate equivalent to the word **عَقِيمٍ** *Yawmin `Aqīmin*. It appears that Asad and Abdel Haleem depend on their understanding of the context and attempt to give a communicative translation while Khan and Hilali provide a semantic translation adhering to the interpretations given by books of Tafseer.

### **6. يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ:**

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ مُّسْتَمِرٍّ

*Lo! We let loose on them a raging wind on a day of constant calamity,*

'?ina: '?arsalna: ʿalayhim ri:yħan šaršaran fiy yawmi naħsin mustamirin

### **Assessment:**

Varied translations are given to this collocational unit. Translators used four different words as equivalent to the word **نَحْسٍ** *naħsin*. Being as faithful as possible to the style of the original word combination, Arberry renders it literally, while Ali

and Abdel Haleem pay more attention to the meaning and the content rather than to the linguistic form, although their translations seem to reflect the consequence of what happened in that day, not the day itself. Khan and Hilali's translation seems successful, as it transfers the literary image of that day and of the scale of disaster.

### 7. أَمْرٌ مُسْتَقَرٌّ:

The following table shows some of the multiple uses of the collocate أمر 'Amr in the Quran:

Quranic collocations	Transliteration	Quranic Collocations	Transliteration
أَمْرُ اللَّهِ	'ʔamru 'llahi	أَمْرٌ مَرِيحٍ	'ʔamrin mari:yʔin
أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ	'ʔamru firʕawna	أَمْرٌ مُسْتَقَرٌّ	ʔamrin mustaqir
أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ	'ʔamru rabika	أَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا	'ʔamran maqḏi:yan
أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ	'ʔamru 'lsa:'ʕati	أَمْرٍ رَبِّي	'ʔamri rabi:yy
أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ	'ʔamrin ʒa:'miʕin	أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ	'ʔamrin ḥaki:ymin

The explicit and implicit meaning of the collocate أمر :

Primary meaning	Secondary meaning
<u>أمر</u> <i>Amr</i> : order, command, instruction; ordinance, decree; warrant; writ; power, authority.	أمر عال      Royal decree (formerly, Eng.)
	أمر قانوني      Ordinance having the force of law
	أمر الحضور      Writ of summons
	أمر تفتيش      Search warrant
	أمر توريد      Delivery order
	أمر واقع      Accomplished fact

The collocational unit أَمْرٌ مُسْتَقَرٌّ:

وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُسْتَقَرٌّ

They belied the Truth and followed their own desires. Yet everything will be settled.

wa kaḏabu: wa 'tabaḥu: 'ʔahwa:ʔʔahum wa kulu 'ʔamrrin mustaqirun

The following represents a sample of Quranic collocate أمر Amr focusing on five selected English translations of the Quran to assess the degree of faithfulness and accuracy and to ensure that the final product is coherent, consistent, error-free, and easy to read and understand.

أمر	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
وَكَانَ أَمْرٌ أَلَيْهِ مَفْعُولًا	'Ins'?, 4:47	for the <u>decision of</u> <u>God</u> Must be carried out.	and <u>God's</u> <u>command</u> is done.	for <u>God's will</u> is always done.	<u>God's will</u> is always done.	And the <u>Commandment</u> <u>of Allah</u> is always executed.
وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ-- إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَائِهِ فَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ فِرْعَوْنَ--وَمَا أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ	hwd,11 :97	And we sent Moses, with Our Clear (Signs) and an authority manifest, unto Pharaoh and his chiefs: but they followed <u>the command</u> <u>of Pharaoh</u> and the command of Pharaoh was no right (guide).	And We sent Moses with Our signs, and a manifest authority, to Pharaoh and his Council; but they followed <u>Pharaoh's</u> <u>command</u> , and Pharaoh's command was not right- minded.	AND, INDEED, We sent Moses with Our messages and a manifest authority [from Us], unto Pharaoh and his great ones: but these followed [only] <u>Pharaoh's</u> <u>bidding</u> – and Pharaoh's bidding led by no means to what is right.	We also sent Moses, with Our signs and clear authority, to Pharaoh and his supporters, but they followed <u>Pharaoh's</u> <u>orders</u> , and Pharaoh's orders were misguided.	And indeed We sent Musa (Moses) with Our <i>Ayat</i> (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and a manifest authority; To Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and his chiefs, but they followed <u>the command</u> <u>of Fir'aun</u> (Pharaoh), and the command of Fir'aun (Pharaoh) was no right guide.
لَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ--وَمَا زَادُوهُمْ غَيْرَ تَثْنِيْبٍ	hwd,11 :101	when there issued <u>the</u> <u>decree of thy</u> <u>Lord</u> : Nor did they add ought (to their lot) but perdition!	when the <u>command</u> <u>of thy Lord</u> came; and they increased them not, save in destruction.	And when <u>thy</u> <u>Sustainer's</u> <u>judgment</u> came to pass, those deities of theirs which they had been wont to invoke instead of God proved of no avail whatever to them	when what <u>your Lord had</u> <u>ordained</u> came about; they only increased their ruin.	when there came <u>the</u> <u>Command of</u> <u>your Lord</u> , nor did they add ought (to their lot) but destruction.

<p>وَمَا أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ إِلَّا كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ</p>	<p>'Inhl,16 :77</p>	<p>And <u>the Decision of the Hour (of Judgment)</u> is as the twinkling of an eye, or even quicker: for God hath power over all things.</p>	<p>And <u>the matter of the Hour</u> is as a twinkling of the eye, or nearer. Surely God is powerful over everything.</p>	<p>And so, <u>the advent of the Last Hour</u> will but manifest itself [in a single moment, like the twinkling of an eye, or closer still: for, behold, God has the power to will anything.</p>	<p><u>The coming of the Hour of Judgement</u> is like the blink of an eye, or even quicker: God has power over everything.</p>	<p>And <u>the matter of the Hour</u> is not but as a twinkling of the eye, or even nearer. Truly! Allah is Able to do all things.</p>
<p>وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ— قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا</p>	<p>'l'?'sr', 17:85</p>	<p>They ask thee concerning the Spirit (of inspiration). Say: "The Spirit (cometh) by <u>command of my Lord</u>: of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you, (O men!)"</p>	<p>They will question thee concerning the Spirit. Say: 'The Spirit is of <u>the bidding of my Lord</u>. You have been given of knowledge nothing except a little.'</p>	<p>AND THEY will ask thee about [the nature of] divine inspiration. Say: "This inspiration [comes] at my <u>Sustainer's behest</u>; and [you cannot understand its nature, O men, since] you have been granted very little of [real] knowledge."</p>	<p>[Prophet], they ask you about the Spirit. Say, 'The Spirit is part of my <u>Lord's domain</u>. You have only been given a little knowledge.'</p>	<p>And they ask you (O Muhammad ﷺ) concerning the <i>Ruh</i> (the Spirit); Say: "The <i>Ruh</i> (the Spirit): it is <u>one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord</u>. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little."</p>
<p>إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ— وَإِذَا كَانُوا مَعَهُ، عَلَيْنَ أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّى يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ</p>	<p>'Inwr,2 4:62</p>	<p>Only those are believers, who believe in God and His Apostle: when they are with him on a <u>matter requiring collective action</u>, they do not depart until they have asked for his leave</p>	<p>Those only are believers, who believe in God and His Messenger and who, when they are with him upon a <u>common matter</u>, go not away until they ask his leave.</p>	<p>[TRUE] BELIEVERS are only they who have attained to faith in God and His Apostle, and who, whenever they are [engaged] with him upon a <u>matter of concern to the whole community</u>, do not depart [from whatever has been decided upon] unless they have sought [and</p>	<p>The true believers are those who believe in God and His Messenger, who, when they are gathered with him on a <u>communal matter</u>, do not depart until they have asked his permission</p>	<p>The true believers are only those, who believe in (the Oneness of) Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ), and when they are with him on some common matter, they go not away until they have asked his permission.</p>

				obtained] his leave.		
<p>إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ - فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ</p>	'ldx'n ,44:4	In the (Night) is made distinct every <u>affair of wisdom</u> ,	We have sent it down in a blessed night (We are ever warning), therein every <u>wise bidding</u>	Behold, from on high have We bestowed it on a blessed night: for, verily, We have always been warning [man]. On that [night] <u>was made clear, in wisdom, the distinction between all things [good and evil]</u>	truly We sent it down on a blessed night- We have always sent warnings-a night when <u>every matter of wisdom</u> was made distinct	We sent it (this Quran) down on a blessed night [(i.e. night of Qadr, Surah No: 97) in the month of Ramadan, the 9th month of the Islamic calendar]. Verily, We are ever warning [mankind that Our Torment will reach those who disbelieve in Our Oneness of Lordship and in Our Oneness of worship]. Therein (that night) is decreed every <u>matter of ordinances</u>
<p>بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَرِيجٍ</p>	q,50:5	But they deny the Truth when it comes to them: so they are in a <u>confused state</u> .	Nay, but they cried lies to the truth when it came to them, and so they are in a <u>case confused</u> .	Nay, but they [who refuse to believe in resurrection] have been wont to give the lie to this truth whenever it was proffered to them; and so they are in a <u>state of confusion</u> .	5But the disbelievers deny the truth when it comes to them; they are in a <u>state of confusion</u> .	Nay, but they have denied the truth (this Quran) when it has come to them, so they are in a <u>confused state (can not differentiate between right and wrong)</u> .

<p>وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ</p>	<p>'lqmr, 54:3</p>	<p>They reject (the warning) and follow their (own) lusts but every <u>matter has its appointed time.</u></p>	<p>They have cried lies, and followed their caprices; but every <u>matter is settled.</u></p>	<p>for they are bent on giving it the lie being always wont to follow their own desires. Yet <u>everything reveals its truth in the end.</u></p>	<p>They reject the truth and follow their own desires-<u>everything is recorded.</u></p>	<p>They belied (the Verses of Allah, this Quran), and followed their own lusts. And every <u>matter will be settled [according to the kind of deeds (for the doer of good deeds, his deeds will take him to Paradise, and similarly evil deeds will take their doers to Hell)].</u></p>
<p>قَالَ كَذَّابًا قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلِيُّ هَيْبٌ وَلِنَجْعَلَهُ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِّنَّا وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا</p>	<p>mrym,19 :21</p>	<p>He said: "So (it will be): Thy Lord saith, 'that is easy for Me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a Mercy from Us': it is <u>a matter (so) decreed.</u>"</p>	<p>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 <u>a thing decreed.</u>"</p>	<p>[The angel] answered: "Thus it is; [but] thy Sustainer says, 'This is easy for Me; and [thou shalt have a son,] so that We might make him a symbol unto mankind and an act of grace from Us.'" And it was <u>a thing decreed [by God]:</u></p>	<p>and he said, 'This is what your Lord said: "It is easy for Me- We shall make him a sign to all people, a blessing from Us." And so <u>it was ordained</u></p>	<p>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 <u>a matter (already) decreed, (by Allah).</u>' "</p>

### **Assessment:**

It can be seen that Khan and Hilali's translation is a literal translation of the collocational unit *'أَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقَرٍّ* *ʿamrin mustaqirun* . Also, it is a literal translation of the explanations of Al-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi, and Ibn Kathir of the collocational unit *'أَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقَرٍّ* *ʿamrin mustaqirun* . Khan and Hilali were cautious to avoid any potential ambiguity; however, overloading the body of the translated text can be distracting to the reader, as it is noticeable in Khan and Hilali's translation. This redundancy

leaves no chance for the context to contribute in revealing the intended meaning which implicitly suggests that 'every matter will be settled on the Day of Resurrection.' Differences in Asad's and Abdel Haleem's translations reflect their understanding of the collocate **مُسْتَقِيرٌ** *mustaqirun*. The dissimilarity is worthy of attention. Asad's translation seems less literal than Ali's and Arberry's, but it shows Asad's perception of the intended meaning although he retains the intended meaning implicitly. Abdel Haleem's translation can be considered less successful in terms of approximation of the intended meaning. This shows that translating Quranic collocations involves the ability to interpret, evaluate and understand what the Quranic message means rather than focus on what the words or phrases in that message might mean by themselves.

#### 8. **أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ:**

وَمَا أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ إِلَّا كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

and the matter of the Hour is but as a blink of an eye, or it is quicker. God has power over everything.

wama: 'ʔamru 'Isa:ʕati 'ʔila kalamhi 'Ibaʕari 'ʔaw huwa 'ʔaqrabu 'ʔina 'llaha ʕala kuli fayʔin qadi:yrun

#### **Assessment:**

The four lexical items: *decision*, *matter*, *advent*, and *coming*, are used as equivalents for the collocat **أَمْرٌ** 'ʔamru. It can be seen that Arberry and Khan and Hilali decided to opt for word for word translation in their good intention to be faithful and to retain the meaning and style of the original; however, the intended meaning apparently remains opaque. Asad and Abdel Haleem use two different lexical items, *advent* and *coming*, that are considered to be synonymous. It can be noted that translators take some liberties to apply their own understanding in order to convey the meaning. Still, by the back-translating process, the lexical

items *advent and coming* are equal to the word قديم qa'dim in Arabic. These equivalents are deemed to be suitable if the meaning is considered from the broad context; however, أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ 'amru 'Isa:'ġati, in this particular context, refers to the specific time of the Day of Judgement. The word *decision*, in Ali's rendering, seems to be an appropriate equivalent to the collocate أَمْرُ 'amru, as the basic message of the intended meaning is still there. Thus, to translate Quranic collocation the translator must understand the nature of that language that makes it sophisticated, creative, and spiritual. It is erroneous to assume that there is a simple one for one correspondence between Quranic collocations and English.

#### 9. أَمْرُ اللَّهِ:

وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا

*The commandment of Allah is always done.*

*wa kana 'amru 'llahi maf'u:lan*

#### **Assessment:**

The collocate أمر 'Amru seems confusing in this context. The combination of the collocate أمر 'Amru with the collocate الله Allah causes different translations to be given. It appears that phrases such as *God's command* and/or *Allah's commandment* agree with the interpretations provided by exegetical scholars adopted in this study. Moreover, these translations suit the context of the verse that expresses an explicit threat whereas a phrase like *God's will*, which is equivalent to إرادة الله 'iradatu 'llahi in Arabic, conveys only part of the meaning. With regard to the phrase *decision of God*, its Arabic counterpart is قرار الله qararu 'llahi, which is neither a synonym nor a near-synonym of phrases such as *God's command* and/or *Allah's commandment* that seem appropriate equivalents to the collocational unit أَمْرُ اللَّهِ 'amru 'llahi. This results in a different evocation of imagery to the original, leaving both translations with some loss of meaning. The

context in which the individual word is used may help determine its meaning. It is important to bear in mind that translation involves more than a string of individual words; for instance, between Arabic and English different words may be needed to refer to the same individual thing.

#### 10. شَيْئًا إِمْرًا:

The following table shows some of the multiple uses of the collocate *شَيْئًا* *fayʔa:n* in the Quran:

Quranic collocations	Transliteration	Quranic Collocations	Transliteration
شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا	<i>fayʔan qali:ylan</i>	شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا	<i>fayʔan fari:yan</i>
شَيْئًا إِمْرًا	<i>fayʔan 'ʔimra:</i>	شَيْئًا مَذْكُورًا	<i>fayʔan maḏku:wan</i>
شَيْئًا نَكْرًا	<i>fayʔan nukran</i>		

The explicit and implicit meaning of the collocate *شَيْئًا* :

Primary meaning	Secondary meaning
<i>شَيْئًا</i> <i>Shay'ā</i> : thing, a little, a certain (amount of).	من النشاط شَيْئًا Some activities
	شَيْئًا من القلق Some uneasiness, some anxiety
	في الأمر شَيْئًا There's something wrong
	على شَيْئًا كثير من Very, extremely
	أشبهه شَيْئًا ب Very much like...

The collocational unit *شَيْئًا إِمْرًا*:

قَالَ أَحْرَفْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا

he said: have you made a hole in it to drown the its passengers? you verily have done a dreadful thing.

*qa:la 'ʔxaraqtaḥa: lituyriqa 'ʔahlaha: laqad ʔiyʔta fayʔan 'ʔimra:n*

The following represents a sample of Quranic collocate شَيْئًا *Jayʔan* focusing on five selected English translations of the Quran to assess the degree of faithfulness and accuracy and to ensure that the final product is coherent, consistent, error-free, and easy to read and understand.

شَيْئًا	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
وَلَوْلَا أَنْ قَبَّلْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدْتُمْ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا	'lʔsrʔ, 17:74	And had We not given thee strength, thou wouldst nearly have inclined to them <u>a little</u> .	and had We not confirmed thee, surely thou wert near to inclining unto them <u>a very little</u> .	And had We not made thee firm [in faith], thou might have inclined to them <u>a little</u> .	If We had not made you stand firm, you would almost have inclined <u>a little</u> towards them.	And had We not made you stand firm, you would nearly have inclined to them <u>a little</u> .
قَالَ أَخْرَجْتَهَا لِيُغْرَقَ أَهْلُهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتُ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا	'lkhf, 18:71	Said Moses: "Hast thou scuttled it in order to drown those in it? Truly <u>a strange thing</u> hast thou done!"	He said, 'What, hast thou made a hole in it so as to drown its passengers? Thou hast indeed done <u>a grievous thing</u> .'	Moses exclaimed: "Hast thou made a hole in it in order to drown the people who may be [traveling] in it? Indeed, thou hast done <u>a grievous thing!</u> "	Moses said, 'How could you make a hole in it? Do you want to drown its passengers? What <u>a strange thing</u> to do!'	Musa (Moses) said: "Have you scuttled it in order to drown its people? Verily, you have committed <u>a thing "Imra" (a Munkar - evil, bad, dreadful thing).</u> "

<p>قَالَ أَقْتَلْتَ نَفْسًا رَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نَكْرًا</p>	<p>'lkhf, 18:74</p>	<p>Moses said: "Hast thou slain an innocent person who had slain none? Truly <u>a foul (unheard of) thing</u> hast thou done!"</p>	<p>He said, 'What, hast thou slain a soul innocent, and that not to retaliate for a soul slain? Thou hast indeed done <u>a horrible thing.'</u></p>	<p>Moses] exclaimed: "Hast thou slain an innocent human being without [his having taken] another man's life? Indeed, thou hast done <u>a terrible thing!</u>"</p>	<p>Moses said, 'How could you kill an innocent person? He has not killed anyone! What <u>a terrible thing to do!</u>'</p>	<p>Musa (Moses) said: "Have you killed an innocent person who had killed none? Verily, you have committed <u>a thing "Nukra"</u> (<u>a great Munkar - prohibited, evil, dreadful thing!</u>)"</p>
<p>قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا قَرِيًّا</p>	<p>mrym, 19:27</p>	<p>At length she brought the (babe) to her people, carrying him (in her arms). They said: "O Mary! truly <u>an amazing thing</u> hast thou brought!</p>	<p>Then she brought the child to her folk carrying him; and they said, 'Mary, thou hast surely committed <u>a monstrous thing!</u></p>	<p>And in time she returned to her people, carrying the child with her. They said: "O Mary! Thou hast indeed done <u>an amazing thing!</u></p>	<p>they said, 'Mary! You have done <u>something terrible!</u></p>	<p>They said: "O Mary! Indeed you have brought <u>a thing Fariya</u> (<u>an unheard mighty thing</u>).</p>
<p>هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنْ أَلَدِهِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مُّذَكَّرًا</p>	<p>'l?'ns'n, 76:1</p>	<p>Has there not been over Man a long period of Time, when he was <u>nothing - (not even) mentioned?</u></p>	<p>Has there come on man a while of time when he was <u>a thing unremembered?</u></p>	<p>HAS THERE [not] been an endless span of time before man [appeared – a time] when he was not yet <u>a thing to be thought of?</u></p>	<p>Was there not a period of time when man was <u>nothing to speak of?</u></p>	<p>Has there not been over man a period of time, when he was <u>nothing to be mentioned?</u></p>

### **Assessment:**

It is noticeable that there is no consensus among the translators for the collocate *إِمْرًا 'imran*. The different renderings are evidently due to different interpretations of the exegetical scholars. The word *إِمْرًا 'imran* in this context has been attributed three distinct meanings: *منكر munkar* that means *denied, not recognised, unacknowledged, disowned, disavowed, disclaimed, disagreeable, shocking, abominable, abomination, atrocity*; *عجبا 'azaba:n* that means *how strange! How odd!*; *شئنا عظيما jay'an 'aziyimn* that means *serious*. It seems that each translator selects one of the three provided meanings and overlooked the other two.

Ali and Abdel Haleem use the adjective *strange* basing their translation on the interpretation *عجبا شئنا jay'an 'azaba:n* given by Tafseer scholars like Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir while Arberry and Asad use the adjective *grievous* based on the interpretation of the collocate *إِمْرًا 'imran* as *شئنا عظيما jay'an 'azi:ymn*. It should be noted that Khan and Hilali's translation reflects the whole confusion between being faithful in bringing as much as possible to the intended meaning and to give a concise and economic translation. In this sense, Khan and Hilali resort to transliterating the collocate *إِمْرًا 'imran* and to add *Munkar* that is a transliteration of the Arabic word *منكر munkar*, then follow it with the phrase *evil, bad, dreadful thing*. In short, three different equivalents were provided for the collocational unit *إِمْرًا شئنا jay'an 'imran*. This is attributed to the three-different exegetical explanations. This study takes the view that in order to translate Quranic collocations into English efficiently it is important to be aware that transferring and conveying their meaning transcends the act of matching language items from SL to TL with the help of dictionary.

## 11. شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا:

قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا

They said: O Mary! You has brought a terrible thing.

qa:lu: ya: maryamu laqad ʒiʔti fayʔan fari:yan

### **Assessment:**

As it can be seen, the meaning of the collocational unit شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا fayʔan fari:yan has a displeasing emotional connection to something that is horrible, objectionable and unprecedented. The use of the adjective *amazing* seems less reflective of the context of the situation which the collocational unit شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا fayʔan fari:yan carries in this context. Adjectives such as *terrible*, *monstrous*, and *mighty* were more appropriate in terms of conveying the feeling and the message embodied in the lexical item فَرِيًّا fari:yan. Transliteration is useful in some cases in the translating process; however, it seems unnecessary, as shown in Khan and Hilali's rendering. Meaning in the Quran is not always explicit. It needs to be negotiated carefully.

## 12. خُلِقَ عَظِيمٌ:

The following table shows some of the multiple uses of the collocate عَظِيمٌ ʕaʒiymun in the Quran:

Quranic collocations	Transliteration	Quranic Collocations	Transliteration
أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ	'ʔajrun ʕaʒi:ymun	ذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ	ðibħin ʕaʒi:ymin
يَوْمٌ عَظِيمٌ	yawmin ʕaʒi:ymin	نَبَأٌ عَظِيمٌ	nabawʔun ʕaʒi:ymun
كَيْدٌ عَظِيمٌ	kaydun ʕaʒi:ymun	مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا	maylan ʕaʒi:yman
شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ	fayʔun ʕaʒi:ymun	إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا	'iθman ʕaʒi:yman

بُهْتَنٌ عَظِيمٌ	buhtanun ḥaẓi:yimun	مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا	mulkan ḥaẓi:yman
عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ	ḥarfūn ḥaẓi:yimun	فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا	fawzan ḥaẓi:yman
قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا	qawlan ḥaẓi:yman	فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ	faḍlin ḥaẓi:ymin
خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ	xuluqin ḥaẓi:ymin	حَظٌّ عَظِيمٌ	ḥaẓin ḥaẓi:ymin
عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ	ḥaḍā:bun ḥaẓi:yimun	ظَلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ	ẓulmun ḥaẓi:yimun

The explicit and implicit meaning of the collocate عَظِيمٌ :

Primary meaning	Secondary meaning
عظيم `Aẓīm: great, big, large; strong, powerful, mighty; significant, important; grand, grandiose, imposing, stately, magnificent; lofty, exalted, august, sublime, splendid, gorgeous, glorious, superb; huge, vast, prodigious, enormous, tremendous, immense, stupendous; hard, distressing, gruesome, trying, oppressive.	فرصة عظيمة Golden opportunity
	أمة عظيمة Great nation
	نار عظيمة Disastrous fire
	إنتصار عظيم Tremendous victory

The collocational unit خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

*And lo! You are of a tremendous morality.*

*Wa 'īnaka laḥala xuluqin ḥaẓi:ymin*

The following represents a sample of Quranic collocate عَظِيمٍ ḥaẓi:ymin focusing on five selected English translations of the Quran to assess the degree of faithfulness and accuracy and to ensure that the final product is coherent, consistent, error-free, and easy to read and understand.

عظيم	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
وَأَنَّكَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ	'lqlm, 68:4	And thou (standest) on <u>an</u> <u>exalted</u> <u>standard of</u> <u>character</u> .	surely thou art upon <u>a</u> <u>mighty</u> <u>morality</u> .	for, behold, thou keepest indeed to <u>a sublime way of</u> <u>life</u> ;	truly you have <u>a</u> <u>strong</u> <u>character</u> .	And verily, you (O Muhammad  ) are on <u>an exalted</u> <u>standard of</u> <u>character</u> .
وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَأَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ	'lbqrt, 2:7	and on their eyes is a veil; <u>great is the</u> <u>penalty they</u> <u>(incur)</u> .	and on their eyes is a covering, and there awaits them <u>a mighty</u> <u>chastisemen</u> <u>t</u> .	and over their eyes is a veil; and <u>awesome</u> <u>suffering awaits</u> <u>them</u> .	and their eyes are covered. They will have <u>great</u> <u>torment</u> .	and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be <u>a great</u> <u>torment</u> .
لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَأَتَّقُوا أَجْرَ عَظِيمٍ	'ḡl ḡmr'n, 3:172	those who do right and refrain from wrong have <u>a great</u> <u>reward</u>	to all those of them who did good and feared God, shall be <u>a mighty</u> <u>wage</u>	<u>A magnificent</u> <u>requital</u> awaits those of them who have persevered in doing good and remained conscious of God	who do good and remain conscious of God, will have <u>a great</u> <u>reward</u> .	for those of them who did good deeds and feared Allah, there is <u>a great</u> <u>reward</u> .
وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ	'ḡl ḡmr'n, 3:174	And God is the Lord of <u>bounties</u> <u>unbounded</u> .	And God is the Lord of <u>bounties</u> <u>unbounded</u> .	and God is limitless in His <u>great bounty</u> .	God's <u>favour</u> <u>is great</u> indeed	And Allah is the Owner of <u>Great Bounty</u> .
إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمِ عَظِيمٍ	ywns, 10:15	if I were to disobey my Lord, I should myself fear the penalty of <u>a Great</u> <u>Day (to</u> <u>come)</u> .	Truly I fear, if I should rebel against my Lord, the chastisemen t of <u>a</u> <u>dreadful</u> <u>day</u> .'	Behold, I would dread, were I [thus] to rebel against my Sustainer, the suffering [which would befall me] on that awesome Day [of Judgment]!"	for I fear the torment of <u>an awesome</u> <u>Day</u> , if I were to disobey my Lord.'	Verily, I fear if I were to disobey my Lord, the torment of <u>the Great Day</u> <u>(i.e. the Day of</u> <u>Resurrection)</u> . "

<p>فَلَمَّا رَءَا فَمِيصْبَهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ كَيِّدَاتِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيِّدَاتِكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ</p>	<p>Ywsf, 12:28</p>	<p>So when he saw his shirt,- that it was torn at the back,- (her husband) said: "Behold! It is a snare of you women! truly, <u>mighty is your snare!</u></p>	<p>When he saw his shirt was torn from behind he said, 'This is of your women's guile; surely your <u>guile is great.</u></p>	<p>And when [her husband] saw that his tunic was torn from behind, he said: "Behold, this is [an instance] of your guile, O womankind! Verily, <u>awesome is your guile!</u></p>	<p>When the husband saw that the shirt was torn at the back, he said, 'This is another instance of women's treachery: your <u>treachery is truly great.</u></p>	<p>So when he (her husband) saw his [(Yusuf's (Joseph)) shirt torn at the back; (her husband) said: "Surely, it is a plot of you women! Certainly <u>mighty is your plot!</u></p>
<p>يَا أَيُّهَا الْبَاطِلُ أَتَقْوَى رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ زُلْزِلَتِ السَّاعَةُ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ</p>	<p>'lhj, 22:1</p>	<p>O mankind! fear your Lord! for the convulsion of the Hour (of Judgment) will be <u>a thing terrible!</u></p>	<p>O men, fear your Lord! Surely the earthquake of the Hour is <u>a mighty thing;</u></p>	<p>O MEN! Be conscious of your Sustainer: for, verily, the violent convulsion of the Last Hour will be <u>an awesome thing!</u></p>	<p>People, be mindful of your Lord, for the earthquake of the Last Hour will <u>be a mighty thing.</u></p>	<p>O mankind! Fear your Lord and be dutiful to Him! Verily, the earthquake of the Hour (of Judgement) is <u>a terrible thing.</u></p>
<p>وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ هَذَا قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نُتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُيُوتُنَا عَظِيمٌ</p>	<p>'Inwr, 24:16</p>	<p>And why did ye not, when ye heard it, say? - "It is not right of us to speak of this: Glory to God! this is <u>a most serious slander!</u>"</p>	<p>And why, when you heard it, did you not say, 'It is not for us to speak about this; glory be to Thee! This is <u>a mighty calumny'?</u></p>	<p>And [once again]: Why do you not say, whenever you hear such [a rumour], "It does not behove us to speak of this, O Thou who art limitless in Thy glory: this is <u>an awesome calumny"?</u></p>	<p>When you heard the lie, why did you not say, 'We should not repeat this— God forbid! – It is <u>a monstrous slander'?</u></p>	<p>And why did you not, when you heard it, say? "It is not right for us to speak of this. Glory be to You (O Allah) this is <u>a great lie.</u>"</p>

وَأَوْتَيْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهِيَ عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ	'Inml, 27:23	I found (there) a woman ruling over them and provided with every requisite; and she has a <u>magnificent</u> <u>throne</u> .	I found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given of everything, and she possesses a <u>mighty</u> <u>throne</u> .	"Behold, I found there a woman ruling over them; and she has been given [abundance] of all [good] things, and hers is a <u>mighty</u> <u>throne</u> .	I found a woman ruling over the people, who has been given a share of everything— she has a <u>magnificent</u> <u>throne</u> .	I found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given all things that could be possessed by any ruler of the earth, and she has a <u>great throne</u> .
يَا لَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونَ إِنَّهُ لَدُوٌّ حَظٌّ عَظِيمٌ	'lqss, 28:79	"Oh! that we had the like of what Qarun has got! for he is truly a lord of <u>mighty</u> <u>good</u> <u>fortune</u> !"	'Would that we possessed the like of that Korah has been given! Surely he is a man of <u>mighty</u> <u>fortune</u> .	"Oh, if we but had the like of what Qārūn has been given! Verily, with <u>tremendous good</u> <u>fortune</u> is he endowed!"	'If only we had been given something like what Qarun has been given: he really is a <u>very</u> <u>fortunate</u> <u>man</u> .'	"Ah, would that we had the like of what Qarun (Korah) has been given? Verily! He is the owner of a <u>great</u> <u>fortune</u> ."
وَإِذْ قَالَ لَقْمَنُ لِابْنِهِ هُوَ يَعِظُهُ لَا تَشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ كَبْرٌ عَظِيمٌ	lqm'n, 31:13	Behold, Luqman said to his son by way of instruction: "O my son! join not in worship (others) with God: for false worship is indeed the highest <u>wrong- doing</u> ."	And when Lokman said to his son, admonishing him, 'O my son, do not associate others with God; to associate others with God is a <u>mighty</u> <u>wrong</u> .	And, lo, Luqmān spoke thus unto his son, admonishing him: "O my dear son! Do not ascribe divine powers to aught beside God: for, behold, such [a false] ascribing of divinity is indeed an <u>awesome wrong</u> !	Luqman counselled his son, 'My son, do not attribute any partners to God: attributing partners to Him is a <u>terrible</u> <u>wrong</u> .'	And (remember) when Luqman said to his son when he was advising him: "O my son! Join not in worship others with Allah. Verily! Joining others in worship with Allah is a <u>great Zulm</u> ( <u>wrong</u> ) <u>indeed</u> .
وَقَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَنْحِ عَظِيمٍ	'lṣ'f't, 37:107	And We ransomed him with a <u>momentous</u> <u>sacrifice</u>	And We ransomed him with a <u>mighty</u> <u>sacrifice</u> ,	And We ransomed him with a <u>tremendous</u> <u>sacrifice</u>	We ransomed his son with a <u>momentous</u> <u>sacrifice</u>	And We ransomed him with a <u>great</u> <u>sacrifice</u> (i.e. a <u>ram</u> ).
قُلْ هُوَ نَبَأٌ عَظِيمٌ	s, 38:67	Say: "That is a <u>Message</u> <u>Supreme</u> (above all)	Say: 'It is a <u>mighty</u> <u>tiding</u> .	Say: "This is a <u>message</u> <u>tremendous</u> .	Say, 'This message is a <u>mighty one</u> .	Say: "That (this Quran) is a <u>great news</u>

وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهْوَةَ أَنْ يَتَّبِعُوا مِثْلًا عَظِيمًا	'Ins'?, 4:27	but the wish of those who follow their lusts is that ye should <u>turn away</u> (from Him),- far, far away.	but those who follow their lusts desire you to <u>swerve away mightily</u> .	those who follow [only] their own lusts want you to <u>drift far away from the right path</u> .	but those who follow their lusts want you to <u>go far astray</u> .	but those who follow their lusts, wish that you (believers) should deviate <u>tremendously away from the Right Path</u> .
وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ أَفْتَرَى إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا	'Ins'?, 4:48	to set up partners with God is to devise a <u>sin Most heinous indeed</u> .	Whoso associates with God anything, has indeed forged a <u>mighty sin</u> .	He will: for he who ascribes divinity to aught beside God has indeed contrived <u>an awesome sin</u> .	but anyone who joins partners with God has concocted a <u>tremendous sin</u> .	whoever sets up partners with Allah in worship, he has indeed invented a <u>tremendous sin</u> .
فَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَأَتَيْنَاهُم مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا	'Ins'?, 4:54	but We had already given the people of Abraham the Book and Wisdom, and conferred upon them a <u>great kingdom</u> .	Yet We gave the people of Abraham the Book and the Wisdom, and We gave them a <u>mighty kingdom</u> .	But then, We did grant revelation and wisdom unto the House of Abraham, and We did bestow on them a <u>mighty dominion</u> .	We gave the descendants of Abraham the Scripture and wisdom—and We gave them a <u>great kingdom</u>	Then We had already given the family of Ibrahim (Abraham) the Book and <i>Al-Hikmah</i> (As-Sunnah - Divine Inspiration to those Prophets not written in the form of a book), and conferred upon them a <u>great kingdom</u> .
يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ فَأُفَوِّزَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا	'Ins'?, 4:73	Oh! I wish I had been with them; a <u>fine thing</u> should I then have made of it!"	'Would that I had been with them, to attain a <u>mighty triumph!</u> '	"Oh, would that I had been with them, and thus had a [share in their] <u>mighty triumph!</u> "	'If only I had been with them, I could have made <u>great gains,</u> '	"Oh! I wish I had been with them; then I would have achieved a <u>great success</u> (a <u>good share of booty</u> )."
إِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُولُونَ قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا	'l'sr'?, 17:40	Truly ye utter a <u>most dreadful saying!</u>	Surely it is a <u>monstrous thing you are saying!</u>	Verily, you are uttering a <u>dreadful saying!</u>	What a <u>monstrous thing</u> for you to say!	Verily! You utter an <u>awful saying</u> , indeed.

### **Assessment:**

In simple terms, the following verse **وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ** *waʔinaka laʕala xuluqin ʕazi:ymin* conveys a simple message, that Allah described the flawless and exemplary character of His Prophet in many verses of the Quran. The above verse says of the Prophet “*Certainly you have the greatest manners (morals)*”. In other words, the Prophet has the greatest moral character. Some translators have decided to obfuscate the verse through the use of archaic English or unnatural expression: ‘*thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character*’; ‘*thou art upon a mighty morality*’; ‘*thou keepest indeed to a sublime way of life*’. Others conveyed the meaning but could have enhanced the fluency and readability of the verse. The translator’s aim is to bring closer two thought processes and make the Quranic message easily accessible to the receptors.

In the Quran, words have more than one sense i.e. a lexical item may have several meanings other than that which most readily comes to mind. A literal translation would result in inaccurate or unnatural translations into most target languages. Collocational senses are based on part-whole relationships. Lack of correspondence between the collocations of different languages does not only indicate a formal difference, it also demonstrates that reality is perceived differently from one people to another.

### **13. كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ:**

The following table shows some of the multiple uses of the collocate **السَّيِّئَاتِ** *'isyʔa:ti* in the Quran:

Quranic collocations	Transliteration	Quranic Collocations	Transliteration
يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ	yaʿmalu:wna 'lsya:ʔti	كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ	Kasabu: 'lsyʔa:ti
ذَهَبَ السَّيِّئَاتِ	ḏahaba 'lsyʔa:tu	مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ	Makaru:w' 'lsyʔa:ti
أَجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ	'z taraḥu:w 'lsyʔa:ti		

The explicit and implicit meaning of the collocate السَّيِّئَاتِ :

Primary meaning	Secondary meaning
سيئة Sayyi'ā: sin, offense, misdeed; bad side, disadvantage (of.s.th.).	سئى الخلق Ill-natured
	سئى التربية Bad-mannered
	سئى السمعة Ill-reputed
	سئى الطالع Unlucky

The collocational unit كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ:

وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا وَتَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ

And those who earn ill-deeds, the recompense of an evil deed is its equivalent and ignominy overtake them

wa 'laḏiyina kasabu: 'lyʔa:ti ʔaza:ʔu sayʔatin bimiḥliha: wa tarhaquhum ḏilatun

The following represents a sample of Quranic collocate السَّيِّئَاتِ 'lsyʔa:ti focusing on five selected English translations of the Quran to assess the degree of faithfulness and accuracy and to ensure that the final product is coherent, consistent, error-free, and easy to read and understand.

السَّيِّئَاتِ	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
وَلَيْسَتْ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمْ	'Ins'ʔ,4:1 8	Of no effect is the repentance of those who continue <u>to do evil</u> , until death	But God shall not turn towards those who <u>do evil deeds</u> until, when one of	whereas repentance shall not be accepted from those <u>who do evil deeds</u> until their dying hour and	It is not true repentance when people continue <u>to do evil</u> until death confronts	And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue <u>to do evil</u> deeds until death faces one of

<p>أَلَمْ تَوْثَّ قَالِ إِلَى تَبْتَّ أَلَنْ</p>		<p>faces one of them, and he says, "Now have I repented indeed,</p>	<p>them is visited by death, he says, 'Indeed now I repent,'</p>	<p>then say, "Behold, I now repent";</p>	<p>them and then say, 'Now I repent,'</p>	<p>them and he says: "Now I repent;"</p>
<p>وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءَ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا وَتَزَهُهَ هُمْ ذِلَّةٌ</p>	<p>ywns,10: 27</p>	<p>But those who <u>have earned evil</u> will have a reward of like evil: ignominy will cover their (faces)</p>	<p>And for those who <u>have earned evil deeds</u> the recompense of an evil deed shall be the like of it; abasement shall overspread them</p>	<p>But as for those who <u>have done evil deeds</u> – the recompense of an evil deed shall be the like thereof; and ignominy will overshadow them</p>	<p>As for those who <u>did evil</u>, each evil deed will be requited by its equal and humiliation will cover them</p>	<p>And those who <u>have earned evil deeds</u>, the recompense of an evil deed is the like thereof, and humiliating disgrace will cover them (their faces).</p>
<p>وَلِئِنْ أَدْقَيْنَهُ نُعْمَاءَ بَعْدَ صَرَاءَ مَسْتَهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّئَاتُ عَنِّي</p>	<p>hwd,11: 10</p>	<p>But if We give him a taste of (Our) favours after adversity hath touched him, he is sure to say, "All evil has <u>departed from me</u>:"</p>	<p>But if We let him taste prosperity after hardship that has visited him, he will say, 'The evils <u>have gone from me</u>'</p>	<p>And thus it is: if We let him taste ease and plenty after hardship has visited him, he is sure to say, "<u>Gone is all affliction from me!</u>"</p>	<p>And if We let him taste mercy after some harm has touched him, he is sure to say, '<u>Misfortune has gone away from me.</u>'</p>	<p>But if We let him taste good (favour) after evil (poverty and harm) has touched him, he is sure to say: "<u>Ills have departed from me.</u>"</p>
<p>أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمْ الْأَرْضَ</p>	<p>'Inhl,16:4 5</p>	<p>Do then those who <u>devise evil (plots)</u> feel secure that God will not cause the earth to swallow them</p>	<p>Do they feel secure, those who <u>devise evil things</u>, that God will not cause the earth to swallow them,</p>	<p>Can, then, they who <u>devise evil schemes</u> ever feel sure that God will not cause the earth to swallow them</p>	<p>Are those who <u>plan evil</u> so sure that God will not make the earth swallow them up,</p>	<p>Do then those who <u>devise evil plots</u> feel secure that Allah will not sink them into the earth</p>
<p>أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ آجَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ</p>	<p>'lj'θyt,45: 21</p>	<p>What! Do those who <u>seek after evil ways</u> think that We shall</p>	<p>Or do those who <u>commit evil deeds</u> think that We shall make them</p>	<p>Now as for those who <u>indulge in sinful doings</u> – do they think that We place</p>	<p>Do those who <u>commit evil deeds</u> really think that We will deal with</p>	<p>Or do those who <u>earn evil deeds</u> think that We shall hold them equal with</p>

ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ		hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds	as those who believe and do righteous deeds	them, both in their life and their death, on an	them in the same way as those who believe and do righteous deeds,	those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds
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### **Assessment:**

The translators obviously adopted different translation methods. Ali, Arberry and Khan and Hilali used the literal translation method to stay close to the original text. They take the verb *earned* as equivalent to the verb كَسَبُوا *Kasabu*:. While, Asad and Abdel Haleem tried to keep their distance from the form and literal meaning of the original; they reproduced the content of the Quranic collocation كَسَبُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ *kasabu: 'Isy?a:ti*. Asad and Khan and Hilali seem to use an appropriate equivalent which reflects the intended meaning of the verb كَسَبُوا *Kasabu*:. Moreover, Asad's and Abdel Haleem's renderings agree with the interpretations of the scholars adopted in this study because attempts to produce absolute exactitude of SL meaning often results in incoherent and often ambiguous messages.

### **14. أَصَابَهُمُ الْفَرَحُ :**

The following table shows some of the multiple uses of the collocate أَصَابَهُمُ *'aṣa:baḥum* in the Quran:

Quranic collocations	Transliteration	Quranic Collocations	Transliteration
أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ	<i>'aṣa:baḥum</i> <i>muṣi:ybatun</i>	تَصِيبُهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ	<i>tuṣibḥum</i> <i>ḥasanatun</i>

أَصَابَهُ وَأَبْلَى	'ʔaşa:bahuw wa: bilun	تُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَةً	tuşibhum say:iyʔatun
أَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ	'ʔaşa:bahu 'lkibaru	تُصِيبُنَا دَائِرَةٌ	tuşi:ybana: da'ʔyʔiratun
أَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ	'ʔaşa:baha'ʔ 'ʔiʕşa:run	يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمًا	yuşi:ybuhum zama'ʔun
أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ	'ʔaşa:bahumu 'lqarḥu	يُصِيبُهُمْ نَصَبٌ	yuşi:ybuhum naşabun
إِصْبَكُمْ فَضْلٌ	'ʔaşa:bakum faḍlun	يُصِيبُهُمْ مَخْمَصَةٌ	yuşi:ybuhum maxmaşatun
أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ	'ʔaşa:bathu fitnatun	تُصِيبُهُمْ قَارِعَةٌ	tuşi:ybuhum qa'riʕatun
أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ	'ʔaşa:bahumu 'lbayyu	تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ	tuşi:ybuw' qawman biżahalatin

The explicit and implicit meaning of the collocate أَصَابَ :

Primary meaning	Secondary meaning
<p>أَصَابَ 'ʔaşa'ba: to hit (a target); to score (a goal); say or do the right thing; to get, obtain, acquire, gain, win, earn, attain, achieve.</p>	أصاب الشيء To hit a target
	أصاب بعينه To envy someone
	أصاب السهم الرمية The arrow hit the target
	أصاب من المال ونحوه To earn some money
	أصاب المتحدث The speaker was right
	أصاب كبد الحقيقة To hit the nail on the head
	أصاب من الطعام To eat some food
	أصاب بدن السفينة بقذيفة To hull

The collocational unit أَصَابَهُمُ الْفَرْحُ:

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْفَرْحُ

*those who heard the call of Allah and His messenger after the harm befell them, for such of them as do right and ward off (evil), there is great reward.*

'laḏiyina 'staja:bu: lilahi wa'lraswu:li min baʿdi ma: 'ʔaṣa:baḥum 'lqarḥu

The following represents a sample of Quranic collocates أَصَابَ 'ʔaṣa:ba focusing on five selected English translations of the Quran to gauge the extent to which Quranic collocations have been transferred in English in meaning not in form because one generally translates what the collocation is saying not numerically how many words or linguistic items the collocation actually has. It seems, therefore that the translators were too cautious to venture beyond the literal meaning deciding to stay close to the Quranic text. A literal or free translation approach depends partly on the nature of the text type.

It is probably sensible to keep an open mind when it comes to translating the Quranic text. Being flexible in choosing to translate as literal as possible and as free as necessary.

أصاب	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ	'lbqrt ,2:156	Who say, when <u>afflicted with calamity</u> : "To God We belong, and to Him is our return"	who, when they are <u>visited by an affliction</u> , say, 'Surely we belong to God, and to Him we return';	who, when <u>calamity befalls them</u> , say, "Verily, unto God do we belong and, verily, unto Him we shall return."	those who say, when <u>afflicted with a calamity</u> , 'We belong to God and to Him we shall return.'	Who, when <u>afflicted with calamity</u> , say: "Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return."
فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ	'lbqrt ,2:264	They are in parable like a hard, barren rock, on which	The likeness of him is as the likeness of a smooth rock on	for his parable is that of a smooth rock with [a little]	Such a person is like a rock with earth on it: <u>heavy rain</u>	His likeness is the likeness of a smooth rock on which is a

<p>فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ</p>		<p>is a little soil: on it <u>falls</u> <u>heavy rain</u>, which leaves it (Just) a bare stone.</p>	<p>which is soil, and a <u>torrent</u> <u>smites it</u>, and leaves it barren</p>	<p>earth upon it – and then a <u>rainstorm</u> <u>smites it</u> and leaves it hard and bare.</p>	<p><u>falls</u> and leaves it completely bare.</p>	<p>little dust; on it <u>falls heavy</u> <u>rain</u> which leaves it bare.</p>
<p>أَيُّودٌ أَحَدَكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الشَّمْرَاتِ وَأَصَابِيهِ الْكَبِيرِ وَلَهُ دُرِّيَّةٌ طُعْفَاءُ فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَابٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ</p>	<p>'lbqrt ,2:266</p>	<p>Does any of you wish that he should have a garden with date- palms and vines and streams flowing underneath, and all kinds of fruit, while he is <u>stricken</u> <u>with old age</u>, and his children are not strong (enough to look after themselves)- that <u>it should</u> <u>be caught in a</u> <u>whirlwind</u>, <u>with fire</u> therein, and be burnt up?</p>	<p>Would any of you wish to have a garden of palms and vines, with rivers flowing beneath it, and all manner of fruit there for him, then <u>old</u> <u>age smites him</u>, and he has seed, but weaklings, then a <u>whirlwind</u> <u>with fire smites</u> <u>it</u>, and it is consumed?</p>	<p>Would any of you like to have a garden of date-palms and vines, through which running waters flow, and have all manner of fruit therein – and then <u>be</u> <u>overtaken by</u> <u>old age</u>, with only weak children to [look after] him – and then [see] <u>it</u> <u>smitten by a</u> <u>fiery whirlwind</u> and utterly scorched?</p>	<p>Would any of you like to have a garden of palm trees and vines, graced with flowing streams and all kinds of produce, which, when you are <u>afflicted with</u> <u>old age</u> and feeble offspring, is struck by a <u>fiery</u> <u>whirlwind</u> and burnt down?</p>	<p>Would any of you wish to have a garden with date- palms and vines, with rivers flowing underneath, and all kinds of fruits for him therein, while he is <u>stricken with</u> <u>old age</u>, and his children are weak (not able to look after themselves), then it is <u>struck with a</u> <u>fiery</u> <u>whirlwind</u>, so that it is burnt?</p>
<p>الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمْ الْقَرْحُ - لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ</p>	<p>ا 6mr'n ,3:172</p>	<p>Of those who answered the call of God and the Apostle, <u>even</u> <u>after being</u> <u>wounded</u>, those who do right and refrain from wrong have a great reward</p>	<p>And those who answered God and the Messenger after <u>the wound had</u> <u>smitten them</u> - to all those of them who did good and feared God, shall be a mighty wage;</p>	<p>who responded to the call of God and the Apostle after <u>misfortune had</u> <u>befallen them</u>. A magnificent requital awaits those of them who have persevered in doing good and remained conscious of God:</p>	<p>Those who responded to God and the Messenger after <u>suffering</u> <u>defeat</u>, who do good and remain conscious of God, will have a great reward.</p>	<p>Those who answered (the Call of) Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad ) <u>after</u> <u>being</u> <u>wounded</u>; for those of them who did good deeds and feared Allah, there is a great reward.</p>
<p>وَلَئِنْ أَصَبَكُمْ فَضْلٌ مِّنْ اللَّهِ لَيَقُولَنَّ كَانَ لَمْ تَكُنْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُ</p>	<p>'lns',4 :73</p>	<p>But if <u>good</u> <u>fortune</u> comes to you from God, they would be sure</p>	<p>But if a <u>bounty</u> from God <u>visits</u> <u>you</u>, he will surely say, as if there had never</p>	<p>But if <u>good</u> <u>fortune</u> comes to you from God, such a person is sure</p>	<p>yet he is sure to say, <u>if you</u> <u>are favoured</u> <u>by God</u>, 'If only I had</p>	<p>But if a <u>bounty</u> <u>(victory and</u> <u>booty)</u> comes <u>to you</u> from Allah, he</p>

<p>مَوَدَّةً يَلْبِئْتَنِي كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ فَأَقْوَرُ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا</p>		<p>to say - as if there had never been Ties of affection between you and them - "Oh! I wish I had been with them; a fine thing should I then have made of it!"</p>	<p>been any affection between you and him, 'Would that I had been with them, to attain a mighty triumph!'</p>	<p>to say – just as if there had never been any question of love between you and him – "Oh, would that I had been with them, and thus had a [share in their] mighty triumph!"</p>	<p>been with them, I could have made great gains,' as if there had been no ties of affection between you and him.</p>	<p>would surely say - as if there had never been ties of affection between you and him - "Oh! I wish I had been with them; then I would have achieved a great success (a good share of booty)."</p>
<p>وَإِنْ تَصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةً يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تَصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةً يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ. قُلْ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ</p>	<p>'Ins'7,4 :78</p>	<p>If <u>some good</u> befalls them, they say, "This is from God"; but if <u>evil</u>, they say, "This is from thee" (O Prophet). Say: "All things are from God."</p>	<p>And if <u>a good thing visits them</u>, they say, 'This is from God'; but if <u>an evil thing visits them</u>, they say, 'This is from thee.' Say: 'Everything is from God.'</p>	<p>Yet, when <u>a good thing happens to them</u>, some [people] say, "This is from God," whereas when <u>evil befalls them</u>, they say, "This is from thee [O fellow-man]!" Say: "All is from God."</p>	<p><u>When good fortune comes their way</u>, they say, 'This is from God,' but when <u>harm befalls them</u>, they say, 'This is from you [Prophet].' Say to them, 'Both come from God.'</p>	<p>And if <u>some good reaches them</u>, they say, "This is from Allah," but if <u>some evil befalls them</u>, they say, "This is from you (O Muhammad ﷺ)." Say: "All things are from Allah,"</p>
<p>فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يُسْرِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخَشَى أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ - فَعَسَى أَلَّا يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ -</p>	<p>'Im'y7d t, 5:52</p>	<p>Those in whose hearts is a disease - thou seest how eagerly they run about amongst them, saying: "We do fear <u>lest a change of fortune bring us disaster</u>." Ah! perhaps Allah will give (thee) victory, or a decision according to His will.</p>	<p>Yet thou seest those in whose hearts is sickness vying with one another to come to them, saying, 'We fear <u>lest a turn of fortune should smite us</u>.' But it may be that God will bring the victory, or some commandment from Him,</p>	<p>And yet thou canst see how those in whose hearts there is disease vie with one another for their good will, saying [to themselves], "We fear <u>lest fortune turn against us</u>." But God may well bring about good fortune [for the believers] or any [other] event of His own devising</p>	<p>yet you [Prophet] will see the perverse at heart rushing to them for protection, saying, 'We are afraid <u>fortune may turn against us</u>.' But God may well bring about a triumph or some other event of His own making</p>	<p>And you see those in whose hearts there is a disease (of hypocrisy), they hurry to their friendship, saying: "We fear <u>lest some misfortune of a disaster may befall us</u>." Perhaps Allah may bring a victory or a decision according to His Will.</p>
<p>إِنْ أَنْتُمْ صَرْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ الْمَوْتِ</p>	<p>'Im'y7d t, 5:106</p>	<p>if ye are journeying through the earth, and <u>the chance of</u></p>	<p>if you are journeying in the land and <u>the affliction of death befalls you</u>.</p>	<p>if <u>the pangs of death come upon you</u> while you are traveling far from home</p>	<p>if you are journeying in the land when <u>death approaches</u>.</p>	<p>if you are travelling through the land and <u>the calamity of</u></p>

		<u>death befalls you</u>				<u>death befalls you</u>
سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا صَغَارٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ	'l'ʔnʕ' m ,6:124	Soon <u>will the wicked be overtaken by humiliation</u> before God, and a severe punishment, for all their plots.	and <u>humiliation</u> in God's sight <u>shall befall the sinners</u> , and a terrible chastisement, for what they devised.	<u>Abasement</u> in the sight of God <u>will befall those who have become guilty of evildoing</u> , and suffering severe for all the schemes which they were wont to weave.	<u>humiliation</u> before God and severe torment <u>will befall the evildoers</u> for their scheming.	<u>Humiliation and disgrace from Allah</u> and a severe torment <u>will overtake the criminals</u> (polytheists, sinners, etc.) for that which they used to plot.
ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمًا وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا مُخْمَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ	'ltwbt ,9:120	because nothing could they suffer or do, but was reckoned to their credit as a deed of righteousness, - whether they <u>suffered thirst, or fatigue, or hunger</u> , in the cause of God	that is because they are <u>smitten neither by thirst, nor fatigue, nor emptiness</u> in the way of God	for, whenever they <u>suffer from thirst or weariness or hunger</u> in God's cause,	if ever they <u>suffer any thirst, weariness, or hunger</u> in God's cause	That is because they <u>suffer neither thirst nor fatigue, nor hunger</u> in the Cause of Allah
وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا نُصِبُهُمْ بِمَا صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةً	'lrʕd, 13:31	But the Unbelievers, - <u>never will disaster cease to seize them</u> for their (ill) deeds	and still the unbelievers are <u>smitten by a shattering</u> for what they wrought	But as for those who are bent on denying the truth – in result of their [evil] deeds, <u>sudden calamities will always befall them</u>	As for the disbelievers, because of their misdeeds, <u>disaster will not cease to afflict them</u>	And <u>a disaster will not cease to strike those who disbelieve</u> because of their (evil) deeds
وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ أُنْقَلَبْ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ	'lhj, 22:11	but if a <u>trial comes to them</u> , they turn on their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter	but if a <u>trial befalls him</u> he turns completely over; he loses this world and the world to come	but if a <u>trial assails him</u> , he turns away utterly, losing [thereby both] this world and the life to come	but if they are <u>tested</u> , they revert to their old ways, losing both this world and the next	but if a <u>trial befalls him</u> , he turns back on his face (i.e. reverts back to disbelief after embracing Islam). He loses both this world and the Hereafter
وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أُصَابَتْهُمْ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ	'ljwry, 42:39	And those who, when an <u>oppressive wrong is inflicted on them</u> , (are not cowed but)	and who, when <u>insolence visits them</u> , do help themselves	and who, whenever <u>tyranny afflicts them</u> , defend themselves.	and defend themselves when they are <u>oppressed</u>	And those who, when an <u>oppressive wrong is done to them</u> , they take revenge.

		help and defend themselves.				
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن نُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُضَيِّحُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ	'lħjr't ,49:6	O ye who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, <u>lest ye harm people unwittingly</u> , and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done.	believers, if an ungodly man comes to you with a tiding, make clear, <u>lest you afflict a people unwittingly</u> , and then repent of what you have done	O YOU who have attained to faith! If any iniquitous person comes to you with a [slandering] tale, use your discernment, <u>lest you hurt people unwittingly</u> and afterwards be filled with remorse for what you have done.	Believers, if a troublemaker brings you news, check it first, <u>in case you wrong others unwittingly</u> and later regret what you have done	O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with a news, verify it, <u>lest you harm people in ignorance</u> , and afterwards you become regretful to what you have done

### **Assessment:**

Differences can be noticed among the translations above. While Ali, Arberry, Khan and Hilali translate the collocational component الْقَرْحُ 'lqarħu as *wound* which agrees with the scholars of Tafseer, Abdel Haleem translates it as *defeat* which partly transfers the meaning. Asad's produces an equivalent which seems distant from the meaning presented by scholars of interpretation. One must bear in mind the meaning is not distributed identically in every language.

### **15. أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ:**

The following table shows some of the multiple uses of the collocate أَجْرُ 'aʒru in the Quran:

Quranic collocations	Transliteration	Quranic Collocations	Transliteration
أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ	'ʔaʒru 'lʕa:mili:yna	أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ	'ʔaʒra 'lmuwʔmini:yna
أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ	'ʔaʒrun ʕaʒi:ymun	أَجْرَ الْمُضِلِّينَ	'ʔaʒra 'lmuʕliħi:yna
أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ	'ʔaʒra 'lmuħsini:yna	أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ	'ʔaʒrun kabi:yrun

أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ	'ʔaʒrun kari:ymun	أَجْرًا حَسَنًا	'ʔaʒran' ḥasanan'
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The explicit and implicit meaning of the collocate أَجْرٌ :

Primary meaning	Secondary meaning
أَجْرٌ 'ʔajru: to reward, recompense, remunerate; wage, pay.	الأجر الأدنى Minimum wages
	أجرة السفر Fare
	أجرة الشحن Transport charges

The collocational unit أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ:

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقْنَا وَعَدَهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ

And they say: praise be to God, Who has fulfilled His promise to us and has made us inherit the land, we can in the Garden wherever we will! how excellent is the wage of workers. [literal translation]

wa qa:lu: 'lḥamdu lilahi 'laḏiy ṣadaqana: waḥdahuw wa'ʔawraḡana: 'l'ʔarḡa natabawa'ʔu mina 'lʒanati ḥayḡu naʃa:ʔu faniʕma 'ʔajru 'lʕa:mili:yna

The following represents a sample of Quranic collocate أَجْرُ 'ʔajru to show how the five selected English translations of the Quran dealt with this challenging collocation.

أجر	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
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<p>وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقْنَا وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْزَنَّا الْأَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّأُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَبِعَمَلٍ الْعَامِلِينَ</p>	<p>'lzmr,3 9:74</p>	<p>They will say: "Praise be to God, Who has truly fulfilled His Promise to us, and has given us (this) land in heritage: We can dwell in the Garden as we will: how excellent a reward for those who work (righteousness)!"</p>	<p>And they shall say, 'Praise belongs to God, who has been true in His promise to us, and has bequeathed upon us the earth, for us to make our dwelling wheresoever we will in Paradise.' How excellent is the wage of those that labour!</p>	<p>And they will exclaim: "All praise is due to God, who has made His promise to us come true, and has bestowed upon us this expanse [of bliss] as our portion, so that we may dwell in paradise as we please!" And how excellent a reward will it be for those who laboured [in God's way]!</p>	<p>and they will say, 'Praise be to God who has kept His promise to us and given us this land as our own. Now we may live wherever we please in the Garden.' How excellent is the reward of those who labour!</p>	<p>And they will say: "All the praises and thanks be to Allah Who has fulfilled His Promise to us and has made us inherit (this) land. We can dwell in Paradise where we will; how excellent a reward for the (pious good) workers!"</p>
<p>وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ</p>	<p>'a ʕmr'n,3 :171</p>	<p>and in the fact that God suffereth not the reward of the Faithful to be lost (in the least).</p>	<p>and that God leaves not to waste the wage of the believers.</p>	<p>and [in the promise] that God will not fail to requite the believers</p>	<p>and that God will not let the reward of the believers be lost.</p>	<p>and that Allah will not waste the reward of the believers.</p>
<p>الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمْ الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرَ عَظِيمٍ</p>	<p>'a ʕmr'n,3 :172</p>	<p>Of those who answered the call of God and the Apostle, even after being wounded, those who do right and refrain from wrong have a great reward.</p>	<p>And those who answered God and the Messenger after the wound had smitten them - to all those of them who did good and feared God, shall be a mighty wage.</p>	<p>who responded to the call of God and the Apostle after misfortune had befallen them. A magnificent requital awaits those of them who have persevered in doing good and remained conscious of God.</p>	<p>Those who responded to God and the Messenger after suffering defeat, who do good and remain conscious of God, will have a great reward.</p>	<p>Those who answered (the Call of) Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) after being wounded; for those of them who did good deeds and feared Allah, there is a great reward.</p>

<p>وَالَّذِينَ يُمَسِّكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُضِلِّينَ</p>	<p>'l'q'r'f, 7:170</p>	<p>As to those who hold fast by the Book and establish regular prayer,- never shall We suffer <u>the reward of the righteous</u> to perish.</p>	<p>And those who hold fast to the Book, and perform the prayer -- surely We leave not to waste <u>the wage of those who set aright</u>.</p>	<p>For [We shall requite] all those who hold fast to the divine writ and are constant in prayer: verily, We shall not fail to <u>requite those who enjoin the doing of what is right!</u></p>	<p>But as for those who hold fast to the Scripture and keep up the prayer, We do not deny <u>righteous people their rewards</u>.</p>	<p>And as to those who hold fast to the Book (i.e. act on its teachings) and perform <i>As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat)</i>, certainly, We shall never waste <u>the reward of those who do righteous deeds</u>.</p>
<p>وَأَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ</p>	<p>hwd,11 :115</p>	<p>And be steadfast in patience; for verily God will not suffer <u>the reward of the righteous</u> to perish.</p>	<p>And be thou patient; God will not leave to waste <u>the wage of the good-doers</u>.</p>	<p>And be patient in adversity: for, verily, God does not fail to <u>requite the doers of good!</u></p>	<p>Be steadfast: God does not let <u>the rewards of those who do good</u> go to waste.</p>	<p>And be patient; verily, Allah loses not <u>the reward of the good-doers</u>.</p>
<p>إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرٌ مَمْنُونٍ</p>	<p>fslt ,41:8</p>	<p>For those who believe and work deeds of righteousness is a <u>reward that will never fail</u>.</p>	<p>Surely those who believe, and do righteous deeds shall <u>have a wage unfailing</u>.</p>	<p>[But,] verily, they who have attained to faith and do good works shall <u>have a reward unending!</u></p>	<p>Those who believe and do good deeds will have <u>a reward that never fails.</u>'</p>	<p>Truly, those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah Islamic Monotheism, and in His Messenger Muhammad ﷺ) and do righteous good deeds, for them <u>will be an endless reward that will never stop (i.e. Paradise)</u>.</p>

<p>ءَامِنُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ وَأَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ مُسْتَخْلِفِيْنَ فِيْهِۗ فَالَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْفَقُوا لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ</p>	<p>'Ihdyd, 57:7</p>	<p>Believe in God and His apostle, and spend (in charity) out of the (substance) whereof He has made you heirs. For, those of you who believe and spend (in charity),- for them <u>is a great Reward</u>.</p>	<p>Believe in God and His Messenger, and expend of that unto which He has made you successors. And those of you who believe and expend shall have <u>a mighty wage</u>.</p>	<p>BELIEVE in God and His Apostle, and spend on others out of that of which He has made you trustees: for those of you who have attained to faith and who spend freely [in God's cause] shall have <u>a great reward</u>.</p>	<p>Believe in God and His Messenger, and give out of what He has made pass down to you: those of you who believe and give will have <u>a great reward</u>.</p>	<p>Believe in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ), and spend of that whereof He has made you trustees. And such of you as believe and spend (in Allah's Way), theirs will be <u>a great reward</u>.</p>
<p>وَأَقْرَضُوا اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَرِيْمٌ</p>	<p>'Ihdyd, 57:18</p>	<p>For those who give in Charity, men and women, and loan to God a Beautiful Loan, it shall be increased manifold (to their credit), and they shall have (besides) <u>a liberal reward</u>.</p>	<p>Surely those, the men and the women, who make freewill offerings and have lent to God a good loan, it shall be multiplied for them, and theirs shall be <u>a generous wage</u>.</p>	<p>Verily, as for the men and women who accept the truth as true, and who [thus] offer up unto God a goodly loan, they will be amply repaid, and shall have <u>a noble reward [in the life to come]</u>.</p>	<p>Charitable men and women who make a good loan to God will have it doubled and have <u>a generous reward</u>.</p>	<p>Verily, those who give <i>Sadaqat</i> (i.e. <i>Zakat</i> and alms, etc.), men and women, and lend to Allah a goodly loan, it shall be increased manifold (to their credit), and theirs shall be <u>an honourable good reward (i.e. Paradise)</u>.</p>
<p>قُلْ لِّلْمُخَلَّفِيْنَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ سَتُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى قَوْمٍ أَوْلىٰ بِآسِنِ شَدِيْدٍ تَقْتُلُوْنَهُمْ أَوْ يُسَلِّمُوْنَۗ فَإِنْ تَطَبَّعُوا يُؤْتِكُمْ اللّٰهُ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا</p>	<p>'Iftḥ,48: 16</p>	<p>Say to the desert Arabs who lagged behind: "Ye shall be summoned (to fight) against a people given to vehement war: then shall ye fight, or they shall submit. Then if ye show obedience, God will grant you <u>a goodly reward</u></p>	<p>Say to the Bedouins who were left behind: 'You shall be called against a people possessed of great might' to fight them, or they surrender. If you obey, God will give you <u>a goodly wage</u>.'</p>	<p>Say unto those bedouin who stayed behind: "In time you will be called upon [to fight] against people of great prowess in war: you will have to fight against them [until you die] or they surrender. And then, if you heed [that call], God will bestow on you <u>a goodly reward</u>.</p>	<p>Tell the desert Arabs who stayed behind, 'You will be called to face a people of great might in war and to fight them, unless they surrender: if you obey, God <u>will reward you well</u></p>	<p>Say (O Muhammad ﷺ) to the bedouins who lagged behind: "You shall be called to fight against a people given to great warfare, then you shall fight them, or they shall surrender. Then if you obey, Allah will give you <u>a fair reward</u>.</p>

### Assessment:

The five translators were reserved and did not venture into the implicit and covert semantic field of the collocate *'ajru* أَجْرُ of which the primary meaning is reward, wage payment in return for work or deed. To some extent the five translators were successful in conveying the gist of what was said in Arabic and also in line with what was said by the Prophet: *أَعْطُوا الْأَجِيرَ أَجْرَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَجْفَأَ عَرَفُهُ* (*Pay the labourer their wages before their sweat dries* -- 'ʔaʔw 'lʔjyra 'ʔjrahu qabla 'ʔan yajafa ʕarakhu) .

### 16. وَجْهٌ لِلَّهِ ۞

The following table shows some of the multiple uses of the collocate *wajhu* وَجْهٌ in the Quran:

Quranic collocations	Transliteration	Quranic Collocations	Transliteration
وَجْهٌ لِلَّهِ ۞	<i>wajhu 'llahi</i>	وَجْهَ النَّهَارِ	<i>wazha 'lna:ha'ri</i>
وَجْهٌ أَبِيكُمْ	<i>wajhu 'ʔabi:ykum</i>	وَجْهَ رَبِّهِمْ	<i>wazhi rabihim</i>
تَبْيِضُ وُجُوهُ	<i>tabyaḍu</i> <i>wuzu:whun</i>	تَسْوَدُ وُجُوهُ	<i>taswadu wuzu:whun</i>
أَنْقَلَبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ ۞	<i>'nqalaba ʕala</i> <i>wazhihiy</i>	فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ	<i>fa'ʔaqim wazhaka</i> <i>lildi:yni</i>
سَيِّمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ	<i>Siyma:hum fiy</i> <i>wuzu:whihim</i>	يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ	<i>yamfi:y mukiban ʕala</i> <i>wazhihi</i>

The explicit and implicit meaning of the collocate *wajha* وَجْه :

Primary meaning	Secondary meaning
وجه <i>Wajha</i> : front, face, outer side of an object.	على وجه الحصر Exclusively
	على وجه العموم Generally, in general

	على وجه اليقين	With certainty
	لوجه الله	For the sake of God

The collocational unit **وَجْهَ اللَّهِ**:

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۚ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ

*To God belong the East and the West; wherever you turn, there is His Face.*

*wa lilahi 'Imafriqu wa 'Imayribu fa'ḡaynama: tuwalu: faḡama wazhu 'llahi*

The following represents a sample of Quranic collocates **وجه** *wazh* focusing on five selected English translations of the Quran to find out whether these convey the meaning of the collocational units in a readable and natural way.

وجه	Sura	Ali	Arberry	Asad	Abdel-Haleem	Khan & Hilali
وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۚ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ	'lbqrt,2:1 15	To God belong the east and the West: Whithersoever ye turn, there is the <u>presence of God</u> .	To God belong the East and the West; whithersoever you turn, there is <u>the Face of God</u> .	And God's is the east and the west: and wherever you turn, there is <u>God's countenance</u> .	The East and West belong to God: wherever you turn, there is <u>His Face</u> .	And to Allah belong the east and the west, so wherever you turn yourselves or your faces there is the <u>Face of Allah</u> .
وَقَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكَتَابِ ءَأَمِنُوا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَجْهَ النَّهَارِ وَآكْفَرُوا ءَاخِرَهُ	'ḡ ḡmr'n, 3:72	Believe <u>in the morning</u> what is revealed to the believers, but reject it at the end of the day.	Believe in what has been sent down upon those who believe <u>at the beginning of the day</u> , and disbelieve at the end of it.	Declare your belief in what has been revealed unto those who believe [in Muhammad] <u>at the beginning of the day</u> , and deny the truth of what came later.	<u>At the beginning of the day</u> , believe in what has been revealed to these believers [the Muslims], then at the end of the day reject it.	Believe <u>in the morning</u> in that which is revealed to the believers (Muslims), and reject it at the end of the day.
أَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهَ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِن	ywsf, 12:9	Slay ye Joseph or cast him out to some (unknown) land, that so <u>the favour of your father may be given</u>	Kill you Joseph, or cast him forth into some land, that <u>your father's face may be free for you</u> , and	[Said one of them:] "Slay Joseph, or else drive him away to some [faraway] land, so that <u>your father's regard</u>	[One of them said], 'Kill Joseph or banish him to another land, and <u>your father's</u>	"Kill Yusuf (Joseph) or cast him out to some (other) land, so that <u>the favour of your father may be</u>

بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ		to you alone: (there will be time enough) for you to be righteous after that!	thereafter you may be a righteous people.	<u>may be for you alone:</u> and after this is done, you will be [free to repent and to live once again as] righteous people!"	<u>attention will be free to turn to you.</u> After that you can be righteous.'	given to you alone, and after that you will be righteous folk (by intending repentance before committing the sin)."
وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَبْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ	'lrfd, 13:22	Those who patiently persevere, seeking <u>the countenance of their Lord;</u> Establish regular prayers	patient men, desirous of <u>the Face of their Lord,</u> who perform the prayer.	and who are patient in adversity out of a longing for their <u>Sustainer's countenance,</u> and are constant in prayer	who remain steadfast through their desire for <u>the face of their Lord;</u> who keep up the prayer	And those who remain patient, seeking their <u>Lord's Countenance,</u> perform <i>As-Salat</i> ( <i>Iqamat- as-Salat</i> )
يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهُ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهُ	'?l fmr'n, 3:106	On the Day when <u>some faces will be (lit up with) white, and some faces will be (in the gloom of) black</u>	the day when <u>some faces are blackened, and some faces whitened</u>	on the Day [of Judgment] when <u>some faces will shine [with happiness] and some faces will be dark [with grief].</u>	On the Day when <u>some faces brighten and others darken</u>	On the Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) when <u>some faces will become white and some faces will become black</u>
وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ أَظْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ ائْتَلَبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ خَسِيرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ	'lhj, 22:11	There are among men some who serve God, as it were, on the verge: if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they <u>turn on their faces.</u>	And among men there is such a one as serves God upon the very edge -- if good befalls him he is at rest in it, but if a trial befalls him he <u>turns completely over.</u>	And there is, too, among men many a one who worships God on the borderline [of faith]: thus, if good befalls him, he is satisfied with Him; but if a trial assails him, he <u>turns away utterly.</u>	There are also some who serve God with unsteady faith: if something good comes their way, they are satisfied, but if they are tested, they <u>revert to their old ways.</u>	And among mankind is he who worships Allah as it were, upon the very edge (i.e. in doubt); if good befalls him, he is content therewith; but if a trial befalls him, he <u>turns back on his face (i.e. reverts back to disbelief after embracing Islam).</u>
فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتِ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا	'lrwm, 30:30	So <u>set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Faith:</u> (establish) God's handiwork according to	So <u>set thy face to the religion, a man of pure faith</u> -- God's original upon which He originated mankind.	AND SO, <u>set thy face steadfastly towards the [one ever-true] faith,</u> turning away from all that is false, in accordance with the natural	So [Prophet] as a man of pure faith, stand firm and true in <u>your devotion to the religion.</u> This is the natural	So <u>set you (O Muhammad ) your face towards the religion of pure Islamic Monotheism Hanifa</u>

		the pattern on which He has made mankind.		disposition which God has instilled into man.	disposition God instilled in mankind.	(worship none <u>but Allah Alone</u> ) Allah's <i>Fitrah</i> (i.e. Allah's Islamic Monotheism), with which He has created mankind.
أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ	'lmlk, 67:22	Is then one who walks headlong, with his face grovelling, better guided, - or one who walks evenly on a Straight Way?	What, is he who walks prone upon his face better guided than he who walks upright on a straight path?	But then, is he that goes along with his face close to the ground better guided than he that walks upright on a straight way?	Who is better guided: someone who falls on his face, or someone who walks steadily on a straight path?	Is he who walks without seeing on his face, more rightly guided, or he who (sees and) walks on a Straight Way (i.e. Islamic Monotheism).
سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مَنْ أَثَرَ السُّجُودِ	'lfth, 48:29	On their faces are their marks, (being) the traces of their prostration.	Their mark is on their faces, the trace of prostration.	Their marks are on their faces, traced by prostration.	on their faces they bear the marks of their prostrations.	The mark of them (i.e. of their Faith) is on their faces (foreheads) from the traces of (their) prostration (during prayers).

### Assessment

As can be seen from the table above, some of the collocations of the word **وجه** *Wazhu* demonstrate two different translation procedures that the translators have resorted to. For instance, in translating the collocation **وَجْهٌ اللَّهِ**, *wazhu 'llahi* Arberry, Abdel Haleem, and Khan and Hilali believe that a word for word translation in this particular case suffices to convey the intended meaning 'Face of God/Alah'. According to Tafseer books, the collocational unit **وَجْهٌ اللَّهِ** *wazhu 'llahi* is interpreted into **القبلة للصلاة** *qiblah for prayers* (the direction of the Kaaba, to which Muslims turn at prayer times. However, in terms of the intended meaning of such contextual and cultural bound collocations, literal translation is not fit for purpose as a method to render the meaning of such type of collocations and to

make the Quranic text accessible to the target readers. Translation relies on a range of sources, when transferring Quranic collocations into English.

### Assessment

أَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ

*Kill Joseph or cast him to some (other) land, so that your father's face may be all for you, and (that) you may afterward be righteous people.*

*'qtulu: yu:sufa 'ʔaw ʔraħuwhu: 'ʔarḏan yaxlu lakum wazhu 'ʔabi:ykum wa takuwnu: min baʕdihiy qawman řa:liħi:yna*

Another example of the meaning variation of the word **وجه** *wazh* is shown in its collocational combination with other lexical items in the Quranic context as in **يَخْلُ** *yaxlu lakum wazhu 'ʔabi:ykum*. This collocational unit has gone beyond its generic relationship between its components to provide a creative image in communicating the meaning in a way that attracts the reader of the Quranic text. The word combination **يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ** *yaxlu lakum wazhu 'ʔabi:ykum* is translated on a word to word basis by Arberry, which results in a meaning that could be ambiguous or misleading to the target reader. Other translators succeed in transferring the gist of the meaning of this collocational unit, that is by giving the following translations: (*the favour of your father may be given to you alone / your father's regard may be for you alone / your father's attention will be free to turn to you / the favour of your father may be given to you*).

### Assessment

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ حَرْفٍ ۖ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ ۖ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انْقَلَبَ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ ۗ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ ۖ وَالْآخِرَةُ

*And among mankind is he who worship God upon a narrow marge so that if good befalls him he is content, but if a trial befalls him, he turns back on his face. He loses both the world and the Hereafter.*

*wa mina 'Ina:si man yaʿbudu 'llaha ʕala ḥarfin fa'ʕin 'ʔaṣa:bahuw xayrun ʔma'ʔana bihi wa 'ʕin 'ʔaṣa:bathu fitnatun 'nqalaba ʕala waʕhihi xasira 'ldunya: wa 'lʔa'xirata.*

Further challenges were encountered by the five translators in rendering the combinations of the word *وجه* *waʕhu* in the Quranic text. Consider this example, *أَنْقَلَبَ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ* *'nqalaba ʕala waʕhihi*: this collocational unit of the word *وجه* *waʕh* is culture-bound and it seems that it presents difficulty, as it is translated literally into *turn on their faces* by Ali. A word of caution is perhaps needed here. The challenge of translating contextual and cultural-bound collocations does not mean that collocations used metaphorically cannot be rendered at face value. In fact, it requires a deeper search on the part of the translator to convey the gist of what was said in the original message. Other translations of the collocational unit *أَنْقَلَبَ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ* *'nqalaba ʕala waʕhihi*: (*turns completely over/ turns away utterly/ revert to their old ways/ reverts back to disbelief after embracing Islam*) seem appropriate in conveying the message.

From the assessment above, it sounds that literal translation approach often conspicuously hinders the communication of the intended meaning of the word *وجه* *waʕh*. In addition, the word *وجه* *waʕh*, as shown in the examples above, carries different figurative meanings that in turn require different treatment in the translating process. The translator's main task is not so much about transferring the primary meaning but it is about conveying the deeper meaning. Adjustment is necessary in order to produce meaning and the same effect felt by the SL reader. Accordingly, the translating of such types of collocational units remains

a source of difficulty for translators. The reason stems from the fact that translations that are word for word oriented, staying too close to the original and are not able, in many cases, to convey accurately the various shades of meaning of the plethora of Quranic collocational units or metaphorical images of the Quran. In contrast, translations that rely on exegetical explanations can reflect the message of the Quran more accurately. To conclude, it is felt that there is a dumbing down of the original word combination with **وجه** *wazh*. It has lost its powerful and spiritual aura in English translations. It can be argued that the purpose of translating the Quran is to make the message of God familiar, meaningful and easily comprehensible in the target language.

## 6.6 Summary

It would be easy to misconstrue the efforts made to objectively assess the limitations of English translations of the Quran as an attempt to discredit or diminish the work by various translators; nothing could be further from the truth. This study acknowledges that translation can only be an approximation, and that every word in the Quran is so loaded with nuance and cultural variation, which goes far beyond straightforward linguistic transfer, it makes exact correspondence rarely achievable. Thus, the five assessed English translations of the Quran exhibit individual variation.

The main theme that emerges from findings indicate that views are polarised between those who advocate as close a rendering of the Quranic text as possible and those who believe in a 'natural style' in the target text. It would seem that incremental improvements to the existing translations of the Quran is essential and it needs a collective effort to provide clarity, naturalness, and accuracy. This study argues that translations are inevitably partial and not infallible. In other

words, translations are approximations. The deeper meaning of the Quranic text can never be fully grasped and conveyed by translation.

## Chapter Seven

### Interview analysis

#### 7.0 Introduction

This section interprets the results of the qualitative data, obtained through the semi-structured interviews. These interviews involved seven translation specialists, including Abdel Haleem, one of the translators of the five translations of the Quran selected by this study. The qualitative data aim to gauge the interviewees' perceptions and perspectives of the existing translations of the Quran in general, focusing on Quranic collocations in particular. It is worth reiterating that this study examines the difficulties and challenges of translating Quranic collocations from Arabic into English. It also investigates the constraints faced by the translators in dealing with Arabic collocations in the Quran in terms of semantic, pragmatic and stylistic features. It mainly assesses the degree of accuracy, fluency and fidelity of conveying the meaning of Quranic collocation into English. It identifies and discusses the translating methods used to transfer the meaning of collocations e.g. word-for-word, free translating approaches, etc. Finally, it provides appropriate and concrete alternative solutions for translating Arabic collocations into English when necessary.

#### 7.1 Justifying the selection of the qualitative method

The purpose of selecting the interpretivist paradigm is to explain and identify the challenges of translating Quranic collocations through the lens of translation specialists; in other words, investigating perceptions and views of translation

specialists using qualitative research to produce a holistic understanding of rich, contextual, and generally unstructured, non-numeric data (Mason, 2002), engaging in conversations with the research participants in a natural setting (Creswell, 2009).

Each method has strengths and weaknesses, pros and cons. Quantitative methods provide clear cut numerical evidence but cannot answer "why" things happen, in this case, the challenges of translating Quranic phraseology. Quantitative methods are mostly used to examine the nature of cause-and-effect relationships among variables, in abstract figures and facts, excluding feelings or personal perspectives and perceptions and thoughts. The results provided can be easily generalised, something which cannot happen by applying qualitative methods. Qualitative methods may be used to formulate new research questions when a quantitative research (survey) seems difficult to generate new hypotheses and ideas for a theme. In short, the choice of adopting a qualitative approach through interviews is motivated precisely by the gap in the literature where many questions regarding the quality of the current translations of the Quran, are still unanswered.

## **7.2 Justification for selecting exploratory research**

Exploratory research aims to explore areas where there is a perceived lack of relevant research. It has the primary purpose of developing preliminary ideas prior to further investigation to address the research questions (Saunders et al 2012; Neuman, 2014; Kumar, 2005). This is precisely the case in translation as confirmed by the literature. The present researcher's aim is to explain and identify the challenges of translating Quranic collocations through the lens of the

participants of the study, understanding their perceptions and views regarding the translation of the Quran, focusing on phraseology, to produce a holistic understanding of the data. The objective of exploratory research is to investigate the processes related to problems, experiences or meanings associated with specific circumstances and to discover new ideas (Ghauri et al., 2005; Zikmund et al., 2010). Exploratory research is often conducted because a problem has not been clearly defined as yet, or its real scope is as yet unclear.

Therefore, in line with the adopted interpretivist philosophy and qualitative approach, this study is exploratory in nature because it aims to find out the underlying difficulties in translating Quranic collocations; it seeks fresh insights; it investigates and assesses the translation of Quranic collocations from different perspectives. The main justification behind using exploratory research is motivated and informed by the following reasons:

- 1) the extensive literature review on the topic of translation is exploratory;
- 2) the researcher as an insider researcher experiences and has actively been engaged in translation practice on a daily basis over several years;
- 3) explanatory research looks at the 'how' and 'why' of translations.

This research does not aim to be neutral and entirely objective through emphasis placed on measuring, counting and statistical manipulation of quantities and numbers. On the contrary, the purpose of this research is to make sense of how translators, readers and users of the Quran, view and rate the quality of the current translations of the Quran. Exploratory research provides a better understanding by looking for patterns, ideas and recurring themes. As Proctor (2003:33) puts it, "exploratory research is a useful tool in fishing out the current

happenings.” Semi-structured interviews gave the present researcher the chance to ‘probe’ for more detailed information by asking participants to give more clarification or to elaborate their answers further on the challenges of translating Quranic collocations.

### 7.3 Interview sample size

Qualitative analysis typically requires a smaller sample size than quantitative analysis. In other words, the number of participants selected in qualitative analysis is generally smaller. Creswell (1998) suggests that sample size in qualitative research varies between 5 – 25. For the purpose of this study a sample of seven interviewees were selected.

### 7.4 Participants’ profiles

The interviews in this study were carried out with a group of academic staff specialised in translation studies at different universities. As some of the translators were in cities and countries a long way from the researcher, interviews were either conducted either face to face or by Skype.

The following table 7.1 shows the participants’ profiles who took part in the interview in their capacity as translation specialists:

Table 7.1 Participants’ profiles – translation specialists

	<b>Academic qualifications &amp; positions</b>
1	<i>Director of Centre of Islamic Studies, SOAS University of London</i>
2	<i>PhD in Contrastive Linguistics and Translation Studies and a lecturer at the University of Al-Ain, UAE</i>

3	<i>PhD in Translation Studies and a lecturer at University of Azzawia – Libya</i>
4	<i>PhD in Interpreting and Translation Studies and a lecturer at University of Birmingham</i>
5	<i>MA in Interpreting and Translation Studies and a lecturer at University of Tripoli - Libya</i>
6	<i>MA in Interpreting and Translation Studies and a lecturer at University of Tripoli - Libya</i>
7	<i>MA in Interpreting and Translation Studies and a lecturer at University of Benghazi – Libya</i>

### 7.5 Selection criteria of participants

A diverse number of participants were selected to ensure as much representativeness as possible. The literature suggests that the number of participants selected is irrelevant as the research is qualitative and not quantitative (Saunders et al 2012; Creswell 2012).

The interview is a structured process of knowledge-gathering with translation experts. As a result, the sample of interviewees is selected based on the following criteria:

- First-hand experience in dealing with translation studies and translation practice
- Experienced professionals in dealing with day to day translation activities in UK and international level.
- Experience and awareness of English translation of the Quran and the issues or difficulties around rendering sensitive texts.

- Participants hold vital information in the area under investigation, some with expertise and direct involvement in the translation of the Quran. Others have a major interest and knowledge of translation through teaching and practice.
- Semi-structured interviews in this study are viewed as a way of supplementing other collection methods, such as thematic and text analysis.

## 7.6 Interview themes and questions

The interview was designed and questions grouped into themes in line with the research questions of this study. The themes were mainly informed by the literature. Insights and knowledge from translation and Quranic studies have been integrated and formulated in the form of questions which made them worthy of interest to interview participants. The aim was to dig deep and gain a fuller, richer account of the participants' views and experiences regarding the issue of translating Quranic phraseology.

The interview covered the following constructs informed by the literature. Each theme captures a common, recurring pattern across the key issues regarding the translations of the Quran, and in particular translating Quranic collocations.

<b>Theme one</b>	<b>Proliferation of the translations of the Quran in English</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a growing number of English translations of the Quran on the market today. In your opinion, does more, mean better?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the translations of the Quran in English equally reliable, or are some 'better' than others?</li> <li>• Amongst all the existing translations of the Quran, which in your view is the most commonly used version of the Quran in translation?</li> <li>• In your experience, is the process of translating Quranic text different from translating other topics?</li> <li>• What is your view regarding the use of archaic English in the translation of the Quran?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme two</b></p>	<p><b>The challenges of translating the meaning of phraseology/collocations in the Quran</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collocations are widely used in the Quran and are often mistranslated or rendered literally. To what extent is this true?</li> <li>• In your view, what causes the difficulties of translating Quranic collocation into English?</li> <li>• In your opinion, are the mistranslations of collocations due to the translators' incompetence or the complex nature of the Quranic language?</li> <li>• Some Quranic collocations are allusive i.e. making indirect reference to something or someone in the Quran. In your opinion, what is the appropriate approach of translating Quranic collocations into English?</li> <li>• If translation is mediation between literal and free, the translators of the Quran are always making choices that emphasise one at the expense of another. In your view, which is the better option?</li> <li>• Some collocations are used figuratively in the Quran and are often mistranslated or rendered literally, without taking into account that Arabic phraseological items are unfamiliar in English. To what extent is this true?</li> <li>• The translator aims to capture the Quran's exceptional collocational expression in English. Should Quranic collocations be explained rather than translated in English?</li> </ul>

## 7.7 Method of evaluating qualitative interview data

The current study is shaped using inductive reasoning. Exploratory research, as the name implies, intends merely to explore the research questions and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions, in this case to existing problems of Quranic translations. This type of research is usually conducted to study a problem that has not yet been clearly demarcated and is used in this study in order to obtain more explanation of the serious challenges facing the translators of the Quran.

The success and validity of qualitative data rests on the extent to which the participants' views are truly reflected - the interviewees' 'voice' communicating their perspectives (Saunders et al 2012; Creswell 2012). For the researcher, the interview process was a fact-seeking instrument and data generation based on interaction. Cassell (2015) and others suggest the following criteria for validity of qualitative data: 1) Transferability 2) Transparency 3) Sufficiency 4) Authenticity.

Throughout the interview, participants were generally open, which provided a greater depth to the data gathered. Clearly, qualitative research is primarily subjective in approach as it seeks to understand human behaviour and reasons that govern such behaviour. In contrast, quantitative research is objective in approach in the sense that it only seeks precise measurements and analysis of target concepts to answer an inquiry. Thus, complete objectivity is impossible. However, the aim here was to minimise the impact of bias on the research process and any threats to the authenticity, by adopting a participatory approach in which the prime data were evaluated to increase transparency. As Reiter (2017:130) points out:

*“Exploratory and inductive research is based on an explicit recognition that all research is provisional; that reality is partly a social construction; that researchers are part of the reality they analyse; and that the words and categories we use to explain reality arise from our own minds and not from reality. In other words, what we perceive and how we perceive it has more to do with us than with the reality we observe.”*

In summary, translating Quranic collocation is a multifaceted process with various shades of complexity. It is also worth noting that the interpretation of the verses of the Quran, and Quranic collocations in particular, are subject to unpredictable individual understanding and mind set.

## **7.8 Generalisability of qualitative data**

Qualitative data is extensively debated and defined in the research methodology and methods literature. Although generalisability as a concept still generates conflicting and inconsistent views, there is a consensus with regards to its generic meaning. Generalisability refers to the degree to which research findings are applicable to other populations or samples (Polit and Hungler 1991; Ryan and Bernard 2000). According to Grbich (1999:66) generalisability involves *“the usefulness of one set of findings in explaining other similar situations.”* Generalising is *“central to the definition and creation of valid public knowledge”* (Metcalf 2005:24). Generalisability is sometimes equated with the terms *‘transferability’* and *‘external validity’* (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). For the purpose of this study, generalisability means making predictions based on a recurring experience.

The research methodology and methods literature provide three overlapping views regarding generalisability in qualitative research:

1. One is more or less acceptance that generalisability is not the main purpose of qualitative research, but there are plenty of other good reasons for employing it (e.g. Myers 2000);
2. The second view is that, yes, you can generalise, but if you do, you have to issue cautions about the limited capacity to do so based on the limited numbers (e.g., Benz and Newman 1998), a view which in part inherently accepts the scientific paradigm's rules and constructs about 'good research';
3. The third view, suggested by Stake (1980) in reference to case study research, is one of formalising the idea that qualitative research is generalisable.

Quantitative research, provides facts and figures that allow comparisons with population characteristics usually in a numerical way. Qualitative research does not generate numerical evidence but provides a depth of insight that quantitative research cannot provide.

### **7.9 For the purpose of this study**

The qualitative research method selected by this study aimed to construct a 'story', to give depth and meaning by exploring the multifaceted aspects of phraseology focusing on Quranic phraseology. The purpose of this study was not to conduct quantitative research to obtain numerical evidence and achieve generalisability. Admittedly no research fits neatly within a purely qualitative or quantitative method nor does it adequately reflect and provide a holistic view of

the topic under consideration. The qualitative approach is an open window into phraseology, a magnifying glass, whereas a quantitative approach is a population study in reply to a closed-ended research question via a test of the null(s) of its hypotheses. Case studies make great qualitative explorations but provide ungeneralisable conclusions, while quantitative ones must meet power of test parameters.

### 7.9.1 Generalisability in the present study

This study is exploratory in nature, examining the challenges of translating Quranic phraseology, to gain a fresh understanding, to find out and evaluate existing translations of the Quran, to seek new insights, to ask questions, and to assess phenomena in a new light (Robson 2000). As with any qualitative study aiming for a maximum variation sample, the findings are not intended to be numerically representative — the sampling method is intended to show the diversity in responses. The participant demographic characteristics of the translation specialists indicated a diverse range of respondents in terms of Arabic/English linguistic combination and work experience to reflect the diversity of opinions through everyday practice. Seale (1999b:50) argues, that the *“quality of research is not automatically determined by the imposition of generalised quality criteria.”*

On the basis of the method of data collection selected, namely qualitative, this study is not making a claim to generalisability. The generalisability of the findings is limited because the sample was small, seven interviewees in total. These cannot be subject to statistical analysis. This study sought to acquire knowledge based on words, not numbers. Knowledge is, to some extent, contextualised to

Quranic translation. Emphasis is on participants' interpretations of meaning of the Quran in English translation.

Some qualitative researchers (e.g. critical theorists, feminist theorists, post-structural theorists) have rejected the relevance of validity/reliability to qualitative research and argued that qualitative research has its own procedures and processes for judging and attaining validity/reliability. This is still an open debate. Smith (1996) argues that internal coherence (or lack of it) would be the most appropriate way of assessing qualitative research. Rather than being concerned, for example, with the representativeness of the sample, researchers should concentrate on whether it was internally consistent and coherent. The following table shows the issues of qualitative research:

Table 7.2: Issues of qualitative research

Generalisability	Validity	Reliability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enriching understanding and generating theory</li> <li>○ Fuzzy Generalisations</li> <li>○ Falsification               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using extreme (most/least likely to fit theory), atypical, and critical cases</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Often concerns: honesty, credibility, richness, authenticity, depth, scope, subjectivity, strength of feeling, capturing uniqueness, idiographic statements, fidelity to participants' accounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dependability, consistency, comprehensiveness, 'checkability', empathy, uniqueness, explanatory and descriptive potential, confirmability, "neutrality", applicability, transferability</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">As by Alis Oancea.</p>

Source : [www.education.ox.ac.uk/.../Oxbridge-Exchange-ppp-SAMMONS-BAKKUMr.-25-A](http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/.../Oxbridge-Exchange-ppp-SAMMONS-BAKKUMr.-25-A)

## 7.10 Analysis of the interviews

There are several methods of interview analysis, such as: thematic analysis, comparative analysis, thematic content analysis, and discourse, in addition to using computer software for data analysis - NVivo (Dawson, 2009). In order to analyse the interviews for this study, a thematic content analysis has been chosen. Thematic content analysis is probably the most common method used in qualitative research. It aims to find common patterns across a data set. It is a *“method where the researcher systematically works through each transcript assigning codes, which may be numbers or words, to specific characteristics within the text”* (Dawson, 2009:122). In this case, the first step in content analysis is to conceptualise the data, then group them into meaningful categories, and then identify them into themes to explain the data.

The purpose of the interviews is to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate the challenges of translating Quranic phraseology.

### **Theme one: Translators’ responses regarding proliferation of the translations of the Quran in English**

In response to the first question (*There is a growing number of English translations of the Quran on the market today. In your opinion, does more, mean better?*), the majority of interviewees agreed that there has been a global interest in the Quran due to recent events, and thus a greater interest in English versions. This has led to the proliferation of translations of the Quran in English. The participants agreed that more choice is better and could lead to the enhancement of the quality of translation as long as successive and future versions of the Quran

in English address the shortcomings and pitfalls of the previous versions. As participant 5 points out:

*more translations mean better for as time moves, we might get to understand it better. Consequently, other more appropriate interpretations are likely to emerge, but as we know, the Quranic text is universal and timeless.*

In contrast, Participants 1 and 3 think that the growing number of English translations of the Quran does not add value, as little or no improvement on previous versions is perceptible. There are still many grey or controversial translating areas which lack accuracy and fluency due to the complex nature of the stylistic features of the Quran such as collocations and figurative meanings. According to Participant 1, the growing number of English translations of the Quran adds to confusion and uncertainty as people do not know which one is authentic. There is only one Quran in Arabic and yet there are over fifty versions in English, begging the question which one is trustworthy, which is reliable or the closest to the original, which many people, both Muslims or non-Muslims who are not specialised in translation, ask themselves. In addition, participants referred to the fact that the majority of the current English versions of the Quran have been undertaken by an individual or pair of translators, which is a tall order. The Quran is written in a style which often defies and challenges highly knowledge people to work out what it means. Translating the full meaning and the whole truth of the message of the Quran is only partial. As Participant 1 states "*the Quran is difficult. I have read it all my life and know it by heart and every day I discover that I am finding that my knowledge is limited as I am discovering new meanings for the first time after decades of reading.*"

When the interviewees were asked (*Have you ever translated verses of the Quran or the whole of the Quran?*) it was found that only Participant 1 has translated the whole Quran and published it through Oxford University Press. The majority of the translation specialists interviewed claimed that they have experience in translating the odd verse of the Quran but not the full Quranic text. Participant 1 said that he made every effort possible to unearth the true meaning of the message of the Quran by focusing on the gist of what was said rather on the literal meaning of the words: *“I focused on the meaning of the main message that the verse conveyed.”*

With regard to the question (*In your experience is the process of translating Quranic text different from translating other topics?*) most of the participants were unanimous in their answers, suggesting that translating the Quran is definitely on a different level. Participants 1,2,5,6,7 stressed that this is due to the special nature of the religious text-type in terms of the sensitivity and complexity of such texts while Participant number 3 attributed the translating challenges to the rhythmic and poetic style and phraseology of the Quranic text. Participant 4 said that *“each text has its own specific stylistic features, structural and textual elements which are different from others. The Quran is no exception.”* In response to the question (*Is there such a thing as a perfect translation?*) all interviewees agree that perfect translation is not realistic as the two languages operate from different thought processes and loss of meaning is inevitable as Arabic and English are each deeply rooted in their own specific culture and different mind-sets. In addition, the distance that separates the linguistic systems causes a serious challenge to translators. However, a good translation is expected to

convey the closest natural message and the same effect of the original. It communicates the writer's intended meaning and is free from linguistic and/or cultural distortions. According to Participant 2, the quality of some translations is good in terms of fluency and accuracy, which means that it does not make the reader conscious it is a translation because of the ease and naturalness of the text, a typical example being Ahmed Rami's translation of "Rubaiyat Alkhyam" from Persian into Arabic.

With regards to the question (*To what extent are the current English translations of the Quran a true reflection of the original in content and form?*) Participants 2,4,5,6, and 7 agreed that translation is often an interpretation or the gist of what was said rather than a true reflection of the original. Participants also agreed that many of the translations of the Quran are a genuine attempt to convey the meanings of the Quranic text. Participant 2 pointed out that: *All the English versions of the Quran in translation available can be viewed as sincere attempts to try to bring as close as possible the concepts and themes covered in the Holy Quran to the minds of the readership, but the fact remains that the Arabic verses of the Quran are one thing and the translations are just translations, the original remains original.* Furthermore, Participant 3 stated that *"It has always been argued that the current English translations of the Quranic have a number of erroneous interpretations of some figurative features, phrases, and sometimes the vocabulary."* In addition, there are many cases where the *"content has not been conveyed to truly reflect its Arabic counterpart. This also applies to the form, where in many cases one can find inaccurate lexical entries used."*

When participants were asked (*As the Quran is viewed as a word of Allah, does a translation of it diminish its relevance?*), the participants' reactions were similar. Participant 2's view is that, "*No, not at all, as translations are the only way to convey the message*". Participant 4 pointed out that translation does not diminish its relevance as "*translation only communicates the Quran to those who cannot read it in its original/source language.*" Participants 6 and 7 stated that as translation is always considered a form of explanation, it is then a way to make the Quran understandable and readable to the reader of the target language with no reduction to its relevance.

When asked (*What is your view regarding the use of archaic English in the translation of the Quran?*) all participants agreed that archaic English must be avoided in translation. Participant 4 said that "*using modern English is more meaningful and accessible so that readers do not need to intra-translation, i.e. from archaic English to modern English.*" For Participant 3, the use of archaic English makes the English version of the Quran more complicated to read and not everyone is versed in archaic English, and the purpose of translation of the Quran is to make it accessible to the general public to read and understand. Similarly, Participant 2 highlighted the point that archaic English is not easy even for many native speakers of English. Translation should opt for using simple and modern English to achieve the anticipated objective. Participant 1 added that archaic language should not be used in modern translations of the Quran at all. The Quran was sent for general readership. Ideally, a communicative method makes the translated Quranic text user friendly.

In response to the question (*Are the translations of the Quran in English equally reliable or are some 'better' than others?*) participants agreed that some translations of the Quran are better than others. Participants argued that translation is measured in terms of adequacy and also by being accepted by the readership. Readers have their preferences. In this regard, Participant 3 stated that "*If I read two versions, for example, one in archaic English and the other in modern English, I will, of course, find the latter better.*" When asked (*Do you think that there should be more translations of the Quran?*) the response of the participants varied. Participants 3, 5 and 7 believe that there must one English translation of the Quran that can be used as a reliable source, preferably one that has been achieved by a committee or a team involving different levels of expertise. On the other hand, Participants 2, 4 and 6 think that more translations are more likely to offer better solutions and better quality if they address the flaws and shortcomings of previous versions.

This theme of the interview was concluded by the question (*Who do you think should translate the Quran – translators, religious experts or both?*). Participants were unanimous, as all agreed that working within a team and the joint efforts of translation specialists and religious experts is essential for translating such an important and complex text.

To conclude, what transpires from the above discussion is that translations of the Quran have their merits and demerits. Their quality varies. There is a consensus amongst participants that translating the Quran from Arabic into English is not just a matter of language transfer from A to B. It involves restructuring, reformulating and creating what is generally acceptable in T.L. and this process

inevitably involves loss of meaning. Translating Quranic phraseological units from Arabic into English requires sensitivity and awareness about their acceptance. Lack of correspondence between Quranic phraseological units does not only indicate a formal difference; it also reveals that aspects of everyday life are perceived differently from one people to another. The translator's aim is to optimise communication.

### **Theme two: The challenges of translating the meaning of phraseology/ collocations in the Quran**

Phraseology or any figurative word combination differs from one language to another in the way the phraseological units or patterns are formed and the way they are distributed in S.L. This difference can cause serious challenges to the translator who may produce odd collocations in T.L. There is generally no match between S.L. words in their figurative senses in T.L. Meaning is often obtained from the wider area and beyond the scope of the context of occurrence. In an ideal situation, the translator aims at rendering an S.L. collocation with a typical collocation in T.L., preserving effect and meaning. However, this is not often possible. The translator is torn between achieving accuracy and naturalness in T.L. Naturalness is often overlooked to achieve accuracy.

When participants were asked (*Collocations are widely used in the Quran and are often mistranslated or rendered literally. To what extent is this true?*), participants attributed mistranslation of collocation to several reasons. Participant 3 believes that finding *“a word that collocates with another to get the required*

*semantic significance could be very difficult for translators and this is where translators are really challenged.*” Participant 5 thinks that “*some collocations are translated literally without giving any reference even in a footnote to explain the intended purpose of the collocation.*” Confirming the same point, Participant 7 said “*literal translation does not often succeed in conveying the intended meaning, in particular, of those collocations that carry a figurative sense and thus mistranslation takes place.*” Participant 1 went as far as to suggest that – whether for collocations or not - literalism is bad. Participant 1 pointed out that the Quran is in Arabic which is so different from the English language in grammar, structure, and culture. Sometimes the Arabic of the Quran is very concise and can be understood by Arabs, but it will not be understood by people of different cultures. From this perspective, literalism is a curse. It is number one fault in many translations. Participant 1 added:

*In my translation, my intention was to get away from literalism. Because the two languages are different, and the language of the Quran is very concise, to translate literally can be meaningless. Thus, regarding the feature you are talking about (collocation) or for any other, literalism can be very dangerous.*

When addressing the question, (*In your view, what causes the difficulties of translating Quranic collocation into English?*) Participant 3 thought that difficulties arise when “*some collocations carry a deeper implicit meaning, as the purpose is no longer the words, but the meaning and how it is negotiated to the receptor.*” Participant 5 attributed the difficulties to the fact that “*every language has its own structures, which cause a challenge for translators to find suitable equivalents*

*that serve the same purpose as the collocation in the original.”* In the same regard, Participant 4 said *“Difficulties in translating Quranic collocations might be attributed to two main factors: the nature of the collocation structure, and the cultural differences between Arabic and English.”*

In response to the question (*In your opinion, are the mistranslations of collocations due to the translators’ incompetence or the complex nature of the Quranic language?*), Participants 2 and 3 believe that it is due to the complex nature of the Quranic language. On the other hand, Participants 4,5,6, and 7 think that translators not mastering English and Arabic and the complex nature of the Quranic text are the main reasons for mistranslating collocations.

When asked (*Some Quranic collocations are allusive i.e. making indirect reference to something or someone in the Quran. In your opinion, what is the appropriate approach to translating Quranic collocations into English?*), this question produced a mixed reaction. Participant 2 said:

*one of the translator’s qualities is to have a background knowledge including familiarity with the subject matter. Therefore, the translator has to select the appropriate translation technique, keeping in mind the linguistic, semantic and situational dimensions and characteristics of the target language. The point is that the translator should strive to convey the message in a very clear direct and concise way and not to exhaust the readers in trying to understand the message.*

Similarly, Participant 4 confirmed that being aware of the interpretations of the Quran along with the historical background would help in understanding the implicit meaning in the collocation. In addition, Participant 5 claimed that

*If there is no direct equivalent collocation in the target language and the context does not provide the translator with a clear collocational meaning, the best technique, in my view is that, the translator has the option of using paraphrasing.*

In response to the question, (*If translation is mediation between literal and free, the translators of the Quran are always making choices that emphasise one at the expense of another. In your view, which is the better option?*), Participants 6 and 7 believe that the free translation method should always be adopted and most agreed it was a useful option. Participant 5 considered that the translator's task is "*only to interpret and explain the Quranic verse; we might need to be more flexible in moving away from word-for-word translation to free translation.*" Participant 4 encouraged adopting the free translation method:

*Using free translation is a better option as Arabic and English belong to two different language families and do not share a common culture. Therefore, literal translation would usually give unacceptable or stilted translations and would lead to loss of meaning.*

Confirming the same point, Participant 2 stated that free translation is better; however, a translator should keep in mind that they must not take too many liberties and the translation of the Quran must not exceed the boundaries of the source text. Participant 3 stressed that: *where the content is more important in the translated text/phrase, it is a better option to seek free translation. I would not say, it should be free all the way, nor literal all the way, but the translator should weigh things up.*

When asked (*Some collocations are used figuratively in the Quran and are often mistranslated or rendered literally, without taking into account that Arabic phraseological items are unfamiliar in English. To what extent is this true?*) all translators agreed to a large extent. Participants 3, 6 and 7 consider collocations that are used figuratively as a challenge for translators and recommend that the translation of the Quran should be a team not an individual effort. Participant 5 stressed the point that translation as team work should not be exclusive to the Quran, but also literary texts where many figurative language features, such as simile, metaphor, and metonymy, are used.

In response to the last question, (*The translator aims to capture the Quran's exceptional collocational expression in English. Should Quranic collocations be explained rather than translated in English?*), all participants agreed that a translator should opt for explaining, focusing on meaning not the words themselves, whenever translation fails to capture the collocational expression. Participant 3 said 'yes - where necessary,' meaning when the target culture fails to offer the needed equivalent, it would be better to go for explanation and clarification. According to Participant 4, "*in case there is no direct collocation equivalent in English, the best translation technique to use is paraphrasing/explaining the meaning of the collocation.*" Participant 1 added that any translator should work on translating "*the meaning and recreate the same effect of the original.*" If literal translation conveys the accurate meaning and it fulfils its communicative purpose, and it is fluent and achieves the right effect that is intended by the Quran, there would be no problem with literalism.

The key insights that emerged from the above discussion is that the majority of the participants tend to agree on the broad issues affecting the quality of the English translation of the Quran. They suggest that the translators of the Quran should not aim to produce the same Quran in English - that is an impossible mission. The translator's task is to optimise communication and understandability and readability in English. Participants hold the view that many of the English translations of the Quran are obviously better than no translations and agree that translators faced an uphill task trying to render Quranic phraseological units adequately. They feel translators often translate these literally or indulge in the use of archaic English to give the text an air of sophistication. However, translating Quranic phraseological units word for word makes no sense to readers, since archaic English clauses, words and many other grammatical points are not the way English is spoken today. Ideally, a successful translation fulfils four basic requirements:

- 1) Makes sense
- 2) Conveys the spirit and meaning of the original
- 3) Written in a natural and user-friendly language
- 4) Produces similar effect and impression in the target language readers as that produced by the original text

### **7.11 Summary of the data analysis of the interviews**

A further point that can be drawn from the qualitative interview discussion regarding the challenges of translating Arabic collocations into English with reference to the Quran is that the translation of the Quran and issues related to

Islamic studies have recently witnessed an expansion, as evidenced by the proliferation of the English translations of the Quran, journal articles, conferences, and academic publications. Thus, the message and style of the Quran has become much talked about in the West. The purpose of translating the Quran is to share the word of Allah far and wide, and for this reason the Quran in English needed to be user-friendly and understandable for those whose language is not Arabic.

As can be seen, although the views on translating the Quran, and in particular phraseology, are somewhat varied, there is still common ground and a core of similar arguments to be found. The interviewees attributed the reasons behind the difficulty of dealing with some collocations in the Quran to the linguistic and stylistic differences between the Arabic language and English language to the literal translation method, the figurative use of some collocations in the Quran, and archaic language that hinders the understanding of the meaning for the ordinary person. Participants support the idea of evaluating and updating the existing translated English versions of the Quran to keep pace with the language of current generations. The content and message of the Quran is immutable, it never changes, but the way it is translated should be comprehensible.

It has become a platitude to say that collocation is a term which is used and understood in many different ways. By the same token, translating collocation is approached and transferred in the target language in different ways. In order to convey clearly the meaning intended, the translating process inevitably results in taking liberties with the text, due in part to the various linguistic and extra linguistic constraints of SL and TL. A “word-for-word” translation of the Quran is not fit for

purpose. It can be argued that translating the Quran is not the one-way approach as many translators have adopted. The translator aims to provide a translation of the Quran that conveys to the public whose language is not Arabic, the same meaning and effect felt by readers of the original. Translation experts and academics agree that there is no perfect translation and there is never going to be one. However, this should not prevent translators from achieving accurate and fluent translation. Translating is the art of negotiation and the nature of negotiation is to find a compromise between literalness and communicative translation.

There is a plethora of sources that exist on the meaning and interpretations (tafseer) of the Quran from different schools of thought, available at the click of a button on the internet and at the disposal of prospective translators of the Quran. As a result, there are high expectations that any future attempt at translating the Quran should use of all the pertinent sources available, as these sources will help translators make informed decisions on complex and difficult issues.

The interview participants' views supported to a large extent the findings of the text-based analysis, that there is ambiguity and unintelligibility in terms of translating Quranic phraseology. The results of the interviews can be said to be similar to the results from the thematic text analysis and there is little or no conflict between the interviews and thematic text analysis findings. Finally, translators believe that continuously evaluating and updating the quality of translated English versions of the Quran is the way forward.

#### **7.11.1 Themes and findings emerging from the interviews**

The following table 7.3 summarises the qualitative findings that emerged from interviews with translators.

Themes	Findings
<p><i>Interviewees' responses regarding proliferation of the translations of the Quran in English.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of the participants agreed that more translations of the Quran lead eventually to better quality providing previous flaws are addressed.</li> <li>• More translations of the Quran help in avoiding the shortcomings and pitfalls of previous translations.</li> <li>• Several participants think that increasing the number of translations of the Quran would add no value and cause confusion in terms of which one is authentic.</li>   <li>• Translating the Quran is different from any other type of texts.</li> <li>• It is sensitive and sacred text and it should be approached differently from other text types.</li> <li>• The quality of the available translations of the Quran varies slightly; however, some are weaker than others.</li> <li>• There is no final or authoritative translation of the Quran.</li> <li>• Translating the full meaning and the whole truth of the message of the Quran can only partially be achieved.</li> <li>• Loss of meaning is inevitable as Arabic and English operate from different mind sets and are each deeply rooted in their own specific culture.</li> <li>• A good translation is expected to convey the closest natural message and the same effect of the original.</li> <li>• A reliable translation communicates the intended meaning and is free from linguistic and/or cultural distortions.</li> <li>• The use of archaic English is not befitting of the solemnity of the Quranic diction and style. The language of the Quran is timeless.</li> <li>• Translation is often an interpretation or the gist of what was said rather than a true reflection of the</li> </ul>

	<p>original.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translations of the Quran should be evaluated regularly.</li> <li>• Working within a team and the joint efforts of translation specialists and religious experts is essential for translating such an important and complex text.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Interviewees' views regarding the challenges of translating the meaning of phraseology/ collocations in the Quran.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literal translation must be avoided in translating phraseology/collocations meaning of the Quran.</li> <li>• Some translators of the Quran resort to word for word translation in the belief that gloss translation and staying close to the original is the only way to be faithful to the original.</li> <li>• Using communicative translation methods makes the translated text meaningful and user friendly.</li> <li>• Some collocations carry a deeper implicit meaning, as the purpose is no longer the words, but the meaning.</li> <li>• Every language has its own structures, which create a challenge for translators to find suitable equivalents that serve the same purpose of the collocation in the original.</li> <li>• The nature of the Quranic language is complex.</li> <li>• Translation quality in conveying the message concisely to the target language reader is essential. A translator of the Quran should have a good understanding of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target culture,</li> <li>• Target language,</li> <li>• Exegesis,</li> <li>• Historical background knowledge,</li> <li>• Reasons of revelation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There is generally a lack of direct Quranic collocation equivalents in English.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The translator’s main focus is on readability, rather than trying to produce flowery or poetic English language to match the Arabic.</li> <li>• The use of footnotes is unavoidable in some parts of the Quranic text in translation to provide more background detail. However, footnotes should be used sparingly.</li> </ul>
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Source: Developed by the researcher

## 7.12 Data analysis from interviewing Imams as end users of the Quran in English

This section interprets the results of the qualitative data, obtained from the semi-structured interviews with the end users of the translations of the Quran. The interview was conducted with five bilingual Imams in order to gauge their perceptions of the existing translations of the Quran as a whole, and Quranic collocational units in particular. The interview mainly revolved around the interviewees’ views in respect of reciting and quoting the Quran in English, their perceptions about the loss of meaning in translation and their views regarding translations of collocational units in the Quran.

### 7.12.1 Participants’ profiles and selection criteria

The number of participants selected is generally smaller in qualitative research; the emphasis is thus on gaining knowledge based on data from interviews, combining words and meanings to strengthen the findings. The criteria of selection were:

1. First-hand experience in dealing on a day-to-day basis with the Quran in English translation either in their Friday sermons or talking to worshippers.
2. Experience and knowledge of religious and linguistic matters in both Arabic and English.

3. Holding vital information in the area under investigation regarding the various challenges of understanding the Quran, having also a major interest and awareness about the importance and benefits of the accessibility of the Quran in English.

### 7.13 Analysis of the interviews

There are several methods of interview analysis, such as: thematic analysis, comparative analysis, content analysis, and discourse (Dawson, 2009). In order to analyse the interviews for this study, a research content analysis has been chosen. Content analysis is a “*method where the researcher systematically works through each transcript assigning codes, which may be numbers or words, to specific characteristics within the text*” (Dawson, 2009:122). In this case, the first step in content analysis is to conceptualise the data, then group them into meaningful categories, and then identify them into themes to explain the data. The researcher started the interview by adopting ‘*Introducing Questions*’, clear, short, and straightforward as follows:

#### **Theme one: Imams’ responses regarding reciting and quoting the Quran in English**

In response to the first question (*Some Muslims believe that the Quran should not be translated and should be read in Arabic; others think that the word of God should be accessible to all speakers. What is your viewpoint?*), all interviewees stressed that the Quran should be read aloud and recited in its original script which is Arabic. A translation of the Quran is not the Quran; it is only an interpretation or a commentary of the Quran. For those whose native language is

not Arabic, however, they can depend on translations to understand the content.

Participant 4 said,

*It is فرض (an obligation) to read the Quran in Arabic even if you don't understand it. Many Muslims who are not native speakers of Arabic read the Quran in Arabic and in their language to understand it. If someone cannot read Arabic, it is not a wrong to read it in his or her language. But, they should learn to read it in Arabic.*

Thus, it can be inferred that current translations of the Quran convey some of the meanings of the Quran. Participant 1 stated, *“Ideally everybody should be able to access the Quran but every translation explains some of the intended meaning of the original.”*

When the interviewees were asked (*Translation of the Bible into different languages helps people who speak different languages to perform their prayers by the translated version in their language. Do you think is that permissible in the case of the Quran?*), they all indicated that in the case of the Quran, the word of God is in Arabic not in a foreign language. Both the message and the words expressing the message are sacred and must be recited in the original language. So, translations of the Quran cannot be used to perform prayers. There was a further clarification offered by Participant 1 who stated that *“The majority of the four Imams had forbidden the practice of prayers in a different language except for Imam Abu Hanifa who in his original opinion believed that a person can recite in his language in Salat (prayers). However, in his view, it is only allowed for those who are unable to speak Arabic and that is the view that I hold.”*

The main recurring theme that emerged from the discussions was that it is not allowed to use translation as an alternative to the Quran's Arabic in prayers because of the sacred symbolism of the message and the words that carry the message. In addition, it is owing to the inevitable loss of meaning which occurs in the translation process. The Quran cannot be rendered faithfully into another language without losing its divine value. This leads to the question (*Do you agree that the Quran should be quoted in English since the majority of worshippers in the UK do not understand Arabic?*) This is related to the previous questions as it concerns interpreting the meanings of Quranic verses in Friday sermons or in the lessons given in the Islamic centers. All of the interviewees said that because many worshippers in the UK do not understand Arabic, the speaker has to quote Quranic verses in Arabic so that people hear the original Arabic and then follow it with the English interpretation and translation.

In response to the question (*What do you think of the argument that the Quran is untranslatable?*) all interviewees agree with this opinion that no human being is acquainted with all the knowledge embedded in the Quran. Participant 1 and Participant 5 stated that translation still has to be done, as it, in many instances, captures some of the meaning. However, it remains an interpretation. To conclude, translations of the Quran are viewed as interpretations; they are just an approximation not a true copy of the original. Variations in quality of the current English translations of the Quran reflect an individual not a team effort.

**Theme two: Imams' perceptions and views about loss of meaning in translation**

When the imams were asked (*The meaning is often partially lost in translation. How does that make you feel as a bilingual imam in terms of translation of the Quran?*), the participants' reactions were different. Participant 1 said, *"Definitely, there is always loss in meaning"*. Participant 1 made a distinction between the imams' view of translation and the translator's view of translation. Participant 1 stated, *"There is a slight difference between a person who translates the Quran by studying the Arabic and the language of the Quran in order to get as much as possible from meanings in the Quran, and the Imam. For example, as an Imam, when I use the Ayat (the verses) of the Quran in the Friday sermon, it does not worry me that I cannot convey the whole meaning of the verse as long as I get the point across and the people understand, that is sufficient for me. I think the key point is that for anybody who is involved in translation of the Quran he should understand that his knowledge is limited."*

On the other hand, Participant 2 highlighted the multiple meanings issue, as a source of difficulty. This may clarify and justify what Participant 1 said with respect to falling short of conveying, the whole meaning of some Quranic words or verses. Participant 2 gave an example of the word تَقْوَى taqwa: *"Taqwa embraces meanings such as fear, awareness, protective, consciousness, carefulness and it seems that there is no good translation of it, I mean, an accurate single word. For instance, the word 'mindfulness' is a little ambiguous."*

Participants 3, 4, and 5 believe that loss of meaning in translation is due to the unrelated cultural origins between English and Arabic. None of the responses elicited above can be underestimated. The cause of meaning loss in translation

can be all the reasons mentioned by the interviewees and there might be other causes too. However, it was noted that most interviewees stress the variety of meaning of verses in the Quran and on the cultural differences between Arabic and English as a source of difficulty.

When asked (*Do you think literal translation is effective in communicating the intended meaning of a verse in the Quran?*), Participants 2 and 3 said that literal translation can be adopted only if it is the best choice to convey the meaning. Otherwise, translation must be made sense by sense. In addition, Participants 1, 4 and 5 stated that it is quite difficult to use literal translation because there is not as much shared between Arabic and English in terms of metaphorical language, symbolic language and idioms. The researcher agrees with Participants 2 and 3. As the ultimate goal of translation is to achieve an equivalent to the source text in meaning, both literal and sense-for-sense translation strategies should be employed, adopting the principle of translating as literally as possible and as free as necessary.

The answers of the interviewees to the question (*What do you do if literal translation does not communicate the intended meaning of a Quranic verse?*) were all the same. They all resort to explanation. The reason behind that was always to disambiguate the meaning, especially to the new Muslim generations. In this regard, Imam 1 said, "*Here in England I notice that the parent generation are more aware of the Quranic terms than the new generation. They are more used to Arabic phrases because many of them heard them in mosques in their countries of origin, so they are a lot more familiar with them than the second generation, so I think for the new generation, greater explanation is needed.*"

Participant 2 said, *“When literal translation sounds strange in English, Quranic verse should be explained.”* According to Imam 2, shifting from literal translation to sense-by-sense translation is essential if literal translation seems unintelligible. Participant 1 explained his strategy in dealing with Arabic-English translation of the Quran in the Friday sermon. Participant 1 said, *“Firstly, I quote the verse and then I translate the meaning. I often quote the verse for people to hear it in Arabic, as there are a lot of Arabic speakers in the mosque. For the non-Arab speakers, it does not worry me because I pass on the contextual meaning so that they understand.”*

Participant 3 further provided an example about the Quranic collocation Kurata Aayon *قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ* (Q25:74), which literally means ‘the coolness of the eyes.’ While sense-by-sense indicates it is someone or something that soothes someone's heart, or is deeply pleasing to someone, in this context, literal translation does not convey the message. Therefore, for making it readable, Participant 3 said, *“I would explain the intended meaning, but I would do that after reciting it in Arabic”*. This would suggest that imams are aware of the linguistic and cultural boundaries that hinder expressing the meaning smoothly. It was also noticed that the interviewees care much more about getting the message across rather than holding tight to one translation method.

When asked (*The multiple meanings of words in the Quran are a source of difficulty. Do you agree?*), all the participants agreed. It was noticeable that all the imams started their answers by saying *“absolutely”* or *“I agree”*. Participant 1 said, *“It is a major issue in translation because it loses so much of the original. How*

*can the translator select the word that captures the original and at the same time carries the other possible meanings?"* Imam 1 stated that this complexity in translation is due to the different interpretations that are introduced by the Quran commentators. Participants 4 and 5 suggested bracketed explanations as a solution while Participants 1 and 3 recommended using a footnote to overcome the issue of multiple meanings of some Quranic words.

Participants' awareness of choice and application of an appropriate strategy to clarify ambiguous meaning of certain words reflects their consciousness of the importance of achieving effective translation. In this context, the answers of the interviewees to the question, *(Do you think that the use of archaic English words in the translation of the Quran hinders recipient understanding?)*, were all "yes, it does". Interviewees said that archaism is a feature of old versions of English translations of the Quran. Participant 1 and Participant 2 said, *"It was to preserve some of the majesty and glamour of the Quranic language in the English version"*. Unacceptability of archaic language for the current English versions of the Quran is due to the fact that the current Muslim generations are not acquainted with archaic English. Participant 2 said, *"Actually, this touch of archaism, in the past, is not without purpose. I think the reason behind this tendency towards using archaic words in the translation of the Quran was to give a flavour of formality to the English version of the Quran. However, nowadays, I think, it has become necessary to escape from these outdated terms and constructions, which in my view, create difficulty, especially for ordinary people to understand."*

Participant 3 argues, *“Translation of the Quran should not be made with the purpose of being exclusionary and must be easy to understand by the average person”*. Imams 3 and 5 also supported the view that translations of the Quran should be simple and straightforward for the public.

**Theme three: Imams' views of the versions of the Quran translated by Arberry (2008), Ali (2000), Abdel Haleem (2010), Asad (1980), and Al-Hilali and Khan (1993).**

When discussing the question, *“Do you think that there should be more translations of the Quran?”*, most of the imams said “yes”. The reasons varied among the interviewees. Participants 1 and 5 said, *“Language naturally evolves and changes from one generation to another”*. The researcher agrees with their view because translation is a linguistic activity which has existed as long as human language existed. Thus, translation is influenced by language development. Human languages change over years; therefore, there is always a need for a new translation that serves the readability of the target language readers at a particular time. On the other hand, Participant 2 said that different translations reflect different interpretations of the major Tafseer books. Participant 3 pointed out that individuals nowadays make many translations of the Quran in the market and so it is an indication of the need to establish a global academic and religious translation institution to be the only authorised body for publishing translations of the Quran.

Two important points emerged out of the questions above. First, languages evolve over time. This evolution affects the readability from one generation to the

next. Hence, a new version is always required. On the other hand, as translation of the Quran is viewed as an interpretation, different versions of the Quran represent different interpretations.

In response to the question, (*Who do you think should translate the Quran – translators, religious experts or both?*) the reactions were similar. All the interviewees said that translators and religious experts should be a prerequisite in order to produce a translation of the Quran. In other words, linguistic mastery alone is not sufficient to translate the Quran; mastery of the different Quranic exegesis is also an essential prerequisite to understand the Quran. Quranic exegeses are composed of the subsidiary sciences of Tafseer such as *asbab al-nuzul* (historical context), *iAAraab* (grammar), *isti'arat* (metaphors) and *bada'i* (rhetorical excellence). For instance, Participant 1 said, *“the translator of the Quran must be (1) skilled to a high level with Arabic and with the language into which he translates; (2) and he must be expert with the sciences of the Quran”*. In addition, Imam 3 said, *“The Quran should be translated by a recognised Muslim organisation where translators and religious experts collaborate to produce a version of the Quran with the least range of errors.”*

There were mixed responses when interviewees were asked (*Which one of the above-named translations do you often use or quote and why?*). Participant 1, Participant 2 and Participant 5 said they prefer Abdel Haleem's translation because Abdel Haleem has expertise in the sciences of the Quran and he is a translator. Although Participant 1, 2 and 5 added that Abdel Haleem's translation is readable and accessible to ordinary people in terms of readability and simplicity

of English, however, they recommend Arberry's translation, which is more inclined to the literal translation method, to their students, although the meaning of some passages is difficult to understand. On the other hand, Participant 3 favours Arberry's and Ali's translations. Participant 3 justified his answer by saying that these translations are close translations, in an effort to be faithful to the original. Participant 3 said that word for word translation can be ambiguous and misleading when the original word is used metaphorically, because emotive language is often deeply rooted in culture.

It is noticeable that there was no consensus among interviewees regarding which translation of the Quran is better or more satisfactory and accepted than the others. This is attributed to the dichotomy between two main trends in translation, namely, literal vs. free translation methods. However, as the primary purpose and the ultimate goal of translation is to decode the message and transfer the meaning to the target reader, the translator of the Quran must utilise every possible translation strategy to produce an English version of the Quran that understandable, meaningful and has the same effect as the original.

#### **Theme four: Imams' views and perceptions about translation of collocational constructions in the Quran.**

In response to the question, (*Some Quranic collocations are allusive i.e. making indirect reference to something or someone. In your opinion, what is the appropriate way when translating them into English?*), all interviewees stressed that allusive and figurative nuances must be conveyed clearly. In addition,

Participant 1 said, *“Allusion in the Quran should be provided by explanation even for those who are native speakers of Arabic because of their little knowledge of these allusions.”* Therefore, the need to explain and interpret collocational and phraseological units containing emotive language in the Quran is a well-argued request. The recommended strategy for translating allusive Quranic collocations is by clarifying the meaning in a simple and straightforward way, after consulting authentic, Tafseer books to identify the specific reference of the allusive collocation.

In response to this question, *(If translation is mediation between literal and free, the translators of the Quran are always making choices that emphasise one at the expense of another. In your view, which is the better option?)* Participant 2 and Participant 3 gave priority to literal translation as an ideal choice that provides a translation as close as possible to the original. However, they suggested that sense-by-sense translation is required in the case that literal translation cannot communicate the meaning. Participant 1 and 5 believe that the original meaning should be communicated simply without confusing the readership as the purpose of translation is to get the meaning across. The researcher agrees with this view.

Regarding the question *(Some collocations are used metaphorically in the Quran and are often mistranslated or rendered literally, without taking into account that Arabic language items are unfamiliar in English. To what extent is this true?)*, they all had almost the same response. They said they try to find a similar literary idiomatic expression in English. Otherwise, they suggest two solutions: (1) a translator should translate sense-by-sense, although it fails to express the

rhetorical image of the original in the translated text (2) a translator should use literal translation as a technique, on condition that it must be coupled by a footnote in order to disambiguate the intended meaning. Participant 3 said, *“metaphorical expressions in the Quran should be translated literally and they should be accompanied by a footnote if they are not familiar to the reader”*.

### **7.14 Summary of the analysis of the interviews**

The conclusion that can be drawn from the data analysis of the semi-structured interviews shows that the research objective that is related to the imams' perceptions is achieved. These interviews aimed to gauge the perceptions and views of imams regarding the issue of translating the Quran in general, and the challenges of rendering Quranic collocations in particular, in order to support the results obtained from text-based analysis.

The interviewed imams' replies show that they view the translation of the Quran as a commentary; therefore, the Quran must be read in Arabic. However, for those who are non-native speakers of Arabic, translations are important to help understand the text. In addition, they stated that translation could not be used to perform prayers because both the message and the words expressing the message are sacred. According to the imams, because many worshippers in the UK do not understand Arabic, the Imam often quotes Quranic verses in Arabic and then provides a translation into English.

The imams believe that many English translations of the Quran can be problematic due to the following weaknesses:

- Fail to transfer adequately collocations with figurative associations and cultural items from Arabic into English,

- Overreliance on literal translation resulting in distorted or meaningless passages
- Many lexical items in the Quran have multiple meanings; some translators have selected explicit and primary meaning to the detriment of contextual and pragmatic meaning.
- Excessive use archaic English leads to complex and often incomprehensible discourse.
- There is a lack of a ‘comprehension check,’ of all English translations of the Quran. These translations should be tested to find out how much the lay reader/listener actually understands; this process enables the accuracy of a translation and the quality of the translation as a whole to be evaluated.
- Many English translations of the Quran reflect the expressive and creative touch and thought processes of the individual translator and their preferences rather than a reflection of the Quranic meaning. ‘*This sounds right so I am going for it*’ type of approach. Team work would reduce this bias.
- Many English translations of the Quran lack the natural flow and resonance of the SL text.

Furthermore, the imams support the idea of producing new versions of the Quran in order to match language evolution and rapid change over time. They also stress that collaboration between translators and religious experts is prerequisite for rendering the Quran. The imams point to two types of translation of the Quran. One is readable and comprehensible translation which is deemed to be accessible and appealing for the ordinary reader, i.e. readership-oriented

translation and a translation which delivers the message of God as was in the original. The latter type is more useful for students and scholars of the Quran and Islamic studies.

For translation of Quranic collocation, the discussion revolved around collocations with figurative nuances, collocations that are used metaphorically and carry implicit meanings. The imams put emphasis on making sense of any collocation that might cause ambiguity and misunderstanding. They suggest a footnote as a strategy to interpret and provide additional explanation, because the essence of translating is explaining and sense-making.

Overall, the participants' responses provided in the semi-structured interviews supported largely the findings of the text-based analysis. Participants questioned the standard and quality of some English translations of the Quran. They pointed out an incomprehensibility and obscurity in terms of translating collocational units that have specific implicit references, or connotative meaning, and those that offer a range of potential meanings. The results of the interviews can be said to be concordant with the results from the text analysis and there is little conflict between the interviews and the text analysis findings.

### 7.15 Themes and findings of the interviews

The following table summarises the qualitative findings:

**Table 7.4: Summary of qualitative interviews**

Themes	Findings
<i>Interviewees' responses regarding reciting and quoting the Quran in English</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translation of the Quran is only a commentary.</li> <li>• The translation of the Quran is essential for non-Arabic speakers to understand the message of God</li> <li>• Translation cannot be used to perform prayers.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Interviewees' perceptions and attitudes about loss of meaning in translation.</i></p>	<p>Cultural differences between Arabic-English are one the causes of loss of meaning in translation. Adopting a literal translation approach is often inappropriate in dealing Quranic phraseological units. Lexical items with multiple meanings cause loss of information in translation. The use of archaic English language in the English version of the Quran causes difficulty in understanding</p>
<p><i>Interviewees' views of the versions of the Quran translated by Arberry (2008), Ali (2000), Abdel Haleem (2010), Asad (1980), and Al-Hilali and Khan (1993).</i></p>	<p>Process of producing new versions of the Quran is ongoing but without taking into account the flaws of earlier versions. Translating the Quran is a collective effort, translators and religious experts should join efforts to translate the Quran. Readable and user-friendly language translation is required for ordinary people, e.g. Abdel Haleem's. Literal translation is required for academic purposes, e.g. Arberry's.</p>
<p><i>Interviewees' views and perceptions about translation of collocational constructions in the Quran.</i></p>	<p>Allusive Quranic collocations and figurative expressions cause ambiguity. Translators should make the Quran in English translation meaningful and clear to the readership when rendering Quranic collocations which often have several shades of meanings. Sense-for sense translation is an alternative if literal translation fails to convey the meaning.</p>

Source: Developed by the researcher

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 8.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses and interprets the main findings obtained from the qualitative methods to achieve the study objectives. The findings will be linked to previous studies dealing in particular with Quranic phraseology in English. It is worth mentioning at this point that the present study aimed to examine the challenges of translating Quranic collocations from Arabic into English. It assessed the degree of accuracy, fluency and fidelity when conveying the meaning of Quranic collocations into English. It identified and discussed the translating methods used to transfer the meaning of Quranic collocations (e.g. word-for-word, free translating approaches, etc). This study sought to assess the perceptions and views of translation specialists and Imams in UK mosques as end users of the English versions of the Quran regarding the English translations of the Quran in terms of their accuracy, fluency and naturalness in conveying the meaning of Quranic collocations into English.

#### 8.1 Positioning this study within the debate of translating Quranic collocations

The following synopsis of the literature regarding Quranic collocations in English, aims to demonstrate whether the findings of the present study are consistent with similar previous studies. It seeks to assess whether the results support or challenge existing key literature focusing mainly on whether the findings fit within the broad body of literature and contribute to knowledge by enriching the debate

on translating Quranic collocations. In short, it attempts to find out the extent to which the general theoretical base and features of collocation match those of Quranic collocations. It aims to answer the following question: are Quranic collocational components in line with the widely accepted set of criteria for determining collocations? Phrased differently, are Quranic collocational and/or formulaic elements consistent with the generic norms of collocation?

The collocation debate has generated a lot of interest from various stakeholders; educationalists, language learners, translators etc., as demonstrated by the prolific publications (Cowie, 2009; Wray, 2008; Nation 2001; Nesselhauf 2003, etc.). Each author has their own perspective on what constitutes collocation. The term 'collocation' from a linguistic point of view, since its inception by Firth in the 1950's, engrained by his famous citation '*You shall know a word by the company it keeps*' has come a long way in providing fresh insights. However, there is little consensus among researchers as to what represents collocation, using a wide range of labels to refer it, '*A collocation is an arbitrary and recurrent word combination*', *individual blocks of language, prefabs, phraseological units, word associations, formulaic sequence, idiom, idiomatic expression, lexical/lexicalised phrase, multi-word unit, phraseme etc*'. Evidence from the extensive literature suggests that the collocation theoretical debate has reached a conceptual stalemate, and many questions remain unanswered regarding the nature of collocation and why some lexical items keep the company of one collocate rather than another, and what attracts one word to cohabit with another word, while other words clash in the company of each other, more frequently than by chance (Badr & Menacere 2019).

Some researchers firmly believe that the frequency of co-occurrence of words in a text are viewed as a reliable criterion for defining collocations (Cowie, 2009; Wray, 2008; Nation 2001; Nesselhauf, 2003; Firth, 1957; Sinclair, 1991). Others put the emphasis on the syntactic and pragmatic relations between elements of a collocation (Nesselhauf, 2005). The key issue regarding the term collocation is that it is a multifarious and multidimensional concept which makes it hard to determine precisely and in a consistent way what should be categorised as a collocation. The fuzziness and elusiveness of collocation stems from the fact that it can stand as free word combinations on the one hand to completely fixed multi-word units on the other. Further conflicting views emerge regarding the formulaic expression inconsistency and the wide variation of the labels used to explain phraseological units. To get a sense of direction in this terminological maze, it can be argued that collocation basically refers to a group of two or more words that usually go together. In other words, it is lexical partnership between words that are expected to match regularly with some other words to form a meaningful semantic unit. (Badr and Menacere 2019). In short, research on collocation appears to be confined to the level of describing, defining and prescribing.

Similarly, although research on translation studies covered plenty of ground over the last decades, there has been little change to its basic conceptual foundations. In general, the translation basics have remained the same. The translation landscape presents disjointed and often overlapping changes to the parameters and definitions of the concept of translation. As a result, the translation debate revolves around nuances rather than substance. Research on translation studies puts more emphasis on comparative analysis of language pairs, examining how

cross linguistic and cultural differences can be overcome (Badr & Menacere 2019).

Throughout its long history, translation and translation studies as a research area has and still generates conflicting views. Translation is one of the most researched topics and no other issue has preoccupied theorists and practitioners as much as the translation debate which has brought about a split of views, specifically into those who claim that translation is an art and those who believe that translation is a science. Translation norms, rules, strategies or techniques are plastered in almost every translation study, article or book on the topic. Each author has a particular agenda in mind or is aimed at dealing with specific language pairs.

Although, translation has been approached from different perspectives involving different language pairs, there are still several grey areas and questions which remain unanswered. Research involving the translation of Arabic has witnessed some progress but it remains under-researched. Moreover, many translation studies overlap and simply describe the same models, theories and approaches over and over, quoting similar translation sources. In short, translation is a multidimensional term meaning different things to different people and despite its long history, it is fragmented and does not have a solid theoretical base. Translation techniques, methods and approaches are often specific to one pair of languages and not universal.

## **8.2 Linking key literature to the findings of this study**

, producing many useful and fresh insights and perspectives, but how translation is viewed and practiced remains a matter of individual interpretation. Therefore,

there are almost as many different definitions and interpretations given to translation as there are authors who conducted research on the subject. Although researchers may differ in the wording they use to define and describe translation, their explanations are similar in many ways. Their definitions tend to share common features or even overlap in their use of key terms, making identical points in different ways.

Research on collocations is polarised between those who examined them from a statistical perspective, as frequency-based lexical units, while others viewed them from a conventional perspective as usage-based lexically restricted units (Granger and Paquot, 2008).

Although collocation in its broad sense is understood to mean a close relationship that words form and the tendency to frequently appear together, it is often used as an umbrella term to refer to a wide variety of labels such as: 'phraseological units, language chunks, extended lexical units, fixed expressions, formulaic sequences, predictable pattern', etc. Many definitions of phraseological units tend to overlap. Wray (2000: 465) highlighted some 50 terms that have been used to refer to phraseological units. Many studies on collocations and phraseological units are written in a language that is either ambiguous or highly jargonistic. There is a need to demystify and standardise the research and move it beyond what is already known and established as the base (Badr and Menacere 2019).

The objective set by this study (*To determine whether the collocation theoretical base matches that of the Quranic collocations*) is accomplished. This study demonstrated through clear samples that collocational or phraseological units in

the Quran fit within the general theoretical base of collocation and are consistent with the following collocation norms:

1. String of words that seem to have a certain mutual expectancy
2. Habitual co-occurrence of words
3. Frequent co-occurrence of two or more words
4. A sequence of words that frequently co-occur together
5. An expression consisting of two or more words that go together
6. A close relationship a lexical item has with other items
7. Arbitrary language items recurrent in context
8. Word association, word partnership with a hint of figurativeness

The above criteria are informed from the literature. It can be argued in light of the above criteria, that Quranic collocational / phraseological units are considered as one of the most influential sources in Modern Standard Arabic, as the Quran possesses a large stock of collocations and phraseological units. Although Arabic and English have different thought processes and operate from different mind-sets, they may share some features in how collocational / phraseological units are used in terms of function and key components. In the case of the Quran, phraseological units are compatible with the broad phraseology criteria.

### **8.3 The main failings of the five translations selected for this study**

Assessing the quality of the English versions of the Quran should be viewed more than just going through the motions of conducting a sporadic collection of data on mistranslations of the Quran; it is a process which evaluates the merit or demerit of the Quran in English and whether it is fit for purpose. The aim is to identify best practice and to determine where change is needed. Highlighting the limitations of

English translations of the Quran is by no means an attempt to discredit or diminish the work by various translators. This study recognises that translation can only be an educated guess because every word in the discourse of the Quran overflows with powerful feelings and is loaded with nuances and cultural variations, making straightforward linguistic transfer and finding a suitable match rarely attainable (Badr and Menacere 2019).

Thus, the five assessed English translations of the Quran demonstrate varying strengths and weaknesses. The findings suggest that the translation of the Quran in English is still a work in progress, and each version needs to be properly evaluated and updated to address the flaws identified from different perspectives and regions of the world. For the purpose of this study, some of the key pervasive flaws can be summarised as follows:

- Failing to preserve the meaning of Quranic collocations with figurative associations and cultural items which were generally lost in translation from English,
- Over-reliance on word for word translation approach resulting in missing the point, which in turn, yielded distorted or meaningless passages
- The Quran is full of lexical items with euphemistic, metaphoric and double entendre meaning; some translators have naively made the wrong choice by selecting the explicit and primary meaning to the detriment of contextual and pragmatic meaning.
- Unwarranted use of archaic English creating complex and often difficult to read, let alone understand, Quranic discourse in English translation.

- Many English translators of the Quran tended to put their personal touch. They felt the need to leave their fingerprints reflecting the individual translator's thought and preference rather than a reflection of the Quranic meaning, thus usurping the divine voice and word. Team work would have minimised this partiality.
- Many of English translations of the Quran lack natural flow and resonance
- Some translators fell short of supporting their translations by checking the exegesis sources

With regards to the English translations of the Quran, no one is expecting zero defects or clamouring for divine inspiration or infallibility of the Quranic interpretation in English text. However, it is expected that the translators achieve a balance between accuracy and fluency, and to convey the Arabic word of God in English as efficiently and as closely as possible. The Quran possesses linguistic and cultural specificity which is bound to yield differences in translation but the translator's aim is to minimise the loss of meaning and avoid ambiguity and unnaturalness. Ideally the Quranic text in English should be holistic, not only making sense by conveying the spirit and body of the word of God, providing its overt and covert meaning, but also by having a natural flow and easy reading, and producing a similar effect, feeling and responsiveness in the TL readers as that produced by the original text.

No translation of the Quran into English has preserved fully and faithfully the sense of the original. It is probably fair to say many English translations of the Quran reflect the translator's creative touch and preference rather than the embodiment of the Quranic powerful words and accordingly, the translator's personal skills and interpretation have a direct bearing on the resultant outcome

of the work. Yet the translation of the Quran must reproduce and convey God's intended meaning of his message. The translators' task is to make every effort to produce an English translation of the Quran that could be understood by anyone. A word-for-word translation of the Quran is not always the best option.

In short, communicative, clear, natural, and accurate English translations of the Quran are in high demand and in short supply. The extant English translations of the Quran are useful but have in parts fallen short of meeting the receptors' expectations. This study accepts that there is no such a thing as a totally faithful translation as all translations are said to be partly flawed. However, it is important to try to produce the closest meaning of the Quranic message that collocational units embody.

#### **8.4 Linking findings to the study objectives**

In line with the research objectives formulated by this study, which focused primarily on investigating the difficulties and challenges of translating Quranic collocations from Arabic into English, it evaluated the degree of faithfulness or deviation in transferring the meaning of Quranic collocations. It determined across five different English translations of the Quran whether this was due to an inadequate translating approach, or erroneously or inadvertently missing the meaning of the Quranic message.

Regarding the objective (*To assess five translations of the Quran to determine the degree of accuracy and fluency*) is achieved through analysing an extensive sample of Quranic collocations across five translations. It was found that the five English translations struggled to convey meaningfully the Quranic formulaic expressions in English due to differences in linguistic and cultural constraints

between Arabic and English. The five translators heavily relied on the 'word-for-word' translation approach. The translators were reserved and not far-sighted enough by deciding to stay close to the source language, focusing on the accuracy of the collocation rather than the meaning and fluency of the message, instead of translating the message and providing the gist of what was said in Arabic, seeking to preserve the sense as much as possible. A 'thought for thought' translation would be the best choice to accurately convey what the original phraseological units say. Some translators have complicated further what are already complex Quranic formulaic expressions. The naturalness and clarity were sacrificed at the expense of accuracy. Thus, any future translation of the Quran should be a collective effort, not an individual endeavour. The translator should translate the embedded message of the collocation and phraseology, not the form of the word combination, the matter not the manner. To translate the meaning not the word should be the main aim of the translator.

As far as the objective (*To evaluate the methods used for rendering collocations in the Quran*) is concerned, only a couple of translators ventured to go beyond faithfully rendering the word to the detriment of the sense and natural flow of the message of God. Thus, the five assessed English translations of the Quran were in their good intentions loyal to the word of God by their adherence to the literal translation method. This approach resulted at times in mistranslation of figurative phraseological units, transferring the primary meaning of individual components rather than conveying a more communicative meaning, in order to create the same impact as in the SL. The findings suggest that failing to convey the connotative and implicit meaning of the phraseological units put the reader at risk

of misunderstanding or confusion as to the correct meaning of the translated message intended in SL.

With regards to the objective (*To gauge the perceptions and views of translation specialists and Quranic translation users about translations of collocation in the Quran*) findings showed that the interviewees attributed the reasons behind the difficulties in understanding the translation of some collocational units in the Quran to the figurative nuances of meaning between Arabic and English. Scholars tend to agree that translating thoughts from one language into another is often tricky, as thought processes and mind-sets are specific to individual people who speak that language. One of the key themes that emerges from the findings is that understanding and transferring Quranic meaning is slippery, particularly in translating the Quranic collocation, and there is the inevitable risk of missing the meaning when selecting from a wide range of choices; there is always more to say as a word always seems to have multiple senses or as Menacere, (1999, 353) put it "*Words have a galaxy of meanings and these are not static or frozen.*"

In general, findings suggest that there is a divergence of views in the translation approach to particular collocations of the Quran. There are those who contend that the word of God must be translated faithfully or as close a rendering of the Quranic text as possible and those who believe that naturalness, accuracy and readability are the underpinning criteria of any translation. Interview participants expressed their uneasiness regarding the quality of English translations of the Quran, which were deemed to be useful but flawed in transmitting the accurate meaning of collocations. This is in line with the text analysis findings and the literature. Participants were unanimous that the increase in the number of

translations of the Quran is positive but argued that this quantity needs to be matched by quality.

Findings from both sets of interviews revealed that there is little co-operation and coordination between the different translators or translation bodies regarding the translation of the Quran. To meet the receptors' needs and expectations, translation of the Quran should be a team effort not just an individual undertaking. Most participants agreed that the type and nature of the English language used by some translators of the Quran is often not user friendly, and difficult to understand. This is consistent with the findings of text analysis results. Participants stated that there is no consistent and reliable measurement of the quality of the English translations of the Quran. Most English translations of the Quran show inconsistency in form and in content. Despite the translators' good intentions, the five translations exhibit in part a level of complexity that is incompatible with the Quranic source text. It is important that translations of the Quran should aim at accuracy, understandability and fluency.

### **8.5 Summary of key findings**

It is clearly evident from the findings of this study that in view of the increasing number of English translations of the Quran, a translating quality assessment framework is necessary. Bilingual Imams and translation experts are in favour of more English translations of the Quran as long as the quality is drastically enhanced to reflect the status of the word of God. The success factor is to aim for sense-for-sense as an effective approach for translating Quranic collocations. This study is not advocating for a flawless translation and accepts that no translating method will address all of the translation challenges and no strategy

will solve all the translating constraints of the complex nature of the Quranic text. Current translations of the Quran benefit millions of non-Arabic speaking readers but they could be better in form and content. Findings revealed that linguistic competence in Arabic and English does not give the licence to translate the Quran; linguistic skills need to be supported by a comprehensive knowledge of the religious, rhetorical, and cultural background in order to produce a readable, meaningful, and effective translation of the Quran.

The following framework summarises the key findings obtained from the three key primary data: interviews with translation specialists, interviews with Imams and text analysis:

### Translation specialists

- More translations should lead to better quality, providing flaws are addressed and previous pitfalls avoided.
- Increasing number of English translations would add no value and cause confusion in terms of which version is authentic.
- Translating the Quran is different from any other type of texts. It is a sensitive and sacred text and should therefore be approached differently.
- Quality of available translations varies; some are weaker than others and there is no final or authoritative translation
- Translating the full meaning and the whole truth of the message of the Quran can only partially be achieved.
- Loss of meaning is inevitable as Arabic and English operate from different mind sets and are each deeply rooted in their own specific culture.
- A good translation conveys the closest natural message and the same effect of the original.
- A reliable Quranic translation communicates the intended meaning, free from linguistic and/or cultural distortions.
- Use of archaic English is not befitting of the solemnity of the Quranic diction and style. The language of the Quran is timeless.
- Translation is often interpretation or the gist rather than a true reflection of the original.
- Translations should be evaluated regularly.
- Translating the Quran is a team effort involving translation specialists and religious experts to translate the complex text

### Imam interviews

- Translation of the Quran is not the Quran, it is only a commentary though essential for non-Arabic speakers to understand the message of God
- Translation cannot be used to perform prayers.
- Cultural differences between Arabic-English are one of the causes of loss of meaning in translation.
- Adopting a literal translation approach is often unsuitable in dealing with Quranic phraseological units.
- Lexical items with multiple meanings cause loss of information in translation.
- Use of archaic English causes difficulty in understanding
- Proliferation of new English versions of the Quran does not address the flaws of earlier versions.
- Translating the Quran is a collective effort; translators and religious experts should join efforts to translate the Quran.
- Quranic collocations with figurative nuances are a major stumbling block for translators.
- Translators should make the Quran in English meaningful and communicative to the ordinary readership
- Sense-for sense translation is the only viable option if literal translation fails to convey the meaning.

### Text analysis

- \* Sensitivity and awareness required when transferring Quranic collocations to ensure acceptance and sense.
- \* Different mind sets and unrelated cultures of Arabic and English often overlooked by translators.
- \* No consistent, clear translation strategy for rendering Quranic collocations. Evidence indicates arbitrary approach
- \* Use of archaic English and complex words, make reading laborious
- \* Word for word translating of collocations without attention to contextual meaning, make it difficult for TL readers to grasp intended meaning
- \* Understanding the implicit and connotative meaning of culture-bound collocations is one of the challenging tasks facing translators
- \* Literal translation appears to be the preferred method in translating Quranic collocation. Some translators used word for word rather than communicative translation believing gloss translation and staying close to the original is the only way to be faithful to original
- \* Excessive use of footnotes aimed at further clarification Also due to lack of TL equivalence.
- \* Many erratic translations of Quranic collocations in terms of their implicit meaning. Insufficient knowledge of the Quran and failure to check reliable exegesis as a source of interpretation of Quranic collocations, resulted in mistranslations and loss of meaning

## 8.6 Recommendations

This study suggests that any future English translation of the Quran should undergo strict quality tests before it is approved for publication. As Nida (2003) proposed for the Bible, the translation of the Quran should undergo oral comprehension checking through providing samples to ordinary people, including non-Muslims, to find out how it is received, how much gets across, and the effect translation has on people in terms of accuracy of meaning and naturalness. Reading aloud passages from the Quran in English translations to a wide range of audiences— Mosque-goers, women, children, Muslims and non-Muslims, involving all levels of education and ages. The reading should include complete surats of the Quran and the listeners should then be encouraged to provide feedback and ask questions about the text and suggests ways of improving the comprehension and meaning.

The readers of the Quran in English want to read and hear the text the way readers hear it in Arabic, with fluency, flow, rhythm, syntax, register and diction. Therefore, future translators of the Quran must address the shortcoming of previous translations of the Quran in English as Baker (1992: 69) stresses

*‘Translators have to prove to themselves as to others that they are in control of what they do; that they do not just translate well because they have a ‘flair’ for translation, but rather because, like other professionals, they have made a conscious effort to understand various aspects of their work.’*

In other words, this study suggests that incremental improvements to the existing translations of the Quran is essential and is a collective effort to provide clarity,

naturalness, and accuracy. The study proposes a set of practical application recommendations on how to deal with collocational units in the Quran.

1. The translator should take into account the degree of translatability of the cultural-bound collocations in the Quran, namely, whether the equivalents provided in the target culture are accurate and enjoy the same stylistic value.
2. In order to avoid being both a translator and an interpreter (Mufaseer) of the Quran, translators of the Quran should cooperate with religious experts and every possible other resource.
3. The translator should provide an equivalent that must be as much as possible a reflection of the spirit of the original.
4. Translation must be clear in terms of being natural and readable to the target language reader.
5. It is noteworthy to mention that using authentic commentaries is essential to achieve accurate understanding of the source text and to avoid problems that translators encounter in several instances. Exegetical translation proves to be more successful in communicating the message of the Quran. However, in some cases disagreement between commentators makes it difficult for the translator to decide which meaning is to be translated. In this instance, the translator needs to use the footnote strategy as a translation technique.

To sum up, translation is not only a process of transferring linguistic items between two languages; it is rather a process of dealing with cultural disparities of two linguistic systems. Translation requires showing great attention to detail on

the part of the translator to avoid presenting an awkward and vague translation and potentially an incorrect meaning to the target recipients. It is recommended that translators of the Quran should avoid literal translation as much as possible when translating collocational units in order to produce equivalents that are meaningful and readable in the TL. Literal translation can only be used if the components of the collocational unit continue to maintain their primary meanings. Therefore, the sense-for-sense translation method can be used to render the meaning in a form of descriptive phrases to make it readable and clear.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher suggests that translators should be well acquainted with collocational units that carry connotative meanings and that produce a special effect. This will eventually lead to a better and more natural rendition of the message. It is also recommended that the translator of religious texts should be well versed in the two languages and the two cultures to transfer the intended meaning as smoothly and effectively as possible.

## **8.7 Contribution to knowledge**

This study aims to contribute to knowledge in two ways:

### **8.7.1 Theoretical contribution**

To provide a platform for further in-depth research into the quality of English translations of the Quran by expanding the literature related to translation studies and linguistics, focusing in particular on collocations which will benefit future academic research.

### **8.7.2 Practical contribution**

The findings will benefit prospective translators of the Quran and translation experts initially in understanding the root of the problem in translating Quranic collocational and phraseological units based on the evidence provided.

The findings will raise awareness regarding the importance of sustainable evaluation of the existing English versions of the Quran in order to address their weaknesses.

The publication of three papers which form the core of this study in refereed and specialised journals, contributes to wide dissemination of knowledge on the challenges of translating the Quran in English.

The findings of the study will contribute to raising awareness about developing clear translation quality assessment processes to evaluate the English translations of the Quran to measure their impact and success rate with the receptors.

As a way forward this study makes the following practical recommendation: the organisation of conferences, discussions and feedback on English translation of the Quran, that focus on a translation quality assessment framework to evaluate past and future translations of the Quran, particularly the challenging aspects of the Quran such as collocations, metaphors. etc.

### **8.8 Limitations of the study**

No research is perfect. Any research is open to criticism and this study is no exception. However, the shortcomings of this study do not have a major impact on the overall significance and relevance of the findings. This research has achieved its aim and objectives set out in Chapter One, which mainly focused on

investigating the difficulties and challenges of translating Quranic collocations. It assessed the degree of accuracy, fluency and fidelity of conveying the meaning of Quranic collocation into English.

Firstly, this research was confined to investigating a limited sample of Quranic collocations. As such, the findings although interesting and having practical implications, make generalisability of findings of the present study limited. Also, it does not offer a detailed analysis of collocation in relation to antonyms and synonyms in the Quranic text. Secondly, the sample size of interview participants of bilingual Imams and translation specialists is adequate but could have been bigger.

### **8.9 Suggestions for future research**

In view of the limited research on Arabic translation, in particular translation of Quranic emotive language focusing mainly on collocations and figurative features of the Quran, this study provided fresh insights and a platform for further in-depth research into the quality of English translations of the Quran. This study suggests a number of interesting research questions and areas for future research:

- 1) Further research can be conducted to evaluate a larger number of English translations of the Quran focusing on collocations and phraseological units.
- 2) Research could be conducted using a broad population sample involving larger numbers of end-users of English translations of the Quran for identifying the weaknesses of translations.
- 3) Future research could conduct a survey gauging the perceptions and views of various non-Arabic speakers regarding their understanding of the

Quranic collocations and phraseological units across selected translations of the Quran.

- 4) Another worthwhile research area that can be explored is to gauge views of English native speakers to find out how much they understand the Quran in translation and compare the findings with the sample of Muslims who are non-Arabic speakers to find out the level of understanding of the Quran in their native language.
- 5) A focus group could be conducted to enhance the generalisability of the findings. A focus group is a form of debate or interview technique involving more than one participant and is suitable for conducting research within the qualitative tradition (Bryman, 2012). The focus group will allow the researcher to probe on specific issues relating to the translation of Quranic collocations in depth. It will elicit the divergence of views and the strength of feeling associated with English translations of the Quran involving a range of different participants holding wide expertise.

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## Appendices



### Liverpool Business School Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies

**Title of research:** An Investigation into the challenges of translating Arabic collocations into English with reference to the Quran

#### *Bilingual Imams: Interview themes*

##### **Theme one: Reciting and quoting the Quran in English**

- 1) Some Muslims believe that the Quran should not be translated and should be read in Arabic; others think that the word of God should be accessible to all speakers. What is your viewpoint?
- 2) Translation of Bible into different languages helps people who speak different languages to perform their prayers by the translated version of their language. Is this permissible in the case of the Quran?
- 3) Do you agree that the Quran should be quoted in English since the majorities of worshippers in the UK do not understand Arabic?
- 4) What do you think of the argument that the Quran is untranslatable?

##### **Theme two: Translation of the Quran and loss of meaning**

- 1) Meaning is often partially lost in translation. How does that make you feel as a bilingual Imam in terms of translation of the Quran?
- 2) What do you often do if literal translation does not communicate the intended meaning of a verse?

3) Multiple meanings of words in the Quran are a source of difficulty. What is your viewpoint?

4) What do you think of the use of archaic English words in the translation of the Quran?

**Theme three: Quality assessment of the five translated versions of the Quran carried by Arberry (2008), Ali (2000), Abdel Haleem (2010), Asad (1980), and Al-Hilali and Khan (1993)**

1) Do you think that there should be more translations of the Quran?

2. Who do you think should translate the Quran – translators, religious experts or both?

3) Which one of the above-named translations do you often use or quote and why?

4) Do you agree with the claim that all translations of the Quran are flawed?

**Theme four: Collocation in the Quran**

**Collocation** is the habitual juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words with a frequency greater than a chance to produce a semantic significance.

1) Some Quranic collocations are allusive i.e. making indirect reference to something or someone in the Quran. In your opinion, what is the appropriate way to deal with such a challenge when translating them into English?

2) If translation is mediation between literal and free, the translators of the Quran are always making choices that emphasise one at the expense of another. In your view, which is the better option?

3) Some collocations are used metaphorically in the Quran and are often mistranslated or rendered literally, without taking into account that language items are unfamiliar in English. To what extent is this true?

*Thank you for your valuable time and your assistance.*



**Liverpool Business School  
Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies**

**Title of research:** An Investigation into the challenges of translating Arabic collocations into English with reference to the Quran

*Translation specialists: Interview themes*

**Theme One**

**Proliferation of the translations of the Quran in English**

- 1) There is a growing number of English translations of the Quran on the market today. In your opinion, does more, mean better?
- 2) Have you ever translated verses of the Quran or the whole of the Quran?
- 3) In your experience, is the process of translating Quranic text different from translating other topics?
- 4) Is there such a thing as a perfect translation?
- 5) Amongst all the existing translations of the Quran, which in your view is the most commonly used version of the Quran in translation?
- 6) Many people know that the sacred text of the Quran in Arabic is beyond doubt, but the translation version of the Quran is a matter of interpretation, rather than a copy of the original text. To what extent are the current English translations of the Quran a true reflection of the original in content and form?
- 7) As the Quran is viewed as a word of Alah, does a translation of it diminish its relevance?
- 8) What is your view regarding the use of old English in the translation of the Quran?
- 9) Are the translations of the Quran in English equally reliable, or are some 'better' than others?
- 10) Do you think that there should be more translations of the Quran?
- 11) Who do you think should translate the Quran – translators, religious experts or both?

## Theme Two

### **The challenges of translating phraseology/collocations meaning in the Quran**

**NB: Collocation refers to** *‘the habitual combination (sequence, association) of a particular word with another word or words with a frequency greater than a chance to produce a semantic significance’.*

- 1) Collocations are widely used in the Quran and are often mistranslated or rendered literally. To what extent is this true?
- 2) In your view, what causes the difficulties of translating Quranic collocation into English?
- 3) In your opinion, are the mistranslations of collocations due to the translators' incompetence or the complex nature of the Quranic language?
- 4) Some Quranic collocations are allusive i.e. making indirect reference to something or someone in the Quran. In your opinion, what is the appropriate approach of translating Quranic collocations into English?
- 5) If translation is mediation between literal and free, the translators of the Quran are always making choices that emphasise one at the expense of another. In your view, which is the better option?
- 6) Some collocations are used figuratively in the Quran and are often mistranslated or rendered literally, without taking into account that Arabic phraseological items are unfamiliar in English. To what extent is this true?
- 7) The translator aims to capture the Quran's exceptional collocational expression in English. Should Quranic collocations be explained rather than translated in English?

*Thank you for your valuable time and your assistance.*