

Translating ‘Invisible Meanings’:A Critique across Seventy Versions of the Qurān in English

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Abstract

This research article aims to explore the variations in translating invisible meanings in the Qurān. The article critically examines a sample of seven verses across seventy versions of the Qurān in English. It attempts to read the variations in translating the salient meanings in these verses in the light of the pragmatics of the Qurān and the ideology and culture of the translator(s). For collection and analysis of relevant data, the article employs a fixed mixed methods design where a quantitative strand is embedded within a dominant qualitative framework that allows for critical and interpretive readings of the texts explored. Ironically, a key finding of this article points to the fact that invisible meanings in the verses sampled are often preserved and better conveyed through essentially literal translation that retains source language (SL) text’s lexis and structures as far as the process of translation allows that. Measures of relationship between categorical variables show significant correlations between proper explication of invisible meanings and essentially literal translation. As well, critical analysis shows that ideological readings are among the major factors that eclipse latent Qurānic meanings in translation.

Keywords: Qurān translation, invisible meaning, explication, implicature, ideology