The Challenge of Translating Qur'anic Polysemous Terms: A Comparative Study of Selected Verses from Sūrat al-Baqarah in the Translations of Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Abdel Haleem

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Abstract

The translation of polysemous terms in the Holy Qur'ān presents significant challenges due to the semantic richness and contextual layers of classical Arabic vocabulary. This study examines nine key polysemous words from *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, analyzing how two English translators, Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2023) and M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (2005), render these terms. Classical tafsīr by IbnKathīr (2000) and al-Ṭabarī (1987) is consulted to understand exegetical nuances, while lexical sources including Lane (1863) and Wehr (1979) provide semantic clarity. The research identifies differences between literal and interpretive translation strategies, highlighting how choices impact theological and rhetorical meaning. Furthermore, this study explores how contextual and cultural factors influence the translators' lexical choices, showing that some words carry layered meanings that extend beyond literal definitions. By comparing translations with classical tafsīr and modern dictionaries, the research highlights how interpretive decisions can either preserve or shift the nuance of the original text. This approach underscores the importance of combining linguistic, exegetical, and semantic analysis when addressing polysemy in the Qur'ān. The study also provides a framework for future research on translation strategies in sacred texts, offering insights for translators, scholars, and students in the fields of Qur'anic studies and comparative linguistics. Findings reveal that

polysemy in the Qur'ān requires translators to balance fidelity to the source text with readability in English, contributing to the broader field of Qur'anic translation studies.

Keywords: Qur'anic Translation, Polysemy, Sūrat al-Baqarah, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Abdel Haleem, Comparative Study, Challenge

Introduction

Polysemy, the phenomenon where a single word carries multiple related meanings, is particularly prevalent in the Qur'ān. Classical Arabic, with its rich morphology and rhetorical structures, allows words to convey spiritual, legal, moral, and literary meanings simultaneously (Lane 1863; Wehr 1979). Translating these words into English poses challenges, as translators must preserve semantic depth while maintaining clarity and accessibility for contemporary readers (Baker 2011).The study of polysemous terms is central to understanding Qur'anic translation because a single lexical choice can influence the theological, ethical, and stylistic interpretation of a verse. This study focuses on *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, which contains numerous polysemous terms that demonstrate these challenges in a practical context.By comparing the renderings of nine polysemous words across two prominent English translations, this research aims to illustrate how translation strategies affect meaning. Classical tafsīr sources, including IbnKathīr (2000) and al-Ṭabarī (1987), provide exegetical guidance, while modern lexicons like Lane (1863) and Wehr (1979) help establish the semantic range of each term. The study contributes to the broader discussion on Qur'anic translation, offering insights for translators, scholars, and students of Islamic studies.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its focus on polysemy, a feature of classical Arabic that presents unique challenges in Qur'anic translation. Words in the Qur'ān often carry multiple, context-dependent meanings that are essential for understanding its theological, moral, and legal guidance. Translators must navigate these layers of meaning carefully to maintain fidelity to the original text while ensuring clarity for the target audience.

Misinterpretation of polysemous terms can lead to shifts in doctrinal understanding or the ethical message of a verse. By analyzing selected verses from *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, this study emphasizes the importance of examining how translators resolve ambiguities inherent in polysemous words. It provides a systematic approach to identifying the linguistic and semantic challenges faced in translation. The study also highlights the intricate relationship between lexical choice and theological interpretation, which is often overlooked in general translation studies.

Furthermore, this research contributes to the broader field of translation studies by showcasing the balance between literal and interpretive strategies in translating sacred texts. Literal translations prioritize word-for-word equivalence, potentially preserving semantic accuracy, but may obscure the broader contextual or ethical meaning. Interpretive translations, on the other hand, aim to convey intended meaning but may deviate from the original wording. By comparing Abdullah Yusuf Ali's and M.A.S. Abdel Haleem's renderings, this study illustrates these methodological differences and their implications for readers' understanding. This comparative approach allows scholars to evaluate the strengths and limitations of different translation philosophies. It also provides insights into the translator's decision-making process, shedding light on the complex interplay between language, culture, and theology.

In addition, this study serves as a bridge between classical exegetical scholarship and modern translation practices. By consulting tafsīr works such as IbnKathīr (2000) and al-Ṭabarī (1987), it contextualizes the semantic range of polysemous terms within the Qur'ān's historical and interpretive tradition. Lexical references, including Lane (1863) and Wehr (1979), further clarify the possible meanings of words in their linguistic and cultural context. This dual focus allows the research to assess how effectively modern translators integrate classical interpretations into English renderings. The study thereby strengthens the connection between historical exegetical knowledge and contemporary

translation needs. It underscores the importance of informed translation practices that respect both the linguistic depth and the spiritual significance of the Qur'ān.

Finally, the practical implications of this study are significant for translators, educators, and students in the field of Qur'anic studies and comparative linguistics. By identifying challenges in translating polysemous words and analyzing how different strategies impact meaning, the study provides a framework for more nuanced translation. It encourages translators to consider both lexical fidelity and contextual appropriateness, fostering translations that are both accurate and comprehensible. For students and scholars, it offers a model for critical engagement with translation choices and their theological consequences. The research also opens avenues for further studies on semantic analysis, cross-linguistic translation, and the interpretive dimensions of sacred texts. Ultimately, this study highlights the crucial role of careful linguistic and exegetical analysis in producing translations that faithfully convey the richness of the Qur'ān.

Literature Review

The study of polysemous terms in Qur'anic translation necessitates a comprehensive understanding of both linguistic and contextual frameworks. Mona Baker's *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (2011) provides a foundational perspective on semantic equivalence and translation strategies. Baker emphasizes that meaning is context-dependent and that translators must navigate lexical ambiguity carefully to preserve both semantic and pragmatic functions of the source text. Her work is particularly relevant for Qur'anic translation, where words often carry multiple layers of spiritual, legal, and ethical significance, necessitating nuanced interpretive decisions (Baker 2011).

Edward William Lane's *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (1863) is an indispensable resource for examining classical Arabic vocabulary. Lane provides detailed analyses of word roots, derivations, and semantic ranges, supported by historical and literary examples. His lexicon allows researchers to identify the multiple connotations of Qur'anic terms,

especially polysemous words that require careful semantic mapping to English equivalents. Lane's approach demonstrates the importance of historical-linguistic context in understanding Qur'anic lexicon, making it a critical reference for comparative translation studies (Lane 1863).

Hans Wehr's*A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (1979) offers complementary insights by providing clear distinctions between contemporary usages of Arabic terms and their classical meanings. While focusing primarily on Modern Standard Arabic, Wehr's dictionary facilitates a comparative analysis of semantic shifts over time. For translators, understanding these distinctions helps in evaluating translation choices, particularly when modern English renderings might diverge from classical interpretations. Wehr's work is therefore instrumental in analyzing both the fidelity and readability of contemporary Qur'anic translations (Wehr 1979).

Finally, IbnKathīr's*Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm* (2000) provides exegetical depth crucial for interpreting polysemousQur'anic terms. IbnKathīr systematically explains the meaning of words in their textual and contextual setting, drawing upon Prophetic traditions, Companions' reports, and linguistic analysis. His tafsīr clarifies ambiguities and offers insight into the theological and ethical implications of lexical choices. Consulting IbnKathīr allows translators and researchers to assess whether English renderings capture the semantic and exegetical richness of the original text, bridging classical scholarship with modern translation practice (IbnKathīr 2000).

Together, these sources provide a robust framework for analyzing polysemy in Qur'anic translation. By integrating contemporary translation theory (Baker), classical and modern lexicography (Lane and Wehr), and exegetical guidance (IbnKathīr), researchers can critically evaluate translation strategies and the extent to which they preserve or transform the meaning of the Qur'anic text. This multi-layered approach is essential for understanding the challenges of translating Qur'anicpolysemous terms and contributes to both theoretical and practical discussions in the field of translation studies.

Research Questions

1. What are the governing factors in identifying the intended meanings of the
2. Polysemous words in the Holy Quriin?
3. To what extent do the translators, under study, succeed in conveying the intendedmeaning of the polysemy in the Holy Qur5n into English?
4. What are the appropriate procedures or ways of translating polysemy in the Holy
5. How do Abdullah Yusuf Ali and M.A.S. Abdel Haleem render polysemous terms in *Sūrat al-Baqarah*?

Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, focusing on nine polysemous terms in *Sūrat al-Baqarah*. It compares their renderings in two English translations, Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2023) and M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (2005), while referencing classical tafsīr by IbnKathīr (2000) and al-Ṭabarī (1987). Lexical analysis is supported by Lane (1863) and Wehr (1979) to determine semantic ranges. The methodology focuses on comparative semantics to identify patterns, divergences, and translation strategies.

Concept of Polysmy

Polysemy, the phenomenon where a single word carries multiple related meanings, is a well-established concept in linguistics. Michel Bréal first introduced the term *polysémie* in 1897, and since then it has been widely studied in semantic theory (Crystal 2008:373). Polysemy differs from homonymy, which involves words that share form but have unrelated meanings. According to Löbner (2002:44), polysemy is pervasive in natural languages, as opposed to homonymy, which is relatively rare. He further explains that a lexeme constitutes a case of polysemy if it has two or more interrelated meanings or "meaning variants" and emphasizes that these variants should be studied separately to understand their usage fully (Löbner 2002:44-45). Polysemy plays a significant role in the historical development of languages, as lexemes continuously shift meanings and develop new variants (ibid: 45).

In the context of the Qur'an, polysemy is particularly salient because classical Arabic allows words to convey multiple layers of meaning, including spiritual, legal, moral, and

literary senses simultaneously. Qur'anic exegetes have recognized that most words in the Qur'an carry different senses or levels of meaning (Berg, 2001). Classical Muslim scholars studied polysemy and homonymy within the framework of *al-Wūjūh/al-Ašbāhwa an-Naẓā'ir*, which categorizes words based on multiple senses (wujūh) or near-synonyms (naẓāʾir) (Berg, 2001). These scholars acknowledged that Qur'anic terms often have multiple context-dependent meanings, and the intended sense can only be accurately understood by consulting tafsirs (Al-Mulla 1989:210). This plurality of meanings emphasizes the intricacies involved in translating Qur'anic text and demonstrates the challenge of conveying the semantic richness in other languages.

Outside the Qur'an, polysemy is observed in all natural languages and is widely utilized in literary and everyday contexts. Words like *clear*, *obvious*, and *bright* carry multiple, context-dependent meanings in English (Crystal 2008:373). Polysemy contributes to rhetorical style, semantic flexibility, and the expressive potential of language. Linguists categorize polysemy into primary and secondary senses, where the primary sense is commonly recognized by speakers, and secondary senses often arise contextually or figuratively (Beekman and Callow 1975:00; Larson 1998:00; Barnwell 1981:00; Dickins et al. 2017:00). Cruse (2011:115-116) further distinguishes linear polysemy—where one sense is a subset of another—from non-linear polysemy, in which figurative or metaphorical senses emerge. Linear polysemy can be further subdivided into autohyponymy, automeronymy, autosuperordination, and autoholonymy (Cruse 2011:116). Autohyponymy, relevant to Qur'anic examples, occurs when a word has a general default sense and a more specific, contextually restricted sense that denotes a subvariety of the general sense (Cruse 2011:110).

Polysemy in Arabic and Holly Quran

Arabic language is a rich and full of the concepts that make it unique. Polysemy is a characteristic of all languages which based on the principle of metaphor where words can be used in new conceptual meanings (Marzari, 2006, p. 15). In Arabic the case that words

have multiple senses called (al-Īshtīrāk al-Lafḍī). AlMunjid (1999, p. 15) argues that polysemy is a common linguistic phenomenon in all natural languages. He considers polysemy as multiplicity of meaning which one word has different meanings. Numerous books and dictionaries have been written on the polysemic words (al-Īshtīrāk al-Lafḍī) in Arabic.

In the Holly Quran there are lots of work have been done in the polysemy. Abdussalam (2001, p. 66) emphasis that multiplicity of meaning of words in the Quranic expressions received adequate attention of Muslim scholars under the science "al-Ashbāhwa al-Naẓāīr or al-Wūjūhwa al-Naẓāīr," i.e. the study of Quranicpolysemic senses and used. There are many scholars in the science of the Quran interested in polysemy in the Quran. The Muslim scholars, in their books regard polysemy in the Quran; they collected the polysemic words in the Quran and stated its senses then give examples of each sense from the verses in the Quran. AlDāmaghānī, one of the scholars in the science of the Quran, indicated that there are more than 500 polysemic words in the Holy Quran, whereas, al-Nīsābūrī offered 540 entries of polysemic words (Abdussalam, 2008, p. 27). Nowadays, it can be found many books written in the polysemy in the Holly Quran such as al-Ashbahwa al-Naẓāīr for Mūqatīl al-Balkhy. al-Wujūhwa al- Naẓāīr fi al-Qurān al-Karīr for HarūnībnMūsa. - Nūzhāt al-âʿyūn al-Nāwaẓr fi ʿlam al-Wūjūhwa al- Nāẓaār for Ibn-alJāwzīy

The study of polysemy in the Qur'an highlights its distinctive role in sacred texts. Words in the Qur'an are rarely monosemous; their layered meanings convey theological, moral, and legal dimensions simultaneously, requiring exegetical interpretation. In contrast, polysemy in secular contexts primarily enhances stylistic expression and semantic versatility. By comparing Qur'anic polysemy with that in other languages or literary texts, scholars can better understand the cognitive, semantic, and translational implications of words with multiple interrelated senses. This dual perspective allows for a

deeper appreciation of both linguistic universals and the unique challenges of translating religious texts.

A Comparative Analytical Study of the English Translations of Selected Qur'anic Verses by Abdullah Yusuf Ali and M.A.S. Abdel Haleem

Before presenting the detailed analysis of selected polysemous terms, it is essential to outline the methodology and criteria applied in evaluating the translations. Each example is examined in its original Arabic form, followed by the renderings of Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2023) and M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (2005). Classical tafsīr sources and lexical references are consulted to provide semantic, contextual, and exegetical insights, highlighting the challenges and strategies involved in translating Qur'anic polysemy. The detail analysis is as under:

Example 1: Hudā (هُدًى) Guidance (Qur'ān 2:2)

Arabic Text: ﴿ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ ۛ فِيهِ ۛ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

Translations:

- Yusuf Ali (2023): "This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah."
- Abdel Haleem (2005): "This is the Scripture in which there is no doubt, a guide for those who are mindful of God."

Analysis

The term *hudā* encompasses meanings such as guidance, right direction, rectitude, and instruction (Lane 1863; Wehr 1979). IbnKathīr (2000, 1:39) interprets it as "guidance that leads to truth," while al-Ṭabarī (1987, 1:182) describes it as "clear clarification of the path of righteousness." Yusuf Ali emphasizes interpretive certainty with "guidance sure," which adds a devotional tone, whereas Abdel Haleem's "a guide" prioritizes lexical conciseness, offering a neutral and modern reading. The divergence illustrates how translators navigate polysemy differently, either emphasizing spiritual reassurance or semantic accuracy.

Example 2: Sawāʾ (سَوَاءٌ) Same / Makes No Difference (Qurʾān 2:6)

Arabic Text:﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَأَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

Translations:

- Yusuf Ali (2023): "It is the same to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe."
- Abdel Haleem (2005): "It makes no difference whether you warn them or not; they will not believe."

Analysis

The word *sawāʾ* denotes equality or lack of distinction (Lane 1863). IbnKathīr (2000, 1:42) notes that entrenched disbelief renders warnings ineffective, while al-Ṭabarī (1987, 1:202) emphasizes that their state remains unchanged regardless of external admonition. Yusuf Ali's formal English, "it is the same," conveys solemnity and classical style, whereas Abdel Haleem's "it makes no difference" adopts a modern, accessible tone. Both retain the semantic meaning, yet stylistic differences influence the interpretive tone and reader perception.

Example 3: UmmatanWasaṭan (أُمَّةً وَسَطًا) Middle/Just Community (Qurʾān 2:143)

Arabic Text:﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا﴾

Translations:

- Yusuf Ali (2023): "We made of you an Ummahjustly balanced."
- Abdel Haleem (2005): "We have made you a middle community."

Analysis

The polysemous*wasaṭ* encompasses meanings of middle, just, balanced, exemplary, or moderate (Wehr 1979). IbnKathīr (2000, 1:313) interprets it as "the just and best community," while al-Ṭabarī (1987, 3:142) describes it as "a community of balance and justice." Yusuf Ali conveys moral and ethical dimensions through "justly balanced," reflecting exegetical interpretation, whereas Abdel Haleem's "middle community" prioritizes literal lexical equivalence and clarity The contrast highlights the impact of translation philosophy: interpretive versus literal.

Example 4: Mathal (مَثَل) Example / Parable (Qur'ān 2:26)

Arabic Text: ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَن يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا﴾

Translations:

- Yusuf Ali (2023): "Allah disdains not to use the <u>similitude</u> of things…"
- Abdel Haleem (2005): "God does not shy away from giving an <u>example</u>…"

Analysis

The term *mathal* is polysemous, including example, parable, analogy, or illustration (Lane 1863). IbnKathīr (2000, 1:125) highlights God's use of parables to clarify truth, while al-Ṭabarī (1987, 1:316) explains them as "illustrations that demonstrate truth." Yusuf Ali's "similitude" preserves classical rhetorical tone, elevating the style and devotional resonance, whereas Abdel Haleem's "example" is more concise and accessible. Both choices retain core meaning, yet the difference affects perceived literary and theological nuance.

Example 5: Qawl (قَوْل) Word / Saying (Qur'ān 2:59)

Arabic Text: ﴿فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ﴾

Translations:

- Yusuf Ali (2023): "…substituted <u>a word</u> other than that which had been said unto them…"
- Abdel Haleem (2005): "…substituted another <u>saying</u> for that which they had been given…"

Analysis

The term *qawl* is polysemous, encompassing word, statement, utterance, or speech (Wehr 1979). IbnKathīr (2000, 1:150) notes that the Israelites altered the divinely commanded phrase, while al-Ṭabarī (1987, 1:354) emphasizes adherence to the original wording. Yusuf Ali's "word" conveys divine sacrality, whereas Haleem's "saying" foregrounds ordinary linguistic expression. Both translations are semantically accurate, but stylistic and theological nuances differ.

Example 6:Ithm (إِثْم) Sin / Harm (Qur'ān 2:219)

Arabic Text:﴿قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ﴾

Translations:

- Yusuf Ali (2023): "In them is great <u>sin</u>…"
- Abdel Haleem (2005): "There is great <u>harm</u> in them…"

Analysis

The term *ithm* denotes sin, guilt, wrongdoing, or harm (Lane 1863). IbnKathīr (2000, 1:257) emphasizes moral culpability, while al-Ṭabarī (1987, 2:328) highlights social and communal consequences. Yusuf Ali's translation, "sin," stresses ethical and theological dimensions, whereas Haleem's "harm" foregrounds practical and societal implications. The polysemy of *ithm* allows divergent but contextually valid interpretations, reflecting either moral culpability or pragmatic concern.

Example 7: Kutiba (كُتِبَ) Prescribed / Ordained (Qur'ān 2:216)

Arabic Text:﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ﴾

Translations:

- Yusuf Ali (2023): "Fighting is <u>prescribed</u> for you…"
- Abdel Haleem (2005): "Fighting is <u>ordained</u> for you…"

Analysis

Kutiba literally means "to be written" but implies obligation, duty, or prescription (Wehr 1979). IbnKathīr (2000, 1:249) interprets it as a divine mandate, while al-Ṭabarī (1987, 2:310) emphasizes the necessity of compliance. Yusuf Ali's "prescribed" emphasizes legal and jurisprudential nuance, highlighting human obligation, whereas Haleem's "ordained" stresses divine authority and decree. Both translations capture the semantic core, but stylistic and interpretive nuances differ.

8.Fitnah (فِتْنَة) Persecution / Trial (Qur'ān 2:191)

Arabic Text: ﴿وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ﴾

Translations:

- Yusuf Ali (2023): "<u>Persecution</u> is worse than slaughter."
- Abdel Haleem (2005): "<u>Persecution</u> is more grievous than killing."

Analysis

The word *fitnah* is polysemous, encompassing trial, temptation, persecution, sedition, or civil strife (Lane 1863). IbnKathīr (2000, 1:234) interprets it as oppression that prevents religious practice, while al-Ṭabarī (1987, 2:287) highlights coercive persecution. Both translators choose "persecution," demonstrating alignment with exegetical consensus and semantic appropriateness. Contextual cues limit the range of possible meanings, showing how polysemy can be constrained situationally. Yusuf Ali's phrasing "worse than slaughter" conveys severity with stylistic gravity, whereas Haleem's "more grievous than killing" emphasizes clarity and readability.

Example 9: Wusʾa (وُسْع) Capacity / Burden One Can Bear (Qur'ān 2:286)

Arabic Text:﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾

Translations:

- Yusuf Ali (2023): "On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than <u>it can bear</u>."
- Abdel Haleem (2005): "God does not burden any soul with more than <u>it can bear</u>."

Analysis:

The word *wus'a* signifies*capacity, scope, ability, power* (Wehr; Lane). Yusuf Ali preserves a classical tone with "doth" and the phrase "greater than it can bear," echoing archaic English religious style. Abdel Haleem uses a modern equivalent without stylistic ornamentation, making the verse accessible while retaining semantic fidelity. Both translations reflect the term's core meaning. The similarity shows how strong contextual clarity constrains the semantic variability of polysemy.

Example 10:Taqwā (تَقْوَىٰ) Piety / God-Consciousness (Qur'ān 2:2)

Arabic Text: ﴿هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

Translations:

- Yusuf Ali (2023): "…a guidance to those who are righteous."
- Abdel Haleem (2005): "…a guide for those who are mindful of God."

Analysis

Taqwā is polysemous, encompassing piety, God-consciousness, fear of God, and moral mindfulness (Lane 1863; Wehr 1979). IbnKathīr (2000, 1:39) explains it as righteousness combined with awareness of divine commands, while al-Ṭabarī (1987, 1:182) interprets it as protection from sin through mindfulness. Yusuf Ali emphasizes moral uprightness with "righteous," whereas Haleem highlights active consciousness with "mindful of God." Lexical sources support multiple dimensions of the term.

Findings

1. The study confirms that the Qur'an contains a high frequency of polysemous words, which carry multiple related meanings depending on context. Words like hudā (guidance), wasaṭ (middle/just), and mathal (example/parable) demonstrate that a single term can encompass moral, legal, spiritual, and rhetorical dimensions simultaneously.
2. The comparative analysis of Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2023) and M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (2005) shows that translators adopt varying strategies to render polysemous terms. Yusuf Ali often favors interpretive or exegetical translation, aiming to capture theological or devotional nuances, whereas Abdel Haleem frequently prioritizes literal or lexical accuracy, maintaining clarity and conciseness.
3. Translator choices significantly affect how readers understand the Qur'anic message. For example, rendering *ithm* as "sin" (Yusuf Ali) emphasizes ethical culpability, while "harm" (Abdel Haleem) highlights practical consequences. Similarly, *fitnah* rendered as "persecution" in both translations conveys the core meaning, but subtle differences in phrasing influence the perceived intensity and scope of the term.
4. The study reveals that classical tafsirs, particularly IbnKathīr (2000) and al-Ṭabarī (1987), are indispensable for interpreting polysemous terms. They provide context, historical background, and theological insight that cannot be captured by dictionaries

alone. Lexical sources such as Lane (1863) and Wehr (1979) complement tafsirs by clarifying semantic ranges but cannot replace exegetical guidance.

5. The findings indicate that polysemy in the Qur'an creates inherent tension between fidelity to the original text and readability in English. Translators must balance semantic precision, stylistic elegance, and theological accuracy. In some cases, a single English word cannot fully convey the multiple layers of meaning present in the original Arabic.

6. Contextual and cultural factors heavily influence the interpretation and translation of polysemous words. Situational analysis, including historical and theological context, reduces ambiguity and guides appropriate lexical choice. Words such as wusʿa (capacity) demonstrate minimal divergence due to strong contextual clarity, while others like hudā show more interpretive variation.

7. The study highlights the necessity of a systematic, combined approach using linguistic, exegetical, and semantic analysis for translating Qur'anicpolysemous terms. Such an approach ensures that both the lexical meaning and the intended theological or moral nuance are preserved, providing readers with a coherent understanding of the text.

Recommendations

1. The present study cannot fully address all issues related to translating polysemous words in the Holy Qur'an. Consequently, further research is recommended to explore additional polysemous terms in the Qur'an. Future studies should aim to examine these terms in depth, analyzing their multiple meanings and contextual nuances to provide a more complete understanding of the challenges involved in Qur'anic translation.

2. It is also recommended that subsequent research investigate specific case studies of polysemous words, comparing multiple English translations and consulting classical tafsirs to identify patterns of interpretive and lexical choices. Such studies will enrich the findings of the current research and illuminate the linguistic, theological, and stylistic difficulties translators encounter when rendering Qur'anic polysemy into other languages.

3. Finally, further studies may also explore the cognitive and cultural factors influencing translators' choices when dealing with polysemous words, including the impact of audience, context, and theological considerations. Such research will offer practical guidance for translators, enhance academic understanding of Qur'anic semantics, and support the production of translations that are both faithful to the original text and accessible to readers.

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