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# 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 lexes 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, explicature, implicature, ideology

## Introduction

### *Background*

Notwithstanding the opinions on its '*untranslatability*', versions of the Qurān in English and in other languages make a colossal bulk. Though it is difficult to track down all translations of the Qurān worldwide, at least one hundred and ten English versions, complete or partial, have emerged since the first rigorous translation of the Qurān in English was made by Ross in 1649. So far, however, none of these translations has attained universal acceptance as the final or authoritative version, for none has ever attained an "iconic status" as there has been no "King James" or "even a Jerusalem Bible" in the timeline of translating the Qurān (Khaldi, 2013). In Kidwai's (1987) view the Qurān is "yet to find a dignified and faithful expression in English that matches the majesty and grandeur of the original." In my opinion, Kidwai's ambition is too difficult if not entirely impossible to attain. In the context of translating the Bible, Carroll (2002) uses the myth of Sisyphus to allegorically illustrate the notion of the impossibility of a final or definitive translation of the Scripture. In the Greek mythology, Sisyphus is punished by being forced to roll a massive rock up a hill, only to watch it roll back down, and to repeat this action forever. In Carroll's words,

> Biblical translation goes on forever as a task never to be undone but also never to be completed either … no sooner has the Bible been translated but it is time to start all over again and (re)translate it again (pp. 53-54).

In the context of translating the Qurān, this Sisyphean analogy literally applies with all its shades of futility. In translating the Bible, Sisyphus might have some hope, however remote it might be, of endgame. In translating the Qurān, Sisyphus recognizes from the very start that his work is doomed to failure. Producing a final or authoritative translation of the Qurān (in English or any other language) is virtually a mission impossible. Besides, the *ontological* status of the Qurān in Arabic, the unique nature of the Qurānic discourse with its highly significant stylistic features is '*translation-resistant*' (Pickthall 1930/2001, Arberry 1962, Asad 1980, Turner 1997, Abdul-Rauf 2004, Cleary 2004, Nassimi 2008, Abdul-Rauf 2010). It is not the translation of a whole Sura or a long verse that could expose the *quality* and *quantity* of the linguistic variations in the existing versions of the Qurān in English. Indeed, a very short verse or sometimes even one word is sufficient to illustrate substantial translational variations with utterly perplexing and baffling discrepancies.

Doherty (1996) observes that "translational problems are, to a large extent, genuine linguistic problems of a special type that has not yet been dealt with within linguistics systematically" (p. 441). One of these linguistic problems which are not systematically defined in translating the Qurān is the question of detecting and translating some instances of *invisible meanings* which could in some cases determine the essential reading of the SL text. Translating the Qurān to English reveals considerable variations and uncertainties in explicating some latent or subtle meanings, for the SL text itself contains significant idiosyncratic semantico-pragmatic features. In translating the Qurān, one handles a text of the highest degree of *transparency, simplicity,* and *clarity*, still a text that is highly *dense* and significantly *connotative*, with multiple layers of deep, implicit, and sometimes veiled meanings, and though rarely, not entirely unequivocal.

***Invisible Meaning within the Framework of Relevance Theory***

In his seminal *introduction to semantics and pragmatics,* Griffiths (2007) outlines a rigorous and coherent model of interpretation based on Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory [RT] which decodes meaning through three stages of interpretation: Stage [1]: *Literal meaning* which decodes context-free meaning on the basis of "semantic information". Stage [2] *Explicature* which is a "basic interpretation of an utterance, using contextual information and world knowledge to work out" reference and ambiguity in expressions (p.6). In this context, explicature is not a "cognate" of the adjective 'explicit' which means clear and easy to understand, but a "cognate" of the verb '***explicate***', which means to make entirely explicit what is essentially implicit or *invisible* (Bach, 2006). Stage [3] *Implicature* which is the pragmatics of "hints", and inferences of "particular explicatures" (Griffiths, 2007, p.7). Griffiths' model could visually be captured in the Figure 1:

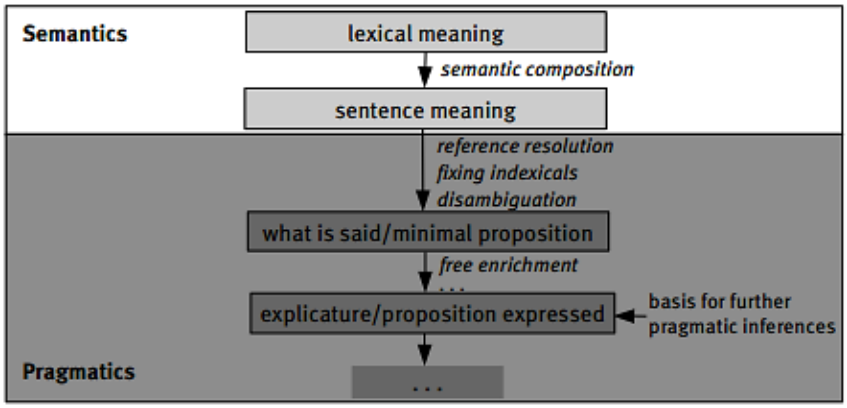



***Figure 1*** Levels of Decoding Meaning within Relevance Theory (Reproduced from Börjesson, 2014, p. 120)

In this article the term *'invisible meanings'* refers to stages [2] and [3] of Griffiths' model in which meaning is decoded through different tools within the zone of pragmatics. Obviously then, *invisible meanings* lie beyond surface meanings and refer to salient features which need meticulous and holistic reading of discourse. Generally, this type of meaning in any particular context refers to one salient possibility of a set of meanings within a specific verse or a particular text, which would become ostensible at the point where the undecidability of meaning is explicated in the light of both contextual and real-world information. In the context of interpreting the Bible, Gutt (2014) quotes France (1981) who assumes a "distinction between the 'surface meaning', which any reasonably intelligent reader might be expected to grasp, and what we may call a 'bonus' meaning accessible to those who are more 'sharp-eyed', or better instructed in … scripture…" (p. 77). Targeting or explicating invisible meaning, however, is not a privilege in doing translation; it is a key dimension which builds on the explicature-implicature interaction in decoding meaning. Beekman and Callow, cited in Gutt (2014), postulate that in translating any text we should pay attention to latent meaning which is not explicitly stated and "left implicit" due to SL structure, intratextuality, or "shared information in the communication situation". This implicit meaning is an essential ingredient of the "meaning which is to be communicated by the translation, because it is part of the meaning intended to be understood by the original writer" (p. 85).

***Questions of the Study***

This research article aims to explore and critically examine variations in translating seven verses where the core meaning is possibly latent, opening floodgates to diverse and sometimes contradictory readings. Three broad questions are addressed in this article:

1) What are the sources of variations in translating invisible meanings in the Qurān?
2) What is the role of ideology in decoding explicature-implicature of latent meanings in translating the Qurān to English?
3) What is the association between the formal/dynamic level of a translation and proper explication of invisible meanings?

## Method and Materials

As illustrated in figure [2], this article employs a *fixed embedded mixed methods* design in which a quantitative strand works within a dominant qualitative matrix to supplement and sustain qualitative analysis and findings.

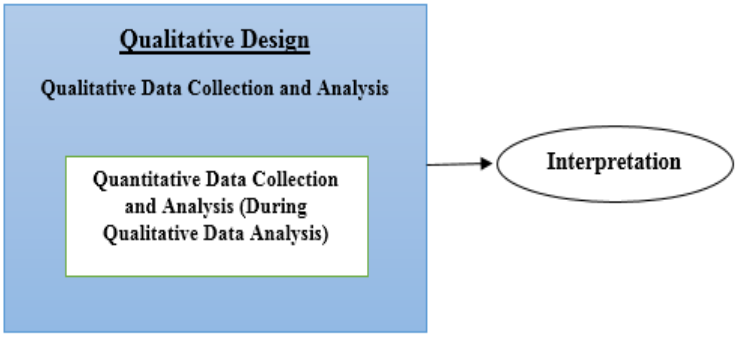



***Figure 2*** Embedded Mixed Methods Design in the Article (Adapted from Creswell and Clark, 2011, p. 70)

In the dominant qualitative matrix in this paper, 'critical discourse analysis' (CDA) is used as a convenient toolkit that is "fundamentally interpretive", allowing research outcomes to be "ultimately the product of the researcher's subjective interpretations of data" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 39). Lexicalization, the choice of specific words to convey particular agendas, is the basic CDA tool used in this study. The corpus explored in this article is seventy versions of the Qurān in English made by translators with diverse ideological, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Versions included in this article are made by the following authors:

1) Abdel Haleem, M.S
2) Ahamed, S.V
3) Ahmed, S
4) Ahmed-Ahmed
5) Ali –Aziz
6) Ali, A
7) Ali, A.Y
8) Ali, A.Y (KFC)
9) Ali, M.M
10) Ali, S
11) Ali-Yazdi
12) Al-Muntakhab
13) Aneesuddin, M
14) Ansari-Maududi
15) Arberry, A.J.
16) Asad, M
17) Bakhtair, L
18) Bewley-Bewley
19) Busool, A. N
20) Cleary, T
21) Dakdok, U
22) Daryabadi, A
23) Dawood, N.J.
24) Droge, A.J.
25) Emerick, Y
26) Fakhry, M
27) Ghali, M.M
28) Gohari, M.J
29) Haque-Khan
30) Hilali-Khan
31) Hulusi -Atalay
32) Irving, T.B
33) Itani, T
34) Jones, A
35) Kaskas, S.
36) Khaldi, A
37) Khalifa, R

38) Khan, M.Z
39) Khan, W
40) Malik, F
41) Moeinian, B
42) Monotheist Trans
43) Muhammad, B
44) Munshey, M
45) Nejad, A.B
46) Nikayin, F
47) Omar- Omar
48) Omar, K
49) Palmer, E. H
50) Pickthal-El-Ashi
51) Pickthall, M
52) Progressive Trans
53) Qadri, T
54) Qara'i, A
55) Qaribullah-Darwish
56) Reformist Trans
57) Rodwell, J.M
58) Sadr-Ameli, S
59) Saffarzadeh, T
60) Saheeh International
61) Sale, G
62) Sarwar, M
63) Shafi, M
64) Shakir, M
65) Sirhohey, A
66) Starkovsky, N
67) Turner- Behbudi
68) Ünal, A
69) Usmani, M.T
70) Zidan-Zidan

Seven verses are purposefully selected to explore the variations in translating *invisible meaning* which is the most salient feature in each of these verses. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS-version 23) is used to do quantitative analysis embedded within the dominant qualitative matrix. Non-parametric tests of Chi-square, Lambda correlation, and Goodman and Kruskal tau correlation are the appropriate tools of statistical analysis in the article.

## Results and Discussion

### *Ideology in Decoding Explicatures of the Qurān*

The first case explored in this article shows traces of ideology as a key factor in explicating latent meanings in translation. Variations in translating the verse below indicate how ideological readings of '*invisible meanings*' in the SL text may frequently be used to promulgate specific agendas.

**وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى 93:7**

A plethora of versions explored echo the SL text salient meaning as illustrated by this sample:

- **Saheeh International** And He found you lost and guided [you],
- **Abdel Haleem, M.S.** Did He not find you lost and guide you?
- **Malik, F** Did He not find you lost and gave you guidance?
- **The Monotheist Trans.** And He found you lost, and He guided you?
- **Nejad, A.B.** and found you a lost one and guided you
- **Asad, M**. And found thee lost on thy way, and guided thee?

The Arabic word (**ضَال**) is explicated with the neutral word '***lost***' which echoes the subtle shades of meaning in the SL text. The word '*lost*' implies a wide range of meanings and should be explicated here in terms of proper contexts and real-world knowledge. *Intratextuality*, "treating the given text or set of texts as a fractal landscape which we explore in detail with a full realization of their overlapping and interpenetrating internal contexts and signs that express concepts and archetypal motifs" (Palmer, 2002, p. 1), is particularly significant here as the *salient meaning* in the verse would become manifest with reference to the whole body of Qurānic discourse. Hence, a portion of the *invisible meaning* of the word (**ضَال**) could better be explicated in the light of this verse:

**وكَذَٰلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلا الإِيمَانُ وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَّشَاء مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ (42:52)**

- Thus We have revealed to you a Spirit of Our command, before which you did not know what is the Book and what is faith, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. And truly, you guide to a straight path -

Nevertheless, the statistics below show substantial discrepancies in explicating the controversial word in this verse. Though there is no significant difference between the four types of explication isolated, the '***lost***' or 'neutral' versions make the smallest portion as visually shown in figure [3].

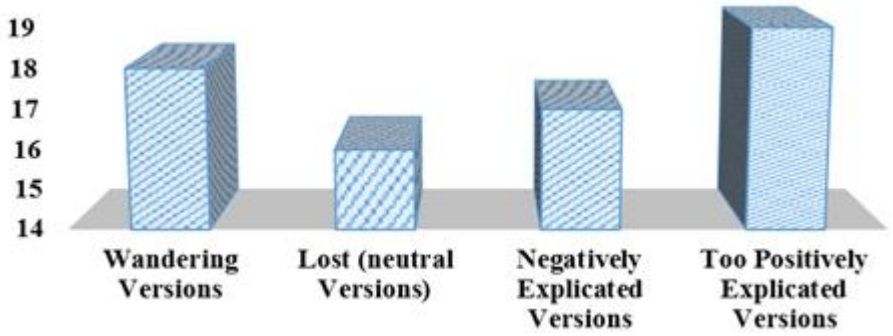



***Figure 3*** Numbers of Versions with Reference to Explicating Meaning in Verse 93:3

**Table 1** *Versions Types with Reference to Explicating Meaning in Verse 93:3*

| **Versions Types** | **Observed N** | **Expected N** | **Residual** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wandering Versions | 18 | 17.5 | .5 |
| Lost (neutral) Versions | 16 | 17.5 | -1.5 |
| Negatively Explicated Versions | 17 | 17.5 | -.5 |
| Too Positively Explicated Versions | 19 | 17.5 | 1.5 |
| **Total** | **70** | | |

**Table 2** *Chi-Square Statistics*

| | **Versions with Reference to Explicating Meaning in Verse 93:7** |
|---|---|
| Chi-Square | .286[a] |
| df | 3 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Asymp. Sig. | .963 |

Chi-square statistics above show no significant differences among the four types of explicating this verse. Still, the bar chart and Chi-square statistics below indicate that ideologically motivated explications make a significant bulk of the corpus explored:

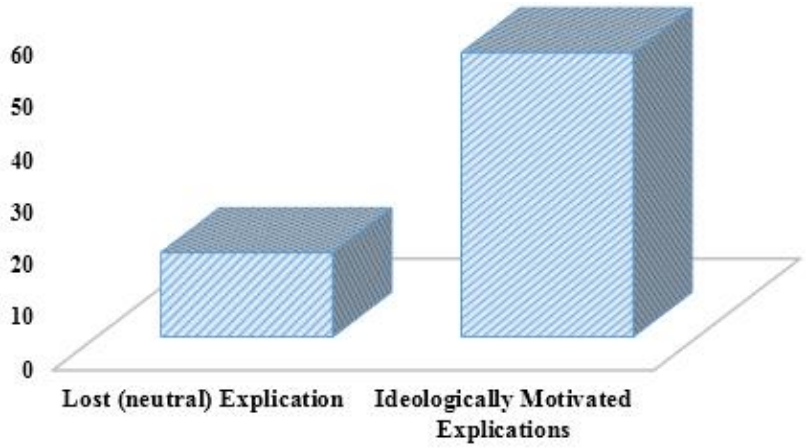



***Figure 4*** Neutral Explications vs. Ideologically Motivated Explications

**Table 3** *Types of Explications Reference to Explicating Meaning in Verse 93:3*

| Types of Explication | Observed N | Expected N | Residual |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lost (neutral) Explication | 16 | 35.0 | -19.0 |
| Ideologically Motivated Explications | 54 | 35.0 | 19.0 |
| Total | 70 | | |

**Table 4** *Chi-Square Statistics*

| | Versions with Reference to Explicating Meaning in Verse 93:7 |
|---|---|
| Chi-Square | 20.629[a] |
| df | 1 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .000 |

Results in table [4] support the postulate that the majority of translations explored in this article advocates other accounts entirely different from the explication of the first group. For instance, versions made by orientalists and some of those affected by them negatively explicate the word (ضَال) as illustrated by this sample:

- **Arberry, A.J.** Did He not find thee erring, and guide thee?
- **Palmer, E.H.** and find thee erring, and guide thee?
- **Jones, A.** Did He not find you erring, and guide you?
- **Khaldi, T.** And found you erring, and guided you?
- **Sale, G.**
  And did He not find thee wandering in error, and hath He not guided thee into the truth?
- **Rodwell, M.J.** And found thee erring and guided thee,
- **Droge, A.J.** Did he not find you astray and guide (you)?
- **Dawood, N.J.** Did He not find you in error and guide you?
- **Bakhtiar, L.** And found He thee one who goes astray, then, He guided thee?

Arberry, Jones, Palmer, Rodwell, and even Khaldi render it as (*erring*), a choice that conveys decontextualized negative meaning extracted from a highly connotative word that embraces wide shades of subtle meanings. Dawood moves a little further, using a noun rather than an adjective [*in error*]. Sale translates it as [*wandering in error*], giving it even much more negative implications than any of the translations of Rodwell, Palmer, Jones or Khaldi. What is peculiar about Sale (and several orientalists) is that they always endorse the hypothesis of the Qurān being the Prophet Muhammad's own product, not a divine revelation. If this premise were true, why would the Prophet paint such a negative picture of himself in a world too hostile to him?

An interesting fact is that Sale and Rodwell translate the word (ضَال) in a parallel context with a milder equivalent: 12:95 (قَالُواْ تَاللَّهِ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلاَلِكَ الْقَدِيمِ)

- **Sale, G.** They answered, by God, thou art in thy old mistake.
- **Rodwell, M.J.** They said, "By God, it is thy old mistake."

Though Droge (2013) uses the word '*astray*' which connotes less negative meanings, later he adds a footnote that betrays his ideological stance. He blatantly maintains that the lexical selection of particular words in this verse indicates that the "'error' was not simply confusion but participation in 'paganism'" (p. 438).

Bakhtiar (2009) claims to be using formal rather than dynamic equivalence in her translation, but this instance shows that this claim may sometimes come short. Bakhtiar's version *'who goes astray'* considerably deviates from the SL text. The use of the present tense indicates a habitual tendency in the character of the addressee, something that the Qurānic verse never suggests at all. On the contrary, the whole context of the relevant Sura refers to a succession of states that were no longer in effect. Nevertheless, the most strikingly negative explicature of the verse is embodied in the version below:

- **Moeinian, B.**

And *for the longest time (years)* you were lost *in darkness and live like a pagan* and He revealed you the truth about the meaning of the life, why you are here, etc.

On the other hand, there are versions which opt for *extremely positive explications* of the word (**ضَال**) in the relevant verse. The first group of these explications uses the word 'wandering' to soften the SL text. Interestingly, some early traditional exegetes interpret this verse in terms of an insignificant and dubious incident in which it is narrated that the Prophet was once lost and found wandering amongst the hills of Makkah during his childhood.

- **Pickthall, M.** Did He not find thee wandering and direct (thee)?
- **Ali, A. (Orig. 1938)** And He found thee wandering, and He gave thee guidance.
- **Bakhtiar, L.** And found He thee one who goes astray, then, He guided thee?
- **Khan, W.** Did He not find you wandering, and give you guidance?
- **Daryabadi, A**. And He found thee wandering, so He guided thee,
- **Bewley-Bewley** Did He not find you wandering and guide you?
- **Aneesuddin, M.** and find you wandering then guide you,

The second group explicates the verse with milder terms, and thus rescinds the *invisible meaning* in the verse and depreciates the unique stylistic effects of the whole Sura.

- **Hilali-Khan**

And He found you unaware (of the Qurān, its legal laws, and Prophethood, etc.) and guided you?

- **Ahmed, S.**

And He found you looking for guidance, and showed you the way. ('Dhall' = Wandering = Looking for guidance = Straying).

- **Ünal, A.**

And find you unguided (by God's Messengership), and guide (you)?

- **Ali, A.**

Did He not find you perplexed, and show you the way?

- **Usmani, T.**

And He found you unaware of the way (the Shari'ah ), then He guided you.

- **Al-Muntakhab**

Did He not find you unsettled and not freed from doubt and uncertainty and He guided you to the path of righteousness and filled your breast with reverential bliss?

- **Omar, K.**

And He found you lost (in search of the Code in Al-Kitab), then He provided you Guidance.

Expansions and additions in the versions above betray ideological agendas intended to oppose the negative explications offered in orientalist versions. Plus, Shakir's version below absurdly leans on one '*anomalous*' and entirely '*uncanonical*' reading of this verse to switch the state of '***loss***' from the Prophet to people around him:

- **Shakir, M.**

And find you lost (that is, unrecognized by men) and guide (them to you)?
**(وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالّ فَهَدَى)**

The last group in this category goes too far in its *hermeneutical* reading that disguises ideological agendas. Qdari, Haque-Khan, Omar-Omar, and Sher Ali are all affected by the Barlawi Sufi explication of this verse that has its genesis in Ahmad Raza Khan's Urdu translation of the Qurān: '*Kanzullman'*. A distinctive feature of this translation is the 'enhanced status it ascribes the Prophet" (Robinson, 1997, p. 263) to the extent that it unwittingly

misrepresents several Qurānic verses in translation. This is what is exactly reflected in the four versions below:

- **Qadri, T**.

And He found you engrossed and lost in His love and then made you achieve the coveted objective. Or And He found in you (a leader) for a straying people so He provided them guidance (through you).

- **Haque- Khan**

And found you deeply engrossed in His love, so directed you?

- **Omar- Omar**

He found you lost in (His) love (and that of His people), and gave you guidance (so as to enable you help the people reach the goal),

- **Ali, S.**

And found thee lost in love for thy people and provided thee with guidance for them,

Almost all versions in the last two groups explicate the word (**ضَال**) with some sort of apologetic or decontextualized additions and expansions that reverse the core meaning of the SL text, to produce fictional scenarios and extremely positive interpretations of the word (**ضَال**) motivated by the authors' sectarian and ideological schemata. All these versions, however, fail to recognize that the word '***lost***' in this context is much more positive than any of their implausible explications. '*Loss*' in the verse refers to a state of being 'alone' amidst a world of chaos. The Prophet is brought up in an environment abundant with chaotic and perplexing values and beliefs from which he could find no salvation. The Prophet's 'loss' is caused by his rejection of all current dominant erroneous values and beliefs and his abstinence from seeking any enlightenment from an outside agency or the prevalent doctrines around him. Hence, '**loss**' is the only positive value in this utter darkness. This kind of loss is virtually the true sign of the Prophet's pure *fitra*, innate disposition, and splendid readiness to receive a divine revelation that rejects all the flawed values and beliefs prevailing at the Prophet's time.

### *Ideology in Decoding Implicatures of the Qurān*

The second case explored illustrates how ideology affects the processing of implicatures in particular Qurānic texts:

**وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِن قَالَ بَلَى وَلَكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ 2:260**

- **Droge, A.J.**

(Remember) when Abraham said, 'My Lord, show me how You give the dead life.' He said, 'Have you not believed?' He said, 'Yes indeed! But (show me) to satisfy my heart.' He said, 'Take four birds, and take them close to you, then place a piece of them on each hill, (and) then call them. They will come rushing to you. Know that God is mighty, wise.'

- **Khaldi, T.**

Remember when Abraham said: 'Lord, show me how you revive the dead.' God said: 'Have you not believed?' Abraham said: 'Yes, but so that my heart can be at peace.' God said: 'Take four birds, cut them in pieces and place each piece upon a separate mountain. Then call them and they shall come flying to you. Know that God is Almighty, All-Wise.'

- **Pickthall, M.**

And when Abraham said (unto his Lord): My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead, He said: Dost thou not believe? Abraham said: Yea, but (I ask) in order that my heart may be at ease. (His Lord) said: Take four of the birds and cause them to incline unto thee, then place a part of them on each hill, then call them, they will come to thee in haste, and know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.

- **Arberry, A.J.**

And when Abraham said, 'My Lord, show me how Thou wilt give life to the dead,' He said, 'Why, dost thou not believe?' 'Yes,' he said, 'but that my heart may be at rest.' Said He, 'Take four birds, and twist them to thee, then set a part of them on every hill, then summon them, and they will come to thee running. And do thou know that God is All-mighty, All-wise.'

- **Bakhtair, L.**

And mention when Abraham said: My Lord! Cause me to see how Thou wilt give life to the dead. He said: Wilt thou not believe? He said: Yea, but so my heart be at rest. He said: Again, take four birds, and twist them to thyself. Again, lay a part of them on every mountain. Again, call to them. They will approach thee coming eagerly. And know thou that God is Almighty, Wise.

Versions in the sample above remain faithful to the SL text which makes use of implicature to convey the latent meaning in the narrative. Nonetheless, a proliferation of translations of the Qurān in English opts for peculiar readings that support the ideological schemata of the translators. El Mallah (2011) claims that these versions show "how translators may take advantage of the metaphorical language of the Qurān to move the text towards an interpretation that better serves their own ideologies" (p. 341). But rather than being a question of metaphor, such ideological readings and interpretations involve processing of the implicature in this Qurānic verse on the basis of the translators' ideological agendas.

The first group attempts to stress the miraculous event implicitly conveyed in this verse. A sample for this ideological stance include these versions:

- **Kaskas, S.**

Abram said, "My Lord, show me how you give life to the dead." God said, "Have you not believed?" He said, "Yes I have, but assure my heart." God said, "Take four birds, ***kill them and cut them into pieces. Then put pieces of each on a mountain and call them***. They will come quickly to you. Know that God is Strong and Wise."

- **Sarwar, M.**

When Abraham prayed, "Lord, show me how you bring the dead back to life," the Lord said, "Do you not yet believe?" Abraham replied, "I believe but want more confidence for my heart." God told him, "Take four birds, induce them to come to you, ***cut and scatter their bodies leaving parts on every mountain top***, then call them and they will swiftly come to you." Know that God is Majestic and Wise.

- **Saheeh International**

And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead." [Allah] said, "Have you not believed?" He said, "Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied." [Allah] said, "Take four birds and commit them to yourself. ***Then [after slaughtering them] put on each hill a portion of them***; then call them - they will come [flying] to you in haste. And know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise."

- **Malik, F.**

Yet another example is when Abraham said: "My Lord! Show me how you give life to the dead." He replied: "Have you no faith in this?" Abraham humbly submitted: "Yes! But I ask this to

reassure my heart." Allah said: "Take four birds; train them to follow your direction, ***cut their bodies into pieces and scatter those pieces on hilltops***, then call them back; Allah will bring them back to life and they will come to you right away. Thus you will know that Allah is All-powerful and Wise."

- **Nejad, A.B.**

And when Abraham said: my Master, show me how you give life to the dead. He (God) said: do you not believe? He said: yes, but to reassure my heart. He said: take four birds, then turn (familiarize) them to you (***and cut them and divide them in pieces), then place a piece of them on each mountain***, then call them, they will come to you in a hurry, and know that God is powerful and wise.

- **Hilali-Khan**

And (remember) when Ibrahim (Abraham) said, "My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead." He (Allah) said: "Do you not believe?" He (Ibrahim (Abraham)) said: "Yes (I believe), but to be stronger in Faith." He said: "Take four birds, then cause them to incline towards you ***(then slaughter them, cut them into pieces), and then put a portion of them on every hill***, and call them, they will come to you in haste. And know that Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise."

Additions such as '*slaughtering the four birds and cutting them into pieces*' run contrary to the use of implicature of the SL text which flouts Grice's maxim of quantity to achieve precise and refined stylistic effects. Particularly, Abdullah Yusuf Ali's revised version of this verse is ideologically motivated. King Fahd Complex *Salafi* revision aims to explicate the SL text to fill in the gap between what is said and what is communicated in unambiguous terms through calculated expansions.

- **Ali, Y. (Orig. 1938)**

Behold! Abraham said: "My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead." He said: "Dost thou not then believe?" He said: "Yea! but to satisfy My own undertaking." He said: "Take four birds; Tame them to turn to thee; ***put a portion of them on every hill and call to them:*** They will come to thee (Flying) with speed. Then know that God is Exalted in Power, Wise."

- **Ali, Y. (KFC, 1985)**

When Abraham said: "Show me, Lord, how You will raise the dead, " He replied: "Have you no faith?" He said "Yes, but just to reassure my heart." Allah said, "Take four birds, draw them to you, ***and cut their bodies to pieces. Scatter them over the mountain-tops, then call them back***.

They will come swiftly to you. Know that Allah is Mighty, Wise."

King Fahd Complex's rewriting of this portion of Ali's original version betrays the Salafi stance which opposes modernist and neo-Mu'tazilite readings that do away with the implicature of the verse in favor of mundane perspectives as explained below.

Consistent with his Qadyani doctrines which downplay any reference to miraculous stories in the Qurān, Maulana Muhammad Ali (1874-1951), a key figure of the Qadyani movement and one of the earliest Muslim translators of the Qurān, produces an ambiguous version:

- **Ali, M. M.**

And when Abraham said, My Lord, show me how Thou givest life to the dead, He said: Dost thou not believe? He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease. He said: Then take four birds, then tame them to incline to thee, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to thee flying; and know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.

But in his commentary on this verse, Ali (1973) precisely disambiguates his translation as follows:

> If he [Abraham] should take four birds and tame them, they would obey his call and fly to him even from distant mountains. If the birds, then, obey his call, he being neither their master nor the author of their existence, would not nations submit to the call of their Divine Master and the Author of their existence? (p. 115).

Later, almost all the Qadyani translators follow in the footsteps of Maulana Muhammad Ali but with more overt language that cancels the implicature of this verse with regard to:

**فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا**

- **Ali, S.**

`Take four birds and make them attached to thee. Then put each of them on a hill; then call them; they will come to thee in haste.'

- **Omar-Omar**

`Take four birds and make them attached to you, then put them each on a separate hill, then call them, they will come to you swiftly.

- **Khan, M.Z.**

then, take four birds and train them to be attached to thee. Thereafter put each one of them on a hillock. Then call them; they will hasten towards thee.

These Qadyani perspectives, however, are paralleled by similar or identical readings in some modernist versions affected by neo-Mu'tazilite perspectives:

- **Asad, M.**

"Take, then, four birds and teach them to obey thee; then place them separately on every hill [around thee]; then summon them: they will come flying to thee.

- **Khan,W.**

Take four birds, and train them to come back to you. Then place them separately on each hilltop, and call them: they will come flying to you.

- **Abdel Haleem, M.S.**

'Take four birds and train them to come back to you. Then place them on separate hilltops, call them back, and they will come flying to you:

- **Ali, A**.

"Trap four birds and tame them, then put each of them on a (separate) hill, and call them, and they will come flying to you.

- **Hulusi–Atalay**

"Take four types of birds and train them so they grow accustomed to you, then place each of them upon four different hilltops and call them to yourself. They will come running (flying) to you.

These readings are in line with the 'reformist' and 'neo-Mu'tazilite' project which has gained ground in interpreting the Qurān since the dawn of the second half of the 19th century. Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Ridha doubt and degrade the mainstream Muslim interpretation of this verse which is adopted by almost all earlier exegetes. They vehemently adopt Abu

Muslim's (an earlier staunch Mu'tazilite) interpretation which discredits the miracle implicated in the verse. The explanation of the relevant verse in *Tafseer Al-Manar* (Vol. 3, 55-58) ends up with a word of admiration of Abu Muslim for his 'meticulous', 'independent', and 'unorthodox' reading of the relevant text (Ridha, 1947, Vol. 3, p. 58). Both Abduh and Ridha believe that Islam is a 'rationalistic' religion which conforms to the prevailing positivist philosophy of their age. This does lead them to extreme positions, to the extent that they regret the fact that the Qurān narrates miracles attributed to Moses, Jesus, or other prophets (Ridha, 1947, Vol. 111, 155).

Aware of the incongruity of the fictional readings in the translations above, Ahmed Shabir provides his own allegorical reading which is further removed from the narratives of SL text:

- **Ahmed, S.**

*Abraham wanted to understand the Law of Revival of nations. Allah asked him if he believed that it were possible*. Abraham said he believed but that he wanted a practical example to educate his heart and mind. Allah told him to take four birds and train them in a kind manner, and then to leave them far apart on each hilltop. And then call them; they will come in haste. (At one call of Abraham, those birds came flying back to him. *This is how mankind can be brought to the Word of Allah with decent training, giving them a new life).*

***Translating Invisible Meaning of Qurānic Irony***

**فَبَشِّرْهُم بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ 84:24**

The most significant variation in translating this verse centers on explicating the irony of the Arabic phrase **(بَشِّرْهُم)** which is used for good news. It is this irony that contains the core latent meaning which makes the verse so vivid and powerful. Below is a sample of versions that fail to appreciate the invisible meaning of the Qurānic irony in the verse:

- **Bewley-Bewley** Give them the news of a painful punishment —
- **Saheeh International** So give them tidings of a painful punishment,
- **Pickthall, M.** So give them tidings of a painful doom,
- **Pickthall-El-Ashi** So give them tidings of a painful doom,
- **Khaldi, T.** So give them tidings of a painful torment,
- **Itani, T.** So inform them of a painful punishment.
- **Jones, A.** So give them the tidings of a painful punishment-
- **Rodwell, J. M**. Let their only tidings be those of painful punishment;
- **Sirohey, A.** So inform them with punishment grievous,
- **Dawood, N. J.** Therefore, proclaim to all a woeful doom,
- **Qara'i, A.** So warn them of a painful punishment,
- **Ali-Yazdi** So announce thou unto them the tidings of a painful chastisement!
- **Gohari, M.J.** So (Messenger) warn them about the painful torment.
- **Starkovsky, N.** So announce to them a painful punishment!
- **Malik, F.** Therefore, proclaim to them a painful punishment,
- **Cleary, T.** So inform them of a painful penalty,
- **Ali, S.** So give them tidings of a painful punishment.
- **Monotheist Trans.** So inform them of a painful retribution.

- **Nikayin, F.** Thus, of the painful Scourge/Give them the news!
- **Reformist Trans.** So inform them of a painful retribution.
- **Khalifa, R.** Promise them painful retribution.
- **Irving, T. B.** Give them news of painful torment,
- **Emerick, Y.** so give them the news of a painful doom.

The bar chart and Chi-square statistics below show that a significant number of versions of the Qurān in English fails to appreciate this Qurānic irony encoded in this verse:

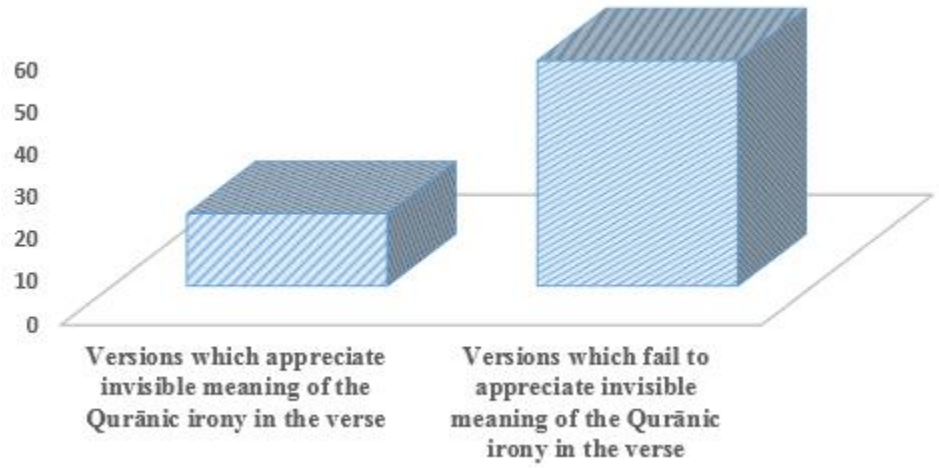



***Figure 4*** Versions which fails to appreciate invisible meaning vs. Versions which fails to appreciate invisible meaning of the Qurānic verse

**Table 5** *Versions with Reference to Explicating Meaning in Verse 84:24*

| **Versions Types** | **Observed N** | **Expected N** | **Residual** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Versions which appreciate invisible meaning of the Qurānic irony in the verse | 17 | 35.0 | -18.0 |
| Versions which fail to appreciate invisible meaning of the Qurānic irony in the verse | 53 | 35.0 | 18.0 |
| Total | 70 | 70 | |

**Table 6** *Chi-Square Statistics*

| | **Versions with Reference to Explicating Meaning in Verse 84:24** |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| **Chi-Square** | **18.514[a]** |
| **Df** | **1** |
| **Asymp. Sig.** | **.000** |

A sample of the versions that appreciate the invisible meaning of the Qurānic irony in this particular instance is cited below:

- **Dakdok, U.** So give them the good news of a painful torment.
- **Arberry, J**. So give them good tidings of a painful chastisement,
- **Palmer, E. H.** So give them the glad tidings of grievous woe!
- **Qaribullah-Darwish** Therefore give to them glad tidings of a painful punishment,
- **Maududi-Ansari** So give them the good news of a painful chastisement,
- **Bakhtiar, L.** So give them good tidings of a painful punishment.
- **Fakhry, M.** So announce to them the good news of a very painful punishment.
- **Usmani, M. T.** So, give him the 'good news' of a painful punishment,
- **Omar, K.** So to announce them 'the good news' about a painful torment —
- **Saffarzadeh, T.** So [O, Messenger!] give them the glad-tidings of a painful Chastisements!
- **Ahmad- Samira** So announce good news to them with (of) a painful torture.
- **Ünal, A .** So give them the glad tidings of a painful punishment.
- **Haque-Khan** Therefore give them the glad tidings of a painful punishment.

Explicating the phrase **(بَشِّرْهُم)** as '*give them the glad tidings', 'give to them glad tidings', 'give them good news',* or *'announce good news to them'*, is essentially-literal translation. Yet, in this context, it is this type of translation that successfully appreciates and precisely conveys the invisible meaning of the irony in the verse.

***Variations in Translating Invisible Meaning of Deictics***

This case shows variations which result from (mis)understanding the pragmatics of the Qurānic discourse. Here '*competing deictic centers*' are the trigger of discordant variations in explicating the verse in question:

**وَكَانَ وَرَاءهُم مَّلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا 18:79**

Group (1) A Sample of 'Flouting' Versions

Versions in this group either bypass and ignore the SL phrase **(وَرَاءهُم)** or switch it in a way that flouts the *deictic value* of the word as Sarwar and Turner-Behbudi do. The cause for this 'flouting' is the apparent mismatch between the word **(وَرَاءَ)**and its semantic equivalence in English.

- **Sarwar, M.**

The king had imposed a certain amount of tax on every undamaged boat. I damaged it so that they would not have to pay the tax.

- **Turner- Behbudi**

the reason being this: the king had recently ordered all boats to be rounded up and used to transport soldiers across the sea to the place where he was waging war. Had these poor men's boat been in working order, it too would have been requisitioned and the poor boatman would have been deprived of their livelihood for many weeks, if not indefinitely.

- **Busool, A.N.**

because a king was ruling over them who seized every boat by force.

- **Khan, Z.M.**

across which was a tyrant who seized every boat by force, so I decided to make a hole in it

- **Progressive Trans.**

as there was a king coming who takes every boat by force

- **Monotheist Trans.**

as there was a king coming who takes every boat by force.

- **Reformist Trans.**

as there was a king coming who takes every boat by force.

- **Moeinian, B.**

There was a king passing by his army who was confiscating every boat [for the use in his army.]"

- **Munshey, M.**

a king nearby, seizes all the (defect-free) ships forcibly."

- **Usmani, M.U.**

as there was a king across them who used to usurp every boat by force.

Group (2) A Sample of 'After' Versions

- **Ali,Y.A (KFC)** for there was after them a certain king who seized on every boat by force.
- **Ali,Y.A.** for there was after them a certain king who seized on every boat by force.
- **Abdel Haleem, M.**

because I knew that coming after them was a king who was seizing every [serviceable] boat by force.

- **Ali, A.** because there was a king after them who used to seize every ship by force.
- **Ünal, A.** for there was a king after them who was seizing every boat by force.
- **Ahamed, S.V.** because, after them was a certain king who took over (seized) every boat by force.
- **Saheeh Int.** as there was after them a king who seized every [good] ship by force.
- **Omar, K.** Because there is after them a head of state who seizes all ferry-boats as impounded.
- **Muhammad, B.**

for there was after them a king who had every boat seized by force.

- **Khalifa, R.** There was a king coming after them, who was confiscating every ship, forcibly.
- **Hilali- Khan** as there was a king after them who seized every ship by force.
- **Cleary, T.** because there was a king after them taking every boat by force.

Group (3) A Sample of 'Behind' Versions

- **Asad, A.**

because (I knew that] behind them was a king who is wont to seize every boat by brute force.

- **Pickthall, M.**

for there was a king behind them who is taking every ship by force.

- **Shakir, M.**

and there was behind them a king who seized every boat by force.

- **Bakhtiar, L.**

As for the vessel, it had been of some needy people who toil in the sea, so I wanted to mar it as there had been a king behind them taking every vessel forcefully.

- **Khan, W.**

because there was a king coming behind them who was seizing every boat by force.

- **Ünal, A.**

for there was a king after them who was seizing every boat by force.

- **Ali, S.**

for there was behind them a king who seized every boat by force;

- **Sale, G.**

because there was a king behind them, who took every sound ship by force.

Group (4) A Sample of 'Beyond' Versions

- **Jones, A.**

for there was a king beyond them who was seizing every ship by force.

- **Ghali, M.M.**

(and) beyond them was a king who was taking away every ship by force.

- **Maududi-Ansari**

for beyond them lay the dominion of a king who was wont to seize every boat by force.

- **Khaldi, T.**

beyond them was a king who seized every ship, unlawfully.

All versions in the three groups above (2, 3, and 4) fail to correctly explicate the SL phrase **(وَرَاءهُم)**, due to their failure to grasp the *invisible meaning* encoded in this deictic expression. Very few versions, in fact, manage to decode this subtle deictic meaning as illustrated by the sampled versions below:

Group (5) A Sample of 'Before/Ahead' Versions

- **Daryabadi, A**.

for there was *before* them a prince taking every boat by force.

- **Qadri, T.**

(because) a (cruel) king was (standing) *ahead of them*, snatching every (undamaged) boat by force (from the owners without any compensation).

- **Gohari, M.J.**

because there was a king *ahead of them* who was taking all boats illegally by force.

This sample captures the pragmatics of the relevant verse and brilliantly conveys the invisible meaning intended. It should be noted here that explicating **(وَرَاءهُم)** as '***before them/ahead of them***' is supported by this tradition narrated in Saheeh Al-Bukhari:

**قال سعيد بن جبير : وكان ابن عباس يقرأها : « وكان أمامهم ملك يأخذ كل سفينة صالحة غصبا » (البخاري، ص2084 )**

Saeed Ibn Jubair narrated that Ibn Abbas used to read it "And there *in front* of them a king who seized every good ship by force." (5)

Though Ibn Abbas' reading of this verse is anomalous, in Arabic the indexical **(وَرَاء)** is virtually used for anything *unseen* or *hidden* whether it is *behind* or *before/in front of/ahead* of the speaker or listener. In the Qurān this indexical is used in both senses and the diverse explications of its latent meaning depend on identifying the deictic center in each particular case. Still, there are confusing variations in decoding *invisible meanings* associated with the indexical **(وَرَاء)**in almost identical contexts as the statistics below clearly indicate:

**1. مِّن وَرَائِهِ جَهَنَّمُ وَيُسْقَىٰ مِن مَّاءٍ صَدِيدٍ (14:16)**

- **Saheeh International**

Before him is Hell, and he will be given a drink of purulent water.

- **Ali, A.**

Before him is Hell; and he shall be made to drink boiling water.

Chi-square statistics show that a significant portion of the versions explored explicates **(وَرَاء)** with the proper deictic equivalences in English (Before/Ahead of/In front of/Next, etc.), and thus captures the invisible meaning of the text:

**Table 7** *Versions with Reference to Explicating Meaning in Verse 14:16*

| **Competing Explications** | **Observed N** | **Expected N** | **Residual** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Behind/Beyond/After | 19 | 34.0 | -15.0 |
| Before/Ahead of/In front of/Next, etc. | 49 | 34.0 | 15.0 |
| Total | 68 | | |

**Table 8** *Chi-Square Statistics*

| | **Versions with Reference to Explicating Meaning in Verse 14:16** |
|---|---|
| **Chi-Square** | 13.235[a] |
| **Df** | 1 |
| **Asymp. Sig.** | .000 |

**2. وَمِن وَرَائِهِم بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ (23:100)**

- **Saheeh International**

and behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected.

- **Ali, A.**

And behind them is a barrier until the day when they shall be raised again.

Chi-square statistics below show that a substantial portion of the versions explored explicates (وَرَاء) with the improper deictic equivalents in English which could be (before/ahead of/in front of/next, etc.), and thus fail to capture the invisible meaning of this verse:

***Table 9*** Versions with Reference to Explicating Meaning in Verse

| **Competing References** | **Observed N** | **Expected N** | **Residual** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Behind/Beyond/After | 43 | 23.3 | 19.7 |
| Before/Ahead of/In front of | 22 | 23.3 | -1.3 |
| Flouting the deictic reference | 5 | 23.3 | -18.3 |
| Total | 70 | | |

***Table 10*** Chi-Square Statistics

| | **Versions with Reference to Explicating Meaning in Verse 84:24** |
|---|---|
| **Chi-Square** | 31.057[a] |
| **Df** | 2 |
| **Asymp. Sig.** | .000 |

The cause of these contradictory explications of invisible meanings in almost identical contexts is the failure to appreciate the rich system of Arabic deictics. My view is that the word **(وَرَاء)** in the three verses explored above is a unique case of what I call here ***reversive indexicals*** which could be explicated in opposite directions, depending on the background contexts. This is an idiosyncratic feature of Arabic deictics that needs special treatment in contrastive pragmatics and translation studies.

### *Explicating Invisible Meanings to Resolve Inconsistencies*

**فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّى إِذَا أَثْخَنتُمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوَثَاقَ فَإِمَّا مَنًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاء حَتَّى تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا (47:4)**

- **Sahih International**

So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] *until the war lays down its burdens.*

Saheeh International echoes almost all the seventy versions explored in this article, which explicate (**حَتَّى تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا**) as 'until the war is finished or lays down its burdens'.

- **Pickthall, M.M.**

Now when ye meet in battle those who disbelieve, then it is smiting of the necks until, when ye have routed them, then making fast of bonds; and afterward either grace or ransom *till the war lay down its burdens.*

- **Ali, A. (Orig. 1938)**

Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; At length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them): thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom: *Until the war lays down its burdens.*

- **Bakhtiar, L.**

So when you met those who were ungrateful, then, strike their thick necks until you gave them a sound thrashing. Then, tie them fast with restraints. And afterwards either have good will towards them or take ransom for them *until the war ends, laying down its heavy load.*

- **Ali, A.**

So, when you clash with the unbelievers, smite their necks until you overpower them, then hold them in bondage. Then either free them graciously or after taking a ransom, *until war shall have come to end.*

- **Sarwar, M.**

If you encounter the disbelievers in a battle, strike-off their heads. Take them as captives when they are defeated. Then you may set them free as a favor to them, with or without a ransom, *when the battle is over.*

- **Malik, F.**

Therefore, when you meet the unbelievers in the battlefield smite their necks and, when you have thoroughly subdued them, then take prisoners of war and bind them firmly. *After the war lays down her burdens,* then you have the choice whether you show them favor or accept ransom.

- **Moeinian, B.**

If you are engaged in a war with disbelievers, fight with them bravely and strike their necks. *When the war is over,* you may choose to free the captives or ask for a ransom for their freedom.

- **Dawood, N.J.**

When you meet the unbelievers in the battlefield strike off their heads and, when you have laid them low, bind your captives firmly. Then grant them their freedom or take a ransom from them, *until War shall lay down her burdens*.

These explications are internally inconsistent, and to resolve this inconsistency, Qurānic exegeses abound with various conjectures about *when 'war will lay down its burdens'*. For instance, Al-Qurtbi cites the following narratives, among many, to explain when war shall end or lay down its burdens:

- *Until the second coming of Jesus*
- *Until all people become Muslim.*
- *Until all people believe in Allah.*

- *Until Islam become the only dominant religion.*

**(القرطبي، 2007، جزء 16، صفحات 228-229)**

As well, these conjectures are entirely inconsistent with Islam universal message of peace, for none of the above is a goal of warfare in Islam. Only two versions manage to capture the invisible meaning of this verse and attain consistency in explicating the verse in harmony with the entire Qurānic discourse:

- **Asad, M.**

NOW WHEN you meet [in war] those who are bent on denying the truth, smite their necks until you overcome them fully, and then tighten their bonds; but thereafter [set them free,] either by an act of grace or against ransom, *so that the burden of war may be lifted: thus [shall it be]*.

- **Ünal, A.**

So, when you meet those who disbelieve in war, smite at their necks (without giving them opportunity to defeat you). At length, when you have sufficiently suppressed them, (without continuing fighting) bind a firm bond of captivity on them. Then set them free either as a favor without demanding anything in return, or for ransom (which may consist of a reciprocal exchange of prisoners of war), *so that warfare may abandon weapons and come to an end*.

Though obviously all explications offered for this particular verse are semantically possible, Asad and Ünal's choice seems to better capture the latent meaning in the verse. Plus, use of '***so***' instead of 'until' would resolve the inconsistency in the text which causes considerable variations among earlier exegetes of the Qurān. This is what Ibn 'Aashour, in his seminal exegesis of the Qurān, considers the proper explication of the verse:

> **"الغاية المستفادة من (حتى) في قوله (حتى تضع الحرب أوزارها) للتعليل لا للتقييد، أي لأجل أن تضع الحرب أوزارها،" (ابن عاشور، 1984،جزء 26، ص 82).**
>
> The word**(حتى)** is used to signify the reason not the duration, and it means 'so war may lay down its burdens (finish or end).

This reading would stress the fact that the final aim of Islam is universal peace, and freeing war prisoners, by an act of grace or for ransom, would attain this precious goal.

### *When Essentially Literal Translation Better Explicates Invisible Meanings*

**إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ (35:28)**

- **Asad, M.**

Of all His servants, only such as are endowed with [innate] knowledge stand [truly] in awe of God: [for they alone comprehend that,] verily, God is almighty, much-forgiving.

- **Dawood, N.J.**

From among His servants, only those fear God who know that God is mighty and forgiving.

- **Ahmed, S.**

This is how it is: of all His servants only the ULAMA get some idea of the Glory of Allah (by examining the wonders in Nature. ULAMA = men and women of scientific knowledge. They understand that) Allah is Almighty, the Absolver of imperfections.

- **Ali, Y.**

Those truly fear God, among His Servants, who have knowledge:

- **Irving, T.B**

Yet only His learned servants dread God [Alone], even though God is Powerful, Forgiving.

- **Kaskas, S.**

Of all of his worshipers, only those with knowledge, are in awe of God.

- **Abdel Haleem, M**.

It is those of His servants who have knowledge who stand in true awe of God.

- **Ünal, A.**

Of all His servants, only those possessed of true knowledge stand in awe of God.

- **Sarwar, M.**

Only God's knowledgeable servants fear Him.

- **Saheeh International**

Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge.

- **Nejad, A**.

Only the knowledgeable among His servants fear God.

- **The Monotheist Group**

Those concerned with God from among His servants are the most knowledgeable.

- **Moeinian, B.**

Only the knowledgeable servants of God respect Him [through pondering upon His Creation].

- **Khalifa, R.**

This is why the people who truly reverence GOD are those who are knowledgeable.

- **Palmer, E.H.**

None fear God but the wise among His servants;

All these versions above translate the superficial meaning of the structure of the verse by assuming that those who fear Allah are those who have knowledge. Yet, the question of what type of knowledge intended in this verse is unconvincingly defined (in Asad's and Ahmed's versions) or remains unresolved (in almost all the rest of the translations explored). Whereas Asad defines it as '*innate*' knowledge, Shabbir Ahmed designates '*scientific*' knowledge as the necessary condition for getting some idea of the glory of Allah. Translations of the Qurān in English seem to follow in the footsteps of most of the exegetes of the Qurān which fail to appreciate the salient meaning of this verse. It is in Al-Qurtubi's exegesis the latent meaning of the verse finds its proper explication. Al-Qurtubi defines the 'knowledgeable' as those who fear Allah. He quotes several previous exegetes who stress the notion that unless one fears Allah and follows His orders, one shouldn't be designated as *'aalim* (somebody who possesses knowledge **(القرطبي، 2007، الجزء السابع عشر، ص 375-376).** Only Bakhtiar's version (which is essentially literal translation) manages to capture this *latent meaning* encoded in the SL text:

- **Bakhtiar, L**.

Only His servants who dread God are knowing.

Bakhtiar's explication of the verse defines the 'knowing' as those who dread God. Though the word 'dread' is too strong in this context, as it connotes something more than fear, Bakhtiar's structural explication matches the invisible meaning of the SL text. This is an interesting fact as here an essentially literal translation better explicates and conveys invisible or latent meanings. This is one instance that supports the hypothesis that among the versions

studied in this article, there is a strong positive association between essentially literal translations and the degree of appreciating invisible meaning as shown in the table below:

**Table 12** *Lambda Correlation*

| | | | **Value** | **Approx. Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Nominal by Nominal** | **Lambda** | **Symmetric** | **.655** | **.000** |
| | | Level of Literal/Dynamic: Independent | **.655** | **.000** |
| | | Degree of Appreciating Invisible Meanings: Dependent | **.655** | **.000** |
| | Goodman and Kruskal tau | Level of Literal/Dynamic: Independent | **.498** | **.000[c]** |
| | | Degree of Appreciating Invisible Meanings: Dependent | **.498** | **.000[c]** |

Lambda correlation is .655 and Goodman and Kruskal tau correlation is .498. Both correlations are significant and they indicate the strong association between the level of essentially literal translation and the success of explicating invisible meanings in this context.

***Explication of Broad Spectrum Qurānic Terms***

Qurānic discourse uses the word (**ظَنَّ**) with a wide range of subtle meanings, each determined by its specific context. This is because (**ظَنَّ**) with its *kindred verbs* **(ظَنّ وأَخَواتُها)** make a unique group of verbs with *indeterminate modality*. Traditional Arabic grammarians call them '*verbs of the hearts*' as these verbs refer to imperceptible states of the mind. Explicating the meaning of any of these verbs depends on contexts and real world information. The diagram below illustrates the *modality-like functions* hardwired in the verb:

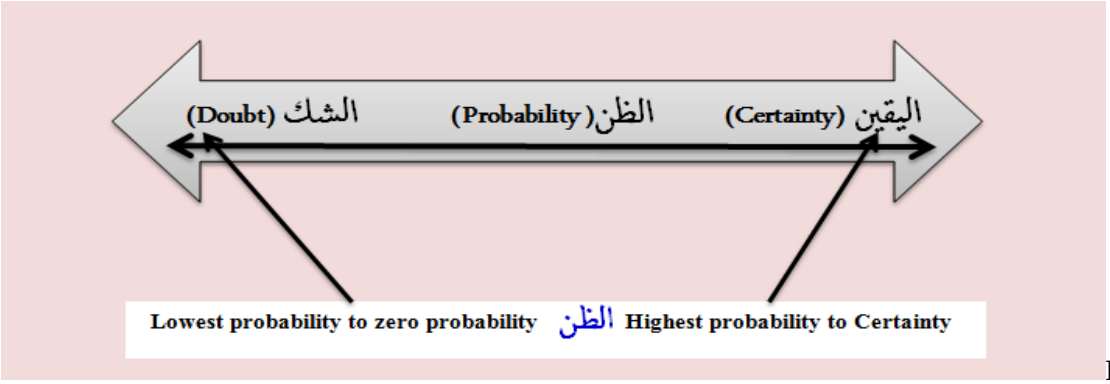



**Figure 5** *The Broad Spectrum of '**dhan**' in Qurān*

Thus, explicating the latent meaning of this verb in this context (and other parallel contexts in Qurānic discourse) depends on the degree of 'probability' determined by contextual factors which are very significant in explicating meaning in each particular verse. In the verse below, the variations in explicating the verb stem from the degree of probability assumed in each of the explications:

**وَرَأَى الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُم مُّوَاقِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا 18:53**

**(1)**

- **Saheeh International**

And the criminals will see the Fire and **will be certain** that they are to fall therein. And they will not find from it a way elsewhere.

- **Hulusi-Ataly**

When the guilty ones saw the fire, they **were certain** they were going to fall in... There was no other destination for them but the fire!

- **Sarwar, M.**

When the criminals see hell fire, they **will have no doubt** about falling (headlong) therein, nor of finding anyone to save them.

**(2)**

- **Ali, S.**

And the guilty shall see the fire and **realize** that they are going to fall therein; and they shall find no escape therefrom.

- **Omar-Omar**

And those who cut off their ties (with Allah) will see the fire and **realize** that they are going to fall into it, and they shall find no way of escape from it.

**(3)**

- **Moeinian, B.**

The guilty ones will see the Fire and **understand** that soon they will fall into it, yet they cannot escape the inescapable.

- **Ali, A.**

The sinners will see the Fire and **know** that they will be thrown into it and will.

- **Asad, M.**

And those who were lost in sin will behold the fire, and **will know** that they are bound to fall into it, and will find no way of escape therefrom.

- **Shafi, M.**

And the sinners shall see the Fire, and they **shall know** that they are going to fall into it. And they shall find no way out therefrom.

- **Ali, M.M.**

And the guilty will see the Fire, and **know** that they are about to fall into it, and they will find no escape from it.

**(4)**

- **Haque-Khan**

And the guilty will see the Fire and **will believe** that they are to call in it and will, find no way of return from it.

- **Bakhtiar, L.**

And the unjust will see the ones who sin in the fire. They **thought** that they are ones who are about to fall in it and they will not find a place to turn from it.

- **Palmer, E.H.**

and the sinners shall see the fire, and **shall think** that they are going to fall therein, and shall find no escape therefrom.

- **Arberry, A.J.**

Then the evildoers will see the Fire, and **think** that they are about to fall into it, and will find no escape from it.

- **Nejad, A.B**.

And the guilty ones see the fire and they **think** that they are to fall into it, and they do not find any escape from it.

**(5)**

- **Ali, A. (KFC)**

And the Sinful shall see the fire and **apprehend** that they have to fall therein: no means will they find to turn away therefrom.

- **Sadr-Ameli, S**

And the evildoers will see the Fire, then **apprehend** that they are falling into it, and will find no escape from it.

**(6)**

- **Rodwell, J.M.**

And the wicked shall see the fire, and **shall have a foreboding** that they shall be flung into it, and they shall find no escape from it.

- **Qaribullah-Darwish**

And when the evildoers see the Fire of Hell they **will reckon** it is there they shall fall. They shall find no escape from it.

- **Aneesuddin, M**And (when) the criminals will see the fire, then they **will guess** that they have to fall into it, and they will not find (anyway) of turning away from it.
- **Daryabadi, A.**

And the culprits will behold the Fire and **imagine** that they are about to fall therein, and they shall not find therefrom a way of escape.

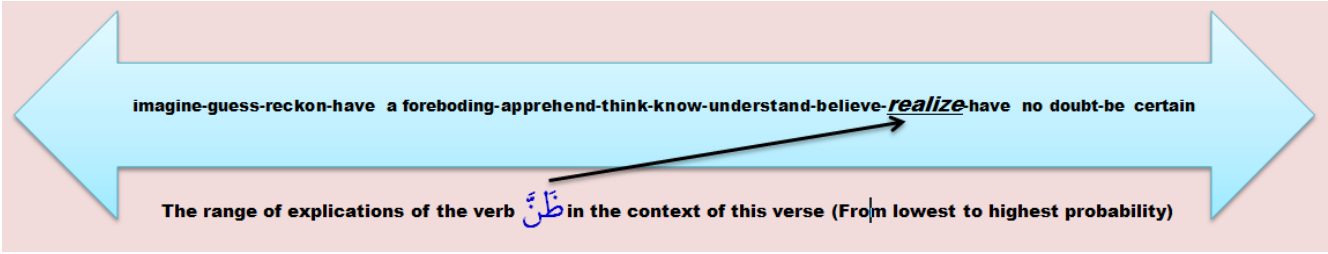



***Figure 6*** Range of Probability in Explicating Verse 18:53

Of all these variations, '***realize***' seems to convey best the meaning of the SL text. The evil-doers would '**realize'** that they are going to fall into hellfire; they would become fully aware of what they used to disbelieve in.

**Findings and Implications**

1. Failure to explicate invisible meaning in translating the Qurān could be attributed to a number of factors which could be summed up in the following categories:
   - Ideological factors in decoding explicatures and implicatures in the Qurān.
   - Failure to appreciate invisible meaning of Qurānic irony.
   - Indeterminacy and variations in translating invisible meaning of the deictics in the SL text.
   - Failure of explicating invisible meanings to explain some inconsistencies in specific verses.
   - Use of free translations that conceal some idiosyncratic features and subtle meanings of the SL text.
   - Failure to properly explicate broad spectrum Qurānic terms.
2. Invisible meanings in the Qurān do sometimes constitute the core meaning of particular verses. If bypassed or ignored, the translation would miss the most important salient meaning in the particular verse.
3. Qualitative and statistical results show a strong affinity and association between the level of formal/dynamic equivalence and proper explication of invisible meanings. Ironically, essentially literal translation significantly better conveys invisible meanings in translating the Qurān to English due to the fact that this type of translation often keeps SL text's ambiguities and idiosyncrasies.
4. Ideology is a key factor in explicating invisible meanings in translating the Qurān. Translators with particular agendas often attempt to work on latent meanings in order to smartly insert traces of ideology that replace the invisible meanings in some Qurānic verses. This is due to the fact that there is a strong affinity between the ways in which both ideology and invisible meanings work, as "ideology […] is always most effective when invisible" (Eagleton, 2007, p. xvii).

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