

# Revisiting Domestication and Foreignisation Methods: Translating the Quran by the Hybrid Approach

Aladdin Al-Tarawneh

**Abstract**—The Quran, as it is the sacred book of Islam and considered the literal word of God (Allah) in Arabic, is highly translated into many languages; however, the foreignising or the literal approach excessively stains the quality and discredits the final product in the eyes of its receptors. Such an approach fails to capture the intended meaning of the Quran and to communicate it in any language. Therefore, this study is conducted to propose a different approach that seeks involving other ones according to a hybrid model. Indeed, this study challenges the binary adherence that is highly used in Translation Studies (TS) in general and in the translation of the Quran in particular. Drawing on the genuine fact that the Quran can be communicated in any language in terms of meaning, and the translation is not sacred; this paper approaches the translation of the Quran by blending different methods like domestication or foreignisation in a systematic way, avoiding the binary choice made by many translators. To reach this aim, the paper has a conceptual part that seeks to elucidate and clarify the main methods employed in TS, and criticise and modify them to propose the new hybrid approach (the hybrid model) for translating the Quran – that is, the deductive method. To support and validate the outcome of the previous part, a comparative model is employed in order to highlight the differences between the suggested translation and other widely used ones – that is, the inductive method. By applying this methodology, the paper proves that there is a deficiency of communicating the original meaning of the Quran in light of the foreignising approach. In conclusion, the paper suggests producing a Quran translation has to take into account the adoption of many techniques to express the meaning of the Quran as understood in the original, and to offer this understanding in English in the most native-like manner to serve the intended target readers.

**Keywords**—Quran translation, hybrid approach, domestication, foreignisation, hybrid model.

## I. INTRODUCTION

TRANSLATION mechanism is a living phenomenon evolving over the time due to a gamut of new genuine propositions contributing to the theory and the practise. Indeed, the more translators being involved in the process of translation, the more the theory and practise are polished and enhanced. Such improvement and advancement are healthy indicators to the discipline of TS because this would facilitate the introduction of up-to-date tools being concomitant with the emerging needs of a specific era. That said, it is natural to notice that some theories used to be considered fundamental at

one point of a time to be abolished and replaced by recent ones addressing the needs of the time. This is highly stressed in the context of Quran translation because many Quran translations do not serve the objective of communicating the meaning of the book in other languages. Unfortunately, many Quran translations produced all over the world by Muslims themselves do not promote due recognition and understanding of the image of Islam to the fullest possible extent because most translators are haunted by the belief that the Quran is the literal word of God (Allah) in Arabic. This belief is a serious obstacle which prevents many translators from going beyond the traditional foreignising approach while dealing with the Quranic genre [2, p. 22]; although it is acknowledged that the Quran is only sacred when it is written in Arabic, so that no translation is deemed to be sacred. Adhering to the formal or literal translation (foreignising translation), which is the frequent result of excessive translator reverence for the original, produces a largely unintelligible target text (TT) because the poetic and figurative elements of the source text (ST) often cannot be adequately retained or reproduced in the target language (TL). Such a traditional practice – especially if followed by Muslims – leads to discrediting Islam and its teachings in the eyes of a wider target readership. Misrepresentations of this kind could have a serious impact because incorrect information about Islam is not just spread by ignorant or hostile mass media, but is perpetuated by translations of the Quran per se (especially if they are viewed as reliable sources of knowledge, commissioned by Muslims themselves). However, before tackling any discussion about Quran translation, it is important to come to terms with the definition of translation and the function Quran translation is supposed to exercise. The concept of translation has not yet been reached and its definition remains inconclusive among translation scholars [20, p. 74]. The importance of the definition lies in the fact that any discussion about translation usually emerges from the basic notion of translation as the core substance. Indeed, the more the definition and the function of translation vary, the more the technique and approaches alter accordingly. Therefore, it is recommended from the very beginning to introduce what translation is from this paper's perspective to justify and criticise the current trends adopted in Quran translation. Strictly speaking, revisiting the current translation approaches constructively is meant to better the process of Quran translation practices, and it is much better to provide a suggested solution rather than just delivering criticism because there is nothing perfect, and

Aladdin Al-Tarawneh is with the Zarqa University, Jordan (e-mail: aaltarawneh@zu.edu.jo).

This research is funded by the deanship of scientific research at Zarqa University/Jordan.

every proposal is prone to flaws. To pave the way for our discussion, some light is thrown on Skopos theory that was firstly proposed by Hans J. Vermeer in the late 1970s. Skopos is originally a Greek word that means aim or purpose, and it is technically used as a term in translation to denote the aim or the purpose during any translation commission [24, p. 198]. Through Skopos, the process and quality of any translation is determined and judged in the TL based on the function or aim assigned to it whether being fulfilled or not. In this attempt, Quran translation is seen as a means of facilitating its meaning in Arabic into many languages, and any translation is not sacred and has no authority. Therefore, Quran translation aims at delivering its meaning into the TT as it is originated and understood in the ST; moreover, such representation has to be delivered in the TL in a native-like manner, meaning that the final product is provided according to the linguistic norms and style observed in the TL. Translation, as a consequence, is just an aim-based representation of the content of the original text in a completely different form. In fact, Skopos theory does not propose a mechanism by which an aim is served in the TL; this mechanism is left to the translator who is the expert in this domain. Vermeer on this issue clearly states:

What the Skopos states is that one must translate, consciously and consistently, in accordance with some principle respecting the target text. The theory does not state what the principle is: this must be decided separately in each specific case [24, p. 198].

The importance of reflecting on Skopos hereby lies in the fact that it enables the translator to identify the methodology adopted through which a translation is directed in terms of the choices the translator has to make to attain the ultimate aim. Thereupon, the attempt here is to provide a different view in regards to the translation practice that maintains the intelligibility of the original text and its uniqueness, and, at the same time, supply such uniqueness in the norms observed in the TL to be imbibed smoothly to establish better understanding rather than distracting the reader with the analysis of the linguistic features being imported from the ST, then to absorb the content. Strictly speaking, translation is not dealt with as an exact imitation of the original; it is indeed a medium of communication. If translation is seen as an imitation, then not everything is translatable, whereas the latter view implies that everything is communicable. Translation consequently should be gauged by the mutual affect established between the two texts because full reproduction of the ST in all its effects existed cannot be fully attained. Therefore, the quality of the translation is examined and the techniques are investigated to justify the final product. All told, translation is supposed to be defined as an activity through which a communicative message, being encapsulated in its original linguistic environment according to some ad hoc norms, is rendered into another language in a way the same foregoing communicative message functions in the TL as in the original but without a perfect imitation. In other words, translation is a rewriting of one language into another to establish the close communicative intention, unless, otherwise, it is indicated to serve a diverged objective.

## II. DOMESTICATION AND FOREIGNISATION

In TS, there have been many terms used to refer to translation practices that have been developed down the ages – and from which the proposed approach is evolved. Throughout the history of translation practice, many polar opposites have been suggested. Cicero (46 BC) distinguishes an orator (free translator) from an interpreter (literal translator); Saint Jerome (4<sup>th</sup> century AD) advocates sense-for-sense translation rather than word-for-word translation; Schleiermacher (1813) describes the well-known dichotomy – although not terminologically labelled – of “either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him” (Schleiermacher, 1977, p. 74). Other notable models include Walter Benjamin’s (1923) harmonising and literal translation, Ezra Pound’s (1929) domesticating and archaising translation, Jiri Levy’s (1963) illusionary and anti-illusionary translation, Eugene A. Nida’s (1964) dynamic and formal equivalence, John Catford’s (1965) textual equivalence and formal correspondence, Ernst-August Gutt’s (1991) indirect and direct translation, and last and most recent, Lawrence Venuti’s (1995) domestication and foreignisation [3, p.11]. In short, there are two main options when producing a translation: to be TT/reader-oriented or ST/author-oriented.

Domestication is a term proposed by Venuti whose root traces back to Schleiermacher’s description of the translation that leaves the author in peace and moves the reader towards him. According to Venuti, domestication, as a translation strategy, is the transparent and fluent style that is used to minimise the strangeness of the SL foreign text for the TL readers [21, p. 44]. Building on the notion of minimisation of the strangeness, the Quranic linguistic and cultural elements in Arabic are supposed to be brought down to the norms of the TL to pursue intelligibility and elegance of reception regardless of what they really are in the ST. Indeed, the target reader of such domesticated text would think that the text is originally composed in the TL in terms of the smooth language and the cultural connotations embedded. In this regard, Nida, considered the main proponent of such techniques, introduced the dynamic equivalence which is target-oriented aiming at establishing naturalness of the receptor’s response – “that is, the way he would say it”; in other words, it is “the closest natural equivalent to the source language message” [16, p. 166]. Strictly speaking, what Nida tries to do is “to relate the receptor to modes of behaviour relevant within the context of his own culture” [16, p. 159]. As far as the foreignisation is concerned, it is the second term proposed by Venuti that also traces its root to Schleiermacher who described it as moving the author towards the reader in the TL; in other words, it “is used to designate the type of translation in which a target text is produced which deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original” [21, p. 44]. Venuti is considered the recent scholar who supports that kind of translation technique that “is an ethno deviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of

the foreign text, sending the reader abroad” [25, p. 15]. That said, translation is seen as a transcript of the style and manner of writing of the original text in the TL, and of the foreign ideas and cultural connotations distinguishing the original text – it resists the influence of the TL’s cultural values and pinpoints the linguistic and cultural differences. In truth, what Venuti advocates is highly appreciated, taking into consideration that the communication between different language speakers is what translation seeks to maintain, especially in the translation of the Quran. The exchange of information is not attainable as long as the ST is adapted to the established knowledge of the reader in the TL in terms of the language and the culture. Therefore, there must be a kind of interception of the fluency technique to give rise to the accuracy one in a way a translation mirrors the distinctive cultural and linguistic features of the original to give the chance to TL readers to have an idea about the ‘other’. Put another way, if any translation attempt aims at fluency or smooth readability, then there will be no added knowledge and value received by the target culture, because it is “more than that just using home-brewed variants and deleting unfamiliar references to the source culture; it also means not being challenging or provocative, not renewing the literary tradition” [14, p. 15].

At face value, both of domestication and foreignisation are beneficial and practicable in the way that they justify each other for good reasons as to establish fluency and readability or to open a window to explore the foreign culture being translated. However, a careful investigation would highlight that both of them are not wholly unproblematic. Regarding the domestication approach, the objective of establishing a fluent target text plays a dominant role in shaping the expectation of any foreign literature translated into English based on the receptor’s expectations – an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values [25, p. 15]. Such fluency and equivalent response are exercised on both of the linguistic and cultural levels in which “the translator must be a person who can draw aside the curtains of linguistic and cultural differences so that people may see clearly the relevance of the original message” [17, p. 14]. That said, any attempt to create a natural response is considered an act of domestication of lexicon, grammar, and cultural references. In point of fact, the idea of ‘natural response’ would create some pressure on the translated text in a way, restricting the linguistic and cultural cases to be adapted and reshaped according to the context of the target recipient, banning the expected result of creating a reading characterised as “deviating enough from native norms to stage an alien reading experience” [25, p.16]. Put differently, the major contention is the fact that domesticating translation, as means of communication, fails to exchange the knowledge between the SL and the TL provided it only aims to overcome the linguistic and cultural differences by way of adapting them according to the TL norms – that is, a less exchange of information because of the appropriation of a foreign text for domestic purposes. Such a criticism is indeed a well-grounded one because translation is “a more complex negotiation

between two cultures” [23, p. 280]. To illustrate, Nida claims that J.B. Phillips “quite naturally” translated “greet one another with a holy kiss” in Romans 16:16, as “give one another a hearty handshake all around” [16, p. 159]. The strategy at work here is one of embedding the meaning of the original within a set of parallel meanings in the TL culture whether that meaning is of linguistic or cultural nature. The translator, according to this approach, is given more influence to exercise as being, relatively speaking, co-authors more than being mediators; indeed, they are interpreting and judging the text based on their understanding rather than what the texts exactly demonstrate. To illustrate, the example drawn before represents a negative engagement by the translator in which holy kiss is not used figuratively, inasmuch as it is a practice used to be at that time in a culture completely different from the target audience’s culture who received holy kiss as just a translation. As a matter of fact, the holy kiss is still practiced as a ceremonial gesture used as a sign of love and union in some Christian churches during the celebration of the Eucharist – it is usually known by another name as the kiss of peace [15, p. 15]. So, who gave the authority to the translator to intervene and to give such misleading interpretation in excuse of naturalising or domesticating the text? And the question will be about the basis that drove the translator to offer such rendering that is completely reduced to a linguistic level omitting its substance compared with the original, let alone the negligence of the sense of ‘otherness’. Such translation is seen inferior because the practical and religious side expressed by this phrase in the original text was excluded, simply, because it does not cope with the target audience culture and knowledge. Indeed, this is an ethical issue with which any translator should be acquainted. When it is always stated and propagated that translation is bridging the gap between cultures and at the same time we employ domesticating translation that tames the ST linguistically and culturally to fit the TL norms, then the distinctive non-linguistic elements of the ST are erased and the sense of otherness is lost, and, resultantly, the translation fails to accomplish its aim. Put another way, the intellectual trade between different nations cannot be established unless the product has a genuine substance to be considered, otherwise the dialogue between two cultures is reduced to be a monologue repeating itself and resonating the same content. In this context, Åsman & Pedersen, in their attempt studying the Swedish children’s novel Bert Dagbok, translated into English, point out that “anyone reading it with the hope of learning more about the SC, i.e. Sweden, is likely to be disappointed... In other words, as much as the ST is a novel about the everyday life of a Swedish boy, the TT is a novel about the everyday life of an American boy” [3, p. 153].

In the same vein, foreignisation is criticised for being partially radical in translating a ST culturally and, specifically, linguistically in the TL. Indeed, to consider translators as the parties responsible for establishing multicultural understanding, introducing the “other” to the host culture, and bringing difference to the TT both culturally and linguistically is, strictly speaking, not fully plausible. This is due to the fact

that foreignising the language of the original text – not the cultural elements – in the process of translation does not help introduce the “other” and the exotic content located in the original text. The language is what is used to express the specificity of the original culture but it is not the language itself that is of drastic concern in the activity of translation. Simply put, both the West and subcontinent India are culturally completely remote, yet they use officially English. Thereupon, a piece of literature written in a perfect Indian English will not be, relatively speaking, different from British or American English, yet it is still exotic in terms of its content because the language has not done anything but to express the context and the culture of the work. That said, the foreignisation approach between two different languages and cultures should be applied to highlight the cultural uniqueness of the text, not the language itself. Furthermore, the claim that foreignising translation imposes hegemony on the ST when translated into the TL is not quite applicable in all cases. In fact, applying the foreignising translation on a minority language translated into a major language like English is plausible and recommended; however, if the same scenario is reversed, would it be of the same effect? In plain English, “advocacy of non-fluent, refractory, eroticising strategies, for example, can be seen as a bold act of cultural revolt and epistemological generosity in a major language, but for a minority language, fluent strategies may represent the progressive key to their very survival” [6, p. 251]. This is the question of the directionality of the foreignising approach in terms of major and minor languages. This is indeed what occurs to minor languages when they are at the receiving end, being instilled with foreign imports – that is, the linguistic ones – leading to transform the host language by the passage of time. In fact, foreignisation can be claimed to be a tool affecting negatively the host language because it acts like a colonising tool exercising its damage on the linguistic level, targeting the language to defuse the attachment of people from their native culture and increase their hospitality to the coloniser’s culture. Put differently, this is the incarnation of the intellectual colonisation whose aim is to erase indigenous significations of the host language, and then to replace its identity [5, p. 128] – meaning, the foreignising translation can be used as a colonial tool when it is applied on minority languages to impose hegemonic representations of the colonised. Put according to Ghandhi’s words: “I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any” [22, p. 22]. Having established that, it cannot be claimed that either or neither of the domesticating and foreignising approaches are fully recommended. The domestication translation produces a TT with a smooth language and fluency, yet it naturalises the text in a way depicting it as it is already written in the receptive language rather than being translated – the TT is distorted because the cultural elements embedded in the ST are reduced and normalised according to the target culture. The foreignising translation, in turn, overcomes the disadvantage of the

domesticating translation that erases the cultural traces of the original text and projects suchlike elements as they are, because the readers in the TL may not have the experience of the world that makes such elements comprehensible to them. However, the issue of importing the stylistic and linguistic features of the ST into the TL does not make sense because, generally speaking, no one would read a translated work unless s/he does not know the language of the ST; therefore, imitating the style of the SL in the TL is preposterous and not justifiable.

To conclude, domestication and foreignisation are the recent binary trends being tackled in the translation activity in general and in the Quran in particular, it might be stated that TS are, to some extent, stained by such dichotomous views of the approaches espoused. Such binary decisions impose an exclusive impression of the adherence to one approach and neglect others throughout the whole commission. Such application may create some shortcomings reflected on the end product of Quran translation as it is highly foreignised and resultantly affecting the audience at the receiving end of this activity. The quest for finding out methodologies to conduct any translation is concomitant with the practise itself that has its impact on the process. In other words, translation is not a science that implies  $1 + 1 = 2$ , and, out of that, calcification and polarity of the translation views during the practise of translation should be avoided; strictly speaking, it is recommended not to be fixed and to merge different views in the application of such theories. This is indeed what enriches the field of translation, opens new horizons, and improves the reception and quality of Quran translation.

### III. HYBRIDISATION

Proposing hybridising translation seeks to establish an intermediary approach to handle the practise of translation in a way the translator is not required to be exclusively source-oriented or target-oriented as in the binaries mentioned before. The translator has to be efficient in delivering his/her final product in the TL because the reader is not concerned with the techniques or approaches used, but it is the content delivered to him/her in a form void of any peculiarities imported from ST, that is, the linguistic ones. In other words, the translator is a chef preparing an exotic dish; s/he gets the recipe and the ingredients, cooks them, dresses the dish, and then serves it to the customers. The customer – being already aware that it is a foreign dish – is supposed to enjoy the meal more than being concerned with how it is cooked. The TL audience reading something translated from a foreign culture expects to encounter something new as opening a new horizon and window through which the foreign culture is introduced and envisioned. Therefore, the sense of foreignness has to be maintained; moreover, such foreignness has to be delivered in a smooth language, that is, normalising the language to ease the access to the foreign content of the ST. Put succinctly, the suggested approach seeks to naturalise the language by creating a native-like reading devoid of the marked linguistic imports of the ST, and to highlight what is already foreign and distinctive in the ST to the TL like values, concepts, beliefs,

etc. In the case of Quranic translation, relying primarily on one approach while neglecting the other does not help communicate the message of the Quran clearly. This is because the language of the Quran was spoken in a community whose environment, culture, and language system were often completely different from those of the TL. This contextual dissimilarity impacts the process of communication on many levels, including, but not limited to, the choice of vocabulary, proverbs, metaphors, and idioms – to say nothing of the practices and traditions inherent in such a different culture. Given the limited correspondence between SL and TL, a foreignising or domesticating approach is not entirely appropriate. That said, it is legitimate to pose the following queries: when does the translator decide to be source- or target-oriented, and how is the decision made when it comes to specifying what to normalise – the language of the ST in the TT – and what to alienate – retaining the foreign distinctive elements of the ST in the TT? Indeed, the application of hybridisation is not done arbitrarily in a way there should be parameters that governs the decision making by ad hoc criteria that specify the ‘when’ and ‘how.’

Within the hybridising approach, there are different techniques to be used in light of the type of communicative message encountered in terms of what is ‘stated’ and what is ‘meant’ between the SL and the TL. To shed more light on how to determine the type of the communicative message and the technique to be applied accordingly, the translator asks the following question: to what extent is the match established between the SL and the TL in terms of what is ‘stated’ and what is ‘meant?’ Indeed, the match suggested here is the one between two languages in terms of the wording and meaning, form and content, form and substance, or surface structure and deep structure; in other words, it is all about the match between what is stated and what is meant. By way of explication, there are two types of meaning being dealt with in this paper: the first is the linguistic meaning resulting from the language itself, and the meaning that is culturally embedded and cannot be penetrated by relying only on linguistic rendering between different languages – that is, culture-specific reference coating or giving shades to the words. As far as the linguistic meaning is concerned, it falls into two types: the figurative sense produced by figurative language like metaphors, idioms, catchphrases, etc., whose meaning is not established by the words used to express that meaning – that is, what is literally ‘meant’ is not expressed by what is literally ‘stated’; and the plain or literal sense that is established by the plain language – what is ‘meant’ is expressed by what is ‘stated.’ Regarding the culturally embedded meaning, it falls into two types as well: the first is the one that exists between different languages as a concept or idea; however, the way how this concept or idea perceived by the native speakers of various languages differ – that is, false cognates between languages or ‘false friends’ [16, p. 160]; in other words, what is ‘stated’ is the same – as a dictionary match – but what is ‘meant’ is not. The second type is the type of meaning that does not exist in any language and it is considered unique to the SL in both form and content – the

intended message by what is ‘stated’ and ‘meant’ does not have any counterpart in any language. The translator has to be aware of suchlike instances when rendering the words of the SL into any language. Thereupon, there are some suggested techniques to handle such instances based on analysing a certain message in light of what is ‘stated’ and what is ‘meant.’ To illustrate, the following table explains the nature of the message and the corresponding technique to be applied.

TABLE I  
 DECISION MAKING, STATED-MEANT-BASED TEST

|   | SL Message |       | TL Message |       | Technique                 |
|---|------------|-------|------------|-------|---------------------------|
|   | Stated     | Meant | Stated     | Meant |                           |
| 1 | +          | +     | +          | +     | Normalisation             |
| 2 | -          | +     | -          | +     | Figurative substitution   |
| 3 | +          | -     | +          | -     | Glossing                  |
| 4 | -          | -     | -          | -     | Annotated transliteration |

For the first instance, when a message in the SL and the TL has the similar function in terms of what is ‘meant’ and what is ‘stated’, then the ‘normalisation’ is used. The normalisation approach is supposed to naturalise the SL when translated into any language to be read smoothly according to the linguistic norms of the TL. It works by breaking down the linguistic elements of the ST that are responsible for conveying the meaning and then process, and accommodate these components according to the norms of the TL, that is, words, by restructuring them. In fact, this the dominant technique that is given the priority all the time during the application of the hybridising approach, unless, otherwise, there is a deviation in terms of what is ‘stated’ and ‘meant’ between the SL and the TL. However, when there is an instance where some words in the SL have equivalent superficial counterparts (stated) in the TL, that is, dictionary meanings, but what is meant is not mutually the same like the case of idioms – then the figurative substitution is activated. The application of such technique seeks to establish the closest function of the original message without the need to adhere to the wording used. It is all about finding the mutual understood meaning regardless of the words coating that meaning. Indeed, the application of this instance falls into two options: the first one is the very strict and only provisional application of Nida’s dynamic equivalence. Both the normalisation and the figurative substitution work with instances of linguistic nature as in the plain language or the figurative one. In case of the culturally embedded messages, there are also two instances and accordingly two techniques. The first of which is the case where two words seem to be reciprocal between the SL and the TL in terms of what is ‘stated’; however, the understood meaning – what is ‘meant’ – is not so for the speakers of each language. Therefore, what is ‘stated’ is kept as it is – the dictionary match – and then the glossing technique is applied by inserting a footnote to clarify the difference of meaning between the both languages. In truth, this technique “is designed to permit the reader to identify himself as fully as possible with a person in the source-language context, and to understand as much as he can of the customs, manner of thought, and means of expression” [11, p. 167]. Secondly,

when some instances are unique to the SL in a way they do not have counterparts in the TL in either form or meaning – what is ‘stated’ and ‘meant’, the technique of annotated transliteration is used. That said, a transliteration is done by mapping the sounds of a SL element into the writing system of the TL, and then a footnote is attached to clarify what that new import is. In short, the hybridising approach works as explained in the next figure in which the normalising technique is prioritised in application. The outcome resulting from the application of the latter is to be tested to see whether it is eligible to be released or to undergo more examinations as postulated in Table I, and then to be processed accordingly.

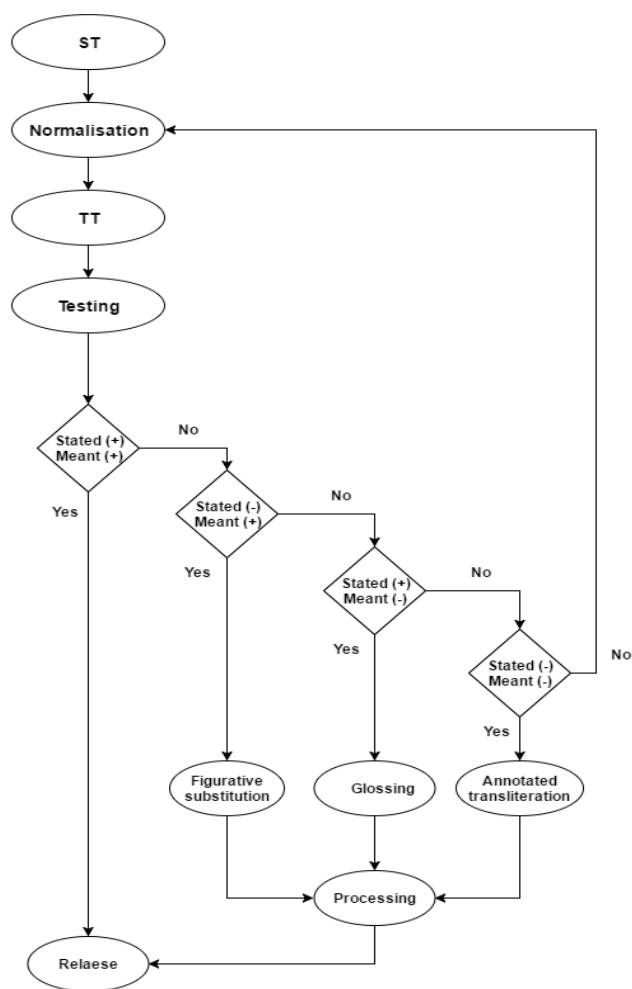


Fig. 1 Hybridisation process

#### IV. APPLICATION

Before applying the hybridising translation, it is important to highlight that it is not an easy task to select certain translations of the Quran for examination when objectivity is a critical concern in this paper. Over centuries past, numerous translations of the Quran have been undertaken. Many of those were prepared to serve particular ideological, missionary, or sectarian goals, with the techniques that were used to deliver the meaning of the Quran into English affecting the quality of the translation. Therefore, any attempt to choose a certain

translation for inclusion in the analysis and discussion is open to criticism, unless sufficient justification can be made. Bearing that in mind, an effort was made to eliminate the influence of the researcher. The choice was based on responses obtained from members of the Muslim community regarding a particular translation’s popularity and usability, and not on the researcher’s perception of the quality of the translation. Since the purpose of this paper is to suggest ways of raising the quality of Quran translations in order to improve the Quran’s reception by the target audience, it directly engages with the most commonly used in English-speaking countries. In an attempt to identify them, the question “What are the three Quran translations that are most in use in your institution?” was sent to a range of Islamic entities – mosques, Islamic centres, schools, and university Islamic studies departments – in the UK and the USA<sup>2</sup>. It is important to highlight that the question did not include options to choose from but simply encouraged the respondents to supply the titles of translations (regardless of any concern related to their quality, the popularity acquired, ideological beliefs, etc.). The reason behind this approach was to eliminate any chance of the researcher suggesting a specific translation to respondents.

In order to identify the most widely-used Quran translations, the aforementioned question was sent to 150 institutions, out of which 41 replied. Of the replies, 32 gave positive feedback and nine others refused to answer the question but did not say why. Table II and Fig. 2 present the details of the responses.

TABLE II  
 A SUMMARY OF THE ANSWERS OBTAINED FROM ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS

|                     | Frequency | Percent      | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------|
| Ali                 | 19        | 19.79        | 19.79              |
| Pickthall           | 14        | 14.58        | 34.37              |
| Abdel Haleem        | 11        | 11.45        | 45.82              |
| Khan and Hilali     | 9         | 9.37         | 55.19              |
| Muhsin Khan         | 9         | 9.37         | 64.56              |
| Sahih International | 8         | 8.33         | 72.89              |
| Shakir              | 7         | 7.29         | 80.18              |
| Arberry             | 5         | 5.2          | 85.38              |
| Wahidulddin Khan    | 5         | 5.2          | 90.58              |
| Asad                | 4         | 4.16         | 94.74              |
| Irving              | 3         | 3.12         | 97.86              |
| Hamad               | 1         | 1.04         | 98.9               |
| Cleary              | 1         | 1.04         | 100.0              |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>96</b> | <b>100.0</b> |                    |

Based on the obtained results, the three most common translations of the Quran, which shall therefore be consulted throughout the application, have been identified as:

1. Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s *The Holy Quran: Translation and Commentary*.
2. Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall’s *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*.
3. Muhammad Abdel Haleem’s *The Quran: A New Translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem*.

<sup>2</sup>The reason for choosing the UK and USA is that most Muslims in English-speaking countries are mainly located in these two countries [9, p. 120].

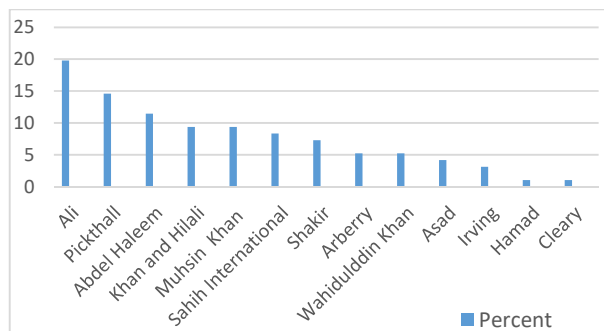


Fig. 2 The distribution of the answers obtained from Islamic institutions

To start with, the two cases concerned with the linguistic issues – the plain and the figurative language – are to be tackled by the Quranic verse (19:12).

At this stage, the translation process involves two similar messages in two different verbal codes. It must be noted, however, that there is no exact equivalence in terms of code units between the two languages. Indeed, the concept of equivalence is highly controversial and is viewed in radically different ways [13, p. 96]. The translator, therefore, should be acquainted with the meaning assigned to Arabic lexical codes, which should then be translated to the closest lexical codes in English. In other words, one lexical code unit is translated into another lexical code unit by observing the specificity of meaning in the TL and ensuring that the meaning in both languages is as similar as possible. This approach does not seek to transfer the lexis and syntax of the ST into the TT regarding the generic and formal meaning but rather to convey the meaning of the ST as closely as possible by employing the lexis and syntax of the TL. In this respect, “expressing meanings is what languages are all about. Everything in a language – words, grammatical constructions, intonation patterns – conspires to realize this goal in the fullest, richest, subtlest way” [10, p. 1]. Put another way, the translation process is source-oriented when it comes to meaning, and target-oriented when it comes to expressing that meaning in a native-like way in the TT.

In practical terms, the application of this approach does not imply that having a mastery of both the source and the TL and using the aid of dictionaries would be possible to successfully complete any translation. The process of translation is not a matter of finding a dictionary match, but rather navigating between possible solutions in the TT according to its rules while remaining sensitive to the perceived meaning of the ST. This is particularly important when the meaning goes beyond the superficial match listed in dictionaries; indeed, the main objective of this approach is to find the meaning in the ST. The language in the TT, expressing the meaning of the ST, should be fluent and native-like; that is, it should domesticate the product in the TL syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically (but not conceptually, culturally, or ideologically). The term “domestication” as used here refers solely to language as means of communication; that is, a purely *linguistic* domestication or normalisation. Put

succinctly, this normalisation is confined to linguistic issues only. Thus, normalisation does not seek to produce an output in the TL that fully meets all the needs of the target readership; that is, a natural response, as prescribed by Nida’s *dynamic equivalence*. The linguistic and cultural elements of the ST should not be reduced according to the norms of the TL in the pursuit of greater intelligibility and elegance.

What is important in this stage is to find a lexical match, and then to accommodate it into the TL in accordance with TL norms. However, it would not be wise here to rely heavily on bilingual dictionaries (which usually list context-free meanings) in the hope that they will somehow provide adequately corresponding units. The approach proposed here thus does not deal with words in isolation as a dictionary match but rather with a word-to-word correspondence in context. The translator uses dictionaries to generate potential options that may be suitable for the respective context. Next, the translator chooses the option that best fits the context, that is, “it is vital to remember that meanings are not found exclusively in the words listed individually in the dictionary” [7, p. 97].

To illustrate with, the following is the translation of the Quranic verse in question (19:12):

1. “‘O Yahya! Take hold of the Book with might’: and We gave him Wisdom even as a youth,” [8]
2. “‘O John! Hold fast the Scripture. And we gave him wisdom when a child” [8]
3. “‘John, hold on to the Scripture firmly.’ While he was still a boy, We granted him wisdom.” [1, p. 191]

These translations manifest the strict formal adherence – the foreignising or literal translation – to the ST’s linguistic aspects in all its forms. By way of applying the hybridising translation, all the source linguistic elements – semantics, syntax, stylistics, and pragmatics – are to be reproduced according to the TL linguistic norms – absolute linguistic normalisation without any hints to the ST’s linguistic features. At this stage, the ST verse is linguistically analysed into its basic components, then transforming these components into their counterparts in the TL and rearranging them according to the TL linguistic norms. The outcome of this stage would be the following: *O John! Take the Torah by force;*” hence, *We gave him wisdom at an early age*. According to the track process outlined in Fig. 1, the normalisation approach is used to domesticate the ST in the TL. Now, before releasing the translation, it should be tested in light of what is ‘stated’ and ‘meant’. Running the aforementioned translation would highlight the following underlined words: “*O John! Take the Torah by force;*” hence, *We gave him wisdom at an early age*. The test reveals that what is ‘stated’ in the ST and the TT is corresponding, that is, the literal meaning; however what is ‘meant’ is not. Indeed, the underlined words in the original are an idiom whose meaning is about tackling something carefully. Having failed the first test, it is to be redirected to the subsequent test rather than being released. In the second text, the message is to be assessed as to what extent it can be expressed on the level of what is ‘meant’ rather than what is ‘stated’ – meaning that, communicating the meaning

regardless of the matchless forms used in both languages. That said, the test reveals that the meaning can be expressed and resultantly the technique attached to this test, the figurative substitution, is activated. The process is done by searching as much as possible the TL for an expression functioning closely as the ST's expression; otherwise, the direct meaning is inserted as an interpretive translation. Luckily, there is an expression in English communicating the same meaning *delve into sth*; the final translation is then: "*O John! Delve into the content of the Torah;*" hence, *We gave him wisdom at an early age.*

As far as the non-linguistic or culturally embedded meaning is concerned, it goes without saying, however, that culture also has an influence over language. This influence may impart some unique cultural characteristics that distinguish the language from all others. One of these characteristics is the use of special vocabulary that stems from cultural components such as religion, traditional practices, and beliefs that for part of the overall culture. Every culture has its own communication medium, or language, and therefore every language has a set of vocabularies that express the specificity of its culture. This obviously poses a significant challenge when it comes to translation, especially between languages that are culturally remote such as Arabic and English. In order to overcome this challenge, the translation process must include extra-linguistic factors that address the cultural and traditional reality. In other words, translation is a process of communication between two languages and cultures where "no language (in the full sense of the word) can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have, at its centre, the structure of natural language" [26, p. 212]. Indeed, the Quran consists of culture-specific and religion-specific words, concepts, and values that are represented by unique vocabularies in which "many lexical items have meanings which cannot be defined without reference to the culture of the language's speakers" [12, p. 341]. Such words representing concepts or values must be conveyed, in the context of sacred translation, as they are understood in the native environment. Therefore, footnotes are used "for those who do not know the background facts of which the author wanted his readers to think. The footnotes provide the needed information, but in a way that indicates they are not part of the text itself" [4, p. 9]. Otherwise, the translator risks being accused of falsifying the complex network of values that are, for many, the key component of any sacred text. In other words, there can be no intellectual exchange between two nations unless translated content includes all aspects of meaning, especially non-linguistic ones. Otherwise, the dialogue between the two cultures becomes diminished and repetitive, resonating with the same domesticated content that prevents the TL receptor from perceiving the unique characteristics of the original text.

In order to use the glossing technique, we must first establish parameters that define when and how it is applied. Glossing should be used wherever there are words in the ST and the TL that may appear similar in terms of dictionary-match or wording, but where the intended meaning is

particular to the ST and requires interpretation, that is, what is stated is the same; however, what is meant is different in the SL and TL. This phenomenon is what is known as "false friends" [16, p. 160] or false cognates; that is, words with superficial similarity and which seem to be equivalent but in reality are not. In most cases, the glossing technique works by maintaining the dictionary match and adding a footnote to explain the difference in meaning. This type of translation, that is, formal translation with footnotes, is usually known as "gloss translation". By providing additional information in a footnote, the translator can help the reader attain a fuller understanding of every detail. While a word may exist as a concept in both the ST and the TT, the way it is comprehended may be completely different. When the TT reader relates such a word to his or her own experience or cultural environment, this may lead to misconception and misunderstanding. Without inserting a footnote, the translator has no way of establishing genuine communication between the two languages.

By way of application, the following is the translation of the Quranic verse in question (19:17):

- She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent her our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects [8].
- And had chosen seclusion from them. Then We sent unto her Our Spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man [8].
- and secluded herself away; We sent Our Spirit to appear before her in the form of a perfected man [1, p. 192].

If the hybridising translation is applied as it flows in Fig. 1, the following translation is offered after the plain language is processed: *There, she placed a screen so that none of her people would see. Then, We sent her Our Spirit incarnated as a perfect man.* However, the hybridising model will mark the word *spirit* in the testing level because there is something extra-linguistic and considered Quran-specific. The word *spirit* in Arabic and English match on the level of dictionary match – what is stated – but they do not match in terms of meaning – what is meant. Therefore, the technique of glossing attached to this case is activated and a footnote is added to clarify the unique meaning of this word that is understood differently from its counterpart in the TL. The footnote would be as follows: The word 'Spirit', as a literal translation for the Arabic word (*rūh*), stands, in the Quranic context, for the Archangel Gabriel who acts as herald of Allah when making any contact with humans. This word should not be confused with the English one used in the Christian context, that is, the Trinity.

Regarding the second case within the non-linguistic instances, the annotated transliteration is used that is based on the fact that languages can be influenced through contact with other languages, where "the simplest kind of influence that one language may exert on another is the 'borrowing' of words" [19, p. 206]. What we are talking about here is a linguistic interaction between languages where the ST "donates" a linguistic item to the TL. This is a natural phenomenon, since no language has the capacity to



meaningfully reproduce everything that is said in another language – especially if that language is both linguistically and culturally remote. To overcome this problem, a linguistic item is transferred from the ST to the TT in the form of a loanword that fills in the semantic gap in the translation process. This strategy not only compensates for the lexical gap, it also preserves the specificity and characteristics, especially linguistic and cultural, of the lexicon translated from the ST.

The annotated transliteration technique should therefore be used for words deemed unique to the ST in terms of wording and meaning, that is, for which there is neither a dictionary match nor a close meaning in the TL. In order to implement those words in the TL, the graphological form of the original ST word is translated into ST phonemes (minimal phonetic units), which are then reproduced with English characters to imitate the original pronunciation. Strictly speaking, annotated transliteration starts as a phonetic transcription of the ST word to create a counterpart replica in the TT. A footnote is then added to the TT providing all the necessary information. As with the glossing technique, annotated transliteration is intended to operate on the level of words that are specific to the Quran and/or Arabic culture. Words such as these cannot be domesticated, and any attempt to do so will be in vain. Consequently, they must be left “intact” as they are already distinctively foreign. The annotated transliteration consists of two levels: the wording level in which a transliteration is provided and the meaning level where a footnote is added with an explanation of the transliterated word. If the translator fails to do so, the precise meaning of the ST may be lost in translation, as the word in question is easily understood by ST native speakers as it is part of their culture and religion, whereas TL receptors are unfamiliar with it. Any alternative approach that offers a generic translation of words for which there are no equivalents in the TL, in both substance and form, can be very misleading and will not bring justice to those words.

To illustrate, the Quranic verse (19:61) is translated as follows:

- Gardens of Eternity, those which (Allah) Most Gracious has promised to His servants in the Unseen: for His promise must (necessarily) come to pass [8].
- Gardens of Eden, which the Beneficent hath promised to His slaves in the unseen. Lo! His promise is ever sure of fulfilment [8].
- They will enter the Gardens of Lasting Bliss, promised by the Lord of Mercy to His servants – it is not yet seen but truly His promise will be fulfilled [1, p. 194].

By processing the verse through the model outlined in Fig. 1, it is linguistically normalised to be *Therein are everlasting gardens of eternal living willed in Ghayb by the Merciful Lord to His righteous servants. Verily! It is Him Whose will is surely fulfilled. Nonetheless, this translation is not entirely unproblematic. When this translation goes through testing, the word Ghayb is highlighted as it cannot be translated into English because it has no equivalent on the level of word and meaning. It is purely a unique word used in the Quran and stands for an important belief of any Muslim. That said, the*

word is transliterated and a footnote is inserted to clarify all the needed information as “Ghayb is a basic component of Islamic belief system. It includes the knowledge of God (Allah) of whatever is going to happen in the future, the world of the unseen as the Angels or Jin – a creature where the Satan belongs, the God (Allah)’ plans regarding everything in this universes – being human or non-human – predestined even before the creation of universe, the knowledge of the afterlife and the resurrection, and the hell and the paradise. All that knowledge is only for God (Allah) given to whoever of His servants (prophets).”

## V. CONCLUSION

The resistance to translation found in much of Quranic scholarship is based on the fear that the process of translation might reduce the ST to the level of an ordinary book. The debate here is between form and faith on the one hand, and utility on the other – the Quran being the core text of a major world religion. The implication is that the only appropriate solution is a hybrid translation strategy, that is, a process where, rather than relying on one translation method to render the Quranic text in another language, the translator adopts a take-and-leave approach in which some techniques may come into play, and others not. When applying this hybrid model, the language of the Quran can be normalised in the TL through native-like wording, while the values and beliefs contained within the SL should be left intact as they are inherently foreign; that is, their distinctiveness is crucial. Otherwise, conveying only the literal meaning of the Quran will lead to creating an unintelligible message in the TL, one that miscommunicates the content of the ST. In other words, translation of the Quran should not be seen as a form of imitation or reproduction of the ST. Instead, the original text should be approached on the principle that meaning – but not form – can be established in any language. It is only through employing a foreignising approach that linguistic untranslatability results on the levels of semantics, pragmatics, and syntax (taking into the account the figurative- and culture-specific language of the Quran). All of these levels interact with each other to deliver the meaning of the Quran in Arabic in a sublime way; any attempt to convey the meaning of the Quran without a due translational treatment – that is, using a variety of approaches – may jeopardise the integrity of its message. Thus, the conveyance of the meaning should be as it is understood in the original text (source-oriented perspective) in a native-like way according to TL norms (target-oriented perspective). In the words of Schleiermacher, though with a slight modification as not to be binary in use, the translator should use foreignisation which “leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader toward that author [foreignising the values and the concepts of the Quran]”, and domestication which “leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author toward the reader [domesticating the language of the Quran, be it plain or figurative]” [18, p. 31].

REFERENCES

- [1] Abdel Haleem, M, *The Qur'an*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- [2] Abdul-Raof, H, *Qur'an Translation: Discourse, Texture and Exegesis* (London: Routledge, 2010).
- [3] Asman, T. P., & Pedersen, J, 'How Bert Got into Ned's head: domestication in the Translation of Literature for Young Readers', *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 21:2 (2013), pp. 143-155.
- [4] Blight, R. C. (2005). Footnotes for meaningful translations of the New Testament. *Journal of Translation*, I (1), 7-46.
- [5] Collins, J. (2010). 'Transcribing Colonial Australi: Startegies of Translation in the Work of Rosa Campbell Praed and Daisy Bates' in P. Wittke-Rüdiger, & K. Gross (eds.), *Translation of Cultures*. (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi 2010), pp. 113-132.
- [6] Cronin, M. 'The Cracked Looking-Glass of Servants: Translation and Minority Languages in a Global Age' in M. Baker (ed.), *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 249-262.
- [7] Dickins, J., Herve, S., & Higgins, I, *Thinking Arabic Translation: A Course in Translation Method: Arabic to English*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
- [8] Dukes, K, *English Translation, The Quranic Arabic Corpus*, (2001), retrieved from <http://corpus.quran.com/> (accessed November 2017).
- [9] Engineer, A. Trivedi, *Muslim Minority, Continuity and Change*, (New Delhi: Gyan Pub, 2008).
- [10] Goddard, C, *Semantic Analysis: A Practical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- [11] Hatim, B., & Munday, J, *Translation an Advanced Resource Book*, (London: Routledge, 2004).
- [12] Hudson, R. (1981). Some issues on which linguists can agree. *Journal of Linguistics*, 17(2), 333-343.
- [13] Kenny, D, 'Equivalence' in M. Baker, & G. Saldanha (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, (London: Routledge, 2011).
- [14] Koskinen, K, 'Domestication, Foreignization and the Modulation of Affect' in H. Kemppanen, M. Jänis, & A. Belikova (eds.), *Domestication and Foreignization in Trasnlation Studies* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, Verlag für wissenschaftliche Literatur, 2012), pp. 13-32.
- [15] McMichael, R. N, *Eucharist: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London and New York: Continuum/T & T Clark, 2010).
- [16] Nida, E. A, *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000).
- [17] Nida, E., & de Waard, J, *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986).
- [18] Pym, A. (2010). *Exploring Translation Theories*. London; New York: Routledge.
- [19] Sapir, E. (1921). *Language: An introduction to the Study of Speech*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.
- [20] Seruya & Moniz Abu-Layla, M, *The Quran and the Gospel: A Comparative Study* (Cairo: El-Falah for Translation, Publishing and Distribution, 1997).
- [21] Shuttleworth, M., & Cowie, M, *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014).
- [22] Thakur, H. K, *Gandhi, Nehru and Globalization*, (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2010).
- [23] Trivedi, H, 'Translating culture and cultural translation' in P. St.-Pierre, & P. Kar (eds), *Translation: Reflections, Refractions, Transformations* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co, 2007), pp. 277-317.
- [24] Vermeer, H. J, 'Skopos and commission in translational action' in L. Venuti (ed), *The Translation Studies Reader* (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 191-202.
- [25] Venuti, L, *The Translator's Invisibility*, (London: Routledge, 2008). Retrieved from [www.dawsonera.com/depp/reader/protected/external/AbstractView/S9780203553190](http://www.dawsonera.com/depp/reader/protected/external/AbstractView/S9780203553190).
- [26] u, L. M., Uspensky, B. A., & Mihaychuk, G, 'On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture', *New Literary History*, 9:2 (1978), pp. 211-232.