

An Analysis of Partial and Complete Semantic Losses in Arthur John Arberry's Translation of Some Joseph Surah Verses and a Proposal for Solutions

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ABSTRACT

Semantic loss in the Target Text (TT) can happen in over-translation, under-translation and mistranslation, resulted either in partial or complete loss of meaning in the TT. This phenomenon is resulted from both non-equivalence in the TL for some linguistic and cultural elements in SL, and the translators' inability to find the suitable TL equivalents. The main goal of the present study is to discover the partial and complete semantic losses, analyzing their causes in the English translation of Joseph Surah by the translator Arthur John Arberry. The research design is descriptive qualitative and comparative through using descriptive content analysis for some words in the Joseph Surah, then comparing them with the translated words to detect both partial and complete loss of translation. The Arabic meanings of the selected words are to be identified by using the classical exegetical works of Ibn Kather and Al-Sa'di interpretive books for Qur'ān. Baker's (2011) Model of non-equivalence was used to identify the causes of semantic loss of translation. For this purpose, (14) samples of verses were extracted from Joseph Surah and were qualitatively analyzed. After analyzing these samples (10) of them were found out as partial semantic losses, and (4) others were complete semantic losses. The findings showed frequent partial losses due to the narrowing of the Arabic Qur'ānic words, and few complete semantic losses of meanings mostly due to mistranslations, semantic complexity of the vocabularies, and culture.

Introduction

Translation is considered one of the instruments of communication, since it simplifies the barriers between the peoples of any two different languages. In order to make this communication simple, the translator should have enough control of the Source Language (SL) and Target Language (TL). It is known about languages that they are to a great extent different in all their phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and cultural levels, therefore, this makes it difficult for both L2 learners and, especially, translators when they transfer all these levels from the source language (SL) into the target language (TL), since their mission is to maintain the meanings between the SL and TL. Abdelaal and Rashid (2015) indicate that the translator's inability to render the intended meaning of the ST into the TL, through

presenting in the TT the main elements of the source text, that result in transferring the same equivalent effect found in the ST, leads to translation loss of meaning. According to Nida (1975), when information is rendered from the SL into the TL, some of it can be lost, or added or skewed. Hence, complete equivalence between two different languages cannot be happened.

With respect to non-equivalence, The Holy Qur'ān is rich with many lexicons that are difficult to render accurately. An example of such difficulty in preserving the meaning in the TL is the translation of the very first verse in the Holy Qur'ān. Consider the following example, which was provided by Ahmed (2008):

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate (1:1) (Arberry, 1955, p.29). The word *God* does not

convey the accurate meaning of the source word 'الله' since the latter is a proper noun, and it expresses (Oneness of Worship). Therefore, this meaning is not reflected in the translated word *God*. Another example of semantic loss in conveying meanings occurred in the translation of the third verse in al-Baqara surah which reads:

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ (3)

Who believe in the **Unseen** (1:3) (Arberry, 1955, p. 30)
The Arabic source word was translated into *the unseen* but 'الغيب' (*al-ghayb*) in Arabic is all what we cannot understand by the mind and what we cannot see, know or predict such as: The Angels, the heaven, the hell.....etc. It also includes what future hides for us, while the unseen in English refers to the abstract which is all what we cannot see, in this case the translated word covers only a part of the meant meaning in the source text.

Statement of the problem

When a source text is transferred into a target text, translation loss can occur in all language levels: phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and cultural levels, hence leading to mistranslation. It also must be taken into consideration that translators of the Holy Qur'ān often encounter critical problems when translating it into English (Al-Jabari, 2008; Alhaj, 2022). Too many words in the Holy Qur'ān are called Qur'ānic specific words, that is, they do not have proper equivalents in the other languages, hence this leads to translating difficulties. For example, the Qur'ānic word 'تَيَمَّمُوا' [*tayammamoo*] does not have an equivalent word in English (Khalaf & Yusoff, 2012). Therefore, its core Islamic meaning is completely lost when it is rendered from Arabic into English. Moreover, Abdul-Raof (2004) and AlQinai (2012) indicate that under-translation can happen when the translators do not refer to the Arab scholars' interpretations of the Holy Qur'ān, their lack of understanding of Arabic linguistics, and inability to decode and convey the nuances of polysemous words.

This study focuses on both partial and complete semantic loss of English translation in some verses in Joseph Surah, translated by Arthur John Arberry (1955).

Objectives of the study

This research aimed at:

- 1) To determine the partial and complete semantic losses in the English translation of some verses in Joseph Surah by A.J. Arberry (1955).
- 2) To identify the primary linguistic and cultural causes according to Baker's (2011) Model of non-equivalence.
- 3) To find suitable target word(s) instead of Arberry's ones.

Research Questions

In the present study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the partial and complete semantic losses in the English translation of some verses in Joseph Surah by A.J. Arberry (1955)?
2. What are the primary linguistic and cultural causes according to Baker's (2011) Model of non-equivalence?
3. What suitable target words can be used instead of Arberry's?

Significance of the study

This study sheds light on challenges of a sacred text translation (i.e., the Holy Qura'n). It also presents a critical tool for translation students and scholars who use Arberry's translation. Another significant point is that the study recommends the translators to read carefully the Arabic scholars' interpretations of the Holy Qura'n text before starting translation.

Scope and Limitation of the study

This study focuses primarily on some verses in *Joseph Surah* translated by A.J. Arberry in his classical work "*The Koran Interpreted*" published in 1955. It concentrates on both partial and complete semantic losses on the word level, when they were translated from the source text (Arabic) to the target text (English), concentrating on both linguistic and culture-specific religious words, depending on authors' interpretations in their classical sources.

Research Methodology

Nunan (2000, p.23) defines research as a "systematic process of formulating question, collecting relevant data relating to questions, analyzing, interpreting the data and making the results publicly accessible." Here method is a way to examine a problem in a certain issue in order to reach its results; the problem is also labeled a research problem. This section presents the methods used by the researcher to collect data in order to answer the research questions, presenting why the researcher chose the certain research design, and selecting the research sample, and how it is analyzed.

Research design

The descriptive qualitative design was used in this research, through analyzing the content of a number of words in some verses in *Joseph Surah* in order to discover both partial and complete semantic losses in these words and the reasons behind them. This type of design is suitable for translating complex texts like the Holy Qur'ān. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010, 475) qualitative research "uses procedures that make use of non-numerical data, such as interviews, case studies, or participant observation." (p.475). According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research is carried out when a researcher would like to search for concise and detailed information that cannot be found by quantitative research. Hence, the technique of observation is used in this study; that is, observation of the verses in *Joseph Surah* that contain semantic losses in Arthur John Arberry's translation of Holy Qur'ān.

Research data

The data of the present study is both the Arabic text *Joseph Surah* and its corresponding English translation by Arthur John Arberry's "*The Koran Interpreted*" (1955). Twenty four verses were chosen purposefully from *Joseph Surah*. In order to know the interpretation of the targeted verses, *Tafsir Ibn Khathir* (2000) and Al-Sa'di (2002) were used as reference books, and *Collins CoBuild Advanced Learner's English Dictionary* (2000) (henceforth Collins CoBuild ALED, 2000), Baalbaki

(1995). (7th ed.) and Baalbaki and Baalbaki (2008) were used to check the meanings of target words used in the translation.

Procedures of data collection

Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) denote that data collection in a qualitative research may include observations of targeted events, focus group interviews and the examination of documents and artifacts.

According to this definition, the data collection procedure involved was carried out as follows:

- 1- Some verses that have semantic loss from *Joseph Surah* were selected;
- 2- The selected verses were interpreted by using *Ibn Kathir' Tafsir* (2000) and Al-Sa'di (2002);
- 3- The English translations of the selected verses were studied to understand the lexical meanings of the verses; and
- 4- Both types of partial and complete semantic loss of translation were identified by comparing the meanings of the target words used by Arberry to their meaning in both *Ibn Kathir' Tafsir* (2000) and Al-Sa'di (2002), and Collins CoBuild ALED (2000) and Baalbaki, M. & Baalbaki, R. (2008)

Data analysis

The data in this study was analyzed by using the content analysis method. Tavakoli (2012) defines the content analysis method as:

A procedure which is used to convert written or spoken information into data that can be analyzed and interpreted. Content analysis is a qualitative research technique which is used to quantify aspects of written or spoken text or of some form of visual representation. It is used for analyzing and tabulating the frequency of occurrence of themes, emotions topics, ideas, opinions and other aspects of the content of written and spoken communication. (p.101).

According to this definition, the researcher collected the data from the Holy Qur'ān, *Joseph surah*, and used *Tafsir ibni Kathir* (2000) and Al-Sa'di (2002) as

reference books to interpret the implied meanings of the verses under study and recognize the partial and complete semantic losses. The *Collins CoBuild ALED* (2003) and Baalbaki, M. & Baalbaki, R. (2008) were used to check both the primary and secondary meanings of lexicons in the translations. *A dictionary of religious terms: Arabic-English, English-Arabic* (Al-Maliki & Ibrahim, 1997) was used to check the meanings of some Qur'ānic words. The target words were examined too, and compared with the source words to discover the type of semantic loss, its causes, and its implication.

Literature Review

Concept of Loss in Translation

Many scholars presented their views about the concept of loss in translation (Bassnett, 1997; Dickins, Hervey and Higgins, 2017; Dizdar, 2014; Hervey and Higgins, 1992; Nida, 1975; Nozizwe and Ncube, 2014; Popović, 1976, among others.) Bassnett (1997) indicates that loss and gain in translation can happen since there is not a complete sameness between the SL and the TL. Therefore, he adds that loss in translation results in a translation product of low status. Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2017) present a comprehensive definition for translation loss as "any feature of incomplete replication of the ST in the TT; translation loss is therefore not limited to the omission of ST features in the TT; where the TT has features not present in the ST, the addition of these also counts as translation loss." (p.297). Dizdar (2014) defines loss in translation as the imperfect replication of the ST in TT. According to Hervey and Higgins (1992), blame in translation loss is put on the translator, since he/she is unable to reproduce the source text accurately to convey the message of source text to a reader of the target text. On the other hand, Nida (1975) states that translation loss is related to the notion of dynamic equivalence, that is when there is not a dynamic equivalence during translation process between the SLT and the TLT, the result is a loss in translation. Dynamic equivalence is represented by that the effect of the translation product on the target receivers should be the same as that among the

original receivers of the source language product. Nozizwe and Ncube (2014) define the concept of translation loss as "the disappearance of certain features in the (TL) text which are present in the (SL) text". (p.676). That is to say, some linguistic and cultural features and information are lost in the target text (TT) during the translation process due to the differences between the SL and TL. As a result, the effects of the ST will not be the same. Popović (1976) denotes that one aspect of loss in translation is resulted from the translator's inability to achieve stylistic translational equivalence between the ST and the TT.

In short, scholars agree that loss in translation during the process of translation is an inevitable phenomenon, as a result of using several strategies by the translators, therefore, they are unable to reproduce the source text in target text perfectly.

Translation Loss Causes

Nida, & Taber (1969), Newmark (1988), Baker (1992) and Abdul-Raof (2004) categorize the causes of loss in translation in the TT into three main causes: linguistic, extra linguistic and cultural and religious differences between two different languages. When the translator fails to achieve equivalence between two different languages in all these three levels of language, inevitably loss in translation will occur in the TT, therefore, an appropriate message of the source text is not conveyed to the reader of the target text accurately and effectively. For example, a translation loss in the religious text is presented in the following verse translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali's (1938/1968) translation:

ST:

"إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلٍ مُكْتَبُونَ" (يس. 55)

TT: Verily the Companions Of the **Garden** shall that Day have joy in all that they do;55.

In verse 55, the Arabic word 'الْجَنَّةُ' means "a pleasant place promised by Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) to pious persons or to those who fear Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)" (Ibn Khatir, 2000, p.582). Abdullah Yusuf Ali translated 'الْجَنَّةُ' as "the Garden" which means "a piece of land next to a house

with flowers, vegetables, other plants, and often grass.” (Collins CoBuild ALED, 2000, p.597). Thus, complete loss at semantic level occurred in Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s translation as the meaning of the source text message was not conveyed at all in the target text. (Islam, 2018, p. 26).

Types of Translation Loss

Baker (2011) divides translation loss into two main types: inevitable and avertable losses. According to Islam (2018) inevitable loss "occurs because of linguistic differences between two languages, i.e., the source language and the target language." (p.19). For example, English and Arabic are two different languages; their origins are from two different language families: English origin is from Germanic Indo- European language family and Arabic origin is from Semitic language family. Avertable loss "occurs when a translator fails to find the equivalent or suitable translation in the target text." (Islam, 2018, p.19). The problems of equivalence are found at linguistic, social and cultural levels between two languages, for example the Arabic language and English language.

Semantic Loss

As-Safi (2006) indicates that semantic loss may occur when source text meaning is not transferred in the target text, and sometimes it is often inevitable in translation, especially in the culture-specific texts. Abdul-Raof (2004) indicates that many lexical items are closely connected to the culture of the (SL), therefore, the translator may fail to find the equivalent in the (TL). For example, Arberry (1955, p.73) translated the two Arabic verbs in the Holy Qur'an 'نَزَّلَ' (*nazzala*) and 'أَنْزَلَ' (*anzala*) to *sent down* in the verse:

نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ آل عمران:03

He has sent down upon thee the Book with the truth, confirming what was before it, and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel.

A careful consideration will confirm that 'نَزَّلَ' (*nazzala*) means piecemeal revelation of the Holy Qur'ān over a period of 23 years, while 'أَنْزَلَ' (*anzala*) refers to revelation of the Gospel and Torah, they were revealed at

once. So, the translator did not manage to perceive the subtle difference between the two verbs. According to Ameel et al., (2009) another semantic loss can happen when one language expresses a concept by just one word, but the same concept is expressed by many words in another language. For example, the English word *cup* can be rendered in Arabic into different lexemes as 'كوب, كأس' and 'إبريق'. The biggest difficult loss as Al-Masri (2009) indicates can happen when the translator neglects the "literariness or figurativeness of the source text" (p. 8). At times translators do not notice figures of speech or rhetorical devices in the source language. Therefore, a loss in literary translation takes place when translators have difficulties in understanding the symbolic meaning. Another translation problem a translator encounters is the semantic differences between the source and target language. For example, the connotative meaning, which is the meaning that goes beyond the conceptual content (Leech, 1983), makes a prime challenge for the translators. For example the Arabic Qur'ānic word 'الحج' (*al-hajj*) is translated to the target English word *pilgrimage*. Although this translation conveys the denotative meaning of the Arabic word 'الحج', it does not convey the connotative aspects of it, which includes specific rites were done by Prophet Mohammed (peace be to him), and then all Muslims, such as clothing, moving from one place to another, in Arafat, rounding about Al-Ka'ba, walking between Al-Safa and Al-Marawa etc. Hence the English word *pilgrimage* does not convey all these behaviours.

To sum up, since English and Arabic are from two different language families, it is expected that there are largest differences in all morphological, syntactic, stylistic/rhetorical, and semantic levels, which in turn lead to translation losses, some are inevitable and others are avertable.

Problems of Translating the Holy Qur'ān

Hana and Ilhem (2016) indicate that the translators of the Holy Qur'ān face different types of problems when they render it into another languages. These problems are

lexical, syntactical, stylistic and cultural. Therefore, these problems lead to translation loss in all levels.

Arabic language is lexically rich in its sense relations. Holy Qur'ān is full of synonyms, polysems, collocations, which make a translation problem for the translators. For examples, there are many synonymous words for the Holy Qur'ān:

القرآن الكريم: الفرقان, الذكر, الكتاب, الروح, التنزيل... إلخ.

Examples of polysemous words for *fasting*:

الصيام: الإمساك عن الطعام والشراب, والإمساك عن الجماع, الإمساك عن الكلام.

Examples of polysemous words for *patience*:

الصبر: الصبر على الشدائد, الحبس.

Examples of collocations:

إقامة الصلاة, إيتاء الزكاة, حج البيت, ذكر الله, صلة الرحم, البر والإحسان, الهدى والضلالة, الذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات... إلخ.

The degree of syntactical difficulty the translators can face depends on the degree of relatedness between the source language and the target language. That is:

The more related the two languages are, the less syntactic problems occur, as in the case of English and German because they belong to the same family (Indo-European), whereas English and Arabic belong to two different families (Semitic) and (Indo-European) in this case syntactic problems are more to be likely encountered. (Hana and Ilhem, 2016, p.5).

Syntactic difficulties are represented in many aspects such as word order, tenses, condition. For example in condition, English contains four forms of conditional sentences: real, probable, improbable and impossible. The subordinate clause starts with the articles *if* and *unless*, the auxiliary verbs *were* and *had* and the modal *should*. In Arabic, there are only two kinds of condition: real and impossible; the Arabic dependent clause starts with the articles 'إن' (*inn*), 'إذا' (*idhaa*) and 'لو' (*law*). Hana and Ilhem (2016) indicate that the conditional articles used for explicit conditions in the Holy Qur'ān are 'إن' (*inn*) and 'لو' (*law*), while 'إذا' (*idhaa*) is a temporal particle, equivalent to *when*. They present two translations, as

examples, for two translators: John Arberry and Yusuf Ali, of translating verse (20) from El-Baqara surah (**the Cow**). The translators used different articles and employed the verb forms indicating impossible condition which semantically contradicts the second part of it.

"وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

قَدِيرٌ" (50)

Had God willed, He would have taken away their hearing and their sight. Truly God is powerful over everything. (John Arberry).

And if Allah willed, He could take away their faculty of hearing and seeing, for Allah hath power over all things. (Yusuf Ali).

Baker's (2011) Model of the Non-equivalence Causes at Word Level

According to Baker (2011), non-equivalence at word level means that "the target language has no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the source text." (p.18). She categorizes the causes of non-equivalence at word level into 11 causes as follows:

1. Cultural specific concepts
2. SL concepts are not lexicalized in the TL
3. Semantically complex SL words
4. Different distinctions in meaning in the SL and the TL
5. The TL lacks a superordinate (Superordinate)
6. The TL lacks a specific term (hyponym)
7. Interpersonal or physical perspective differences,
8. Differences in expressive meaning
9. Differences in form: it is hard to find equivalent forms in a SL and TL
10. Differences in frequency and purpose of using specific form
11. The use of loan words in the SL (Cited in Abdelaal, 2018, p.79.)

Previous Studies

Mohammed (2016) conducted a study at University of Algeria entitled "*Loss and Gain in Translation: A Comparative Study between Three Translations of Surat An-Naas*." It aimed to determine the types of losses and gains occurred in the three translations of Surat "An-Naas

and find out the strategies that were adopted to overcome the inevitable loss. Moreover, at what extent the losses in the translation of the Holy Qur'ān are inevitable and at what extent gains are feasible. The study is a descriptive qualitative design where the researcher collected the data, matched, examined and then analysed the results through using comparative method which compares (ST) to (TT). The linguistic and extra linguistic factors behind the phenomenon of loss and gain have been examined along with suggesting some solutions on how to reduce the first and enhance the second. The results of the study revealed that the strategies followed by the translators varied, and the analysis showed that the loss is highly expected in the translation of the Holy Qur'ān and the gain is a mere attempt to approximate meaning.

Hana and Ilham (2016) conducted a study on semantic loss in the English translations of Al-Baqara Surah by both Arberry's and Yusuf Ali's translations, entitled "*Semantic loss at word level in Quran translation: Case of two translated versions of Surat El-Baqara (The Cow) by A.J.Arberry & A.Y.Ali.*" They found out from the data analyzed that semantic loss occurs either completely or partially. They indicated that this loss was due to mistranslating of the verses: In Arberry's case, he did not read thoroughly through the exegesis books and because of lack of mastery of the authentic (SL) in addition to the use of literal translation. On the other hand, Yusuf Ali is a non-Arab Muslim, so he tended sometimes to select words that are not accurate or equivalent in meaning though sometimes the equivalents exist. They also discovered that Arberry's translated data showed complete loss of meaning, while Ali's data showed partial loss of meaning. In addition, both translators sometimes selected words that are improper in their semantic fields. Such inaccuracy of selected vocabulary leads to a shift in meaning which occurs in any kind of translation, especially the Holy Qur'ān, where we can never convey one hundred per cent the intended meaning of the (ST).

Abdelaal & Rashid (2016) conducted a study entitled "*Grammar-related semantic losses in the translation of*

the Holy Qur'ān, with special reference to Surah Al A'araf". This study aimed at investigating the grammatical losses in the translation of the Holy Qur'ān, with special reference to Al A'araf Surah, and the extent these losses caused partial or complete semantic loss. Qualitative descriptive design (content analysis of the text) was adopted to analyze the data extracted. The study revealed losses occurring in translating grammatical aspects such as conjunctions, syntactic order, duality, tense, and verbs. It was also found that grammatical losses contributed to semantic losses, which are mostly partial semantic losses of the connotative or the expressive meanings. This study suggests that appropriate translation strategies be adopted to reduce loss in translation.

Another study was conducted by Islam (2018) entitled "*Semantic loss in two English translations of Surah Ya-Sin by two translators (Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Arthur John Arberry)*". The purpose of study was to find semantic loss and its causes. Moreover, the objective of the study was to investigate to what extent the linguistic and cultural essence of the source text has been maintained by the two translators. Baker's (2011) typology of translations was used: Equivalence at word level, above word level, Textual, Grammatical and Pragmatic Equivalence. This research is qualitative in nature. Moreover, Tafsir by Ibn Khathir (2000) was used as a reference book. The analysis of the data revealed frequent partial loss of meaning in Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation and complete loss of meaning in Arthur John Arberry's translation. In addition, there are similarities and differences between the two translations which show that every language is different from the other in terms of vocabulary items, grammar, lexicons and more importantly different in culture.

Another study was conducted by Mekki (2020) at Sudan University of Science and Technology. The study entitled "*Investigating the linguistic needs to avoid loss of meaning in translating rhetorics in the Glorious Qur'ān*". The chief purpose of this study was to investigate the losses that are likely to occur in the course of translation

of figurative language, namely euphemistic expressions. Furthermore, the study aimed to investigate the recurrent phenomenon of verbal similarity as a linguistic miracle. This research employed a descriptive qualitative design; specifically, the content analysis. The data was collected from the Holy Qur'an and Arabic linguistic books: Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged) (Al Sabuni, 2008) Fi Zilal Al Qur'an (Qub, 1996) Tafsir Al Jalalyan (Al Suyuti, and Mahaly, 2005). The Qur'anic verses that include euphemistic expressions were grouped and analyzed to establish the correct meaning accurately. By analyzing the various English translations of the meaning of the Holy Qur'an, the researcher realized that some deviations and under translations were the results of insufficient references of the Holy Qur'an, lack of understanding of Arabic rhetoric and inability to decode the nuances of euphemistic expressions. The study recommends that in order to maintain the informative and aesthetic functions of euphemistic expressions, Qur'anic words and phrases, translators should try to render them in approximate adequate renditions, and should employ a number of strategies to render Qur'anic euphemisms into English and to achieve best possible approximate equivalent to ST. One of those strategies involves retaining the linguistic forms of Arabic while translating it into English.

A study by Abdelkarim and Alhaj (2023), entitled "*Probing the meaning loss in the translation of Arabic Qur'anic connotative words into English: A linguistic semantic perspective*" focused on translating the Arabic Qur'anic connotative words into English. This study aimed to identify the meaning loss in the translation of some selected Arabic Qur'anic connotative words into English by examining three notable translations of the Holy Qur'an which have been extracted from The Qur'anic Arabic Corpus. They are the works of Abdelhaleem (2004), Al- Hilali and Khan (1996) and Pickthall (1930). This study was qualitative descriptive in nature. It utilized Nord's (2005) model of text analysis in translation. Findings showed that a literal or word-for-word rendering is not the appropriate method to use when

translating the Arabic Qur'anic connotative words into English. The study recommends that semantic translation method may be more useful in conveying the connotations of the Holy Qur'an into English and in coping with this phenomenon that is commonly met in the translations of the Arabic Qur'anic connotative words, due to causes such as the lack of equivalence of some connotative words in English language.

The last study by Baraja'a (2024), entitled "*Translation loss in human translation from English into French and then into Arabic*". It aimed to find out the loss of translation specifically when translating a text from English into French and then into Arabic, as well as when translating the text from Arabic into English and then into Arabic by human translation. It also aimed to identify the extent of translation loss at the syntactic and semantic level. She used a descriptive quantitative design, conducted through the BLEU automated evaluation program as well as a ranking scale by four referees. The study data were collected by giving French text to three specialists in the French (First Group) to translate it into Arabic (French text has been translated from English). Another English text was also given to the other three specialists in English (Second Group) to translate it into Arabic (English text has been translated from Arabic). The results indicated through the BLEU program as well as the ranking scale that there was a significant loss of translation when translating a translated text, for both groups (specialists in the French and specialists in the English). There is also a loss of translation in terms of the semantic level and syntactic level of the same two groups, revealed through ranking scale by four referees.

Discussion of the Results

This section presents and analyzes the study data collected from various verses from *Joseph Surah* translated into English by Arberry (1955). The main aim of the study is to identify both partial and complete semantic loss of the English translation.

Partial Semantic Loss

According to Hana & Ilhem (2016), "partial losses are those losses in which the message of the (ST) is partially conveyed." (p.36). In this type of semantic loss the core meaning is preserved and the translation is somehow correct, but religious and connotative meanings are weakened, altered or lost. That is, the connotative, associative and pragmatic meanings of words are not fully conveyed to the target language reader by the translator. This sub-section presents a careful analysis of the partial losses of meaning in the verses chosen in *Joseph surah*.

Sample 1

ST:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ. (2)

TT: We have sent it down as an Arabic Koran; haply you will understand. (p.254).

The translation problem here is represented by that the translator failed to differentiate between the Arabic synonyms 'أَنْزَلَ' (*anzala*) and 'نَزَلَ' (*nazzala*). The verb *send down* is not the exact equivalent word for the Arabic verb 'أَنْزَلَ', since Allah revealed the Holy Qur'an on the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him) during 23 years. Ibn Kathir (2000) mentioned that Allah "started revealing the Holy Qur'an in the most honourable month, which is Ramadan." (pp.365-66). The Arabic word means in the Holy Qur'an 'الوحي' (*al-wahi*) = *revelation* as Baalbaki (1995, p.207) presented its English equivalents "to inspire with (or to), to reveal to." The Arabic verb implies a gradual deliberate sending down from a higher realm (Allah) to a lower one (Earth/humanity). This is a vertical, spatial movement from the heavenly to the earthly. Therefore, the Arabic word is highly specific and carries profound religious meaning. The translator considered the verbs 'أَنْزَلَ' and 'نَزَلَ' as two synonyms, though they are totally different in Arabic, especially in the Holy Qur'an. For example, وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً, the verb here can be translated to the phrasal verb *sent down*, since Allah sends down the rain water in one time. The verb is also more general; it can describe sending a letter down from an upstairs room, or sending troops to a border. It lacks the unique, technical and spiritual meaning of revelation. The

primary cause of failure in translating this word is that the SL concept 'أَنْزَلْنَاهُ' (*anzalnahu*) was not lexicalized in the TL word *sent down* (Baker, 2011, cause 2), because the Arabic concept does not mean only sending down physically, but also it carries the unique composite meaning of revealing the Holy Qur'an from a divine, higher realm to a human lower realm. Therefore, English does not have a single word that includes all that complex meaning of the SL word. The closer equivalent to decrease the semantic gap is the phrase *bestowed it from on high*, since the verb *bestowed* conveys the divine giving, and *from on high* denotes the spatial/transcendent dimension that is found in the Arabic source word.

Sample 2

ST

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَأَلْقُوهُ فِي غَيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطُهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ. (10)

TT: One of them said, "No, kill no Joseph, but cast him into the bottom of the pit and some travellers will pick him out, if you do aught. (p.255).

The source word 'الْجُبِّ' (*al-jubb*) means in *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (2000, 4th vol., p.372) a deep hole having water because he mentioned that the travellers may find him inside the well, when they bring water. Ibn Kathir also mentioned that Joseph was dipped in the water, then he ascended on a large stone inside the well. Therefore, the source word 'الْجُبِّ' (*al-jubb*) is a specific hyponym; it refers in classical Arabic to a well- a deep, narrow, man-made, often cylindrical structure for drawing water. However, the target text word *pit* is a broad superordinate term. It means "a large hole that is dug in the ground." (*Collins CoBuild ALED* (2003, p.1086). In English there is not a distinction between the words *pit* and *well*, since *pit* can have the idea of a well. It can be a large hole in the ground, a coal mine pit, a difficult situation (metaphorical.) According to Baker's (2011) model of causes of non-equivalence, the translation reflected cause (4): a distinction in meaning between the SL and TL, since Arberry applied a superordinate word *pit* on an Arabic hyponym source word 'الْجُبِّ' (*al-jubb*), which led to losing

the crucial defining feature (+water). Only the denotative meaning was conveyed by the target word *pit*, whereas the connotative meaning was partially lost, since the English reader understands it as a hole, but not necessarily a water source, that attracts a caravan. In this case, the preferred alternative is *well*, since it maintains the specific meaning, the narrative causality, and the cultural setting that were lost in using the broad word *pit*.

Sample 3

ST

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَأَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ (17)

TT: They said, 'Father, we went running races, and left Joseph behind with our things; so the wolf ate him. But thou wouldst never believe us, though we spoke truly.' (p.255).

The target word *ate* does not convey the physical meaning of the wolf action in eating. The verb *eat* expresses the general and normal action of eating as denoted in the *Collins CoBuild ALED* (2003, p. 447), "When you eat something, you put it into your mouth, chew it, and swallow it." The verb *eat* has six meaning in the dictionary, they all show that the sentence subject is a human being, not an animal. Here the translator used the superordinate word. It fails to capture the appropriate connotation of the context, since when it is used in the context of preying, it sounds oddly bland and domestic. Eating action is violent attack, tearing apart and devouring. The brothers were describing a graphic, bloody, and frightening death in the wilderness to manipulate their father. Therefore, these different meanings of both the source word 'فَأَكَلَهُ' (*akalahu*) and the equivalent word *ate* reflect Baker's cause (4): different distinctions in meaning in the SL and TL. Verbs suitable for violent and brutal animal eating are hyponyms of eating: *devour*, *tuck*, *guzzle*, *engorge*, *gormandize* and *gobble* (Baalbaki, 1995, p.159), which mean 'يَلْتَهُمُ' (*yaltahimu*). For example, *devour* means "If a person or animal *devours* something, they eat it quickly and eagerly." (*Collins CoBuild ALED* (2003, p. 387), here

quickness and eagerness and hungriness are features of how animals eat. They carry the necessary connotations of violence and compete consumption. Other verbs can be used: *maul* (emphasizes the aspect of viciously tearing and wounding with claws and teeth, which often precedes eating), and *prey upon* (a slightly more literary option that shapes Joseph explicitly as a victim of a predator).

Sample 4

ST

وَجَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَأَرْسَلُوا وَارِدَهُمْ فَأَدْلَى دَلْوَهُ قَالَ يَا بُشْرَى هَذَا غُلَامٌ... (19)

TT: Then came travellers, and they sent one of them, a water-drawer, who let down his bucket. 'Good news!' he said. 'Here is a young man.' (255).

Although the target noun phrase *young man* is contextually acceptable, it is not the exact equivalent translation word for the source word 'غُلَامٌ' (*ghulam*), since it expresses the adulthood age group, and it connotes to someone in their late teens or early twenties, or even thirties, while 'غُلَامٌ' expresses the adolescence age group, or carries a sense of being closer to boyhood. The Arabic word 'غُلَامٌ' in Baalbaki (2003, p. 803) has three equivalents in English: "boy, lad, youth." Its translation into *a young man* misses the specific nuances of the original word. The primary loss is in specificity and resonance, because the source word 'غُلَامٌ' indicates a boy, a youth, or a lad, an age between childhood and full manhood. Therefore, translating it into *a young man* encroaches this specific connotation. This description of the source word and target word fits Baker's cause (4): different distinctions in meaning in the SL and TL. Thus, the proper equivalents could be the words *a youth* (a male who is no longer a child but no a grown man, and fits the Qur'anic style), *a boy* (contextually very accurate, since it emphasizes Joseph weakness and the greatness of the crime committed against him), or *a lad* (since it is an archaic English word that is a direct synonym for a young boy or youth, and it contains right connotation.)

Sample 5

ST

... وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ... (21)

TT: ... So We established Joseph in the land, ... (p.256). The Arabic word 'الأرض' (al-ard) is polysemous; it means the earth (the entire planet), the land (opposite of the sea) and a country or territory. Therefore, in this verse it means "the land of Egypt to which Joseph was taken by the travellers who bought him from his brothers." (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (2000, 4th vol., p.378). It is not the land in general. The translator only used the word *land* without adding any note to show which land is intended. The loss of translating it as *land* is a case of under-translation or narrowing. The translation "we established joseph in the land, ..." as if Joseph was given a plot of farmland or a local district, but when it means the land of Egypt, it contains the connotation of a large and important land; it implies authority sovereignty and power. All in all, while the target word *land* is an acceptable functional translation, it represents a narrowing of the semantic field, sacrificing the connotative meaning of grandeur and universal symbolic potential (Baker's cause 4). Therefore, a proper translation can be done by using the word *earth* adding a note after it: earth [of Egypt].

Sample 6

ST

... ذَلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ. (38)

TT: That is of God's bounty to us, and to men; but most men are not thankful.(p.258).

As seen in sample 6 the word *God* is not exactly an equivalent to the great name of *Allah*, Almighty, that is, 'الله', (*Allāh*) which is a proper noun expressing Oneness and which denotes that Allah is the One Who deserves worship, that is, unifying *al-Uluhiyyah* (Oneness of Worship). Here the word *God* does not express the meaning expressed by the word *Allah* in the Islamic context. Arberry used the word *God* since it is the standard, conventional, and most widely accepted translation for 'الله' in English; there is not any other English word can replace the semantic field of 'الله'. It is a functional label, but it does not reflect an accurate semantic weight. On the contrary, *Allah* does not mean

god, since *god* is a common noun, therefore it conceals the word *Allah* from its unique proper name quality. For Muslims the word *Allah* refers to the God of Abraham with all attributes described in the Qur'ān. Moreover, using the word *God* equals the Islamic concept with Christian or general Western understanding the deity, blotting the distinguished Islamic meaning. As a result of this explanation, the main cause of this loss is Baker's cause (1): culture-specific concept, since the concept of 'الله' in Islam means the Divine Being with its distinct attributes. So translating it into the common noun *God* forces the Islamic concept into a Western/Abrahamic category, which carries different connotations (e.g., a Christian understanding of God.) The most suitable equivalent as Newmark (1988), Pym (2004) and Hervey and Higgins (1992) suggest is transliterating the original name of the source text, that is, *Allah*, since it preserves the term's uniqueness, its status as a proper name, and its specific Islamic theological identity.

Sample 7

ST

وَقَالَ يَا بَنِيَّ لَا تَدْخُلُوا مِنْ بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ وَادْخُلُوا مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ مُتَفَرِّقَةٍ... (67)

TT: He also said, "O my sons, enter not by one door; enter by separate doors..." (p.261).

Tafsir Ibn Kathir (2000, 4th vol., p.400) indicates that Prophet Jacob told his sons to enter Egypt from different gates, since he was afraid of envy to befall them. Therefore, the word *gate* is related to Egypt as a city. The target word *door* is not the suitable equivalent word for the source word 'بَاب', (*bāb*) because it means "a piece of wood, glass, or metal, which is moved to open and close the entrance to building, room, cupboard, or vehicle." (Collins CoBuild ALED, 2003, p. 420), while the word *gate* means "a structure which is used at the entrance to a field, a garden, or the grounds of a building." (Collins CoBuild ALED, 2003, p. 599). The word *door* is technically correct, but contextually narrow, since Jacob's sons were entering a fortified city, not a house, whose entrance was large and public. Moreover, his advice for his sons to enter from different gates imply strategic

dispersal across the city's main points of entry, a meaning that is lost with the simpler word *door*. The Arabic word 'باب' is a superordinate for door, gate and a chapter in a book, while English has a lexical distinction between these words: *door* (for buildings, rooms), *gate* (for cities, fences, palaces), so when Arberry chose the word *door*, he selected a hyponymy, which is not the most precise one for this context (Baker's cause 4). Therefore, *gate* and *entrance* are two suitable target words can be used. *Gate* expresses contextual meaning, standard for the main entrance to a fortified public town or city, and *entrance*, though used for a general purpose, it is broader than *door*, and avoids the domestic connotation.

Sample 8

ST

قَالُوا نَفَقَ صُوعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلَمْ يَأْتِ بِهِ جَمْلٌ بَعِيرٍ وَأَنَا بِهِ زَعِيمٌ (72)

TT: They said, 'We are missing the king's **goblet**.'
(p.262).

In Arabic the word 'صُوعَ' (*ṣawā*) has no equivalent in English; it is a culture-specific word. Arberry substituted it with a functionally-similar but conceptually different word. *Goblet* is "a type of cup without handles and usually with a long stem." (Collins CoBuild ALED, 2003, p. 621). Therefore, the English word indicates that this object is a vessel for drinking, made of metal or precious material, associated with royalty or ceremony. The lost meaning nuance in the target word *goblet* is the specific function of the Arabic word 'صُوعَ', which was used as a measure for weighing grains or other goods. In the context of Joseph story, it was used in an administrative context, in which the Arabic word was used as the king's standard measure used for distributing rations or collecting taxes in grain. Hence, calling it *goblet* personalizes it as a drinking vessel and belittles it of its administrative job. The cause of the semantic loss is Baker's cause 1: culture-specific concept, i.e., the Arabic word 'صُوعَ' is a culture-specific word, so English lacks a single, direct equivalent that captures both its form (a cup/bowl) and its primary function (an official grain measure.) As a result other suitable equivalents can be used instead *goblet*. One of them is the king's

measuring-bowel, which combines its form *bowl* with its primary function *measuring*, so it clarifies the meaning of administrative context. Another alternative is the king's *grain-measure*, which adds *grain* to provide clear context about what was being measured in the story.

Sample 9

ST

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ أَجْمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُونَ (102)

TT: That is of the tidings of the **Unseen** that We reveal to thee; thou wast not with them when they agreed upon their plan, devising. (p.265).

In this verse the Arabic Qur'ānic word 'الْغَيْبِ' (*al-ghayb*) is not the exact equivalent English word, since it has no direct counterpart in English, compelling the translator to convey it in a communicative manner. Although the word the *Unseen* is standard and most direct equivalent in English, it reduces the conceptual meaning of the Arabic source word 'الْغَيْبِ'. It indicates only one part of the source Qur'ānic word, whereas the source word includes everything beyond the reach of human senses such as angles, paradise, hell, Day of Resurrection, Day of Judgment etc. It also includes past events one did not witness (like Joseph's story), knowledge of the future. Therefore, translating it into *the Unseen* reduces it to a spatial and perceptual quality. Baker's cause (1): cultural specific concepts is behind this loss, since 'الْغَيْبِ' (*al-ghayb*) is a too complex technical term in Islamic context to be conveyed by a simple, literal translation. So, in order to overcome its lacking of conceptual and divine meaning, phrases can be used as equivalents to the Arabic source word 'الْغَيْبِ' such as: *The Realm of the Unseen/The Hidden Reality* (adding realm or reality elevates it from a simple adjective 'unseen things' to a defined meaning closer to the Arabic usage).

Sample 10

ST

أَفَأَمِنُوا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ غَاشِيَةٌ مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ أَوْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ (107)

TT: Do they feel secure that there shall come upon them no enveloping of chastisement of God, or that the Hour shall not come upon them suddenly when they are unaware? (p.266).

The source word 'غاشية' (*ghāshiyah*) was translated as *enveloping*, which is to a large extent unsuitable equivalent, since it misses specific religious meanings. It only conveys the core meaning of covering something completely; it conveys the sense of an event that will cover all of creation. But, in fact, it is one name of the Doomsday. Therefore, it contains a culture-specific religious meaning because it describes a specific aspect of divine punishment that a literal English translation cannot fully capture (Baker's, 2011, cause 1: culture-specific concepts.) The word *enveloping* lacks the immediate, powerful association with the Day of Judgment that the Arabic term evokes for a Muslim reader. The Arabic word expresses overwhelming calamity. Ibn Kathir (2000) describes it as it "overwhelms the people with horrors and terrors while they do not feel." (p. 422). Therefore, the semantic loss is partial, since the word *enveloping* conveys the meaning linguistically, but it loses much of specific referent and emotional weight, since the English reader does not connect it to the central Islamic meaning of the Day of Judgment with all its associated imagery of reckoning, paradise and hellfire. Therefore, it failed to convey the full semantic weight of the Arabic source word. The following phrases can be used as equivalents for the word *enveloping*: *The Overwhelming Calamity* (the most accurate one since *overwhelming* translates the meaning of covering, while *calamity* specifies its nature as a disastrous, punishing event from Allah), *The Overwhelming Event* (*event* expresses concrete and historical reality; *overwhelming* expresses that the event's inescapable nature), and *The Overwhelming Punishment* (a powerful, concise option.)

Complete Semantic Loss

According to Hana & Ilhem (2016), complete losses are "the losses that change both form and meaning or give an opposite one." (p.36). Complete loss of meaning in

translation is characterized by omitting or misrepresenting of the core meaning, cultural concept, or rhetorical features of words. The meaning presented here contradicts the original. This sub-section presents a careful analysis of the complete losses of meaning in the verses chosen in *Joseph surah*.

Sample 1

ST

اقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ. (9)

TT: Kill you Joseph, or cast him forth into some land, that your father's face may be free for you, and thereafter you may be a righteous people. (p.254).

In this sample the source word 'وَجْه' (*wajh*) was translated literally as *face*, which is non-equivalent word to the source word. It has a meaning deeper than the physical face. According to *Tafsir Al-Sa'di* (2002, p.394), it means that "your father will take care of you and give you his mercy and compassion." Therefore, it means Jacob's attention, affection and favour. That is, it is used metaphorically, since the Joseph's brothers wish to capture their father's emotional focus and love by removing Joseph. The word *face* (noun) has 8 meanings in *Collins CoBuild ALED* (2003, p.507); none of them has the same meaning as it is in *Tafsir Al-Sa'di* (2002, p.394). Hence, the target word *face* does not convey this metaphorical meaning, consequently it seems odd to an English reader. According to Baker's categories of causes of semantic loss, cause 4: different distinctions in meaning in the SL and the TL is the primary cause because the source word 'وَجْه' conveys meaning which is not found commonly in the target word *face*, therefore, the equivalent English words that infer the intended meanings of Joseph father's caring are *favour*, *affection* and *attention*.

Sample 2

ST

وَجَاءُوا عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ ... (18)

TT: And the brought his shirt with false blood on it. (p.255).

The source word 'قميص' (*qamīṣ*) is also repeated in the verses (25-28, 93). The target equivalent *shirt* is not the exact translation of the source word. *Shirt* means "a piece of clothing that you wear on the upper part of your body." (*Collins CoBuild ALED* (2003, p.1332). In this sense, *shirt* connotes casual, everyday clothing; it lacks the symbolic weight of *qamis* in this sacred and dramatic story. On the contrary, 'قميص' *qamis* culturally means a long gown-like garment, often reaches lower than the knees, a symbol of honour and prophecy. Therefore, Arberry reduced the source word meaning in his translation, since it failed to convey the garment's size, cultural significance of the original Arabic word; reduced its visual and historical accuracy; the target word does not convey the connotative meaning and cultural context. That *qamis* is the one that Prophet Jacob (Joseph's father) smelled and then his sight was retained again at the end of the story; it is the *qamis* which proved Joseph's innocence. According to Baker's framework of loss causes, cause 1: the source word 'قميص' is a culture-specific concept, translated by a common neutral word *shirt*, causing complete semantic loss in translation, since it reduces this cultural specific item to a common modern object. Generally speaking, this translation resulted in connotative and cultural losses. This loss can be minimized by choosing words with more weight and historical resonance, such as *tunic* since it conveys the sense of a long, formal garment; moreover, the word *robe* which expresses a long, dignified garment; another word is *garment*, which is generic and avoids the modern connotations of *shirt*.

Sample 3

ST

وَلَا جُزْءَ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ. (57)

TT: Yet is the wage of the world to come better for those who believe, and are god-fearing. (p. 260).

The target word *world* is not the equivalent for the source word 'الْآخِرَةِ' (*al-ākhirah*). The word *world* in *Collins CoBuild ALED* (2003) means "(1) the planet that we live on, (2) all the people who live on this planet." (p.1680). In

Tafsir Ibn Kathir (2000, 4th vol., p.396) the source word 'الْآخِرَةِ' means "the life after the world life", so its equivalents in Baalbaki, M. & Baalbaki, R. (2008) are "afterlife (p.39), afterworld (p.39) and hereafter (p.538)." Here is a complete semantic translation loss; it is a major error in conveying the source word meaning. Arberry's target word *world* refers to this life, the present, temporal existence, whose Arabic equivalent is 'الدنيا' (*al-dunyā*). The Arabic religious word 'الْآخِرَةِ' denotes the eternal, everlasting life that begins after the Day of Judgment. Hence using this word indicates a direct contradiction of the source word meaning. The cause of this loss is the source word and target word have distinctive meanings (cause 4): the source word refers to only the afterlife, while the target word refers to only this life. Thus, the most accurate and universally accepted translation is *Hereafter*, since it conveys the concept of a life that comes after this life, and it avoids this serious error committed by Arberry. Other suitable translations could be *The Next Life/The Life to Come/The Afterlife*.

Sample 4

ST

أَفَأَمِنُوا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ غَاشِيَةٌ مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ أَوْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ. (107)

TT: Do they feel secure that there shall come upon them no enveloping of chastisement of God, or that the Hour shall not come upon them suddenly when they are unaware? (p.266).

The ST word 'السَّاعَةُ' (*al-sā'ah*) was rendered literally and formally into *the Hour*, which only indicates the denotative meaning of the ST word, but it does not convey the implied meaning of the ST meanings. This literal translation leads to complete semantic loss, since the target language reader might interpret it as a specific imminent event within the story of Joseph, which would be complete misunderstanding. In the context of the Holy Qur'ān, the ST word 'السَّاعَةُ' refers to the Day of Judgment, the end of the world, the time of Resurrection, and it indicates that it is a definite time. Translating it simply as *the Hour* without any contextual framing keeps

it away from its immense meaning and Islamic eschatology. This is one of non-equivalence problems between a SL and a TL, as mentioned by Baker (2011), since the source word does not refer to 60 minute period, but to the Day of Resurrection and the end of the world (Baker's cause 1: cultural specific concepts. Therefore, to overcome this problem a footnote for the word *hour* could have been used, or other phrase can be used such the *Final Hour*, since adding the word *final* indicates that the word *Hour* is not just any hour, but the ultimate one, and connected directly to the concept of eschatology.

Discussion of the Study Questions

1- What are the partial and complete semantic losses in the English translation of Joseph Surah by A.J. Arberry found out from the samples extracted?

After comparing the Arberry's translation of (24) words from Joseph surah with the original Arabic text words, using Tafsir Ibn Kathir (2000) and Al-Sa'di (2002) for interpretations of the verses, Baalbaki (1995) to identify the meanings of the Qur'ānic words, and Collins CoBuild ALED (2000) and Baalbaki (2008) to find the meanings of the target English words used by Arberry, the researcher reached that his translation for Joseph surah contained both partial and complete semantic translation losses on the word level. What follows shows these two types of semantic loss, through presenting the source text words and their target English words:

Partial semantic losses:

V2: أنزلناه = we sent it down, V10: الجب = pit, V13: يأكله الذئب = the wolf eats him, V19: غلام = young man, V21: الأرض = land, V38: الله = God, V67: باب = door, V72: صواع = goblet, V102: الغيب = the Unseen, and V107: غاشية = enveloping.

As shown above the researcher discovered (10) partial semantic translation losses. Eight of them are nouns and (2) verbs. Arberry might have not referred to the Qur'ānic interpretations in order to discover the contextual, religious and cultural meanings of the source words. He only concentrated on the target language reader and necessities of English. Therefore, he committed these

losses. The sematic partial loss was reached by Hana and Ilham (2016) and Baraja'a (2024).

Complete semantic losses:

V9: وجه = face, V18: قميص = shirt, V57: الأخرة = the world, and V107: الساعة = hour.

Four complete semantic translation losses were identified; they are all nouns. Arberry committed serious errors in using these target words as equivalents for the source words, since all the meaning nuances were lost, because he translated them literally. The sematic complete loss was also reached by Hana and Ilham (2016) and Baraja'a (2024).

2- What are the primary linguistic and cultural causes according to Baker's (2011) Model of non-equivalence?

Semantic translation loss is a frequent and central challenge in the field of translation studies, especially when dealing with a sacred text like the Holy Qur'ān. Arberry's translation is among of too many translations that are full of semantic losses on all levels. The reasons behind Arberry's translations of Joseph surah can be analyzed from different angles: linguistic (semantic), theological and methodological reasons.

Linguistic (semantic) differences between the source language (Arabic) and the target language (English) is considered the main reason behind the semantic loss in translation. First, Each language has its own semantic fields of words; no word in one language has a perfect one-to-one equivalent in the other. For example, the word 'غلام' is found in the semantic field which includes the words *boy*, *youth*, *lad*, and *young servant*. Although the target word *young man* used by Arberry is to some extent correct, it is not within the semantic field, so the connotative meaning of boyhood was not conveyed by it. Second, some words can be understood in their connotative, cultural and historical context; they are not just dictionary definitions. For example, the dictionary meaning of the source word 'الساعة' is *the hour*, but its historical and cultural usage in the Holy Qur'ān is specific, since it means *The Final/Last Hour/The Day of Judgment*.

Arberry used a literal translation, so it lost its cultural and historical identity, which led to a complete loss for the meaning. This result is in accordance with Abdelkarim, & Alhaj (2023) who discovered the loss of connotative meaning in some verses in three notable translations: Abdel Haleem, Al-Hilali, and Khan, and Pickthall, and Abdelaal (2018). Arberry's using of literal translation is confirmed by Hana and Ilham (2016) who indicate that literal translation that Arberry based on, leads to an ambiguity in meaning and made the verses unreadable, the same for Ali's translation, that leads to a partial loss and in some verses to a complete one.

The reasons of semantic loss of translation can be theological and doctrinal. The Qur'ānic text is not normal; it is a theological discourse with a precise, technical vocabulary. Therefore, the translators may consider it as common words, which lead to semantic loss. For example, when Arberry translated the source words 'الساعة, الآخرة, الغاشية' in the Qur'ānic text into *the Hour, the World, the Enveloping*, respectively, they lost their doctrinal and theological meanings. Too many Qur'ānic words are connected to the afterlife, punishment, and reward. When they are translated neutrally, their religious resonance is encroached. For example, translating 'الغاشية' into *enveloping* led to lacking the terror and finality of the Overwhelming Calamity.

Some reasons can be methodological and stylistic. A.J. Arberry is an orientalist, worked in an academic context, which explains many of his translation choices. He was often affected by the formal equivalence approach in translation. Therefore, he concentrated more on reproducing the formal structure of Arabic sentence than on conveying the conceptual meaning on natural English. For examples, he translated the Arabic words 'الساعة, الآخرة, الغاشية' formally and literally. His aim from this translation was to enable the English readers to be closer to the linguistic structure of Arabic. Moreover, Arberry was a scholar out of the faith tradition; his primary aim was often academic and literary analysis, hence his choices were almost more literary than precise doctrine

choices. For example, using the target word *young man* as an equivalent for 'غلام' reflects his literary taste.

To sum up, the causes of the partial semantic translation loss in the samples extracted from Joseph surah can be attributed to Baker's (2011) model of non-equivalence at word level between the SL and TL as follows: the cause

Partial semantic losses	Verse no.	Arabic Qur'ānic source word	Arberry's translations	Suitable alternative words
	2	أنزلناه	Sent it down	Bestowed it from on high
	10	الجب	Pit	Well
	13	يأكله الذئب	The wolf eats him.	Devour/tuck/guzzle/engorge/gormandize/
	19	غلام	Young man	A boy/a youth/a lad
	21	الأرض	Land	Earth [of Egypt].
	38	الله	God	Allah
	67	باب	Door	Gate, entrance
	72	صواع	Goblet	Measuring-bowel/grain-measure
	102	الغيب	The Unseen	The Realm of the Unseen/The Hidden Reality
	107	غاشية	Enveloping	The Overwhelming Calamity/Event/Punishment
Complete semantic losses	Verse no.	Arabic Qur'ānic source word	Arberry's translations	Suitable alternative words
	9	وجه	Face	Attention/favour
	18	قميص	Shirt	Robe/tunic/garment
	57	الآخرة	The World	Hereafter/The Next Life
	107	الساعة	The Hour	The Final/Last Hour

of partial losses in the target words *God, goblet, unseen* and *enveloping* is cause 1: cultural specific concepts, that is, the source words are specific cultural words, so that these target words do not contain all the meaning nuances found in the source words. The cause of partial loss in the words *pit, ate, young man* and *door* is cause 4: different distinctions in meaning in the SL and TL. That is, languages contain different lexical fields; the source word and its equivalent have their own semantic fields. The cause of semantic loss in the target word *sent down* is

cause 2: SL concepts are not lexicalized in the TL, because the Arabic concept in the word 'انزل' does not mean only sending down physically, but also it carries the unique composite meaning of revealing the Holy Qur'ān from a divine, higher realm to a human lower realm. In case of the complete semantic loss the cause of semantic loss in the target words *face* and *world* is cause 4: different distinctions in meaning in the SL words and the TL words, whereas in the words *shirt* and *hour* is cause 1: the source words have cultural specific identity.

3- What suitable target words can be used instead of Arberry's?

Many suitable target English words can be used as alternatives to Arberry's target words that led to both partial and complete semantic losses in Joseph Surah. These alternative words were reached after careful comparing the words used by Arberry to the meanings of the source words in original text (the Holy Qur'ān), namely, Joseph Surah, by using Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Al-Sa'adi, three dictionaries (Baalbaki (1955), Baalbaki, M. and Baalbaki, R. (2008), and Collins Cobuild ALED (2003)). The following shows both Arberry's English target words and the suitable alternative words.

Table 1

Arberry's English Target Words and the Suitable Alternative Words

Conclusion, Implications and Further Studies

This study investigated the partial and complete semantic loss in the word level in some verses in Joseph Surah translated by A.J. Arberry from the source language (Arabic) to the target language (English). Many samples, which contains these types of semantic loss, were extracted from the Surah. The Arberry's translation reflects the literary merits of English, therefore, it has significant partial and complete semantic loss because the existence of too many polysemous words in the Arabic text (Holy Qur'ān), cultural differences between the source text and the target text, which in turn affected on Arberry's understanding of the different shades of meaning. He might not have depended on the Arab

scholars' interpretations of the Holy Qur'ān such as Ibn Kathir, Al-Tabari etc., or some Arabic dictionaries such as Al-Mawrid, Lisan Al-Arab and Al-Monjed etc. Baker's (2011) Model was used to identify the causes of both partial and semantic loss of translation in the chosen verses from the surah. The majority of losses were attributed to cause 4 (different distinctions in meaning in the SL and TL), then cause 1 (cultural specific concepts), and cause 2 (SL concepts are not lexicalized in the TL) and cause 3 (semantically complex SL words), and finally cause 8 (differences in expressive meaning.) Therefore, as a results of these semantic losses in his translations and their linguistic, conceptual, theological and methodological reasons, the researcher suggested a number of suitable alternatives, which convey some or the majority of these aspects. According to these findings, this study implies for translation studies that there should be extensive annotations in translating sacred texts, such as the Holy Qur'ān; it serves as a piece of advice for readers and translation students, that depending always on a single translation is inadequate for deep study; moreover, it provides an analysis of a specific Surah in a major translation for scholarship. Further studies can be carried out on similar analysis of other famous translations such as Pickthall, Yusuf Ali, Sahih International etc. for comparative purposes; moreover, examining the translation of parables and metaphors in the Holy Qur'ān

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