Rhetoric in the Translation of Selected Kinship Terms in the Holy Quran into French and English

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ABSTRACT

Translating the Qur'anic real meaning into other languages is considered to be a unique challenge as it is deeply rooted in Arabic culture and language. Thus, this operation often loses the rhetoric and poetic beauty of the Qur'anic text, hindering a deep understanding of its spiritual and moral significance. This study constitutes a part of a comparison study of certain kinship terms in Qur'anic Arabic' abawayn / wâlidayn, zawj / ba'al, and imra'a / zawj / ṣaḫiba and their equivalents in French and English versions. It is actually about providing some details on these Arabic terms and their equivalents by examining how they have been used in the Qur'anic context to indicate specific meaning. It is divided into two main parts. The first discusses the issue of the rhetoric in the translation. The second analysis differentiates between French and English translations of these Qur'anic terms. This research aims to highlight the importance and the role of rhetoric in translating these terms into other languages in order to convey their meaning in an exact or even a correct way. The study concludes that gaps and shortcomings in the process of converting the meaning of kinship terms contribute to the distortion of the original meaning in general and the text in particular. The data analysis underscores the significance of distinguishing between seemingly synonymous terms to prevent misinterpretations. Moreover, by overlooking the cultural and linguistic nuances of these terms, translators may inadvertently convey inaccurate or incomplete meanings.

Keywords: English language; French language; Kinship terms; Rhetoric; Translation

INTRODUCTION

The speech of Allah, represented by the Holy Quran, is a miracle for its sublime language (Alhaj, 2015, p. 51) and is an important and very rich resource for research. Numerous linguistic studies have been carried out in this field, based in most cases on phonological, syntactic, morphological, and lexical criteria.

Among these studies, the issues of translating the Quran and its terms, especially Qur'anic kinship terms, have been delved into by scholars, who have highlighted the potential pitfalls and strategies for accurate rendering. Al Salem et al., (2023), for example, examine the semantic distinctions between the English terms "wife," "woman," and "companion" when used to translate Arabic kinship terms. They highlight the importance of understanding the cultural and religious connotations associated with these terms in Islamic contexts. AL-Tameemi (2017) also delves into the challenges of translating the Arabic terms *imra'a* and *zawj*, which can have multiple meanings depending on the context. She notes that a translator must carefully consider the specific meaning

intended in each instance to avoid inaccuracies. For Alharbi (2015), she analyses the sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects of kinship terms in the Quran, focusing on the use of address and reference terms. This study emphasises the role of social factors, such as gender, status, and setting, in shaping the choice of kinship terms in Classical Arabic. Moreover, Abdel Meguid (2011) explores the stylistic challenges of translating the Quran into French, pointing out the importance of preserving the original text's rhetorical devices and linguistic features. Thawabteh (2012) emphasises the difficulties arising from lexical discrepancies between Arabic and English kinship terms. He mentions that the polysemy of Arabic words, particularly those related to family and kinship, can lead to confusion and misinterpretation in translation. On their part, the researchers Al-Sahlany and Al-Husseini (2010) provide a comprehensive analysis of Qur'anic translation, touching on various issues, including the translation of kinship terms. They accentuate the need for translators to be sensitive to the cultural and religious context of the Quran and to employ appropriate translation strategies to convey the intended meaning.

Moreover, studying rhetoric in translation constitutes an obvious linguistic problem that can be studied generally because it offers fertile ground for rhetorical exploration. The varied differences between Arabic language (AL) and other languages pose many linguistic problems when converting the meaning of the Quran into French language (FL) and English language (EL), for example,

> Such a task becomes even more delicate when the translator starts translating a Qur'anic text. This difficulty comes, on the one hand, from the specificity of certain lexical elements, which are rooted in the structure of the language itself and immersed deeply in Arab culture and customs. And on the other hand, from the intended meanings and the messages that the Holy Quran wants to convey.
>
> (Al-Shams & Shubbar, 2019, p. 535)

In translating the Quran, Sadiq (2010, p. 44) argues, "the translator finds huge difficulties in conveying the complete meaning of culture-bound words." It is therefore difficult for the Francophone and the Anglophone receivers to be aware of the use of the precise meaning of these Qur'anic terms translated in an inaccurate or even false manner. So, to understand what they are being informed, and even to be more convinced by it, the receivers need to recognise the exact meaning. This study aims to emphasise the importance and the role of the rhetoric in translating the Qur'anic kinship terms into other languages in order to translate their meaning into FL and EL in an exact or even a correct way.

Over the years, the meaning of the Holy Quran has been translated into several languages. The kinship terms in the Quran that are translated to FL and EL without taking into account their precise meaning cause a lack of understanding of the specific meaning related to certain lexical elements. The issue of translation of kinship terms from Arabic to French and English, particularly within the Quran, has been delved into by Scholars, who highlight the potential pitfalls and strategies for accurate rendering.

As for this study, the researcher is interested in comparing certain terms in Qur'anic Arabic (QA) in the ST with their equivalents in French and English versions and examining the problems of their interpretations. The originality of this study lies in the fact of comparing different linguistic systems, such as Arabic, French, and English, that have different cultures.

The selection of French and English as target languages is supported by their historical and cultural relevance, worldwide prevalence, and variety of dialects. These languages have a rich corpus of Qur'anic translations and exist within distinct linguistic and cultural contexts to allow an analysis across translation strategies and effects on meaning and style of the text.

This study answers the following questions: What is the difference between *'abawayn* and *wâlidayn*, *zawj* and *ba'al*, *and imra'a*, *zawj*, and *ṣaḫiba*? What are the equivalents used to express *'abawayn* and *wâlidayn*, *zawj* and *ba'al*, *and imra'a*, *zawj*, and *ṣaḫiba* in the FL and EL versions of the Quran, and do the French and English translations of these kinship terms adequately convey the meaning and rhetorical nuances of the QA to Francophones and Anglophones?

This study is divided into two main parts. The first contains a general overview of rhetoric in translation: definition and function of rhetoric in the field of translation. The second part is a practical part in which the data is analysed. The researcher shows the stylistic feature characterising the kinship terms in QA and compares them with the FL and EL.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE RHETORIC IN TRANSLATION

The Quran, which is composed in QA, is characterised by its distinctive rhetorical style. This style is considered a challenge to maintaining accuracy in conveying the meaning of the ST, as it is often lost in translation. According to Nida and Taber (2003, p.3), some of the basic difficulties in translation of holy books are due to translators who often have quite wrong views of the target language as well as of the source language. Thus, to construct texts which will convey the exact meaning, translators often need to reconceive the source language and the target language and to radically rethink their attitude toward the target language, even when it is their native language: "In this manner, the translator's professional knowledge and personal experience play an immutable role in translation practice. Strictly speaking, how the outcome of the text is shaped hinges upon the translator's aptitude and his prior background" (Raoufkazemi et al., 2020, p. 157). However, the linguistic side is not only the level at which the translator must take into consideration to guarantee a quality translation. He must also take into account the cultural dimension of the text: cultural nuances and implicit references which can vary from one language to another and must be managed carefully to preserve the same meaning and effect of the ST (Newmark, 2003, p. 42). Consequently, linguistic and cultural awareness is demanded; the translator needs to be precise:

> Culture has a very effective role in translation. Even when the translation is utterly precise linguistically, it can never attain complete intelligibility without responding to the TC. Cultural issues in translation can convey the message or distort it. Therefore, they should be given special attention, especially in translating idioms, proverbs and culture-bound words, and translators should familiarise themselves with both the SC and the TC.
> (Sadiq, 2010, p. 45)

Baker (1992, p. 5) claims that accuracy, which presents a significant common target language pattern with which the target receptor is acquainted, is a crucial factor to maintain effective communication. Thus, when providing the target reader with an accurate translation, he can understand the impact of the source language.

Rhetoric of the kinship terminology in AL has always been a main objective of Arab legal scholars, philologists, sociologists, and rhetoricians (Al-Sahlany & Al-Husseini, 2010, p.721). The difference between *'abawayn* / *wâlidayn*, for example, is a subject treated by interpreters of the Quran like Al-Tabarî (9th - 10th centuries CE), Al-Razî (12th century CE), and Ibn Kathîr (14th century CE). Their interpretations raised questions that solicited us and drew great interest in this

theme since the specificity of certain terms in QA experiences linguistic difficulties when converting them into FL and EL.

Aristotle (2010, p. vii) defines rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. This is not a function of any other art", which possesses the capacity to convince within its particular domain. He determines rhetoric to be "the power of observing the means of persuasion on almost any subject presented to us; and that is why we say that, in its technical character, it is not concerned with any special or definite class of subjects."

Plato describes the rhetoric as "persuasion," and in accord with what he proposes, Kronman mentions that.

> The rhetoric is the art of persuading people to believe things, "the art of speaking or writing effectively", as the dictionary tells us, and wherever persuasion is needed, the art of rhetoric would seem to have a useful employment. This, of course, says nothing about the methods that rhetoric employs, or how it achieves its intended effects, but it does define, in a preliminary way, its field of operation.
>
> (Kronman, 1999, p. 677)

In AL, rhetoric is considered one of the properties that the Qur'anic text sustains. It "can never be properly treasured and preserved in translation without a solid linguistic proficiency in the relevant SL and TL, and a profound knowledge of the complexities of QA and its semantics" (Al-Kharabsheh & Al-Azzam, 2008, p. 10). Hence, the translation of the QA into receiving languages is not a possible mission (Alhaj, 2015, p. 52); it "has always been a highly problematic job for translators, no matter how efficient and skilful they might be" (Jaber, 2010, p. 944). Thus, "there has been no translation of the Holy Quran that is equivalent to or authoritative like the Arabic Quran yet" (Al-Hanini, 2018, p. 1). The translation processes risk undoing the QA from its original form and stripping it of one of its miraculous aesthetic attributes: the rhetoric. Due to this nature,

> The transposition nuances of the meaning of a term lead to the transfer of the literary image in its entirety. But if this aspect does not manage to convey this image well, then the transposition of the nuances of the vocabulary in relation to this aspect is almost impossible, or it is certainly impossible.
>
> (Al Azab, 2006, p. 49)

To show how difficult it is, if not impossible, for translators to imitate the rhetorical distinct features of the holy Quran when converting it into another language, Nabih describes the problems encountered when converting certain terms to a receiving language, which sometimes complicates the attempt to delimit the meaning of the entire Qur'anic message as follows:

> Without regard to the quality of the French translation of the Quran, it has always posed significant problems for translators. This is because this text is of an unparalleled linguistic and stylistic scope, such that it is considered inimitable. Besides the sacred character of its letter, considered to represent the divine word, one must mention this lexical density and stylistic richness, which sometimes make any attempt to grasp the meaning of the Qur'anic message in all its dimensions difficult. Certain terms with a very broad semantic field are practically untranslatable, and certain verses containing a plurality of meanings give rise to several readings or interpretations, some of which are erroneous.
>
> (Nabih, 2018, pp. 4-5)

The translation difficulties in conveying the rhetoric in QA to other languages are a result of the incongruence between QA and these languages. It is the rhetorical and the eloquent that express the meaning in indirect ways (Al-Kharabsheh & Al-Azzam, 2008, p. 11). On the other hand, FL and EL fail to convey such a meaning invisibly or explicitly. Namely, the QA owes its power to the types of terms used, the presence of which creates an atmosphere of mysterious

solemnity, which elevates the style above that of ordinary language. This fact has created great difficulties in conveying QA because in many cases FL and EL, like other languages, do not have lexical elements which have the same stylistic and emotional values and which cover the concepts in a style similar to that of the QA: "there is no word in the target language that has the same meaning in the source language" (Abbas & Tuma, 2020, p. 98). Besides, lexical elements can be rich in emotional meanings that are specific to language and culture: "Qur'anic lexical items are generally characterised by semantic compression where lengthy details of semantic features are compressed and encapsulated in a single word" (Abdul-Raof, 2001, p. 81).

METHODOLOGY

The present study explores rhetoric in the translation of kinship terms into French and English. The data comprised 12 translations of the Quran, consisting of 6 French and 6 English versions. The French translations included: Michon (2014) *Le Coran*; Abdelaziz (2009) *Le Coran: Traduction du sens de ses Versets*; Chiadmi (2008) *Le noble Coran: Nouvelle traduction française du sens de ses versets*; Chouraqui (1990) *Le Coran*; Masson (1967) *Le Coran*; and Blachère (1966) *Le Coran*. The English translations included: Sahih International (1997) *The Quran: Arabic text with corresponding English meanings*; Muhammad Sarwar (1982) *The Holy Quran, Arabic Text and English Translation*; Mohsin Khan and Al-Hilali (1977) *Translation of the Meanings of the The Noble Qur'ân into the English Language*; Arberry (1955) *The Koran Interpreted*; Yusuf Ali (1934) *The Holy Quran: Text, Translation and Commentary*; and Pickthall (1930) *The meaning of the glorious Koran*. These translations were rendered by translators from different countries and different cultures, as well as different conceptions.

To undertake this research, the kinship terms under consideration were thoroughly studied, and the sample selection was informed by a comprehensive examination of the relevant literature. The examples from the Qur'anic verses are first listed. These examples are restricted to certain terms that fall within the first degree of kinship. A Contrastive analysis is conducted following Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, pp. 9-10), which clarifies the language mechanisms that are involved in the translation process. The application of this procedure in translation is illustrated in the following passage:

> This conception leads them to establish a unique translation solution, which is, of course, impossible, since universal solutions do not really exist. They seek, above all, the correspondence between terms and equivalence, which becomes the identifying notion of these first linguistic studies.
>
> (Casas, 2009, p. 142)

This study is contextualised within the systematic descriptive translation studies. It describes the cultural and linguistic background of the kinship terms selected. The QA examples are subsequently correlated with their French and English translations. Taking into account cultural and linguistic nuances, the semantic equivalence for each corresponding pair is further explored. Terms are separately excerpted within their original context to ensure adequate contextual meaning. A comparative analysis is then performed, examining Qur'anic kinship terms alongside their French and English translations to determine the relationships between corresponding terms.

DATA ANALYSIS

Seven kinship terms*, ' abawayn* and *wâlidayn*, *zawj* and *ba'al*, and *imra'a, zawj* and *ṣaḫiba*, identifying relationships between parents/child and husband/wife, were identified in various verses of the Holy Quran. This corpus was analysed in both French and English versions, employing a comparative and qualitative content analysis to examine the impact of religious, cultural and linguistic factors on the translation process.

والدَيْن *wâlidayn* / أبَوَيْن *'abawayn*

The terms*' abawayn* and *walidayn*, which are cited in the Holy Quran, are specified particularly to parents/father and mother, though each of these terms has a special meaning that accords to the context in which it is brought up. The term*' abawayn* "is closer to the father with regard to the father's side, while the term *wâlidayn* "is closer to the mother who raised and worked hard, and the meaning is specific to the mother's side (Ahmad, 2020, pp. 1120-1121). As a result of these rhetorical differences between these terms, which appear similar, each term has its own and particular usage within the Qur'anic context, and each term cannot be replaced by the other term (Ahmad, 2020, p. 1156).

The rhetoric of the Quran has a prominent and clear role in distinguishing between the meanings of *'abawayn* and *wâlidayn*. Dawood (2008, p. 27) argues that the terms (*'ab-wâlid*) share the same semantic features: the reason for the existence of a child and the kinship. The term*' ab*, on the one hand, refers to predecessors and ancestors. And on the other hand, it means childcaring and upbringing. Nevertheless, the term *wâlid* is characterised in the Qur'anic use by its meaning of sired (birth father or a biological parent).

Whereas the terms (*'um-wâlidah*) have a semantic affinity between them, they share the same semantic feature: the expression of the origin. As for the difference between them, the term *'um* has a general meaning, it indicates: mother, nursing mother, pregnant woman, ancestor, and wives of Prophet Mohammed, although the term *wâlidah* has a special signification: mother who gives birth to a child (Dawood, 2008, p. 79-80).
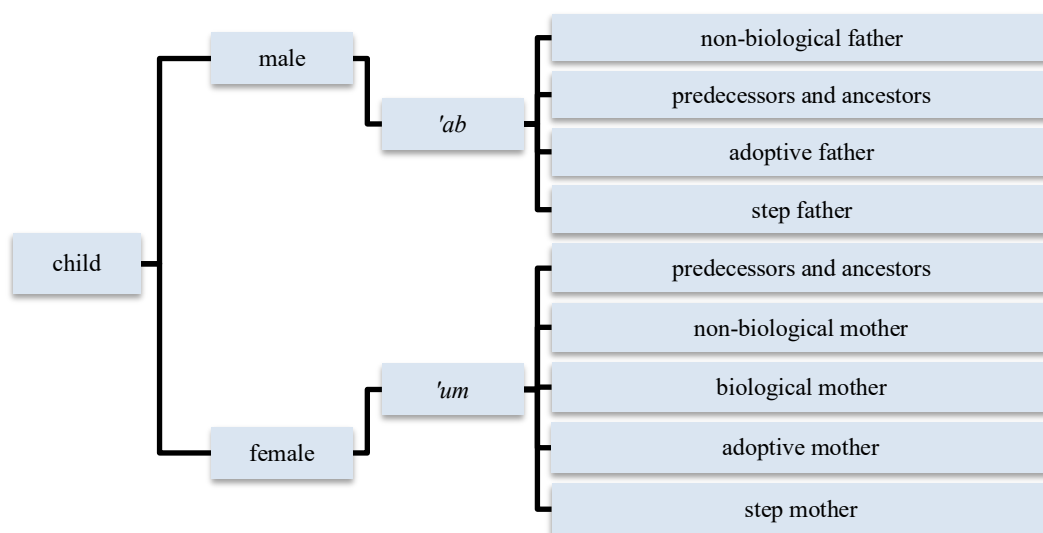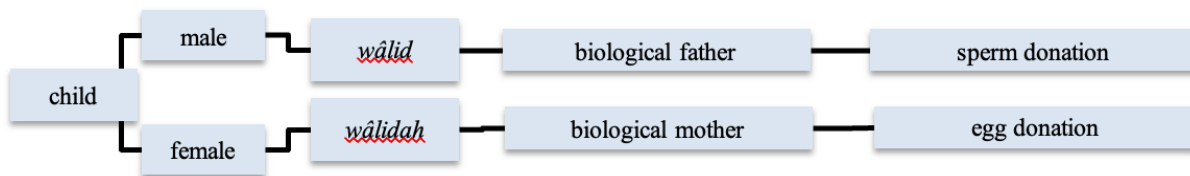

FIGURE 1. Reference of the term*' ab* and *'um* in QA

FIGURE 2. Reference to the term *wâlid* and *wâlidah* in QA

TABLE 1. Occurrence of the term *'abawayh* in French translation

Example 1	فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ آوَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ ﴿99 يوسف﴾
SL	آوَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْهِ :
Michon (2014)	: celui-ci accueillit son père et sa mère
Abdelaziz (2009)	: il serra contre lui ses père et mère
Chiadmi (2008)	: celui-ci accueillit son père et sa mère
Chouraqui (1990)	: il accueille chez lui ses deux parents
Masson (1967)	: celui-ci accueillit son père et sa mère
Blachère (1966)	: celui-ci accueillit ses père et mère

The term *'abawayh* ' is used in ST instead of *wâlidayh* due to the fact that the woman who was with Joseph's father is not his biological mother; she was his stepmother (Al-Najâr, 2016, p. 162). In translating this term, the nuanced meaning of *'abawayh* is not simply defined by its linguistic form but is determined by the cultural and historical context that the translator must be cognizant of, without which the translation can distort the rhetoric of the intended meaning, and the information that it provides "is fallacious indeed because Prophet Joseph's mother was dead throughout the sura and it was his maternal aunt intended in the text rather his mother" (Thawabteh, 2012, p. 121).

In Table 1, the term *'abawayh* (lit. parents) is interpreted as *son père et sa mère* in most of the translations of ST. Chouraqui uses the term *parents* as an equivalent to *'abawayh*. In FL, the term *parents* refers either to *le père et la mère* or *les ancêtres*: "parent, itself etymologically descended from the Latin verbs *parere, pario*, which mean 'to generate, to produce'. In Latin, *parens* refers to fathers, mothers and other descendants" (Latuillière, 2015, p. 15).

TABLE 2. Occurrence of the term *'abawayh* in English translation

Example 2	فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ آوَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ ﴿99 يوسف﴾
SL	آوَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْهِ :
Sahih International (1997)	: He took his parents
Muhammad Sarwar (1982)	: He welcomed his parents
Khan and Al-Hilali (1977)	: he betook his parents
Arberry (1955)	: he took his father and mother
Yusuf Ali (1934)	: he provided a home for his parents
Pickthall (1930)	: he took his parents

The term *'abawayh* (lit. parents) mentioned in Table 2 is interpreted mostly as *parents*. Arberry merely uses the term father and mother as an equivalent to *'abawayh*. In EL, the term parents means a person who gives birth to or raises a child, a mother or father of a person, or someone who looks after a person in the same way that a parent does.

TABLE 3. Occurrence of the term *wâlidân* in French translation

Example 3	لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا﴿النساء 7 ﴾
SL	مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ:
Michon (2014)	: ce qu'ont laissé leurs parents
Abdelaziz (2009)	: ce qu'ont laissé les père et mère
Chiadmi (2008)	: dans l'héritage laissé par leurs ascendants
Chouraqui (1990)	: ce que laissent les deux parents
Masson (1967)	: ce que leurs parents
Blachère (1966)	: ce que laissent les père et mère

This Qur'anic verse addresses the subject of the division of the inheritance; therefore, the term *wâlidân* should be used instead of the *'abawân*. In Table 3, the term *wâlidân* (lit. who give birth) is translated as *parents/père et mère/ascendants*. In FL, the term *ascendants* refers to the generations from which one is descended directly, that is to say, the parent from whom one descends: *father*, *mother*, *grandfather*, *and great-grandfather*.

The translators equally used the terms *parents* and *père et mère* as an equivalent for both Arabic kin terms *'abawân* and *wâlidân*.

TABLE 4. Occurrence of the term *wâlidân* in English translation

Example 4	لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا﴿النساء 7 ﴾
SL	مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ:
Sahih International (1997)	: of what the parents and close relatives leave
Muhammad Sarwar (1982)	: in the legacy of their parents
Khan and Al-Hilali (1977)	: from what is left by parents
Arberry (1955)	: of what parents and kinsmen leave
Yusuf Ali (1934)	: from what is left by parents
Pickthall (1930)	: of that which parents and near kindred leave

As cited above in Table 4, all translators translate the term *wâlidân* (lit. who give birth) as parents. It is obvious that the translators could not render the real meaning of the kin term *wâlidân*; they used parents as an equivalent for both Arabic kin terms *'abawân* and *wâlidân*.

zawj زَوْج / *ba'al* بَعْل

In AL, as a verb, *zaw-waja* زَوَّجَ conveys "to join" and "to generate," and as a term, *zawj* زَوْج "refers to both spouses, the pair, or the partner" (Lamrabet, 2016, p. 11). This term "is given to any two things that are related to each other, whether similarly or oppositely" (Osman, 2014, p. 21). In the Holy Quran, this term is used to mean mate, spouse, or group. *Zawj* is grammatically masculine and takes corresponding masculine verbal antecedents. However, conceptually it is neither masculine nor feminine…*Zawj* is also used to indicate females as well as males" (Ali, 2004, p. 19). In the Holy Quran, it is often used to speak about a couple whose married life would be harmonious and stable.

A distinct difference between *zawj* and *ba'al* in Qur'anic usage has been addressed by Al-Teenawy (2011, pp. 127-129), who mentioned that in both cases, when a male assumes the role of *zawj* or *ba'al*, there is a marriage agreement, but the difference is that *zawj* is considered as a party to a marriage with a sexual function, while *ba'al* is considered as a party to a marriage with no sexual function. The *zawj* becomes *ba'al* out of the intimate relationship, if he abstains from sexual

intercourse with his wife, whether due to advancing age, illness, or a legal impediment such as the period of waiting *'iddah* after divorce.

TABLE 5. Occurrence of the term *zawj* in French translation

Example 5	قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿1 المجادلة﴾
SL	الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا :
Michon (2014)	: celle qui discutait avec toi au sujet de son époux
Abdelaziz (2009)	: celle qui discutait avec toi, de son mari
Chiadmi (2008)	: celle qui discutait avec toi au sujet de son mari
Chouraqui (1990)	: celle qui a plaidé auprès de toi pour ses épousailles
Masson (1967)	: celle qui discutait avec toi au sujet de son époux
Blachère (1966)	: celle qui discutait avec [toi, Prophète!], au sujet de son époux

In Table 5, which shows the different French translations, it is remarkable that the terms *époux*, *mari*, *épousailles* are used as an equivalent of *zawj* (lit. pair) in Arabic. Abdelaziz and Chiadmi employed the term *mari*, which is a literary translation of *zawj* in FL; this term is derived from the verb *marier*, the equivalent of *zawaja* in AL, while the other translators prefer the term *époux*. In his translation, Chouraqui uniquely opted for the Latin term *épousailles*, a feminine plural noun that refers to a celebration or ceremony of a marriage, wedding, union, *sponsus*, and *époux*. This departure from the Arabic equivalent *zawj* offers a different interpretation of the text.

TABLE 6. Occurrence of the term *zawj* in English translation

Example 6	قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿1 المجادلة﴾
SL	الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا :
Sahih International (1997)	: concerning her husband
Muhammad Sarwar (1982)	: disputed with you about her husband
Khan and Al-Hilali (1977)	: disputes with you (O Muhammad SAW) concerning her husband (Aus bin As-Samit)
Arberry (1955)	: disputes with the concerning her husband
Yusuf Ali (1934)	: concerning her husband
Pickthall (1930)	: concerning her husband

All the translators in Table 6, which shows the English translations of the same verse, used the term husband as an equivalent of *zawj* (lit. pair), and as it is clear that there is no other translation proposed. The term husband does not derive from any verb, as we saw above in the case of the term *mari*. The verb that expresses the action of marriage in EL is *marry*; this verb has these derivations: marriage (n.) and married (adj.); it lacks a specific term that could express a partnership of marriage.

TABLE 7. Occurrence of the term *ba'al* in French translation

Example 7	وَإِنِ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا ﴿١٢٨ النساء﴾
SL	وَإِنِ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا :
Michon (2014)	: Quand une femme redoute d'être maltraitée ou abandonnée par son mari,
Abdelaziz (2009)	: Si une femme redoute de son époux des brutalités ou de l'éloignement
Chiadmi (2008)	: Au cas où une femme constate de la part de son mari une attitude hostile ou un certain refroidissement
Chouraqui (1990)	: Si une femme redoute de son mari dureté ou indifférence
Masson (1967)	: Quand une femme redoute l'abandon ou l'indifférence de son mari
Blachère (1966)	: Si une femme craint, de son époux; rudesse ou indifférences

In the Table above, which displays the different French translations of the term *ba'al* (lit. head of household), it is noteworthy that the translators have used the same terms *époux*, *mari*, and *épousailles* that they used before when translating the term *zawj*. As mentioned before, the terms *zawj* and *ba'al* are not synonyms in the AL; thus, when trying to find an equivalent for these terms, it appears that the translators have not taken into consideration the difference in meaning of these kinship terms.

TABLE 8. Occurrence of the term *ba'al* in English translation

Example 8	وَإِن امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا ﴿١٢٨ النساء﴾
SL	وَإِن امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا :
Sahih International (1997)	: And if a woman fears from her husband contempt or evasion
Muhammad Sarwar (1982)	: If a woman is afraid of her husband's ill treatment and desertion
Khan and Al-Hilali (1977)	: And if a woman fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part
Arberry (1955)	: If a woman fear rebelliousness or aversion in her husband
Yusuf Ali (1934)	: a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part
Pickthall (1930)	: If a woman feareth ill treatment from her husband

Table 8 illustrates the English translations of the term *ba'al* (lit. head of household); all the translators have used *husband* as equivalent for *ba'al*. As shown in Table 6, the term *husband* is also used as an equivalent of *zawj*, and this is due to the fact that a misunderstanding of the concepts of Qur'anic kin terms is found. Considering them to be synonymous is one of the main reasons that lead to errors in translating Qur'anic kin terms into other languages.

صَاحِبَة *ṣaḥiba* / زَوْج *zawj* / امْرَأة *imra'a*

As stated in the Holy Quran, three terms describe the female's status in the legal relationship that pairs a woman to a man, which is marriage. These terms are *imra'a* / *zawj* / *ṣaḥiba*, denoting consecutively femininity, mating and similarity, and consort:

> In most cases, each one conveys the meaning of "wife"; each one involves a hidden message and specifically helps in identifying the exact nature of the marital relationship indicated in the Qur'anic verses, which would otherwise remain undisclosed to readers of the Quran. Differently put, there are slight differences in the meanings of the Qur'anic designations for the word "female spouse" that should be adequately rendered by attending to the nuances of meaning suggested by the context.
>
> (Al Salem et al., 2023, p. 16)

Thus, the term *zawj* is not used in the Holy Quran except in the case of a woman who fulfils the pairing specifications: the first is that she believes and follows her husband in the correct faith. The second is to have the ability to conceive and give birth. If one or more of these two specifications are missing, or when the woman is a widow or fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, then she is considered as an *imra'a* and not as a *zawj* in this case. Moreover, the term *imra'ra* "has different meanings depending on the context… Three meanings can be identified: first, a sterile woman; secondly, a barren woman; and thirdly, a virgin or maiden woman" (AL-Tameemi, 2017, p. 159). At the same time, the term *ṣaḥiba* is approached in the Holy Quran to describe a partner whose intellectual, physical, and/or emotional relationship is interrupted with her husband.

The term *imra'a* is used to describe the relation of marriage between Walegha and Noah, as well as between Waleha and Lot, which contains all normal interactions between spouses. However, both women betrayed their husbands in the faith. They did not adhere to the faith sent

through their husbands, did not accept their message, and did not follow their religion. Hence, each of them is an *imra'a* and not a *zawj*.

TABLE 9. Occurrence of the term *imra'a* in French translation

Example 9	ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَ امْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ ﴿10 التحريم﴾
SL	امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَ امْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ :
Michon (2014)	: la femme de Noé et la femme de Loth
Abdelaziz (2009)	: la femme de Noé et la femme de Loth
Chiadmi (2008)	: la femme de Noé et celle de Loth
Chouraqui (1990)	: la femme de Nûh et la femme de Lût
Masson (1967)	: la femme de Noé et la femme de Lot
Blachère (1966)	: la femme de Noé et la femme de Loth

All the French translators shown in Table 9 used the term femme in order to convey the meaning of *imra'a* (lit. women). In FL, *femme* is often used in an informal style. Thus, the translators in Table 9 adhered to the grammatical structure, so they used the term *femme* to maintain the same form as used in the verse.

TABLE 10. Occurrence of the term *imra'a* in English translation

Example 10	ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَ امْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ ﴿10 التحريم﴾
SL	امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَ امْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ :
Sahih International (1997)	: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot
Muhammad Sarwar (1982)	: the wives of Noah and Lot
Khan and Al-Hilali (1977)	: the wife of Nuh (Noah) and the wife of Lout (Lot)
Arberry (1955)	: the wife of Noah, and the wife of Lot
Yusuf Ali (1934)	: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lut
Pickthall (1930)	: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot

In Table 10, the kinship term *imra'at* (lit. woman) is translated as wife, which refers to a married woman mainly when considered in relation to her partner in marriage. It is derived from the Old English term wife which means woman. Over time, the meaning has evolved to specifically refer to a married woman.

TABLE 11. Occurrence of the term *zawj* in French translation

Example 11	وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا ﴿35 البقرة﴾
SL	اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ :
Michon (2014)	: Habite avec ton épouse dans le Jardin
Abdelaziz (2009)	: Habite, toi et ta conjointe, le Paradis
Chiadmi (2008)	: Installe-toi avec ton épouse dans le Paradis
Chouraqui (1990)	: habite le Jardin avec ton épouse
Masson (1967)	: Habite avec ton épouse dans le jardin
Blachère (1966)	: habite ce Jardin, toi et ton épouse

The French translators shown in Table 11 chose to convey *zawj* (lit. pair) by using the term *épouse*, which appears as a synonym of *femme*. In FL, *épouse* belongs to the legal or administrative language that is still under the influence of the language of the Church. Abdelaziz chooses to use the term *conjointe*, which, according to Larousse and Le Robert dictionaries, has the meaning of a person who lives as a couple with another or a wife. Therefore, the translators in Table 11 adhered to the grammatical structure, so they used the term *épouse* and its lexical equivalent to maintain the same form as used in the verse.

TABLE 12. Occurrence of the term *zawj* in English translation

Example 12	وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا ﴿35 البقرة﴾
SL :	اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ
Sahih International (1997)	: dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise
Muhammad Sarwar (1982)	: to stay with his spouse (Eve) in the Garden
Khan and Al-Hilali (1977)	: Dwell you and your wife in the Paradise
Arberry (1955)	: dwell thou, and thy wife,
Yusuf Ali (1934)	: dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden
Pickthall (1930)	: Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden

In Table 12, it is notable that *zawj* (lit. pair) is translated as wife and spouse. In EL, as in AL, the term spouse, as well as the term *zawj*, can be used to refer to the husband as well as the wife. This term is only used in the translation that has been prepared by Muhammad Sarwar.

According to its typical usage, the term *ṣaḥib / ṣaḥiba* means companion, associate, or fellow; it refers to someone who keeps company with someone, animal, or place. This term is derived from the verb *ṣaḥiba* صَحِبَ, which means to accompany, to associate, or to befriend someone (Leaman, 2006, p. 556). According to Ibn Kathîr (Abdul-Rahman, 2009, p. 198), *ṣaḥiba*, the feminine form, is used in the Holy Quran to describe a wife who lived, spent a lot of time, and shared activities with her husband; however, the intellectual and physical relationships between these spouses are interrupted.

TABLE 13. Occurrence of the term *ṣaḥiba* in French translation

Example 13	وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَىٰ جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا ﴿3 الجن﴾
SL	مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَة :
Michon (2014)	: ne s'est donné ni compagne
Abdelaziz (2009)	: Il n'A jamais Pris de compagne
Chiadmi (2008)	: Il Se soit donné une épouse
Chouraqui (1990)	: il ne prend ni compagne
Masson (1967)	: ne s'est donnée ni compagne
Blachère (1966)	: n'a pas pris de compagne

Most French translators shown in Table 13 used the term *compagne*, which is the literary equivalent to *ṣaḥiba* in AL. This term in old FL signifies who shares the same bread, whence it means someone who shares someone's life as a wife or as a concubine. Chiadmi adhered to using the term *épouse* to maintain the same meaning; he failed to consider whether the use of *épouse* is adequate in this context or not.

Therefore, the Arabic kin terms *imra'a*, *zawj*, and *ṣaḥiba* have been conveyed mainly by using either the grammatical structure or the literary equivalent to maintain the same form as used in the verse. The translators appear unable to convey these kin terms into FL; they have not taken into account the precise meaning of these terms.

TABLE 14. Occurrence of the term *ṣaḥiba* in English translation

Example 13	وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَىٰ جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا ﴿3 الجن﴾
SL	مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَة :
Sahih International (1997)	: He has not taken a wife
Muhammad Sarwar (1982)	: to have either a wife
Khan and Al-Hilali (1977)	: He has taken neither a wife
Arberry (1955)	: has not taken to Himself either consort
Yusuf Ali (1934)	: He has taken neither a wife
Pickthall (1930)	: hath taken neither wife

Most translators listed in Table 14 reproduce the meaning of *ṣaḥiba* (lit. companion) within the use of wife, which is not the equivalent of *ṣaḥiba*. Arberry's translation employs the term consort, which means, according to the Oxford and Cambridge English dictionaries, the husband or wife of a king, queen, ruler, etc. Therefore, such a term has been avoided, and the meaning of the Qur'anic verse has been transferred by using the term wife and consort as an equivalent for the term *ṣaḥiba*.

Hence, the Arabic kin terms *imra'a*, *zawj*, and *ṣaḥiba* have been rendered mostly into FL by using the terms *femme*, *épouse,* and *compagne* as equivalents for these terms. However, they have been rendered into EL by using the term *wife* as an equivalent for these terms. It seems that the translators have not distinguished the meaning of these kinship terms; therefore, the rhetoric in the translation of these kinship terms has been lost.

DISCUSSION

This study examines the translation of certain Qur'anic kinship terms into French and English, focusing on the primary role of rhetoric and the challenges posed by linguistic and cultural differences. The research illustrates the importance of accurately conveying the nuanced meanings of these terms, as imprecise translations can lead to misinterpretations and a loss of rhetorical impact.

The study finds that many translations consistently fail to accurately convey the rhetorical nuances embedded within Qur'anic kinship terms. It establishes that translators often utilise perfunctory renderings, overlooking the subtle yet significant distinctions between terms that, while seemingly synonymous, carry distinct cultural and religious connotations. As the study demonstrates, these terms are not interchangeable within the Qur'anic context; each occupies a specific semantic space and contributes to the overall rhetorical effect. The utilisation of "parents," "husband," and "wife" in the TL obscures these distinctions, resulting in a deficient understanding of the relationships described. This disregard for the nuanced meanings of the SL terms suggests a lack of deep engagement with the cultural and religious context of the Quran. The study concludes that each kinship term has a unique and irreplaceable function within the Qur'anic text.

These findings have significant implications for both translation theory and practice, especially when dealing with religious texts. These findings expose the limitations of literal or grammatically focused translation approaches. Accurate translation of culturally embedded terms, like kinship terms, requires more than merely identifying lexical equivalents; it necessitates a deep understanding of the SL culture, religious context, and the rhetorical strategies employed in the text. The study emphasises the crucial role of the translator's religious and cultural background, stressing the importance of a "religious infrastructure" that includes cultural knowledge, sensitivity to rhetorical nuance, and an awareness of diverse interpretations of the Quran. Unintended meanings, loss of rhetorical force, and even distortion or omission of the original message, as noted in the study, can lead to misinterpretations and affect both scholarly understanding and the accessibility of the Quran for a wider range of receivers.

This study concentrates on a select group of kinship terms and a specific set of French and English translations. Thus, because of this limited scope, the findings may have limited applicability to all Qur'anic terms or all translations. Additionally, the study primarily examines the translations themselves, without directly examining how these translations are received and interpreted by target receivers.

This study suggests several future research directions to improve the translations of religious texts in general and the Quran in particular. A broader analysis of Qur'anic terms and translations is needed for a more comprehensive understanding. Crucially, research should explore how target non-Arabic speakers receive translations. Investigating the impact of exegesis on translation decisions is vital. Ultimately, the development of effective translator training programs is of paramount importance, given their emphasis on cultural sensitivity, rhetorical awareness, and the specific challenges of religious text translation and their incorporation of insights from this and other studies to enhance translation quality and accessibility.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the intricate challenges of translating kinship terms in the Holy Quran into French and English, revealing a significant loss of rhetorical nuance. Analysing terms such as *'abawayn/wâlidayn*, *zawj/ba'al*, and *imra'a/zawj/ṣaḥiba* has demonstrated how seemingly synonymous terms carry distinct connotations within the Qur'anic context, connotations often obscured in target language renditions. For instance, the subtle distinctions between *zawj* and *ba'al*, reflecting varying degrees of marital relationship, are frequently flattened into a single equivalent in both French and English, diminishing the richness of the original text. This loss of nuance stems from a lack of attention to the Qur'anic linguistic structure and a less-than-comprehensive understanding of the religious cultural context, ultimately impacting the interpretation and reception of the text.

Translators must move beyond literal equivalence and adopt a more nuanced, context-sensitive approach. By integrating a robust theoretical framework, including a hermeneutic perspective, and meticulously considering the cultural and linguistic subtleties of source and target languages, translators can strive for greater accuracy and faithfulness to the original intent.

This research underscores the crucial role of interpretation in translation, particularly when dealing with sacred texts. Ultimately, by bridging linguistic and cultural gaps, translators can facilitate a deeper and more authentic engagement with the Holy Quran across different linguistic communities, ensuring that its profound message resonates with its intended richness and complexity.

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