

The Study of the Assessment of the Qur'anic Word *Ghurfa* into English

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المخلص:

يهدف البحث الحالي إلى معرفة قدرة المترجمين، في مجال ترجمة القرآن الكريم الذين اختيرت ترجماتهم لغرض تقييمها، على نقل معنى النص القرآني بوضوح وخصوصاً أن لكلمة "غرفة" معنيان مختلفان. فيشير المعنى الأول إلى راحة اليد أما الثاني فيعني مكان رفيع في الجنة.

واستند الباحث في بحثه إلى فرضيتين. وهي كما يلي:

١- يرجح أغلب المترجمون إلى نقل معنى كلمة "غرفة" في القرآن الكريم إلى الانكليزية على نحو مقبول.

٢- يتوقع أن تسبب الترجمة غير الدقيقة إرباك بسبب عدم القدرة على اختيار المعنى المناسب للكلمة.

ولإثبات صحة الفرضيتين المذكورتين في أعلاه، اختار الباحث خمس آيات قرآنية تحتوي على كلمة "غرفة" واعتمد على اربع ترجمات منشورة للقرآن الكريم أيضاً. وعلاوة على ذلك، صمّم الباحث انموذج تقويم الترجمات. واثبتت نتائج البحث صحة الفرضيتين في أعلاه لأن أغلب المترجمين نقلوا معنى كلمة "غرفة" إلى الانكليزية على نحو مقبول. ولم يرتك المترجمون بين معنيي الكلمة المذكورة أثناء ترجمتها إلى اللغة الانكليزية. فتعني أما راحة اليد أو أماكن في الجنة.

Abstract

The paper aims to see how far Qur'anic translators whose translations are selected for assessment are capable of rendering the meaning and sense of the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" adequately; especially the word concerned refers to two different things,

the first means hollow of hand whereas, the second one refers to places in paradise.

And the researcher based his paper on the following hypotheses:

- 1- Most Qur'anic translators are likely to render the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" appropriately.
- 2- Inadequate renditions can be produced due to the confusion of selecting which meaning of the word is intended

To validate the hypotheses mentioned above, the researcher selected five Qur'anic Ayas embracing the word "*Ghurfa*" and he consulted four existing Qur'anic translations. And the researcher has designed an eclectic model for assessment. Moreover, the results of the paper have validated the aforementioned hypotheses because most Qur'anic translators rendered the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" into English appropriately. And they did not mix between the meanings of Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*".

1.1. Types of meanings of the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*"

The Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" of meanings, they are presented as follows: literal meaning and metaphorical one.

1.1.1. The Qur'anic Word (*Ghurfa*) Means Hollow of Hands:

It means that the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" is used in the body of the Glorious Qur'an to refer to the "*Ghurfa*" as hollow of hands as in the following Qur'anic aya:

وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ عَرَفَ غُرْفَةَ بَيْدِهِ

(Surat AL-Baqara, aya: 249)

And whoever tastes it not, he is of me, except him who takes (thereof) in the hollow of his hand (Surat AL-Baqara, aya: 249) (Hilali and Khan, 1996: 55).

1.1.2. The Qur'anic Word (*Ghurfa*) Means Places:

It refers to the fact that the word *Ghurfa* has some meanings referring to a place, they are presented below:

1. High Place (Paradise)
2. Lofty Dwellings
3. Room

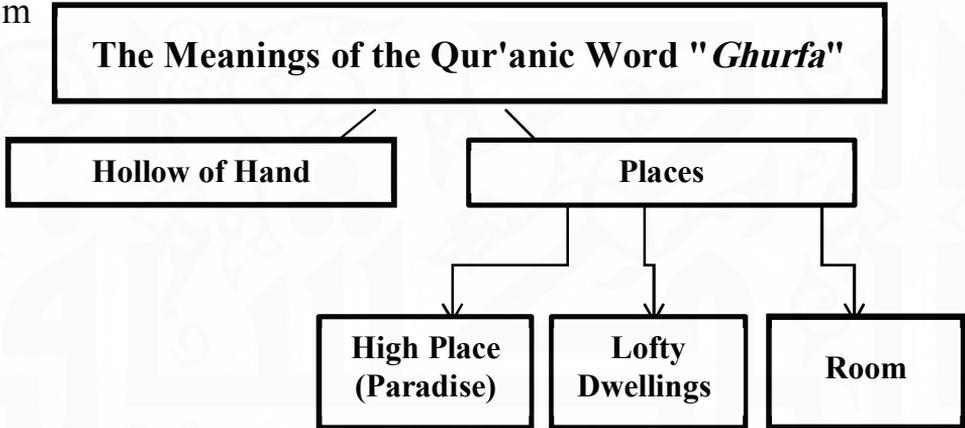


Figure (1.1.) Division of Meanings of the Qur'anic Word (*Ghurfa*)

1.2. The Qur'anic Ayas that embrace the word "Ghurfa" with their commentaries.

1.2.1. The Qur'anic Word (*Ghurfa*) Means Hollow of Hands:

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ عَرََفَ عُرْفَةً بِرِيْدِهِ"
(Surat AL-Baqara, aya: 249)

And whoever tastes it not, he is of me, except him who takes (thereof) in the hollow of his hand (Surat AL-Baqara, aya: 249) (Hilali and Khan, 1996: 55).

Commentaries:

It means a small amount of water taken by the hand (AL-Zihili, 1994: 42).

It means that whoever drinks of it, of its water, is not of me, is not of my followers, and whoever tastes it not, he is of me, except for him who scoops up with his hand' (ghurfa, or gharfa, 'a scoop'), satisfying himself therewith and not taking more, he is also of my followers. (AL-Jalalyan, tr. Feras Hamza, 2007: 46).

1.2.2. The Qur'anic Word (*Ghurfa*) Means Places:

أُولَئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْعُرْفَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً وَسَلَامًا"
(Surat AL-Furqan, Aya: 75)

Those will be rewarded with the highest place (in Paradise) because of their patience. Therein they shall be met with greetings and the word of peace and respect (Surat AL-Furqan, aya: 75) (Hilali and Khan, 1996:488).

Commentaries:

It refers to the fact that they will be rewarded the privilege of good place in paradise (AL-Zihili, 1994:267).

It means that Those, they will be given the privilege of having a great place, the highest degree in Paradise as a result of their absolute obedience to AL-Mighty Allah (AL-Jalalyan, tr. Feras Hamza,2007: 410).

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدۡبُوَنَّهُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ عُرَفًا

(Surat AL-Anakaboot, Aya: 58)

And those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, to them We shall surely give lofty dwellings in Paradise (Surat AL-Anakaboot, Aya: 58) (Hilali and Khan, 1996: 540)

Commentaries:

The Qur'anic word signals that all those believe in God (Almighty Allah), his prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and act virtuously will be rewarded high places in paradise (AL-Zihili, 1994: 404).

The exegete in question explained the fact that those who believe and perform righteous deeds, will be given the residence of high places in paradise as a reward (AL-Jalalyan, tr. Feras Hamza, 2007: 460).

الَّذِينَ اتَّقُوا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ عُرَفٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا عُرَفٌ مَّبْنِيَّةٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

(Surat AL-Zumer, Aya: 20)

But those who fear their Lord (Allah) and keep their duty to Him, for them are built lofty rooms, one above another under which rivers flow (i.e. Paradise) (Surat AL-Zumer, aya: 20) (Hilali and Khan, 1996: 623).

Commentaries:

It means that the believers who obey Almighty Allah will be rewarded rooms above rooms since paradise is built firmly (AL-Zihili, 1994: 461).

It refers to the fact that those who fear their Lord, and therefore obey Him — for them there will be lofty abodes with [other] lofty abodes built above them, with rivers flowing beneath them, that is, beneath [both] the upper and the lower abodes — a promise of God. God does not fail the trust, [He does not break] His promise. (AL-Jalalyan, tr. Feras Hamza, 2007: 538).

"وَهُمْ فِي الْغُرُفَاتِ آمِنُونَ"

(Surat Saba', Aya: 37)

And they will reside in the high dwellings (Paradise) in peace and security (Surat Saba', aya: 37) (Hilali and Khan, 1996: 581).

Commentaries:

It mentions that all those believe in God (Almighty Allah), his prophet Mohammad (PBUH) will be protected in the rooms of paradise (AL-Zihili, 1994: 433).

They shall be in the lofty abodes of Paradise and they guarded in these rooms (AL-Jalalyan, tr. Feras Hamza, 2007: 492).

2. Text Types and Methods of Translation

Many translation scholars such as: (Newmark, 1988: 12) (Reiss, 2000: 16) and (House, 2001:245f) backed the idea that is referring to the existence of the interrelation between text-type and the translation method chosen. It is crystal clear that there are different kinds of texts which require different types of translation methods. They are as described below:

| Translation Methods (Approaches) | Text-Types | Subject-matter |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Free (Communicative) | Expressive | Literary |
| Literal | Informative | Scientific |
| Semantic | Vocative | Commercial |

Table (2.1.) Division of Translation Methods, Text-Types and Subject-Matter

It is understood that free method of translation is employed when there is an expressive text-type. It is of different types like: poems, prose, stories and novels etc. because they embrace rhetorical devices (metaphors, similes) and these devices need this method to transfer the same sense and meaning of ST into TT.

Literal method of translation is used in translating scientific, medical texts because the readers look for meanings of these texts not the aesthetic effects.

Besides, semantic method is very similar to literal method used for translating commercial texts for reasons of persuasions.

Therefore, Reiss (Reiss, 2000: 16) emphasized that the text-type defines the approach for the translator concerned. The text-

type is seen as an important factor that impacts the choice of translator in selecting the appropriate method of translation.

The translation of religious texts is more difficult than any other text of translation since it aims to render sacred beliefs, thoughts and concepts of certain culture into another one which must be achieved by accuracy. The beliefs and intentions of translator of religious texts must be neutral (AL-Khawalda, 2004: 217). In other words, he has to be impartial in translation so as to reach out the highest degree of clarity. It is mentioned that translators of religious text stick to the original manuscripts than translators of other text-types (Stewart, 2000: 33).

2.1. Religious Texts Features

It is obvious that not all texts have the same characteristics. There are many text-types such as political, medical, legal, scientific, economic, and religious texts. Every type of the abovementioned texts has its features. They make them different in comparison with other text-types.

The English language of religion has some characteristics, they are presented by Waard and Nida (1986: 21f):

- 1- It is figurative. It uses symbols, where metaphors and metonymies are employed widely, and they make extensive use of poetic forms.
- 2- It is timeless: it presents a truth which goes beyond time and history.
- 3- In this language, experience generally outweighs in a rational way. Therefore, there is no hesitation to speak of miracles.
- 4- New and unusual expressions become special features of the new community of faith.
- 5- It almost always contains a great deal of expressions that refer to instructions and the appeal to the commitment.
- 6- The religious texts consist of many ethics. Although spirituality takes priority over ethics, the ethical behaviour is described as the product of a change in one's spiritual relationships.

2.2. The Language of the Glorious Qur'an

The language of the Glorious Qur'an is a unique kind of discourse in the Arabic language. It is different from ordinary discourse and from classical Arabic in its highly rhetorical fusion of form and content.

It is agreed upon by Muslim theologians and linguists that the language of the Glorious Qur'an is of divine authorship. In other words, no one can write down an Aya due to its uniqueness. One of those famous figures is Al-Jirjani, 1984 whose work *Dalā'il al-i'jāz* Evidence pieces Inimitability. The language of the Glorious Qur'an is absolutely unparalleled in its style, eloquence, structure and lexis.

Tawhidi presents details over the language of the Glorious Qur'an by saying the following:

The language of Qur'an shows "some unparalleled eloquence of speech and writing to the extent that the most able poets and orators were astounded before the beauty and magnificence of the text" (2004: xx).

Bell and Wott cite that the language of the Glorious Quran is "neither a treatise on theology, nor a code of laws, nor a collection of sermons, but rather a medley of all three" (1970: xi).

The Glorious Qur'an is described as the most phenomenal textual material; it is the most wonderful artistic combination. This is why,

Ahmed Khan cites the following:

The holy Qur'an is neither a poetry, nor prose, nor rhymed prose, yet in emphasizing the significance of its message, it brings home of its main ideas in ever so fresh a set of effective artistic combination (1987: 12).

Almighty Allah indicates that neither human beings nor jinns (angels) can produce a book like the Glorious Qur'an:

قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ
بِعِضِهِمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

(Al-Israa, aya: 88)

Say: "If the mankind and jinn were together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another."(Surat Al-Isra': aya: 88) (Hiali and khan, 1996: 325).

2.3. Translation and the Glorious Qur'an

Rendering the meanings of the Glorious Qur'an is described as the most complicated task assigned to the translators. The difficulty of translating it partially due to its significance whose ultimate goal is to spread the message of Islam and to strengthen faith and partially resulted from the nature of language which this book uses.

The translators of religious texts in general and of the Glorious Qur'an in particular have to take the following points into account:

- 1- They have to believe in or at least be passionate with the message presented in the texts.
- 2- They must be thoroughly familiar with the various nuances of the words which they intend to translate.
- 3- Since religious texts are closely related to faith, and faith is an essential part of the culture of the speaking community, translators should involve themselves in attempting to create the original culture (Yowell and Latawish, 2000: 111)

When dealing with Sacred Books, two incompatible criteria have to be satisfied:

- 1- Accuracy: being faithful to the meaning
- 2- Intelligibility: being understandable to the reader and related to the current trend (Crystal, 1987: 385).

Since words have relations understood intuitively by native speakers, the essential role of the translator is to translate not only what is said but also what is implied (Duff 1981: 111). Terms of religious vocabulary carry with them a heavily charged pragmatic meaning (Nida1964: 36).

3. Methods of Translation and the Assessment of the Translation of the Qur'anic Word "*Ghurfa*" into English

3.1. Preliminaries

This part is dedicated to assessing the translations of the Qur'anic ayas that contains the word "*Ghurfa*" into English. Besides, the researcher has chosen five Qur'anic ayas consisting of the word concerned. And he selected four Qur'anic Translators to see how far the translators concerned are able to transfer the meaning and sense of the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" clearly. This is why; the researcher has designed an eclectic model for assessment.

It is worth mentioning that the study has been based on four published translations of the Glorious Qur'an translated by the following:

- 1- Shaker, M. H. (2009)
- 2- Al-Hilali and M. and Khan, M.M.(1996)
- 3- Dawood, N. J. (1956)
- 4- Rodwell, J.M. (1994)

The above-mentioned translators' names are respectively abbreviated as follows:

- 1- Sh
- 2- Hi.-Kh.
- 3- Daw
- 4- Rod

The reason behind selecting the Qur'anic translators whose names are cited above is because they are from different religions and cultural backgrounds: Dawood is Jewish, Al- Hilali and Khan are Muslims, Rodwell is Christian and Shaker is Muslim. Hypothetically speaking, a translator's religious/cultural background has some sort of impact upon his products in the Target Language. Iiyas (1989: 107) affirms that the translators of religious texts may sometimes be influenced either consciously or unconsciously, by their own religious doctrines and beliefs, i.e. their religious background.

3.2. The Model of Translation Assessment

The researcher has created an eclectic model for the assessment the Qur'anic Word (*Ghurfa*). It is of two methods: 1- Transparent Method of Translation (TMT) and Non-Transparent Method of Translation (NMT)

3.2.1. Transparent Method of Translation (TMT)

It means that that the Qur'anic translators whose translations are selected by the researcher rendered the meaning and sense of the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" into English clearly.

3.2.2. Non-Transparent Method of Translation (NMT)

It shows that the Qur'anic translators failed to convey the meaning and sense of the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" into English obviously.

The following is the eclectic model designed by researcher for the assessment the Qur'anic Word (*Ghurfa*) into English:

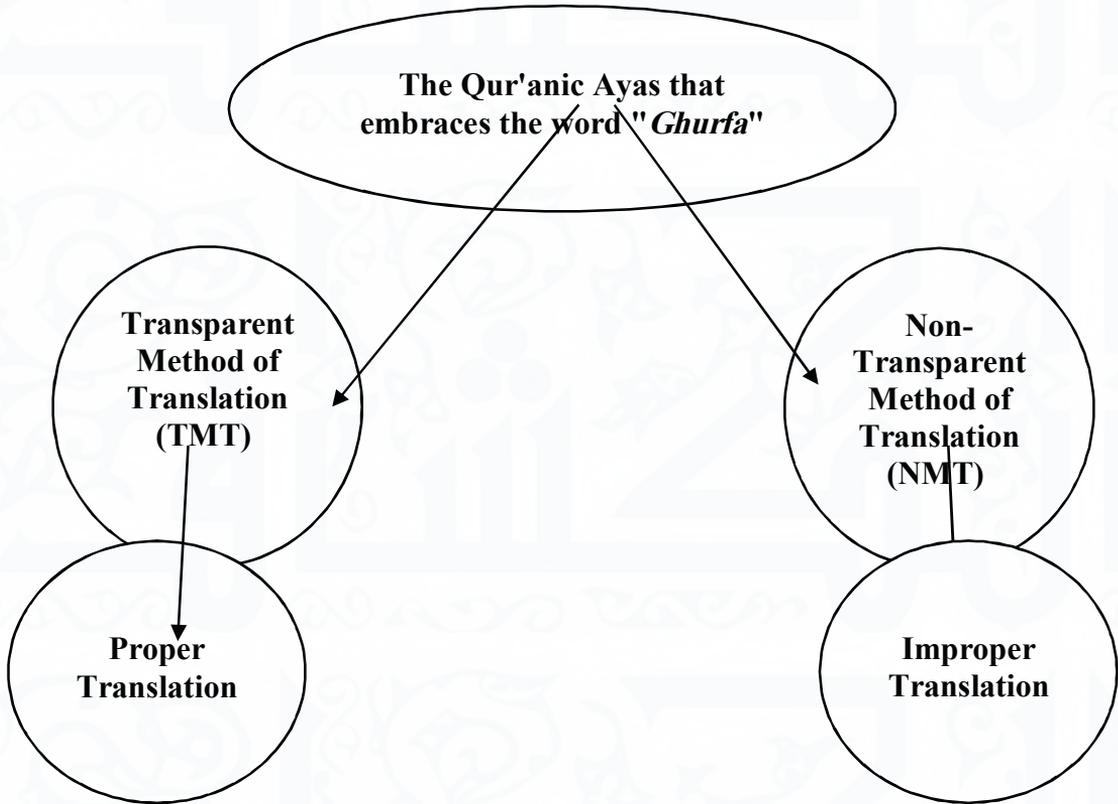


Figure (3.1.) The Eclectic Method designed for the assessment of the translations of the Qur'anic word (*Ghurfa*) into English

4.3. The Assessment of the Translations of the Qur'anic word *Ghurfa* into English:

4.3.1. The Qur'anic Word (*Ghurfa*) Means Hollow of Hands:

As mentioned in (1.2.1 above), the meaning of the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" refers to Hollow of Hands. Besides, this is understood depending on the nature of the word in question in the body of the Glorious and the exegeses of the Qur'anic exegetes. The Qur'anic Aya mentioned below referring to Hollow of Hands with their English translations:

وَأَمَّن لَّمْ يَطْعَمُهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ عَرَفَ عَرَفَةً بِيَدِهِ"
(Surat AL-Baqara, Aya: 249)

Sh (p. 74)

And whoever does not taste of it, he is surely of me, except he who takes with hand as much of it as fills the hand.

Hi.-Kh. (p. 55)

And whoever tastes it not, he is of me, except him who takes (thereof) in the hollow of his hand.

Daw (p. 351)

But he that does not drink from it, or contents himself with a taste of it in the hollow of his hand, shall fight by my side.

Rod (p. 26)

But he who shall not taste it, drinking a drink out of the hand, shall be of my band.

All Qur'anic translators above expect for **Rod** followed (TMT) in rendering the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" into English because they translated it into (**Hollow of Hand**), while Rodwell transferred it into (**the hand**) without any further explanation. In other words, he followed (NMT).

4.3.2. The Qur'anic Word (*Ghurfa*) Means Places:

As stated in (1.2.2 above), the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" refers to places: High place, lofty dwellings and rooms. In other words, all the meanings mentioned above mean Paradise. The following Ayas embrace the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" mean places:

"أُولَئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْعَرْشَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيَدْخُلُونَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً وَسَلَامًا"
(Surat AL-Furqan, Aya: 75)

Sh (p. 427)

These shall be rewarded with high places because they were patient, and shall be met therein with greetings and salutations.

Hi.-Kh. (p. 488)

Those will be rewarded with the highest place (in Paradise) because of their patience. Therein they shall be met with greetings and the word of peace and respect.

Daw (p. 209)

These shall be rewarded with Paradise for their fortitude. There they shall find a welcome and a greeting.

Rod (p. 241)

These shall be rewarded with the High Places of Paradise for their steadfast endurance, and they shall meet therein with welcome and salutations.

All above mentioned translators of the Glorious Qur'an translated the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" successfully because they referred to places in paradise. It means that they did not derail from the real sense of the word in question. Besides, all of them resorted to (TMT) in their translations.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْوَئَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ غُرَفًا

(Surat AL-Ankaboot, Aya: 58)

Sh (p. 467)

And (as for) those who believe and do good. We will certainly give them abode in the high places in gardens.

Hi.-Kh. (p. 540)

And those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, to them We shall surely give lofty dwellings in Paradise.

Daw (p. 192)

Those that embrace the true faith and do good works shall be forever lodged in the mansions of Paradise.

Rod (p. 267)

But those who shall have believed and wrought righteousness will we lodge in gardens with palaces.

All the aforementioned Qur'anic translators used different types of places in paradise to refer to the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" in English. In other words, **high places**, **lofty dwellings**, **mansions** and **palaces** are highly privileged places in paradise given to those believers who obey Allah. So, (**lofty**) means very high building according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD, 2008: 904), whereas (**Dwelling**) stands for a place where you live (Ibid: 478). As for (**mansions**), it is defined as a large impressive house (Ibid: 935) while the word (**palace**) means a large impressive house as well (Ibid: 1093). In other words, all translators made use of synonymies that have the same sense. Therefore, all of them depended on (TMT)

"وَهُمْ فِي الْعُرْفَاتِ آمِنُونَ"

(Surat Saba', Aya: 37)

Sh (p. 499)

And they shall be secure in the highest places.

Hi.-Kh. (p. 581)

And they will reside in the high dwellings (Paradise) in peace and security.

Daw (p. 182)

They shall dwell in peace in the pavilions of Paradise.

Rod (p. 287)

And in the pavilions of Paradise shall they dwell secure.

Sh, Hi.-Kh whose translations of the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" mentioned above employed different synonymies to render the word concerned in English. Because **Sh** used (**highest places**) whereas, **Hi.-Kh.** Made use of (**high dwellings (Paradise)**), so they mean highly privileged places as they were explained in the Aya mentioned above. Therefore, they followed TMT in rendering the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" into English. Yet, this is not the case with **Daw** and **Rod** because they employed the word (**Pavilions**) in their translations. In other words, **Pavilions** is defined as a temporary building used for public events and exhibitions or a building next to a sport ground or large building used for sports or entertainment (OALD, 2008: 1112). Moreover, "*Ghurfa*" is a place where an obedient will live forever. This is why, **pavilions** does not match

the criteria of the sense of the Qur'anic word. So, **Daw** and **Rod** resorted to (NMT).

"لَكِنَّ الدِّينَ اتَّقُوا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ عَرَفٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا عَرَفٌ مَّبْنِيَّةٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ"

(Surat AL-Zumer, Aya: 20)

Sh (p. 532)

But (as for) those who are careful of (their duty to) their Lord, they shall have high places, above them higher places built (for them), beneath which flow rivers.

Hi.-Kh. (p. 623)

But those who fear their Lord (Allah) and keep their duty to Him, for them are built lofty rooms, one above another under which rivers flow (i.e. Paradise).

Daw (p. 274-275)

As for those who truly fear their Lord, they shall dwell in towering mansions set about with running streams.

Rod (p. 309)

But for those who fear their Lord are storied pavilions beneath which shall the rivers flow.

All Qur'anic translators expect for **Rod** followed **TMT** in their translations because they employed the followings equivalences respectively: **high places**, **lofty rooms** and **mansions**. And they refer to the meanings and sense of Qur'anic word "Ghurfa". But **Rod** failed in rendering the meaning and sense of the word concerned as a result of employing the term **Pavilions** in his translation. This is why, he used **NMT** in rendering the word in question into English.

4.4. Assessment Results

The researcher made a table so as to show rates of success and failure of each Qur'anic translators whose translations of the Qur'anic word "Ghurfa" were selected in the current paper. The results are presented below:

| Qur'anic Translators | Aya No.1 | Aya No.2 | Aya No.3 | Aya No.4 | Aya No.5 | Rates of Success | Rates of Failure |
|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------------|------------------|
| (Sh) | Success | Success | Success | Success | Success | 100% | 0% |
| (Hi.-Kh.) | Success | Success | Success | Success | Success | 100% | 0% |
| (Daw) | Success | Success | Success | Failure | Success | 80% | 20% |
| (Rod) | Failure | Success | Success | Failure | Failure | 40% | 60% |

Table (4.1) Assessment Results of the Qur'anic Word "*Ghurfa*" into English

Conclusions

- 1- It has been found out that most of the Qur'anic translators whose published translations were consulted in carrying out the process of translation assessment of the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" rendered the meaning and sense of the word concerned appropriately.
- 2- Qur'anic Translators did not mix between the two meanings of the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" in translating it into English.
- 3- The results of assessment are as follows:
 - A- Shaker's Translations of the Qur'anic Ayas that contain the word "*Ghurfa*" were successful at a rate of 100% as a result of following (TMT).
 - B- Al-Hilali and M. and Khan achieved 100% of success in their translations of the Qur'anic word in question for reasons of resorting to (TMT).
 - C- Dawood got 80% success because of clarity in his translation. And he failed by 20% for not selecting the appropriate equivalence of the word concerned in English. In other words, he chose **Pavilions** which is defined as a temporary building used for public events and exhibitions or a building next to a sport ground or large building used for sports or entertainment (OALD, 2008: 1112).
 - D- Rodwell is defined as the Qur'anic translator whose rate of failure is higher than the rate of success. In other words, the result of translating the Qur'anic word "*Ghurfa*" is 40% success and 60% failure because he employed Non-Transparent Method of Translation in 60% of his translations.

References

The Glorious Qur'an

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