

## **Proposing a Tentative Revision Hypothesis for Sacred Texts: The Holy Qur'an's English Translation and Revision in Focus**

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### **Abstract**

*The present study analyzes a translation of the Holy Qur'an and its revision to take a step towards formulating a tentative revision hypothesis. Muhammad Ali's (1917) translation and its edited version by Aziz (2010) are the corpus of the study. The major principle of the revision hypothesis was found to be that the translation of a sacred-text is less target-oriented than its edited-version. This revision hypothesis is not formulated in absolute terms. Other researchers can test the validity of its principles by focusing on specific genres (i.e. religious texts, children's literature, etc.).*

**Keywords:** *the Holy Qur'an; sacred texts; the revision hypothesis; Maulana Muhammad Ali (1917); Zahid Aziz (2010)*

### **1. Introduction**

The passage of time may cause cultures, languages and translations to experience some changes. In the case of translations, such change sometimes appears in the form of a revised (self-)edition of the translation or the production of (re)translations by other translators. Retranslation refers to the process of translating a source text (ST) that has previously been rendered into the same target language (TL). Retranslation, as a product, “denotes a second or later translation of a single ST into the same” TL (Koskinen & Paloposki 2010: 294). Accordingly, retranslators are those who produce retranslations.

Although retranslations may sometimes “respond to a lack in the initial translation,” they “exist not because earlier translations are defective but because they are the necessary condition for the survival of the canonical source text” (Massardier-Kenney 2015: 73–81). On the basis of Berman's Retranslation Hypothesis, “later translations tend to be closer to the source text” (Chesterman 2004: 8). Editors are those who just edit a target-text, and self-editors denote those translators who commit self-retranslations.

While “corpus-based studies of translation use published texts as the basis for their corpus” (Bisiada 2018: 1), almost all of them just concentrate on the original translations or their edited versions. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has yet been conducted to compare the original translation with its edited version to propose or even pave the way for formulating a tentative hypothesis for the revised editions. The current study aims at analyzing a translation and edition of a sacred text: the Holy Qur'an. The corpus is introduced comprehensively in the methodology section.

Edited versions (or revisions) of published translations always appear after the original translation. They share this feature with retranslations. The question that may arise here is whether revisions and retranslations share the same hypothesis or not? In other words, do we need to formulate a separate hypothesis for revisions? Can we confidently assert that revised versions are closer to the STs (i.e. are more ST oriented) than the original translations (as is the case for retranslations)? The present paper aims to find answers to these questions.

## 2. Literature review

In Section 2.1, previous works on the Holy Qur'an's translations are reviewed. In the two sections after that, some studies on the issue of the retranslation hypothesis and revision hypothesis (RH) are reviewed.

### 2.1. Previous works on the Holy Qur'an's translations

Al-Salem (2008) analyzed procedures employed in rendering metonymies in five English translations of the Holy Qur'an: Pickthall (1930/1992), Arberry (1955/1996), Al-Hilali and Khan (1996), Ghali (1998) and Bewley and Bewley (1999). He found the following methods used by translators: "translation into a metaphor;" "translation into the same metonymy;" "translation into the same metonymy with the intended meaning in parentheses;" "reduction of metonymy to its sense only;" "assuming that there isn't a metonymy," and "translation into another metonymy" (196). The findings indicated that translators showed great tendencies towards rendering Arabic metonymical expressions into the same metonymy in English. All translators were chosen from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The researcher could have selected a number of translations carried out in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> century to investigate whether the time span really affects the type of strategies selected by translators and the overall tendencies of translators towards the target- or the source-language. If Al-Salem (2008) had done so, he could have also tested the RH in the context of religious texts.

Pirnajmuddin & Zamani's (2012) study investigated English translations of Qur'anic culture-bound terms by Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan (1995), Shakir (1980), Arberry (1955), Yusuf Ali (1934), and Pickthall (1930). Concentrating solely on "[p]ractical laws of religion (Furū al-Dīn)," they found that "literal translation" is the most frequent and the most proper procedure in rendering culture-bound terms (CBTs) (71). The researchers could have examined the general tendencies of the retranslators and tested the RH.

Naseri and Shiravi Khoozani's (2015) paper focused on four Persian translations of the Qur'an by Moezzi (1993), Sharany (1995), Dehlavi (1996) and Mesbah-zadeh (2001). The researchers concentrated on a set of criteria for comparing the translations: "accuracy" of equivalents, "consistency and cohesion," "eloquence," the morphological and stylistic issues, etc. (137). Based on their findings, once the first two translations (i.e. Moezzi 1993 and Sharany 1995) are compared, it would be revealed that the later one is slightly more source-oriented, and, when the translations of Dehlavi (1996) and Mesbah-zadeh (2001) are compared, it would be found that the later translation is more source-oriented than the earlier rendition. Therefore, as far as the RH is concerned, Naseri and Shiravi Khoozani's (2015) paper neither confirms nor disproves the hypothesis.

Mohammadi and Valavi's (2019) paper examined metonymies in three ancient translations of the Holy Qur'an by Tabari (13<sup>th</sup> century), Meybodi (15<sup>th</sup> century) and Abul-Futouh Razi (15<sup>th</sup> century). The researchers found that "Tabari and Abul-Futouh Razi" mainly used "literal translation," while "Meybodi has had the most content-wise translation in rendering metonymy" (17). If Tabari's translation is merely compared with Meybodi's, it can be pointed out that the RH is disproved since the earlier translation was more source-oriented than the later one. However, the study could have obtained more conclusive results in terms of the RH if more recent (re-)translations had been also taken into consideration.

## 2.2. Previous works on the retranslation hypothesis

Paloposki & Koskinen (2004) took the retranslation hypothesis into consideration and compared “its claims with data from Finnish first translations and retranslations” (27). Based on their findings, “while there are numerous (re)translations that fit in the RH schema, there also exist several counter-examples where the schema is turned the other way round, and also cases where the whole issue of domestication/assimilation versus foreignization/source-text orientation is irrelevant” (36). Paloposki & Koskinen (2004: 36) contended that there were “no inherent qualities in the process of retranslating that would dictate a move from domesticating strategies towards more foreignizing strategies”. The researcher, finally, pointed out that they did not find enough support for the RH.

El Damanhoury (2015) analyzed three Japanese translations of the Holy Quran and tested the applicability of the RH in this respect. Translators included Izutsu (1964), Mita (1972) and Nakata (2014). Based on the results of her study, Izutsu employed foreignizing strategies in 60%, Mita in 62% and Nakata in 70% of the cases (56-59). The earliest translation (by Izutsu in 1964) was found by the researcher to be “the most domesticating” one, “followed by Mita (1972) and lastly Nakata (2014)” (56–59). The findings of El Damanhoury’s (2015) study were in line with the basic principles of the RH.

Kitanovska-Kimovska (2017) attempted to test the RH by analyzing three Macedonian translations of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. The study was on the basis of a comparison between the source text (ST) and the target texts (TTs) by Shopov (1960), Gjuzel (1989), and Mihajlovski (2008) “in terms of the number of lexical inventions, i.e. the number of words derived through the processes of conversion and compounding” (201). The earliest translations, both direct and indirect one, were found to be more “target-oriented, while the second direct translation” was “more source-oriented” (210). The researcher confirmed the RH in her study.

Oyali’s (2018) study investigated the validity of the RH “in representations of certain Biblical concepts in the translations of the Bible into Igbo” and his findings proved that “most of the borrowings in the first translation are de-borrowed in the retranslations” (84). Analyzing five translations of the Bible, he finally concluded that “the opposite” of the retranslation hypothesis “is true” in this case since “later translations” were found to be “more target culture oriented than earlier translations” (97).

The findings of El Damanhoury’s (2015) thesis and Oyali’s (2018) paper were in sharp contrast: one confirmed the RH and the other totally disproved it. It should, however, be noticed that while the genre of the two studies was the same (i.e. sacred texts), the corpora studied by the two researchers were not the same. Moreover, the source- and the target-languages were not the same in the two works. Overall, such factors might play a role in (dis)proving the RH. Prospective researchers can work on such an issue, but what is significant for us, in the present study, is that there are at least a few works dealing with the issue of the retranslation hypothesis in religious texts. But no one, as far as the researchers know, has yet attempted to take a step towards formulating the RH. Therefore, the present study is conducted to fill the research gap.

### *2.3. Previous works on revision hypothesis*

All works conducted so far have generally focused on translations of the Holy Qur'an and almost none of them took the issue of edited versions into account. Only the study carried out by Afrouz (2021) straightforwardly dealt with RH. But it needs to be clarified that his work focused on "self-revision". Afrouz (2021) found that subsequent revisions made by a translator were more accurate and more natural than the first translation produced by the same translator. However, Afrouz's (2021) paper concentrated on self-revisions and modern Persian literature, but the current study worked on a translation of the Holy Qur'an as a classical Arabic literary-religious text and its revision (made by a person other than translator himself). Such a study has never been conducted by any other researcher.

From among numerous English translations of the Holy Qur'an by individual translators (e.g. Sale 1734; Muhammad Ali 1917; Pickthall 1930; Yusuf Ali 1934; Arberry 1955; Shakir 1980; Irving 1985; Nikayin 2000; Saffarzadeh 2001; Abdel-Haleem 2005; Starkovsky 2005) or groups of translators (e.g. Yuksel et al. 2007; Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought 2008; The Monotheist Group 2012), only the one by Muhammad Ali (1917) was selected because it was revised by Zahid Aziz in 2010.

### **3. Method**

The current study is analytical-comparative qualitative research exploring the potential relationship between religious translations and their edited versions. The sacred literary text selected in this study is the Muslims' greatest religious Book the Holy Qur'an, originally translated by Muhammad Ali (1917/1951) and edited by Aziz (2010). The following steps were taken to carry out the study:

1. It was attempted to find a sacred literary text with its original translation and its latest revision.
2. The translated version was linguistically compared with its revised version to detect the changes applied by the reviser.
3. The features of the revised version were analyzed.
4. On the basis of the findings and data analysis, a tentative hypothesis concerning revised versions of sacred texts was suggested.

### **4. Results and discussion**

The issue of RH is first discussed in terms of classical literary texts and then is dealt with in the context of sacred literary texts. The most conspicuous changes applied by the editor was the exclusion of the ST which reduced the number of pages from 1388 to 923—a 20 percent reduction in hardcopy versions. It may make the edited version appear much handier and reader friendly. Moreover, while the electronic version of the original translation is about 80 megabytes, the edited version is less than four megabytes. Although both of these changes may, at first sight, seem superficial, they can potentially influence the accessibility of the edited version to the TT audience.

Other changes applied by Aziz are discussed here by referring to some tangible evidence from the corpus. It is noteworthy that the changes mentioned here were majorly found to be consistent throughout the whole revision.

1. Replacing the second person singular form *thou* and *thee* by *you*:

ST	صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ {الفاطحة/7}
TT	The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, Not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 6–7)
RTT	The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favours, Not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray. (Aziz 2010: 1)

As can be seen, the subject pronoun *Thou* is changed into *You*. This modernization has also occurred in alteration of *hast* as *have*. Consider the following instance which contains further changes:

2. Modernizing antiquated endings to English verbs:

ST	قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ {البقرة/32}
TT	They said: Glory be to Thee! we have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us; surely Thou art the Knowing, the Wise. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 24)
RTT	They said: Glory be to You! we have no knowledge but what You have taught us. Surely You are the Knowing, the Wise. (Aziz 2010: 9)

Besides modernizing the pronouns *Thee* and *Thou*, the (auxiliary) verbs have also experienced such a change: *hast* vs. *has*; *art* vs. *are*. In the same line, the more traditional construction *that which...* is replaced by *what....* Additionally, the sentences which had been partially separated by a semicolon are now totally separated by a period. It may presumably imply that the revised version shows stronger tendency towards simplification via separating complex sentences. Further evidence of such changes will be presented as follows:

3. Replacing the second person singular form *thy* by *your*:

ST	وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ {البقرة/30}
TT	And when <i>your</i> Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the <i>earth</i> one who shall rule (in it), they said: What! Wilt Thou place in it such as make mischief in it and shed blood, and we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness. He said: Surely I know what you do not know. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 23)
RTT	And when <i>your</i> Lord said to the angels, I am going to place a ruler in the earth, they said: Will You place in it such as make mischief in it and shed blood? And we celebrate Your praise and extol Your holiness. He said: Surely I know what you do not know. (Aziz 2010: 8–9)

Muhammad Ali has been inconsistent in using the archaic forms like *thou/thee* and *thy*. As the instance above clearly demonstrates, both *your* and *thy* are present in his translation, while in the edited version by Aziz, just a single form is used: *your*. Therefore, whereas expressions like *Wilt Thou*, *Thy praise*, and *Thy holiness* are modernized, *your Lord* is left unchanged since it had been modernized in the original translation. It seems that Muhammad

Ali has only used archaic forms to refer to God. Whatever the case may be, his behavior can be considered as a sort of stylistic inconsistency.

Furthermore, the sentences separated by a comma (i.e. ...*shed blood*, and *we...*) are now totally separated by a question mark (i.e. ...*shed blood?* and *we...*). It shows the meticulousness and diligence of the editor in the accurate use of punctuation marks. This would promote the readability and fluency of the TT. In the same line, Aziz has replaced the long and rather complex clause *to place in the earth one who shall rule (in it)* by *to place a ruler in the earth*. Aziz has also removed the unnecessary term *What!* to observe the brevity of his revised edition.

Take the last part of the above verse into consideration: *Surely I know what you do not know*. Interestingly, Muhammad Ali in his 1951's edition has employed structures like *they see not* and *you know not* while he has used simpler constructions such as *they do not see* and *you do not know* in his original 1917's version. Aziz (2010), as could evidently be seen, has restored the original translation's style.

4. Replacing more traditional phrases by modern ones:

ST	وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ {البقرة/4}
TT	And who believe in that which has been revealed to <i>you</i> and what was revealed before <i>you</i> , and they are sure of the hereafter. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 13)
RTT	And who believe in what has been revealed to <i>you</i> and what was revealed before <i>you</i> , and of the Hereafter they are sure. (Aziz 2010: 4)

As was explained in previous instances, the phrase *that which* is replaced by *what*. There were other alterations in the revised version. Firstly, the *Hereafter*, as a religious-bound term, is capitalized by the editor to distinguish it from ordinary terms. Secondly, in rendering the Arabic clause *بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ* /*bel ākherate hom jūqenūn*/, the original translation's word-order is more target-oriented than the edited version. The edited version follows the Arabic word-order and is, therefore, structurally more source-oriented. It should, nonetheless, be remembered that this event has been an exception, and in other cases, the edited version has been much more target-oriented than the original translation.

5. Replacing more formal and difficult lexical items by everyday words:

ST	أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ {البقرة/44}
TT	What! do you enjoin men to be good and neglect your own souls while you read the Book? Have you then no sense? (Muhammad Ali 1917: 29)
RTT	Do you tell people to be good and neglect your own souls while you read the Book? Have you then no sense? (Aziz 2010: 12)

In the above instance, the difficult word *enjoin* in the original translation is replaced by everyday verb *tell*. Other changes in the revised version include:

- Removal of the word *What!*—which is used typically by Muhammad Ali wherever the Arabic item *أ* /*a*/ is used at the beginning of a sentence to make interrogative constructions
- Replacement of the word *men* with *people*—which may display the tendency of the editor to employ more neutral gender-free words

- Breaking up longer sentences into shorter independent sentences to boost the flow of constructions (usually by replacing comma, colon or semicolon with question mark, exclamation mark, period, etc.)

6. Avoiding prolixity and showing more tendencies towards brevity:

ST	وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ {البقرة/48}
TT	And be on your guard against a day when one soul shall not avail another in the least, neither shall intercession on its behalf be accepted, nor shall any compensation be taken from it, nor shall they be helped. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 30)
RTT	And guard yourselves against a day when no soul will avail another in the least, neither will intercession be accepted on its behalf, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be helped. (Aziz 2010: 12)

Other changes in the revised version include replacing the less frequently used modal *shall* by *will* and changing the word order (i.e. *on its behalf*) to promote the flow of the sentence.

7. Replacing complex constructions by more simplified ones:

ST	فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ صَدَّ عَنْهُ وَكَفَىٰ بِجَهَنَّمَ سَعِيرًا {النساء/55}
TT	So of them is he who believes in him, and of them is he who turns away from him, and hell is sufficient to burn. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 217)
RTT	So some of them believe in him, and some of them turn away from him. And Hell is sufficient to burn. (Aziz 2010: 117–18)

The expression *منهم من* /*menhom man*/, originally rendered as *of them is he who*, is simplified as *some of them*. Moreover, the last clause in the Arabic text, being a dependent segment in the original translation, is broken up as an independent sentence in the edited version. The religious-bound term *Hell* is also capitalized.

8. Replacing literary (and old-fashioned) words by more everyday (modern) ones:

ST	قَالَ هِيَ رَأَوْنَتِي عَنْ نَفْسِي وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدًّا مِنْ قَبْلِ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ {يوسف/26} وَإِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدًّا مِنْ دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ {يوسف/27}
TT	He said: She sought to make me yield (to her); and a witness of her own family bore witness: If his shirt is rent from front, she speaks the truth and he is one of the liars. And if his shirt is rent from behind, she tells a lie and he is one of the truthful. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 482)
RTT	He said: She sought to seduce me. And a witness of her own family bore witness: If his shirt is torn in front, she speaks the truth and he is a liar. And if his shirt is torn from behind, she tells a lie and he is truthful. (Aziz 2010: 289)

The word *rend* in Muhammad Ali's translation is a literary old-fashioned verb. It is replaced with *tear* in Aziz's revision. Prolixity in expressions like *make me yield (to her)*, *one of the liars* and *one of the truthful* are respectively replaced with *seduce*, *a liar*, and *truthful*. It should be reminded that the original translation is closer to the ST since, for instance, the two parallel-structured expressions *هُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ* /*howa menal kazebīn*/ and *هُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ* /*howa menal ṣādeqīn*/ are literally rendered in the original translation as *he is one of the liars* and *he is one of the truthful*, respectively, while they were condensed in the edited version as *he is a liar* and *he is truthful*, respectively.

## 9. Replacing literary constructions with everyday ones:

ST	وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ {البقرة/88}
TT	And they say: Our hearts are securely <i>covered</i> . Nay, Allah has cursed them on account of their unbelief; so little it is that they believe. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 47)
RTT	And they say: Our hearts are securely covered. No, Allah has cursed them on account of their unbelief; so it is little that they believe. (Aziz 2010: 20)

Sometimes changing some lexical items and word-order can result in the change of literary style into normal one. Take, for instance, the alteration of *Nay* and *little it is* into *No* and *it is little*, respectively. It should also be remembered that although Muhammad Ali (1917) has typically rendered the word *بَلْ/bal/* as *nay*, he has not been consistent and, in some verses, the same word *بَلْ/bal/* had been translated as *yet*, *rather*, or *but*.

## 10. Observing the (more creative and accurate) use of punctuation marks:

ST	قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ {الشعراء/153} مَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا فَأْتِ بآيَةٍ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ {الشعراء/154}
TT	They said: <i>You are</i> only of the deluded ones: <i>You are</i> naught but a mortal like ourselves: so bring a sign if <i>you are</i> one of the truthful. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 736)
RTT	They said: You are only a deluded person. <i>You are</i> nothing but a mortal like ourselves—so bring a sign if <i>you are</i> truthful. (Aziz 2010: 463)

While three successive colons are used in the translation, the editor has replaced two of them with a period and a dash. Aziz has accurately used a full stop at the end of the first verse, while Muhammad Ali had employed a colon. Furthermore, the expressions *مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ/menal mosaharīn/* and *مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ/menal šādeqīn/* are again rendered literally by Muhammad Ali as *of the deluded ones* and *of the truthful*, respectively, while they are reduced as *a deluded person* and *truthful*, correspondingly.

While the expression *إِلَّا بَشَرٌ/ellā basharon/* is translated originally as *naught but a mortal*, it is replaced by *nothing but a mortal*. Although Muhammad Ali (1917) has employed equivalents *naught* and *aught* in his rendition of some verses, he has been inconsistent in this respect since in other verses the same expressions were rendered using equivalents such as *nothing*, *anything*, *at all* and *in the least*. Compare the abovementioned instance with the following one.

## 11. Removing redundant expressions:

ST	لَا هِيَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَسْرُوا النَّجْوَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا هَلْ هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ أَفَتَأْتُونَ السَّجَرَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَبْصُرُونَ {الأنبياء/3}
TT	Their hearts trifling; and those who are unjust counsel together in secret: He is nothing but a mortal like yourselves; what! will you then yield to enchantment while you see? (Muhammad Ali 1917: 643)
RTT	their hearts trifling. And they—the wrongdoers—counsel in secret: He is nothing but a mortal like yourselves; will you then yield to enchantment while you see? (Aziz 2010: 398)

The redundant *what!* and *together* is removed in the edited version. Again, as can be seen, here the same expression *إِلَّا بَشَرٌ/ellā basharon/* appears identically in both the translation and the edition: *nothing but a mortal*. In general, the edited version was detected to be more consistent in terms of employing equivalents.

Furthermore, while the Arabic expression *الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا*/*al lazina zalamū*/ is literally translated as *those who are unjust*, it appears more concise in the edited version: *the wrongdoers*. Therefore, again, the original translation was more source-text oriented than the edition. It should also be reminded that Muhammad Ali has again been less consistent than Aziz in terms of equivalent choice since the words *wrongdoer*, *unjust* and *iniquitous* have been interchangeably used in various verses. Take the following instances into consideration:

ST1	وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ {البقرة/92}
TT	And most certainly Moses came to you with clear arguments, then you took the calf (for a god) <i>in his absence</i> and you were unjust. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 48)
RTT	And Moses indeed came to you with clear arguments, then you took the calf (for a god) in his absence and you were wrongdoers. (Aziz 2010: 21)
ST2	وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُوَلِّي بَعْضَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ {الأنعام/129}
TT	And thus do We make some of the iniquitous to befriend others on account of what they earned. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 183)
RTT	And thus do We make some of the wrongdoers to befriend others on account of what they earn. (Aziz 2010: 315)

While the synonymous terms *الظالمون*/*zālemūn*/in ST1 and *الظالمين*/*zālemīn*/ in ST2 are respectively rendered by Muhammad Ali as *unjust* and *iniquitous*, Aziz has consistently chosen *wrongdoers* in all cases. Aziz has also been more considerate of the TT grammatical rules in terms of verb-tenses—*do*, *make*, and *earn* are all simple present.

#### 12. Condensing the footnotes and even removing them in some cases:

ST	وَوَضَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُّوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ {البقرة/57}
TT	And We made the clouds to give shade over you* and We sent to you manna and quails*: Eat of the good things that We have given you; and they did not do Us any harm, but they made their own souls suffer the loss. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 33)
RTT	And We made the clouds to give shade over you and We sent to you manna and quails. Eat of the good things that We have given you. And they did Us no harm, but they wronged their own souls. (Aziz 2010: 13–14)

Asterisks are added to the above TT by the researcher to show where Muhammad Ali has marked for providing footnotes. As can be seen, both footnotes have been removed in the edited version. Other changes include replacing a full stop by a colon/semicolon; simplifying the expression *they did not do Us any harm as they did Us no harm*; and abridging the expression *they made [...] suffer the loss by they wronged*.

#### 13. Substituting longer expressions with shorter ones:

ST	وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَا عَشَرَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرِبَهُمْ كُلُّوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِن رِّزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ {البقرة/60}
TT	And when Moses prayed for water for his people, We said: Seek with <i>your staff</i> a way into the mountain. So there flowed from it twelve springs; each tribe knew its drinking-place: Eat and drink of the provisions of Allah, and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 34)

RTT	And when Moses prayed for water for his people, We said: March on to the rock with <i>your</i> staff. So twelve springs flowed from it. Each tribe knew their drinking-place. Eat and drink of the provisions of Allah, and do not act corruptly, making mischief in the land. (Aziz 2010: 14)
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Longer and more complex expressions in the original translation are substituted with simpler and more succinct constructions. For instance, *Seek with your staff a way into the mountain* and *So there flowed from it twelve springs* are revised as *March on to the rock with your staff* and *So twelve springs flowed from it*, respectively. The original is structurally closer to the ST. Furthermore, consider the sentence *وَلَا تَعْتَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ* /*wa lā tathū felarṣ mofsedīn*/ which is literally rendered by Muhammad Ali as *and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief*. It is then revised by Aziz and has become more adapted to the target language grammatical rules: *do not act corruptly, making mischief in the land*.

#### 14. Capitalizing religious-bound terms:

ST	كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أَجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحِرَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ {آل عمران/185}
TT	Every soul shall taste of death, and you shall only be paid fully your reward on the resurrection day; then whoever is removed far away from the fire and is made to enter the garden, he indeed has attained the object; and the life of this world is nothing but a provision of vanities. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 192)
RTT	Every soul must taste of death. And you will be paid your reward fully only on the day of Resurrection. Then whoever is removed far from the Fire and is made to enter the Garden, he indeed attains the object. And the life of this world is nothing but a provision of vanities. (Aziz 2010: 101)

The two religious-bound terms *الْقِيَامَةِ* /*alqiāmat*/ ('Resurrection') and *النَّار* /*alnār*/ ('Fire'/'Hell'), *الْجَنَّة* /*aljannat*/ ('Garden'/'Paradise') are capitalized in the revised edition. Moreover, the verse is divided into three separate sentences by Aziz and is made more target-reader friendly. The less frequently used *shall* is also replaced by *must* and *will*.

#### 15. Replacing specialized terms with more general ones:

ST	وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظَلَّمُونَ نَقِيرًا {النساء/124}
TT	And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and he (or she) is a believer—these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 235)
RTT	And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and is a believer—these will enter the Garden, and they will not be dealt with unjustly in the least. (Aziz 2010: 129)

The phrase *a jot* is replaced by *in the least*, which is more general and understandable for the TT readers. In this case, neutralization of specialized terms is a target-oriented behavior on the part of the editor. Other changes include the capitalization of the religious-bound term *Garden*, the removal of the redundant *he (or she)*, and the replacement of the less frequently used modal *shall* with *will*.

## 16. Removing brackets:

ST	وَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ {البقرة/203}
TT	And laud Allah during the numbered days; then whoever hastens off in two days, there is no blame on him, and whoever remains behind, there is no blame on him, (this is) for him who guards (against evil), and be careful (of your duty) to Allah, and know that you shall be gathered together to Him. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 93)
RTT	And remember Allah during the appointed days. Then whoever hastens off in two days, it is no sin for him; and whoever stays behind, it is no sin for him, for one who keeps his duty. And keep your duty to Allah, and know that you will be gathered together to Him. (Aziz 2010: 47)

As can be seen, Aziz has removed brackets in his edited version. Since numerous uses of brackets can distract the attention of the target readers, such elimination can be thought of as an action towards making the text more target-oriented by the editor. Moreover, while Muhammad Ali has selected the less accurate equivalents *laud*, *numbered*, and *sin* for *أَذْكُرُوا* /*edhkorū*/, *مَّعْدُودَاتٍ* /*ma'dūdāt*/, and *إِثْمَ* /*ithm*/, respectively, Aziz has replaced them with the more precise and most common equivalents *remember*, *appointed*, and *sin*, respectively. Furthermore, in translating this verse, Muhammad Ali has selected the equivalent *remain*; however, he has inconsistently opted for *stay*, or even the less familiar word *tarry*, in other cases. Other instances of (in)consistencies can be seen in the following example.

## 17. Observing consistency in equivalent-choice:

ST	فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنْ اعْتَرَفَ بِغُرْفَةٍ يَدْرِيهِ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا اللَّهِ كَمْ مِنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ {البقرة/249}
TT	So when Saul departed with the forces, he said: Surely Allah will try you with a river; whoever then drinks from it, he is not of me, and whoever does not taste of it, he is surely of me, except he who takes with his hand as much of it as fills the hand, but with the exception of a few of them they drank from it. So when he had crossed it, he and those who believed with him, they said: We have to-day no power against Goliath and his forces. Those who were sure that they would meet their Lord said: How often has a small party overcome a numerous host by Allah's permission, and Allah is with the patient. (Muhammad Ali 1917: 116–17)
RTT	So when Saul set out with the forces, he said: Surely Allah will try you with a river. Whoever drinks from it, he is not of me, and whoever does not taste it, he is surely of me, except he who takes a handful with his hand. But they drank of it except a few of them. So when he had crossed it, he and those who believed with him, they said: We have today no power against Goliath and his forces. Those who were sure that they would meet their Lord said: How often has a small group overcome a numerous army by Allah's permission! And Allah is with the steadfast. (Aziz 2010: 60)

Although Muhammad Ali (1917) has used the less common equivalent *host*, he has selected the more familiar equivalents such as *force*, and *army* in other cases. In general, as far as equivalent choice is concerned, he was found to be more inconsistent than his editor. Other changes include:

- Removal of some words: for instance, *then* in *whoever then drinks*, or *of* in *taste of it*. It should be remembered that Muhammad Ali's translation is close to the source-text since the word *then*, considered presumably unnecessary by the editor and consequently removed by him, is the equivalent for *ف*/*fa*/ appeared at the beginning of the expression *فَمَنْ شَرِبَ*/*fa man sharaba*/ (i.e. *then whoever drinks*).
- Replacement of formal words with more everyday ones: *departed/set out*.
- Breaking longer sentences into shorter ones: The original translation is made of three sentences, while the edited version includes six sentences.
- Substitution of longer complex constructions with simpler ones: For instance, *who takes with his hand as much of it as fills the hand* and *with the exception of a few of them they drank from it* are replaced respectively by *who takes a handful with his hand*, and *they drank of it except a few of them*.

## 5. Concluding remarks

As regards the Holy Qur'an as the sacred literary text, the editor has strived to "bring the language closer to the general readership" (Aziz 2010:1–2), presumably because he has considered that, compared to the 20<sup>th</sup>-century readership, 21<sup>st</sup>-century readers are less familiar with archaic terms and traditional literary style.

Altogether, as the changes applied by the editor revealed, the revised version of the Holy Qur'an was detected to have the following features:

- Replacing the less familiar equivalents with more familiar ones;
- Replacing more traditional (or formal) expressions by modern (everyday) words;
- Replacing *thou/thee* and *thy* by *you* and *your*, respectively;
- Modernizing old-fashioned constructions, words and antiquated endings to English verbs
- Replacing literary constructions with everyday ones;
- Simplifying complex constructions;
- Avoiding prolixity and observing brevity;
- Removing redundant expressions;
- Observing TL grammatical rules more meticulously;
- Manipulating footnotes: condensing or totally removing them;
- Manipulating brackets: reducing the number of them or totally removing them;
- Generalizing or neutralizing some specialized (or incomprehensible) equivalents;
- Observing consistency in equivalent choice;
- Capitalizing religious-bound terms referring to God, Paradise, Hell, the Hereafter, etc.

The aforementioned features of the revised edition of the sacred text can lead to the suggestion or pre-formulation of a new hypothesis, namely the RH. This is a tentative hypothesis which needs to be tested by other researchers working on other text-types and/or other language pairs. Concerning the religious texts, the major principle of the RH is that the translation of a sacred text is less target-oriented than its edited version. Therefore, the main principle of the RH stands in stark contrast to that of the retranslation hypothesis.

Attempting to update the translation of a religious book, a reviser, like Aziz, embarks on a nuanced process of modernization, simplification, streamlining, etc. This approach can be interpreted through various theoretical lenses, including Skopos theory and relevance theory, each shedding light on different dimensions of the reviser's work.

Skopos theory, which prioritizes the purpose of a revision or translation, helps explain the rationale behind Aziz's decisions. His focus on modernization and clarity indicates a goal aimed at enhancing the text's relevance for contemporary readership. By making the text accessible and understandable to a modern audience, Aziz ensures that the translation remains a source for guidance in faith, worship, and moral conduct. This emphasis on accessibility, inclusivity, and coherence aligns the translation closely with its intended purpose.

Relevance theory, on the other hand, posits that communication is most effective when it maximizes relevance for the audience (Gutt 2010). When applied to a religious text, this theory suggests that the reader's ability to understand, internalize, and practice the teachings is fundamentally shaped by the text's readability and comprehensibility. Aziz's efforts to simplify and modernize the translation make it more accessible, thereby facilitating deeper engagement with its message.

When it comes to the aims of modernization and simplification, it is important to note that updating the language and making the text easier to understand enhances the text's appeal to contemporary readers. These revisions help ensure that the sacred text resonates with a broader audience, even those who might find archaic language, outdated terminology, intricate theological concepts or overly complex expressions challenging.

Through this simplification, the reviser prioritizes clarity for the target audience, consciously avoiding convoluted language and superfluous details that could hinder understanding. This approach is in line with a Skopos that seeks to make the text accessible and engaging, particularly for those who may lack extensive background knowledge of the original text. By prioritizing an inclusive, clear translation, Aziz has seemingly attempted to ensure that the Holy Qur'an fulfills its role as a meaningful and relevant guide for diverse readers.

Aziz likely recognized that the purpose, or Skopos, of the Holy Qur'an might involve reaching a broad and diverse audience, necessitating a clear, straightforward language and a clear style. In fact, by applying Skopos theory, we can examine various crucial factors when analyzing the work of a reviser who modernizes a translation. In this case, Aziz's choice to modernize the language appears purpose-driven. This could entail enhancing accessibility and relevance for modern readers, incorporating contemporary language norms, or adapting to cultural shifts that have occurred since the original translation. The main goal of the revised translation would be to convey the original message in a way that connects with modern readers, preserves the ST's impact, and allows it to continue serving its role as a source of inspiration and guidance.

Indeed, modernization may target a particular audience demographic necessitating adjustments in language, style, and references to engage effectively. While the original translation by Muhammad Ali probably aimed at a scholarly audience, Aziz's revised version is likely targeted towards a broader, more inclusive readership. The language has been

simplified by Aziz to better meet the expectations and comprehension levels of the new target audience. The reviser's role when creating a modernized translation can be to ensure that the text fulfills its intended purpose in a contemporary setting, possibly as an educational resource. This could lead to alterations that put the reader's experience ahead of strict adherence to the structure or wording of the ST. Moreover, the reviser needs to take into account the cultural implications of the translation. Aziz's editing process modernizes the text by removing archaic terminology and outdated structures that could alienate contemporary readers, thus ensuring cultural relevance and sensitivity.

Even though Skopos theory accepts that translations can deviate from the original text, the reviser still has the responsibility to maintain the original's intent and message. In this study, Aziz's revision is a well-executed modernization since it strikes a balance between the need for contemporary language and style with fidelity to the main message of the Holy Qur'an.

According to the present study, Aziz most likely sought to produce a revision (or possibly, a new translation) that could serve a specific purpose for the target audience. This required changes in language, structure, and the format of some cultural references to ensure his revised text remains effective and relevant in a contemporary setting.

Regarding the aim of shortening or eliminating footnotes, it is important to note that in religious texts, footnotes may often serve to provide commentary, historical background, or theological interpretation. Excessive footnotes, however, can interrupt the reading process. Aziz's decision to utilize shorter footnotes or remove them altogether can be seen as an effort to prevent disrupting the flow of reading. Cutting down on the length or quantity of footnotes caters to an audience who prioritize smooth reading over scholarly intricacies. This implies that Aziz's objectives in the present study align with a purpose that values promoting engagement and comprehension rather than focusing on exhaustive detailed information. Additionally, Aziz's revisions might reflect a thoughtful consideration of the target audience's demands and expectations. Aziz most likely intended to reach a wider or less specialized readership; therefore, simplification and minimal footnoting has seemingly turned to be his strategic choices to ensure that his revision fulfills the intended goal. Aziz has also attempted to address cultural factors—recognizing that the target audience might lean towards succinctness and directness over lengthy explanations typical in more scholarly or intricate translations.

In brief, from the perspective of Skopos theory, Aziz's strategy of simplifying the translation and modifying the use of footnotes serves a specific purpose aimed at improving clarity, enhancing accessibility, and engagement for the intended readership. His decisions reflect how the revision process is closely linked to the function of the text, illustrating how translation and revision are intrinsically tied to their intended function and audiences.

When it comes to avoiding prolixity, it is important to keep in mind that reducing unnecessary complexity goes hand in hand with the core idea of relevance, since overly complicated language can distract from the main points and diminish reader interest. In the context of the Holy Qur'an, as a religious text, clarity is crucial for conveying sacred meaning and enhancing spiritual connection.

In the field of translation studies, discussions of equivalence often revolve around the extent to which a TT mirrors the ST's intended meaning and impact within the TL. Regarding consistency in equivalents, it is important to note that eliminating discrepancies in choosing equivalents contributes to a coherent and unified reading experience. When dealing with sacred texts, like the Holy Qur'an, consistency in equivalent choice is crucial for upholding theological integrity among varied readerships.

When it comes to capitalization of religious terms, it is important to recognize that capitalizing religious-specific terms or even common names hinting at such terms (e.g. *Garden*, *Fire*, etc.) often highlights their importance and distinction, reinforcing their significance in religious practice and theology. This choice enables readers to easily understand the religious significance of the text while navigating through it.

As far as gender neutrality is concerned, choosing to use non-gendered language is in line with contemporary understandings of accessibility and inclusivity in religious discourse. Additionally, this cultural sensitivity shows awareness of the evolving attitudes towards gender roles and portrayal of people in sacred texts. By using gender-neutral language, the reviser makes the text more inclusive, allowing a wider audience to feel represented and engaged with the scriptures. Aziz, as the reviser of this sacred text, has broadened the text's audience by avoiding gender-specific terms, making the revised text more inclusive and engaging for everyone.

In conclusion, Aziz's role as the reviser of Muhammad Ali's translation involves modernizing, simplifying, avoiding prolixity or eliminating verbosity to enhance the text's relevance and readability for contemporary readers. By drawing on ideas from relevance theory, functionalist approaches, and Skopos theory, we can appreciate the multifaceted objectives of such revisions in making religious texts resonate with contemporary readers while preserving doctrinal integrity. The Holy Qur'an aims at educating all people about Islamic principles and providing guidance to anyone, anywhere, at any time. Aziz has made an effort to make timeless spiritual truths accessible to contemporary readers, enabling them to understand and apply in their daily lives.

It may be stated that the researcher cannot assertively posit a hypothesis for revisions of sacred texts simply by investigating one single case study; however, this effort of the researcher is optimistically expected not to be taken into account as an unforgivable sin to suggest just a tentative RH to be validated by prospective researchers. Future researchers are encouraged to study more texts and more translations and their post editions to obtain more conclusive results. In fact, this RH is not formulated in absolute terms. The validity of its principles needs to be tested by other researchers by initially focusing on specific genres (i.e. religious texts, children's literature, etc.). Future studies can also deal with translations and revisions of the same text into languages other than English.

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