

## An Analysis of English Translations of Qur'anic

### Asma un Nabee SAW

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#### Abstract

This research has analyzed how 'Qur'anic Asma un Nabi Kareem (SAW) (The Holy Names of Muhammad (SAW) have been translated by six very renowned translators whose translations are included in Quran Arabic Corpus which is an annotated linguistic resource for Holy Quran. These translators have adopted different strategies to achieve right level of equivalence in their translations. The major strategies adopted by them at semantic level are: near-synonymy, paraphrase, and emphasis change.

First of all the Holy Names have been described in the context of source language and The Holy Qur'an; secondly, the strategies adopted by the translators for their translations have been analyzed; and finally, the translations have been analyzed by comparing semantic content of target language translations with source language original Names to see whether the strategies adopted and lexical choices made for translations are capable to achieve the right level of equivalence in the target language.

The research finds that in some translation cases the translators fail to adopt the right strategy and most appropriate lexical choice, and their translations do not convey the essence of the message of the Holy Book to the nearest possible extent.

**Key Words:** The Holy Qur'an, Asma un Nabi, Translations, Translation Strategy

#### Introduction

Muhammad (SAW) is not like only a father of a man amongst you people, but he is the messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets and Allah is ever all aware of everything<sup>1</sup>. In another verse of Holy Qur'an He has been ordained to introduce Himself<sup>2</sup>.

In The Holy Qur'an Muhammad ﷺ has been addressed by different beautiful and Holy Names like: Muhammad, Ahmad, Hamid,

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Mahmood, Taha, Yaseen, Rauf, Raheem, Nabi, Rasool, Umi, Kareem, Mudassir, Muzzamil, Khatim, Shahid, Mubashir, Nadhir صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم and others. Some of these references are proper names while some are attributive Names referring to Him صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم as the most Most Merciful, Compassionate, and Kind benefactor of humankind ever sent by God. Being references to an extraordinary and sublime character, these Holy Names acquire extraordinary meanings in the context of Holy Quran and His Seeraah. Therefore, it's usually very difficult for translators of The Holy Book to find a one word equivalent for them. The task of a translator becomes more difficult when Target Language contains no word as a counterpart of the source language terms. For instance, Arabic word *Bashir* has no one word substitute in English language. Moreover, a word possesses many layers of meanings in the context of the Holy Quran. In this situation a translator's task involves a keen and conscious analysis of source text, its particular context, and target language. This leads a translator to adopt different strategies for finding the right level of equivalence in the target language. In this respect, this research has explored two research questions:

1. What strategies were adopted by translator' for the translations of the Holy Names?
2. Did their strategies render them the nearest appropriate equivalent in the target language?

## **Literature Review**

### **Translation Studies and Religious Texts**

Robinson (2000: 103–107) views that religious translation is difficult in terms of status of translation (Is religious text translatable, How, when and for whom and with what control should it be translated), sacredness (Does the translated version still preserves sanctity of the original? where does sacredness reside and can it be transferred to the target language culture) and text. These core issues serve to contextualize the translation activity of three main religious texts The Quran, The Bible, and The Talmud.

Most of the translators and researchers of Holy Quran accept the inimitability of the Holy Quran and experience Quran as a linguistic miracle as claimed by the Quran itself. Arberry (1973) maintains that Quran is neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both. It is very difficult for a translator to reproduce its form in some other language as it is a Quran

specific form. So neither a form oriented nor a content oriented translation can achieve an equivalent in translation.

Abdul-Raof (2001) observes that:

*“The Qur’an itself will be lost when translated; its unique linguistic architecture, rhetorical beauty, and prototypical texture will be wasted” (p.40). He also emphasizes that “the target language cannot accommodate the linguistic and/or the rhetorical norms of the Qur’anic discourse” (p.109).”*

Amir and Othman (2012) state that:

*“Qur’anic texture cannot be translated. There must be a kind of loss.”(p.42)*

Halliday and Hasan (1976) point out that:

*“Texture is meant the qualities that cause a stretch of language to be read as a text rather than as an unordered and unorganized jumble of linguistic items”.*

Robbins (1996) points out four different types of texture which include: intertexture, inner texture, ideological texture, and scared texture (P.7). He regards the “sacred” texture as “the ways the text speaks about God, or talks about realms of religious life”. He believes that the relationship between human beings and divine matters is of sensitive nature.

Lawrence (2006) witnesses The Holy Quran as a miracle. He states that “Qur’anic verses are expressive of an inexhaustible truth. They signify meaning layered with meaning, light upon light, miracle after miracle”.

Saffarzadeh (2013) suggests that the most important aspect of Holy Quran which most of the translators could not translate justly and appropriately are the HOLY NAMES of ALLAH known as ASMA UL HUSNA in the original language. This is the major cause of incomplete conveyance of meanings. Any translation which does not pay attention to this most important aspect can’t be considered valid.

This research has analyzed the selected English translations of ‘Quranic Asma o Nabi Kareem (S.A.W)’ (The Holy Names of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)). The translations have been taken from Quran Arabic Corpus which is an online linguistic resource for Holy Quran. This corpus provides 6 translations of the Holy Quran by different renowned scholars. The research has particularly focused on the strategies adopted by the translators to achieve the nearest equivalent in the target language.

This study has applied Chesterman’s (1997) taxonomy for the analysis of translation strategies. His model divides translation strategies into two major types.

- I. Comprehension strategies involve the analysis of the whole text and overall nature of the translation process.

II. Production Strategies reveal how the translator has utilized the available linguistic material to produce an appropriate target text. The following table (as quoted in Fazel and Farahani 2013: 132) enlists different strategies suggested by Chasterman (1997) at three different levels: **Syntactic, semantic and pragmatic.**

<i>Syntactic Strategies</i>	<i>Semantic Strategies</i>	<i>Pragmatic Strategies</i>
<i>literal translation</i>	<i>synonymy</i>	<i>cultural filtering</i>
<i>loan, calque</i>	<i>antonymy</i>	<i>explicitness</i>
<i>transposition</i>	<i>hyponymy</i>	<i>information</i>
<i>unit shift</i>	<i>converse</i>	<i>change</i>
<i>phrase structure change</i>	<i>abstraction</i>	<i>interpersonal change</i>
<i>clause structure change</i>	<i>distribution</i>	<i>illocutionary change</i>
<i>sentence structure change</i>	<i>emphasis</i>	<i>coherence</i>
<i>cohesion change</i>	<i>change</i>	<i>change</i>
<i>level shift</i>	<i>paraphrase</i>	<i>partial translation</i>
<i>scheme change</i>		<i>visibility change</i>
		<i>Transediting</i>
		<i>Other pragmatic changes</i>

This research has analyzed the Holy Names which occur in first 10 chapters of Holy Quran. There are some Holy Names which refer to both Almighty ALLAH and the Holy Messenger (S.A.W). Translations of only those Holy Names will be selected for Analysis which refer to MUHAMMAD (S.A.W) in that particular reference of the Qur’anic Text.

First a brief introduction of each Holy Name has been given. This brief introduction will describe these Holy Names in the context of SL and particularly in the context of Holy Quran. For this purpose the research has relied on two very authentic bilingual sources- An Arabic English Lexicon (1968) and Arabic English Dictionary of Qur’anic usage (2008). After that it has been analyzed that which translation strategies have been adopted by the translators for translating these Names. Their choices has been compared with each other and with other possible translation choices mentioned in some authentic SL linguistic resource to investigate whether a

particular translator has achieved the nearest possible equivalence in the Target Language.

## Analysis

### 1. نُورٌ

This Holy attributive name has occurred in the verse 15 of Chapter 5 of the Holy Quran which says:

"يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ"<sup>3</sup>

The word نُورٌ occurs 43 times in the Holy Quran in different verses.

In 'An Arabic-English Lexicon', Lane (1968) has presented a detailed analysis of the word نُورٌ particularly taking into consideration occurrences of this word in the Holy Quran. His analysis may be summarized as follows.

نُورٌ Light syn. ضِيَاءٌ Antonym ظُلْمٌ.

ضِيَاءٌ is more intense than نُورٌ when applied to celestial bodies. In the Holy Quran the:

"هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا"<sup>4</sup>

The sun is termed ضِيَاءٌ and the moon نُورٌ: and it is said that ضِيَاءٌ is essential, but نُورٌ is accidental. It is of two kinds, the light of the present world and that of the world to come; and the former is either perceived sensibly, by the eye, and this is what diffuses itself from the luminous bodies as the sun and moon and stars and is mentioned in 5<sup>th</sup> verse of the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of Holy Quran as referred to above; or perceived by the eye of the intellect and this is what diffuses itself of the divine light, as the light of reason and the light of the Quran...., and both of these in common are spoken of in the Quran (6:1 & 39: 69). It is also applied to Muhammad (S.A.W). It is said by Aboo -Is-haaq to be so applied in the Quran (05:15). And that which manifests things, and shows to the eyes their true or real state: and therefore النُّورُ is applied in the Quran (07: 157) to that revelation which the Prophet ﷺ brought. النُّورُ is also one of the names of God as mentioned in the Holy Quran (24: 35) اللَّهُ نُورٌ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ (An Arabic-English Lexicon)

<i>Translator</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Strategy adopted for Translation</i>
<i>Pickthall</i>	<i>Light</i>	<i>Near Synonymy</i>
<i>Yusuf Ali</i>	<i>A (new) Light</i>	<i>Near Synonymy</i>
<i>Shakir</i>	<i>Light</i>	<i>Near Synonymy</i>
<i>Muhammad Sarwar</i>	<i>A Light</i>	<i>Near Synonymy</i>
<i>Mohsin Khan</i>	<i>A Light (Prophet Muhammad(SAW))</i>	<i>Near Synonymy+ Additional reference</i>
<i>Arberry</i>	<i>A Light</i>	<i>Near Synonymy</i>

**Table 4.1**

Table 4.1 shows how different translators have translated the Holy Name نُور which has occurred in above mentioned verse as an attributive name referred to Muhammad ﷺ.

**An Analysis of the word Light**

All the translators have translated Arabic word نُور into English word *light*. They have adopted a semantic strategy of near synonymy in doing so. Here an analysis is needed that whether the English *Light* is an appropriate equivalent of the Arabic original in all contexts. For this purpose the analysis of the lexical choice ‘*Light*’ has been done by exploring its possible conceptual meanings as presented by different authentic English language dictionaries.

These resources present the following connotations of the word light.

"The energy from the sun, a lamp, etc. That makes it possible to see things; or [countable] a thing that produces light, especially an electric light"  
(Oxford Learner’s Dictionary)

"The brightness that comes from the sun, fire, etc. And from electrical devices, and that allows things to be seen, or [countable] a thing that produces light, especially an electric light."  
(Cambridge Dictionary)

"Something that makes vision possible; or the sensation aroused by stimulation of the visual receptors; or a source of light as a celestial body, a candle, an electric light; or a spiritual illumination, inner light, enlightenment, truth."

(Merriam Webster Dictionary)

*"The energy from the Sun, a flame, a lamp etc that allows you to see things  
(Longman Dictionary of contemporary English usage."*

These connotative meanings are comparable to Arabic word نُور when it refers to the kind of light that is diffused from the luminous bodies like sun, moon and stars as referred to in the Holy Quran. However, these connotations do not refer to the second type of illumination which diffuses itself from a divine source as referred to in the Quran and some other places also. In these references of Holy Quran the term نُور is referred to as a light perceived by the eye of intellect and diffused of the divine light. Among the above quoted Only Merriam Webster dictionary refers to one such connotation of the word.

When the Arabic term نُور refers to Allah Almighty in the Holy Quran or to Muhammad ﷺ, it acquires semantic content which is not sufficiently accommodated by the generic use of the English Term *Light*. Therefore, it is not the most appropriate or sufficient equivalent of the original term نُور. To testify this hypothesis a multi-dimensional analysis was required. At first level, a comparison of the lexis of both the languages has been done. At second level a contextual analysis of the term نُور in particular context of the Holy Quran has supported this hypothesis.

A comparative analysis of the two lexis shows that Arabic term نُور refers to more referents and senses as compared to English term *Light*. The former has more connotations as compared to the later.

The Arabic term نُور may refer to:

- The energy, illumination or light diffused from the celestial bodies as sun, moon, and stars and perceived sensibly by the eye
- The intellectual or spiritual enlightenment which diffuses itself from divine source of enlightenment
- The Almighty Allah as His proper name or an attribute
- The messenger of Allah as his ﷺ attribute and his name
- The revelation brought by the messenger of Allah
- The English term *Light* may refer to:
  - The energy or brightness that comes from sun, moon, stars, fire, or some electric source, and it makes vision possible
  - Some source of light that may be a celestial body (sun, moon, stars etc), or a candle, or an electric lamp
  - Spiritual illumination or inner light (this connotation is missed by most of the major sources of English lexicon)

A lexical comparison of both the terms shows that there are some referents of the term نُور that are not shared by its English counterpart *Light*. So far as there occurrence as a physical phenomenon is concerned, both the terms can be replaced as the nearest possible equivalents of the other. However, the English term *light* does not contain any referent that is a divine or celestial being and which may be a source of spiritual enlightenment or inner light. It does not refer to God or the messenger of God, and it does not refer directly to the revelation of God. Therefore, this term is not an absolute equivalent of the original Arabic term نُور which has different connotations in different contexts of the Holy Quran. An analysis of the term نُور in Quran's context was inevitable for complete clarification of the matter. As it has been discussed above that the term نُور has different senses and different referents in the Holy Quran. Owing to this diversity of references the referring terms need different target text equivalents in different situations. For instance, when in the Holy Quran the term نُور refers to the energy or brightness coming from a physical or natural source of light it implies to accidental light(as mentioned in Arabic English Lexicon) or derived light which is not essential.

The Quran terms sun as ضِيَاء and moon as نُور because moon derives it light from sun. On the other hand the terms which refer to Almighty Allah, Holy messenger of Allah ﷺ or the revelation of Allah have quite distinct conceptual content. The نُور of Allah is not derived from any other source. So the general concept of نُور can't be applied here. It implies that term نُور have different domains in Holy Quran. One is physical domain in which it refers to the light emitted by different sources as sun, moon, stars, a lamp, a candle, or some other source. The other is metaphysical domain in which it refers to Almighty Allah, His messenger ﷺ, His holy revelation or spiritual enlightenment bestowed by Him on the pious. In the second case the general term *Light* alone can't be chosen as the most appropriate equivalent in the target language. In view of the above discussion the translation of Mohsin Khan is most appropriate as it does not rely on the lexical replacement of the word نُور by the target language synonym *Light*, but also mentions the referent which was the most appropriate strategy in the particular context of the

Holy Quran. The other translations do not take into account this consideration.

2. **بَشِيرٌ** ﷺ

This Holy attributive Name has occurred in verse 19 of Chapter 5 of the Holy Quran which says:

" يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فَتْرَةٍ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ"<sup>5</sup>

The trilateral root (ب ش ر) occurs 123 times in the Holy Quran, in 11 derived forms. Its nominal form (بَشِيرٍ) occurs 9 times.

"[n.] a bearer of good tidings: ..... وَنَذِيرًا Surety We have sent you with the truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner...<sup>6</sup>."

"One who announces to a people [or person] an event, either good or evil; but meaning the former oftener than the latter; an announcer of a joyful event, or joyful events: one who rejoices another, or others, by annunciation."

S.No	Translator	Translation	Strategy adopted for the Translation
1	Pickthall	Messenger of cheer	Paraphrase
2	Yusuf Ali	Bringer of glad tidings	Paraphrase
3	Shakir	Giver of good news	Paraphrase
4	Muhammad Sarwar	Bearer of good news	Paraphrase
5	Mohsin Khan	Bringer of glad tidings	Paraphrase
6	Arberry	Bearer of good tidings	Paraphrase

**Table 4.2**

All the translators have adopted the same strategy for translating this Holy Noun referring to Muhammad ﷺ in the verse quoted above. They have paraphrased the original Arabic nominal (بَشِيرٍ) into NP's (noun phrases) of their own choice. They had no option other than paraphrase because the target language had no one word substitute/equivalent available into which it could be translated.

An analysis of the translated phrases from 1 to 6 (in the table 4.2) shows that phrases are almost of same structure, and lead to one possible meaning-

One who brings glad tidings/news. However, the translation of Shakir is different in a way that the Head word of the noun phrase ‘Giver’ is a relatively flexible noun as compared to the Head nouns adopted by the rest of the translators. The other translators use three head nouns Messenger, Bringer, and Bearer of good new or tidings. These head nouns strictly adhere to the essential semantic content of the Arabic original. It restricts the meaning of the term to ‘One who imparts the news/tidings given to Him by his Lord’. The Giver may accumulate other meanings in the context of target language reader and he may not be able to infer the implied meaning. Surely ‘Giver’ here means the messenger of good news who gives news, and not the one who gives news from his own self, but it was better to use other head word that reflect a proximity to the basic semantic content of the original term.

3. نَذِيرٌ ﷻ

This Holy attributive Name has occurred in verse 19 of Chapter 5 of the Holy Quran that has been quoted in section 4.2.

The trilateral root (ن ذ ر) occurs 130 times in the Holy Quran in eight derived forms. Its nominal form (نذير) occurs 58 times.

“[n. /act. Part., pl. (nudhur)] 1. Warner/preacher that which warns-  
 تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا Exalted is He who has sent down the differentiator to His servant that He may be to all beings a Warner”<sup>7</sup>.

“One who gives information or advice of things: and one who warns; one who cautions; and one who puts in fear; one who gives notice to a people of an army, or other thing that has come upon them; a spy who gives notice, to a people, of an army, to put them on their guard.---[And also.] (AINADHIR)The apostle ,so in the Holy Quran (35: 37)accord to The prophet Muhammad ﷺ.”

S.No	Translator	Translation	Strategy adopted for Translation
1	Pickthall	A Warner	Synonymy
2	Yusuf Ali	A Warner	Synonymy
3	Shakir	A Warner	Synonymy
4	Muhammad Sarwar	-----	Not Translated
5	Mohsin Khan	A Warner	Synonymy
6	Arberry	A Warner	Synonymy

Table 4.3

The translators have adopted the strategy of synonymy for translation of نذير ﷺ. As compared to بشير (which had no equivalent in the target language) this Name could be replaced by one word equivalents, like a Warner or a Cautioner, in the target language. Owing to this fact there is complete harmony among the translators on this Name. The best possible strategy they could adopt was synonymy in which to replace the Arabic Term by the English Term ‘a warner’ or ‘a cautioner’.

4. رُؤُوفٌ ﷻ

This Holy attributive name has occurred in verse 128 of chapter 9 of Holy Quran.

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ<sup>8</sup>

“(ر/ا/ف) mercy, kindness, compassion, to have pity, to show kindness, to be merciful) of this trilateral root two forms occur 13 times in the Quran. رُؤُوفٌ occurs 11 times.

رَأْفَةٌ [n.] Compassion, kindness and we put into the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy.

رُؤُوفٌ [intens. Act. Part.][An attribute of God] Compassionate, Most Kind then He turned to them; He is to them most kind and Merciful<sup>9</sup>. ”

“رَأْفَةٌ is syn. with رَحْمَةٌ or it denotes a more special and more tender affection than رَحْمَةٌ; or the utmost degree thereof; or the tenderest thereof. رُؤُوفٌ is one of the epithets applied to God; meaning الرحيم [The merciful; or rather it has an intensive signification, i.e the very Merciful]<sup>10</sup> ”

S.No	Translator	Translation	Strategy adopted for translation
1	Pickthall	Full of pity	Paraphrase
2	Yusuf Ali	Most kind	Synonymy + Emphasis Change
3	Shakir	Compassionate	Synonymy
4	Muhammad Sarwar	Very compassionate	Synonymy+ Emphasis Change
5	Mohsin Khan	Full of pity	Paraphrase
6	Arberry	Gentle	Synonymy

Table 4.4

The translators have adopted different strategies for the translation of this Holy attributive Name of Muhammad ﷺ. Pickthall and Mohsin Khan have paraphrased the original Arabic into a phrase ‘Full of pity’. The reason behind this choice might be to refer to the intense signification of this word. As referred to above this word has an intense signification i.e. *The Very Merciful*. The paraphrased form ‘Full of Pity’ possesses the intense signification of the original word. As compared to a simple synonym pitiful, compassionate, or merciful this is a better translation equivalent in this context because this term is applied to the Messenger ﷺ not in an ordinary sense, but with a special intense signification i.e. The very Merciful, The very Kind, Very Compassionate etc.

Shakir and Arberry has substituted the original Arabic word with single Target language equivalent ‘Compassionate’ and ‘Gentle’. These lexical choices convey the basic semantic content of the Source language term, but lack the intense signification, emphasis and thematic focus of the source text. In the context of this verse wherein Muhammad ﷺ is referred to ,with intensiveness of degree in all attributes, as extremely grievous over the pain of the faithful, extremely solicitous and concerned for them, extraordinarily compassionate and merciful, the translators should have preserved the intense signification of the original text. Another clue to a special reference to the intensiveness of degree is the occurrence of two intense attributive nouns together *رُؤُوفٌ and* in this verse.

Yusuf Ali and Muhammad Sarwar have conveyed the intense signification of the original text by adopting the strategy of emphasis change with synonymy.

The translations of Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Sarwar, Mohsin Khan, and Pickthall are more appropriate and better equivalents as they contain a special intense signification.

### 5 رَحِيمٌ ﷻ

This Holy attributive name has occurred in verse 128 of chapter 9 of Holy Quran that has been quoted in section 4.4.

The trilateral root ( ر ح م ) occurs 339 times in the Holy Quran in 9 derived forms. Its nominal form رَحِيمٌ occurs 116 times.

“[Intens. qausi-act.part., pl.ruhama] 1. One endowed with mercy, compassion (48:29) and those with Him are hard against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves.2 [attribute of God] the most compassionate (2: 199) and ask forgiveness of God: He is most forgiving and most compassionate<sup>11</sup>.”

“الرَّحِيمِ” is the name or attribute applied to God. It is considered as expressive of a constant attribute with somewhat of intensiveness, agreeably with analog, may be rendered *The Merciful*.

رَحِيمٌ has an intensive signification [having much mercy], It is also applied to a man and so is رَحُومٌ (*Rahoom*) in the same sense, and likewise to a woman; the plural of رَحِيمٌ is رُحَمَاءٌ as occurring in the tradition as related by different persons إِيْمَانِيْرَحْمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الرُّحَمَاءُ Verily those on whom God has mercy, of his servants, are the merciful.”

<b>S.no</b>	<b>Translator</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Strategy adopted for Translation</b>
1	<i>Pickthall</i>	<i>Merciful</i>	<i>Synonymy</i>
2	<i>Yusuf Ali</i>	<i>Most merciful</i>	<i>Synonymy+ Emphasis change</i>
3	<i>Shakir</i>	<i>Compassionate</i>	<i>Synonymy</i>
4	<i>Muhammad Sarwar</i>	<i>Very merciful</i>	<i>Synonym+ Emphasis change</i>
5	<i>Mohsin Khan</i>	<i>Kind and Merciful</i>	<i>Paraphrase</i>
6	<i>Arberry</i>	<i>Compassionate</i>	<i>Synonymy</i>

**Table 4.5**

As this Holy Name is synonymous with the Name Raufun which has been discussed previously, its analysis is almost similar to the previous one. There is a little variety in the translations of different translators. Pickthall, Shakir, and Arberry tried to find the equivalence in the form of the nearest synonym available in the target language, so they replaced the Source text

attribute with synonym of the target text without any emphasis change to refer to intensiveness of the original word. Therefore, their translations do not contain the degree of intensiveness which the original Arabic word contains in the particular context of this verse of Holy Quran.

Yusuf Ali and Muhammad Sarwar have tried to preserve the intensiveness contained by the Arabic original. They have adopted the strategy of synonymy and emphasis change that was necessary for specific reference to the Holy Prophet ﷺ as the possessor of a very intensive degree of Mercy for the faithful. If analyzed in the particular reference and context of this verse of Holy Quran the choice and strategy adopted by these two render more appropriate equivalent. This particular verse contains other references with intensiveness. For instance, your suffering is extremely grievous to him; He is excessively solicitous respecting you.

Mohsin Ali has paraphrased the Arabic word with a collocation *Kind and Merciful*. This strategy also helps to maintain the intensiveness of the original in a way that one synonym of the target language could not preserve the right level of intensiveness. So, the strategy of paraphrasing was another possible to maintain the equivalence in the sense of intensiveness.

#### 6 نَبِيٌّ ﷺ

This verse has occurred in verse 158 of Chapter 7 of the Holy Quran which says:

"قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَأَمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ"<sup>12</sup>

The trilateral root (ن ب ل) occurs 160 times in the Holy Quran in 6 derived forms. Its noun form نَبِيٌّ occurs 75 times.

[n.pl. نَبِيَّوْنَ and أَنْبِيَاءُ] Who acquaints or informs mankind, or who is acquainted or informed regarding God and things unseen: or according to some it is derived from نَبَاةٌ or نَبْوَةٌ signifying “elevation” in which case it is without (ء): or according to others, from (Nabeeun) in the sense of a “conspicuous way”. It is a less special word than رَسُولٌ; for every رَسُولٌ is a نَبِيٌّ, but not every نَبِيٌّ is a رَسُولٌ.

<i>S. No</i>	<i>Translator</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Strategy adopted for Translation</i>
1	Pickthall	The Prophet	Synonymy
2	Yusuf Ali	The Prophet	Synonymy
3	Shakir	The Prophet	Synonymy
4	Muhammad Sarwar	The Prophet	Synonymy
5	Mohsin Khan	The Prophet	Synonymy
6	Arberry	The Prophet	Synonymy

**Table: 4.6**

There is a uniformity in the translation strategy of this Noun (reference) of Muhammad ﷺ. All the six translators replaced the original Arabic word with a synonymous DP determiner phrase ‘The Prophet’ which is different from generic ‘prophet’ or ‘a prophet’ owing to the reason that most of the authentic dictionaries of English language contain a special reference, apart from other connotations, to Muhammad ﷺ wherein He ﷺ is referred to as ‘The Prophet’. The reasons for this special reference are rooted in the context of Arabic language and Holy Quran which can be summed up in the following points.

There are two major connotations of the generic ‘prophet’ shared by most of the English dictionaries that are described by Oxford Learner’s Dictionary as following.

- a) [Countable] (in the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religions) a person sent by God to teach the people and give them messages from God
- b) The Prophet [singular] Muhammad ﷺ
- c) [Countable] the person who claims to know what will happen in the future
- d) [Countable] prophet (of something) a person who teaches or supports a new idea, theory, etc<sup>13</sup>.

Connotations (c) & (d) can be neither an equivalent to the Arabic word نبي as it refers to the one who informs or acquaints others about what is unseen (not necessarily about future) which may be God, or the things told or revealed by

God, nor an equivalent in this particular context as the office of prophet hood in Islam does not refer to information of future events only. Connotation (a) signifies a near equivalent of the word رَسُولٌ but even it does not exactly convey what Arabic word refers to. So, all the three connotations are not exact equivalents of the original word. Therefore, a special reference was necessary which has been included by the English Lexicons to cope with the situation.

In the light of above discussion it is necessary for the translators to use the definite article with the noun prophet to refer to Muhammad ﷺ.

### 7 رَسُولٌ ﷺ

This Holy Name occurs in verse 158 of chapter 7 of the Holy Quran that has been quoted in section 4.6.

The trilateral root (ر س ل) occurs 513 times in the Holy Quran in 8 derived forms. Its noun form رَسُولٌ occurs 332 times.

*“One who has a message; a messenger; often meaning an apostle of God and with the article (ال) applied to Muhammad ﷺ. Its meaning in the proper language of the Arab is one who carries on by the consecutive progressions the relations of the tidings of him who has sent him; taken in that sense the saying of Muazin means ‘ I testify that Muhammad ﷺ is the relater by consecutive progressions of the tidings of God.’”*

<b>Sr. No</b>	<b>Translator</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Strategy adopted for Translation</b>
1	Pickthall	His Messenger	Synonymy
2	Yusuf Ali	His Messenger	Synonymy
3	Shakir	His Messenger	Synonymy
4	Muhammad Sarwar	His Messenger	Synonymy
5	Mohsin Khan	His Messenger	Synonymy
6	Arberry	His Messenger	Synonymy

**Table 4.7**

There is complete harmony among the translators on the translation of this Noun. They have translated the source text رَسُولٌ with Target language

nearest possible synonym Messenger. This translation choice is most appropriate in the target language to convey the meaning of the original language noun.

**8 أمي**

This Holy attributive Name occurs in verse 158 of Chapter 7 of Holy Quran that has been quoted in section 4.6.

أمي: Of or belonging to a nation who did not write nor read; and therefore applied to the one not knowing the art of writing nor that of reading: as though he were thus called in relation to condition in which his mother (أمه) brought him forth; n. From (أم) because the art of reading or writing is acquired and much a person is as her mother brought him forth.

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Translator</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Strategy adopted</i>
1	<i>Pickthall</i>	<i>Who can neither read nor write</i>	<i>Paraphrase</i>
2	<i>Yusuf Ali</i>	<i>Unlettered</i>	<i>Near synonymy</i>
3	<i>Shakir</i>	<i>Ummi</i>	<i>Borrowing</i>
4	<i>Muhammad Sarwar</i>	<i>Unlettered</i>	<i>Near Synonymy</i>
5	<i>Mohsin Khan</i>	<i>Who can neither read nor write</i>	<i>Paraphrase</i>
6	<i>Arberry</i>	<i>Of the common folk</i>	<i>Paraphrase</i>

There is a variety in the translation strategies and translations of this attributive Name. Pickthall and Mohsin Khan have translated it with a relative clause ‘Who can neither read nor write. This phrase is a better equivalent as compared to one word synonym ‘Unlettered’ adopted by Yousuf Ali and Muhammad Sarwar. The target language synonym ‘Unlettered’ may mislead a target language reader. The word Umi, in the particular context of this verse, refers to a person who is in the initial state in which his mother gave birth to him. He is in his natural state ‘Who can neither read nor write’. It does not mean that he has no knowledge. He has the knowledge of revelation given to Him by his God. The synonymous term unlettered may refer to both the connotations: One who cannot read or

write and is in a natural state; and one who is ignorant and knows nothing. Therefore the translators who have adopted the strategy of paraphrase are well aware of the sensitivity of the context

The translation done by Arberry does not contain the essential conceptual meaning and reference of the original Arabic word; therefore, it is not the appropriate equivalent. The phrase ‘Of the common folk’ does not clarify to the target language reader that in which sense He ﷺ is a prophet of the common folk. It implies a partial sense of the original word *Umi* in the sense that usually common folk are unlettered who can neither read nor write, but target language reader may find it difficult to infer the implicit meaning of the phrase as they might be unaware of the conceptual and contextual meaning of the source text. Furthermore, this translation is wrong in the sense that here ‘*Umi*’ does not refer to common folk, but to Muhammad ﷺ with a highly positive sense.

### **Conclusion**

This research has submitted the following findings:

In most of the cases the translators have been successful in finding nearest possible equivalents in the target language for the Holy Names. However, there are some aspects of source text which have been ignored by some translators in some translations. This research identifies two types of insufficiencies in the translations. First type is due to the incapability of the target language to accommodate the whole semantic content of the source language term in word or even in a phrase. For second type of insufficiency translators are responsible for not adopting the right strategy or right lexis.

The Holy Names نُور (when referred to Allah almighty or Muhammad ﷺ) (When referred to Muhammad ﷺ and بَشِير (even as generic noun) had no one word equivalents which could shift the whole semantic content from source language to the target language. The first word نُور , when taken as a referent to a celestial being, is a metaphysical concept which can't be encapsulated in the English word Light; therefore its translation as ‘light’ in all the context is neither possible nor appropriate. The second word أُمِّي has different connotations in Arabic language. In different contexts it acquires different meanings. It has no one word equivalent, and translators usually translate it in phrases instead of possible one word equivalents. The third word بَشِير has absolutely no one word equivalent in English language. These

were the Nouns which were difficult to translate because of unavailability of appropriate counterparts in the target language, and translators adopted different strategies, except in the case of نُور, like paraphrase to compensate the semantic or pragmatic loss of the original text. In the case of نُور the translators have relied on a near possible synonym 'Light' which should be revisited.

For second type of insufficiencies in the translations, some translators are responsible for not transferring maximum linguistic aspects to the target text which they could transfer by adopting appropriate strategies. For instance, some holy names signify an intensiveness of degree both in Arabic language and in a particular reference of the Holy Quran. In the translations of such terms some translators fail to preserve the intensiveness of degree. For instance, the Holy Names رُؤُوفٌ and رَحِيمٌ contain intense significations, and their occurrence in a collocation in verse 128 of chapter 9 of Holy Quran refers to even more intense signification. In the translation of these Holy Names some translators have adopted the strategy of emphasis change that was inevitable to preserve the intense signification i.e. The Most Merciful, Very Kind and Merciful. However, the translators who just translated by using English synonyms of these Arabic words, without using any additional strategy to preserve the intense signification, ignored important linguistic aspects of source text. Moreover, there are translations wherein the translators have picked the wrong referent. For instance, in the translation of verse 158 of chapter 7 of the Holy Quran some translators translate the word أُمِّي as common folk while, without any conflict of opinion, it refers to Muhammad ﷺ in this context.

## **References**

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