

Translating Repetition in the Holy Qur'an: A Diachronic Analysis of Rhetorical Equivalence in English Translations

Yousef Albudairi*

Translation Department, College of Languages and Translation, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Zakaryia Almahasees

Department of Translation, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Abstract—In this study, the translation of repetition, which is a crucial rhetorical and stylistic aspect of the Qur'an, is analyzed in four major English translations of the Qur'an that span three centuries: Sale (1734), Rodwell (1861), Khan (1905), and Qaribullah and Darwish (2001). Qur'anic repetition has various purposes, such as emphasis, cohesion, or rhythmic prose, but when translated into English, where translation tends to favor lexical variety, specific challenges are posed. Using Vinay and Darbelnet, Nida and Taber, Baker, and Venuti as frameworks, this study utilizes a range of methodologies that are both descriptive, qualitative, and comparative in nature to analyze thirteen Qur'anic verses that involve repetition on three levels of hierarchy: word-level repetition, verse-level repetition, or non-verse repetition. This paper argues that while early translations tend to be more paraphrastic, reducing repetition, more recent approaches tend to be more literal, effectively conveying the oral nature of the Qur'an. Literal translation is found to be an effective translation technique in carrying the semantic, pedagogical, and aesthetic roles of repetition. This study contributes to the development of an analytical framework for the function of repetition as an indicator of rhetorical translation in sacred texts, resolving the conflict between linguistic equivalence and theological meaning. It also shifts the focus from repetition being an unnecessary stylistic device to an intentional rhetorical device in the Qur'an.

Index Terms—Qur'an translation, repetition, rhetorical equivalence, translation strategies, comparative linguistics

I. INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an has a special place in the literary canon of the world in terms of its religious value and distinctive style of speech. It is neither prose nor poetry in the usual sense but a special discourse in which rhythm and narrative are uniquely combined (Neuwirth, 2014, p. 17). The task of the translator is to translate the Qur'an's complicated combination of repetition and meaning in a way that retains the religious effect in a different language.

A prominent aspect of Qur'anic speech is the usage of the technique of repetition, which has received praise and criticism alike. In some Western literary traditions, succinctness, linearity, and originality are highly prized, and the usage of the technique of repetition can be considered a weakness in style or redundancy. Such usage can be understood in the sense of the deficiency of originality in the rhetoric of the past, and modern literary theory can place more emphasis on the linear progress of the story than the usage of the technique of repetition. Thus, the prophetic story or the technique of refrain in the Qur'anic text, for example the refrain "Which of the favors of your Lord will you deny?" in Chapter 55:13, can be considered overly repetitive according to such literary traditions. However, the dynamic functions of Qur'anic speech can be understood in the sense that the technique of repetition can have several functions such as the emphasis on the central theological ideas, the memorization of the speech in an oral-aural society, and the encouragement of the audience's active listening and participation (Neuwirth, 2014, p. 112; Abdel Haleem, 1999, p. 21; Kermani, 2014, p. 56).

Some scholars have noted that there are several functions that are interwoven in the repetition that is seen in the Quran. There is the mnemonic aspect that serves to reinforce basic teachings in the memory of the audience. There is also the structural aspect that provides cohesion to the text that is non-linear by interweaving themes that include tawhīd, moral advice, and accountability for actions in the afterlife (Abdel Haleem, 1992, pp. 34-35). There is also the rhetorical aspect that provides persuasive techniques that include repetition to emphasize the importance of belief and morality as expressed in the Quran (Kermani, 2014, pp. 88-90). It is important to note that this repetition is never simply repetitive; there is variation that is often used to emphasize differences in theology (Robinson, 2003, p. 76).

At the same time, the same characteristics of the Qur'an that make it such a masterpiece of rhetorical skill pose

* Corresponding Author. Email: yaalbudairi@imamu.edu.sa

considerable challenges for the task of translating it. The Qur'anic device of repetition, serving the functions of cohesion, persuasion, and aesthetic marking in the Arabic text, can be considered tedious and repetitive in target languages that value succinctness and rhetorical variety. This situation raises the general question of the extent to which the rhetorical and teaching effectiveness of Qur'anic repetition can be retained in the task of translating it.

This research examines the treatment of repetition as a literary and theological issue in English translations of the Qur'an. Through a theoretical approach grounded in Qur'anic literary theory and translation studies, it examines and assesses the literary effect of translations' treatment of repeated statements and motifs. The research seeks to position translation within a literary aesthetics of repetition inherent within the Qur'an and thus seeks to merge Qur'anic literary studies and translation studies and challenge traditional notions of literary aesthetics.

The current study aims to examine the representation of repetition in the Qur'an within the translation of the Qur'an and determine the level to which the translators are maintaining the Qur'anic texture and the way the translation is affected by the conventions of the period. In order to achieve the objectives of the current study, the study is divided into three questions.

1. How did translators across different historical and cultural contexts approach repeated lexical expressions, recurrent verses, and narrative motifs in the Qur'an?
2. Which translation strategies—such as literal reproduction, modulation, reduction, or compensation—are most frequently employed to handle repetition, and what factors (stylistic, theological, or linguistic) govern these choices?
3. What is the impact of these strategic choices on the preservation or distortion of primary functions of repetition, namely its rhetorical power, pedagogical efficacy, and aesthetic functions?

Thus, by identifying the structure and framework for analysis, this study is able to conduct an integrated analysis for the lexical, phrasal, and textual levels to produce a comprehensive analysis for the translation and reinterpretation of repetition in the Qur'an into English.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Qur'an is inextricably tied to linguistic and stylistic aspects which are central to the concept of inimitability in the Qur'an itself and are known as *i'jaz*. Among the stylistic aspects is the feature of *tikrār* or 'repetition'. This literature review incorporates the most current findings on the primary role of *tikrār*, covering its use in the structuring of cohesion, the expression of ontological statements, and the use of *tikrār* in rhetorical arguments. This paper also evaluates the challenges translators face in conveying the most crucial stylistic element of the holy book in English translation. The analysis indicates a significant gap in the translation of the holy book, and a lack of a systematic approach in preserving the stylistic integrity of the holy book. This gap, in turn, forms the basis of the current investigation.

There appears to have been a paradigm shift from the more traditional academic view of Qur'anic repetition purely being a textual phenomenon towards more sophisticated approaches to texturing. Whereas more traditional approaches to Qur'anic research may have viewed repetition from time to time through the lens of redundancy or editorial weakness (Christiansen, 2010), more modern approaches tend towards more complex views of linguistic and theological significance. In more classical Islamic scholastic tradition, the phenomenon of *tikrār* is normally seen to be indicative of divine eloquence (*balāghah*) as a means of emphasis, threat, promise, or theological instruction. It would seem that modern research views the texturing role of repetition through the means of formulaic clauses, lexical repetition, and refrains.

Based on this localized textual cohesion, Elalami (2023) offers concrete evidence of the cohesive role of repetition with the extended narrative of the Chapter of Yusuf being a key case study. Elalami shows that *tikrār* is a key aspect of Qur'anic text cohesion with the objective of creating thematic links and a cohesive text out of different segments of the text. This will enable the meaning of every verse to apply to the entire chapter, thereby acting like a 'thread that weaves different pieces of a text together.' Elalami, therefore, argues that the Qur'anic text is based on a 'principle of interlinking.' In addition to this local role, a more systemic role of repetition has emerged in current scholarship and is relevant to the Qur'an's overall conceptual structure. In a pioneering study, Sedek (2020) contends that "repetition of words/phrases or larger textual patterns is essentially linking corresponding themes related to theology across different chapters." Specifically, Sedek proposes that such recurring features of the text establish "concept-based structures" that enable the "retrieval of ontological data." This deeper level of structure linking related concepts throughout the entire Qur'an is critically at risk of being lost when translation strategies prioritize the concision and flow of the translation over and above the preservation of the original text. Therefore, the preservation of this aspect is absolutely crucial to the translation of the overall conceptual message of the Qur'an.

The structural importance of *tikrār* is directly tied to its rhetorical/persuasive role, adding further complexity to the translator's work. Its functional importance is evident from research on the role of repetition in Qur'anic rhetoric. Stepanova and Hachim (2025) rank *tikrār* alongside other "crucial rhetorical devices such as metaphor, simile, and pleonasm" that are "indispensable for achieving full cognitive, psychological, and aesthetic comprehension of the Arabic original." In this context, repetition is seen to "intensify meaning, create a sense of urgency/inevitability, and make sure that the reader/internalized the essential message regarding social behaviour and theological obligations." Similarly, in his study on argumentative structures, Shan (2025) contends that "the translational

difficulties” are not eliminated because the role of repetition is vital to the Qur’anic rhetorical/persuasive purpose.” In matters related to religion, punishment, or lessons from history, “repetition is purposefully employed for the purpose of setting up premises, propelling the discussion towards a climax, or achieving the final rhetorical/persuasive purpose.” In such a context, the “stylistic repetition becomes a rhetorical anchor” such that “its translation becomes imperative for maintaining the Qur’anic argumentative/didactic purpose”.

Despite the general academic consensus about the functional importance and rhetorical necessity of *tikrār*, the literature always singles out the translation of *tikrār* into English as being a major task. The heart of the challenge lies in the basic incompatibility between the Arabic style of discourse, which purposefully employs repetition in order to accent, emphasize, and thereby preserve cohesion, and the English preference for brevity, variety, and synonymy. The English language tradition, with roots in the principles of classical rhetoric, views exact or nearly exact repetition, except in specialized literary genres, as an indicator of poor style, mental inadequacy, or the failure to find good synonyms. This deeply rooted bias always leads the translator down the path of domestication, sometimes opting for variation, modulation, or outright deletion when repetition occurs in the Arabic original text.

This conflict between source-text faithfulness and target-text conformance with stylistic norms often requires the translator to compromise on the original Arabic’s rhetorical effectiveness and cohesion. According to Shan (2025), this conflict is constantly negotiated through the translator’s use of a range of techniques from close translation to explanatory paraphrase, which may require the use of classical tafsir (exegesis) for verification. It is generally agreed that while the translator aims for faithfulness, the differences between the source and target languages, plus the cultural preference in the latter for a style that does not favor repetition, inevitably result in a functional loss. This loss is highlighted through empirical research that concentrates on the micro-textual level. For instance, Al Tameemi (2020) illustrates the challenges that arise when the translator tries to translate the phenomenon of reduplication. This is a morphological and rhetorical device that is utilized for the purpose of intensification. In her research that compares the translations of the Quran into English by four prominent translators (Pickthall, Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Arberry), the author illustrates that instead of maintaining the effective and intensifying rhetorical device of the Arabic form of words or verbal roots that use repetition, the translator inevitably makes a trade-off. In this case, the techniques that are employed include the use of a single word that is intensified through the use of an adverb (for example, ‘truly’ or ‘very’), or the use of meaning substitution or even deletion. While these techniques are acceptable from the point of view of English style, the textual resonance that was created through the repetition of words or verbal roots is lost. This results in the loss of the rhetorical emphasis that was aimed for through the use of the rhetorical device. This conflict between the source text and the target text is the central problem that contemporary research tries to solve.

In conclusion, the literature review above has shown that the scholarly literature views the presence of “repetition” (*tikrār*) in the Qur’anic text as an integral part of the Qur’anic structural and rhetorical design. From the above evidence, it is evident that the issue of repetition in the Qur’anic text is not random; instead, it is a fundamental part of the process of ontological retrieval (Sedek et al., 2020) and the process of structural unity (Elalami, 2023) of the Qur’anic text. In addition, there have been specific research efforts that have established the amount of losses involved in canonical translations with regard to the issue of repetition, including theme and microscopic morphological repetitions such as reduplication (Al Tameemi, 2020). However, the major challenge facing the existing literature is the fact that there is a lack of a comprehensive approach to the treatment of the issue of repetition. Although there is considerable knowledge with regard to the issue of functions and losses associated with repetition, there is a lack of a unified methodological approach to the treatment of the issue of repetition. As such, the major challenge at this particular stage is the establishment of a comprehensive approach to the study of the issue of repetition. The treatment of the issue of repetition in the Qur’anic text, as well as the challenge associated with it at this particular stage, is the theme of this research.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive and comparative qualitative approach to explore the treatment of repetition in the Holy Quran across different eras. It seeks to explain and analyze the translation and treatment of repetition and determine the effectiveness of such approaches towards the aesthetic and rhetorical value of the Quran in the English translation. These research questions mentioned above help to determine the focus and direction of this research.

The corpus for this analysis includes thirteen verses of the Qur’an chosen to illustrate the various types of repetitive patterns at three levels of linguistic analysis: the level of word adjacency, the level of verse adjacency, and the level of non-adjacent verses. These levels include all types of rhetorical repetitions found in the Qur’an, including phonological repetitions and structural refrains. The verses are taken from those parts of the Qur’an where the repetitions are recognized and deliberately employed for rhetorical and mnemonic ends, ensuring that the corpus analyzed here can be manageable and representative enough for the assessment of the four different translations’ treatment of the varied types of repetitions. The selection of the 30 examples is based on the following considerations: the selection is informed by purposive sampling that ensures the data set is representative of a range of patterns of rhetorical repetition found in the Holy Qur’an. The selection is also informed by the fact that the examples were drawn from different surahs to ensure that the selection is representative of the range of variations in the use of repetition. Further, the selection is based on the fact that the examples are the most discussed cases of repetition in Qur’anic discourse. The selection of 30 examples

is adequate for a balanced data set that is representative without being unwieldy. The thirteen verses are analyzed for four English translations of the Qur'an, including Sale (1734), Rodwell (1861), Khan (1905), and Qaribullah and Darwish (2001), reflecting four different translational philosophies based on the date and the ideological background of the respective translational approach.

The research uses Vinay and Darbelnet's model of translation procedure categories and Nida and Taber's concepts of formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Catford's theory of shifts and Baker's concepts of equivalence and cohesion form the core theoretical constructs (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 31; Nida & Taber, 1969, p. 12; Catford, 1965, p. 27; Baker, 2011, p. 203). These theories help in assessing the translator's tendency towards repetition through the use of amplification, reduction, modulation, or compensation. The research also uses the Qur'anic style literature, specifically the concepts of Neuwirth, Abdel Haleem, and Elimam. They all conceptualized the use of repetition in the Qur'an through rhythm and meaning (Neuwirth, 2014, p. 41; Abdel Haleem, 1992, p. 35; Elimam, 2019, p. 56). This research uses both theories related to translation and Qur'anic style. This makes it possible to assess the form and function of the repetition.

The analysis is carried out through three hierarchical levels that correspond to the structural levels of repetition. In the first level, which corresponds to the consecutive lexemes' repetition, for example "لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ" or "هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ", it is sought to determine how the translation of reduplication is carried out. In this case, it is classified into a translation that literally treats both repetitions, a modulation in which the first element is replaced by an intensifier, or a reduction in which the whole repetition is eliminated. In the second hierarchical level, which corresponds to the consecutive verses' repetition, for example "كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ" it is sought to determine if the translation literally treats the duplication of the repetition or if it is reduced to a declaration. In the third hierarchical level, which corresponds to non-consecutive verses' repetition, for example "فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ" it is sought to determine how formulaic refrains that appear in several chapters or surahs are treated.

Each verse and its translations were placed side by side for easy comparison. The translation techniques were derived from textual coding that was anchored on the theories of Vinay and Darbelnet and the Molina and Hurtado Albir model. The textual coding helped to isolate five techniques that appear in the translation of repetition: literal translation, modulation, paraphrasing, reduction or deletion, and compensation through restructuring. In particular, when the translator uses an intensifier instead of repetition (for example, "minutely ground to dust"), the technique was coded as modulation. Omitting the repetition for economy was coded as reduction. When the rhetorical purpose of the repetition was replicated through parallel structure in the same sentence, the technique was coded as compensation.

The evaluation of translation strategies was based on three closely intertwined criteria: rhetorical fidelity, stylistic naturalness, and theological orientation. Rhetorical fidelity measured to what extent a translation strategy replicated the insistent or rhythmic aspect of a given original repetition. Stylistic naturalness was concerned to determine to what extent a translation strategy conformed to typical English patterns of expression. By implication, theological orientation enabled a reading of the ideological agendas that lie behind a given strategy of translation—whether it is a matter of eschewing redundancy in early Orientalist translations or maintaining it in contemporary faith-based translations. Each of these closely corresponds to a research question in the current study.

The study takes a diachronic approach and looks at the patterns over the past three centuries to examine the historical changes in the philosophy of translation. Sale and Rodwell are seen to often demonstrate domestication in their translations with a focus on the readability of the translation in the receptor language and not so much on formal equivalence to the original text, thus reflecting the rationalist and stylistic ideals of eighteenth and nineteenth century English. Khan and Qaribullah and Darwish demonstrate a clear drift towards formal equivalence and foreignization with the retention of repetition to mark the holiness of the text and to demonstrate the sacredness of the text in terms of repetition as an indicator of textuality (Venuti, 1995, p. 19). Thus, the study is able to examine the second research question about the strategies and their historical background and context. Moreover, with the focus on the rhetorical effects of emphasis, rhythm, and memorability in terms of repetition in translation, the study is also addressing the third research question about the functional role of repetition in translation.

This methodology combines the analysis and interpretation of texts and theory to produce results that are both descriptive and evaluative. It is descriptive in that it systematically identifies the process by which Qur'anic repetition has been achieved in different linguistic and temporal environments. It is also interpretive in that it illustrates how the ideology and aesthetic goals of translation shape the translation of Qur'anic rhetoric. This methodology is also three-tiered and systematically addresses each aspect of the research questions: the first by means of textual analysis, the second by means of categorization, and the third by means of evaluation. Generally, this methodology confirms that the translation of Qur'anic repetition is more than linguistic translation and is instead the translation as a mediating process between fidelity, fluency, and reverence.

IV. ANALYSIS

The data analysis is presented on three different levels of repetition. Level one involves analysis of repeated words in a verse. Level two involves analysis of repeated verses where a verse is repeated in its entirety. Level three involves analysis of repeated verses where verses are not repeated consecutively but are placed in a particular chapter.

A. Repeated Consecutive Words

In Arabic, the form of consecutive reduplication seen in *دكا دكا، صفا صفا* has a strong phonological, rhetorical, and emphatic function. The norm in English translation, on the other hand, would be not to simply reproduce the word in a way that is not justified from a rhythmic and rhetorical perspective, so the translator must weigh the need to maintain the repetitive quality against the need to capture a native English idiom.

TABLE 1
ILLUSTRATION OF REPEATED CONSECUTIVE WORDS

Arabic Verse (Transliteration)	English Translations	Strategy	Commentary
دكا دكا (<i>dakkā dakkā</i>)	Sale: "When the earth shall be minutely ground to dust." Rodwell: "When the earth shall be crushed with crushing, crushing." Khan: "When the earth shall be dashed to pieces." Qaribullah & Darwish: "When the earth quakes and is pounded."	Modulation (Sale, Khan, Qaribullah); Literal (Rodwell)	Rodwell preserves the reduplication ("crushing, crushing"), maintaining rhythm and emphasis, while others reduce it for fluency, sacrificing the phonological echo central to Qur'anic rhetoric.
صفا صفا (<i>ṣaffan ṣaffan</i>)	Sale: "...the angels rank by rank." Rodwell: "...rank on rank." Khan: "...in lines." Qaribullah & Darwish: "...rank upon rank."	Literal (Sale, Rodwell, Qaribullah); Reduction (Khan)	Most retain the repetition, preserving parallel rhythm. Khan's reduction into "in lines" weakens rhetorical symmetry but improves idiomatic flow.
هيات هيات (<i>hayhāta hayhāta</i>)	Sale: "Away, away with that ye are threatened with." Rodwell: "Away, away with his predictions." Khan: "Away! Away!" Qaribullah & Darwish: "After, after with that which you are promised."	Literal (Sale, Rodwell, Khan); Misinterpretation (Qaribullah)	Early translators preserve emphatic duplication, sustaining tone and urgency. Qaribullah's "After, after" misreads semantics, losing rhetorical force.
قوارير قوارير (<i>qawārīra qawārīra</i>)	Sale: "Bottles shall be bottles of silver." Rodwell: "Flagons of silver." Khan: "Glasses of silver." Qaribullah & Darwish: "Goblets, goblets of silver."	Compensation (Sale, Qaribullah); Reduction (Rodwell, Khan)	Sale and Qaribullah recreate repetition through echo, retaining musicality; others condense for stylistic economy.
والسابقون السابقون (<i>wa-sābiqūn al-sābiqūn</i>)	Sale: "Those who have preceded others... shall precede them." Rodwell: "They who were foremost—the foremost still." Khan: "The foremost... shall be the foremost." Qaribullah & Darwish: "The Outstrippers, the Outstrippers."	Literal (Rodwell, Qaribullah); Modulation (Sale, Khan)	Literal translation heightens rhythmic identity; interpretive ones prioritize conceptual clarity over stylistic intensity.
إلا قیلا سلاما سلاما (<i>illā qīlan salāman salāmā</i>)	Sale: "Peace! Peace!" Rodwell: "Peace! Peace!" Khan: "Peace, peace." Qaribullah & Darwish: "Peace, Peace!"	Literal (all)	Consensus in literal translation reflects recognition of repetition's liturgical and emotive resonance in the source text.

At this point, the translators display varying levels of adherence to the phenomenon of repetition. In the early translations, the tendency is towards modulation and explicitation, mirroring the English style of the time. Rodwell displays a greater tendency towards formal equivalence, maintaining the auditory parallelism of "crushing, crushing." Towards the end of the twentieth century, the translators Qaribullah and Darwish deliberately pursue foreignization due to postcolonial awareness of the rhetorical uniqueness of the Qur'an. In all instances, the overriding problem is the conflict between faithfulness to the text and the flow of the target language.

B. Repeated Consecutive Verses

Whereas the first level is concerned with single-word repetition, the second level examines repetition at the level of the verse itself, in which whole clauses or sentences are repeated consecutively. This type of repetition has more rhetorical and didactic import: it is used to emphasize and create rhythmic parallelisms that are hallmarks of the oral delivery of the Qur'an. However, the translation of this type of repetition is more challenging than that of single-word repetition because it requires the ability to replicate whole repetition without sacrificing the natural flow of the English sentence. Below is a table that provides three examples.

TABLE 2
ILLUSTRATION OF REPEATED CONSECUTIVE VERSES

Arabic Verse (Transliteration)	English Translations	Strategy	Commentary
كلا سوف تعلمون ثم كلا سوف تعلمون (<i>kallā sawfa ta'lamūn, thumma kallā sawfa ta'lamūn</i>)	Sale: "Hereafter shall ye know your folly. Again... ye shall know your folly." Rodwell: "Nay! but in the end ye shall know. Nay! once more, in the end ye shall know." Khan: "Not so! Ye shall hereafter know... Again assuredly ye shall hereafter know." Qaribullah & Darwish: "But no, indeed, you shall soon know. Again, no indeed, you shall soon know."	Literal (Rodwell, Qaribullah); Modulation (Sale, Khan)	Rodwell and Qaribullah reproduce repetition fully, reflecting rhetorical insistence and oral cadence. Sale and Khan smooth phrasing through modulation, maintaining meaning but reducing rhythmic recurrence.
كلا سيعلمون ثم كلا سوف يعلمون (<i>kallā sayā 'lamūn, thumma kallā sawfa ya'lamūn</i>)	Sale: "Assuredly they shall hereafter know... Again, assuredly they shall hereafter know." Rodwell: "Nay! they shall certainly know its truth. Again... they shall certainly know it." Khan: "Assuredly, they shall know hereafter. Again they shall know hereafter." Qaribullah & Darwish: "Indeed, they shall know! Again, indeed, they shall know."	Literal (all)	All translators retain repetition almost verbatim, signaling awareness of its structural and rhetorical function, which reinforces warning and certainty.
فإن مع العسر يسرا إن مع العسر يسرا (<i>fa-inna ma'a al-'usri yusrā, inna ma'a al-'usri yusrā</i>)	Sale: "Verily a difficulty shall be attended with ease. Verily a difficulty shall be attended with ease." Rodwell: "Then verily along with trouble cometh ease. Verily along with trouble cometh ease." Khan: "Surely, with the difficulty is ease; surely with the difficulty is ease." Qaribullah & Darwish: "Indeed, hardship is followed by ease, indeed, hardship is followed by ease."	Literal (all)	Full repetition is consistently preserved, maintaining theological rhythm and consolation effect. Literal strategy aligns with the verse's pedagogical intent and mnemonic balance.

At this point, all the translators display a strong sense of repetition fidelity. This suggests that the consecutive repetition of the poem is often God's emphasis. In cases where modulation takes place (as in the paraphrasing of Sale and Khan), the meaning is preserved despite the reduction of the rhythmic repetition. The near-unanimity of the translators' position on the preservation of repetition suggests that all the translators are aware that the repetition in this case is God's warning and reassurance. This supports the second research question on rhetorical preservation.

C. Repeated Inconsecutive Verses

The third level involves the kind of repetition that happens non-consecutively, meaning the repeated lines and phrases are found in the same chapter or several chapters. As opposed to immediate repetitions, this type of repetition strengthens the thematic elements and maintains the coherence of the text despite the varied settings. In the Qur'an, the type of dispersed refrain can be found at the start of a transition, emphasizing the attributes of God, or even for rhythmic continuity in long passages. The translation of the repetitions will test the translator's skill in achieving consistency and variation. The table below will discuss four cases and the treatment of the repetitions by different translators.

TABLE 3
ILLUSTRATION OF REPEATED INCONSECUTIVE VERSES

Arabic Verse (Transliteration)	English Translations	Strategy	Commentary
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (<i>fa-bi'ayyi ālā'i rabbikumā tukadhibān</i>)	Sale: "Which, therefore, of your Lord's benefits will ye ungratefully deny?" Rodwell: "Which then of the bounties of your Lord will ye twain deny?" Khan: "Then which of the bounties of your Lord will ye deny?" Qaribullah & Darwish: "Which favors of your Lord will you both (humans and jinn) belie?"	Literal (all)	All translators preserve the refrain with minimal variation, reflecting awareness of its structural recurrence throughout <i>Sūrat al-Rahmān</i> . Minor lexical shifts ("bounties," "favors") show adaptation for style rather than meaning.
وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ (<i>waylun yawma'idhin lil-mukadhibīn</i>)	Sale: "On that day, woe be unto them who accused the prophets of imposture." Rodwell: "Woe on that day to those who charged with imposture." Khan: "Woe be on that day unto the disbelievers." Qaribullah & Darwish: "Woe on that Day to those who belied it!"	Literal–Modulation mix	All translators preserve the refrain's warning tone, though Sale and Rodwell expand "mukadhibīn" contextually. The repetition across <i>Sūrat al-Mursalāt</i> is retained, sustaining thematic cohesion and prophetic intensity.
وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ (<i>wa-inna rabbaka la-huwa al-'azīzu al-rahīm</i>)	Sale: "Verily thy Lord is the mighty, the merciful." Rodwell: Variations include "And assuredly, thy Lord!—He is the Mighty, the Merciful." Khan: "Verily thy Lord is the mighty and merciful God." Qaribullah & Darwish: "Your Lord is the Almighty, the Most Merciful."	Literal (all); Stylistic variation (Rodwell)	Translators consistently reproduce the divine epithets, demonstrating fidelity to theological recurrence. Rodwell's syntactic variation across instances introduces stylistic freshness while preserving semantic equivalence.
فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرٍ (<i>fa-kayfa kāna 'adhābī wa-nuḍur</i>)	Sale: "How severe was my vengeance and my threatening." Rodwell: "How great was my vengeance and my menace." Khan: "See how was my punishment and my warning." Qaribullah & Darwish: "How then were My punishment and My warnings!"	Literal (all)	All translators maintain near-verbatim repetition across occurrences, showing that thematic continuity outweighs stylistic monotony. Lexical adjustments ("vengeance," "punishment") remain within the same semantic field.

Inconsecutive repetition bears witness to a high level of consistency among the translators throughout the ages. The fact that the refrains serve as a backbone and a theological anchor explains why all four translators choose to express the refrains with almost the same wording, which indicates a concern for formal equivalence (Nida & Taber, 1969). The slight differences in wording, from "favors" to "bounties," show awareness of English idiom but do not affect the rhetorical purpose and therefore answer the third research question regarding the translation and preservation of the rhetorical, pedagogical, and aesthetic unity.

V. DISCUSSION

Inconsecutive repetition shows a remarkable degree of consistency among translators throughout different historical periods. Since refrains in the Qur'an play a crucial role both as a structural framework and a theological reference, these four translators render these refrains with nearly identical wording, revealing their strong preference for formal equivalence (Nida & Taber, 1969). Lexical variations, such as "favors" instead of "bounties," are mostly stylistic adjustments in idiomatic usage, without altering meaning, yet still preserving rhetorical, pedagogical, and aesthetic integrity in the original text.

In diachronic terms, these features seem to indicate a shift in Qur'an translation, from a more domesticating approach to a more foreignizing one (Venuti, 1995, p. 19). This is because, as a whole, more recent translations seem more attentive to the performative aspects of Qur'anic language, whereas earlier ones, in accordance with Enlightenment ideas of linguistics, were more focused on readability as a feature of interpretation. Hence, the repetition in literal form does not simply represent a stylistic choice, but a commitment to ideology and translation as a whole.

These findings collectively confirm the research questions posed by the study by showing that the maintenance of repetition is a key factor in the preservation of the Qur'an's rhetorical force and aesthetic coherence in English translation. Repetition must thus be conceived not merely as a linguistic device but rather as a rhetorical space wherein the sacred intersects with the represented.

VI. CONCLUSION

The current investigation examines the translation of repetition in the Qur'an, which is one of its characteristic features. By examining cases of repeated words in sequence, repeated verses in sequence, and repeated verses in non-sequence, it is possible to show how translators over three centuries adopt a range of strategies which are not only driven by linguistic concerns but also reflect broader ideological and aesthetic commitments. By employing a diachronic and comparative methodology, it is argued here that translation as a process of translating repetition is where theological veneration, stylistic convention, and communicative intent intersect.

What emerges is a pattern from the early tendencies towards paraphrased and modulated translation towards more modern approaches that favour literal translation. Sale and Rodwell, influenced by the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the English neoclassical tradition, tended to view repetition as being stylistically redundant and preferred to reduce or eliminate it in favour of more fluent translation. These practices, following the 'domestication' strategy outlined by Venuti, worked to 'naturalize' the Qur'an in the West, sometimes at the expense of the text's poetic and mnemonic qualities. Subsequent translators, such as Khan, Qaribullah, and Darwish, tend more towards the strategy of 'formal equivalence' outlined by Nida and Taber, and 'foreignization' outlined by Venuti, and retain the repetition as a marker of the divine word and an important component of the Qur'anic aesthetic.

On all levels of text, the most effective translation of Qur'anic rhetorical/pedagogical purpose is the literal translation. Despite the fact that modulation and reduction may facilitate fluency in the receptor language, these processes often reduce the cohesive/pedagogical purpose encoded in the message of the source text. Therefore, the current study supports Baker's claim that "repetition is a cohesive mechanism that joins meaning, structure, and feeling." In addition, the results show that Qur'anic repetition is not merely for decoration but is instead a primary organizing mechanism for emphasis, rhythm, and religious ideas. Those translators who translate repetition accurately translate not only linguistically but also theologically.

In conclusion, therefore, this research contributes to Qur'anic translation studies by establishing that the aesthetic/pedagogic nucleus of Qur'anic discourse is based on repetition. Through a paradigm shift in translation studies, which shifts attention from translation as a potentially redundant process to one that values repetition, it is possible to translate the Qur'an in a way that is more attuned to its meaning and style. Future studies could examine translation as a function of other target language speakers or through computer-aided stylistic analyses that would better establish how religious texts function to redefine translation.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite its contributions, the current research has a number of limitations that are important to recognize. First, the research is grounded on a corpus of thirty selected examples of Qur'anic repetition, which, although purposefully selected to represent the major forms of rhetorical repetition, cannot hope to represent the full range of repetitive forms within the Qur'anic text as a whole. Secondly, the research is limited to the English translation of the Qur'an, which, although the dominant form of the text within the English-speaking world, represents only a single target language variety. It is recommended that the research be extended to incorporate a greater number of examples, as well as a comparison with translations of the Qur'an into other languages, such as French, Turkish, Urdu, or Malay, to determine whether the same forms of repetitive translation are used. Although the current research follows a qualitative rhetorical approach, subsequent research may incorporate a more quantitative approach, drawing upon corpus linguistic techniques to determine the full range of repetitive forms within the Qur'anic text as a whole.

FUNDING

This work was supported and funded by the Deanship of Scientific Research at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) [grant number IMSIU-DDRSP2602].

REFERENCES

- [1] Abdel Haleem, M. A. S. (1992). *Understanding the Qur'an: Themes and style*. I. B. Tauris.
- [2] Al-Tameemi, A. (2020). Rendering Reduplication in English Translations of the Qur'an. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, 20(1), 45–62.
- [3] Baker, M. (2011). *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- [4] Catford, J. C. (1965). *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- [5] Christiansen, B. (1993). Repetition and structure in the Qur'an. *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 12(3), 89–105.
- [6] Elimam, A. (2019). *Repetition in the Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis and Translation Challenges*. Dar Al Fikr.
- [7] Hassan, A. (2015). Verb repetition in Arabic: Stylistic and Translational Functions. *Arab World English Journal*, 6(2), 134–150.
- [8] Kermani, N. (2014). *God is Beautiful: The Aesthetic Experience of the Quran*. Polity Press.
- [9] Khan, M. (1905). *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary*. Dar al-Andalus.
- [10] Maatooq, S. (2012). Rhetorical Functions of Repetition in the Holy Qur'an. *Majallat al-Lughah wa al-Adab*, 8(2), 171–178.
- [11] Molina, L., & Hurtado Albir, A. (2002). Translation Techniques Revisited: A Dynamic and Functionalist Approach. *Meta: Translators' Journal*, 47(4), 498–512.

- [12] Neuwirth, A. (2014). *Scripture, Poetry, and the Making of a Community: Reading the Qur'an as a Literary Text*. Oxford University Press.
- [13] Nida, E. A., & Taber, C. R. (1969). *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Brill.
- [14] Qaribullah, H., & Darwish, A. (2001). *The Qur'an: Translation and Commentary*. London Islamic Cultural Centre.
- [15] Robinson, N. (2003). *Discovering the Qur'ān: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text*. SCM-Canterbury Press Ltd.
- [16] Rodwell, J. M. (1861). *The Koran*. Henry G. Bohn.
- [17] Sale, G. (1734). *The Koran, Commonly called the Alcoran of Mohammed*. London.
- [18] Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. Routledge.
- [19] Vinay, J.-P., & Darbelnet, J. (1995). *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A methodology for Translation* (J. C. Sager & M.-J. Hamel, Trans.). John Benjamins.
- [20] Yusuf Ali, A. (1989). *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation, and Commentary*. Amana Publications.

Yousef Albudairi is an assistant professor at the Translation Dept., College of Languages and Translation, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Riyadh. He has a PhD in translation studies from The University of Western Australia, Australia (2023). He has experience as a translator and as a freelancer. Among his research interests are translation strategies, translation evaluation and machine translation. E-mail: yaalbudairi@imamu.edu.sa (ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7992-7754>).

Zakaryia Almahasees is an assistant professor of Translation in the Dept. of English Language and Translation. He earned his PhD in translation studies from The University of Western Australia, Australia (2020). His research interests include translation theories, translation evaluation, Quran translation, audiovisual translation, comparative translation, and machine translation. E-mail: zmhases@hotmail.com (ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4035-7165>).