

## **Semantic Challenges in Translating the Qur'an: A Comparative Analysis of Four English Translations of Surat Yusuf**

Yousreya Ahmed Ali Alhamshary

Professor of Linguistics, Department of English

Faculty of Education, Damanhour University

Email: [alhamshary@edu.dmu.edu.eg](mailto:alhamshary@edu.dmu.edu.eg)

### **Abstract**

Qur'aan translation is one of the most intellectually critical issues that must be treated with caution because divergence of thought resulting from the translation may lead to problems in the doctrine of the essence of religion itself. This study offers a comparative semantic and stylistic analysis of four English translations of *Surat Yusuf* in the Qur'an, focusing on the renderings by Sahih International, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Al-Hilali and Khan, and John Arberry. Drawing on the exegetical insights of Sheikh Alsharawy and applying principles from translation theory and contrastive linguistics, the study examines how lexical choices, syntactic constructions, and cultural references affect the accuracy and impact of each translation. Particular attention is given to the handling of idiomatic expressions, metaphorical language, and theological nuance. The analysis further examines stylistic features—such as tone, formality, and rhetorical devices—that shape readers' perception, emotional engagement, and interpretive outcomes. Employing an integrated framework of linguistic, semantic, and cultural dimensions, the study reveals the complexities inherent in translating sacred texts and highlights the interpretive strategies employed by different translators. The findings underscore how variations in translation affect the transmission of narrative coherence, doctrinal meaning, and the spiritual resonance of the Qur'anic message, providing valuable insight into the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and theology in religious translation.

**Keywords:** Qur'an Translation; Surat Yusuf; Semantic Equivalence; Comparative Analysis; Translation Strategies; Exegesis; Arabic-English Translation; Cultural Context

## التحديات الدلالية في ترجمة القرآن الكريم: تحليل مقارنة لأربع ترجمات إنجليزية لسورة يوسف

## الملخص

تُعد ترجمة القرآن أحد أكثر القضايا الفكرية أهمية والتي يجب التعامل معها بحذر لأن اختلاف الفكر الناتج عن الترجمة للنص الديني قد يؤدي إلى مشاكل عقائدية في جوهر الدين نفسه. يقدم هذا البحث دراسة تحليلية مقارنة من حيث الدلالة والأسلوب لأربع ترجمات إنجليزية لسورة يوسف في القرآن الكريم، وهي ترجمات: "صحيح إنترناشيونال"، وعبد الله يوسف علي، والشيخان الهلالي ومحب الدين خان، وجون آربري. وانطلاقاً من الرؤية التفسيرية للشيخ الشعراوي لسورة يوسف، وتطبيقاً لمبادئ نظرية الترجمة واللغويات التقابلية، يفحص البحث كيفية تأثير الاختيارات المعجمية، والتراكيب النحوية، والإحالات الثقافية في دقة كل ترجمة وأثرها. كما يُولى اهتمام خاص لكيفية معالجة التعبيرات الاصطلاحية، واللغة المجازية، والدلالات العقائدية الدقيقة. ويتناول التحليل كذلك السمات الأسلوبية—مثل النغمة، ودرجة الرسمية، والوسائل البلاغية—التي تشكل تصور القارئ، وتفاعله العاطفي، ومخرجاته التأويلية. ومن خلال اعتماد إطار متكامل يشمل الأبعاد اللغوية والدلالية والثقافية، يكشف البحث عن التعقيدات الكامنة في ترجمة النصوص المقدسة، ويسلط الضوء على الاستراتيجيات التي يعتمد عليها المترجمون. وتؤكد النتائج أن الاختلافات في الترجمة تؤثر بشكل مباشر في نقل تماسك السرد، والمعنى العقائدي، والوقع الروحي لرسالة القرآن، مما يقدم رؤية قيمة حول التفاعل الديناميكي بين اللغة والثقافة في سياق الترجمة الدينية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ترجمة القرآن؛ سورة يوسف؛ التكافؤ الدلالي؛ تحليل مقارنة؛ استراتيجيات الترجمة؛ التفسير؛ الترجمة بين العربية والإنجليزية؛ السياق الثقافي

## Introduction

The Qur'an, as the central religious text of Islam, holds profound significance for millions of believers worldwide. Among its chapters, *Surah Yusuf* stands out as a captivating narrative that unfolds the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) and his journey of faith, resilience, and redemption. With its intricate plot, moral lessons, and timeless themes, *Surah Yusuf* has engaged readers across cultures and centuries. Translating this Surah presents a unique challenge for scholars and translators who must convey the richness and complexity of the original Arabic text into another language. Each translation reflects not only linguistic rendering but also interpretative decisions, cultural sensibilities, and stylistic preferences. A comparative analysis of multiple translations of *Surah Yusuf* offers valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and interpretation in the translation of religious texts. This research aims to conduct such a comparative analysis, focusing on four widely recognized English translations: Sahih International, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali & Muhammad Muhsin Khan, and John Arthur Arberry. The analysis explores how each translator interprets and renders the Surah into English, with a particular focus on semantic variance, linguistic accuracy, and stylistic divergence. Through this comparative analysis, the study seeks to illuminate the complexities and subtleties involved in translating *Surah Yusuf*. It highlights the interpretive choices that contribute to the diversity of meanings presented in each version and their implications for readers' understanding and engagement. In doing so, the research contributes to broader discussions on Qur'anic translation, particularly in its ability to shape theological understanding across linguistic and cultural boundaries. It is essential to acknowledge that no translation, however faithful, can fully replicate the depth, rhetorical power, and divine nature of the original Arabic Qur'anic text. Translation, though widely practiced across cultures and centuries, especially in both Arab and European societies, is especially delicate when applied to sacred texts. While literary translations may allow for creative interpretation, Qur'anic translation requires strict

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adherence to the intended meaning to avoid misrepresenting the divine message. The difficulty lies not only in lexical equivalence but also in the impact of cultural context and exegetical insight, which often govern how a term or verse should be understood.

The Qur'an presents one of the most intricate and profound narrative traditions. Its stories are not merely accounts but divinely guided narratives with legal, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Among these, *Surah Yusuf* is unique—it is the only Surah that presents a complete and continuous story from beginning to end. It is structurally independent, not repeated elsewhere in the Qur'an, and contains an elaborate narrative framework involving numerous characters and moral lessons relevant to various stages of life. The Qur'anic narrative, especially in *Surah Yusuf*, interweaves themes and structure in a way that demands harmony between the story's components. The coherence of plot, character development, and spiritual motifs in this Surah presents considerable challenges for translation. Given the rising interest in Islam—whether through scholarly engagement or social discourse—*Surah Yusuf* stands out as a critical Surah to study in translation, especially as misunderstandings or misinterpretations can lead to distorted beliefs or misrepresented teachings.

This study selects *Surah Yusuf* due to its rich narrative structure, linguistic beauty, and spiritual depth. It seeks to examine whether and how English translations preserve the integrity and intended meaning of the original Arabic text. While the Qur'anic narrative is tightly interwoven with rhetorical and semantic devices, translation often falls short of capturing these intricacies. Contrastive analysis, used in this study, focuses on the structural differences between Arabic and English—highlighting how these affect grammatical structure, vocabulary, and ultimately meaning. According to Yule (2006), semantics involves understanding “the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences,” not simply in context, but based on their conventional meanings. Abdul-Raof (2005) emphasizes that Qur'anic translation faces numerous challenges due to its pragma-linguistic and cross-cultural constraints, which make semantic fidelity extremely difficult. This study does not approach the permissibility of Qur'anic translation from a theological perspective; rather, it examines linguistic and rhetorical challenges inherent in rendering the text accurately and meaningfully. To conduct a thorough comparative analysis, this research adopts a multidimensional framework integrating linguistic, semantic, stylistic, and cultural components. The linguistic dimension assesses vocabulary, syntax, clarity, and the use of idioms. The semantic dimension evaluates interpretation and meaning transfer, focusing on fidelity to exegetical interpretations. The stylistic dimension explores the translators' use of rhetorical devices, tone, and formality, while the cultural sensitivity dimension considers how well each translation navigates context-bound references and theological nuances. This integrated framework facilitates a systematic approach to comparing the selected translations, enhancing our understanding of how language, culture, and interpretation converge in the translation of *Surah Yusuf*.

### Significance of the study

The comparative analysis of translations of *Surah Yusuf* holds substantial scholarly and practical significance. By examining the linguistic, semantic, and stylistic differences across multiple English translations, this study deepens the understanding of the complex dynamics involved in translating sacred texts. It highlights the challenges faced by translators in conveying the subtle nuances, rhetorical devices, and theological depth of the original Qur'anic Arabic into English. Analyzing how different translators render the compelling narrative of *Surah Yusuf* not only enriches scholarly

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discourse on Qur'anic interpretation but also enhances readers' engagement with its moral and spiritual teachings. This exploration supports cultural and linguistic sensitivity in Qur'anic translation, encouraging approaches that respect both the sanctity of the source text and the needs of diverse readerships. Furthermore, this study provides critical insights into how translation choices impact comprehension, emotional resonance, and theological interpretation. Such understanding enables scholars, educators, and religious leaders to guide readers—both Muslim and non-Muslim—toward a more informed and nuanced appreciation of *Surah Yusuf* and the Qur'an as a whole. In addition, the research contributes methodologically to the field of translation studies by demonstrating a framework that integrates semantic, linguistic, stylistic, and cultural dimensions. It informs future translation efforts, particularly in religious contexts, where precision and sensitivity are paramount. Finally, the study serves as a valuable contribution to interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural understanding. By shedding light on how translation mediates meaning across languages and belief systems, it promotes mutual respect, tolerance, and a deeper appreciation for the diversity of religious expression. Thus, this comparative analysis is relevant to scholars, translators, educators, and readers interested in Qur'anic studies, linguistic precision, and the ethics of intercultural communication.

**Purpose and objective of the study**

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of English translations of *Surah Yusuf* in the Qur'an, with a focus on identifying linguistic, semantic, stylistic, and cultural variations among selected translators. The study aims to examine how vocabulary choices, sentence structures, and idiomatic expressions vary across translations, and how these choices affect the clarity, tone, and interpretative depth of the text. It also seeks to explore semantic differences, particularly in how translators handle ambiguous, metaphorical, or theologically loaded language, revealing the interpretive strategies that shape readers' understanding of the Surah. Furthermore, the study investigates stylistic variations, such as the use of formal versus informal language, poetic versus prosaic styles, and rhetorical devices that influence the emotional and spiritual impact of the translation. Cultural sensitivity is also assessed, especially in how translators navigate culturally specific references and expressions, ensuring appropriateness and relevance for diverse audiences. In addition, the study aims to draw insights from translation theory by analyzing the strategies employed—such as equivalence, paraphrasing, omission, or explication—and how these reflect the translators' linguistic and theological orientations. Ultimately, this research aspires to deepen scholarly understanding of Qur'anic translation, enrich interfaith dialogue, and contribute to broader discussions in translation studies, religious interpretation, and cross-cultural communication.

**Theoretical background**

Language functions as a fundamental representation of societies, whether developed, developing, or underdeveloped. Among the most influential global languages are Arabic and English. Arabic, the liturgical language of Islam, is spoken natively by over 100 million people, particularly across the Middle East, and is also studied globally as a second or foreign language. English, on the other hand, functions as the dominant global language in fields such as science, technology, international relations, and even academic education in many Arab countries. Arabic is generally categorized into three types: Classical Arabic, used in pre-Islamic poetry and formal literature, and most significantly, the language of the Qur'an; Modern Standard Arabic

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(MSA), used in official, academic, and media contexts; and Spoken Arabic, which varies in dialect across regions. Among these, Qur'anic Arabic stands apart in its linguistic depth, rhetorical power, and divine status—making its translation particularly complex and contentious.

### Equivalence in Translation

The central theoretical challenge in Qur'anic translation is the notion of equivalence. While some theorists, such as Catford, define translation as the pursuit of equivalence between source and target texts, many scholars argue that true equivalence is often unattainable—especially when dealing with sacred texts. Hatim and Mason (1997) emphasize that meaning often exists beyond the propositional level, stating that equivalence is best viewed as “the closest possible approximation” to the source text’s meaning. Mona Baker (2018) addresses equivalence across several levels—word, grammatical, textual, and pragmatic—while acknowledging that some degree of semantic loss is inevitable. Strategies such as paraphrasing or omission are often used to deal with non-equivalence; however, they risk diluting the rhetorical and theological richness of the Qur'anic message. This issue becomes especially relevant in Qur'anic translation, where the source language's structure, style, and divine context challenge the capacity of any target language—especially English—to fully capture its depth. The Qur'an employs dense metaphors, nuanced theological terms, and divine directives, all of which resist straightforward translation. As Imam Al-Sadiq is reported to have said, “Learn Arabic, for it is the language of Allah.” Thus, translators must often choose not between perfect and imperfect translations, but between varying degrees of interpretative approximation, shaped by their cultural, linguistic, and religious frameworks.

### Qur'anic Narrative and Language Complexity

The Qur'anic text is not merely a literary or historical document—it is divine revelation. Its narrative elements, especially in *Surah Yusuf*, demonstrate a sophisticated structure characterized by cohesion, rhetorical eloquence, and profound spiritual depth. The Surah is unique in being the only complete story in the Qur'an, unfolding in one continuous narrative without repetition elsewhere. This story integrates moral lessons, spiritual insight, and psychological depth—covering themes relevant to all stages of human life. Given its stylistic and thematic richness, *Surah Yusuf* presents exceptional challenges to translators. The Qur'an's linguistic beauty—its rhythm, phonology, and metaphor—rarely survives the transfer to another language. Translators often face difficulties related to ambiguous vocabulary, ellipses, polysemy, syntactic complexity, and culture-bound expressions, making it hard to preserve both form and meaning.

### Review of Literature

Numerous studies have addressed the challenges of translating the Qur'an. Abu Mahfouz (2006) focused on deictic expressions and how they lose meaning in translation. Sadiq (2010) identified key issues such as semantic change, proper names, and syntactic ambiguity. Alamiri & Mikan (2013) explored ellipsis in the story of Yusuf, while Mahmoud (2008) emphasized the need for cultural sensitivity and the transfer of embedded meanings in translation. Al-Salem (2008) argued that more rhetorically and spiritually elevated texts are harder to translate, while Abu-Mahfouz (2011) and Ashaer (2013) analyzed semantic and pragmatic failures in translations by Arberry and Yusuf Ali. Al-Hadi (2019) critiqued the use of archaic language and



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transliteration, advocating for collective translation efforts by scholars well-versed in Islamic sciences. A lot of studies related to the difficulty of translations of the meanings of the Holy Quran have been conducted. The study of Abu Mahfouz (2006) made a distinction between different types of deictics—such as social deixis, time deixis, place deixis, person deixis, demonstratives, and the definite article—as language-bound concepts in translating the Qur'an, causing frequent loss of meaning due to contextual constraints. In addition, Sadiq (2010) has found that the problems directly related to Qur'an translation are polysemy, semantic change, proper names, tenses—especially the use of the past tense in Arabic—word order, syntactic ambiguity, ellipsis, redundancy, extraposition, and culture-bound words. Additionally, Sallal & Hussein (2021) examined implicit meanings in *Surah Yusuf*, using frameworks from Larson and Verschueren to identify functions of ellipsis, metaphor, and politeness in Qur'anic discourse. Lachgar (2023) focused on “conveyance strategy” to preserve the Islamic terminology's theological precision. Similarly, Nur et al. (2023) interpreted the *Surah Yusuf* narrative through a contemporary lens of human trafficking, demonstrating the story's enduring relevance. Aziz (2019) examined the translation of "harf jar al-bā'" in *Surah Al-Kahf*, highlighting how different translators' theological and linguistic approaches result in divergent renderings. Mohammed (2020) contrasted Yusuf Ali's archaic style with Assad's modern tone, recommending that translators avoid personal bias and outdated forms. Likewise, Tughral et al. (2024) found significant variation between translators' adherence to either formal correspondence or dynamic equivalence. Other studies—such as those by Aghajani & Jalali (2019), Abdelwali (2007), Elhindi (2008), Roozegar (2012), Farahani (2013), and Naser & Ashaer (2013)—analyzed metaphor translation, lexical challenges, and divine names, often concluding that literal methods are dominant, but often inadequate for capturing Qur'anic richness.

These studies collectively highlight the evolving concern over the quality, faithfulness, and clarity of Qur'anic translations. As translation tools proliferate, particularly AI-powered ones, the risk of unintended shifts in meaning becomes more urgent. This raises the importance of rigorous scholarly evaluation and critical comparison of existing translations. Against this backdrop, the current study positions itself as a focused investigation into the **linguistic, semantic, stylistic, and cultural divergences** among four prominent English translations of *Surah Yusuf*. By identifying areas where meaning may be lost, altered, or clarified, the study seeks to enrich the academic field of Qur'anic translation and deepen understanding of Islam's foundational text.

## Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative comparative research design that combines textual analysis with interpretive reflection. It investigates the linguistic, semantic, stylistic, and cultural dimensions of four English translations of *Surah Yusuf* from the Holy Qur'an. The central aim is to examine how each translation maintains the coherence, rhetorical force, and theological depth of the original Arabic text. By relying on both applied linguistics and Qur'anic exegesis (tafsīr), the study moves beyond surface-level lexical choices to consider deeper implications of translation strategies. Translation is treated not merely as a linguistic act but as an interpretative and communicative process that must respect the sacred nature of the text while making it accessible to a broader readership.

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Surah Yusuf was selected as the corpus of this study due to its narrative completeness and its rich linguistic and moral content. Comprising 111 verses, the surah presents a unified and self-contained story, making it particularly suitable for comparative textual analysis. The primary focus is on verses 4 through 101, which form the narrative core of the surah. These verses are analyzed across four English translations: Sahih International, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, and John Arthur Arberry. These translators were purposefully selected for their differing backgrounds, linguistic affiliations, and approaches to translation. The selection reflects a range of translation philosophies, from literal fidelity to poetic representation, and from modern linguistic accessibility to traditional religious framing.

Data for this study were drawn from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consist of the four English translations of Surah Yusuf. The researcher accessed physical copies of the translations by Yusuf Ali, Al-Hilali and Khan, and Arberry, and retrieved the Sahih International version from its official website <https://quran.com/12>. Secondary sources include classical and contemporary Qur'ānic tafsīr, notably the interpretative work of Sheikh Al-Sha'rāwī (2004), accessed through both video lectures and textual compilations. Arabic lexical sources such as *Al-Sihāh* were also consulted to determine precise word meanings. Furthermore, theoretical literature on translation studies, especially Mona Baker's (2018) *In Other Words*, provided analytical tools for evaluating translation equivalence. English dictionaries were used to evaluate the clarity and appropriateness of translated expressions.

The analytical framework used in this study integrates four key dimensions: linguistic, semantic, stylistic, and cultural. Linguistic analysis focuses on vocabulary choices, syntactic structures, and grammatical patterns to assess how clearly and accurately the original meanings are conveyed. Semantic comparison evaluates how the translators render ambiguous or context-sensitive words and phrases, with a particular focus on interpretative decisions that affect the theological and narrative aspects of the text. Stylistic analysis examines whether translators adopt formal or informal registers, poetic or prosaic styles, and rhetorical devices such as metaphors, repetition, or parallelism. Lastly, the cultural sensitivity of each translation is assessed to determine how effectively it navigates cultural references, religious connotations, and context-specific expressions in ways that resonate with or inform non-Arabic-speaking Muslim and non-Muslim audiences alike.

The procedure for analysis involved multiple comparative steps. First, the Arabic source text of Surah Yusuf was closely read in conjunction with each English translation. The verses were categorized by thematic units—such as expressions of divine will, family dynamics, or moral instruction—to allow focused analysis. Key phrases and problematic vocabulary were examined in detail across all four versions, with attention to differences in meaning, tone, and coherence. Where discrepancies occurred, tafsīr and Arabic dictionaries were used to establish the most contextually accurate interpretation. Translation choices were then evaluated using Mona Baker's model of equivalence, including word-level, grammatical, textual, and pragmatic equivalence. This facilitated a systematic and multi-layered comparison that accounts for both surface and deep-structure features of translation.

This methodological approach is justified by the theological and linguistic complexity of the Qur'ānic text, which necessitates an interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional strategy. By integrating insights from Qur'ānic studies and translation theory, the study ensures that both the sacredness of the source text and the communicative needs of the target audience are considered. The selected translations

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vary not only in stylistic preferences but also in theological framing and linguistic fidelity. The comprehensive methodology allows for an assessment that is both analytical and interpretative, aiming to identify best practices in Qur'ānic translation and to highlight the challenges inherent in rendering divine speech into another language. The goal is to contribute to the improvement of future translations and to deepen readers' understanding of Surah Yusuf through a linguistically and theologically informed lens.

**Analysis and Discussion**

The main aim of the present study is to compare the English and Arabic translations of Surat Yusuf to determine the points of difference on the semantic level. The translated text for each of the translators is compared to the original text to determine the extent to which each of them is closer to the translation and reflects the real meaning of the original Qur'aānic text. These differences may be the main cause of difficulty in the appropriate understanding of Qur'anic rules and principles. The whole focus of the present analysis will be confined to structure and semantic meaning in both translations. Translating text between two different language structures is of great importance, especially in critical topics like religion, which can be misunderstood. No translation of the Holy Qur'an can ever fully match the form and content of the real Qur'anic discourse. In translating the Qur'anic expressions in Surat Yusuf from Arabic into English, lexical, syntactic, and semantic problems arise to keep the meaning as coherent and cohesive as possible, as no two languages are identical in the given meaning to the figures or in how such figures are ordered in phrases and sentences. The Arabic taste cannot be evident unless the translator has the same vision and cultural background as Arabic society. This study investigates the translators' different versions to find better equivalents in the target text and to give insights into producing more accurate translations into other languages.

This translation is a covert one whose source text is not specifically addressed to a particular source culture audience or firmly tied to the source lingua-culture. The Qur'anic text is supposed to be for all human beings. The source (Arabic text) and the translated one (English here) are supposed to have equivalent purposes. Thus, as House (2014, p.253) said, it is "desirable to keep the function of the source text equivalent in the translation text". She adds, "Translation involves a transfer of texts across time and space, and whenever texts move, they also shift cognitive frames and discourse worlds." The present study analyzes the existing problems and challenges in the translation of Surat Yusuf into English. It sheds light on direct and indirect translation procedures in translating from Arabic into English, besides it emphasizes the translators' and interpreters' role in transferring and reframing ambiguous expressions in the target text, mainly in the field of pragmatics. The Holy Qur'an contains devotions and instructions besides a lot of literal and figures of speech like assonance, epithet, irony, repetition, polysemy, metonymy, simile, synonymy, and homonymy that constitute an obstacle in translation; it is very difficult to be free of some mistakes or misunderstood words. Bassnett (1991:13) stated that translation must take place within the framework of culture. The analysis of the available data depends mainly on the maintenance or loss of meaning. Dealing with the style of translation, there are a lot of words that don't suit the meaning of its verse.

The development of the story comes in the following frame in six steps, going down, then the same six steps going back to the starting point of the story again, and the verses greatly help to understand the story between the lines of the story. A lot of



actions and events are embedded but clearly understood through the perfect structure of language used in the Qur'anic style.

1 – Yusuf has a dream.  
interpreted and realized.



2 – His brothers plot against him  
lesson



3 – His owner's wife attempts to seduce him  
owner's wife confesses



4 – Her ladies attempt to seduce him



5 – He is imprisoned

1 – Yusuf's dream is



2 – His brothers learn their



3 – His former



4 – The ladies confess



5 – Yusuf is released from prison

6 – The king has a dream  
interpreted

6 – The king's dream is



This frame of events is spread out in exactly this order over 103 verses. Throughout this timeline and verse, problems are introduced and solved in reverse symmetric order. It was revealed in parts over 23 years to have this kind of consistency in speech over this time and moving through locations of the events as if you are watching a perfect film, forming what would later be compiled as a book and analyzed as a book is beyond human capacity. In analyzing translations of Surat Yusuf, several key factors shape the variations observed across different versions. Firstly, vocabulary choices diverge as each translator selects words to convey the original Arabic meaning, resulting in distinct semantic nuances perceived by readers. Secondly, sentence structure varies among translations, impacting the text's flow, readability, and emphasis on specific story elements. Thirdly, interpretative decisions come into play when translators encounter ambiguous or metaphorical language, significantly influencing the text's understanding. Additionally, cultural context influences how translators interpret nuances and references, leading to disparities in translating certain concepts or expressions. Stylistic preferences also play a role, with each translator bringing their unique tone and register to the translation. Finally, theological perspectives shape translation choices, particularly in passages with theological significance, reflecting the diverse interpretations of Surat Yusuf's messages. The analysis goes as follows.

**Verse No.** (1) all of the four translators use the identifier "these" that is syntactically to refer to a particular person, thing, or event that is close to you, especially compared with another or mentioned before, referring to the holy verses in the Qur'an whereas (JA) used the identifier "those, which may indicate that he does not feel the spiritual

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sense of the Qur'an. At the same time (YA) uses the adjective "perspicuous" for the noun "book" (meant here the Qur'an) which syntactically refers to something pure and (JA) uses "manifest" that may indicate that the book shows itself, so the appropriate adjective is used by (SI) and (HK) as they use "clear" for this book comes from Allah and is divine, so it has no doubt. Asha'arawi says that these letters "الر" must be read according to the way they are said in speech "الف لام راء", as in the phonological system of the language. They are translated as the names of the letters by (SI), (HK), and (A). Asha'arawi gives "المبين" the meaning of "what makes issues and things clear". Longman Dictionary (2017) and Al-Mawrid (2015) define "perspicuous" as clear, easy, showing clever judgment and understanding.

**Verse No. (2):** Translator (HK) uses "verily," which means truly or really, whereas (SI) uses "indeed" to make sure that Allah talks about the fact and truth or reality. (YA) and (JA) did not use any adverbs. The translation of (YA) for "لعلكم تعقلون" is "you may learn wisdom," which is more appropriate to the context. The phrase "may understand" means that they do not know what Allah refers to, maybe because of ignorance, which may be an excuse for him (Mohamed). In the exegeses of "لعلكم تعقلون" Alsharawy indicated that the target meaning here is to use the brain and logic a higher skill of mentality than understanding which is closer also to the English expression "to learn wisdom". No big difference in using "may" and "might" but using "will" in (JA) has made a difference in the meaning as it refers to the future. Adding the word "happy" is not appropriate here as cognition or being aware of something leads to ease and comfort. However, its reward gives a sense of happiness.

**Verse No. (3):** They differ in structure as (SI) and (JA) use adjectives and (YA) and (HK) use nouns or phrases. "Unaware" and "heedless" indicate the prophet's status as partially not knowing, but "knew it not" and "knew nothing about it" do not have the same meaning, which is being ignorant. The adjective "beautiful" is given to the word "stories" by (YA), which is inappropriate, for it may relate to sight or feeling, and (JA) uses "fairest", which is also inappropriate. Both (SI) and (HK) use the adjective "best," which is more appropriate and closer to the Arabic expression "احسن" as it indicates a suitable degree of convincing it reflects being the most excellent type or quality. The quality of (JA) was not good enough for the meaning in Arabic, so he committed to the word-by-word translation or the non-equivalent one. In Al-Waseet (2004), the word "احسن" is derived from the root "حسن" which can stand for two meanings: "جميل" meaning what is beautiful, and "الافضل" meaning "the best" in comparative form with other stories in the Qur'an context. This preference expressed by the word "احسن" is due to the surah being the best of stories in its narration, choices, style, judgment, and proof (Nofal, 1989) or due to being written in the best of forms and the greatest of excellence (Abd-Alaziz, 2000). (YA) Using "the most beautiful" goes to the first meaning of the word "احسن" and follows the Arabic semantics where one word can have many shades of meaning.

**Verse No. (4):** This is the starting point of Yusuf's story with his dream. The Arabic version includes, according to the exegeses, two scenes where Yusuf saw the stars and the sun and the moon in the ordinary context, and then the other scene where they are prostrating to him. Whereas all translations express one scene in which they are prostrating to him. The Arabic version has the accusative masculine plural active participle "ساجدين" that indicates reasoning, and the four English translations use "they" and "them" too without any indication for that. For adding assurance (SI) uses the word "indeed", (YA) uses "did", and (HK) uses "verily" and "themselves"; however, (JA) did not use any expression to assure the prostrate scene. (HK) uses the verb "remember" between brackets as if the Prophet Mohamed knew the story before, and this is not true.

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(JA) uses the verb "bow," which is less effective in the meaning of respect to Yusuf. In the Arabic original version, the word "رؤية" syntactically is related to things one sees as real while awakening, but the word "رؤيا" is related to things one sees while sleeping (dream), and prophets' dreams are considered real. Thus, the word "vision," which means "the ability to see perfectly" in all translated versions, is not appropriate to the situation unless in the story it will come true, so the translator prefers to use the word vision. The appropriate word is "dream". The repetition of رأيت "I saw" indicates that there was not the least doubt in Joseph's mind that what he saw was real and not just a normal dream. The word رأى in Arabic

may serve as the verbal stem for both "رؤية", "seeing" using physical eyesight, and "رؤيا" conceiving a vision of future events while asleep.

**Verse No. (5):** This is attested to by Joseph's father's answer not to tell his brothers about his "visionary" dream رؤياك in the following verse. The word "contrive" in "will contrive against you a plan" also did not refer to an evil action, but it is followed by Satan being manifested enemy to clarify that they will do something harmful to him if they know. In Arabic, "يَكِيدُوا لَكَ" refers to the evil that comes to be good for Yusuf, but "يَكِيدُوكَ" is a hidden evil that may harm him. Maybe if the translator said conspire may be more effective. The previous meaning of the Arabic word "مبين" given to the book is not the same this time with Satan. (SI) and (JA) use manifested enemy which means "show feeling or attitudes. (YA) uses "avowed" which means "stated or admitted". (HK) uses "open" which means "to allow things or people to go through". The exegeses meant that Satan surrounds man from everywhere. So, the closest word to Arabic meaning is "avowed" as a concept admitted previously for the relation between Satan and mankind. All (SI), (YA) and (HK) replace the possessive pronoun "my" which is "ي" in Arabic except (A).

**Verse No. (6):** (JA) uses "tales" and (YA) uses "stories" for the Arabic expression "تأويل الاحاديث" whereas (HK) uses dreams. All the previous are limited to one type of event; However, using "interpretation of narratives" in (SI) refers to the interpretation of dreams or predictions about actions in life. In Arabic, the word "تأويل" means knowing what will happen to something or reading future events and their results, but here it is meant to include stories, fiction, and dialogues. Thus (SI) is the best of them, expressing the Arabic meaning. The word "favorite" or "نعمة" also here is not clear in meaning whether it is grace or being a messenger shortly. Only (YA) utilizes the word Allah, which is appropriate in the context, for only Allah can grant and choose prophets and teach them interpretation. The other word, "lord in the English culture may be used to refer to a man of high rank in the nobility (people of high social class), or somebody who has been given the title 'lord' as an honor. Thus, the use of lord in (SI), (HK), and (JA) is inappropriate and may cause misunderstandings for new readers or people away from Arabic culture.

**Verse No. (7):** The word "signs" is not the same as "آيات" meaning in Arabic, as it may refer to miracles for the disbelievers to be convinced or things that astonish people or miracles, and they see them unusual things, whereas in Arabic, sings mean things that people can see but with their usual sense. The non-Arabic people may read it as verses or as lessons or evidence or proofs for others to follow. In the tafseer of this verse, it is said that "آيات" is a plural word that means something that people feel strange and they may be universal like sun and moon and day and night, or they may be miracle related to messengers like that of prophet Soliman like treatment of diseases and talking to birds; or the last ones that relate to principles and values of religion. The word "signs" in the translation doesn't hold any of the previous meanings. Thus, only (HK) has chosen the right word in context and given options or alternatives to the reader to

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indicate other meanings for him. Using the plural indicates the large number of miracles included in the Surah. The preposition "in" is used here as an adverb to limit the actions and characters of the Surah in Yusuf and his brothers.

**Verse No. (8):** the article "الـ" with the "لـ" is used to assure the meaning that Yusuf and his brother's love in the father's heart are disturbing them however, the use of comparative form "أحب الي ابينا" "are more beloved" means that they are included in the same feeling "love". The word "عصبه" is translated in one "clan" meaning "a group of families who are related to each other, especially in Scotland" and in (YA) "goodly body" whereas in (HK) is translated as "a strong group" and in (JA) is "band" or a group of people having the same ideas or do same actions however, may mean in other culture "a small group of musicians who play popular music together, often with a singer or singers". The repetition of the Arabic word "مبين" but with a different meaning; here it means unfair treatment of the sons. It is translated as "clear" in (SI) and "wandering" or to move without much control over other ideas, subjects, etc. in (YA) and plain" or easy to see or understand in (HK) and finally "manifested" in (A). The concept of brotherhood is not clear in translation where "ليوسف واخوه" means that Yusuf and Benjamin are brothers for the same mother and the others are not.

**Verse No. (9):** The translators in this verse differ in the structure of their sentence, but they all present the meaning simply and easily with the use of different verbs like "slay" and "kill". Al-Waseet (2004) gives the Arabic word "يخل" the meaning of "يفرغ منه" meaning "empty from what it contains". The exegeses all give it a secondary meaning in this verse "تفرد وانفرد" which is "solely" according to Al-Mawrid (2015). Both (YA) and (HK) understood the meaning of "يخل" in the verse, so they used "the favor" respectively. On the contrary, (SI) goes a little bit close to the meaning using the word countenance, which means "طلعه". (JA) uses word-for-word saying (your father's face may be free for you. The result is an incomprehensible phrase. The real meaning here is to let the father care only for you and loves no anybody else only the brothers and there will be no Yusuf to care about or love more forgetting that love is not by the presence and later on the father will show that he still favor Yusuf even if he is not there and his love for them still not changes.

**Verse No. (10):** Here, there is no difference in meaning, but the cultural part is clear. The Arabic expression "غيايات الجب يلتقطه بعض السياره" is not well expressed as (YA) and (HK) used "caravan" which does not belong to the Arabic desert environment. They all used "pick up" for "يلتقطه" which means "finding something by accident" (Al-Qurtuby 2008) or "to take" (Abd-Alaziz 2000) and is acceptable but "pick out" used by (JA) may be confusing as it means "ينتقي" or "to choose or recognize somebody carefully from a group of people or things" also according to the context.

**Verse No. (11):** the use of "counselors" which means a person who wants to show that they support somebody and want them to be happy, successful, etc. in (SI) and "well-wishers" which means a person who has been trained to advise people with problems, especially personal problems in (YA), (HK) and (JA) as an alternate to the Arabic "لناصحون" is not concise in getting the right meaning. The use of plural speaker pronouns "قالوا، ابانا، تامنا، انا، ناصحون" in the Arabic verse represents their agreement and assures the previous meaning of "عصبه".

**Verse No. (12):** According to Al-Qurtuby (2008) and Asha'arawi the two verbs in Arabic "يلعب" and "يرنع" are different; as the former include playing games that are accepted by religion and help the human strength to grow such as horse riding and swordplay; whereas the latter refers to games that waste time and have negative results on health and worship. In English, "play" is used for all positive or negative activities. Therefore, the use of "eat well by" (SI) and "enjoy himself" by (YA) and (HK) and

"frolic" by (JA) in addition to "play" did not cause a loss in meaning according to the books of exegeses because all include the meaning "to play and move around in a lively, happy way".

**Verse No. (17):** the use of "even if" in (SI) and "even though" in (YA) and "even when" in (HK) and "though" in (JA) as an equivalent for "لو" illustrates the real understanding in the translators' view for the relation between the father and the sons in this context. For Abd-Alaziz (2000), "لو" in this verse takes the meaning of "ان كنا", which is "if we". The father does not see them as innocent or previously told truths. What the verse indicates is that they are not telling their father the truth, and even if they do, they think he will not believe them. They see him hate them while they lie to him.

**Verse No. (18):** the expression "false blood" does not define whether the blood is false for being of a wolf or the idea of putting blood on his shirt. "فصير جميل" "so patience is most fitting" It is known in Arabic that there is a big difference between being patient and the beautiful patience as the second one is parallel to accepting Allah's fat without feeling any pain or sadness but the other one may have any disagreeing feeling attached with patience. So, the translator did not use an adjective before the noun to add the type of patience. Only (JA) uses "sweet" before the noun "patience," but sweet is related to tasty. And (HK) used passive structure in "his shirt stained with false blood," which doesn't indicate that this action may not be done by them.

**Verse No. (19):** The image here is left for the reader or listener to the verse to imagine the narrated scene of how the water drawer knows that he is a boy, not water, and the impression of finding a boy in such a place, and how they get Yusuf out of the well.

The Arabic expression "اسروه", which means "hiding", is only understood from (2) the expression "as a treasure" which indicates the value of a boy in such an environment, but "as merchandise" used by (SI), (HK), and (JA) did not reflect that meaning. The use of "young man" by (YA) and (JA) has made Yusuf an age bigger than he is.

They sold him for a reduced price - a few dirhams - and they were, concerning him, of that content with little. The cultural aspect is clear in using the currency of the country "Drahim". And they concealed him, [taking him] as merchandise بضاعة. Using the pronoun "they" doesn't refer to the identity of who concealed him and why they did so. The translation here is incomplete, and here the strategy is the omission of some words, which affected the meaning. Concealing him here means that he is considered a very precious thing by them, but after a while, they sell him for a few dirhams, which indicates irony in action.

**Verse No. (20):** The "وشروه بثمن بخس" and the word "الزاهدين" in Arabic mean they don't like something, which means here they don't want to have him with them, and that's why they sold him. The expression indicates that they quickly get rid of him for fear that his family may find him. The adjectives "reduced price", "miserable price", "low price", and "paltry price" all indicate the valuelessness of the money they get in return for him, despite the difference in the degree of valuelessness. According to Asha'arawi and Al-Qurtubi (2008), "بخس" carries the meaning of Yusuf's trivial price, low and less than his real value if sold as a slave. In addition to the meaning of "حرام", Yusuf is a free boy, not a slave. One of the clear problems in Qur'an translation is the example of "بخس" where the used words seem semantically equivalent, "reduced price" as in (SI), "miserable price" as in (YA), "low price" as in (HK), and "paltry price" as in (A). Another issue found in this verse is the word "دراهم معدودة". In this case, it was (YA) the only one to use the word "miserable" in his translation, which means that (SI), (HK), and (JA) cause some loss in meaning. Both brothers and the people who sold him did not underestimate his importance, nor did they know how great he would be in the future, selling him in such a way.



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**Verse No. (21):** In this verse, the translators have made it easy to understand that this is the starting point of the story of Zulikha, as "اكرمي مثواه" here has taken different meanings, although Aziz Misr said as a son. "Residence comfortable, stay honorable, stay comfortable, and good lodging" all indicate that he will be in a good position about staying and treatment. Again, the difference in "تلويل الاحاديث" is clear. The Arabic expression "الناس" here means all human beings (men and women), so the best word to use is "people" in (SI).

**Verse No. (22):** In this verse, judgment does not guarantee doing the right, like in (SI) and (JA), and so does the word power in (YA). However, the word "wisdom" in (HK) does guarantee to do the right and avoid wrong deeds. The word "maturity" also indicates the stability of behavior in (SI) but "full manhood" and fully grown" like in (YA), (HK), and (JA) may refer to bodily growth more than mental growth. The word "judgment" means playing the role of a judge to say this is right and this is wrong. Instead, the word wisdom may be more effective as the word judgment depends only on evidence, but wisdom depends more on experience, and giving judgment may be without evidence. Starting from this verse, troubles start to rise for him.

**Verse No. (23):** The Arabic word "راودته" is translated in all by "seduce," which indicates the interaction of words or behavior before the true expression, parallel by closing the doors there. The words "in her house" indicate the perfection of her plan and the facilities she must execute her plan. The Arabic word "الابواب" in the Arabic language means the repetition of the action, and the "غلقت", "closed", is an exaggerated form meaning the power of the action. All these meanings did not appear clear in the translation of all, although they differ in the structure of their sentences. The phases of seducing start with "راودته" which means talking in a soft and romantic voice to catch his desire, then closing the doors and ending with the expression "هيت لك" translated by the imperative verb "come" is left to the reader or listener to build in his mind. The Arabic "معاذ الله" indicates the refusal of the seduction of Zulikha and Yusuf's refuge in Allah, as he felt no protection but him.

**Verse No. (24)** is a very significant one in the Surah as it includes, according to the exegeses, the innocence of Yusuf. "همت به" means seduction and the bad thoughts followed by the bad behavior. The Arabic conditional particle "لولا" is the key word here, as it means "Absence of existence because of". For example, if I said "لولا احمد" if Ahmed is in there, I would come, meaning I did not come because Ahmed is there. This means that Yusuf did not even think of the idea of seduction or even respond in his mind. The translation of them all gives the meaning that Yusuf already responds to the idea of seduction, then Allah prevents him; this is not true. If the Quran text was "he did not respond," this may open the mind to think that Yusuf was afraid of her husband, thus the idea was in his mind, which is not true. He did not even think of responding to the proof of Allah's protection before thinking or not thinking to respond. The Arabic exegeses of the verse complete this meaning by "لنصرف عنه السوء والفحشاء", the evil thoughts and behavior together. The Arabic "مخلص" means Allah protects him so he does not commit mistakes, whereas "مخلص" means following Allah's orders, so Allah rewarded him. The idea is to protect Yusuf from the beginning, so he does not respond to her seduction. This is explained by the translation "he is one of our chosen servants" and so on.

**Verse No. (25):** There is no dual in Modern English and the "ا/aa/ in "الفيا and "استيقا" is used to indicate duality in Arabic, referring to "Yusuf" and the wife. Both (SI) and (YA) kept the duality by using the expression "both" to refer to this duality whereas (HK) and (JA) give no attention to duality at all and only used the pronoun "they" which may indicate that there was somebody else with them. The use of the English plural only

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may cause some loss in meaning. The word "evil" used by the translators does not mean the adultery meant in the Arabic word "سوء" and causes a loss of meaning since not all evil or bad doings deserve to be imprisoned or painful punishment like adultery. All of them pay attention to that.

**Verse No. (28):** The expression "it is of the women's plan" may refer to the women in the city, while he means his wife as a representative of whole women using the word "كيدكن". The scene of judgment and evidence is clear in the minds of listeners or readers. The use of the Arabic pronouns and devices that show gender is clear in "كيدكن," which carries the meaning of all women, including the feminine plural suffix "ن". There is no such distinction in English; thus, a translator will need to add items to give the intended meaning for both the "ن" and the "ك". They overcome the gap between English and Arabic by adding the word "women associated with you". But still, there is a misinterpretation of who is addressed here by you, the wife only, or all women.

**Verse No. (30):** The surah tells that before Yusuf came to Egypt, someone bought him without indicating his personality, and there was a king, and another ruler called "Aziz". The term is used to refer to a political rank in Egyptian society currently. But later, the "Aziz" can be used for the person responsible for the treasury and the goods of the country because "Yusuf" himself becomes the "Aziz" and is granted this rank by the king.

**Verse No. (31):** The word "banquet" means a place to eat and drink, but in Arabic, the word "منا" means a place with comfortable seating, as the time for staying may be long. The expression "they greatly admired him" "اكرننه" doesn't express the real meaning of amazement or astonishment for his beauty, as they did not feel the knife cut their hands and they don't feel pain. The expression "perfect is Allah" may be better replaced by "God forbid" to give the meaning in Arabic "حاشا لله". In Al-Mawrid (2015), the word "مكر" is defined as "cunning", "craftiness", "slyness", "wiliness", "deception", and "deceit". So, it is possible. If we are to translate the word with a target text word from the same category the preference and the choice according to the meaning from the exegeses will be "wiliness" or "deception" for the other words have both positive and negative meanings, as found in Al-Mawrid (2015), while "wiliness" and "deception" have the negative meanings only of "غش" or "cheating" and "خداع" or "deceit". The verb "ارسلت" is not used in the sense of "sent" as in the translation of all four, but means "invited". (JA) Loses the whole idea in it, using "God save us," which indicates surprise and shock only.

**Verse No. (32):** The expression "will be of those debased" doesn't match the meaning of the Arabic word "الصاغرين" as the first refers to the corrupted people, not the ones being imprisoned while innocent.

**Verse No. (33):** The expression "the ignorant" is not what the verse means. The verse in Arabic words means violating God's orders and being disobedient to His values. The intended meaning in this verse is not a preference or liking like that between Yusuf and his brothers for the father, but it means that prison is more tolerable and preferred by Yusuf to committing adultery, but both are bad for him. All of them have taken the sense of "liking" as in (SI), (YA), and (HK), and "dearer" as in (A). It is better to use "more tolerant" to indicate the exact meaning of the verse.

**Verse No. (36):** People do not press wine; they press grapes and get wine. All of them use "pressing wine," whereas for the first time, (JA) uses pressing grapes. Wine drinkers only will understand this.

**Verse No. (41):** The omission of the possessive pronoun has made it general, not the people talking to him only (YA) has made it clear by adding the pronoun (my).

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**Verse No. (42):** The word "lean" doesn't hold the meaning of the Arabic word "عجاف" as the Arabic word means slim or thin or skinny. The word interpretation doesn't express the meaning of the Arabic word "تعبرون," which indicates passing through something and having the wisdom from it (knowing the unknown through the known). The word "spikes" is more accurate than the word grain as spikes means (wheat), but (grain) means general seeds.

**Verse No. (43):** (YA) and (HK) use "kine" for the Arabic word "بقرات" which means "ماشيه" and this expression includes cows and bulls, "male cow". Thus, it is not acceptable for the Arabic word "بقرة" to be female, not male.

**Verse No. (46):** The word "explain" holds the meaning of interpretation, but is not effective. Interpretation means clarifying things to people who don't have any idea about it, but explaining means they may know part of the meaning but need more.

**Verse No. (47):** The word "consecutively" holds the meaning of consequently but not actively, whereas "دابا" means with hard work.

**Verse No. (48):** The three translators (SI), (YA), and (HK) restricted the meaning of "يغاث" to the fall of rain and none of them refer to pressing grapes and olives or being saved although they used them in the

second part of the translation of this verse. And (JA) restricted the meaning of being saved in general. This may lead to the loss of meaning.

**Verse No. (63):** In this verse, we have the contrast between reality, where they have all measures; however, they told the father that they were denied measures. Both (YA) and (HK) expressed the meaning of future denial of measures, which is correct, as mentioned by Alsharawy in exegeses of this verse. However, the other two (YA) and (JA) only translated the words in the verse.

**Verse No. (77):** The conditional here is not as usual in structure as the answer of the condition-case comes first. "ان يسرق" is the question of the condition, and it can't be "فقد" to be the answer for the condition, as the meaning cannot be the past before the present. They said if he stole, his brother would be robbed too. This means do not be surprised, Yusuf, as his brother has stolen so, he does he. Another meaning can be Do not be surprised by the brother stealing, as he stole from his brother before.

**Verse No. (78):** The Arabic word "شيخ" means old, aged man, and all of them use it in their translation, but only (YA) knew that "كبير" means honorable, which's why he added "venerable" to his translation, making it the appropriate one.

**Verse No. (80):** Only the Arabic expression "كبيرهم" is confused in translation, for it can be the eldest or the leader, or the wisest of them. (SI), (HK), and (JA) use eldest, and (YA) uses leader; none of them use the wisest.

**Verse No. (83):** The problem of consistency in the use of "entice" in (SI) which means "persuade" and "contrive" in (YA) which means "manage" and "beguile" in (HK) which means "trick" and "tempt" in (JA) which means "attract" is very inconsistent. The closest is (JA) because it reflects the impression of their desire to harm their brothers.

**Verse No. (88):** the name of the governor "ايها العزيز" differs from one to another as (SI) uses Azeez, (YA) exalted one which means of high rank, position, or great importance, (HK) uses ruler of the land and finally (JA) uses "mighty prince" referring to his culture. Then, the term "مزجة" which means not good. They translate it differently as (SI) "goods poor in quality", (YA) "scanty capital", which means "too little in amount for what is needed", then (HK) poor capital, and finally (A) "merchandise of scant worth" all describe types of goods in quality or price.

**Verse No. (97):** The Arabic expression "اوى اليه ابويه" in the exegeses means only his father and his aunt, for his mother had died. All translators use "parents" to represent aunts as mothers in position in the Arabic culture.

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**Verse No. (99):** The Arabic word "اوى" has the meaning of "embraced" for all Al-Qurtuby (2008), Abd-Alaziz (2000). So, when Yusuf met his family, he embraced them and took them in his arms. The meaning expressed in all four translations is not the intended one in the original, for (SI), (HK) used take to himself which does not express the love or passion for them. At the same time, the use of "provide home" in (YA) is also not the intended meaning in the original verse. Only (JA) expressed the nearest meaning to the original when he says, "he took his father and mother into his arms."

**Verse No. (100):** The Arabic expression "خروا له سجدا" does not mean they worship him, but they fell in prostration for the new position from Allah for Yusuf, where his dream comes true, and at the same time, they did so as a response to Allah's order for them. All four translators are successful in their word choice and order of this verse.

Extracts:

### 1. Vocabulary Choices:

Original Arabic: وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ

(SI) "And women in the city said"

(YA) "And women in the city said"

(HK) "And the women in the city said"

(JA): "And women in the city said"

In this example, all translations render the phrase similarly, but slight variations in vocabulary choice are present. For instance, Sahih International and Abdullah Yusuf Ali omit the definite article "the" before "city," while Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan include it. Arberry's translation mirrors the structure closely but may vary in the nuances of the vocabulary chosen.

### 2. Sentence Structure:

Original Arabic: قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

(SI): "They said, 'By Allah, you will not cease remembering Joseph until you become fatally ill or become of those who perish.'"

(YA): "They said: 'By Allah! (never) Wilt thou cease to remember Joseph until thou reach the last extremity of illness, or until thou die!'"

(HK): "They said: 'By Allah! Certainly, you will never cease remembering Yusuf (Joseph) until you become weak with old age, or until you be of the dead!'"

(A): "They said, 'By God, thou art still in thy old error.'"

In this extract, the translations differ in their sentence structures and the extent to which they stick to the original Arabic syntax. Sahih International and Abdullah Yusuf Ali maintain a more literal structure, while Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan slightly modify it for clarity. Arberry's translation offers a more interpretive rendering with a different structure and meaning.

### 3. Interpretative Decisions:

Example:

Original Arabic: إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ

(SI) "I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah."

(YA) "To Allah (alone) I complain of my distraction and anguish"

(HK) "I only complain of my grief and sorrow to Allah."

(JA) "Truly, I cry my anguish and my sorrow to God."

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Here, the translations diverge in their interpretative decisions regarding the meaning of "بَنَى" (my distraction/suffering) and "حُزْنِي" (my grief/sorrow). Each translator offers a slightly different understanding of the emotional state conveyed in the verse.

4. Cultural Context:

Original Arabic: وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَلِغٌ أَمْرَهُ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا

(SI): "And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out and will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent."

(YA): "And for those who fear Allah, He (ever) prepares a way out, And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine. And if anyone puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is (Allah) for him. For Allah will surely accomplish His purpose: verily, for all things has Allah appointed a due proportion."

(HK): "And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed, Allah has set a measure for all things."

(A): "Whosoever is godfearing -- God will appoint for him a way out and will provide for him whence he never reckoned. And whosoever puts his trust in God, He will suffice him. Surely God attains His purpose; God has appointed a measure for everything."

Here, while all translations convey similar meanings, slight differences in wording can reflect cultural nuances and varying interpretations of the original Arabic text.

5. Stylistic Preferences:

Original Arabic: وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

(SI): "And when he reached his full maturity, we gave him judgment and knowledge. And thus, do We reward the doers of good."

(YA): "When he attained His full manhood, we gave him power and knowledge: thus do We reward those who do right."

(HK): "And when he [Yusuf (Joseph)] attained his full manhood, we gave him wisdom and knowledge (the Prophethood), thus We reward the Muhsinun (doers of good)."

(JA): "And when he reached his maturity, We gave him judgment and knowledge; and so We recompense the good-doers."

Each translation reflects the stylistic preferences of the translator, whether in terms of sentence structure, use of punctuation, or word choice.

1. Sentence Structure:

Example:

Original Arabic: قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ

(SI): "I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah."



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(YA): "To Allah (alone) I complain of my distraction and anguish"

(HK): "I only complain of my grief and sorrow to Allah."

(JA): "Truly I cry my anguish and my sorrow to God"

In this example, the translations vary in their sentence structures while conveying a similar meaning. Sahih International and Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan use a straightforward structure with the subject followed by the verb and object. Abdullah Yusuf Ali employs a more poetic and elaborate structure with a prepositional phrase "To Allah (alone)" at the beginning. Arberry's translation offers a more poetic and free-flowing structure, deviating slightly from the literal order of the Arabic text.

### 2. Sentence Structure:

Original Arabic: قَالُوا إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ يُوسُفُ

(SI): "They said, 'You are Joseph, and we know you well.'"

(YA): "They said: 'Thou art indeed Joseph, and we bear witness (to all that we say).'"

(HK): "They said: 'Surely, you are Yusuf (Joseph), and we know well (this fact).'"

(JA): "They said, 'Thou art Joseph.' 'Yes,' said he, 'and this is my brother.'"

In this example, the translations vary in their sentence structures and the inclusion of additional details. Sahih International Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan maintain a simple subject-verb-object structure, while Abdullah Yusuf Ali includes the phrase "and we bear witness (to all that we say)" to elaborate on the recognition of Joseph. Arberry's translation presents a dialogue format with an additional response from Joseph, which alters the structure and adds depth to the conversation.

## Differences

### 1. Order of Clauses:

Original Arabic: وَاجْتَبَاهُ وَكَانَ ثَوَابُهُ مَشْرُوطًا

(SI): "And they exerted effort and were certain that they would not be able to escape [Allah]."

(YA): "And they thought they had power over him, but he realized that the power of Allah was supreme."

(HK): "And they resolved upon a plan, and We too planned, while they perceived not."

(JA): "They made a plan, and We too planned, but they were not aware."

In this example, the order of clauses varies among the translations. Sahih International and Arberry begin with the subject "they" and then describe the action, while Abdullah Yusuf Ali Al-Hilali, and Muhsin Khan start with the action and then mention the subject.

### 2. Inclusion of Additional Information:

Original Arabic: وَإِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا ۖ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۚ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ

(SI): "And [Joseph] said to his father, 'O my father, indeed I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating to me.'"

(YA): "Behold! Joseph said to his father: 'O my father! I did see eleven stars and the sun and the moon: I saw them prostrate themselves to me!'"

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(HK): "And (remember) when Yūsuf (Joseph) said to his father: 'O my father! Verily, I saw (in a dream) eleven stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating themselves to me.'"

(JA): "And when Joseph said to his father, 'O my father, I saw eleven stars, and the sun, and the moon; I saw them bowing themselves to me.'"

In this example, Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Sahih International provide a more concise rendition, while Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan offer a detailed explanation. Arberry's translation offers a poetic rendition with a slightly different sentence structure.

## 1. Simple vs. Complex Structures:

Original Arabic: وَلَمَّا الْفَرَكَ ءَاوِلُهُمْ بِأَخِيَّةٍ لَا تَعْلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سُوْرَةٍ إِنَّمَا نُرِيدُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِهِمْ  
الْأَسْئَلُ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُعْرَضُونَ

(SI): "And when they went away, they decided to imprison him, but We inspired to him, 'You will surely inform them [someday] about this affair of theirs while they do not perceive [your identity].' "

(YA): "And when they went away, they agreed to draw lots to decide upon him. But We inspired in him the definite resolve that the matter would be decided according to his will: he was indeed full of self-possession and resource."

(HK): "And when they went away, they had determined to imprison him, but We inspired to him, 'You shall indeed inform them of this their affair while they perceive not.'"

(JA): "And when they went away to confer together privately, Joseph said to his brother, 'Take my shirt, and lay it over my father's face; he will recover his sight. Then come to me with all your family.'"

In this example, Sahih International, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan use relatively straightforward sentence structures. However, Arberry's translation presents a more complex structure with additional clauses and details.

## 2. Length of Sentences:

Original Arabic: وَلَمَّا الْجَاءَ الْبَشْرُ الْقَوَّةُ فِي الْجَبِّ وَأَتَتْهُ السَّيَّارَةُ يُوسُفَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ بَصِيرًا

(SI): "And when the caravan departed [from Egypt], their father said, 'Indeed, I find the smell of Joseph [and would say that he was alive] if you did not think me weakened in mind.'"

(YA): "And when the caravan left (Egypt), their father said: 'I do indeed scent the presence of Joseph: Nay, think me not a dotard.'"

(HK): "And when the caravan departed, their father said: 'I do indeed feel the smell of Yusuf (Joseph), if only you think me not a dotard (the old weak).'"

(JA): "And when the bearers despaired of him, they put him down upon the bank, and the eater came, and they thrust him into the pit's deeps."

Here, Sahih International, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan use longer sentences to convey the narrative, while Arberry's translation offers shorter sentences. Several semantic issues have been dealt with in this analysis, such as words with wide semantic ranges, words with different meanings in different cultures, and words with two opposing meanings depending on their context of occurrence. It is now clear that issues like these are problematic for translators and consequently cause

misunderstanding of the meaning, causing the translation to be lacking and lose meaning.

### Results

Based on the previous analysis and comparison of the translation of Sahih International, Yusuf Ali, John Arbarrey, and Mahmoud Khan, Interestingly, the study has come to notice cases in which the translators failed to grasp the intended meaning of a word or a speech act which leads to a lack and inaccuracy in the translations leaving an effect on the readers other than the intended effect of the original text. It has concluded with the following points. It was found that they use some techniques to translate, like substitution, omission is very rare, and addition to clarify the meaning.

The study has revealed that translators in Surat Yusuf tend to commonly euphemize topics such as seduction and Yusuf's response to Zulikha and the idea of asking for authority by Yusuf, then referring to the Qur'an and the disbelievers in its verses by replacing words relating to these topics with others having less degree of directness and causing less embarrassment. Many examples have been cited for this type of translation, as previously mentioned. The introduction in the Surah is amazing, where the verses show the importance of Arabic and the position of this Surah in particular. Then the story timeline starts with the family context where Yusuf and his brothers' relationship is clear, and Yusuf's place in the father's heart is also clear. The translators in some sentences failed to reproduce the same image and effect of the original Arabic text in the target one, or reproduce the intended meaning behind these expressions. All of them utilized ellipses successfully in places that do not need explanation. Arberry uses idioms a lot in his translation. Along with the translation of verses, the word "lord" is used differently in places where it means the master of slaves and in other places to indicate the governor, but it is not correct to use it to indicate the meaning of Allah. Also, the Arabic expression "تأويل الاحاديث" is differently translated all along the Surah, but only in verse no. (101) All of them use "dreams" to express the right meaning. The use of pronouns in some places is confusing, where you cannot differentiate whether they indicate people, Yusuf's brother, or the group speaking, and the reader or listener has to predict the right meaning. Cultural aspects are clear in Arberry's translation as he uses some expressions that do not relate to the Arabic environment, like a caravan, prince, master, or lord. There are a few places where translators use an explanation of meaning or add words to clarify meaning, and they put the added words in brackets. No omission of text in the source text, but every Arabic word is translated. Some problems arise from the difficulty of understanding the Arabic meaning, as indicated in the analysis, and other problems can be summarized as follows. Rendering some lexical terms is one of the problems that arise from the lack of equivalence or the absence of the equivalent of some Islamic terms consequently, translators only give approximate meanings for them like the word "رؤيه or وؤيا". Usually, translators encounter tense or the 'grammatical realization of location in time' and how location in time can be expressed in language as an obvious syntactic problem in translating the Holy Quran (Sadiq, 2010, p. 20). In the Yusuf Surah, this concept is not there, as throughout the Surah, we find the transition of events and change, but the time is not a problem. The development of the story leaves a lot of space for the listener or the reader to imagine the flow of events, but this does not disturb the right development of the whole of Surat. Consequently, verb form and tense in Surat Yusuf are guided by the overall context and stylistic considerations. Future and present simple are the most utilized tenses, and past or other forms are rarely used. The rare shift is noted in Yusuf Ali's translation to conjure an important action in the mind as if it were happening in the present.

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Translating metaphors also constitutes a serious problem in translation as a whole and it is of great seriousness when topics are related to religious aspects. The dictionary defines Metaphor as 'a word or phrase used to describe something else, in a way that is different from its normal use, to show that the two things have the same qualities and to make the description more powerful', (Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary, 2010, p. 965). The use of metaphor in Surat Yusuf, along with other rhetorical usages, is a feature of the Qur'anic text. Therefore, translators should not ignore its use when attempting to translate the Qur'anic text (Al-Azab and Al-Misned, 2012). Consider this example: "رايتهم لي ساجدين" and how the four translators handle them.

(SI) I saw them prostrating to me."

(YA) I saw them prostrate themselves to me!"

(HK) I saw them prostrating themselves to me."

(JA) I saw them bowing down before me."

"السجود" for human beings and nothing can prostrate like humans. If the translator does not reflect readers or listeners that this prostration is out of respect and gratitude to Allah, a misconception about the relation of prophets may arise. Another example is found in the following verse.

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكًا وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا  
وَقَالَتْ أَخْرِجْ عَلَيْنَ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا  
إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

(SI): So, when she heard of their scheming, ... and cut their hands ..."

(YA): When she heard of their malicious talk, ... and (in their amazement) cut their hands: ..."

(HK): So, when she heard of their accusation, ... and (in their astonishment) cut their hands. ....!"

(A): When she heard their sly whispers, ... that they cut their hands, ....

Instead of "مكرهن", the expressions "scheming", "malicious talk", "accusation", and "sly whispers" indicate bad behavior. Then use "cut their hands" for "قطعن ايديهن" like things to be cut. Another example is found in the following verse.

قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

(SI): He said, "No blame will there be upon you today."

(YA): He said: "This day let no reproach be (cast) on you"

(HK): He said: "No reproach on you this day,"

(JA): He said, 'No reproach this day shall be on you;'

The "تثريب" is removing the fat from the body. They likened reproach to blaming both of them for making the person not ok and changing his face. Another example is found in the following verse.

قَالُوا أَضْغَتْ أَحْلَامٌ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلَامِ بِعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

(SI): They said, "[It is but] a mixture of false dreams, ..."

(YA): They said: "A confused medley of dreams: ..."

(HK): They said: "Mixed up false dreams ..."

(JA): 'A hotchpotch of nightmares!...'

The Arabic expression "اضغاث" means it is a mixture of grass, which is mixed with hashish from wet and dry, or what is taken with a grip of hashish, in which there is the long and short grass, the soft, the dry, and the harsh, and what is edible and what is not. In dreams, overlapping dreams are impossible or cannot be explained by their large details or their lack of coherence. so, the court likened his dreams to be like that "اضغاث". Another example is found in the following verse. The Arabic expression "ملك كريم" in which he likened Yusuf to be "a noble angel" is also a good example. Or, others like "يخلوا لكم وجه ابيكم" or "بلغ اشده" which all used to refer to context.

Ellipsis is another example of the difficulty of translation in the Surat. The dictionary defines ellipses as the omission of some parts of a sentence that can be understood either from the surrounding text or the situation itself. In the translation of Surat Yusuf, due to the way English uses ellipsis, elided words are sometimes added (which usually appear in brackets) to complete a sentence in the translation. The language of Surat Yusuf has many examples of ellipsis which can be seen in two types. First, we can gain information about the development of the story without referring to it in any place. For example, in verse (8), the life timeline of interaction between Yusuf and his brothers and father is embedded, but the reader feels the jealousy of his brothers till they make their conspiracy and plan to kill him. Then, the plan to go playing and racing and the procedures for getting him in the well or slaughtering a wolf, all these actions are understood from the context and clear even if there are no exegeses for the Surah. This is found all along the story that the action and events are embedded but understood. In the Arabic version, there are a lot of examples, but in translation, they write the meaning in brackets. For example,

يُوسُفُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا وَاسْتَغْفِرِي لِذَنبِكِ إِنَّكِ كُنْتِ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

(SI): Joseph, *ignore this*. ...."

(YA): "O Joseph, *pass this over!* ....!"

(HK): "O Yusuf (Joseph)! *Turn away from this!* ...."

(JA): Joseph, *turn away from this*; ..."

The use of ellipsis here is to reduce the words and use "this" instead of the whole seduction idea to be mentioned again. In verses (45) and (46), the development of events is seen clearly when the translators rendered the two verses and show the assumed omitted part is "فأرسلوه فذهب الي يوسف فقال", "They sent him to Joseph, then he said " without writing it, the reader got it.

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَّا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ ﴿٤٥﴾

(SI): ....., so send me forth."

(YA): ....., send ye me (therefore)."

(HK): ....., so send me forth."

(JA): ....., so send me forth."

يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ أَفْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعُ عَجَافٍ وَسَبْعِ  
سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَةٍ لَعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

(SI): [He said], "Joseph, ...."



(YA): "O Joseph!" (he said) ....."

(HK): (He said): "O Yusuf (Joseph), ....."

(JA): 'Joseph, ....'

Another example is:

وَسَّالِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعِيرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا وَإِنَّا لَصَدِّقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

(SI): And ask the city in which we were ..."

(YA): "'Ask at the town where we have been ..."

(HK): "And ask (the people of) the town where we have been, ..."

(JA): Enquire of the city wherein we were, ...".'

In this verse, there is a deletion of the word (people). The complete sentence can be formed as "وأسأل أهل القرية", "ask the people in the town", but the word people is deleted as it is understood from the context, and its deletion will not affect or change the meaning of the verse. However, in English, it is better to retrieve the deleted word to understand the deep meaning of the verse. Literal translation or word-for-word translation cannot be applied here. Only (3) added the deleted words. Other examples can be seen in the Surah verses (9, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46, 48, 81, 82, and 101), and all the translators rendered the meaning by explaining it or adding words to explain in brackets. Ellipsis, though only seen in (11) verses, played a vital role in the cohesion of the story as the implied pronouns. For example, the central character of the story, "Yusuf," was substituted as a subject 19 times, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Substitution places of Yousef's name in each translation:

| No.<br>verse | Added names for the pronoun |     |      |         |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----|------|---------|
|              | Sahih                       | Ali | Khan | Arberry |
| 4            | ✓                           | ✓   | ✓    | ✓       |
| 23           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 26           | ✓                           | X   | ✓    | X       |
| 33           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 37           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 42           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 47           | ✓                           | ✓   | ✓    | X       |
| 50           | ✓                           | ✓   | ✓    | X       |
| 55           | ✓                           | ✓   | ✓    | X       |
| 59           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 62           | ✓                           | ✓   | ✓    | X       |
| 69           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 77           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 79           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 89           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 90           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 92           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 99           | X                           | X   | ✓    | X       |
| 100          | X                           | X   | X    | X       |

The first three versions are alike in most cases, whereas (JA) does not agree with them. The father was substituted as the subject pronoun 12 times. Table (2) shows the differences between translators in adding the name of the father to illustrate the pronoun.

Table 2: Differences in adding the father's name:

| No.<br>verse | Added names for the pronoun |     |      |         |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----|------|---------|
|              | Sahih                       | Ali | khan | Arberry |
| 5            | X                           | √   | √    | X       |
| 13           | √                           | √   | √    | X       |
| 18           | √                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 64           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 66           | √                           | √   | √    | X       |
| 67           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 83           | √                           | √   | √    | X       |
| 84           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 86           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 94           | √                           | √   | √    | √       |
| 96           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 98           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |

Again, the agreement is clear with (SI), (YA), and (HK). The brothers were also substituted 19 times. Table (3) shows the differences among those who added the names of the brothers to illustrate the pronoun. In verse (9) only, it starts with an imperative verb, but it's them who said that verb.

Table 3: added names of brothers to pronoun:

| No.<br>verse | Added names for the pronoun |     |      |         |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----|------|---------|
|              | Sahih                       | Ali | khan | Arberry |
| 8            | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 9            | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 11           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 14           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 17           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 61           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 63           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 65           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 71           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 73           | X                           | √   | X    | X       |
| 75           | √                           | X   | √    | X       |
| 77           | X                           | X   | √    | X       |
| 78           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 85           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 88           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 90           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 91           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 95           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |
| 97           | X                           | X   | X    | X       |

In this case, all translators agree not to add the names of the brothers to clarify the meaning, and it is already understood from the context. These implied pronouns which

are considered signs of concealed nouns help to build the cohesive meaning of the story "because the listener or reader can recognize the person, they refer to easily" (Marogy 2010, 85), and because they form "relation within the text" constituting a link between its parts (Halliday & Hassan 1976, 89-91).

Polysemy Another semantic feature is Polysemy, which is one of the important linguistic ones for coherence. Kalakattawi (2005, p.4) defines polysemy as a phenomenon in which a word has several different meanings that are closely related to each other. Polysemous words form obvious difficulties for translators when they try to convey the intended meaning because he/she will be confused by the various meanings and senses of these words. In Surat Yusuf, there are many polysemic words in its structure. For instance, the word (أُمَّة - people) can mean an unknown period, as in:

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَّاهُ مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ ﴿٤٥﴾

(SI): But the one who was freed and remembered *after a time* said, ..."

(YA): ... who now bethought him *after (so long) a space of time*, ..."

(HK): ... (one of the two who were in prison), *now at length* remembered ..."

(JA): ..., remembering *after a time*, ...."

However, all of them differ in translating the meaning of the word. Yet, the word "عام" is associated with a promising year of bounteous harvest.

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعَصِرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

(SI): Then will come after that a year in which the people will be given rain and in which they will press [olives and grapes]."

(YA): "Then will come after that (period) a year in which the people will have abundant water, and in which they will press (wine and oil)."

(HK): "Then thereafter will come a year in which people will have abundant rain and in which they will press (wine and oil)."

(JA): Then thereafter there shall come a year wherein the people will be succored and press in season.

وَسَّالِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعِيرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

(SI): And *ask the city* in which we were and *the caravan* in which we came ..., "

(YA): "*Ask at the town* where we have been and *the caravan* in which we returned,..."

(HK): "*And ask (the people of) the town* where we have been and *the caravan* in which we returned, ..."

(JA): *Enquire of the city* wherein we were, and *the caravan* in which we approached; ...".

Only (HK) added the word "the people of" to clarify the meaning, though it is already clear. Both the city or town and caravan meant the people of both.

Thus, it can be deduced that they have some differences in dealing with all types of semantic features, as shown previously, and they also have some agreement about the structure of their translation. It is noticeable that (SI), (YA), and (HK) agree more in their translation but (JA) has a big shift in using idioms and different structures in his translation. Thus, translations of the meanings of Surat Yusuf do not give detailed interpretations in some verses, but still, the development is understood. As a non-native speaker, when reading the translation of some verses needs interpretation references are

needed to help understand the embedded meanings, especially in certain verses that need special attention, as previously mentioned.

### Features in Four Translations of *Surah Yusuf*

Each translator of *Surah Yusuf* adopts specific lexical and syntactic strategies to convey the meaning, tone, and emotional depth of the Qur'anic narrative, influenced by their linguistic preferences, theological orientations, and target readership. The following comparative analysis highlights the vocabulary choices, sentence structures, and stylistic tendencies characteristic of each translation.

### Vocabulary Choices

The vocabulary choices across the four English translations of *Surah Yusuf* reveal distinct priorities in rendering the Qur'anic text for various audiences, reflecting both stylistic and interpretive aims. Sahih International (SI) consistently employs modern, accessible vocabulary tailored to contemporary readers, aiming for clarity and straightforward communication. Phrases such as "Surely I am aware of its smell" and "And when he saw his shirt torn from the back" demonstrate the translators' preference for plain, direct language that supports immediate comprehension, particularly for those unfamiliar with classical or poetic styles. In contrast, Abdullah Yusuf Ali (YA) adopts a markedly elevated and formal register, incorporating archaisms and poetic diction that reflect an early 20th-century spiritual and literary sensibility. Expressions such as "For, of truth, we have been wrongdoers!" and "In Allah is my trust: On Him I rely" illustrate the reverent tone and classical phrasing he employs. While his vocabulary enhances the text's solemnity, it may feel dated to modern readers. Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan (HK) offer a translation that balances readability with a formal religious tone, using vocabulary that is both accessible and respectful of the sacred subject matter.

Statements such as "Oh, my sorrow over Joseph!" and "I will not send him with you until you swear a solemn oath to me in Allah's Name" underscore the integration of Islamic theological terminology and explanatory elements, enhancing doctrinal clarity. Meanwhile, John Arthur Arberry (JA) prioritizes literary elegance and poetic cadence, using refined and sometimes elevated language to mirror the stylistic beauty of the original Arabic. His translations, such as "O sorrow for Joseph!" and "Then there shall be no measure for you with me, nor shall you come near me," reflect his aim to preserve both the rhetorical artistry and the emotional depth of the source text. While Arberry often captures the spiritual tone of the Qur'an, his stylistic choices occasionally involve interpretive liberties taken in service of aesthetic resonance.

### Sentence Structure

The sentence structures employed by the four translators of *Surah Yusuf* reflect distinct stylistic and interpretative orientations, each impacting the readability and tonal effect of the text. Sahih International favors concise and syntactically simple constructions, frequently adhering to a subject-verb-object pattern. Sentences such as "Indeed, he is in clear error" exemplify this clarity, allowing readers to easily follow the narrative without syntactic complexity. In contrast, Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation exhibits more elaborate sentence structures, often utilizing compound and embedded clauses that echo classical rhetorical traditions. For example, the sentence "So when they took him away, and they all agreed to throw him down to the bottom of the well" demonstrates a layered syntactic arrangement, enhancing the gravity and rhythm of the narration. Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan's rendering maintains a generally direct and

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accessible sentence structure; however, it occasionally incorporates longer and more intricate sentences, particularly when preserving theological or narrative detail from the original Arabic. An illustrative example is the sentence, "We inspired him, 'You will surely inform them [someday] about this affair of theirs while they do not perceive [your identity],'" which strives to retain the nuance and depth inherent in the source text. Meanwhile, John Arthur Arberry adopts a syntactic style marked by literary complexity and poetic rhythm. His sentences often extend in length and are designed with a musical cadence, as seen in "Take my shirt, and lay it over my father's face; he will recover his sight. Then come with all your family." This stylistic approach contributes to a more immersive and aesthetically rich reading experience, reflective of Arberry's intent to echo the artistic elegance of the Qur'an's original Arabic prose.

### Stylistic Features

Each of the four translations of *Surah Yusuf* demonstrates distinct stylistic features shaped by the translator's linguistic philosophy and intended audience. Sahih International emphasizes clarity and accessibility, employing modern and straightforward English that avoids elaborate or archaic expressions. Its use of a contemporary register and concise sentence structures makes it particularly suitable for readers seeking a clear and direct understanding of the Qur'anic text. In contrast, Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation adopts a formal and poetic tone, deeply influenced by classical English literary traditions. His use of archaisms—such as "ye," "thee," and "verily"—along with frequent allusions and elevated diction, creates a solemn and reverent atmosphere. This translation is further distinguished by its extensive footnotes and commentaries, which offer theological, linguistic, and contextual insights to support the reader's interpretation. The translation by Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan seeks to maintain a balance between clarity and formality, preserving the sacred tone of the original while remaining comprehensible. A notable feature of their work is the inclusion of Hadith references, which provide intertextual support and enhance doctrinal understanding. This translation prioritizes fidelity to the Arabic source text, often favoring literal accuracy over stylistic elegance. Meanwhile, John Arthur Arberry presents a markedly literary and poetic rendering, characterized by rich imagery, rhythmic structure, and a careful attempt to echo the stylistic beauty of the original Arabic. His version prioritizes expressive elegance and spiritual resonance, occasionally taking interpretive liberties in order to convey the aesthetic and emotive essence of the Qur'anic message rather than adhering strictly to literal translation. Together, these translations reflect a spectrum of stylistic approaches, each shaped by different interpretative goals, theological commitments, and cultural considerations.

*Surah Yusuf* contains 111 verses, with the core narrative unfolding between verses 4 and 101. Upon analyzing 43 selected instances across the first 103 verses from a semantic perspective, several important patterns emerged regarding the translations by Sahih International (SI), Abdullah Yusuf Ali (YA), Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan (HK), and John Arthur Arberry (JA). First, while all four translations generally maintain semantic fidelity, notable variation occurs in lexical choices and sentence structures. The translations by SI and HK exhibit clarity and accessibility, whereas YA and JA lean toward formal and poetic expression. JA shows inconsistency in tone and precision—offering some of the most eloquent renderings in certain verses but lacking clarity or coherence in others. Second, as demonstrated in *Surah Yusuf*, the Qur'anic narrative relies heavily on semantic nuances and rhetorical devices rooted in classical Arabic. Translators occasionally misinterpret these devices, resulting in semantic loss or distortion. Recognizing the layered meanings, especially in metaphor, ellipsis, and



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cohesion devices, is essential to producing faithful translations. Third, effective translation of the Qur'an demands a comprehensive understanding of not only lexical semantics but also the pragmatics and rhetoric of Arabic discourse. This includes familiarity with the primary and secondary meanings of Arabic particles and speech acts. Without this, translators risk overlooking key dimensions of the message, especially when words or phrases carry theological, emotional, or narrative weight. In conclusion, while each of the four translations of *Surah Yusuf* contributes valuable perspectives, this comparative analysis underscores the importance of integrating linguistic accuracy, rhetorical awareness, and cultural sensitivity. A balanced approach—grounded in exegesis, supported by linguistic theory, and guided by respect for the sacredness of the text—is vital for any meaningful translation of the Qur'an. Such an approach not only preserves the integrity of the message but also enriches cross-cultural and interfaith understanding.

### Conclusion

This study affirms that Qur'anic translation is a complex endeavor that extends beyond linguistic equivalence. The selected translations of *Surah Yusuf* illustrate that each version embodies the translator's interpretative decisions, cultural assumptions, and intended readership. Literal translations, while lexically accurate, may fail to convey the emotive and rhetorical dimensions of the original. In contrast, dynamic or interpretative translations, though reader-friendly, may inadvertently introduce theological bias or semantic drift. The findings highlight the need for a balanced approach that respects both the semantic integrity and stylistic beauty of the Arabic Qur'an while remaining intelligible to non-Arabic readers. A hybrid strategy—integrating formal equivalence, cultural awareness, and stylistic sensitivity—offers the most promising path for Qur'anic translation. Moreover, the results contribute to translation studies and Qur'anic scholarship by offering a structured methodology for evaluating religious translations across languages and traditions. Importantly, while translations serve as essential tools for understanding the Qur'an globally, they are not substitutes for the original Arabic. For faithful comprehension, engagement with the Arabic text, along with classical *tafsīr* (exegesis), remains indispensable. The methodology and insights from this study may be extended to future comparative projects, enabling scholars to assess Qur'anic translations in other languages or contexts.

Future studies related to translations of *Surah Yusuf* or similar topics could explore various avenues to deepen our understanding of translation dynamics and their implications. One avenue is to expand the comparative analysis to include more translations of *Surah Yusuf* or other Quranic chapters, examining how translators approach linguistic, semantic, and stylistic aspects, thus shedding light on understanding and interpretation. Additionally, researchers could investigate how translators' cultural backgrounds influence their choices, exploring how cultural nuances shape translations of religious texts and affect readers' perceptions and interpretations. Conducting reader reception studies would be another valuable approach, aiming to understand how diverse audiences perceive and interpret different translations, and how translations shape understanding and beliefs across various cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. Moreover, delving into the translation strategies used in religious texts like the Quran could provide insights into challenges such as faithfulness to the original, conveying theological concepts accurately, and ensuring accessibility for diverse audiences. Employing digital humanities methods to analyze large-scale textual data from multiple translations could uncover patterns and

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relationships within translations, while comparing translations of Surah Yusuf with non-religious texts could illuminate differences in translation strategies and their implications for cross-cultural communication. Investigating how gender influences the translation of religious texts, including Surah Yusuf, would provide insights into gender representation in religious discourse. Lastly, developing pedagogical approaches for teaching translation of religious texts could equip students with skills in linguistic analysis, cultural sensitivity, and ethical decision-making in translation, thus enriching their understanding of religious texts and translation dynamics. In conclusion, this study highlights the intricate challenges of translating the

Qur'an by offering a detailed semantic and stylistic comparison of four English translations of Surah Yusuf. The analysis reveals that translation is not merely a linguistic exercise, but a deeply interpretive act shaped by theological, cultural, and stylistic considerations. Understanding these dimensions is essential for ensuring the accurate and respectful transmission of sacred texts. Future research may expand this comparative approach to other Surahs or explore the role of emerging translation technologies, such as AI-driven models, in rendering religious texts. Such studies would contribute to the growing field of translation studies and support efforts to bridge cultural and spiritual understanding across languages.

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