

## **Challenges of Rendering Qur'anic Total Paronomasia: A Semantic-Pragmatic Study**

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### **Abstract:**

The current study attempts to investigate the problematic rendering of paronomasia (agnominatio or punning) in the Qur'an from a semantic-pragmatic perspective. M. H. Abrams (1999) defines paronomasia as "A play on words that are either identical in sound (homonyms) or very similar in sound, but are sharply diverse in meaning" (253). Thus, paronomasia is a rhetorical device that is like a word play intentionally used to exploit the confusion between words having similar sounds but different meanings. Use of paronomasia in the Qur'an is intentionally employed in order to address the early Arabs who were fluent in their use of language and literature especially in their poetry which was considered part of their daily life. In Arabic rhetoric, paronomasia has two main types: total and partial under which there are 82 types. However, this paper focuses on discussing the use, effect and meaning, and how to translate total paronomasia in the Qur'an. The problem lies in the fact that the translator may not have the linguistic competency, or the cultural background needed for such a mission in order to transfer the implied meaning of Qur'anic paronomasia with the same level of rhetoric into English. The samples of the study are (5) paronomasia verses drawn from the Qur'an. Five sample verses are the samples of the study with their rendering in eight translations of the Qur'an. The study findings and conclusion found out that in order to overcome the challenges of translating paronomasia in the Qur'an, the translator has to stick to the original Qur'anic text by mentioning their equivalent terms to preserve the faithfulness to the source text of the Qur'an taking into consideration the readership principle. Achieving this complex equation can be through three strategies; adding within-the-text-notes, or footnotes, or endnotes.

**Key Words:** Paronomasia, Homonymy, Homophony, Homography, the Qur'an, Translation, Semantics, Figurative Language, Language-play, Pun, Ambiguity.

إشكاليات ترجمة الجنس التام في القرآن الكريم إلى اللغة الإنجليزية:  
دراسة دلالية تداولية

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ملخص البحث

يحاول هذا البحث دراسة المشكلات التي تواجه المترجم عند ترجمة الجنس التام في القرآن الكريم إلى اللغة الإنجليزية من منظور دلالي - تداولي. والجناس هو تشابه لفظين مع اختلافهما في المعنى (عبدالعزیز الحربي ٧٩:٢٠١١). وهو إما جناس ناقص أو جناس تام ويندرج تحتها ٨٢ نوع من الجنس في اللغة العربية (إنعام فوال عكاوي ٥٢٢-١٩٩٦:٤٦٢). ويركز هذا البحث على دراسة مشكلات ترجمة الجنس التام وهو ما اتفق فيه اللغويون في أربعة أمور، وهي: نوع الحروف وعددها وترتيبها وهيئتها. وتكمن مشكلة ترجمة الجنس في أن المترجم ربما لا يكون لديه الكفاءة اللغوية، أو الخلفية الثقافية اللازمة، فضلاً عن العلم الشرعي وعلوم التفسير وأسباب النزول لترجمة مثل هذا النوع من المحسنات البديعية، ولنقل المعاني الضمنية للجناس بنفس مستواها اللغوي في اللغة العربية إلى اللغة الإنجليزية. وتتبنى الدراسة بالتليل والمناقشة ترجمة ٥ عينات من الجنس التام في ٥ آيات من القرآن الكريم من خلال ٨ ترجمات للقرآن الكريم من خلفيات ثقافية مختلفة لضمان مصداقية نتائج الدراسة. توصلت نتائج الدراسة واستنتاجاتها إلى أنه من أجل التغلب على تحديات ترجمة الجنس في القرآن، يتعين على المترجم التمسك بالنص القرآني الأصلي من خلال ذكر المصطلحات المكافئة لها في اللغة الهدف للحفاظ على روح النص الأصلي للنص القرآني مع مراعاة اختلافات الثقافات. يمكن تحقيق هذه المعادلة المعقدة من خلال ثلاث استراتيجيات؛ تدخل المترجم بإضافة شروح وملاحظات داخل النص، أو الحواشي السفلية التي يضيفها المترجم أسفل الصفحة، أو التعليقات الختامية التي تُضاف في نهاية السورة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الجنس التام، ترجمة القرآن، الدلالة، التداولية، المحسنات

البديعية، الإطناب، التجانس، الغموض الدلالي، التلاعب بالألفاظ.

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**1.0 Introducing the Study**

Islam has now become a universal religion that is based upon two main sources; namely, the Qur'an and Sunnah (Prophetic Traditions). That is why, it is not appropriate to have mistakes in the translation of the Qur'an since it is the book on which non-Arabic speaking people depend to know and learn about Islam. One of the major mistakes committed by some translators of the Qur'an is their unawareness of its rhetoric and figurative language. The Qur'an was revealed to the early Arabs who were fluent in using language in their daily life and especially in composing their poetry that are abundant with lots of figures of speech and rhetorical language. Paronomasia is one of the figures of speech that the early Arabs used to use in their normal everyday language.

However, some mistakes in the translation of paronomasia structures in the Qur'an emerge due to some reasons. Paronomasia means the use of a word in different senses or the use of words similar in sound to achieve a specific effect, as humor or a dual meaning which is called "punning". The translator's unawareness of the layers of meanings of the same word and implied meaning of the context may cause misunderstanding and hence mistranslation. This might perplex the non-Arabic speaking reader since the translator who is supposed to master both the source and the target languages could not give the correct meaning, then what about the foreign reader who depends on the translated text in order to understand the message of the Qur'an?

The problem is that paronomasia in the Qur'ân is often translated literally giving the surface meaning without giving concern to the other multi-layers of meaning that differ according to the context. Translating paronomasia haphazardly results in distorted translations and hence presents distorted meanings or

misrepresentations of the ST into the TT. Thus, a competent translator has to give due concern to such a rhetorical phenomenon and look for the embedded meaning of each paronomastic lexical item.

### 1.1 Research Questions

The current research is set to answer the following questions:

- 1- What problems do translators encounter in translating paronomasia in the Qur'an?
- 2- Which translation approaches and techniques could be suitable for translating paronomasia in the Qur'an?
- 3- How would adopting a certain exegetical approach or trend affect the translation of paronomasia in the Qur'an?
- 4- How far could making use of Qur'an interpretation be employed as a tool for understanding paronomasia in the Qur'an and hence be adopted in translation?

### 2.0 Theoretical Framework

In the following part, the meaning and definition of paronomasia, its etymology, types, and rhetorical function are overviewed in detail.

#### 2.1 Meaning and Etymology of Paronomasia

According to Webster Online Dictionary<sup>1</sup>, the term paronomasia is derived from “Latin, from Greek, from *paronomazein* to call with a slight change of name, from *para-* + *onoma* name”. However, Oxford Online Dictionary<sup>2</sup> traces that its origin dates back to “late 16<sup>th</sup> century: via Latin from Greek paronomasia, from *para-* ‘beside’ (expressing alteration) + *onomasia* ‘naming’ (from *onomazein* ‘to name’, from *onoma* ‘a name’).” Still both definitions express nearly the same origins and meanings since it means that a word is used with alteration of the common surface

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/paronomastic>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/paronomasia>

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meaning that comes to the mind to mean another implied meaning within the same context.

## **2.2 Types of Paronomasia in Arabic Rhetoric:**

Paronomasia in Arabic has a different classification than that in English. In the following lines, the types of paronomasia in Arabic are demonstrated in detail. Ina'am Fawal Akawy (1996:462-522) lists 82 types of paronomasia in Arabic rhetoric and literature. The current paper attempts to cover "Total Paronomasia" only with its subcategories since it is impossible to discuss all the 82 types here due to the study limitations. Magdy Wahba and Kamel Al Muhadis (1984:138) define paronomasia in Arabic literature and rhetoric as "Two words that are identical in sound but are sharply diverse in meaning, and it is either total paronomasia when the two words are identical in the number of their letters, kind (part of speech), form (diacritics), and order or partial paronomasia if the two words differ in one of the previously mentioned conditions (the number of their letters, kind, form, or order)".

### **2.2.1 Types of Total Paronomasia**

Total paronomasia and its subcategories are listed as follows:

#### **2.2.1.1 Identical (Homonymic) Paronomasia (Jinas Mumathil):**

It means that both paronomastic words belong to the same part of speech; namely they are both nouns or verbs, or prepositions, etc. The poetic verse by Abi Al Alaa Al Ma'ri (449 A.H.) is an example of identical paronomasia:

لم نلق غيرك إنساناً يلاذ به      فلا برحت لعين الدهر إنساناً

In this poetic verse, the two words "إنساناً" have the same number of letters, form, order, and part of speech since they are both "nouns". However they have different meanings; the first "إنساناً" means "a human being" but the second "إنساناً" means "the pupil of the eye". So it is called identical homonymic paronomasia and it is the highest level of paronomasia in Arabic rhetoric.

### 2.2.1.2 Antanaclasis Paronomasia (*Jinas Mutashabih*):

In this type of paronomasia, the two paronomastic words are of the same number of letters and the sound but they differ in the figure of speech; that is to say, both words are not nouns, verbs, prepositions, etc. This type can be indicated in the following poetic verse by ibn Al Farid (632 A.H.):

لم يُلَف غير منعم بشقاء      هلا نهاك نُهاك عن لوم امريء

Here, the two words “نهاك” have the same number of letters and order. However they have different meanings; the first “نهاك” means “forbid you” and it is a verb, yet the second word “نُهاك” means “your mind” and it is a noun.

### 2.2.1.3 Compound Paronomasia (*Al Jinas Al Murakab*):

It means similarity of the letters, word order and sounds of two words but one of them is a compound word like the poetic verse by Al Busti (400 A.H.):

إذا ملك لم يكن ذا هبة      فدعه فدولته ذاهبة

It is notices that the first “ذا هبة” is a compound word composed of two words derived from the words (ذا) which means (who has / who gives) and (هبة) which means “who gives gifts”, while the second word “ذاهبة” is derived from the word “go” and means “will perish soon”.

## 3.0 Methodology of the Study

This part covers the methodology adopted in the current study. It, also, demonstrates the procedures of conducting the study, methodology procedures, sampling, research design, steps of data collection, and data analysis.

### 3.1 Data Analysis

In this part, I present the methodology of conducting the study pointing out the steps followed for conducting the study, data sources, research design, and the procedures followed for data analysis in detail.

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### 3.2 Sampling

Samples of the study are taken from eight translations of the Qur'ân chronologically arranged as follows; Shakir (1982) *The Qur'ân*, Hilâlî and Khân (1996) *The Noble Qur'ân: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*, Saheeh International (1997) *Translation of The Meanings of the Glorious Qur'an*, Ghâli (2003) *Towards Understanding The Ever-Glorious Qur'ân*, Abdel Haleem (2004) *The Qur'ân: A New Translation*, Hammad (2006) *The Gracious Qur'an: A Modern-Phrased International in English*, Asad (2007) *The Message of The Qur'an: Translated And Explained*, and Shabbir (2007) *The Qur'ân As it Explains Itself*.

Samples of the study represent five paronomastic Qur'anic structures in the Qur'ân. These verses are already listed in Arabic rhetoric books. I have depended on many books to select the paronomastic Qur'anic verses in the Qur'ân for the analysis. However, an article published in *Al Resala Magazine* issue no. (1022) published in (1952) displays all the verses including total paronomasia in the Qur'an which is the core of the current study<sup>3</sup>. Other Arabic rhetoric books are consulted throughout the paper such as:

- 1- *Al Mu'jam Al Mufasssal fi Uloum Al Balagha* "The Detailed Glossary of Arabic Rhetoric", by Ina'am Fawal Akawy (1996).

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[https://ar.wikisource.org/wiki/%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF\\_1022/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B3\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%85\\_%D9%81%D9%8A\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A2%D9%86](https://ar.wikisource.org/wiki/%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF_1022/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B3_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%85_%D9%81%D9%8A_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A2%D9%86)

- 2- *Mu'jam Al Mustlahat Al Arabia fi Al Lugha wal Adab*  
“Glossary of Arabic Terms in Language and Literature”,  
Magdy Wahba and Kamel Al Muhadis (1984).
- 3- Glossary of Literary Terms, by M. H. Abrams (1999).

### 3.3 Procedures of Data Categorization and Analysis

For the purpose of data collection, some procedures have been followed. Firstly, the paronomastic verses in the Qur'ân are categorized according to their type; identical (Homonymic) Paronomasia (*Jinas Mumathil*), antanaclasis Paronomasia (*Jinas Mutashabih*), and compound Paronomasia (*Al Jinas Al Murakab*) according to rhetoric books. Secondly, the meaning and interpretation of each verse and each paronomastic term is interpreted in order to get the surface and implied meanings of each term by consulting reliable and common exegeses books like Ibn Kaθîr (2000), As-Samarqandî (1993), Al-Qurtubî (2002), Al Sa'adi (2004), Al-Baidawî (1418 A.H.), As-Sabunî (1981), Al-Muntakhab (nd), Abû Bakr Al-Jaza'rî (2006), Tafsîr Al-Jalâlayn (2003), At-Tabarî (19.84), An-Nasafî (1998), Ash-Shawkânî (1983), Al-‘izz Ibn Abdussalâm (1996), Az-Zamakhsharî (1995), Al-Baġawî (1986), Al-Jaza'rî, Al Sa'adi and Al-Biqâ'î (1995), and others. Thirdly, after comparing the various and different schools of exegeses, I resort to rhetoric books before mentioned in order to connect the exegetical meaning with the rhetorical one. Fourthly, I have discussed and analyzed the eight adopted translations for each verse depending on the exegeses of the Qur'an and the books of rhetoric. Finally, I have attempted to suggest a proposed translation for the verses that may be inappropriately translated.

### 4.0 Samples for Analysis

In the current section, samples of analysis are deliberately detailed so as to evaluate and specify the suitable model or strategy to be adopted to translate paronomasia in the Qur'an. Also, different Qur'ân exegeses and Arabic dictionaries are consulted when necessary.

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**4.1 Sample Analysis (1)**

﴿ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لَبِثُوا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ ﴾

(سورة الروم ٥٥)

**Shakir**

“And at the time when the **hour** shall come, the guilty shall swear (that) they did not tarry but an **hour**.”

**Hilâlî and Khân**

“And on the Day that the **Hour** will be established, the Mujrimun (criminals, disbelievers, polytheists, sinners, etc.) will swear that they stayed not but an **hour**.”

**Saheeh International**

“And the Day the **Hour** appears the criminals will swear they had remained but an **hour**.”

**Ghâli**

“And on the Day when the **Hour** comes upright, the criminals will swear (that) in no way did they linger except (Literally: other than) for an **hour**.”

**Abdel Haleem**

“On the Day the **Hour** comes, the guilty will swear they lingered no more than an **hour**”

**Asad**

“And when the Last **Hour** dawns, those who had been lost in sin will swear that they had not tarried [on earth] longer than an **hour!**50”

**Shabbir**

“(Since your life is short, your time is precious.) On the Day when the **Hour** rises, the guilty will swear that they lived in this world no more than an **hour**, (and that they didn't have time to reform).”

## Hammad

“Thus, the Day the **Hour** od Doom shall come, God will raise the dead, an the defiant unberlievers will swear that they had not remained in the world but for an **hour**.”

In this verse, the word “الساعة” and “ساعة” are considered identical homonymic paronomastic lexical items for the following reasons:

- 1- They recur in the verse with the same number of letters apart from the definite article in the first word,
- 2- They both belong to the same figure of speech as they both nouns,
- 3- They both have the same sounds without any change even in diacritics,
- 4- They both have the same order.

Yet, they do not have the same meaning according to the exegeses of the Qur'an. Ibn Kaθīr (2000), As-Samarqandī (1993), Al-Qurtubī (2002), Al Sa'adi (2004), Al-Baidawī (1418 A.H.), Aṣ-Ṣabunī (1981) and Al-Muntakhab (nd) interpret the paronomastic words “الساعة” and “ساعة” in this verse commenting that “the first word refers to the “Day of Judgment” and the second one means that the disbelievers will swear that they did not stay or live in the “worldly life” but “an hour” and it means metaphorically that life is too short in comparison to the other life which they expect to live in the hereafter and the horrors of that day”.

However, Abū Bakr Al-Jaza'rī (2006), Tafsīr Al-Jalālayn (2003) and Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1984) gives the same interpretation of the verse with only one difference; they says that the second indefinite noun “ساعة” means that the disbelievers will swear that they did not stay in their “tombs” but “an hour” not in their “life” like what Al Sa'adi and Al-Muntakhab say in their interpretation of the Qur'an.

On the other hand, An-Nasafī (1998), Ash-Shawkānī (1983), Al-ʿizz Ibn Abdussalām (1996), Az-Zamakhsharī (1995), Al-Baġawī (1986), and Al-Biqāʿī (1995) agree with Al-Jaza'rī and Al Sa'adi in interpreting “الساعة” as the Day of Judgment but they

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combine both of their interpretations of the meaning of the indefinite noun "ساعة" saying that "the disbelievers will swear that they did not stay in their "tombs" and/or "their life" but "an hour".

According to the aforementioned interpretations of the verse under discussion, it is clear that the two words "الساعة" and "ساعة" are similar in form, spelling and part of speech but they different in meaning. The definite "الساعة" refers to the Doomsday or what can be called the Judgment Day. This meaning comes to mind due to the co-text since the verb "تقوم" helps the reader to understand it in that way. The other indefinite noun "ساعة" means "an hour" and this is the surface common meaning that comes to the mind of the reader and listener.

The eight adopted translations render the paronomastic terms using nearly similar strategies. All of them render the term "الساعة" as the "Hour" by putting the definite article "the" before it and capitalizing the first letter in order to attract the reader's attention that it is different from the word "hour". In fact, the term "the Hour" is familiar and common in the western culture and the Holy Bible and has the meaning of the Doomsday. That is why, the western reader to whom the translation of the Qur'an is supposed to be rendered may understand the esoteric meaning of the term "the Hour" without any misunderstanding since it is mentioned in the Holy Bible, New King James Bible, Mark 13:32 as follows "Watch therefore, for all of you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes" whose Arabic translation is "وَأَمَّا ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ، وَتِلْكَ السَّاعَةُ فَلَا يَعْلَمُ بِهِمَا أَحَدٌ، وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الَّذِينَ فِي السَّمَاءِ، وَلَا الْإِبْنُ، إِلَّا الْأَبُ". Therefore, the non-Arabic speaking reader may not find any difficulty in understanding the term implications of the "the Hour" in this context.

The indefinite noun "ساعة" in this context has no implied meanings and metaphorically refers the period of time equal to sixty seconds. However, it is used here to ironically blame the criminals and disbelievers who would swear that all their life which was surely tens of years is merely an hour. They mean to say

that they their life was too short in comparison to the other life which is either paradise or hell forever.

Ghazi comments on the translation of word “Hour” in this verse saying that the translators attempted to distinguish it by “capitalizing the first letter of the first word to differentiate between the hour of Judgment and the temporal hour that we know as a unit of measuring time” (2004: 45). These identical homonymic paronomastic lexical items are the most popular in the Qur'an since Allah addresses the disbelievers in an ironical language. The adopted translations could render the paronomastic lexical items “الساعة” and “ساعة” in this context appropriately and so there is no need to suggest a proposed translation for this verse.

#### **4.2 Sample Analysis (2):**

(يَكَادُ سَنًا بَرْقُهُ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ، يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لَأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ)  
(سورة النور ٤٣-٤٤)

#### **Shakir**

“The flash of His lightning almost takes away the **sight**. Allah turns over the night and the day; most surely there is a lesson in this for those who have **sight**.”

#### **Hilâlî and Khân**

“The vivid flash of its (clouds) lightning nearly blinds the **sight**. [Tafsir At-Tabari]. Allah causes the night and the day to succeed each other (i.e. if the day is gone, the night comes, and if the night is gone, the day comes, and so on). Truly, in these things is indeed a lesson for those who have **insight**.”

#### **Saheeh International**

“The flash of its lightening almost takes away the **eyesight**. Allah alternates the night and the day. Indeed in that is a lesson for those who have **vision**.”

#### **Ghâli**

“The splendor of His lightning almost goes away with (i.e., takes away) the **beholdings** (i.e., **eyesights**). Allah turns about (i.e.,

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alternates) the night and the day-time. Surely in that is indeed a lesson for the ones endowed with **beholdings**.”

**Abdel Haleem**

“The flash of its lightning almost snatches **sight** away. God alternates night and day– there truly is a lesson in [all] this for those who have **eyes** to see”

**Asad**

“The flash of His lightning well-nigh deprives [men of their] **sight!** It is God who causes night and day to alternate: in this [too], behold, there is surely a lesson for all who have **eyes** to see!”

**Shabbir**

“The flashes of lightning and the brightness of the snow dazzle the **sight**, all but snatching it away. It is God Who alternates the night and the day. Herein is a lesson for men and women of **vision** and understanding. [Of darkness of ignorance and light of knowledge, of death and life, calculating time, rest and work, planning the life on the planet, and so on]. It is God who causes night and day to alternate: in this [too], behold, there is surely a lesson for all who have **eyes to see!**”

**Hammad**

“The flash of its lightening nearly takes away the sight. God alone alternates the night and the daylight. Indeed, in this, there is a sure lesson for those who have eyes to see.”

In this verse, the word “الأبصار” and “الأبصار” are considered identical homonymic paronomastic lexical items. However, they have different meanings according to the exegeses of the Qur'an. Ibn Kaθîr (2000), As-Samarqandî (1993), Al-Qurtubî (2002), Al Sa'adi (2004), Al-Baidawî (1418 A.H.), As-Sabunî (1981), Al-Muntakhab (nd), Abû Bakr Al-Jaza'ri (2006), Tafsîr Al-Jalâlayn (2003), At-Tabarî (1984), An-Nasafî (1998), Ash-Shawkânî (1983), Al-'izz Ibn Abdussalâm (1996), Az-Zamakhsharî (1995),

Al-Baġawî (1986), Al-Jaza'rî, Al Sa'adi and Al-Biqâ'î (1995) unanimously agree that the first paronomastic word “الأبصار” in this verse refers to the “vision” or the “eyesight”. So the meaning is that the flash of lightning may take away the “vision” or “eyesight”. However, the second word “الأبصار” means “mind”, “insight” or “discernment” which means that only the people who have insight, mind and wittiness may understand the lesson behind it. This means that not all those who have “eyes” or “vision” should necessarily have “insight” and understanding of the truth like the disbelievers who already have eyes yet they do not see the truth. It is common in Arabic to describe people who are able to think properly and have minds and understanding as “أولي الأبصار” which means “those who have witty, aware, and insightful minds”.

Divergence of meaning is apparent in the divergent rendering of the second word in the paronomastic word “الأبصار” as follows. Shakir, Hilâlî and Khân, Abdel Haleem, Asad, Shabbir, and Hammad rendered the first word “الأبصار” into “sight” which is appropriate since it refers to the as before mentioned. However, Saheeh International rendered it as “eyesight” which is equal in meaning to “sight”. However, Ghâli uses the same term between brackets (i.e., eyesights) as a within-the text-notes to illustrate the word “beholdings” which is used here to mean “eyesight”. Actually, the inappropriateness in Ghâli's rendering is structural and grammatical since the word “eyesight” is uncountable and hence it cannot be pluralized to be “eyesights”. The same applies to the word “beholdings”. Yet, it is clear that the eight translations of the word “الأبصار” render it clearly to refer to the “sight of the eyes” or “eyesight”.

On the other hand, the problem emerges in the translation of the second word “الأبصار” since it has an embedded meaning as indicated in the exegeses listed above. Shakir tried to transfer the same resonance emerging for the paronomastic words “الأبصار” by rendering both words giving the same translation “sight” as a rendering for both words. However, it is not an appropriate rendering here as the dictionary meaning of the word “sight” means “the ability to see” and “something that is in someone's

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view”. Consequently, it is not suitable in such a context. The same applies to Ghâli who rendered it as “beholdings” in the plural form which is neither a proper rendering nor exist in any dictionary for the best of my knowledge.

Likewise, Abdel Haleem, Asad, Shabbir, and Hammad rendered the word “الأبصار” as “eyes” which is not an appropriate choice here according to the interpretations mentioned earlier. On the other hand, Saheeh International translated it as “vision” which is an appropriate rendering as the word “vision” means “an experience in which you see things which do not exist physically, when your mind is affected powerfully by something such as deep religious thought or drugs or mental illness” as indicated in *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Also, Hilâlî and Khân rendered it as “insight” which is a perfect selection of translation for the word “الأبصار” as it means “the ability to have) a clear, deep and sometimes sudden understanding of a complicated problem or situation” as indicated in the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

This divergent rendering of the paronomastic word “الأبصار” is caused by its being axiomatically clear. So, the translator may not consult the reliable exegeses of the Qur'an in search of the implied meaning of paronomastic lexical items due to their axiomatic nature. The translation of Hilâlî and Khân may be a good choice in the rendering of the paronomastic lexical items in this verse since they attempted to give the implied meaning although they sacrificed the resonance emerging from the structure of the rhyming paronomasia.

**4.3 Sample Analysis (3):**

﴿وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ، أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ﴾

(سورة الرحمن ٧-٨)

**Shakir**

“And the heaven, He raised it high, and He made the **balance**. That you may not be inordinate in respect of the **measure**.”

**Hilâlî and Khân**

“And the heaven He has raised high, and He has set up the **Balance**. In order that you may not transgress (due) **balance**.”

**Saheeh International**

“And the heaven He raised and imposed the **balance**. That you not transgress within the **balance**.”

**Ghâli**

“And the heaven, He raised it up, and laid down the **Balance**. That you should not be inordinate in the **Balance**”

**Abdel Haleem**

“to His designs; He has raised up the sky. He has set the **balance** so that you may not exceed in the **balance**:”

**Asad**

“And the skies has He raised high, and has devised [for all things] a **measure**, so that you [too, O men,] might never transgress the **measure** [of what is right).”

**Shabbir**

“The sky (atmosphere) He has raised high, and He has kept perfect **balance** in the Universe. So that you too, never violate **balance** in your lives.”

**Hammad**

“And as to the sky – it is He alone who has raised it. Thus it is He alone who has set the **balance** of all things, So that you might not transgress the just **balance**.”

In this verse, the two words “الميزان” are considered identical homonymic paronomastic lexical items. Yet, they do not have the

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same meaning according to the exegeses of the Qur'an. At-Tabarî (1984), Ar-Razî (2009), Al-Qurtubî (2002), Ash-Shawkânî (1983), Al-Baidawî (1418 A.H.), Ibn Kaθîr (2000), As-Samarqandî (1993), Al Sa'adi (2004), As-Ṣabunî (1981) and Al-Muntakhab (nd), Abû Bakr Al-Jaza'ri (2006), Tafsîr Al-Jalâlayn (2003), An-Nasafi (1998), Al-'izz Ibn Abdussalâm (1996), Az-Zamakhsharî (1995), Al-Baġawî (1986), and Al-Biqâ'î (1995), Al-Jaza'ri, and Al Sa'adi interpret the first "المِيزَانُ" saying that it means "Allah set and established justice among his creatures" and the second "المِيزَانُ" is a warning to people not to contravene or transgress in using "the balance" or the "scales" which is an instrument that one uses for measuring and weighing.

By and large, it is clear cut that most of the Islamic scholars and Qur'an exegeses unanimously agree that the paronomastic words "المِيزَانُ" in both afore mentioned contexts have different meanings since the first one has a connotative "rhetorical" meaning which is "justice" and the second one means "scales" or "measure"

The translations of the two paronomastic words "المِيزَانُ" in the two verses under study here are translated similarly by the eight translators somehow. Firstly, the first word "المِيزَانُ" is translated as "balance" by Shakir, Hilâlî and Khân, Saheeh International, Ghâli, Abdel Haleem, Shabbir, and Hammad. However, this translation does not deliver the implied meaning of "justice". That is why, it has been more appropriate to add within-the text-notes between brackets or footnotes to explain this embedded meaning as well as preserving the surface structure "balance" mentioned in the original text of the Qur'an.

However, Asad rendered it as "a measure" and added in his translation the following footnotes as follows:

The noun mizan, usually denoting a "balance", has here the more general connotation of "measure" or "measuring" by any means whatsoever (Zamakhshari), in both the concrete and abstract

senses of the word. (Cf. also the parabolic use of the term mza~ in 42:17 and 57:25.)

However, these additional data do not give the due meaning required in this context and even after looking thoroughly at the two verses to which Asad referred; the implied meaning of “justice” is not mentioned. So, it is some kind of connecting correlated verses or topics as a reminder for the reader, not adding to the meaning or providing more elaboration for the reader.

Over and above, the translation of the second paronomastic word “المِيزَانُ” is rendered either as “measure” like in the translation of Shakir, Hilâlî and Khân, Saheeh International, Ghâli, Abdel Haleem, Shabbir, and Hammad or “measure [of what is right)” like the translation of Asad. Both translations are acceptable and deliver the appropriate meaning, yet Asad’s additional notes “[of what is right)” is an exotic rendering since the word “المِيزَانُ” here means the real “scales” used for measuring and weighing.

After analyzing the eight translations under investigation, it may be more appropriate to render the first paronomastic word “المِيزَانُ” in verse (55:7) as “justice” and the second one as “scales” or “balance” used for measuring and weighing and hence a proposed translation for the two verses may be as follows:

“And the heaven He has raised high, and He has set up the **Balance** (justice). In order that you may not transgress the (just) balance (scales).”

#### 4.4 Sample Analysis (4):

﴿ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ ﴾

(سورة المائدة ١١٦)

**Shakir**

“ Thou knowest what is in my **mind**, and I do not know what is in Thy **mind**.”

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**Hilâlî and Khân**

“You know what is in my **innerself** though I do not know what is in **Yours**.”

**Saheeh International**

“You know what is within **myself**, and I do not know what is within **Yourself**.”

**Ghâli**

“You know whatever is within **my self**, and I do not know what is within **Your Self**.”

**Abdel Haleem**

“You know all that is **within me**, though I do not know what is **within You**.”

**Asad**

“Thou knowest all that is **within myself**, whereas I know not what is in **Thy Self**.”

**Shabbir**

“You know what is **in my mind**, and I do not know what is in **Your mind**..”

**Hammad**

“You know what is in **my soul**, and I do not know what is in **Yourself**.”

According to the Salafî exegeses of the Qur'an, the two paronomastic words “نَفْسِي” and “نَفْسِكَ” are interpreted as follows. Ibn Kaθîr (2000), As-Samarqandî (1993), Al-Qurṭubî (2002), Al Sa'adi (2004), Al-Baidawî (1418 A.H.), Aṣ-Sabunî (1981), Al-Muntakhab (nd), Abû Bakr Al-Jaza'ri (2006), Tafsîr Al-Jalâlayn (2003), Aṭ-Ṭabarî (1984), An-Nasafî (1998), Ash-Shawkânî (1983), Al-ʿizz Ibn Abdussalâm (1996), Az-Zamakhsharî (1995), Al-Baġawî (1986), Al-Biqâ'î (1995), Al-Jazai'ri (1990), and Al

Sa'adi (1414 A.H.) agree that the Allah has a Self as He mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah, however it must not be likened to any other entity. Therefore, the self of living creatures is related to the body with its flesh, and blood but the Self of Allah is not known to anybody and cannot be imagined or debated as a stipulation of true faith in Islamic doctrine.

In fact, the translators presented divergent and variant translations for the paronomastic words “نَفْسِي” and “نَفْسِكَ” in this verse as follows. The first word “نَفْسِي” is translated as “my mind” by Shakir and Shabbir which are not typically accurate since the “self” does not necessarily refer to the mind, it may also refer to heart. However, Hilâlî and Khân rendered it as “my inner self” which is similar to Saheeh International and Asad’s translation “myself” and both resemble Ghâli’s translation “my self”, and all of them deliver nearly the same meaning to the reader. Also, Hammad translated it as “my soul” which is different but also communicative and informative to the reader.

The second paronomastic word “نَفْسِكَ” is the real challenge in this verse as illustrated in the aforementioned commentary about the exegeses of this term. Shakir and Shabbir rendered it as “mind” without capitalization which is an exotic and inappropriate rendering since there is no evidence in the Qur'an or Sunnah or Islamic doctrine that Allah has a mind. Therefore, Shakir’s and Shabbir’s translation of this word is not acceptable by all means since it is against the Islamic faith. On the other hand, Saheeh International and Hammad translated “نَفْسِكَ” as “Yourself” which is similar to Ghâli’s “Your Self” and Asad’s “Thy Self” and all three renderings are appropriate and acceptable on the level of Islamic faith and linguistically. However, Hilâlî and Khân avoided mentioning the word self by using the possessive pronoun “Yours” because he preceded it by “my innerself”, so using the pronoun “Yours” compensates the use of “self” as a way of averting repetition and avoiding delving into doctrinal dilemmas. Finally, Abdel Haleem rendered it as “within You” which is a good adaptation but not a perfect one since it is clear that Allah has a “Self” and it is considered the same strategy adopted by Hilâlî and

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Khân to avoid going into doctrinal problems whether unintentionally or on purpose.

Generally speaking, it is more appropriate to render the two paronomastic words “نَفْسِي” in this verse as “myself” and “نَفْسِكَ” as “Yourself” or “Your Self” for this doctrinal and linguistics reasons mentioned earlier.

#### **4.5 Sample Analysis (5):**

﴿ وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أُذُنٌ قُلْ أُذُنٌ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ﴾

(سورة التوبة ٦١)

#### **Shakir**

“And there are some of them who molest the Prophet and say: He is **one who believes every thing that he hears**; say: A **hearer of good** for you.”

#### **Hilâlî and Khân**

“And among them are men who hurt the Prophet (Muhammad SAW) and say: "He is **(lending his) ear** (to every news)." Say: "He **listens to what is best for you.**”

#### **Saheeh International**

“And among them are those who abuse the Prophet and say, "He is an **ear.**" Say, "[It is] an **ear** of goodness for you.”

#### **Ghâli**

“And of them are the ones who hurt the Prophet and say, “He is an **ear!**” (i.e., He listens to everything, welfare) Say “An **ear** (i.e., giving ear, listening) of charity (Or: benefit; the choicest thing, welfare) for you.”

#### **Abdel Haleem**

“There are others who insult the Prophet by saying, ‘**He will listen to anything.**’ Say, ‘He **listens** for your own good.’”

### **Asad**

“AND AMONG those [enemies of the truth] there are such as malign the Prophet by saying, "He is **all ear**." Say: "[Yes,] he is **all ear**, [listening] to what is good for you!

### **Shabbir**

“And among those (enemies of the truth) are some who hurt the Prophet and say, “He is only a **hearer**.” Say, “A **listener**, that is good for you.”

### **Hammad**

“Now, as to the hypocrites, among them are those who seek to hurt the prophet by their words. For they say: He is just an **ear**! Say to them: His is an **ear** of goodness for you.”

Al-Wahidi in his *Asbab Al-Nuzul* (1991:254) displays the context and circumstances of the revelation of such as a verse commenting that:

“This was revealed about a group of hypocrites who used to harm the Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and give him peace, by saying about him things that should not be said. One of them said: “Do not do this, for we fear that what we say might reach him and he will punish us”. Al-Julus ibn Suwayd said: “We will say whatever we wish to say and when we go to him he will believe whatever we tell him, for Muhammad is nothing but a hearer”, and so Allah, exalted is He, revealed this verse.

On the other hand, many of the Qur'an interpreters agree with aforementioned commentary as follows. Ibn ʿabbās (1992), *Tafsīr Al-Jalālayn* (2003), Ibn Kaṯīr (2000), *As-Samarqandī* (1993), *Al-Qurtubī* (2002), *Al Sa'adi* (2004), *Al-Baidawī* (1418 A.H.), *As-Sabunī* (1981), *Al-Muntakhab* (nd), *Abū Bakr Al-Jaza'ri* (2006), *At-Tabarī* (1984), *An-Nasafī* (1998), *Ash-Shawkānī* (1983), *Al-ʿizz Ibn Abdussalām* (1996), *Az-Zamakhsharī* (1995), *Al-Baḡawī* (1986), *Al-Biqāʿī* (1995), *Al-Jazai'ri* (1990), and *Al*

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Sa'adi (1414 A.H.) interpret this verse stating that at the time of the Prophet there were hypocrites who harmed the Prophet by saying bad things on him and others warned them that what they say may reach the Prophet. They replied confidently that 'He is only an ear!' that is he listens to anything that is said and accepts it so that when we swear to him that we have not said to others a particular thing he believes us. Say he is 'A listener who listens to good for you and not one who listens to evil one who believes in God and has faith he trusts in the believers in what they inform him and not in others.

Actually, the translation of the two paronomastic words "أُذُنٌ" in this verse is problematic and challenging for the translator since their meaning is culture-specific and hence the target reader may not understand the implied meaning without more elaboration by the translator. This problem appears in the following part as the translator either translates it literally as "an ear", or renders its meaning without mentioning the original word, or combines both strategies.

Shakir renders the first paronomastic word "أُذُنٌ" in this verse as "one who believes everything that he hears" but he renders the second word as "hearer". Also, Abdel Haleem renders the first "أُذُنٌ" as "He will listen to anything" and the second as "He listens for your own good" while Shabbir renders the first as "hearer" and the second as "A listener". These translations are informative and communicative to the reader; however they do not mention the original lexical items of the text "أُذُنٌ". So, they are an explicitation rather than a translation. In terms of faithfulness, the translator is responsible for delivering the meaning to the target reader but in the case of translating the Qur'an, the translator has to stick to transferring the original text and may add elaborative notes as within-the text notes, or footnotes, or endnotes if the elaborations are lengthy and may distract the reader.

However, Saheeh International and Hammad rendered both words as "an ear" without any elaborative notes that may deliver

the meaning to the reader. So these translations stick to the faithfulness principal but they lack the communicative sense with the target reader.

On the other hand, the other translators attempted to achieve this compromise and harmony between faithfulness to the target text and winning the approval of the target reader. Hilâlî and Khân rendered the first “أُذُنٌ” by using its original equivalent “ear” as well as adding other additional within-the text-notes between brackets as follows “He is (lending his) ear (to every news)”, yet they did not apply the same strategy in rendering the second “أُذُنٌ” as they replaced it with the verb "listens" which is communicative but lacks faithfulness to the original text. Moreover, Ghâli's adopted an appropriate strategy in rendering both words “أُذُنٌ” in this verse since he managed to achieve this harmony between the faithfulness to the original text and delivering communicative elaborative additions between brackets as follows “He is an ear!” (i.e., He listens to everything, welfare) Say “An ear (i.e., giving ear, listening) of charity”. Although this strategy may distract the target reader due the long within-the-text elaborations, it is more communicative and reader-oriented. Finally, Asad rendered the two words “أُذُنٌ” in this verse as “all ear” which is accurate and faithful to the target text as well as adding elaborative notes which make his translation more reader-oriented at the same time as follows “He is all ear.” and “he is all ear, [listening] to what is good for you!”. In fact, the translation of Asad is distinguished by the within-the-text notes and elaboration as well as the lengthy footnotes that provide the reader with long interpretations and opinions from reliable exegeses. For example, he commented on the meaning of the words “أُذُنٌ” in this verse saying the following:

“I.e., "he believes everything that he hears". Most of the commentators assume that the hypocrites were thus alluding to the Prophet's alleged propensity to believe everything - good or bad - that he was told about other people (cf. Manar X, 600). Since, however, there is no historical evidence of such a "propensity" on his part, it seems to me that what the

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hypocrites referred to was the Prophet's readiness to listen to what they - in common with many other unbelievers regarded as mere hallucinatory sounds, and to interpret them "mistakenly" as revelations. This would explain the statement that "they malign the Prophet" - namely, by attributing to him self-deception - and that this saying of theirs "amounts to a denial of the truth" (see verse 74 of this surah).- The verb *adha* signifies primarily "he molested" or "annoyed [another]", i.e., in a manner not amounting to actual harm (*darar*). Since in the above context this verb is used in the sense of making a derogatory remark, *yu'dhun* is best rendered as "they malign".

Although it is a long commentary, it does not distract the flow of ideas. Therefore, the reader who understood the meaning of the verse may go on reading non-stop while the reader who finds it difficult to understand or needs to get more about the story behind and circumstances of revelation of the verse can explore that in the footnotes.

To sum up, in order to overcome the challenges of translating the two paronomastic words "أُنُّ" in this verse, the translator has to stick to the original Qur'anic text by mentioning its equivalent which is "an ear", yet s/he has to take into consideration the target reader. Achieving this complex equation can be through three strategies; adding within-the-text-notes, or footnotes, or endnotes. Therefore, a suggested translation for this paronomastic verse may be as follows:

"And among them are those who maligned the Prophet (Muhammad SAW) and say: "He is an ear" (lending his ear to all the news and believes it). Say: "He is an ear (i.e. listening, lending his ear) to what is best (i.e. benefit; the choicest thing, welfare) for you."

## 5.0 Discussion of the Results

This section discusses the results of the present study focusing on answering to the five research questions raised. The first question raised was *What problems do translators encounter in translating paronomasia in the Qur'an?* The analysis of the eight translations reveals that the translating paronomasia may be considered a challenge to translators. In order for the translator to overcome this challenge, an extra effort should be exerted in searching for the accurate differences in meaning between each two paronomastic words. Also, cultural problems may be another challenge facing translators in rendering paronomasia as the early Arabs were fluently using the paronomastic style in their everyday life and poetry, yet it may cause distraction to the target reader if they are rendered word-for-word without taking account the target readership.

The second question was *Which translation approaches and techniques could be suitable for translating paronomasia in the Qur'an?* In an answer to this question, more than one strategy can be adopted by the translator in order to render paronomasia in the Qur'an appropriately. Firstly, the translator may resort to using within-the text-notes between brackets if there is no equivalent term is available in the target language. Sometimes the term needs more elaboration that may be lengthy and hence may distract the reader if inserted within the text, so in this case using footnotes may be a good solution to be adopted by the translator. Finally, if longer commentaries and illustrations are required to reveal more issues and problems, translators may resort to using endnotes after the end of each Qur'anic Surah or chapter. This last strategy may help discerning readers who aspire to absorb more issues concerning the translator's strategies and adopted exegeses and ideology.

The third question dealt with in this paper is *How would adopting a certain exegetical approach or trend affect the translation of paronomasia in the Qur'an?* Sometimes a translator looks up an exegesis of the Qur'an without knowing its background

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or ideology. This unawareness of the exegesis ideology may result in unacceptable translation in terms of doctrine. For example, in verse (114) in surat Al-Mai'dah (the Table): (تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا (فِي نَفْسِكَ), the word "نفسك" refers to the self of Allah. However, Shakir translated it "Thy mind" which is not acceptable according to the salafi and sunni doctrine. Therefore, Shakir's Shiite background affected his translation in this verse in particular since it talks about an anthropomorphic issue related to Allah. So, the translator understanding and choice of Qur'an exegeses plays a significant role in the linguistic accuracy and doctrinal acceptability of the translation.

The final question was *How far could making use of Qur'an interpretation be employed as a tool for understanding paronomasia in the Qur'an and hence be adopted in translation?* Surely, the translator of the Qur'an cannot go without Qur'anic exegeses. The Qur'an is a rich text and each word may bear many interpretations and layers of meanings. So, it would be impossible for the translator to achieve such a mission without resorting to the reliable Qur'anic exegeses in understanding each single verse and word even those seeming axiomatic and need no illustration. This has been clear in this paper in the translation of the word "الأبصار" as "sight" although it means "insight", and the word "الساعة" which is translated as "the Hour" though its accurate translation is "the Doomsday", etc. This reason for this accuracy in meaning is utilizing reliable and accurate Qur'an interpretations as well as accurate dictionaries.

### **5.1 Concluding Remarks**

At the end of this paper, it is obvious that paronomasia is a significant rhetorical feature in Arabic that needs more elaboration by the translator of the Qur'an. It is not appropriate to adopt a fixed strategy in rendering paronomasia since it is better to translate it word-for-word in some contexts and to translate it and functionally in others. This selection of the appropriate strategy depends on the meaning of the lexical paronomastic item in the exegeses of the

Qur'an even if it seems axiomatic and clear. Hence, it is a required necessity for the translator of the Qur'an to doubt the meaning of each structure and word due to the rich and multilayered of the Qur'anic text. Finally, it is important for the translator to put the target reader into consideration since any mistranslation would naturally result in misinterpretation and misunderstanding.

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[https://ar.wikisource.org/wiki/%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF\\_1022/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B3\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%85\\_%D9%81%D9%8A\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A2%D9%86](https://ar.wikisource.org/wiki/%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF_1022/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B3_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%85_%D9%81%D9%8A_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A2%D9%86)

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