Difficulties and Strategies in Translating Verb-Noun Collocations in the Qur'an by Arab Translators

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Abstract

This paper tries to display the importance of finding the correct equivalents in the target language when translating the Arabic verb-noun collocations, particularly those of the Qur'an, into English. The analytical focus is on the translations of four native Arab translators of the Qur'an. Analysis of these four translations will be based on the translation models of Newmark (1988) and Venuti (1995). The paper's objectives are (i) identifying the difficulties encountered by the selected translators in their respective translations of the Qur'anic collocations, (ii) showing the extent to which they succeeded in finding the correct equivalent English collocations in their respective translations of Qur'anic collocations, and (iii) suggesting strategies for translating the Qur'anic non-equivalent collocations that convey the intended meaning. Findings reveal that the translation of the Qur'anic collocations depends on understanding the meanings of these Qur'anic collocations and finding the precise equivalent collocations in the target language, which, in turn, communicate the intended meaning of the Qur'anic collocations in a much more native-like translation. The study recommends the use of faithful, functional equivalence, and communicative strategies for translating non-equivalent collocations. However, if these strategies do not convey the full intended meaning, the foreignization strategy may be more appropriate, as it conveys the meaning and the culture of the source text.

Keywords: Arab translators, translation difficulties, translation strategies, the Qur'an, verb-noun collocation

1. Introduction

Collocations play an important role in a language, as they preserve the language's coherence. Collocations add a unique flavor to a language and make it more appealing, beautiful, powerful, effective, and rhetorical (Ghazala, 2008). Understanding them can enhance the natural expression of one's ideas. Development of linguistic competence depends on one's knowledge of which nouns go with which adjectives or which adjectives go with which nouns (Sarikas, 2006). Knowledge of collocations (collocational competence) is an essential requirement for translators to have a high command of the target language. A translator's unawareness of the natural collocational patterns of a target language may lead to translations that sound strange or even incorrect to native speakers of that target language. The translation of the English collocation "'to call tears' into Arabic as '*da'wat ad-dumū*' دعوة الدموع (meaning invitation of tears)'" is an illustrative example. Although the translation is grammatically correct in Arabic, it does not sound natural nor native-like to Arabic speakers who expect it to be "*dharf ad-dumū*' ذرف الدموع or 'shed tears'" (Brashi, 2005, pp. 4-5).

Translation of the meaning of a collocation is acceptable but poorer than finding the proper equivalent one in the target language (Ghazala, 2008). However, identical equivalents are almost impossible to find across languages (Belloc, 1931; Nida, 2003). Therefore, translators should try their best to find the closest possible equivalent in the target language (TL). Forster (1958) states that a good translation is "one which fulfills the same purpose in the new language as the original did in the language in which it was written" (p. 6). However, the translation is sometimes better than the original. The original text, albeit providing significant information, is perhaps poorly written and needs lucidity. A good translator can tie up loose ends and rewrite the awkward sentences. Nida (2003) points out that the translation process becomes more difficult when there is a disparity between the structures of both the source language and the target language. However, differences in the structures of languages cause less severe complications for the translator than differences between the cultures of those languages. This holds true for Arabic and English, where both language structures and cultures are different.

The importance of the current research lies in the fact that the Qur'an is one of the main sources of numerous words and phrases that are still common in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) today. The Qur'an has long been praised for being a rich source of expressions, including collocations. This still has an impact on how the Arabic language is used today (Brashi, 2005). Furthermore, the teachings and the cultural values of the Qur'an are disseminated via its numerous translations. It is claimed that over forty English translations of the Qur'an were produced between 2000 and 2017. Nonetheless, close examinations of these translations reveal obvious errors in many of them (El-Sayed, 2020; Kidwai, 2018). Therefore, the current research attempts to help translators produce what Goodspeed (1945) calls "the best translation," which makes the readers constantly forget that they are reading a translation and makes them feel that they are

looking into an original English piece of writing (p. 8). This is a challenging task for professional translators. The same point of view is supported by Phillips (1953), who asserts that "the test of a real translation is that it should not read like a translation at all" (p. 53).

1.1 Research Objectives

This paper has three main objectives:

1. To identify the difficulties encountered by the selected translators in their respective translations of the Qur'anic verb-noun collocations.

2. To show the extent to which the selected translators succeeded in finding the correct equivalent English collocations in their respective translations of Qur'anic collocations.

3. To suggest strategies for translating the Qur'anic non-equivalent collocations, which convey the intended meaning.

1.2 Research Questions

This paper seeks to answer the following three research questions:

1. What are the difficulties encountered by the selected translators in their respective translations of the Qur'anic collocations?

2. To what extent did they succeed in finding the correct equivalent English collocations in their respective translations of Qur'anic collocations?

3. What are the suggested strategies for translating the Qur'anic non-equivalent collocations that convey the intended meaning?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Collocation

A collocation is described by Newmark (1988) as the "habitual co-occurrence of individual lexical items" (e.g., "commit a crime") (pp. 212-213). He also considers collocations as the nerves of a text, the lexis as the flesh, and grammar as the bones.   Palmer cites Firth as arguing that "you shall know a word by the company it keeps". He adds that collocation is a part of the meaning of a word, as is the case with the context of a situation and all other levels of linguistic analysis.   Some words may have particular meanings in specific collocations (Alruwaili et al., 2025). This could be reflected in the example of 'an exceptional child' who is not an abnormal one, as the adjective 'abnormal' suggests some sort of defect. However, it is possible to say 'abnormal' or 'exceptional weather' to refer to a heat wave in November. There is also the colour 'blond' which is collocated with hair and not with the door. Hence, we can say 'blond hair' but not 'blond door' (Palmer, 1976, pp. 94-6; Newmark, 1988; Firth, 1957; Dickins et al., 2005). Larson (1998) also points out that collocations determine which meaning is given to a word in a phrase or a sentence.   For instance, the word 'dress' has two different meanings when it is used with 'child' and 'chicken'. To dress a child means "to put clothes on," whereas to dress a chicken means "to take the feathers off." Hence, knowing which words go together helps in comprehending the text and rendering it accurately (p. 155). This is portrayed by Firth (1957) as "meaning by collocation," which is "an abstraction at the syntagmatic level". Such a procedure of identifying the meaning of words is not related to the conceptual interpretations of words. For instance, he remarks that one of the meanings of 'night' is identified by its collocability with 'dark', and that of 'dark' by its collocability with 'night' (p. 196).

A collocation is composed of a node and collocates. The node is the head word, whose pattern of co-occurrence is the focus of examination, and the words, which are combined with it within a given linguistic context, are collocates. Based on their constituents, collocations can be categorized into lexical collocations and grammatical collocations. The grammatical collocations include content words paired with function words, mostly prepositions. For instance, the verb *istarsala* can have different meanings, according to the preposition it collocates with, as in *istarsala ilā* إلى استرسل (to feel at ease with someone), and *istarsala fī* في استرسل (to dilate on) (Izwaini, 2015, p. 72; Stubbs, 1995; Qassem, 2022). Based on the word class of the node and its collocates, Izwaini (2015) provides a concise categorization for the lexical collocations in Arabic, i.e., verb collocations, noun collocations, adverb collocations, and adjective collocations, classifying these types into sub-types.

2.2 Collocational Range

Collocational range of a word is demonstrated by Larson (1998) as the list of all other words with which it may occur. Some words may have a very small range, while others may have a very large one. A word's position in the generic-specific scale often determines how many collocations it can have. For instance, the terms 'sheep' or 'dog' will have a less collocational range than the word 'animal'. Also, one cannot expect that two words will have the same range of collocations. For example, the nouns 'child', 'man', 'chicken', 'dog', and 'horse' collocate with the verbs 'walk', 'drink', 'eat', and 'run'. Yet, child, man, and chicken do not collocate with the noun 'race'; only dog and horse do (e.g., horse race and dog race). Larson (1998) claims that all learners of a second language make lexical collocational errors, or 'collocational clashes. Consequently, he advises the translator to suspect any word not used in its main sense and check constantly with the native speakers of the receptor language to be able to determine whether certain words collocate with each other or not. For instance, if English is not the mother tongue of a translator, translating into English, such a translator will always need to check with a native speaker of English. However, Larson (1998) points out that the collocability of words varies from one language to another, depending on their linguistic and cultural differences. What collocates in one language may not collocate in another. This is because every language has its own lexical collocational restrictions. For example, in some languages, the verb 'believe' does not collocate with people. Hence, to avoid a collocational clash in such languages, one should not translate "I believed him" literally, but the translation might need

to say, "I believed what he said" (pp. 159-62).

Similarly, Baker (2011) states, "patterns of collocation are basically arbitrary and independent of meaning" (p. 48-49). This is true both within and across languages. She gives the example of the English verb 'deliver', which collocates with many nouns, which collocate with different Arabic verbs. For instance, deliver 'a letter', 'a speech', 'news', 'a blow', 'a verdict', and 'a baby', which can be translated respectively as *yusallim khiṭāban* يسلم خطاباً, *yūlqī khuṭbatan* يلقي خطبة, *yanqilu akhbāran* ينقل أخباراً, *yūwajjihu ḍarbatan* يوجه ضربةً, *yuṣdiru ḥukman* يصدر حكماً, and *yūwallidu imra'atan* يولد امرأةً. The latter Arabic phrase, *yuwallidu imra'atan*, literally means, 'assist a woman in childbirth'. In Modern English Usage, it is normally improper to say 'deliver a woman' instead of 'deliver a baby'. This is because English tends to emphasize the infant, while Arabic emphasizes the woman in the process of giving birth to a child. This implies that different collocational patterns across languages can encompass entirely various methods of describing an incident rather than simply using a different verb with a certain noun. Therefore, the acceptance or otherwise of a collocation cannot be accounted for, but through habitual use and familiarity. This is attested to by the collocation 'white coffee.' In reality, coffee can never be white. There is also no difference in meaning between the words 'flock' and 'herd' except that 'flock' is used with sheep and 'herd' is used with cows (Palmer, 1976; Robins, 1964).

All languages include items that collocate frequently with one another. Hence, collocation, as a linguistic phenomenon, exists in Arabic as it does in other languages. It has been studied as part of semantics, translation, grammar, and lexicography, and has been assigned different labels in accordance with these fields of study. For instance, the works of classical Arab philologists dealt with collocation as a linguistic phenomenon in Arabic. However, it was not given a name. Al-Jāḥiz observes that some Qur'anic lexical items take on positive or negative meanings when they collocate with other lexical items, depending on the context in which they appear with other vocabulary items. This is indicated in using the *maṭarat* in the context of God's granting mercy and the use of *amṭarat* with the added prefix 'a' in the context of God's inflicting torture (El-Gemei, 2006; Al-Jāḥiz, 1948).

2.3 Related Studies

Verb-noun collocations in the Qur'an are often difficult to translate, especially when there are no direct equivalent collocates in the target language. The problem of the absence of collocates has been called 'collocational gap' and has been studied in corpus linguistics, translation studies, and Qur'anic translation studies. Farghal & Obiedat (1995) refer to the collocational gap problem in the Arabic-English translation context, pointing out that collocational non-equivalence frequently leads to problematic or unnatural translations in the target language. Likewise, Howarth (1998) examines the difficulties, which translators and non-native speakers face, when reproducing idiomatic and natural verb-noun collocations, especially in formal or religious language.

Ali (2019) highlights the importance of considering the Qur'anic collocations as a separate semantic field. He points out the defect of literal translation, which is its frequent failure to grasp the implied meanings of the source text, particularly verb-noun collocations. Free translation can be relied on for expressing concealed meanings in context-dependent statements. He criticizes the literal translation strategy adopted by Pickthall (1938), Al-Hilali and Khan (1996) for confusing meaning in Qur'anic collocations. He argues that communicative strategies of paraphrasing and footnoting provide a more obvious conveyance of the intended meaning. Asiri (2020) also applies Toury's (2012) Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) method to the translation of culture-specific items (CSIs) in the Qur'an. His corpus-based research shows that Arab translators, like Al-Hilali & Khan (1996), use a literalist approach due to theological faithfulness. Asiri (2020) categorizes translation strategies for CSIs into source-oriented (e.g., literal translation, transference) and target-oriented (e.g., generalization, cultural substitution). He points out that translators use couplets or triplets to strike a balance between linguistic accuracy and communication clarity, such as (literal translation + gloss + paraphrase).

Qassem (2021) also points out a difficulty in translating the Qur'anic verb-noun collocations due to their unique style. This is because translators often focus on conveying the informational message and neglect the aesthetic and rhetorical devices, which are characteristic of the Qur'anic discourse. For instance, the idiomatic collocation "*ḥaṣḥaṣa al-ḥaqq* حصحص الحق, which literally means 'the truth has emerged' (Q. 12:51)" is frequently paraphrased or simplified and thus loses its stylistic uniqueness and rhetorical effect. Such stylistic and rhetorical features are not satisfactorily translated due to a lack of in-depth exegetical and linguistic investigation, and a limited knowledge of the classical Arabic language of the Qur'an (pp. 6-7). Likewise, Dweik & Abu Shakra (2011) point out that Arabic collocations, particularly those found in the Qur'an, have extremely deep origins in cultural, idiomatic, and metaphoric frameworks that are not common in English use. Their empirical investigation of MA translation students in Jordan reveals that the vast majority of mistakes, in translating verb-noun collocations, are caused by literal translation, improper synonymy, or omission. These procedures repeatedly result in 'collocational clashes', in which the TL output is unnatural or contextually incorrect. They suggest an interpretative translation strategy for translating religious collocations instead of one-to-one lexical replacement, due to their being deeply context-dependent and culturally laden. Dweik & Abu Shakra (2011) adds that some verbs violate the selectional restriction rule to form a collocation for a rhetorical purpose. For instance, in the Qur'anic phrase *fa-bashshirhum bi'adhābin alīm* فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (give them glad tidings of painful torment) (Q. 84:24), the verb *bashshara*, signifying (positive news), has collocated with the phrase *bi'adhābin alīm* بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيم (painful torment), which signifies, 'negative news'. Thus, this verb violates the selectional restriction rule to achieve the rhetorical purpose of irony and sarcasm (Dweik & Abu Shakra, 2011, p. 12; Abdul-Raof, 2007, p. 100).

Although collocations play a significant role in translation, they have not been given due attention by scholars of translation studies. The above studies do not focus on Arab translators and how native Arabic-speaking translators handle verb-noun collocations. The current

paper's novelty lies in examining the loss of collocationality when translating the Qur'anic verb-noun combinations into English and evaluating the strategies used by the selected Arab translators to overcome this problem. It explores how the loss of collocationality affects the theological interpretation and the reader's understanding in English translations. The paper also suggests appropriate strategies for preserving form, ensuring theological fidelity, maintaining semantic accuracy, and achieving naturalness and idiomaticity in English translation as much as possible.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Problems of Translating Verb-Noun Arabic Collocations

Translators encounter numerous challenges and difficulties in rendering Arabic collocations into English accurately. For instance, collocations in languages can be identified only by their native speakers who are able to locate the material as well as the figurative collocations (e.g., barren land and barren discussion) (Larson, 1998). Various registers across languages include a wide range of collocations. New collocations may arise and need to be learnt. The collocational range of words sometimes differs across languages. For example, the verb 'catch' collocates with 'fire', 'a train', 'a cold', 'a fish', which can be translated respectively as *tashta'il an-nār fīh* تشتعل النار فيه, *yalḥaq bil-qiṭār* يلحق بالقطار, *yuṣāb bi-nazlit bard* يصاب بنزلة برد, *yaṣṭād samakah* يصطاد سمكة. Some collocations of a metaphorical sense may not match each other in the source and the target languages, e.g., 'barren argument' is translated as *jadal 'aqīm* جدل عقيم, while 'barren land' is translated as *arḍ qāḥilah* أرض قاحلة. Language-bound collocations are used exclusively in a particular language, like 'eating one's soup' in English, but 'drinking one's soup' in Arabic. Culture-specific collocations across languages need to be learnt, such as 'Hercules of his times', which is translated as *'antar zamānuh* عنتر زمانه (Bahumaid, 2006). There is also a mistranslation of the collocation 'strong tea' literally as *shāyī qawī* شاي قوي, and not into its Arabic equivalent *shāyi thaqīl* شاي ثقيل (Sabtan, 2024, p. 79).

A translator may be susceptible to misinterpreting a source-language collocation, owing to cross-linguistic interference, originating from their native language. Such misinterpretation often arises when a collocation in the source language closely mirrors, in form, a frequent collocational pattern in the target language, thereby producing a misleading sense of equivalence. An illustrative example of this challenge can be seen in the translation of the sentence taken from Rowland (1988, p.59), which is "the industrialist had been struck by his appearance as someone with modest means." It was rendered in the target Arabic language as *waqad ra'ā fīhi rajul aṣ-ṣinā'ah shakhṣan yanummu maẓharuhu 'an al-tawāḍu' wal-basāṭah* وقد رأى فيه رجل الصناعة شخصاً ينم مظهره عن التواضع والبساطة. This last Arabic rendering means, "The industrialist saw in him a person whose appearance suggests modesty and simplicity." Here, the translator misinterpreted the English collocation 'modest means', which conveys a financial modesty, or a lack of wealth. The Arabic language does use *mutawāḍi'* متواضع (modest) in similar contexts, such as *dakhl mutawāḍi'* دخل متواضع (small income). When *mutawāḍi'* متواضع (modest) and *tawāḍū'* تواضع (modesty) are used to describe a person, they typically imply humility rather than financial status. The addition of the word *basāṭah* بساطة (simplicity) also leads to this mistranslation. Consequently, the translator seems to have forced Arabic collocational rules on an English phrase, eventually twisting the intended meaning (Baker, 2011, pp. 59–60).

Collocates often determine the meaning of a word. Hence, a failure to identify collocational patterns that give meanings beyond the sum of the individual words may lead to mistranslation. When critics depict a translation as false or improper, they may be referring to the translator's failure to recognize such patterns, which can convey distinct context-dependent meanings. When two languages appear to have identical collocational patterns, their meanings may vary enormously. For instance, the English phrase 'to run a car' means not only driving but also possessing and being financially capable of sustaining a car. In contrast, its Greek equivalent refers only to driving a car fast or recklessly, without the additional connotations (Baker, 2011, pp. 57-58). Different patterns of the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) may make the translation process problematic for the translators. Translators may focus more on retaining the original collocation structure than on conveying the denotation of the collocation, which has a big impact on the intelligibility and cohesion of their translations (Izwaini 2016; Qassem, 2022).

In many cases, certain features of the original text are untranslatable and must be explained. Such untranslatable features include puns (plays on words), chiasmus (repetition of words or ideas in reverse order), assonance (rhyming of vowel sounds), or acrostics (words generated by the first letters or sounds of lines in a poem or text). In these cases, the translator should use marginal notes to explain such features of the original text (Nida, 2003). Nida (2003) asserts, "Biblical content is regarded as much more important than Biblical form" (p. 170). This assertion is true of the Qur'an, which necessitates that more emphasis should be put on the Qur'anic content during the translation process.

3.2 Strategies for Translating Verb-Noun Collocations

The first stage of translating collocations requires the translator to consider the collocational meaning instead of replacing words with their dictionary equivalents. Baker (2011) refers to *dry* when collocating with *voice*, it signifies 'cold' in the sense of not expressing an emotion. Therefore, a translation of *dry voice* as 'a voice, which is not moist' is but a mistranslation of *dry* in this context. To deal with TL collocations appropriately, even when there isn't an equivalent one, a translator should be well-educated both linguistically and culturally (Abdullah, 2010). Newmark (1988) observes that a translator cannot write in a foreign language (e.g., English) without producing strange and unnatural English. He will be exposed for employing improper collocations rather than for his vocabulary or grammar. Incorrect collocation usage can bring about a significant change in meaning. For instance, describing a man as pretty is done disparagingly to imply effeminacy. He indicates that the most accurate way of translating a culture-specific term is to use the procedure of functional equivalence, in which a culture-free word is used, i.e., deculturalising a cultural word. This is a cultural componential analysis. For instance, the French word *baccalauréat* is translated as "French secondary school leaving exam" (p. 83).

When translating collocations, the first and least likely strategy is to have formal and semantic congruence in lexicalization (Altohami & Khafaga, 2023), as in translating the collocation 'heavy industry' into *ṣinā'ah thaqīlah* صناعة ثقيلة. The second and most likely strategy is to have an equivalent collocation, in which the collocator is lexicalized differently, but it includes the same communicative significance, as in rendering 'heavy rain' into *amṭār ghazīrah* أمطار غزيرة, signifying much rain. Natural English translation depends on the translator's competence to identify and reproduce equivalent collocations, having the same communicative implications, although they are different in lexicalizations. Unnatural English translation results from the translator's failure to find the right TL collocation. When there is no formal or functional equivalent TL collocation, the third strategy of paraphrasing is applied in the translation process, as in rendering 'heavy demands' into *maṭālib sa'bat at-taḥaqquq* مطالب صعبة التحقق, meaning 'demands which are hard to fulfil' (Farghal & Almanna, 2015).

Since theological precision, form, and rhythm are crucial in Qur'anic translation, translators need to opt for some proper methods of translation that convey such Qur'anic features as far as possible. The most important of such strategies include faithful and communicative methods of translation. A communicative translation strategy seeks to express the exact meaning of the source text (ST) in a way that makes the content and language understandable and acceptable to a reader. It is especially effective for translating conventional expressions or proverbs, which need cultural approximation. A communicative translation strategy employs culturally familiar concepts, such as idioms and clichés. It focuses on conveying the message and aims to produce the same effect on the TL reader that the SL text does. It is concise, clear, and written in a natural and resourceful style. Therefore, if any collocation standard for a particular situation is used in the source text, a TL collocation standard for an equivalent target culture situation needs to be used in the target text (TT). For instance, the proverb "charity begins at home" is rendered into the Arabic proverb *al-aqrabūna awlā bil-ma'rūf* الأقربون أولى بالمعروف, which means 'relatives have the highest priority to receive charity or any sort of help' (Dickins et al., 2005; Newmark, 1988; Lahlali & Abu Hatab, 2014, p.12).

As for a faithful translation strategy, it is especially crucial when translating sacred texts, which function not only as linguistic messages but also as conveyers of religious doctrine, ritual, and identity. In this context, faithfulness incorporates fidelity to form, lexical meaning, rhetorical purpose, and cultural elements. For instance, the rhetoric of Arabic encompasses a reference switch, including a shift from one form to another within the same context. This appears in the Qur'anic verse, '*Wama līa lā a'budu alladhī faṭaranī wa ilayhi turja'ūn* وَمَا لِيَ لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ, which means, "Why should I not worship the One who created me? It is to Him that you will be returned" (Q. 36:22) (Abdel Haleem, 2005). Here, the pronominal reference is shifted from the first person (*I, me*) to the second person (*you will be*). A faithful translation strategy will maintain these shifts to convey the intended rhetorical intent and the theological meaning (Hatim & Mason, 1997, p. 94). The reference switch is a linguistic tool that is commonly prevalent in the Qur'anic discourse, aiming to increase vividness and accomplish a sublime style and mental readiness by drawing the reader's attention to the statement's meaning (Abdul-Raof, 2004). This proves the importance of faithful translation for translating religious texts, such as the Qur'an. A faithful translation strategy maintains the literal meaning of the source language (SL) text and the syntactic norms of the target language (TL). It also considers the context to convey a more correct meaning of the SL text (Lahlali & Abu Hatab, 2014; Newmark, 1988).

Venuti (1995) points out other important translation procedures of domestication and foreignization. He refers to Schleiermacher, who acknowledges that translation can never fully capture the meaning of the foreign text. Therefore, Schleiermacher gives the translators two options: either a foreignizing strategy, which preserves the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of the source text, or a domesticating strategy, which adjusts the text to conform with the cultural and linguistic norms of the target language. However, Schleiermacher explicitly opts for foreignizing translation (Al-Tarawneh, 2018; An, 2024). These two strategies are important for translating sacred or cultural texts, like religious texts. For such texts, domestication might misrepresent or distort the theological or cultural meanings in the original text, while foreignization may make the original text incomprehensible to the reader but preserve the religious and cultural connotations. Eventually, opting for foreignization or domestication rests on the target audience, the features of the text, and the goals of the translation.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data: Collection, Description, and Rationale

As far as the research methodology is concerned, the comparative and qualitative content analysis methods will be used. Translations of four native Arab translators of the Qur'an are selected. These translations include "The Clear Quran: A Thematic English Translation" by Khattab (2016), "Towards Understanding the Ever-Glorious Qur'an" by Ghālī (2003), "The Qur'an: A New Translation" by Abdel Haleem (2005), and "The Gracious Quran: A Modern-Phrased Interpretation in English" by Hammad (2009). The data of this study incorporates 15 Qur'anic Arabic verb-noun collocations. The Qur'an is believed to be the revealed word of Allah and the first and foremost scripture of Islam. It consists of 114 chapters (Surahs), including 6236 verses, and totaling roughly 77,800 words. The references to the Qur'anic verses and chapters will be as in the example (Q. 2:93), which refers to the Qur'an (Q.), Chapter 2, which is the second chapter titled 'al-Baqarah (the Cow)', and verse 93.

A corpus of fifteen Qur'anic Arabic verb-noun collocations, which was collected from the second and longest chapter in the Qur'an, i.e., Surah al-Baqarah (the Cow), will be used. The current study will be restricted to lexical verb-noun collocations and exclude collocations of grammatical structures (e.g., an infinitive or a clause), and grammatical collocations, consisting of a content word (e.g., verb, noun, adjective) and a preposition. The study is limited to the verb-noun collocations because such pairings are one of the most common collocation types and are challenging to translate. These translators were selected because they are native Arabic speakers and were

trained at Al-Azhar establishment, one of the oldest and most renowned Islamic institutions in the Muslim world. As such, they are expected to have greater awareness and knowledge of Arabic collocations and their interpretations in the Qur'an.

As for the method for selecting Qur'anic collocations, the current research will apply Clear's criteria that a collocate comes three times, in the sense that a word combination in the Qur'an that displays a frequency of three or higher can be classified as a collocation. The goal is to explore whether word combinations happen together more frequently than by accident (Clear, 1993; Hassan, 2019). As for the sample size, based on their review of many qualitative research studies, Creswell & Creswell (2018) suggest the range of the sample size of phenomenology to be 3-10 and grounded theory to be 20-30. They also suggest the idea of grounded theory saturation, which Charmaz (2006) explains by stating, "Categories (or themes) are saturated when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of these core theoretical categories" (p. 113). This comes true when the selected sample is sufficient for fulfilling the research purpose. Therefore, the study sample of verb-noun collocations will be restricted to those of the second and longest chapter of the Qur'an, that is, the cow chapter, Surah al-Baqarah. The rationale for selecting the study data from Surah al-Baqarah (Q.2) is the need for the current study to be limited, and that Surah al-Baqarah (Q.2) includes many of such culture-specific verb-noun collocations. The culture-specific verb-noun collocations are selected because they are more common and challenging to translate. Thus, the study will be limited to representative examples of 15 verb-noun collocations in Surah al-Baqarah (Q. 2).

Table 1. Data description

	Qur'anic Arabic collocations	Their transliteration	Chapter title	Chapter no.	Verse no.
1	أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ	aqīmū aṣ-ṣalāh	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(43)
2	آتُوا الزَّكَاةَ	ātū az-zakāh	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(43)
3	اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ	ittaqū Allāh	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(189)
4	كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ	kutiba 'alaykumu al-qitāl	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(216)
5	مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ	mā anzala Allāh	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(91)
6	يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَىٰ	yuḥyī Allāhu al-mawtā	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(73)
7	وَمَا تُنفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ	wa mā tunfiqū min khayr	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(272)
8	وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ	wa-udhkurū Allāh	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(198)
9	فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ	fawalli wajhaka shaṭra al-masjid al-ḥarām	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(144)
10	اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ	udhkurū ni'matī	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(40)
11	وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ	wa-'amilū as-ṣāliḥāt	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(25)
12	أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُم	wa'idh akhadhnā Mithāqakum	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(63)
13	ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ	ẓalama nafsahu	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(231)
14	يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَٰلَهُمْ	yunfiqūna amwālahum	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(261)
15	يُؤْمِنُ بِٱللَّهِ	yu'minu bi-llāh	The Cow (Al-Baqarah)	(2)	(232)

4.2 Procedures

Based on the translation models of Newmark (1988) and Venuti (1995), an attempt will be made to analyze the translation strategies of the selected Arab translators in translating the selected 15 verb-noun collocations in the Qur'an. Newmark's (1988) proposed procedures for translating culture-specific items include transference, naturalization, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, synonymy, through translation, shifts or transposition, modulation, recognized translation, compensation, componential analysis, paraphrase, couplets, notes, additions, and glosses. Likewise, Venuti (1995) referred to the procedures of foreignization and domestication. Both models were selected as they are more appropriate for translating culture-specific collocations and are very popular among translation scholars.

5. Analysis and Discussion

As indicated above, the verb's combination with a certain noun, which occurs three or more times in Surah al-Baqarah (Q.2), will be counted as a collocation. The selected Qur'anic Arabic collocations, their transliteration, meanings, and number of occurrences will be displayed below in Table 2. The translations of these collocations by the selected four Arab translators will be presented in Table 3. Then, the analysis of the translation procedures used by the four Arab translators in rendering each of these collocations will be provided below. An attempt will also be made to display to what extent they succeeded in translating these collocations into natural English ones.

Table 2. Qur'anic Arabic collocations, their transliteration, meaning, and occurrence in Surah al-Baqarah (Q.2)

	Qur'anic Arabic collocations and their transliteration	Meaning	Chapter and verse no.	No. of occurrences in Surah al-Baqarah (chapter 2)
1	أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ *aqīmū aṣ-ṣalāh*	Establish the prayer	2:43; 2:83; 2:110; 2:177; 2:277	5
2	آتُوا الزَّكَاةَ *ātū az-zakāh*	Give the *zakāh*	2:43; 2:83; 2:110; 2:177; 2:277	5
3	اتَّقُوا اللَّ *ittaqū Allāh*	Fear Allah, Be mindful of Allah	2:189; 2:196; 2:203; 2:206; 2:223; 2:231; 2:233; 2:278	8
4	كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ *kutiba 'alaykumu al-qitāl,*	Fighting has been prescribed for you	2:216; 2:246; 2:246	3
5	مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ *mā anzala Allāh*	What Allah has revealed	2:90; 2:91; 2:170; 2:174	4
6	يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَىٰ *yuḥyī Allāhu al-mawtā*	Allah gives life to the dead	2:73; 2:28; 2:260; 2:258; 2:259	5
7	وَمَا تُنفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ *wa mā tunfiqū min khayr*	Whatever you spend of good	2:272; 2:272; 2:273	3
8	وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ *wa-udhkurū Allāh*	And remember Allah	2:198; 2:200; 2:203; 2:239	4
9	فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ *fawalli wajhaka shaṭra al-masjid al-ḥarām*	So, turn your face toward the Sacred Mosque	2:144; 2:149; 2:150	3
10	اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِي *udhkurū ni'matī*	Remember My favor	2:40; 2:47; 2:122; 2:231;	4
11	وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ *wa-'amilū aṣ-ṣāliḥāt*	And did righteous deeds	2:25; 2:82; 2:277	3
12	أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ *akhadhnā mithāqakum*	We took your covenant	2:63; 2:83; 2:84; 2:93	4
13	ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ *ẓalama nafsahu*	He wronged himself	2:231; 2:54; 2:57	3
14	يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ *yunfiqūna amwālahum*	They spend their wealth	2:261; 2:262; 2:265	3
15	يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ *yū'minu bi-llāh*	He believes in Allah	2:232; 2:256; 2:264	3

Table 3. Arabic collocations and their translations by the selected Arab translators

Series	Qur'anic Arabic collocations and their transliteration	Chapter and verse no.	Khattab	Ghālī	Abdel Haleem	Hammad
1	أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ *aqīmū aṣ-ṣalāh*	(2:43)	Establish prayer	Keep up the prayer	Keep up the prayer	Duly establish the Prayer
2	آتُوا الزَّكَاةَ *ātū az-zakāh*	(2:43)	Pay alms-tax	Bring the Zakat (i.e., pay the obligatory poor-dues)	Pay the prescribed alms	You shall give the zakat-charity
3	اتَّقُوا اللَّه *ittaqū Allāh*	(2:189)	Be mindful of Allah	Be pious towards Allah	Be mindful of God	Be ever God-fearing
4	كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ *Kutiba 'alaykumu al-qitāl,*	(2:216)	Fighting has been made obligatory upon you	Prescribed for you is fighting	Fighting is ordained for you	Fighting in the just cause of God is prescribed for you
5	مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ *mā anzala Allāh*	(2:91)	What Allah has revealed	What Allah has sent down	God's revelations	What God has sent down
6	يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَىٰ *yuḥyī Allāhu al-mawtā*	(2:73)	Allah brings the dead to life	Allah gives life to the dead	God brings the dead to life	God gives life to the dead
7	وَمَا تُنفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ *wa mā tunfiqū min khayr*	(2:272)	Whatever you ˹believers˺ spend in charity	And whatever charity (benefit) you do expend	Whatever charity you give	Whatever good you believers spend
8	وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ *wa-udhkurū Allāh*	(2:198)	Praise Allah	Remember Allah	Remember God	Remember God
9	فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ *fawalli wajhaka shaṭra al-masjid al-ḥarām*	(2:144)	Turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque	Turn your face towards the Inviolable Mosque	Turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque	Turn your face in Prayer toward the Sacred Mosque
10	اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ	(2:40)	Remember My	Remember My favour	Remember how I	Recall in your hearts

	udhkurū ni'matī		favours		blessed you	My blessings
11	وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ *wa-'amilū aṣ-ṣāliḥāt*	(2:25)	And do good	And have done deeds of righteousness	And do good	And do righteous deeds
12	أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ *Akhadhnā mithāqakum*	(2:63)	We took a covenant from you	We took compact with you	We took your pledge	We took your pledge to fulfill our covenant
13	ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ *ẓalama nafsahu*	(2:231)	He wrongs his own soul	He has already done injustice to himself	He wrongs himself	He has wronged his own soul
14	يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ *yunfiqūna amwālahum*	(2:261)	Those who spend their wealth	(the ones) who expend their riches	Those who spend their wealth	Those who spend their wealth
15	يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ *yū'minu bi-llāh*	(2:232)	Whoever has faith in Allah	(any) of you who believes in Allah	Those of you who believe in God	Whoever believes in God

1- أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ *aqīmū aṣ-ṣalāh* (Q. 2:43)

In his translation of this collocation into "establish prayer," Khattab uses the literal translation procedure. He excludes the definite article, supposing that the reader can infer the Islamic prayer from his translation. Nevertheless, Ghālī and Abdel Haleem choose "keep up the prayer." They use the modulation procedure, indicating the regular performance of prayer. Yet, Hammad's rendering "duly establish the Prayer" includes the word 'duly', suggesting the proper and complete observance of prayer. He also employs a literal translation strategy of the imperative form *aqīmū* (establish) and the noun form *ṣalāh* (prayer). These translations vary from the literal establishment of prayer (Hammad, Khattab) to interpretative translation, indicating the customary performance of prayer (Ghālī, Abdel Haleem). Ghālī and Abdel Haleem also managed to produce a natural English collocation, whereas Hammad and Khattab preserve faithfulness to the Qur'anic text. However, a foreignizing strategy may be suggested here to convey the theological content and show fidelity to the original text, and thus it can be 'keep up the Salah'.

2- آتُوا الزَّكَاةَ *ātū az-zakāh* (Q. 2:43)

Khattab translates this collocation into "pay alms-tax" to equate it with a tax, which aids in comprehension in a non-Islamic context, but may diminish the act's spiritual significance. Ghālī translates it literally into "bring the Zakat (i.e., pay the obligatory poor-dues)," keeping the transliterated Arabic term through foreignization, adding an explanation gloss in parentheses, and thus retaining its religious connotations at the expense of immediate comprehension on the part of native readers. To benefit non-Muslim readers, Abdel Haleem uses domestication and functional equivalence in his translation "pay the prescribed alms," emphasizing its mandatory character to those who are unfamiliar with the text. In his translation, "you shall give the Zakat-charity," Hammad employs a foreignizing strategy by including the transliterated 'Zakat', a culture-specific term. Then, he adds an explanatory word 'charity' to form the compound 'Zakat-charity'. In general, Khattab and Abdel Haleem focus on the clarity of expression. Ghālī's translation is accurate and reflects cultural significance through transliteration and annotation, while Hammad applies a procedure that incorporates cultural connotations with intelligibility. Although Ghālī's translation sounds good, his translation could be better if he had used the verb 'give' instead of 'bring'.

3- اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ *ittaqū Allāh* (Q. 2:189)

Khattab renders the collocation *ittaqu Allāh* into "be mindful of Allah," employing the communicative translation approach, which conveys the Qur'anic connotation of *taqwā* as conscious awareness instead of genuine fear. His rendering of 'be mindful' conforms with natural English usage. Ghālī translates it into "be pious towards Allah," applying a literal translation strategy, which retains the basic religious meaning. Nonetheless, he uses the collocation 'pious towards Allah', which is unusual, as 'pious' collocates with a 'person' instead of 'towards Allah'. Likewise, Abdel Haleem's rendering, "be mindful of God," uses the dynamic equivalence procedure. Although his translation is in natural English and reflects the spiritual sense of *taqwā*, it does not convey the sense of fear that exists in the Arabic text. He also chooses 'God' instead of 'Allah', using the domestication procedure to promote interfaith understanding. Hammad renders it into "be ever God-fearing,'' using the formal equivalence strategy. He also adds 'ever' to express the action's continuance. Also, 'God-fearing' reflects the conventional sense of fear perceived in older English Bible translations. All in all, the translations change from the domesticated modern idiom 'be mindful' to literalism 'be ever God-fearing'. All translators attempt to preserve cultural specificity and language clarity. Khattab and Abdel Haleem manage to produce natural English collocations, while the translations of Ghālī and Hammad maintain faithfulness to the Arabic text. Yet, Hammad's translation proves to be the best one, as it conveys the theological meaning of *taqwā*, and at the same time, preserves the natural English collocation.

4- كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ *kutiba 'alaykumu al-qitāl* (Q. 2:246)

Khattab renders *kutiba 'alaykumu al-qitāl* into "fighting has been made obligatory upon you," using the dynamic equivalence procedure. His use of 'made obligatory' explains the metaphorical meaning of *kutiba* as a legal-religious ordinance. Ghālī renders it as "prescribed for you is fighting," using the literal translation strategy. He follows the Arabic rule of emphasizing by preserving the Arabic text structure through employing the inverted syntax (i.e., fronting 'prescribed for you'). This translation appears unnatural in English because 'prescribed' normally collocates with medication and regulations. Abdel Haleem translates it into "fighting is ordained for you." The word 'ordained'

indicates an imposition of religious authority, which equates to a solemn decree, thus aligning with the Qur'anic rhetoric. This translation offers a semantic interpretation, balancing fidelity to the text with readability, and preserving the passive voice, while reducing the rigid and legalistic tone found in the word 'prescribed'. Hammad renders it as "fighting in the just cause of God is prescribed for you," using the modulation and explicitation strategies. *Al-qitāl* is now limited to its Qur'anic ethical context by the addition of 'in the just cause of God'. The four renderings, taken together, represent a range from highly literal translations to interpretively enlarged ones, striking a balance between faithfulness to the Arabic text and different levels of contextual elucidation for the target audience. However, Khattab's translation is natural and idiomatic, but it does not convey the theological and ethical message, which is reflected in Hammad's translation. Therefore, a translation can be suggested to combine the advantages of the translations of Hammad and Khattab, which is 'fighting in the just cause of God has been made obligatory upon you'.

5- مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ (Q. 2:90) *mā anzala Allāh*

mā anzala Allāh is translated by Khattab as "what Allah has revealed," using a semantic translation that interprets metaphors and the more idiomatic 'revealed', which is more common in the theological contexts. Ghālī has "what Allah has sent down," which translates literally, preserving the source text imagery of revelation from above and keeping the literal metaphor of *anzala*. In his translation "God's revelations," Abdel Haleem uses the modulation procedure by choosing a noun phrase instead of a relative clause. This alteration conveys the intended meaning and makes it more natural in English. However, this change eliminates the metaphor of descent. Hammad chooses "what God has sent down," which is a literal translation like Ghālī's one. Yet, he replaces Allah with God through using a domestication procedure to emphasize interfaith understanding. In general, the translations of Ghālī and Hammad preserve the Qur'anic metaphor (sent down) but sound less natural in English. However, the translations of Khattab and Abdel Haleem were adapted to the theological language (revealed, revelations) and thus seem to be more natural in English.

6- يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى (Q. 2:73) *yuḥyī Allāhu al-mawtā*

Khattab's translation "Allah brings the dead to life" employs a semantic translation strategy that reflects the causal notion of *yuḥyī* while maintaining natural English vocabulary. Ghālī translates it into "Allah gives life to the dead," using a literal translation procedure that matches the Arabic structure and terminology while keeping the theological accuracy. Abdel Haleem renders the collocation as "God brings the dead back to life," adopting the explicitation strategy by using the word 'back' to stress the restoration of life after death, and thus pointing out that death and life are cyclical. Hammad uses "God gives life to the dead," which is nearly identical to Ghālī's literal translation, but uses 'God' rather than 'Allah' to promote interfaith discourse. The main difference between these renderings is whether the translators stick to the direct literal structure (gives life to the dead) or use slightly more idiomatic or interpretive translation (brings the dead to life, brings the dead back to life), each of which strikes a balance between accuracy for the intended audience and faithfulness to the original.

7- وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ (Q. 2:272) *wa mā tunfiqū min khayr*

Khattab translates *wa mā tunfiqū min khayr* as "whatever you 'believers' spend in charity," using a communicative translation strategy. He clarifies the context by stating 'in charity'. He manages to provide a natural English collocation. Ghālī renders it into "and whatever charity (benefit) you do expend," employing a literal translation. Nevertheless, he uses the verb 'expend', which does not collocate with charity. Abdel Haleem chooses "whatever charity you give," using adaptation and domestication to generate idiomatic and smooth English. However, he restricts *khayr* to 'charity' in accordance with traditional understanding, favouring readability for a modern audience. In his rendering "whatever good you believers spend," Hammad uses semantic translation to keep the general sense of *khayr* as 'good' rather than restricting it to financial generosity. Nonetheless, the verb 'spend' does not collocate with 'good', which makes it an unnatural English collocation. Overall, the translators' procedures show two distinct tendencies: Khattab, Ghālī, and Abdel Haleem narrow down their translation of *khayr* to be 'charity' for contextual clarity and idiomatic flow, whereas Hammad retains the wider scope of the source text, reflecting a more textually faithful translation of *khayr*. Nevertheless, a paraphrasing strategy can be used to include the connotations of both *tunfiqū* and *khayr*, and thus the collocation may be better translated into 'Whatever charity you give and whatever good you do'.

8- وَاذْكُرُواْ اللَّهَ (Q. 2:198) *wa-udhkurū Allāh*

In his translation of *wa-udhkurū Allāh* as "praise Allah," Khattab adopts a functional equivalence strategy, which translates *dhikr* as praising. Although the word 'praise' is one kind of *dhikr*, it limits the broader concept of *dhikr*. Ghālī translates it literally as "remember Allah," using the formal equivalence to nearly replicate the Arabic structure while retaining the spiritual depth of *dhikr*. Additionally, Abdel Haleem and Hammad translate it as "remember God," choosing semantic and domesticating translation procedures with cultural adaptation by substituting 'God' for 'Allah'. Consequently, they preserve the religious meaning of *dhikr* and make the text understandable and natural for non-Muslim readers. However, a suggested translation, like 'say *dhikr* of Allah', can be produced by using the foreignizing strategy. Then the glossing and adding strategies can also be used to expand more on *khikr* in such a translation, which will be 'say *dhikr* of Allah (by saying *la ilaha illā Allah* لاإله إلا الله, there is no god but Allah)'.

9- فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِّ (Q. 2:144) *fawalli wajhaka shaṭra al-masjid al-ḥarām*

The collocation *fawalli wajhaka shaṭra al-masjid al-ḥarām* is rendered by Khattab into "turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque," using a semantic translation strategy that maintains the meaning and expresses it in smooth, modern English. Ghālī renders it into "turn your face

towards the Inviolable Mosque," adopting a literal translation strategy while opting for the formal term 'inviolable' to stress sacredness, though the language seems a little antiquated in contemporary English. Abdel Haleem chooses "turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque," applying the explicitation procedure by inserting the phrase 'in the direction of', which helps readers, who are unfamiliar with the Qur'anic idiom, understand the spatial sense of *shaṭra*. Hammad translates it as "turn your face in Prayer toward the Sacred Mosque," using the explicitation and functional equivalence strategies, so directing readers to the command's liturgical context and immediately connecting it to ritual practice. These four translations display a balance between textual faithfulness and contextual clarification. Abdel Haleem and Hammad translate the Qur'anic expression with interpretive detail and produce a natural English collocation, while Khattab and Ghālī preserve the original structure with little adjustment. Khattab's translation is also natural, but Ghālī's use of "inviolable" is not idiomatic. However, the addition procedure can be used to improve Khattab's translation to become 'turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque (in Mecca)'.

10- اُذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتِيَ *udhkurū niʿmatī* (Q. 2:40)

Khattab renders *udhkurū niʿmatī* as "remember My Favours," using a literal translation with explicitation to translate *niʿmatī* in the plural as 'favours', which refers to the various bounties conferred upon the Children of Israel and enlarges the context of the original singular. By using the formal equivalence procedure and a literal translation, Ghālī's rendering "remember My Favour" keeps the singular form of 'favour' to show fidelity to the Arabic text. Abdel Haleem's rendering "remember how I blessed you" employs the adaptation and modulation procedures. He renders the noun phrase *niʿmatī* by using a verbal one 'how I blessed you' to emphasize the act of divine favor. Hammad's translation, "recall in your hearts My blessings," uses the strategy of explicitation and functional equivalence. He adds the interpretative phrase "in your hearts" to make the command an inner remembrance (Khafaga, 2023). He also chooses the plural of *niʿmatī*, i.e., 'blessings'. Overall, the four renderings together show a range from literal faithfulness (Ghālī) to interpretative details (Hammad). By modifying form and number to make meaning more understandable for the intended audience, Khattab and Abdel Haleem represent the middle ground among the four renderings. Among the four translators, Abdel Haleem manages to provide the most natural English collocation.

11- وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ *wa-ʿamilū as-ṣāliḥāt* (Q. 2:25)

The translators treat the collocation *wa-ʿamilū as-ṣāliḥāt* differently. Khattab and Abdel Haleem render it as "and do good". They use a communicative strategy, resulting in natural and uncomplicated English that is readable and clear, although their translations somewhat enlarge the meaning of *as-ṣāliḥāt*. Ghālī uses a more literal translation procedure by his translation "and have done deeds of righteousness," adhering closely to the Arabic structure and maintaining its formal tone. However, Hammad's translation reads "and do righteous deeds," which preserves the original Arabic structure while keeping the English collocation natural and clear. When reviewing these translations together, we observe that Khattab and Abdel Haleem use more natural English collocation, but their translation lacks the lexical significance of 'deeds'. Ghālī shows faithfulness to the collocational structure at the expense of fluency. Hammad manages to keep the original structure while producing a natural English collocation.

12- أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ *akhadhnā mithāqakum* (Q. 2:63)

The translators differ in their translations of this collocation. Khattab's translation "We took a covenant from you" applies the formal equivalence by preserving a formal agreement and being clear and faithful to the Arabic text. Ghālī chooses "We took compact with you," an older and more formal English phrase. Though his translation retains the solemnity of the word *mithāq*, modern readers may find the word 'compact' rather archaic. Abdel Haleem selects "We took your pledge," using a communicative translation strategy by producing a simpler, smoother translation, which reduces the formality of *mithāq* while making the message clearer. Hammad translates it into "We took your pledge to fulfil our covenant". He uses the explicitation procedure by adding 'to fulfil our covenant', which does not occur in the original Arabic, to underscore the theological message. These translations together demonstrate the struggle between maintaining the formal Qur'anic style and ensuring that the collocation sounds clear and natural in English. Khattab's translation sounds the most natural in English, while being faithful to the Arabic text. Ghālī's translation is less natural, and Abdel Haleem's is less formal but natural. Hammad is clear, but he provides over-translation.

13- ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ *ẓalama nafsahu* (Q. 2:231)

The collocation *ẓalama nafsahu* represents a challenge for translators, i.e., to produce the intended message of the text and keep its literal imagery. Khattab translates it into "he wrongs his own soul," remaining faithful to the Arabic structure, and using a literal translation procedure to preserve the spiritual sense of the 'soul'. Ghālī's rendering, "he has already done injustice to himself," displays a paraphrase strategy to convey the meaning of committing injustice. The addition of 'has already' does not exist in the Arabic text, emphasizing the meaning of the collocation. Abdel Haleem chooses "he wrongs himself," employing a communicative equivalence strategy, in which the spiritual connotations of *nafs* as 'soul' are reduced to 'self', favouring clarity. In doing so, the collocational depth is reduced, as the phrase "He wrongs himself" is not idiomatic in English and lacks the theological significance of the Qur'anic expression. Hammad translates it into "he has wronged his own soul," using literal equivalence that maintains the collocational combination and theological impact of *nafs* as 'soul'. However, his use of the past tense somewhat diminishes the theological force of the 'soul'. Consequently, while Khattab and Hammad employ literal translation to maintain both collocationality and meaning, Ghālī and Abdel Haleem favour readability and clarity, which caused a limited loss of the Qur'anic collocational effect. Yet, Hammad's translation seems to be the best one for its use of the present perfect tense, emphasizing the collocational meaning.

14- يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَٰلَهُمْ *yunfiqūna amwālahum* (Q. 2:261)

Khattab, Abdel Haleem, and Hammad render *yunfiqūna amwālahum* as "those who spend their wealth," employing a literal translation strategy that preserves the original collocational structure and retains intelligibility in English. Ghālī chooses "(the ones) who expend their riches," using somewhat archaic or formal lexical items (expend and riches) rather than the more natural collocation 'spend their wealth'. Although Ghālī's translation retains the semantic meaning, it modifies the language style and lessens the naturalness in English. Taken together, Hammad, Abdel Haleem, and Khattab manage to maintain the sense and the collocational structure of the original collocation through their natural translation. However, Ghālī's rendition alters the style and makes his translation far from natural English collocation.

15- يُؤْمِنُ بِٱللَّٰه *yu'minu bi-llāh* (Q. 2:232)

Khattab's translation "has faith in Allah" adopts a dynamic equivalence procedure. He produces a natural English collocation by using 'has faith' rather than 'believes'. However, choosing 'has faith' emphasizes the state of having faith, but it slightly undermines the dynamic meaning of *yu'minu*. Ghālī's translation, "believes in Allah," adopts a more literal procedure, keeping the structure and semantic meaning of the original Arabic collocation. The collocation 'believes in Allah' is widely an acceptable expression in English religious discourse. Although this translation is accurate and clear, it does not reflect the natural fluency of a more natural English collocation. The translations of Hammad and Abdel Haleem, "believe in God," synthesize a formal equivalence procedure with a little adaptation by employing 'God' instead of 'Allah'. By using 'God'' the cultural aspect of the original Arabic is lost. The use of "believe" is idiomatic and natural in English, rendering the meaning of the collocation and preserving the syntactical and grammatical smoothness. The usage of "believe in God" maintains the active voice of the verb "*yu'minu*." These four translations produce an idiomatic and fluent English collocation and preserve the theological connotation.

6. Conclusion

This study presented a comparative analysis of the translation procedures used by Khattab (2016), Ghālī (2003), Abdel Haleem (2005), and Hammad (2009) in translating the representative examples of collocations in the Qur'an. These translators adopted different translation strategies. Khattab often used literal and communicative translation strategies, usually favoring semantic translation, which strikes a balance between faithfulness to the Qur'anic text and producing a natural, native-like translation. For instance, he managed to produce natural English collocations, such as translating *ittaqū Allāh* ٱتَّقُوا ٱللَّٰه into "be mindful of Allah" (Q. 2:189), *akhadhnā mithāqakum* أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ into "We took a covenant from you" (Q. 2:63), and *wa mā tunfiqū min khayr* وَمَا تُنفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ into "whatever you 'believers' spend in charity" (Q. 2:272). Ghālī frequently adopted the formal equivalence procedure to maintain the structure of the source language (SL). His heavy reliance on literal translation made him resort to using slightly archaic or less common English terms, such as his translation of *akhadhnā mithāqakum* أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ into "we took compact with you" (Q. 2:63), *ittaqū Allāh* ٱتَّقُوا ٱللَّٰه into "be pious towards Allah" (Q. 2:189), and *yunfiqūna amwālahum* يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَٰلَهُمْ into "(the ones) who expend their riches" (Q. 2:261). His translation was usually produced in less natural English. Abdel Haleem used a communicative strategy to make the language intelligible to modern readers. Thus, he was often able to produce natural English collocations, even though his translation comprised paraphrasing or modulation. For instance, he translated *mā anzala Allāh* مَا أَنزَلَ ٱللَّٰه into "God's revelations" (Q. 2:90), *yu'minu bi-llāh* يُؤْمِنُ بِٱللَّٰهِ into "whoever believes in God" (Q. 2:232), and *udhkurū ni'matī* ٱذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِي into "remember how I blessed you" (Q. 2:40). However, his translation often neglects fidelity to the original Arabic structure. Hammad frequently employed the explicitation and functional equivalence procedures in his translation, and thus expanded on the original Arabic collocation to make the theological message and contextual information more explicit. For example, he translated *akhadhnā mithāqakum* أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ as "we took your pledge to fulfill our covenant" (Q. 2:63), *kutiba 'alaykumu al-qitāl* كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْقِتَالُ as "fighting in the just cause of God is prescribed for you" (Q. 2:246), and *fawalli wajhaka shaṭra al-masjid al-ḥarām* فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ into "turn your face in Prayer toward the Sacred Mosque" (Q. 2:144). Although his translation boosts informative clarity, it sometimes risks over-translation and weakens the cohesiveness of the original Arabic.

Overall, this comparative analysis also reveals a variety of translation procedures: Khattab and Abdel Haleem emphasize readability and naturalness in English; Ghālī upholds a more literal and formal equivalence strategy; and Hammad enriches the text with explanatory details. Each strategy has its own advantages and disadvantages, displaying that the challenge of translating Qur'anic collocations is not merely to find equivalents, but to maintain faithfulness to form, expression of natural English, and in-depth explanation. Translators in general and Arab translators in particular, need to be aware of the fact that translating collocations is not a word-for-word translation between the SL and TL. They should develop their knowledge of collocations in the TL (English in the current study) so that they can produce a natural and reader-friendly translation. To identify collocations, translators whose mother tongue is not English are advised to consult native speakers of English or specialized English collocations dictionaries, such as "Oxford Collocations Dictionary" and "Macmillan Collocations Dictionary." However, some Islamic culture-specific collocations have no equivalent ones in English. To translate such non-equivalent collocations, some translation scholars recommend the use of faithful, functional equivalence, and communicative strategies for translating them. However, if these strategies do not convey the full intended meaning, the foreignization strategy will be more appropriate as it conveys the meaning and the culture of the source text. Also, the use of combined strategies can be resorted to when single strategies do not convey the full meaning (e.g., foreignization + footnote, literal translation + gloss).

For future research, this study recommends more intensive studies on translating different types of collocations in the Qur'an and by other translators (Arabs and non-Arabs) to explore the challenges they faced in translating these collocations and the most appropriate strategies they employed to translate them.

Authors' contributions

The authors contributed equally to writing, editing, and proofreading the manuscript. They also approved the final version of this manuscript.

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The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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