+Euphemism:
Sensitive Profanities in the Translations of the Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an in English

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Abstract

This paper is intended to investigate the phenomenon of euphemism in the Glorious Qur'an and its rendering into English ,i.e., the translations of its meaning. A general theoretical framework of euphemism in English and Arabic with a particular view in the Glorious Qur'an is first introduced . A sample of Qur'anic texts with their English rendering has been analyzed . The results show that the percentage of presenting the euphemism form in the target text (TT) is (77.5%), while that of revealing its intended meaning , with some degree of decency, is (20%). The results also show that the percentage of presenting the euphemistic form followed by an explanation of the intended meaning is only (2.5%). The paper ends up with a number of conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study .

1 . Introduction

There has been an increasing number of studies and monographs on euphemism, yet it can be argued that still there exist few studies of Qur'anic euphemism and its translation into English. Thus ,there is an obvious need to tackle this topic. This paper aims at bringing the reader into a closer understanding of the features, purposes and images of Qur'anic euphemism and also investigating the strategies used for rendering it into English . Finally, the paper attempts at recommending suitable strategies for translating the phenomenon under study.

It hypothesized that there is no single perfect strategy for translating Qur'anic euphemism. Every strategy can be suitable for a certain purpose of translation and a certain reader. To achieve the aims of this study and verify the hypothesis , First, a brief theoretical framework of euphemism in English and Arabic in general will be developed including the definition of euphemism, its etymology, purposes, types, and changeability . This is supported with a particular reference to this phenomenon in the Glorious Qur'an. Second, a sample of Qur'anic euphemisms will be selected together with their rendering into English by

a group of translators. Third, the problems and the strategies employed in the selected sample will be analyzed and discussed to find out the merits and demerits of each strategy.

2. Euphemism : Etymology and Definition

Euphemism is a rhetorical device used in semantics and stylistics. It refers to *the substitution of a pleasant, an agreeable, (less or) inoffensive, indirect, vague, evasive, neutral, clean, or elevated expression* for *one that is unpleasant, harsh, offensive, blunt, direct, blasphemous, indelicate, gross, vulgar, crude , snarl, ugly, disparaging, or distasteful* such as *pass away* for   die , *make love* for sex, and *number one* for urinate (Crystal ,2003 : 61 , Harris 2000: np, Leech, 1974: 53,and others). So euphemizing is "the lexical replacement" of a polite description or labels of persons, jobs, system, groups, or whatever- to give fairer picture of sensitive - impolite ones that offend the listener because of the unacceptability of altering them in public situations. The substitution is expressed not by "a similar word" but by "a closely associated" one (Stockwell, 2003 :36).

Etymologically, the term *euphemismos* (euphemism) was used by ancient Greeks for " to keep a holy silence (speaking well by not speaking at all)" (Org/wiki/Euphemism ,2010 : np) or "use of good words" (euphemisms.grammar about.com,2011:np) or "fair speech" (Harris,2000: np). Its root is *euphemos* , meaning auspicious , coined from *eu-* (good) and *pheme* (speaking). The *dysphemism* (evil speaking), *cacophemism* (deliberate offensive speaking), and *power point* (to raise the correctness of a point) are the antonyms of euphemism which subtly make bad connotations   of expressions (ibid).

Harris (ibid) describes euphemisms as "secret diplomatic means of highly respected polite correctness". They are called " soft language, conciliatio, soother, and paradiastole"(euphemisms.grammar about.com,2010:np) and Leech (2003:53) terms a euphemism "a positive misnomer" since it purges a subject from its damaging affective associations , and states that a "euphemism is in the nature of things a palliative , not a cure ". He also compares euphemisms to " secret agents on a delicate mission" which aims at making unpleasant truths wear "diplomatic cologne" and this is the reason behind their universality. They are chosen with strategic tact for picking out the optimistic and progressive aspects of the phenomenon labeled, and playing down the pessimistic aspect of culturally sensitive areas (ibid).

Generally, Al-Qadi (2009: 13) states that the thematic index of euphemisms covers more than thirty topics such as alcohol, body parts, body processes (mainly excretions), business, crime, death, disability, drugs, mental illness, military, politics, religion, sex, etc. All are considered *profanities* – with obvious degrees of diversity. They require a great carefulness in using them publicly(Leech ,1974: 45   and Harris,2000: np).

Modern linguists term the *deliberate* usage of euphemisms *Doublespeak* by , which is intended to "obfuscate the language in order to deny or shift responsibility in certain situations such as public relations and politics" . Doublespeak can be made by either bald euphemisms, as *downsizing* or *rightsizing* for 'firing of many   employees' or ambiguous phrases,   as *wet work* for 'assassination' (Harris,2000: np , Al-Qadi ,2009: 13 and www.Answer.com.euphemism 2008:6) .

Linguistically euphemisms can be mainly couched into three figures of speech, these are :

1- *Metonymy* is the basic, ambiguous and delicate figure which is the name or an attribute of an entity used as a replacement of the entity itself depending on some real relation between the things signified. It can be a word as *bottle* for drinking alcohol or an idiomatic expression as *heavy rain* for " it is raining cats and dogs" (Leech ,1974:54   , Al-Qadi ,2009: 15).
2- *Synecdoche* is a nomination or description of one thing or idea by using words - without *as* or *like* which makes it differ from metaphor- usually used of something else having very similar qualities such as *an eye* for a spy.
3- *Circumlocution* is the roundabout saying of embarrassing ideas by using more words than needed so, it is uneconomical figure, such as *in the family way* for pregnancy and *to be able to do better work with help* for   stupid students (ibid) .

Not always euphemisms are linguistically expressed . Words are not always necessary to express euphemisms , the asterisks, dashes, or other symbols can play the role perfectly and the hidden meaning can be induced from the context only . On the other side, *visual* euphemisms can be noticed in the appearance of things. Such euphemisms are used to beautify or hide the ugliness from things or products or problems. This is obviously presented in the wearing of color contact lenses , hiding the genital parts of statues by fig leaves, and the packaging of most nowadays

cheap –less quality products. (Leech ,1974:54 , Harris,2000: np ,and Al-Qadi ,2009: 14).

3. Types of Euphemisms

Al-Qadi (2009: 17) explains that euphemisms can be classified into different categories . They are either *positive* when they are intended to express the solidarity with the addressee especially with the titles of low-level or "fancy" occupations like *environmental engineer* for garbage man and *mental hospital* for madhouse. Euphemism can be *negative* if the expressions refer to the social ranks that cause "face loss "or insult to the referent , so they are negatively euphemized to cover their bad connotation such as *low-income* for poverty. Some euphemisms are described as *conscious* because they are intentionally coined to make what is unreal or bad seem real or respectful especially in the language of advertising and politics such as *redeployment of troops* for withdrawal, whereas others are termed *unconscious euphemisms* due to their unknown "original motivations" or checkered .Euphemisms that are used and understood by two friends and they might make no sense to a third person are described as *situational*, while they will be *governmental* if the euphemism is couched intentionally by a formal institution or government as *Accessible Parking Permit* for Disabled Person Parking Permit . Jargon (or orgot) euphemisms are specifically employed by certain social or professional (medical ,military , etc.) circles but not others, such as *put him in bed with the captain's daughter* for drunk sailor (Org/wiki/Euphemism,2010 :np and euphemisms.grammar about.com,2010:np) .

4. The Purposes of Euphemisms

The main purposes of euphemisms can be stated as follows :

1-Religious purpose : euphemisms are used to avoid mentioning explicitly some spiritually imperiling religious expressions or taboos for not inviting misfortune by ominous statements as the names of deity-Persophone, Herate, Nemesis . This avoidance is due to the ancient belief that "to speak a name was to evoke the divinity whose power then had to be confronted" (Org/wiki/Euphemism,2010 :np , euphemisms.grammar about.com,2010:np and www.Answer.com.euphemism 2008:4) :

2- Political purpose : politicians and scientists use euphemisms to shield themselves from accountability and more responsibility for their illegal or wrong actions by disguising and clouding thought of the

audience as   with Roosevelt's *reception centers* for concentration centers –places   like prisons and *collateral damage* for civilian deaths (ibid).

   3- Social purpose: euphemisms are necessities in dealing with sensitive and repulsive topics. They   are intended to avoid using expressions which wound susceptibilities and which are not preferred to talk about topics directly like death ,   sex, excretion processes, war ,sickness, blindness , etc. Therefore,   Harris (2000:np) states that euphemizing is the safest strategy for:

   a- discussing these subjects secretly in the presence of others and prevent strong negative stereotypes from prejudicing a hearer as the uses of *economically disadvantaged* for poor , *developmentally disabled* for retarded , and *illegitimate child* or *love child* for bastard ,

   b- obscuring the identity of subject of a conversation from potential eavesdroppers in order to protect the guilty as when a prostitute solicits a customer , saying "Do you want to party? Or Are you looking for a good time?" and the nomination of illicit drugs and plants such as *speed* or *crank* for meth .

5. Changeability of Euphemisms (*treadmill*)

   Euphemisms are changed continually in languages from one generation to another due to the mode of the native speakers and the mood of the age(Wilson, 1993: 65) ,i.e., psychological reasons stand behind this changeability which is termed nowadays as *treadmill* or , *semantic change* or *pejoration* which justifies the infinite number of euphemisms in languages . Therefore, euphemisms are in constant state of   flex   which   means   that   always   there   are   new euphemistic   creatures. Some have short life then they lose the euphemistic value and then turn into taboo words themselves or unconscious   ones,   while   othermay   last   for   generations, or even centuries(Org/wiki/Euphemism,2010 :np, euphemisms .grammar about.com,2010:np and www.Answer.com.euphemism 2008:2).

   Leech (1974:54)   explains this process as that the replaced euphemism of the original term "soon gets tarred with the same brush" and states that the acquisition of bad connotation is not " the fault of the word itself but of what it refers to" . Here are some examples presented by Harris (200o:np):

-Lavatory , privy , water-closet , toilet , cloakroom , restroom , comfort station
-Prison , penal institution , correctional facility , rehabilitation center
-Used car , pre-owned car , experienced automobile , resale
-Mad , crazy , insane , deranged , mentally ill
-Poor , underdeveloped , developing , emerged

6. Euphemisms in Arabic Language & Glorious Qur'an

Arabic is one of the basic world languages and its importance and necessity to Muslims all over the world is not deniable since it is the language of their Glorious Book – The Qur'an (Allah's words). It is considered one of the most religiously-socially conservative and elevated languages. The phenomenon of euphemizing (meaning and use) is found in Arabic as a necessity rather than aesthetic linguistic procedure. Arabic linguists use the word **الكناية** *kinaayah* which can be equivalent in function to euphemism and **metanoma** (i.e., metonymy) . *kinaayah* is defined in Arabic as:

" تعبير المتكلم عن المعنى القبيح باللفظ الحسن ، وعن النجس بالطاهر،وعن الفاحش بالعفيف ، هذا وإذا قصد المتكلم نزاهة كلامه من العيب " بدوي (١٩٥٥) و مطلوب والبصير(١٩٩٩)واخرون.
ومن فوائدها هو التعبير عن الامور التي قد يتحاشى ذكرها الانسان احتراماً للمخاطب وتنزيه الاذن عما تنبو عن سماعه .(شبكة نبأ المعلوماتية والبلاغة القرآنية و ويكيبيديا الموسوعة الحرة .)

Al-Qadi (2009:18) states that Euphemisms in Arabic have similar meanings to the Arabic root "lu:fl (لطف)and its derivative la.a:fah" (لطيفة)which are " to be kind and to mitigate horrible meanings. Arabic euphemisms are more decent, prestigious and denotative in nature than English ones because the degree of politeness in Arabic is higher than in English which tends to be more explicit and open language . This characteristic of purity is one of the remarkable features of the Glorious Qur'an that itself is described as "the most beautiful message" in : (Ibn-Kathir and Al-Zuhayli)

"الله انزل أحسن الحديث كتاباً ..."(الزمر آية ٢٣)

"Allah has revealed (from time to time) the most beautiful message in the form of a Book " (Az-Zumar 39 : verse 23). (YusufAli:2001:1187)

This purity in speech is recommended clearly in:

"وهدوا إلى الطيب من القول ..."(الحج أية ٢٤)

"*For thy have been guided (in this life) to the purest of speeches*" (Al-Hajj 22 : verse 24). (YusufAli:2001:827).

The Qur'an is the last revelation to humanity and has been unchanged since it was sent down in *Arabic* to the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the 7th century M. Asad -the German Jewish born convert translator- describes this Holy Book as ' the ultimate wisdom, and the ultimate beauty of expression' ,   while Pickthall calls it the "inimitable symphony"(Kidwai,1998:3 and Khaleel,2005:64).   The Glorious Qur'an's 114 chapters (Surahs) and 6236 verses (Ayahs) have set up the Islamic cultural, and linguistic rules that impose a great sanction on the deliberate use of Arabic words and phrases in different subjects of life. This completely contrasts with the English speakers' freely use of their language.

Euphemisms in the Glorious Qur'an gain a special importance as they are used in a context which is closely related to Muslims. This rhetorical device represents one of the crucial linguistic stumbling blocks in the face of translators of the *meaning* of the Glorious Qur'an. The success of capturing the functional equivalence of these items demands translators' proficiency in the Arabic and Islamic religious knowledge. The job needs to *not scarify or ignore the euphemistic meaning at the expense of the original-intended meaning or vice versa , but they should be presented together through explication, paraphrase or annotation*(Mohammed:2007:4) . It is also necessary that *" a euphemism should be translated with a euphemism that has the same degree of departure from the original meaning"* (Al-Salem:2008: 81). These two main themes are considered as the bases of investigating and analyzing in this paper .

7. Glorious Qur'an & Translation

The history of translating this Glorious Book has begun with the Christian, Ross (1625-49) and has continued to the present. Hundreds of translations - with different motivations and purposes with or against Islam- have been produced and the target mainly is the non-Arab Muslims who consider these works as indirect means of knowing the Islamic message. This task has been a very controversial issue that raised many debates about whether this holy book is translatable or not and whether the translation is truly academic in nature and informative in the objective or not . Pickthall and many sincere translators agree that the Qur'an *cannot be translated* and their works are only attempts to present

the *meaning* or approximate interpretations of the Qur'an (Kidwai,1998: 2). They have agreed that these works can never take the place of the Qur'an in Arabic since the revelation in none but the pure and   clear Arabic tongue (the dialect of Qureish) has been proclaimed in some   qur'anic verses as in:

"إنا أنزلناه قرءاناً عربياً لعلكم تعقلون " (يوسف آية ٢)

" *We have sent it down as an **Arabic Qur'an** in order that ye may learn wisdom"* (Yusuf 12 : Verse 2). (YusufAli, 2001:546)

What gains no debates all the time is that a good translation should   match the Arabic Qur-an in rhythm of text, depth of meaning, syntax of sentences, word usage and adherence to the divine words ,i.e.,   capture stylistic, pragmatic and figurative aspects of the Qur'an (Mohammed:2007:2 and Denffer,2008: 14)**,** and till now this is an unachievable desire. Accordingly, a translation can be either *Communicative* or *Semantic*. The first aims mainly at conveying to a limited category of readership an effect similar to that of the original text which means rendering the force rather than the content. It makes a translator free to correct the logic of the source text, change the structure, omit repetitions or unintelligible metaphors, and solve any ambiguities as long as the equivalent effect is guaranteed. *Semantic* translation, on the other hand, is more appropriate for addressing all readers and it respects the context and the semantic-syntactic structures of the target language (Al-Salem:2008: 51).

Al-Salem (2008: 88-9) presents three types of translations of the Glorious Qur'an : *Literal*, *Lexical,* and *interpretive*. *Literal* translation means the equivalent translation between the source language word and the target language with maintaining the same word order and taking into account the syntactic and semantic rules. This method has been used largely although it is criticized as being impractical,   impossible and causing an ambiguity because of the definite linguistic differences between Arabic and English at all levels .

Lexical translation involves *replacing* the source language words with target language items that convey the same meaning which requires changing the order in accordance with the word order rules of the target language. It is   followed in most translations of the Qur'an especially those produced by Muslims.

Finally, *interpretive* translation which means either translating interpretively and   directly from the Qur'an without making any substitutions or translating   the Arabic commentaries of the Qur'an such as the Tafsir   (or interpretation of) Ibn Kathir.

For the purpose of studying and analyzing in this paper four   of the most readable and remarkable translations of the meaning of the Holy Qur'an are selected :

1- Abdullah Yusuf Ali's *The Meaning of Holy Qur'an* (published in 1934 in at least 35 editions). The translator(1872-1953) is a Muslim *Indian* educator and he wrote in chaste English mixed with   eloquent , vivid and "poetic" style (Kidwai,1998:5 and Khaleel,2005: 59).

2- Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall's *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran* (published in 1930 in at least 27 editions) . Pickthall (1875-1936), who is an *English* convert man of letters with fluent Arabic tongue , wrote in the Biblical English that makes his work difficult to be read for an uninitiated readers of Qur'an (ibid).

3-Mohomedali Habib Shakir's *The Quran, Arabic and English*   (published in 1982). This work is criticized as being a "blatant plagiarism" from Maulana Muhammad Ali's translation with English updated to middle century style. This work represents the period of 1980s (ibid).

4-Thomas   Ballantine   Irving's *The Qur'an : the First American Version* (published in 1985). Irving, who is an American convert educator died in 2002, changed the word order and   used modern and forceful English with employing many American idioms (ibid) .

8 . Analysis and Evaluation

8 . 1   Sexual Euphemisms
Sexual euphemisms are prohibited to be declared publicly by religion in most cultures, and societies. They involve mainly the most two thematic profanities in the language which are: Sexual Organs and Copulate   or Sexual intercourse.

8.1.1 *Sexual Organs* - the nominations of the bodily privy parts (genital female and male organs) and their functions- are euphemized in any respectful communication since they literally mean " shameful things " or "evil " . For example, the term "*pudendum*" is used for the genitals in Latin and the word "*thigh*" is a euphemistic substitute for "testicles" in the Bible (Khaleel,2005: 60 and Denffer,2008: 31). In the Holy Qur'an, there is a very polite and elevated treatment of these expressions since "our first parents as created by Allah were innocent in matters materials as well as spirituals" and He created them "bare and alone"(Yusufali,2001: 315). Mostly and largely the private parts are not expressed explicitly, but indirect and somewhat neutral words are used , as shown below :

Qur'anic Sexual Organs Euphemisms in the Selected Translations

Chapter Name	Chapter &Verse No.	Arabic Word	English translation			
			YUSUFALI	PICKTHAL	SHAKIR	IRVING
Al-araf	7: 20	سوءاتهما	their shame	their shame	evil inclinations	*private parts*
	7: 26	سوءاتكم	your shame	your shame	your shame	*private parts*
Ta-ha	20 :121	سوءاتهما	nakedness	their shame	evil inclinations	*private parts*
Al-mumenoon	23: 5	فروجهم	*sex*	*private parts*	modesty	*private parts*
An-noor	24: 31	عورات	*the shame of sex*	women's nakedness	what is hidden of women	*their private parts*

In the above five verses, the Almighty Allah uses (عورة, فرج , سوءاة) to refer mainly to the human privy parts and in turn to the sexual process. The word (سوءاة) –literally means shame. It refers to the genital female and male organs, and it is mentioned in the first three selected verses. In Al-mumenoon 23 –verse 5 ,the explicit Arabic indication (فَرج) of the sexual organs is noticed, while (عورة) is used in the last to refer to women privy parts (*Tafsir ibn Kathir*). This word also is mentioned in the chapter of Al-ahzab 33 :verse 13 with a very different meaning – their houses are not protected against enemies (ibid) . Yusufali translates (سوءاة) in the first two verses as (… *shame*) in accordance with the qur'anic term and uses *nakedness* in the third which may also refer to spiritual not materials ugliness according to his interpretation

(Yusufali,2001:1059). So the target reader is in need for using the commentaries to understand the intended meaning. In the two last examples, he declares frankly what the(فَرج) and (عورة) mean by using *sex* and *the shame of sex* referring to the private parts. This clarifies the idea to the target reader . Here only translated interpretation of the Glorious Qur'an cures the problem of ignoring the intended meaning at the expense of the euphemistic one of these words and this must be avoided as Mohammed (2007:3) states.

Pickthall is consistent on using the same English equivalent words which are neutral and vague euphemisms(… *shame* and *nakedness*) to the source language words in all   examples except the fifth one . This correspondence is due to his use of the chaste-Biblical English and his concentration on the dictionary meaning of words at the expense of the message (Al-Salem:2008:84) which makes his work inaccessible to the uninitiated readers especially with the absence of commentaries (Kidwai, 1998:6 and Khaleel, 2005:54), but   when the Arabic word is direct he uses the direct –blunt target word and   this due to his style .

Shakir is always with the use of the neutral euphemistic vocabularies (*evil inclinations*, …*shame*, *modesty*, and *what is hidden of women*) to express the meaning even when the context requires the explication as with the fifth case . Irving conveys overtly the intended meaning (*private parts*) without paying attention to the euphemisms in all selected verses. It is true that Irving's presentation is so understandable to the receiver but it "cause the unfitting of the dignity of the qur'anic diction and style"(Kidwai,1998:8).   The four translators do not agree with G. Mohammed who suggests to keep the euphemism and mention the intended meaning through explication, paraphrase or annotation   and not ignore one at the expense of the other (Mohammed,2007:2 and Al-Salem,2008 : 77) .

8.1.2 *Copulate or Sexual intercourse* is one of the most sensitive issue in human communication , which has been euphemized since the time of creation . The phrase *sexual intercourse* was once a euphemism derived from the general term intercourse -literally means meeting- by itself. In the Bible, this issue is mentioned euphemistically in Gen. 39:6 as "*the beard he eats* "for the woman with whom he has sexual contact and "*Adam knew his wife*" as a euphemism for this sensitive process. In Talmud , "*the usage of the bed*" is   used to euphemistically   to   refer   to   this   issue   (Denffer:2008:16   and www.usc.edu/dept/msa/quran) . What was hidden in most people's minds in the past , nowadays becomes openly declared as it is the case in the

Western world due to the loss of religion power, the women's liberation and the sexual openness through using different changeable euphemisms such as: *making love (to)*; *having marital relations* ; *sleeping with* ; *engaging in sexual intercourse* ; *acting like rabbits*; *getting it on* ; *cheeky time*; *doing it* ; *making the beast with two backs*; *pitching woo* (Harris,2000: np and Org/Wiki/Euphemism :np) .

   The Arabic sex euphemisms tend to be more decent and covert than English ones . This is undeniable truth before and after Islam which recalls for   purity in words and actions. They are dealt with in the Glorious Qur'an in a very euphemistic manner in one way or another as shown below, and this requires a very sincere and intelligent treatment on the translators' side . The sensitive idea which is related largely to the husband-wife relationship should be accessed to the target, who is without any doubt a non-Arabic speaker, clearly since it is a matter of the true faith. Some elevated and modest presentations of sex relations in the Glorious Qur'an can be noticed below :

Qur'anic Sexual intercourse Euphemisms in the Selected Translations

Chapter Name	Chapter &Verse No.	Arabic Euph.	English translation			
			YUSUFALI	PICKTHAL	SHAKIR	IRVING
Al-baqara	2:187	الرفث	approach	go in unto	go into	*have intercourse*
		باشروهن	associate with	*hold intercourse*	be in contact	frequent
		تباشروهن	associate with	touch them not	have not contact	dealings with
	2: 222	لاتقربوهن	Not approach	go not in	do not go	not approach
	2: 223	فاتوا	approach your	go to your	go into	go to
	2: 235	تواعدهن سراً	a secret contract	plight not your troth with women	a promise in secret	**propose anything to them secretly**
An-nisa	4: 43	لمستم	contact with women	have touched	have touched	contact with any women
Al-araf	7:189	ليسكن اليها فلما تغشاها	Dwell with her *(in love)*. When they are united	take rest in her. And when he covered her	incline to her; so when he covers her	settle down with her. Once he has covered her

| Maryam | 19: 20 | يمسسني | touched | touched | touched | touched |

The above table shows that the selected verses refer euphemistically to the sexual relations through the words (الرفث ; لمستم ;فاتوا ;تقربوهن ; ليسكن اليها فلما تغشاها) Ibn Kathir . It can be noticed that Shakir translates these expressions euphemistically as *approach* , *associate*, *go in, contact* , , *take rest ...covered,* and *touch* respectively. Yusufali does the same except in chapter 19 verse 20 where he mentions the euphemistic meaning with the an indication between round brackets *(in love)* to explain the intended meaning euphemistically which can also be understandable to the English readers, but this is not done by the other translators. Pickthall and Irving express frankly the intended meaning – sexual intercourse- for one time only (of the nine) as *hold intercourse* and *have intercourse* which are the equivalent target words for (الرفث and (باشروهن . This explication can be justified because of the Western British and American origins of these two Muslim translators . No one of these translators meets Mohammed Gamal's view point " the best translators are those who mention the euphemism followed by a paraphrase to make it easy for the target receivers to understand what is intended to be relayed to their language" (2007:2).

8 . 2 Death Euphemisms

Using euphemisms for *death* , *dying* , and *burial* is likely to have originated with the magical belief that to speak the word *death* was to invite death or draw its attention (euphemisms.grammar about.com,2010:np). In the Bible , death –a taboo subject in most English speaking cultures- is expressed euphemistically as in " *They shall sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake* " (Jer.51), "*I shall go the way whence I shall not return* " (Job 16:22) and " *I am about to go the way of all the earth*" (I King 2:2). From this context many euphemisms have been coined for this universal disaster to prevent wounding susceptibilities and cause misery to others by all generations, some of them are *pass away* ; *go to be with the Lord*; *called home*; *departed* ; *expire*; *breathe one's last* ; *the great certainty* ; *land of no return*; *at peace*; *at rest* ,etc (Leech,1974:52, Harris,2000:np and others). In certain Qur'anic situations this sensitive topic is presented without using the blunt – direct word (موت) as explained in the following table :

Qur'anic Death Euphemisms in the Selected Translations

Chapter Name	Chapter &Verse No.	Arabic Euph.	English translation			
			YUSUFALI	PICKTHAL	SHAKIR	IRVING

Yufuf	12 : 85	هالكين	*Die*	perish	perish.	*die*
Al-ahzab	33:23	قضى نحبه	**completed their vow (to the extreme)**	**paid their vow by *death* (in battle)**	**accomplished his vow**	**fulfilled their mortal duty**
Ar-rahman	55: 26	فان	perish	pass away	pass away	disappear

The words (فان, قضى نحبه ,هالكين) are indirect expressions for death in the above three selected qur'anic verses(ibn kathir). The indirectness of conveying the intended meaning is noticed with all the translators-especially with Shakir- by using the euphemisms *perish* , *pass away*, and *disappear*, while Yusufali and Irving convey it frankly (*die*) in chapter Yusuf 12 :verse 85 for the word (هلاك) indicating the end of the prophet Jacopo (ibid). When death is for the sake of Allah –martyrdom - as in chapter A-ahzab33: verse 23, the Almighty Allah uses (قضى نحبه) which is translated by Yusufali , Shakir , and Irving equivalently to the source language. This literal   translation *"completed* or *accomplished ...vow* and *fulfilled their mortal duty*" is completely true but according to Ibn Kathir's exegesis death is also meant and involved here which is obvious with Pickthall who mentions both the euphemistic meaning followed by the intended one as Mohammed Gamal (2007:3) recommends .

Accordingly , other closely related expressions to the death topic are corpse and murder. The word corpse is presented in chapter Al-maeda 5:verse 31- as shown below - when the Almighty Allah uses the neutral word (سوءة) which literally means *the shame* , and its intended meaning in this situation is corpse (ibn Kathir). Pickthall, Shakir , and Irving use the direct- blunt word *corpse* or *dead body* , while Yufufali is still consistent on not ignoring the euphemistic meaning at the expense of the intended one which is explained in his commentaries and this may be sufficient to prevent the confusion and misunderstanding that may face the target reader since the same word (سوءة) is used to mean the sexual organs as it has been explained previously .

Chapter Name	Chapter &Verse No.	Arabic Euph.	English translation			
			YUSUFALI	PICKTHAL	SHAKIR	IRVING
Al-maeda	5 : 31	سوءة	the shame	naked corpse	the dead body	his brother's corpse

The word murder is euphemized through using different expressions to hide the illegality and ugliness of this action. The most common one is *terminate* or *to off* . Some less frequent and vague euphemisms are *wet work*   (also for assassination); *to take care of one* ; *to do them in* ; *sleep with the fishes* ; *put him in a concrete overcoat*; *neutralize*, *put a hit on* (3,6). In the Holy Qur'an, murdering is euphemized in the chapter of Al-qasas 28 :verse 15 by using the word (قضى عليه) which literally means *terminate* or *to off* (ibn Kathir). Here , Pickthall and Shakir declare the intended meaning openly , while Yusufali and Irving present the equivalent euphemisms as shown below :

Chapter Name	Chapter &Verse No.	Arabic Euph.	English translation			
			YUSUFALI	PICKTHAL	SHAKIR	IRVING
Al-qasas	28:15	قضى عليه	make an end of him	*killed* him	*killed* him	finished him off

8 . 3 Excretory Euphemisms

The processes of digestive excretion (*urinary, fecal, or gas*) are considered vulgarities and unacceptable in general use and substituted throughout the history by euphemisms like *pass water* or *wind* ; *number one*; *go to the toilet*; *go to the bathroom*; *wee wee* ;*a comfort station* ; *the necessary (or necessarium)*; *privy* ; *W.C.* (water closet) ; *lavatory* ; *toilet* ; *bathroom* ; *restroom*; *powder room* ; *men's* or *ladies' room* ,etc. The treadmill is seen clearly here, for example, lavatory or toilet are now considered inappropriate and replaced with bathroom and water closet ,which were replaced with restroom – which is rarely used outside of the USA- and WC- which was very popular in the UK but now it is the first in use in France, Germany   and Hungary(Harris,2000:np and www.Answer.com.euphemism:2011). Religiously , *the house of the water* and *' the house of the chair'* are euphemisms for the place of excretory ,and urine is called *"the water of the feet"* while *"having need of his apertures", "turning aside"* express the defecating action in Talmud. The excretion is referred to by "*to cover one's feet*" in the Bible and the basic Anglo-Saxon words *piss* and *shit* are used for   urination and defecation   functions respectively in King James Bible – in Isaiah 36:12 and elsewhere(Harris,2000:np and euphemisms.grammar about.com,2010:np).

In the Glorious Qur'an , this sensitive topic is expressed by using the word (الغائط) which literally means the defecation only but in the chapter of   An-nisa 4 :verse 43 and the chapter of Al-maeda 5 :verse 6, the word (الغائط) refers to all excretory processes -*urinary, fecal, or gas* -

(Ibn Kathir). The translators are far from explicating directly these processes. They use different euphemisms   as in :

Excretory Euphemisms in the Selected Translations

Chapter Name	Chapter &Verse No.	Arabic term.	English translations			
			YUSUFALI	PICKTHAL	SHAKIR	IRVING
An-nisa	4 :43	الغائط	offices of nature	The closet	The privy	the toilet

9 . Summary of Analysis Results

The table below summarized the main results of analyzing the translations of the selected verses :

	Euphemistic meaning	Intended meaning	Both	Total
Yusufali	17	2	1	20
Pickthall	15	4	1	20
Shakir	18	2	0	20
Irving	12	8	0	20
Total	**62**	**16**	**2**	**80**
Ratio %	**77.5%**	**20%**	**2.5%**	**100%**

It is clear from the table that :

1. The percentage of rendering the Qur'anic euphemistic expressions in the selected sample into equivalent euphemistic expressions in Target Text (TT) is 77.5%. Irving tends to employ less euphemistic expressions than the other translators . This can be due to the fact that he uses modern rather than archaic English, a matter which makes it difficult for TT to match the archaic feature of the Qur'anic euphemisms .

2. The percentage of revealing the intended meaning of euphemistic expressions is 20%. This strategy is mainly adopted by Irving who reveals the intended meaning eight times in the selected sample. Again, this can be due to his use of modern English.

3. The strategy of using equivalent euphemistic expressions together with explanatory translation of the intended meaning is the least strategy used in the selected sample which represents only 2.5% euphemistic expressions .

10. Conclusions

Within its scope and procedures followed , the findings of the study lead to the following conclusions:

1. The translators of the selected sample mainly tend to render Qur'anic euphemisms into equivalent English euphemisms. They try to avoid revealing the intended meaning. This can be due to their attempt to make the TT look formal, archaic, holy to match the Source Text (ST) in terms of these features.

2. The second strategy used by the translators is to reveal the intended meaning behind the Qur'anic euphemism. It is mainly used by those translators who employ modern English – like Irving – whose concern is to convey the content rather than keep the ST form.

3. The third strategy of translating Qur'anic euphemism represents a compromise between the two strategies mentioned above, i.e., the euphemistic form is kept, and its intended meaning is revealed through explanatory translation. However, this strategy is the least used one. This can be due to the translators' desire to ensure the fluency and readability of their TTs since explanatory translation of euphemism beside keeping its form can be argued to obstacle fluent reading.

4. To decide which translation strategy is most successful has to be based on two interrelated criteria : readership and function of translation. For this purpose the three strategies will be discussed and evaluated according to these criteria as shown below :

a. The first strategy is suitable for a translation addressed to a well-educated reader who is interested in the culture of Qur'anic register and its archaic Arabic. Here , the reader is taken to the Qur'anic world in its almost original form. The potential reader of such translation can be those interested not only in Islamic law, but also those interested in the theoretical, cross- cultural and archaic registers. The aim of such translation is to render the ST form together with its content. And if a choice is to be made between form and content, priority is given to form.

b. The second strategy which involves revealing the intended meaning of the euphemistic expression is suitable when translation is addressed to a reader who interested in the content of Qur'an more than in its form. Such translation usually aims at bringing the reader into a close understanding of the Islamic laws rather than teaching him/her the register of Qur'anic Arabic and its form. The potential readers of such translation are the non-Arab Muslims who try to learn about Islam.

c. The third translation strategy is preferable when translation aims at preserving the euphemism form , and at the same time, revealing its intended meaning. Such translation is usually addressed to a reader who is interested in both the content and form of the Qur'anic text. This strategy can help to preserve the style and form of Qur'anic text and , at the same time , can help the reader understand its content.

5. The choice of either of these strategies according to the criteria of translation function and readership can be summarized in the following diagram which can be a useful guide for both translating and the assessment of the translation of the Qur,anic euphemism.

Figure (1) The Strategies of Translating Qur'anic Euphemism

	Translation Aim	Readership	Preferable Strategy
Qur'anic Euphemism	To preserve the form of the ST and make the TT look formal, archaic, and holy as ST.	Those interested in Qur'anic register and its Archaic standard Arabic as well as its culture .	Strategy No. 1
	To convey the ST content and ensure the reader's understanding of the intended meaning of euphemistic expression.	Those interested in learning Islamic laws more than learning Qur'anic Arabic and its culture.	Strategy No.2
	To preserve the ST euphemistic form and to reveal its intended meaning .	Those interested in both the form and content of Qur'anic text.	Strategy No.3

المستخلص

العبارة التلطيفية : المحرمات الحساسة في ترجمة معاني القرآن الكريم إلى اللغة الانجليزية

يهدف البحث إلى دراسة ظاهرة العبارة التلطيفية في القرآن الكريم وترجمة معانيه إلى اللغة الانجليزية. فقد أولا عرض أطار نظري عام لهذا الموضوع في اللغتين الانجليزية والعربية مع نظرة خاصة في القرآن الكريم. ثم تم تحليل عينة من النصوص القرآنية مع ترجمتها

الانجليزية. أظهرت النتائج الحالية أن نسبة ترجمة العبارة ألتلطيفية شكلاً في اللغة الأجنبية كانت ٥٫٧٧% فقط ، في حين كانت نسبة إظهار المعنى المقصود من تلك العبارة ٢٠% ، وأظهرت النتائج أيضا بان نسبة تقديم العبارة التلطيفية شكلاً ومتبوعا بتوضيح للمعنى المقصود ٥٫٢% فقط. ختم البحث بعدد من الاستنتاجات والتوصيات المرتكزة على نتائج هذا البحث.

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