

# How Different Muslim Translators Render *the Holy Qur'an* into English? The Case Study of Sunni, Shia and “neither Sunni nor Shia” Translators

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## Abstract

*There are many factors potentially affecting the choice of translation equivalents and strategies. Religion, as a cultural element, can be one of these factors. The researcher aims at investigating whether the religious background of translators play any role in selecting specific strategies or not. For this, the Holy Qur'an and its 4 English renditions by 'Shia,' 'Sunni' and 'neither Shia nor Sunni' Muslim translators were studied and compared based on Aixela's model. It was found that the factor of 'translator's religious background' does not play a pivotal role in selecting specific translation strategies of rendering ITs.*

*Keywords: Aixela's model; Islamic term; The Holy Qur'an; translation strategies*

## 1. Introduction

There can potentially be some factors influencing the choice of translation equivalents by various translators. The religious background of translators may be one of them. The Christian translators are normally supposed to render the Christianity-bound terms more accurately than other translators do. Similarly, in rendering Islamic terms (ITs), it is not illogical to suppose that 'Muslim' translators may strive to translate them more accurately than translators of other religions do.

But what about various sects within the Islam religion? What can be stated about the Sunni, the Shia, and the so-called Independent translators who call themselves Muslims who are neither Sunni nor Shia? Do translators who belong to these three groups differ in resorting to various translation strategies when dealing with ITs? To what extent translators' sectional background affect translation strategies?

Equivalence choice is highly affected by the strategies opted for by translators. As far as the author knows, no study has ever touched upon the issue of 'equivalence choice' in relation to 'translation strategy' and 'translator's religious-sectional background'. Therefore, in comparing the renditions of the three groups of translators mentioned above, the researcher has analyzed the strategies selected by the members of each group in rendering ITs to specify whether there is any regularity among them or not.

Translators of the three groups may opt for different strategies in rendering ITs. The present study will hopefully shed some light on the cultural implications for translation of literary-religious texts and will conceivably be useful for translators, translation studies students and those who are interested in translation studies as a whole. The author intends to investigate how translators of various Islamic sects deal with the issue of 'lexical gap' in religious-text translation by resorting to various translation strategies. The research questions include:

1. Was there any consistency in resorting to a specific strategy by each group of Muslim translators?
2. What are the most and the least frequently employed strategies by each group of Muslim translators?

3. Is there any similarity in the general tendency of Muslim translators in the employment of strategies?
4. Is there any similarity in the general tendency of Sunni translators to resort to particular strategies?

The result would probably help those who are determined to get familiar with the strategies of rendering ITs embedded in *the Holy Qur'an*.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Religious texts

Religious texts, which are typically literary texts rooted deeply in a nation's culture, would be a great challenge for translators. Weissbort and Eysteinnsson (2006: 3) believe that in rendering religious texts, the TT needs to "attend to the language and cultural heritage of such works, for it also has the function of extending that heritage, of lending it another kind of historical depth, of transforming it into a cross-cultural tradition". Such texts, in general, and, according to Moradi and Sadeghi (2014: 1735), *the Holy Qur'an* in particular, "have played a significant role in the life of man throughout history by aiming at guiding mankind into the right path", thus investigating "how the universal message of *the Qur'an* should be conveyed to the receivers" is of prime importance.

Naudé (2010: 285), quoting Robinson (2000: 103-107), underscores that religious translation is challenging in terms of "text", "sacredness" and "the status of translation". The latter factor deals with the following issues: the possibility and necessity of translating such texts; the identification of the potentially effective procedures of translating them; and specification of the right addressee and the right time for rendering religious texts. The first factor, text, concentrates on investigating the limits and characterizations of such texts in a literate and oral culture, respectively. The issue of sacredness, as Naudé (2010, *ibid.*) writes, deals with such questions as "Is a translated religious text still sacred, or is it a mere 'copy' of the sacred text? What is sacrality, in what does it lodge or reside or inhere, and can it be transported across cultural boundaries?"

As Fudge (2009: 41) concedes, "*The Qur'an* is held to be a literary achievement of which mortals are incapable". Moreover, concerning the translation of *the Holy Qur'an*, El-Awa (2006: 1) concedes the huge "loss of style and even meaning" in its rendition into European languages. The problem of untranslatability, as Manafi (2003: 21) puts it, "is often caused by sociocultural, linguistic, religious, philosophical, or methodological" barriers.

It is significant, as Afridi (2009) denotes, "to analyze how language, and specifically language in sacred texts, can have multiple meanings and can offer an alternative to literal colloquialism of language" (p. 21). Analyzing how language in sacred texts can have "multiple meanings" and can "offer an alternative to literal colloquialism of language" is quite essential (*ibid.*).

Regarding the concept of 'loss' in translating *the Holy Qur'an*, Abdelwali (2007: 1) claims that "A survey of existing English versions of the Qur'an shows that the most a translator aims at is the communication of the message without considering the idiosyncrasies and prototypical features of the Qur'anic discourse". Focusing on the difficulties encountered by the translators of *the Qur'an* as far as stylistic, rhetorical and lexical levels are concerned, he concludes that "Qur'anic lexemes can be adequately translated into English provided that

bilingual dictionaries that accurately document and explicate various meanings of Arabic words, both common and rare, and elucidate the range of contexts in which they occur, are available” (p. 7). He considers the absence of such comprehensive bilingual dictionaries as “a drawback to Qur'an translators” (*ibid.*).

Al-Jabari (2008) has investigated the effect of literal translation on some translations of the meaning of *the Qur'an* into English. It shows how literal translation impedes the transfer of a precise meaning and how it affects comprehensibility. As he writes, literal translation, posing problems on different levels of word, idiom, style, and culture, “is unnatural and misleading and can hardly do justice to the original; it distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and fails to transfer a precise meaning in a comprehensible message” (p. 58). He concludes that the inexplicitness of the TTs “stem from poor translation” and the translator is “the one to be blamed for the unsatisfactory work” (p. 238).

Al-Azab and Al-Misned (2012) have attempted to “highlight the eloquence and rhetoric of the Qur'an in using certain words, structures, formulae, and articles” (p.48). Asserting that pragmatic losses play a central role in translation, they conclude that pragmatic loss “is a thorny problem that poses various hurdles in the face of translators of the *Ever-Glorious Qur'an*.” The solution to this problem, as they maintain “is the linguistic compensation for the sake of approximation of meaning via pragmatics” (*ibid.*).

Moradi and Sadeghi (2014) have investigated the strategies used in the translation of the CSIs “in three English translation[s] of [*the*] *Holy Qur'an* and the frequency of such strategies” (p. 1735). The data gathered, as they explain, consist of the terms related to “Islamic law” or “*Ahkam*” in the original Arabic text based on the classification made by Khoramshahi (1990) as well as their equivalents in three English versions by Shakir (1985), Yusuf Ali (1996), and Pickthall (1996). However, quite strangely, they claim in the very beginning of the conclusion section of their research paper that the procedures opted for by “seven translators” were studied (p. 1745). Their study, unfortunately, seems to have a limited scope since, as they claim, they have randomly selected “Chapter Thirty of [*the H*]oly *Qur'an*” and restricted their analysis merely to 52 items. Ivir's (1987) model including the subsequent seven procedures was used as the framework of their study: (1). Definition (2). Literal translation (3). Substitution (4). Lexical creation (5). Omission (6). Addition (7). Borrowing. As Moradi and Sadeghi (*ibid.*) point out, “only four out of the seven strategies have been adopted by the selected translators in this study, namely, literal translation, definition, borrowing and addition”—the remaining three procedures, i.e., omission, substitution, and lexical creation “had no occurrence” (p. 1745). Observing that the most frequently used procedure is “literal translation,” they hurriedly and weirdly concluded that “Therefore, it seems that the most appropriate procedure for translating culture-bound terms in *the Holy Qur'an* into English is the literal translation procedure”. Unfortunately, they offer no justification for describing ‘literal translation’ as the optimum procedure. If ‘frequency’ is considered by them as the mere criteria of ‘good’ procedure, it should be noted that it stands in stark contrast to the results of previous works which strongly rejected any correlation between ‘frequency’ of a procedure and its ‘efficacy’ (see Ordudari, 2006 & Zhao, 2009).

Religion is part of a culture. Therefore, to find out about strategies of rendering religious texts, we initially need to know about strategies of translating culture-specific items (CSIs).

## 2.2. Rendering religious terms

The ST occasionally conveys some concepts that are entirely unknown in the TL. They may relate to a kind of food or drink, a social custom, or a religious belief. Such concepts can be termed as ‘culture-specific items’ (CSIs) or ‘culture-bound terms’ (CBTs). Aixela’s model for dealing with CSIs was chosen as the study’s theoretical framework. Aixela (1996) categorizes strategies under two main groups of “conservation” and “substitution.”

The general strategy of ‘conservation’ embraces the following sub-strategies: 1) Repetition: The translator preserves as much as s/he can of the original reference. 2) Orthographic Adaptation: it comprises of procedures like transliteration and transcription. 3) Linguistic (non-cultural) Translation: Here, translators select a denotatively close reference to the ST, but increases its comprehensibility via offering a TL version which can still be recognized as belonging to the source culture. 4) Extratextual Gloss: Translators use one of the above strategies, but deem it indispensable to offer some explanation of the meaning or implications of the CSI. 5) Intratextual Gloss: Here, translators incorporate their gloss as an indistinguishable part of the main text.

The general strategy of ‘substitution’ includes the subsequent sub-strategies: 1) Synonymy: The translator resorts to some kind of synonym or parallel reference to avoid repeating the CSI. 2) Limited Universalization: The translators feel that the CSI is too obscure to be understood or that there is another, more usual possibility and decide to replace it. 3) Absolute Universalization: The translators choose a neutral reference. 4) Naturalization: The translator decides to bring the CSI into the intertextual corpus felt as specific by the target language culture. 5) Deletion: Translator decides to omit the CSI. 6) Autonomous Creation: The translators decide that it could be interesting for their readers to put in some nonexistent cultural reference in the source text.

Aixela (1996: 64) also mentions other potential strategies like “compensation”, “dislocation” or “attenuation”. There are several strategies, being considered as subcategories of ‘substitution’, which are employed by the fourteen translators of the *Holy Qur’an* yet are left unmentioned by Aixela: 1. Couplet (intertextual couplet, extratextual couplet, multi-couplet); 2. Absolute modulation; 3. Limited modulation (interpretative equivalent, perspective modulation, shift modulation, inadequate modulation, reduction, ambiguous equivalent, figurative equivalent) (see Ordudari and Mollanazar, 2016).

The current study intends to investigate how translators of various Islamic sects, namely the Sunni, the Shia, and the so-called Independent translators, resort to various translation strategies to deal with lexical gaps in rendering ITs embedded in *the Holy Qur’an*.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1 Material*

The *Holy Qur’an* was selected as the material of the study since it includes various types of Islamic terms, and its translations are easily accessible. The ITs were extracted from the book entitled “*A Trilingual Dictionary of Qur’anic Terms*” (written by Mollanazar & Ordudari 2015).

#### *3.2 Procedure*

*The Holy Qur'an* and its 4 English translations (by Nikayin, The Monotheist Group, Irving, Pickthall) are studied and compared based on Aixela's model. His model is the most comprehensive one typically employed for analyzing cultural terms embedded in literary texts.

The following steps were taken to conduct the research:

1. Specifying ITs and their English equivalents,
2. Determining the strategies of rendering them,
3. Identifying the frequency of strategies, and
4. Examining whether the translator's religion (or sect) would have any effect on selecting strategies for rendering ITs.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

In the following, first, the Muslim translators are categorized into three groups. Then, some instances of ITs being rendered by each translator are discussed. Finally, the quantitative findings are presented via figures and tables.

##### 4.1. Muslim translators of various sects

According to Table 4.1, from among the translators, two of them are Sunni, and one is Shia. There is also a team of translators, called The Monotheist Group, who have claimed to be neither Shia nor Sunni. As can be seen in the table below, the Monotheist Group is categorized neither as Sunni nor as Shia. The reason can be understood from what they have indicated in the preface of their book *'The Qur'an: a monotheist translation'* where they explain:

With so many English translations of *the Qur'an* available, it is inevitable that the reader would ask "why [to] make another one?" The answer to that question lays in the current structure of the Islamic faith itself, and the fact that, for many centuries, Islam has been primarily subcategorized as either "Sunni" or "Shia" or one of the many other denominations that have emerged over the years. As such, all translators have belonged to one school of thought or another which clearly comes across in the interpretation of and choice of translation for specific words or verses. The Qur'an: A Monotheist Translation is the result of a group effort by people who do not belong to any denomination, and, for the first time in many centuries, are simply proud to call themselves "Muslims," submitting to God alone. (2012: 11)

*Table 4.1 Muslim Translators of Various Sects*

Religion	Translators
<i>Shia</i>	Fazlollah Nikayin
<i>neither Shia nor Sunni</i>	The Monotheist Group
<i>Sunni</i>	Thomas Ballantyne Irving M. Marmaduke Pickthall

##### 4.2. Focusing on quantitative findings (some instances)

In the following tables, ITs, their English equivalents and the strategies for rendering them by each translator is illustrated:

In Table 4.2, a number of ITs and their transliterations are presented.

**Table 4.2 A Number of ITs**

No.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ITs	يَوْمَ الْأَحْزَابِ {غافر/30} yaum-al ahzab (40/30)	يَوْمَ النَّادِ {غافر/32} yaum-al tanad (40/32)	يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ {الشورى/7} yaum-al jam' (42/7)	يَوْمَ الْقِصَلِ {الدخان/40} yaum-al fasl (44/40)	يَوْمَ الْوَعِيدِ {ق/20} yaum-al va'eid (50/20)	يَوْمَ الْخُلُودِ {ق/34} yaum-al kholud (50/34)

In Table 4.3, equivalents and strategies being opted for in translating ITs are presented.

**Table 4.3 Equivalents and Strategies for Rendering ITs**

Tr ITs	TBI	MMP	the MG	FN
1	the day of the Coalition	{a fate like} that of the factions (of old)	the day of the Confederates	what upon the Factions* fell
	(LT)	(IG)	(LT)	(EG)
2	the day when you will (all) turn around to retreat	a Day of Summoning	the Day of mutual blaming	the Day of Cries and Tears
	(AM)	(AM)	(LM)	(IG)
3	the Day of Gathering	a day of assembling	the Day of Gathering	the Day of Gathering
	(LT)	(LT)	(LT)	(LT)
4	The Day for Sorting things out	the Day of Decision	the Day of Separation	the Day of Separation
	(LT)	(LM)	(LT)	(LT)
5	the day of the Threat	the threatened Day	the promised Day	the Day that has been promised
	(LM)	(LM)	(LM)	(LM)
6	the day that will last for ever	the day of immortality	the Day of eternal life	the Day of Permanence*
	(LT)	(LT)	(LT)	(EG)

#### 4.3. Strategies employed by Muslim translators of various sects

To realize whether following a specific sect of the Islam affects equivalent-choice, and consequently, the strategies selected by a translator in rendering ITs, translators were classified into three categories: Sunni, Shia, and 'neither Shia nor Sunni'.

Table 4.4 exhibits the number of strategies preferred by the two Sunni translators:

**Table 4.4 The Frequency of the Strategies selected by Muslim Translators of Various Sects**

Strategies		Frequency of the strategies			
		Nikayin	the MG	Pickthall	Irving
Strategies	Rep	0	0	0	0

offered by Aixela	Conservation	OA	10	8	16	9
		LT	16	29	25	30
		EG	25	0	5	1
		IG	6	1	1	0
	Substitution (I)	S	132	179	186	173
		LU	0	0	1	1
		AU	14	33	17	20
		N	3	6	4	7
		D	0	3	2	1
		A	2	3	2	4
AC		1	0	0	0	
Strategies added by Ordudari	Substitution (II)	LM	46	47	36	46
		AM	7	18	7	22
	C	IC	45	2	14	3
		EC	20	0	14	12
		MC	5	3	2	3

#### 4.3.1. Shia translator

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show the percentage of strategies opted for by the Shia translator:

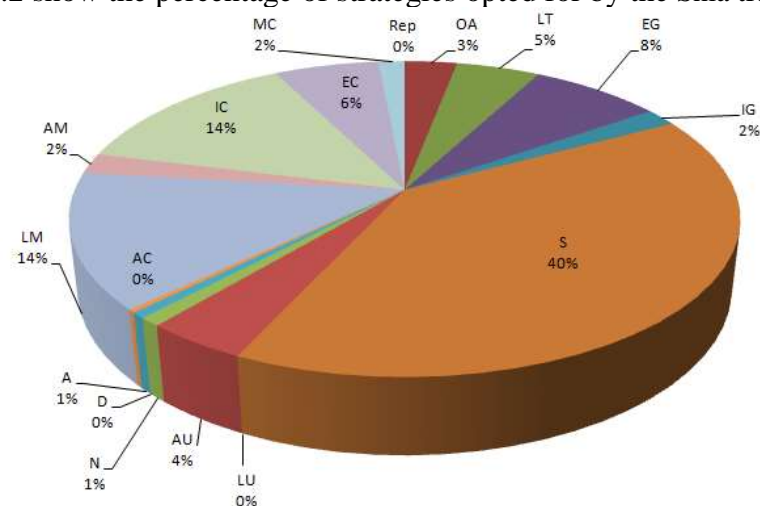


Figure 4.1 Percentages of Strategies Chosen by Shia Translator

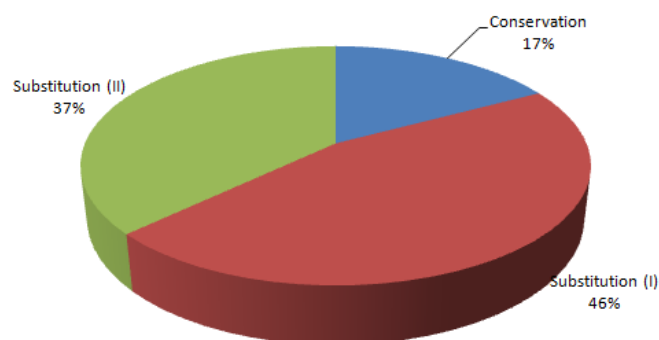


Figure 4.2 Percentages of General Strategies Selected by Shia Translator

#### 4.3.2. Sunni translators

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 illustrate the percentage of strategies opted for by the two Sunni translators:

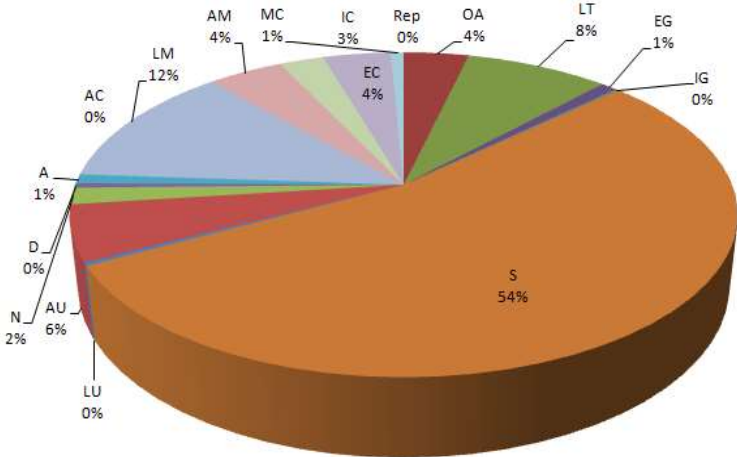


Figure 4.3 Percentages of Strategies Chosen by Sunni Translators

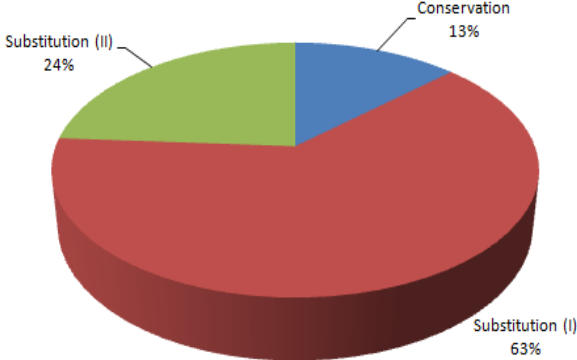


Figure 4.4 Percentages of General Strategies Selected by Sunni Translators

4.3.3. Neither Shia nor Sunni

Figures 4.5 and 4.6 illustrate the percentage of strategies opted for by the Monotheist Group:

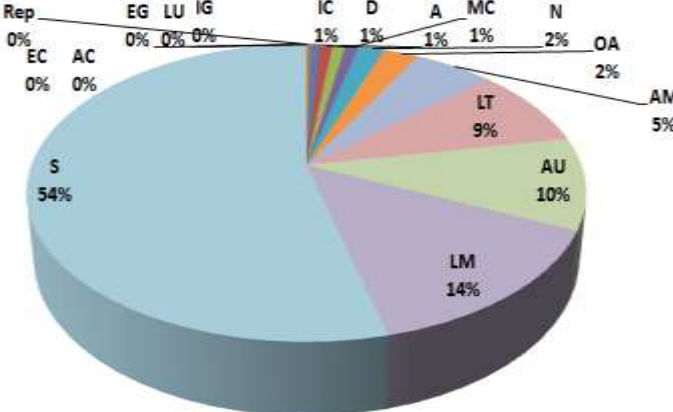


Figure 4.5 Percentages of Strategies Chosen by the Monotheist Group



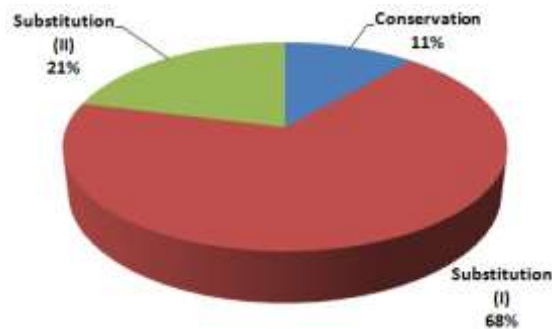


Figure 4.6 Percentages of General Strategies Selected by the Monotheist Group

#### 4.4. Discussion of the findings

In the following, first, a number of ITs, presented in Table 4.3, their equivalents and the strategies employed for translating them by each translator is discussed in detail. Then, with an attempt to provide answers to research questions, the quantitative findings are discussed.

##### 4.4.1. Discussing qualitative data (some instances)

According to Table 4.3, as for the term *يَوْمَ الْأَحْزَابِ* (*yaum-al ahzab*), Makarem (1994) believes it refers to “the Day (of disaster) of the Factions of old” (my translation). Pickthall (1930) is the only translator who has mentioned that *الْأَحْزَابِ* (*al ahzab*) refers to ‘the factions of old’. Other translators have selected synonymous words such as ‘the parties, the confederates, and the coalition’. Nikayin (2000), resorting to the strategy of EG, offers several equivalents like ‘Parties’, ‘Confederates’ or ‘those who rejected God’s message and his prophets.’ Makarem (1994), in his interpretation of *the Holy Qur’an*, has mentioned the word “disaster”, which is a word roughly synonymous with ‘misfortune’. Moreover, the word *الْأَحْزَابِ* (*al ahzab*) can be interpreted, as was confirmed by Nikayin (2000), as ‘opponents’.

As is presented in Table 4.3, the term *يَوْمَ النَّادِ* (*yaum-al tanad*) is translated by Makarem (1994), the Persian translator and interpreter, as ‘The Day which there is no respond to any call, even though people may wail and call to each other’ (*My translation*). As Qara’ati (1995, Vol. 8: 249) writes:

The word *النَّادِ* (*tanad*), being derived from *نداء* (*neda*) means “call to one another”. This day is the Day of Resurrection when believers call to others: ‘come and read my book’, disbelievers regretfully shout, and seek help from the inhabitants of the Paradise and they call the Hell-residents: ‘why did you enter the Hell?’ In general, in that Day, men call unto one another. (*My translation*)

Sale (1734), as one of the earliest translators of *the Holy Qur’an*, resorting to the strategy of EG, has translated the term as ‘the day whereon men shall call unto one another’ and has clarified that this day is “the day of judgment, when the inhabitants of paradise and of hell shall enter into mutual discourse: when the latter shall call for **help**, and the seducers and the seduced shall cast the **blame** upon each other” (p. 355, the emphasis is mine). The word ‘**blame**’, as is mentioned in Sale’s note, indicates that this Day can also be called ‘the day of mutual blaming’—the equivalents opted for by the MG—however, it is a change of view point. Since only one aspect of the term is considered, it can be stated that the MG has employed the strategy of Reduction (as a subcategory of LM). Pickthall’s ‘a Day of Summoning’ and Irving’s ‘the day when you will (all) turn around to retreat’ indicate that

these two translators have utterly altered the viewpoint by using the strategy of ‘Absolute Modulation’. Considering different meanings of ‘summon’ and ‘retreat’, we can claim that Irving and Pickthall could have been more accurate if they had resorted to other helpful strategies.

The term ‘يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ’ (yaum-al jam’), literally meaning ‘the Day of Gathering’, needs to be written with capital letters. However, Pickthall has ignored it by rendering it as “a day of assembling”. The term is glossed by Muhammad Ali (1917), an Indian translator, who believes that the day refers to “the first conflict between the Muslims ... and the unbelieving Meccans; thus prophesying success for the former and defeat for the latter” (p. 932). All of the translators being studied in this article have opted for the strategy of LT.

Three translators, resorting to the strategy of LT, have offered the following equivalents for the term ‘يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ’ (yaum-al fasl): ‘the Day of Separation’ and ‘The Day for Sorting things out’. Pickthall, altering the view point, have translated it as ‘the Day of Decision’. Saffarzadeh (2001), a Persian translator, has clarified the term and mentioned the underlying meaning of it by using the strategy of IG and translating the term as ‘the Resurrection Day is the Day of Separation between Truth and Falsehood’.

As far as the term ‘يَوْمَ الْوَعِيدِ’ (yaum-al va’eid) is concerned, Wehr (1976) defines it as “promises” and “threats” (p. 1081). Irving and Pickthall, the two TL natives, have respectively rendered it as “the day of the Threat” and “the threatened Day”. Both of them have seemingly neglected the primary meaning of ‘الْوَعِيدِ’ (al va’eid). On the other hand, the MG and Nikayin have only paid attention to the primary meaning of the term by translating it as “the promised Day” and “the Day that has been promised”, respectively. The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute (RABI), a team of translators of *the Holy Qur’an*, selecting an equivalent which includes both components, has translated it as ‘the Day of the Promised Threat’. Saffarzadeh (2001), the first woman translator of *the Holy Qur’an*, again has resorted to IG and offered the following equivalent: ‘the Day of fulfillment of the dreadful Chastisement which has been promised’.

As for the term ‘يَوْمَ الْخُلُودِ’ (yaum-al kholud), equivalents such as ‘immortality’, ‘everlasting Life’, ‘Eternal Life’, ‘eternity’ and ‘abiding’ can be chosen for ‘الْخُلُودِ’ (al kholud). Nikayin (2000) has translated the term as ‘the Day of Permanence’ and then, in a short footnote, has reminded the TT reader that there is another equivalent for the term: “Day of Eternity”.

#### 4.4.2. *Discussing quantitative data*

As can be observed in table 4.4, none of the translators had any consistency in adopting one particular strategy.

As regards the general strategies of ‘conservation’ and ‘substitution’, the former has been used the least (11% to 17%) while the latter was most frequently resorted to by the members of the three groups.

In respect of the general strategies of ‘conservation’ and ‘substitution’, there seems to be a sort of regularity between the two groups of Sunni and the Monotheist Group. According to Figures 4.4 and 4.6, both averagely resort to the former and latter strategies in 12% and 66% of cases, respectively. The regularity is also evident in various sub-strategies. In accordance with Figures 4.3 and 4.5, both groups approximately share the same range of percentages for the following sub-strategies:

0% to 5%	6% to 14%	above 50%
(Rep), (D), (AC), (IG), (EG), (EC), (MC), (A), (N), (LU), (OA), (AM), (IC)	(LM), (LT), (AU)	(S)

However, the Shia translator has performed a little bit differently:

0% to 5%	6% to 14%	above 40%
(Rep), (D), (AC), (IG), (MC), (A), (N), (LU), (OA), (AM), (AU), (LT)	(EG), (EC), (IC), (LM)	(S)

While Sunni and the Monotheist Group had almost never employed EG, the Shia translator has resorted to it in 14% of the cases. Moreover, the Shia translator utilized IC about 13% more than the Monotheist Group and 11% more than the Sunni translators did.

Therefore, except for the aforementioned three sub-strategies, there seems to be a kind of regularity among the three groups of Muslim translators.

On account of what can be observed from table 4.4, excluding the strategies of Rep and AC, which was never employed by the two Sunnis, no similarity could be detected in the general tendency of Sunni translators to resort to particular strategies.

## 5. Concluding remarks

The paper aimed to identify whether the factor of “religion” in general, and various sects of the Islam, in particular, affects the employment of strategies by translators of the *Holly Qur’an*.

Firstly, it was found that none of the translators had any consistency in adopting one particular strategy. It can be concluded that in rendering ITs, as far as selecting translation strategies is concerned, consistency does not seem to be quite logical and translators are required by the context to change their strategies and resort to the best ones in appropriate situations.

As regards the general strategies of ‘conservation’ and ‘substitution’, there seemed to be regularity between the three categories of Muslim translators. The regularity was also observable in the employment of various sub-strategies. Therefore, no conspicuous influence of sectional belief on the selection of translation strategy could be detected.

Within the category of Sunni translators, there seemed to be regularity between the two only in resorting to Rep and AC; however, when it came to other sub-strategies, no similarity could be detected in the general tendency of Sunni translators to resort to particular strategies.

The data were indicative of the fact that Nikayin, the Shia translator, was more enthusiastic to conserve ITs of the *Holly Qur’an* than the rest. Moreover, he has provided more explanatory notes for their audience than the two other groups. The Shia translator seems to be more considerate of his audience than the rest. Interestingly, he is also the only translator who has offered a poetic translation of the *Holly Qur’an*. It can be interpreted that, the Shia translator has done his best to both convey the meaning and observe the aesthetic aspects of the original text.

Finally, however, it should be noted that in contrast to the research hypothesis, the factor of ‘translator’s religious background’, as far as various Islamic sects are concerned, does not play a pivotal role in selecting specific translation strategies of rendering ITs.

The findings of this study, it is hoped, would be practically a useful and valuable guideline for translators in a way that it optimistically makes them more familiar with the potentiality of various strategies of rendering culture-specific terms, in general, and ITs, in particular. It may hopefully assist them in opting for the practical strategies and, consequently, in selecting appropriate equivalents.

This line of research can be continued to pave the way for the development of a more comprehensive theory of religious text translation. The following areas can be considered as the ones worthy of further study:

1. The effect of 'time' (historical gap between the Holy Qur'an's translators) on preserving the formal beauties of the Holy Qur'an (e.g., puns, alliterations, etc.).
2. The effect of 'the similarity of the SL and the TL systems' on the quality of the *Holy Qur'an's* translation.
3. The effect of 'familiarity with SL/TL culture', 'translator's gender' and 'time' on translating various speech figures of *the Holy Qur'an* (e.g. allusions, metonymies or metaphors).

It is also recommended that a confirmatory or replication research be conducted to see if the findings of the present study are verified

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