Fidelity in Rendering the Quranic Arabic Homonymous Words Sawai into English in Light of Skopos Theory

Majda Babiker Ahmed Abdelkarim[1], Ali Albashir Mohammed Alhaj [2], & Ahmed Hadi Hakami[3]

[1] King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia

[2] King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia

[3] Saudi Electronic University, Saudi Arabia

Correspondence: Dr. Ali Albashir Mohammed Alhaj, English Unit, Applied College, Dhahran Aljanoub, King Khalid University, SaudiArabia. E-mail: alalhaj@kku.edu.sa

Abstract

This analytical study aims to identify discrepancies in the fidelity of translating the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English. This study adopts a qualitative approach with a qualitative design, as it hinges on perspectives and reviews rather than quantitative evidence. Also, the study shows that fidelity in translation can be understood through the lens of Skopos theory, which is utilized in this study as a frame of reference. Furthermore, the findings reveal that some translators occasionally rely on interpretive translations and succeed in capturing the intended meaning of the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English in the schemes they are targeting. In other cases, however, they lean on literal translations, often aiming to convey the connotative meaning of these Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words. Several challenges and losses were found in the three English translations explored: fidelity in translation occupies a role in gauging the fidelity of a rendered text. The study also indicates that the translation of the Holy Qur'an in general, and of the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء in particular, should be led by its Skopos rather than unrealistically focusing on achieving fidelity.

Keywords: fidelity, Skopos theory, Arabic homonymous words, rendering, the Holy Qur'an.

1. Introduction

Fidelity in translating Qurʾānic Arabic texts in general and homonymous words in particular, especially into English, has been a problem that has long captivated the academic interests of scholars, translators, linguists, and recipients of translated language (Abdelkarim & Alhaj, 2023; Abdelaal, 2019). This issue has received increased attention in translation applications and assessments, sometimes even more than the standard of rendering when the rendered text is authentic (Gutt, 1998; Williams, 2004; Diniz, 2003). Diniz (2003) opines that a translator's lack to maintain the original wording and locution in any way leads to a lack of fidelity to the original wording. In the same way, Nida and Taber (1982) underscore the significance of being accurate and faithful to the original text. Nord (1997) claims that rendering has constantly been more dedicated to achieving fidelity to the text of the source language, even though it sometimes leads to a translation that is not apt for the intended purpose. Connected to this, Pym (2001) maintains that if a translated text omits certain segments of the original wording, then the rendering tends to reflect a lack of fidelity to the source. In the same spirit, Newmark (1988) asserts that problems connected with fidelity occur when a translator is carrying out an applicability rendition. Nevertheless, a competent translator will be faithful to the original version of the text. Fidelity, in this respect, is perceived as achieving equivalence. To put it differently, to be accurate to an original version of a text, it is essential to attain equivalence. However, achieving such a correspondence is conceivably challenging.

Attaining fidelity in rendition is not a simple task for an interpreter. Zhongying (1990), for instance, deems that obtaining a remarkably form of fidelity to the original work conveys the sense of being complicated. In the same manner, Çöz (2012) argues that a translator is sometimes compelled to diverge from the precise translation of the original version of the text to a less accurate or true version. Correspondingly, Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) assert that fidelity in rendering should also not be the right alternative all the time. Occasionally, a translator needs to be true to the original version of the text to transfer its message more competently in the translated language. Similarly, Noss suggests that fidelity to a source language text could result in a translated text that is incomprehensible (as quoted in Nae, 2004). Consequently, it is foremost for a translator to maintain fidelity to the original version of the text without producing an unclear rendering. Baker (2004) explains that fidelity to the original is akin to the advisability and aptness of equivalence. From this notion, she found that the concept of correspondence is very significant since other conceptual ideas of rendition are interconnected with it, and for this reason, the concepts of equivalence and fidelity in translation should not be dropped or refuted.

A rapid glimpse at various published renderings of the Holy Qurʾān by authorized translators and expert translators reveal that the translators faced several challenges while rendering the Qurʾānic Arabic words. From researchers' perspective this impede the fidelity of

the meaning signified by the original message. The translators in general and translators of the Holy Qur'an, still not comprehend intricacies of the complications of philology and stylography of the Arabic and English language systems and above all the issue of consulting the major Qurʾānic tafsīr. There is thus a dire need to explore the problems the translators meet and the translation procedures they employ while rendering the Qur'anic text which teems with the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymic words that are ingrained in the Arabic Islamic culture. The study is a basic endeavor achieve this objective.

Basically, up to the present and to the authors' broader knowledge, no investigation, has been carried out on fidelity in translating the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymic words sawāi سَوَاء into English in light of skopos theory. Hence, this study contributes by addressing this research lacunae.

1.1Objectives of the Study

Research investigating the issues of translated Arabic homonymous words into English, especially of Qurʾānic homonymous words, is limited. The current study adopts the perspective of Skopos theory, which is a fresh angle of research. It aims to fill the gap in the literature. Specifically, this study probes the issues of rendering the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English from the viewpoint of Skopos theory. Moreover, this study is important because it is among the first to examine issues of translating Qur'anic homonymous words, such *sawāi* سَوَاء, into English.

The threefold aims of this investigation are:

a) First, to figure the problem out found in the translations of Abdel Haleem (2004), Al-Hilali and Khan (1996), and Pickthall (1930) of the Qur'anic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English through the lens of Skopos theory.

b) Second, to identify whether the above-named translators attained fidelity in translation when rendering the meanings of the Qur'anic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English without perverting the meaning of the original Qur'anic wording.

c) Third, to explore the cultural and stylistic hindrances that impede the translatability of the Qur'anic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English and how these issues can be tackled in view of Skopos theory.

1.2 Study Questions

In conformity with the aforementioned threefold objectives, the major research questions (RQs) of this study are as follows:

1. What issues are found in the translations of Abdel Haleem (2004), Al-Hilali and Khan (1996), and Pickthall (1930) of the Qur'anic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English from the lens of Skopos theory?

2. To what extent do the above-named translators attain fidelity in translation when rendering the meanings of the Qur'anic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء without perverting the sense of the original Qur'anic wording?

3. From the view of Skopos theory, what are the cultural and stylistic hindrances that thwart the translatableness of the Qur'anic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء?

2. Literature review

2.1 The Idea Behind Homonymy

The word "homonym" comes from the prefix *homo-*, which means "the same", and the suffix *-nym*, which means "name". Therefore, a homonym is a word that has the same pronunciation and spelling as another word but has a different meaning; an example of a homonym in English is the word "book", which can mean "something to read" or "the act of making a reservation" (Polysemous, n.d.; Crystal, 2011).

2.2 The Concept of Skopos Theory: Prima Facie

Skopos theory was developed in Germany in the late 1970s as an attempt to explain the dominance of equivalence in translation studies; it represents a shift from traditional lingual and stylized translation theories to a practical and socio-culturally oriented conceptuality of translation (Wendland, 2016). "Skopos," which is the Greek word for "objective" or "target," was introduced to translation theory in 1989 by Hans J. Vermeer (1994) as a technical term that emphasizes understanding the purpose of a translation and the functionality of the source text (ST) within the target text (TT) together with its culture. This focus aligns with the functionalist approach of Skopos theory to regard translation as "an action that leads to a result, a new situation or event, and a new object" (Venuti, 1995, p. 215).

Skopos theory stipulates a fresh perspective to translation studies and mirrors "a more functional and socio-culturally oriented notion of translation" (Baker, 2004). As the original version of the text is only perceived as a source of information, and the ultimate goal is given to the more autonomous dilemma of producing translated language text, Skopos theory offers creativity and development to translation theories (Kiraly, 2012; Eke, 2016). The theory frees translators from the constraints and confinements necessitated by a formulated concept of fidelity to the source language and allows them to follow translation paradigms with hints to the function of the translated language text (Katan, 2018; Abdelkarim & Alhaj, 2023).

2.3 Rendering of Qurʾānic Arabic Homonymous Words into English: A Divisive Issue

The translation of the Holy Qur'an from Arabic into English in general, and particularly of Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words, has been a contentious issue among scholars, linguists, and translators. Some have questioned the appropriateness of rendering the Holy Qur'an

and its Arabic homonymous words, claiming that the sacred book is untranslatable and that the output is certainly not the Holy Qur'an, arguing that this sacred text is the Word of Allah revealed in a specific Arabic form and content (Abdelkarim & Alhaj, 2024a; Friedman, 2015). Other scholars, linguists, and translators have a contrary view, stating that the Holy Qur'an can be rendered without inducing any desertion or truancy to the original wording.

On top of that, the rendition of Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words into English in general, especially of *sawāi* سَوَاء, is culturally and stylistically arduous because these words are terms that are specific to the Islamic culture (Taghian, 2013; Tabatabaee, 2002; Abdelkarim & Alhaj, 2024b). Newmark (1988) argues that when there is a social focus, there is a translation issue because of the cultural schisms or disparities between the source language and the translated language. The cultural and stylistic equivalents given these Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words are either lengthy explanations of the meaning or less meaningful translations. The results of rendering these Islamic culture-specific words by using their lexicon correspondents are often imperfect (Al-Abdullatif, 2018; Poshtdar, 2016).

2.4 Previous Studies

Homonymous terms in languages (i.e. Arabic) may vary from those in other languages (i.e. English) or have various expressive meanings. In this regard, Albahiri and Alhaj (2024) find that some translators rely on verbatim translations and usually fail to transfer the innuendo and connotation of Qurʾānic Arabic homographic words such as *l-duʿāi*/الدُّعَاءِ. Alhaj and Alwadai (2024) also argue that any loss has a significantly negative impact on the reader's understanding and interpretation of the Holy Qurʾān, particularly the words found in the Qurʾānic Arabic *al-bush'rā* (البُشْرَى). In addition, Abdelkarim and Alhaj (2024a) find that a good rendering of the Qur'anic text reveals the "dynamics" of both the form and content of the Holy Qur'an. Yahya (2017) casts light on the important part of linguistic context in rendering homonymic meanings. The study reveals that linguistic context is not enough to identify the real meanings of homonymic words. Shaher and Kaddouri (2012) find that indicating the solution of context that intrudes is a paramount important linguistic component in translating the meaning of homonymous words into English.

Having introduced the fidelity in rendering the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words sawāi into English: in light of Skopos theory. One can find that a comprehensive study is necessary to bring to light the cultural problems encountered by translators in rendering Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words in terms of their fidelity to the original message. None of the above-mentioned studies explored such a phenomenon and how to deal with it. Hence, the study seeks to bridge the gaps by investigating problems of fidelity in rendering the Qurʾānic Arabic Homonymous Words sawāi into English.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

This study falls within the analytical type of qualitative research, which is appropriate for detailed translation studies. A qualitative method is suitable for this investigation since the analysis focuses on a difficult and comprehensive understanding of the problem; thus, quantitative data and tests do not suit this study issue. Likewise, a qualitative tool is ideal for this investigation since translating the Holy Qur'an is an arduous undertaking and could not be thoroughly explored utilizing any alternative approaches. This review also does not rely on quantity or statistics. Rather, it falls within category the category of explicative or elucidative inquiry in qualitative study that comprises the structure (or collection) and perception about new (or existent) texts (Abdelaal, 2019; Higgs & Cherry, 2009).

3.2 Data Gathering Method

The current study adopts a qualitative procedure with a qualitative design, relying on prospects and examinations rather than quantitative information. In this case, the authors gathered, examined, and analyzed the data, which in this study consisted of Qur'anic verses and their English translations. To document the evidence, some selected Qur'anic verses encompassing the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء were carefully analyzed from the perspective of Skopos theory to identify the issues found in the translations of the Holy Qur'an by foregoing translators. First, the data were discussed based on the existing issues of rendering the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English. Afterward, the extent to which the targeted translations of the Holy Qur'an adequately and accurately convey the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English was reconsidered. Finally, from the viewpoint of Skopos theory, the cultural and stylistic hindrances of the translatability of the Qur'anic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English were extracted.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted according to Diniz (2003) who considers that a translator's loss to maintain the original wording and locution results in a lack of fidelity to the ST. In the same way, Nida and Taber (1982) emphasize the significance of being authentic to the original wording in their concept of fidelity. The original wordings were compared with the retranslated language texts, and the loss to transfer certain parts of the ST sense was spotlighted and clarified.

The authors have predicated this study on the Qur'ān Arabic Corpus (QAC), items for discussion that were tabulated by outstanding language experts, academics, and researchers and helmed by professor Kais Dukes of the Leeds University, UK. The topics of the QAC also encompass eminent and exceptional proficiency in the area of rendering of the al-qur'an.

The present study employs a descriptive-analytical method to compare the three English renditions of the Holy Qur'an by the above-said translators. It examines these translations to determine the issues of rendering the Qur'anic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English from the lens of Skopos theory.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, four examples of the Qur'anic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء rendered into English are analyzed to ascertain whether or not the above-said translators attained fidelity in translation when rendering the meanings of these words without perverting the sense of the original Qur'anic wording. This section also highlights how Skopos theory can be an escort for a more functional and modern concept of the translation of the Holy Qur'an.

4.1 Example One

Source Surah: Chapter (38) *sūrat ṣād*, Verse 22.

ST: ﴿ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تُشْطِطْ وَاهْدِنَا إِلَىٰ سَوَاءِ الصِّرَاطِ﴾ (ص:22)

Target Text:

1. **Abdel Haleem** (2004): "Judge between us fairly– do not be unjust– and guide us to the <u>right</u> path" (p. 455).

2. **Al-Hilali and Khan** (1996): "Therefore judge between us with truth, and treat us not with injustice, and guide us to the <u>Right</u> Way" (p. 613).

3. **Pickthall** (1930): "Therefore judge aright between us; be not unjust; and show us the <u>fair</u> way" (p. 325).

4.1.1 The Analysis

The basic meaning of the Ayah

The meaning of this verse relates to the story of two litigants mentioned in these two verses. The scholars of Tafsir cited a narration mostly based upon the Isr'iliyāt, for which there is no authenticated proof of its validity. The narration suggests that the Infallible Prophet (PBUH) was terrified of them because they appeared in his private praying place, where he had commanded that no one should enter that day. However, all of a sudden, he found two persons climbing over into his praying place to ask his opinion about their case (Ibn Kathir, 2009, Vol. 3, p. 1871).

4.1.2 Fidelity in Rendering the Qur'ānic Arabic Homonymous Words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English in Chapter (38) *sūrat ṣād*, Verse 22.

In this verse, the interpretation of the Qur'ānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into the linguistic context or co-text already connotes العدل ("Justice"). It was stated in Tafsir Ibn Ashour (1984, p. 8183): {Straight as the path} is a metaphor for the truth that is not diminished by an untruth because the path is a far-reaching path, and the straight path is the one in which no crookedness and no branches are spreading out from. Thus, the path aligns quicker with the goals through its straightforwardness, and it is miles away from perplexity through its probity and rectitude from ramification. The sum of {Guide us to the straight path} is an interpretation of the state of the ruler with justice, and in the state of the guide who reveals the guided route. It is a representation that can be divided into simple parts. It is taken from here that the ruling of a just judge is to be interpreted as being based on the truth and must be according to the truth according to Islamic law because it is guidance. Therefore, the ruling and the *fatwa* are equal in that they are both guidance, except that the ruling is compulsory.

As demonstrated in Example 1, the translations of the Qur'ānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English in Chapter (38) *sūrat ṣād*, verse 22, differ in the levels of accuracy of the implied meaning of justice. Abdel Haleem and Al-Hilali and Khan translate the lexemes into "right," which in English means truth and rightness. It is an interpretive translation that provides the true intended meaning in the verse, which was denoted by the word "equity", while Pickthall rendered it into the word ""fare"", which means equitable, average, and exquisite in English. It is a literal translation that fails to convey the hint of nuanced and pragmatic meanings of the Qur'ānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء. Hence, the renderings of Abdel Haleem and Al-Hilali and Khan are the closest to what the three authors think are the best and the most faithful to the original version text without producing an unclear rendering.

4.2 Example Two

Source Surah: Chapter (44) *sūrat l-dukhān* (The Smoke), Ayah, 47.

ST: ﴿ خُذُوهُ فَاعْتِلُوهُ إِلَىٰ سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴾ (الدخان:47)

Target Text:

1. **Abdel Haleem** (2004): "Take him! Thrust him into the <u>depths</u> of Hell!" (p. 499).

2. **Al-Hilali and Khan** (1996): "(It will be said) 'Seize him and drag him into the <u>midst of</u> blazing Fire'" (p. 676).

3. **Pickthall** (1930): "(And it will be said): Take him and drag him to the <u>midst</u> of hell" (p. 354).

4.2.1 The Analysis

The basic meaning of the Ayah

This verse means: "Seize him", which refers to the infidel. It was reliably recorded that when Allah says to the keepers of Hell, "Seize him", 70,000 of them will immediately hasten to seize him. "Drag him" means to force him forward by pushing him ferociously "into the midst of blazing Fire", and "Then pour over his head the torment of boiling" (Ibn Kathir, 2009, Vol. 4, p. 2049).

4.2.2 Fidelity in Rendering the Qur'ānic Arabic Homonymous Words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English in Chapter (44) *sūrat l-dukhān* (The Smoke),

Verse 47.

Midst: The word "midst" was interpreted to mean in the middle in the context of smoke, as in the verse in Surah, "Take it and ascend it to the equal of God Almighty" (The Smoke, verse 47). It was stated in Tafsir Al-Qurtubi (2006) that the Almighty's words "Take him" are said to the adulterous woman, meaning that she must take the sinful one. {So, they mounted him}; that is, they dragged him and drove him, {As far as hell) in the middle of hell. Then, they poured burning torment over his head. A fighter said: Malik, the keeper of fire, strikes Abu Jahl on the head with an iron cone, causing his head to separate from his brain, and his brain to flow over his body. Then the angel pours hot water into him, and his suffering is ended, and he falls.

As exemplified in Example 2, the translations of the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English in Chapter (44) *sūrat l-dukhān* (The Smoke), Verse 47, differ in the degrees of precision of the intended meaning of "midst". Abdel Haleem and Al-Hilali and Khan translate the lexemes into "midst," which means middle or depths in English.

Rightness: As for the meaning of "rightness", their renderings for the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English in Chapter (44) *sūrat l-dukhān* (The Smoke), Verse 47, are faithful and relatively similar to the original Qur'anic wording. Hence, the two translations are true to the original text. Abdel Haleem excels in the translation of the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء in Chapter (44) *sūrat l-dukhān* (The Smoke), Verse 47, and is consistent with that of the commentators, such as Al-Qurtubi (2006), who rendered the lexeme into "depth", which means "midst" in English.

4.3 Example Three

Source Surah: Chapter (5) *sūrat l-māidah* (The Table Spread with Food), Ayah, 77.

ST: ﴿...وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَن سَوَاء السَّبِيلِ﴾ (المائدة:77)

Target Text:

1. **Abdel Haleem** (2004): "continue to stray from the <u>even</u> path" (p. 122).
2. **Al-Hilali and Khan** (1996): "and strayed (themselves) from the <u>Right</u> Path" (p. 158).
3. **Pickthall** (1930): "… and led many astray, and erred from a <u>plain</u> road" (p. 103).

4.3.1 The Analysis

The basic meaning of the Ayah

The meaning of this verse is that they deviated from the Straight path to that of misguidance and straying (Ibn Kathir, 2009, Vol. 1, p. 474).

4.3.2 Fidelity in Rendering the Qurʾānic Arabic Homonymous Words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English in Chapter (5) *sūrat l-māidah* (The Table Spread with Food), Verse 77

Tafsir Al-Qurtubi (2006) stated: {They had gone astray before.} Mujahid and al-Hasan said: meaning the Jews. {And they misled many}, meaning, they misled many people. {And they strayed from the right path}, that is, intentionally following the path of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and bestow him peace. The repetition of "they went astray" means that they went astray before and went astray after, and what is meant is the ancestors who enacted misguidance and acted upon it are among the leaders of the Jews and Christians.

As exemplified in Example 3, Abdel Haleem, Al-Hilali and Khan, and Pickthall used a literal translation to render the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English in Chapter (5) *sūrat l-māidah* (The Table Spread with Food), Verse 77. They rendered it into "even," "right," and "plain," respectively. As for the meaning of "intent", the three translators rendered it in the same way as the word "justice", which showed up in the aura of justice, and it is noted that it was an appropriate translation. However, in this context, the lexeme *sawāi* سَوَاء connotes "intent". Hence, Abdel Haleem, Al-Hilali and Khan, and Pickthall fail to convey the implied meaning, and their translations are out of context.

4.4 Example Four

Source Surah: Chapter (8) *sūrat l-anfāl* (The Spoils of War), Verse 58.

ST: ﴿... فَانبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَائِنِينَ ﴾ (الانفال:58)

Target Text:

1. **Abdel Haleem** (2004): "… throw their treaty back at them, for God does not love the treacherous" (p. 185).
2. **Al-Hilali and Khan** (1996): "… throw back (their covenant) to them (to be) on <u>equal terms</u> (that there will be no more covenant between you and them). Certainly Allah likes not the treacherous" (p. 239).
3. **Pickthall** (1930): "… then throw back to them (their treaty) <u>fairly</u>. Lo! Allah loveth not the treacherous" (p. 143).

4.4.1 The Analysis

The basic meaning of the Ayah

The meaning of this verse is: Allah, the Almighty, says to his prophet (PBUH) if you "O Mohammed (PBUH) fear from any people" *sūrat*

l-anfāl, Verse 58. with whom you made a covenant "treachery" *sūrat l-anfāl*, Verse 58. (i.e., a violation of the covenants) and pledges that you have conducted with them, then "throw back (their covenants) to them", that is their peace treaty, "on equal terms" *sūrat l-anfāl*, Verse 58. (i.e., inform them you broke your covenants [peace treaty] with them), to be equal to them regarding you who has been in a state of war with them. Moreover, them being in a similar state of war with you means there is no more peace treaty regulating both of your enemies, or that "on equal terms" *sūrat l-anfāl*, Verse 58., means to give them respite before breaking your covenant with them (by showing them that you are fair with their treachery) (Ibn Kathir, 2009, Vol. 2, p. 744).

4.4.2 Fidelity in Rendering the Qurʾānic Arabic Homonymous Words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English Chapter (8) *sūrat l-anfāl* (The Spoils of War), Verse 58

"A clear matter" was interpreted to mean a clear matter in the Almighty's saying in *sūrat al-anfal*: "And if you fear treachery from a people, then point out to them all the same. Indeed, God does not love traitors" (8:58). It was stated in Tafsir Alt-Tabari (2004): (Then repel them equally), saying, "So engage in war with them, and inform them before you wage war against them that you have broken the covenant between you and them, due to the appearance of treachery and betrayal on their part (until you and they become in agreement)" (p. 194). It is equal in the knowledge that you are a warrior for them, so they take the tools of war for war and disavow themselves from treachery.

In Tafsir Al-Balkhi et al. (2002): Then he said: {And if you fear}. He says: And if you fear {treason from a people} by betrayal, breaking the covenant, {then approach them equally}, meaning he says, "On a clear matter, so fulfill their covenant with them" {Indeed, God does not love a traitor} [8: 58], meaning the Jews (p. 45).

As demonstrated in Example 4, in rendering the meaning of the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English, Chapter (8) *sūrat l-anfāl* (The Spoils of War), Verse 58, Abdel Haleem omitted the lexeme *sawāi* سَوَاء. Hence, his rendering is certainly confusing for the receptor because the translation of this ayah has lost its meaning. The renderings of Al-Hilali and Khan and of Pickthall are not close to the natural style of the translated text. The equivalent for both translators in the target language was "on equal terms", by Al-Hilali and Khan, which in English means "on equal footing" (Oxford, 2010). It is a literal translation that does not convey the true meaning of the verse as well. Pickthall's rendering of the verse (8:58) is quite different from that of Al-Hilali and Khan; that is, "fairly" is a literal translation and likewise does not convey the true meaning of the verse.

5. Conclusion

This research aimed to cast new light on the issues of fidelity in rendering the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء into English from the lens of Skopos theory. The Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء in the Holy Qur'an are elucidated in six methods as stated by Al-Balkhi et al. (2002); six ways as stated by Al-Damghani (n.d.); and five ways according to Ibn al-Jawzi (1983). Among the stipulatory ways are / *aleadl*, العدل ("Justice"), *alwasat* / الوسط ("midst"), *amr bayn* / أمرين ("a clear matter"), and *alqasd* قَصْد ا ("intent").

The translation of the four verses (ayahs) comprises the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء. The four examples of the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء were premeditatedly chosen and examined. Various challenges and shortfalls were found in the three English renderings explored. This investigation indicated that fidelity in translation is deemed to be a concept that occupies a role in gauging the fidelity of a rendered text: from high fidelity to zero fidelity. A high-fidelity translation suggests that no maximum effort was exerted to attain fidelity and transfer the original wording. The investigation also indicated that the rendition of the Holy Qur'an as a whole, and of the Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words *sawāi* سَوَاء especially, should be led by its Skopos rather than unreasonably focusing on attaining fidelity.

5.1 Study Implication

Besides these results, this study shows the knotty and key factors of transferring Qurʾānic Arabic homonymous words sawāi سَوَاء through different translation strategies, such as faithful translation. These translation strategies may presumably have a pivotal role in rendering Qurʾānic Arabic words faithfully and accurately.

5.2 Recommendations

Further studies are needed to identify the fathom of congruity between English and Arabic regarding the applicability of the faithful translation strategy either as a transitional device or as a literary mechanism. This study suggested that fidelity be explored in future studies predicated on the principle of continuance resemblance, and cumulation as a notion that can be placed on a range spanning from very fidelity to infidelity translation.

Acknowledgments

Authors' contributions

The authors made significant contributions to the conception and design of the work. The first author carried out the textual analysis. Also, the three authors contributed to the interpretation of the gathered data. All authors edited, proofread and revised the work critically for important intellectual content based on the editor and reviewer's comments. All authors approved of the final version to be published and

agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Competing interests

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.

Informed consent

Obtained

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned, externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions**.**

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available**.**

References

Abdel Haleem, M. A. S. A. (2004). *The Qur'an*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Abdelaal, N. M. (2019). Faithfulness in the translation of the Holy Quran: Revisiting the Skopos theory. *Sage Open*, *9*(3), 2158244019873013. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019873013

Abdelkarim, M. B. A., & Alhaj, A. A. M. (2023). Underlying linguistic problems experienced by translators in translating the Qurʾānic Arabic l-ḥazana' الْحَزَن words into English: A comparative study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *13*(11), 2995-3005. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1311.30

Abdelkarim, M. B. A., & Alhaj, A. A. M. (2024). A study of the translatability and untranslatability of Qur'anic Arabic particle laʿalla لَعَلَّ in some selected Surahs: A linguistic perspective. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *15*(2), 579-587. https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1502.26

Abdelkarim, M. B. A., & Alhaj, A. A. M. (2024). The dilemma of the duality of form and content of The Holy Qur'an translation into English in light of modern theories of meaning. *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture*, *15*(3). Retrieved from https://esiculture.com

Al-Abdullatif, M. (2018). The Qur'an translatability: The translation's invisibility. *Babel, 64*(2), 205-224. https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.00037.ala

Albahiri, M. H., & Alhaj, A. A. M. (2024). Issues of translating the Qurʾānic Arabic homographic word l-duʿāi/ الدُّعَاء into English: From the perspective of functional equivalence theory. *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture*, *15*(3). Retrieved from https://esiculture.com/index.php/esiculture/article/view/1856

Al-Balkhi, M. I. S., Abū al-Ḥasan Muqātil ibn Sulaymān ibn Bashīr al-Azdī. (2002). Tafsīr Muqātil, Taḥqīq wa-dirāsat D. 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shiḥātah, Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth – Bayrūt, al-Ṭab'ah: al-ūlá.

Al-Damghani, A. (n.d.). *Faces and Paradoxes for the Words of the Holy Book of God*. Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah. Beirut.

Alhaj, A. A. M., & Alwadai, M. A. M. (2024). A study of gain and loss in the translation of the Qurʾānic Arabic words of glad tidings known as Al-Bush'rā (البُشْرَى) into English: An Islamic professional ethical perspective. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *14*(1), 233-240. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1401.27

Al-Hilali, M. T., & Khan, M. M. (1996). *The Noble Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*. Madinah, Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Complex for Printing of the Holy Qur'an.

Al-Jawzi, I. (1983). Kitab al-Qussas wa al-Mudhakkirin. *MEJ*, *26*, 465-6.

Al-Qurtubi, M. A. A. A. (2006). *Al-Jami'li Ahkam al-Qur'an*. Beirut: Muassasah al-Risalah.

Alt-Tabari, M. (2004). *JaamiAA Al-Bayaan AAn Ta'weel Ayil Qur'an [The commentary on the Quran]*. Cairo, Egypt: Al-Halabi, Dar Al-Maref.

Baker, M. (2004). The status of equivalence in translation studies: An appraisal. In Y. Zijian (Ed.), *English-Chinese Comparative Study and Translation* (pp. 63-71). Shanghai, China: Foreign Languages Education Press.

Çӧz, N. (2012). Considering ethics in translation. *Electronic Journal of Vocational Colleges*, *2*, 131-134.

Crystal, D. (2003). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. 5th ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Diniz, T. F. N. (2003). A new approach to the study of translation: From stage to screen. *Cadernos de Tradu ҫao*, *2,* 29-54.

Eke, J. N. (2016). Skopos translation theory, text-types, and the African postcolonial text in intercultural postcolonial communication: A theoretical reflection. *Babel. Revue internationale de la traduction/International Journal of Translation*, *62*(3), 349-369. https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.62.3.01eke

Friedman, R. A. (2015). *Clarity, Communication, and Understandability: Theorizing Language in al-Bāqillānī's I'jāz al-Qur'ān and Usūl al-Fiqh Texts*. University of California, Berkeley.

Gutt, E. A. (1998). Pragmatic aspects of translation: Some relevance-theory observations. *The Pragmatics of Translation*, 41-53. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800417939-005

Higgs, J., & Cherry, N. (2009). Doing qualitative research on practice. In J. Higgs, D. Horsfall, & S. Grace (Eds.), *Writing Qualitative Research on Practice* (pp. 1-12). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789087909086_002

Ibn Ashour. (1984). *Muhammad Al-Taher, Interpretation of Liberation and Enlightenment*, Tunis, Tunisian Publishing House (in Arabic).

Ibn Kathir, A. (2009). *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*. Translated by Muhammad Saed (Trans. S. Abdul-Rahman). United Kingdom's Publication Limited.

Katan, D. (2018). Defining culture, defining translation. In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Culture* (pp. 17-47). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315670898-2

Kiraly, D. (2012). Skopos's theory goes to Paris: Purposeful translation and emergent translation projects. *Mtm*, *4*, 119-144.

Nae, N. (2004). Markedness, relevance, and acceptability in translation. *Forum of International Development Studies*, *26,* 103-114.

Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. Hatfield, UK: Pearson Education.

Nida, E. A., & Taber, C. (1982). *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (2nd ed.). Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004669147

Nord, C. (1997). *Translating as a Purposeful Activity*. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome.

Oxford Dictionary of English. (2010). 3rd ed. Oxford University Press. China Translation & Printing Services Ltd., China.

Pickthall, M. (1930). *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an: An Explanatory Translation*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

Polysemous. (n.d.). In Vocabulary.com Dictionary. Retrieved October 04, 2024, from https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/polysemous.

Poshtdar, A. M. (2016). Techniques of translation in an old translation of the Qur'an in the manuscript of Jame'al-Qisas. *Iranian Journal of Translation Studies*, *14*(53).

Pym, A. (2001). Introduction: The return to ethics in translation studies. *The Translator*, *7*, 129-138. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2001.10799096

Shaher, W., & Kaddouri, N. (2012). Demonstrating Homonymy in English and Arabic as an Ambiguous Lexeme. *Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities, 19*(1).

Tabatabaee, S. K. (2002). Obligations of the translators of the Qur'an towards the Qur'anic readings. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, *4*(1), 142-147. https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2002.4.1.142.

Taghian, M. A. F. A. (2013). *Problematic Translation of Mutashābihāt Qurʾānic Verses* (Doctoral dissertation, Doctoral dissertation, University of London).

Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London & New York: Routledge.

Vermeer, H. J. (1994). Translation today: Old and new problems. *Translation studies: An interdiscipline, 5,* 3-16. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.2.03ver

Vinay, J. P., & Darbelnet, J. (1995). *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation* (Vol. 11). John Benjamins Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.11

Wendland, E. (2016). Translating the English Bible: From relevance to deconstruction. *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*, *42*(1), 109-127.

Williams, M. (2004). *Translation Quality Assessment: An Argumentation-centered Approach*. University of Ottawa Press.

https://doi.org/10.1353/book6617

Yahya, N. Q. (2017). The Role of Co-Text in Determining the Homonymous. *Journal of Al-Farahidi's Arts, 9*(30). https://doi.org/10.51990/2228-009-030-018

Zhongying, F. (1990). Some remarks on the criteria of translation. *Babel*, *36*, 97-110. https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.36.2.04fan