Translating the Words "Al -Qadr" in Surah Al Qadr: Examining Cultural and Linguistic Challenges in Quranic Translation

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Abstract. The enduring significance of Surah al-Qadr in contemporary discourse has prompted numerous translations from Arabic into English, sparking ongoing discussions around its interpretation. This study meticulously examines translations provided by seven prominent Quran translators, analyzing the methodologies employed in each rendition with a particular focus on the strategies used to translate the word 'Al-Qadr'. Employing a mixed-methods approach integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses, the study compares translations and scrutinizes procedures using Vinay and Darbelnet's framework. Findings reveal varying degrees of success among translators; some achieve synonymous translations like Mohsin Khan's "Night of Al-Qadr (Decree)" and Sahih International's "Night of Decree," while others provide interpretations such as Muhammad Sarwar's "Night of Destiny" and Shakir's "grand night" that may not fully capture the intended meaning. Assessment of accuracy to the original text suggests that translations like "Night of Decree" (Sahih International) and "Night of Power" (Yusuf Ali and Arberry) may be deemed more accurate due to their closer adherence to the specific terminology and intended meaning of "Al-Qadr" in the Quran. Factors contributing to the differences in translation include linguistic intricacies inherent in the Arabic term, cultural context, translation philosophy, target audience considerations, and individual expertise and understanding of Islamic theology and Arabic language among translators. This investigation offers valuable insights into Quranic language translation, enhancing understanding of the complexities involved and suggesting avenues for further research.

Keywords: English Language, Quranic Text, Surah al-Qadr, SL (Source language), TL (Target language), Translation, Cultural-specific terms, Linguistic challenges

Introduction

According to Crystal (2003), English presently holds the foremost position in social and political influence and boasts a broader distribution compared to other languages. The ascendancy of English as the primary global communication medium across diverse sectors such as science, technology, business, finance, diplomacy, transportation, and publishing is attributed to historical, political, and socio-economic factors, as discussed by Crystal (1997), Wallerstein (1995), and Ammon (2001), Alsbagh, et al. (2017).

Crystal (1987:358) approximates that there are currently approximately 300 million native English speakers, with an additional 300 million utilizing English as a second language, and another 100 million proficiently using it as a foreign language. This marks a rise of roughly 40% since the 1950s. Contrarily, Gordon (2005) contends that English ranks as the fourth

most spoken language globally, with 510 million speakers, trailing Mandarin Chinese, Hindi, and Spanish. However, more liberal estimates, encompassing individuals with varying levels of language proficiency and familiarity, propose that the total number of English users exceeds one billion. Moreover, the prevalence of English has resulted in it being the preferred target language for translation. Practically all significant literary and important documents originally written in languages other than English have been translated into English. These encompass religious and philosophical works like the Analects of Confucius (from Chinese to English), the Socratic Dialogues (from Greek to English), the Bible (from Latin to English), the Buddhist Sutras (from Sanskrit to English), and the Quran (from Arabic to English). Regarding the Quran, the necessity for an English translation arises from the multilingual nature of the contemporary Muslim world. Beyond Arab countries, many Muslims in Asia, Europe, and America utilize their native languages such as Bahasa Malaysia, Indonesian, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, and Bengali to comprehend the Quran. Numerous Muslims and non-Arab scholars also depend on English translations for detailed Quranic analysis (Alsbagh and Abdullah 2012:3 and Azizah et al. 2021:1)

Various English translations of the Quran exist, with historical figures like Alexander Ross and George Sale contributing early versions in the 17th and 18th centuries (Ushama, 2002). Muslim translators, including Mohammad Abdul Hakim Khan, Mirza Hairat Dehlawi, and Muhammad Marmaduke William Pickthal, have also produced translations (Ushama, 2002), and Abdullah Yusuf Ali's rendition is widely recognized as authoritative (Kidwai, 1986). These translations serve several purposes, including countering misconceptions about Islam, aiding Muslim understanding, and providing access to non-Arabic speakers (Kidwai, 1986). However, translating the Quran presents significant challenges due to linguistic and cultural differences between classical Arabic and modern languages (Shadi El-Farran, 2006). Zwemer (1915) argues that the Quran is essentially untranslatable due to its unique style and rhythm. Despite these challenges, translations offer valuable insights into the Quran's teachings for those unable to comprehend the original Arabic text.

Considering the inherent intricacies in Quranic translation, this study endeavors to examine a particular facet of English renditions, specifically the translation of the Arabic noun phrase "al-Qadr" (القدر) in Surah al-Qadr of the Qur'an into English.

Theoretical Framework

Translation serves as the conduit that connects historical epochs to contemporary times, playing a pivotal role in the annals of human civilization (Siddiek, 2018:46). It has been extensively examined and deliberated upon by scholars who invest their intellectual energies in debating and theorizing its essence. Catford (1965: 20) delineates translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)," echoing the notion of equivalence advocated by Cartford in his work A Linguistic Theory of Translation. This pursuit of equivalence represents a shared aspiration among translators, as articulated by Nida and Taber (1974: 83), who define translation as the endeavor to reproduce the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, prioritizing both meaning and style. Hatim and Mason (2014: 1) posit translation as an act of communication aimed at conveying messages across cultural and linguistic barriers. Each scholar offers a distinct perspective. While Catford and Nida prioritize achieving equivalence between target and source languages, Hatim and Mason underscore the importance of effective communication while respecting cultural and linguistic intricacies. Regardless of the approach, translators perennially find themselves navigating the intricate balance between the exigencies of the source and target languages, embodying the metaphorical struggle between the hammer of the former and the anvil of the latter.

Accordingly, Alsbagh and Imran (2012:88) aver that an in-depth understanding of various aspects of Arabic grammar, including nominatives (المرفوعات), accusatives (المنصوبات), genitives (المجرورات), jussives (المجزومات), sentences (الجمل), and quasi-sentences (شبه الجملة), is

Yasir Ahmed Alsbbagh, et al.

Translating the Word 'Al-Qadr' in Surah Al-Qadr:
Examining Cultural and Linguistic Challenges in
Quranic Translation

essential for effectively analyzing the complexities of Quranic translations from Arabic into English (van Putten 2023:24). Specifically, this knowledge is crucial for grasping the finer points and multiple meanings of noun phrases, such as the noun phrase 'al-Qaeda', commonly encountered in Quranic verses. Qazi (2011) strongly advocates that translators possess a deep understanding of Arabic grammar to navigate the intricacies of religious texts and accurately convey their meanings while ensuring fidelity to the original text. As a result, translating words laden with cultural connotations poses significant challenges, as these terms may contain subtleties in the source language that lack direct equivalents in the target language. This research focuses specifically on the word "al-Qadr." However, before delving into this term, it is essential to provide a clear elucidation of the root word "QDR" (QDR = qaf dal ra=ق د ر). According to the Islamic site corpus of the Quran, the triliteral root qāf dāl rā (ق د ر) appears 132 times in the Quran, manifesting in 11 derived forms as indicated in table (1).

Table 1.
Quranic Occurrences and Definitions of 'Qadr'

Form of the Word	Occurrences	Description
(qadara ●) قَ دَر) َ	25	As the form I verb
(qaddara ●)قَّ َدر) َ	16	As the form II verb
(qadr ●)قَ ْدر)	7	As the noun
(qadar ●)قَ َدر)	11	As the noun
(qudūr ●)قُ ُدور)	1	As the noun
(qadīr ●)قَ دير)	45	As the nominal
(miq'dār ●)مِ □قَ َدار)	3	As the noun
qādir ●)قَا دِر)	14	As the active participle
maqdūr ●)مَ ْقدُور)	1	As the passive participle
taqdīr ●)تَ ْق دِير)	5	As the form II verbal noun
muq'tadir ●)مُ ْقتَ دِر)	4	As the form VIII active participle

Source: (http://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=qdr)

Hence, translating words enriched with cultural subtleties poses considerable challenges, as the specific elements present in the source language may not necessarily translate seamlessly into the target language. This diversity of usage places significant pressure on translators, necessitating their adeptness at discerning the intended meaning within the Quranic text and conveying its functional relevance in English. This study seeks to analyze the efficacy of translators in rendering the Arabic term Al-Qadr into their English equivalents. Achieving true "equivalence" proves particularly daunting for translators when faced with substantial cultural disparities between the two languages, as previously discussed. Newmark (1991: 63) contends that the "equivalent effect" serves as the preferred outcome rather than the primary objective of any translation endeavor. Thus, the paramount goal for translators entails transcending linguistic barriers and endeavoring to bridge the divide between languages through the use of straightforward, precise language. This approach ensures comprehension by individuals, especially non-native Arabic speakers.

The rationale behind studying Surah Al-Qadr encompasses both the spiritual significance and the linguistic complexities associated with its exploration. This Surah, revealing the Quran's descent during Ramadan to Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him)

through the angel Jibreel (peace be upon him), underscores the profound connection between divine revelation and the sacred month. Central to this study is the term "Al-Qadr," which encapsulates diverse meanings such as destiny, decree, and divine will, presenting linguistic challenges in translation and interpretation. For instance, Shunnaq (1999) has identified differences in the singular–plural noun systems between Arabic and English. Shunnaq (1999:52) states that English countable nouns can be singular and plural, whereas Arabic countable nouns can be singular, dual, and plural. Moreover, the mysterious quality of the Night of Decree adds another layer of complexity, prompting diverse speculations among scholars regarding its precise timing within Ramadan. Navigating these intricacies necessitates not only linguistic proficiency but also a deep understanding of Islamic theology. Thus, the study of Surah Al-Qadr serves as a gateway to spiritual enlightenment while also fostering critical engagement with the linguistic and theological complexities inherent in sacred texts.

Strategies for Translating Religion-specific Words

Abdelaal (2020:12) references the utilization of methodologies akin to those proposed by French Canadian linguists Vinay and Darbelnet in exploring the differences between Arabic (the source language) and English (the target language), with a specific focus on the translation of culture-specific terms. These methodologies are divided into two main categories: direct translation procedures and indirect translation procedures. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995:30) conducted an in-depth examination of the evolution of translated texts, stressing their belief that elucidating the principles governing the translation process enables translators to proficiently produce comparable translations. They noted that "in the process of translating, translators establish relationships between specific manifestations of two linguistic systems. Categorizing seven distinct processes integral to translation endeavors, these linguists (1995) grouped them into two classifications: *direct translation*, comprising three procedures, and *oblique translation*, comprising four as shown in figure (1) Such delineations serve as guiding principles, facilitating a deeper understanding of the intricate art of translation between Arabic and English. (See also, Al-hibachi,2023:4)
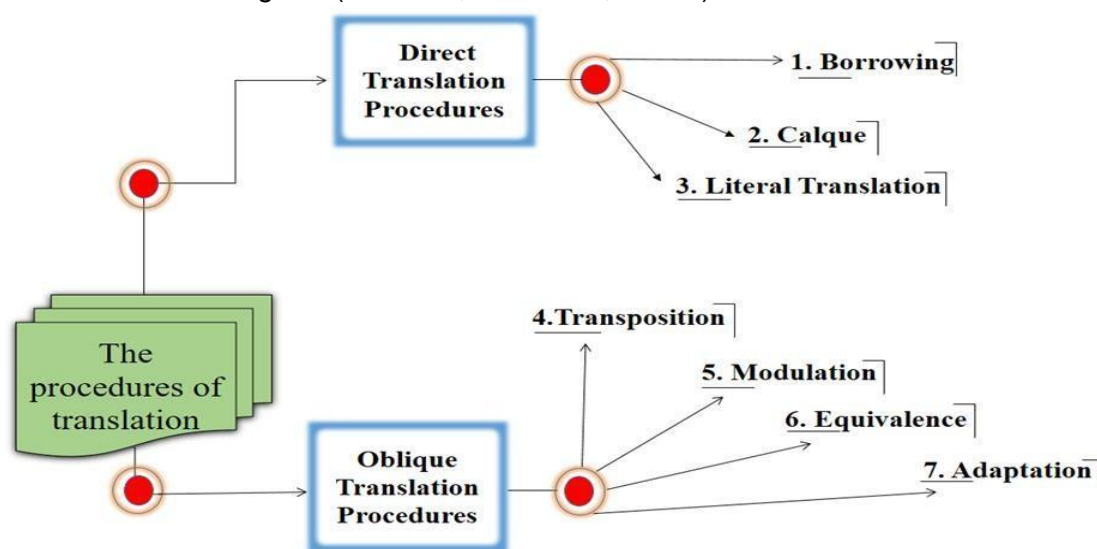

Figure 1.
The procedures of translation Source: Vinay and Darbelnet (1995)

Direct Translation Procedures

When employing direct translation, the translator adopts a method where institutional, technical, cultural, or proper names are directly borrowed from the original text and utilized in

the translation process. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) elaborate on this approach, delineating three distinct procedures. According to their framework, direct translation involves the possibility of transposing each element of the source language message into the target language, either through structural parallelism based on parallel categories or through metalinguistic parallelisms stemming from parallel concepts, (also see Waliński 2015:4). However, translators may encounter gaps or "lacunae" in the target language that necessitate the incorporation of corresponding elements to ensure coherence and consistency between the two messages. These three distinct procedures will be elaborated as follows.

Borrowing (الاقتراض اللغوي). To bridge a linguistic gap, especially when encountering unfamiliar technical processes or concepts, borrowing becomes the simplest translation method. The decision to incorporate a foreign word or expression into the target language is primarily about style and conveying the intended message. By employing this strategy, the translator imports words from the source language to the target language to either fill a lexical void or evoke a specific effect. For instance, words like "hijab," "kebab," and "jehad," originating from Arabic (جهاد، كباب، حجاب), are directly transferred into the target language, whereas terms like "computer," "internet," "Facebook," and "Twitter" are borrowed from English into Arabic (كمبيوتر، تويتر، بوك فيس، انترنت), (Halimah,2020:4), also see (Ahmed & Shihab, 2023:3).

Calque (الاستعارة المترجمة). A calque is a borrowing method wherein one language adopts an expression from another and translates each of its elements literally. This process results in either a lexical calque, which maintains the target language's syntactic structure while introducing a new mode of expression, or a structural calque, which introduces a new linguistic construction. Vinay and Darbelnet categorized calques into lexical and structural types, where lexical calques maintain the structure while introducing new expressions, and structural calques introduce new constructions into the language. Examples of calques are often observed in the translation of common collocations and organization names, such as "السريعة الوجبات مطاعم" illustrating lexical "Skyscrapers / ناطحات السحاب" or "Fast-food restaurants / مطاعم الوجبات السريعة" calques, and "World Trade Organization / منظمة التجارة العالمية" demonstrating a structural calque (Ali, 2019:171 and Halimah, 2020: 5).

Literal Translation (الترجمة الحرفية). Literal translation involves the direct transfer of a source language (SL) text into a target language (TL) text, ensuring grammatical and idiomatic appropriateness in the TL while adhering strictly to its linguistic norms. This method is commonly employed between closely related languages and cultures, such as French and Italian. For instance, translating "Ahmed is a student" into Arabic as طالب يكون احمد exemplifies a literal translation suitable for educational purposes. However, literal translation is typically feasible only at the surface level of language. For instance, translating "I love Rabiaa" into Arabic as ربيعة احب انا constitutes an acceptable literal translation within certain contexts (Al-hibachi, 2023:5).

According to Vinay and Darbelnet (1995: 35), as quoted by Safi and Nassar (2021:11), this procedure is adopted whenever it's demonstrated that the meaning remains intact in the target language. They emphasize that translators may consider literal translation 'unacceptable' if it conveys an incompatible meaning, lacks coherence, or proves structurally or pragmatically unfeasible. In such cases, employing an *'oblique' (indirect) strategy* in translation is recommended, which comprises four specific procedures:

Transposition (الابدال). Transposition involves substituting one-word class with another, retaining the message's meaning, and is utilized not only in translation but also within a language. Obligatory transposition is necessary when the target language demands a specific form, such as translating 'أغتسل' to 'to wash up after having sex or ejaculation,' where the verb must be expressed as a clause in English due to a lack of equivalence. Optional transposition, on the other hand, offers flexibility, as seen in examples like translating 'الزكاة يؤتون الذين' as 'zakat payers' or 'those who pay zakat.' This method shares similarities with Catford's categorical shifts and includes instances like rendering 'she screamed when she saw the snake' as 'لثعبان رؤيتها عند صرخت لقد' and 'المؤمنين' as 'those who believed (Abdelaal,

Yasir Ahmed Alsbbagh, et al.

Translating the Word 'Al-Qadr' in Surah Al-Qadr:
Examining Cultural and Linguistic Challenges in
Quranic Translation

2020:25).

Modulation (التحوير/التعديل). Modulation, a technique of altering the form of a message by shifting the perspective, serves to rectify instances where a literal or transposed translation, while grammatically correct, appears unsuitable, unidiomatic, or awkward in the target language (TL). As defined by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995:36), modulation involves changing the viewpoint to attain a level of naturalness in the target text (TT) while preserving the meaning and fidelity of the source text (ST). Illustrations of modulation can be observed in the translation of various English sentences.

For instance, consider the phrase 'lend me your ears', which may be rendered as 'انتباهك اعرني'; the expression 'ups a piece of cake', which could be translated as 'هين او سهل امر'; and downs' can be interpreted as 'الحياة تقلبات'; and the statement 'you are going to have a child' may be translated as 'ستصبحينَ اما' ' (Abdelaal, 2020:25).

Equivalence (التكافؤ). Equivalence is a crucial concept emphasizing that a single situation can be depicted through two distinct texts employing entirely different stylistic and structural approaches. This method, also referred to as reformulation, aims to generate an equivalent text in the target language by employing varying stylistic and structural techniques as in:

وَءَايَةٌ لَّهُمۡ أَنَّا حَمَلۡنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمۡ فِى ٱلۡفُلۡكِ ٱلۡمَشۡحُونِ

And a Sign for them is that We bore their race (through the Flood) in ***the loaded Ark*** (Surah Yasin –Ali Abdallah Yousef)

In this example of translation equivalence involving an additive relation, the Arabic phrase "ٱلۡفُلۡكِ ٱلۡمَشۡحُونِ" is rendered into English as "in the loaded Ark," reflecting the concept of addition by including additional information about the Ark being laden during the event described (Alsbagh and Abdullah 2012:53).

Adaptation (القلمة /التبني). Adaptation, the final calque strategy outlined by Vinay and Darbelnet(1995) involves adjusting or elucidating cultural disparities between a source language (SL) and a target language (TL). Its primary objective is to establish situational equivalence. For example, the English greeting 'hello' may be adapted to 'alssalamu alikum' in Arabic instead of its linguistic equivalent 'أهل'. This approach finds frequent application in translating literary works and films, particularly when dealing with profanity such as 'fuck' or 'damn', which may be rendered as 'اللعنة', and terms like 'boyfriend' and 'girlfriend', translated as 'صديق و صديقة'. Adaptation is essential when the cultural context referenced in the SL message is unfamiliar in the TL culture, requiring the creation of a new scenario deemed equivalent. Thus, adaptation can be viewed as a specialized form of equivalence, namely situational equivalence (Abdelaal, 2020:26).

After discussing the seven translation strategies proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet, the current study aims to achieve the following objectives: identify the strategy used to translate the word 'Al-Qadr', determine which translation is more equivalent to the original text, indicate the differences in the translation of the word 'Al-Qadr', and answer the following questions: what strategy was utilized to translate the word 'Al-Qadr' in Surah Al-Qadr for each translator? Which translation is more accurate to the original text? What factors contribute to the differences in the translation of the word 'Al-Qadr'?

Translators' Cultural Backgrounds of Surah Al-Qadr

In the process of translating Surah Al-Qadr in Quranic text, the involvement of seven translators from diverse cultural backgrounds highlights the varied ways in which reality is perceived (See the Appendix). Each translator brings a unique cultural perspective, shaping their interpretation of the text. This diversity enriches the understanding of Surah Al-Qadr, as it reflects the cultural subtleties and experiences inherent in each translator's background. Through their collaborative efforts, the translations offer insights into the multiplicity of human

Yasir Ahmed Alsbbagh, et al.

Translating the Word 'Al-Qadr' in Surah Al-Qadr:
Examining Cultural and Linguistic Challenges in
Quranic Translation

experiences and perspectives, emphasizing the influence of cultural backgrounds on the perception of reality (Musk,1988:1):

a) **Sahih International (2007):** Sahih International aims to provide an accurate and accessible translation of the Quran in English, ensuring fidelity to the original Arabic text while maintaining clarity and readability (Mbaideen,2020:104).

b) **Pickthall (1930):** Marmaduke Pickthall's mission was to produce a translation of the Quran into English that captured both the literary beauty and the spiritual depth of the original Arabic text. (Ibid:105)

c) **Yusuf Ali (1934):** Abdullah Yusuf Ali's mission was to offer a comprehensive translation of the Quran in English, supplemented with detailed commentary and explanatory notes to aid understanding and interpretation Alsbagh and Abdullah,2012:40).

d) **Shakir (1985):** Muhammad Sarwar Shakir aimed to create a straightforward and easily understandable translation of the Quran in English, ensuring accessibility to readers of diverse backgrounds (Mbaideen,2020:104).

e) **Muhammad Sarwar (2012):** Muhammad Sarwar aimed to provide an English translation of the Quran that incorporates Shia perspectives and interpretations, catering to the needs of Shia Muslim communities.

f) **Mohsin Khan (1996):** Muhammad Muhsin Khan's mission was to produce a translation of the Quran that adhered closely to Salafi interpretations and annotations, providing a faithful representation of Islamic teachings (Ibid:105).

g) **Arberry (1955):** Arthur John Arberry's mission was to translate the Quran into English in a manner that preserved the poetic beauty and linguistic intricacies of the original Arabic text, appealing to readers interested in literary and scholarly aspects of the Quran (Siddiek, 2018:1).

In general, the translation of the Quran into English has been approached with diverse perspectives and objectives by different translators throughout history. Sahih International (2007) focuses on accuracy and accessibility, while Pickthall (1930) emphasizes literary beauty and spiritual depth. Yusuf Ali (1934) offers a comprehensive translation with detailed commentary, and Shakir (1985) aims for simplicity and clarity. Muhammad Sarwar (2012) incorporates Shia perspectives, while Mohsin Khan (1996) follows Salafi interpretations. Arberry (1955) preserves poetic beauty and linguistic intricacies. Each translation reflects the unique mission and methodology of its translator, contributing to the diversity of English translations of the Quran.

Material and Method

The present study employs a mixed-method design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches, to investigate the translation of the Arabic noun phrase "al-Qadr" (القدر) in Surah al-Qadr of the Qur'an into English. The research methodology involves three stages: First, a qualitative textual analysis delves into the themes and descriptions of Surah al-Qadr, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic intricacies and contextual meanings associated with "al-Qadr." Second, quantitative methods are utilized to extract instances of the term "al-Qadr" from Surah al-Qadr, facilitated by software packages such as AntConc version 3.5.9, updated in December 2020. Lastly, statistical analysis of the extracted data is conducted using Vinay and Darbelnet's (2004, as cited in Abdelaal, 2020:12) framework to ensure representativeness and accuracy, thereby identifying translation of Word ''al-Qadr'', and variations in the translation of "al-Qadr" across different English renditions, shedding light on the diversity of translation choices and their implications.

The present study collected data from a reputable website (https://corpus.quran.com) that analyzes the Quranic Arabic Corpus. The Quranic Arabic Corpus is a comprehensive linguistic resource that offers detailed insights into Arabic grammar, syntax, and morphology found within the Holy Quran. It provides an in-depth analysis of each word, showcasing its

morphological annotation, and syntactic structure through treebanking, and semantic ontology. This resource serves as a valuable tool for scholars and students seeking to understand the linguistic intricacies of the Quran. The sample for the study consists of translations of Surah Al-Qadr by seven translators, chosen for their contributions to translating Quranic texts (see the Appendix). In the analysis section, verses from Surah Al-Qadr are utilized to achieve three primary objectives: to identify the strategies used to translate the word 'Al-Qadr', to determine which translation is more accurate to the original text, and to indicate differences in the translation of the word 'Al-Qadr'.

Results and Discussion
Results

The findings regarding the diverse strategies employed in translating the term "al-Qadr" in Surah al-Qadr are supported by the analysis of translation strategies outlined in Hani and Zainab (2024:10). Their study highlights how the absence of strategies like calque, literal translation, transposition, or modulation reflects deliberate efforts by translators to ensure clarity and fidelity to the original text. For example, the adaptation strategy, utilized by Sahih International and Pickthall, demonstrates a conscious effort to make the term comprehensible for English-speaking audiences while maintaining its theological depth. Similarly, Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Muhammad Sarwar, and Arberry's emphasis on equivalence showcases their commitment to preserving the semantic and spiritual essence of "al-Qadr," ensuring its theological and literary significance is effectively conveyed to readers. Mohsin Khan's use of the borrowing strategy adds a unique layer, retaining the Arabic term alongside its English equivalent to balance authenticity with accessibility. These strategies underscore the intentionality behind translators' choices, aimed at bridging linguistic and cultural gaps while faithfully representing the original text. Collectively, this analysis provides valuable insights into the complexity of translating religious-specific terminology and affirms the strategic decision-making required to render the Qur'anic text meaningful to diverse audiences as indicated in Figure 1.
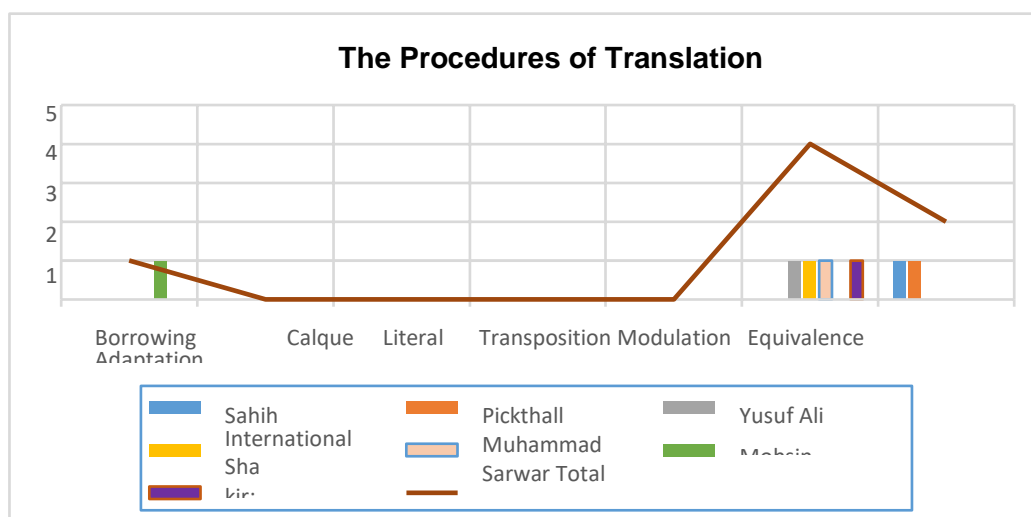

Figure 2.
Strategies of Translation Word Al-Qadr

The second objective of this analysis, to determine which translation of the term "Al-Qadr" in Surah al-Qadr is more accurate, is supported by the findings of Eslamieh & Mokhtar (2021: 8-13). Their study highlights how translations such as "The Night of Decree" (Sahih International), "The Night of Predestination" (Pickthall), "The Night of Destiny" (Muhammad

Yasir Ahmed Alsbbagh, et al.

Translating the Word 'Al-Qadr' in Surah Al-Qadr:
Examining Cultural and Linguistic Challenges in
Quranic Translation

Sarwar), and "The Night of Power" (Yusuf Ali and Arberry) closely align with the original Arabic term, effectively conveying the concept of divine decree or power associated with the night. These translations preserve the theological essence of "Al-Qadr," maintaining both linguistic and cultural relevance for English-speaking readers. In contrast, translations like "The Grand Night" (Shakir) and "The Night of Al-Qadr (Decree)" (Mohsin Khan) are seen as slightly deviating from the original term's specificity, though they still convey the importance of the night. Eslamieh & Mokhtar (2021) suggest that translations such as "The Night of Decree" and "The Night of Power" are more accurate, as they more closely adhere to the specific terminology and intended meaning of "Al-Qadr." These translations offer a clearer understanding of the original text's essence and significance, highlighting the divine authority and destiny embedded in "Al-Qadr," thus providing readers with a more faithful interpretation of the Qur'anic verse. (Respectively: see the Appendix).

Furthermore, the third objective, which aims to analyze the reasons behind the differences in translating "Al-Qadr" in Surah al-Qadr, is supported by Roodashty et al. (2023:2-4), who identify several key factors shaping these variations. The linguistic complexity of the term "Al-Qadr," with its multiple meanings—such as decree, destiny, power, and significance—provides translators with interpretive flexibility, leading to diverse renderings. Cultural context also plays a significant role, as translators must navigate the sensitivities of both the source and target languages to ensure the translation resonates with the intended audience. Additionally, translation philosophy influences choices, with some translators prioritizing linguistic fidelity to the original Arabic and others focusing on readability and meaning. Roodashty et al. further note that the translator's expertise in Islamic theology and Arabic language, as well as differences in audience and interpretation, contribute to the varied translations. These factors underscore the complexity of translating the Quranic text and highlight the richness of interpretation, aligning with the third objective by illustrating how linguistic, cultural, philosophical, and contextual considerations shape the translation process.

Discussion

The diverse translations of the Arabic term "al-Qadr" in Surah al-Qadr arise from a range of linguistic, cultural, and theological factors that influence the process of rendering its meaning into English. Translators often strive to make the Qur'anic text resonate with their target audience, and this effort introduces various interpretations of "al-Qadr." Terms such as "Night of Destiny" or "Night of Power" carry distinct connotations, shaped by cultural contexts, which significantly affect readers' perceptions of this pivotal concept.

Roodashty et al. (2023) emphasize that the translators' familiarity with the Qur'anic text and Islamic theology is crucial in achieving nuanced interpretations. Those with deep knowledge of Islamic traditions are better equipped to capture the multifaceted meanings of "al-Qadr," encompassing decree, power, destiny, and grandeur. In contrast, limited understanding can lead to oversimplification or misrepresentation, which detracts from the text's profound significance.

One of the primary challenges in translating "al-Qadr" lies in the inherent limitations of the English language compared to Arabic. Arabic words, particularly those in the Qur'an, often carry layered meanings that integrate theological, linguistic, and poetic dimensions. Yasir et al. (2017) note that this complexity necessitates prioritization during translation, leading to interpretations that emphasize certain aspects of "al-Qadr" while inevitably overlooking others. For instance, "Night of Decree" highlights the concept of divine sovereignty and predestination, while "Night of Power" underscores the grandeur and spiritual significance of the occasion.

Theological perspectives further shape these translations. Translators may adopt terms that align with their interpretive goals and the needs of their audience. Raed (2023:1) observes that stylistic preferences and considerations for clarity influence choices in translation. For example, Sahih International prioritizes accessibility with the term "Night of Decree," aiming to convey the central theological concept straightforwardly. In contrast, Arthur

Yasir Ahmed Alsbbagh, et al.

Translating the Word 'Al-Qadr' in Surah Al-Qadr:
Examining Cultural and Linguistic Challenges in
Quranic Translation

John Arberry's poetic rendering of "Night of Power" seeks to preserve the literary elegance of the Qur'anic text, appealing to readers who value its artistic dimension.

Overcoming these challenges requires a balanced approach that integrates linguistic precision, cultural sensitivity, and theological depth. Roodashty et al. (2023) argue for collaborative efforts among scholars of linguistics, Islamic studies, and cultural expertise to produce translations that encompass the richness of "al-Qadr" while remaining accessible to diverse audiences. Moreover, translators should explicitly address the layered meanings of "al-Qadr" in footnotes or commentaries to ensure that readers gain a comprehensive understanding of its implications. By acknowledging the multifaceted nature of "al-Qadr" and embracing its complexities, translators can enrich the engagement with Surah al-Qadr and its profound spiritual message.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis has effectively addressed its objectives by shedding light on the strategies employed by translators in rendering the word "Al-Qadr" in Surah Al-Qadr of the Quran into English, assessing the fidelity of translations to the original text, and analyzing the reasons behind the differences observed. Through this examination, it becomes evident that translators employ various strategies such as adaptation, equivalence, borrowing, and alternative renderings to convey the subtle meanings of "Al-Qadr" while ensuring clarity and fidelity to the original Arabic text. Translations such as "The Night of Decree" and "The Night of Power" demonstrate a closer adherence to the specific terminology and intended meaning of "Al-Qadr," thus providing readers with a clearer understanding of its essence and significance. However, the differences in translation are influenced by a multitude of factors including linguistic intricacies, cultural context, translation philosophy, interpretation of the Quranic text, target audience, and the translator's expertise and understanding. These factors collectively highlight the complexity of translation and the richness of interpretation inherent in the Quranic text, offering readers a multifaceted understanding of this profound concept. Overall, this analysis contributes valuable insights into the translation process of religious-specific terminology, facilitating a deeper understanding of the Quran for diverse audiences and enriching scholarly discourse on the subject.

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Yasir Ahmed Alsbbagh, et al.

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Examining Cultural and Linguistic Challenges in
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