

Translating Noncanonical Ancillary Qur'anic Oppositions Into English: An Etiotypological Analysis

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Abstract—Translating the sacred in a so-called divine language has been shown to be so difficult and challenging a task for translators of the Bible or the Qur'an. The human reproduction of the divine product(ion) has biblically and qur'anically been found to raise (in)soluble challenges and (in)surmountable hurdles in bicultural and cross-cultural communication and transfer in translation. One great challenge or big obstacle thereof is the (un)transferability of noncanonical ancillary oppositions from SL (QA) to TL (E) which is sought to be explored and investigated by the current study from a linguistic-translational perspective. Based on corpus data across several languages, noncanonical ancillary opposition has been shown to co-occur in preponderant syntactic frames loaned from fellow categories, such as coordination, subordination, transition, and so forth, to perform cross-categorial discourse functions in canonical, semicanonical, and noncanonical configurations, and to entertain a propensity and penchant for special multi-principled and rule-governed sequences based on morphology, gender, agency, and so on. The specific objectives of this study are to compare and contrast SL and TL frequent frameworks and ordering sequences in the process and product of translation. It was found that a number of these frames and functions have gone untended and unrendered by the two Qur'an translators under scrutiny due to their incognizance of colligational forms and discursive functions as translation units of functional sentence perspective contributing to the semantic ends of intraversially sentential structures. It was also revealed that SL paradigmatic lexical choices were too semantically distinct and complex to lexicalize into TL.

Index Terms—noncanonical, ancillary opposition, frames, sequences, Qur'an

I. INTRODUCTION

Religion and translation studies stick together because translation theories and practices have originated in the imperative context of translating religion (Judaic, Biblical, and Islamic) and as religion has historically been the strongest stimulus and highest impulse for translational enterprises (see DeJonge & Tietz, 2015). Problematics and polemics of translating religion from the so-called divine language into human languages have ever been the major preoccupations of scholars, e.g., linguists and translators, over the ages at both linguistic and nonlinguistic levels. The most prominent linguist and translation theorist and practitioner is indeed Eugene Nida who initiated work on religious translation with special reference to Bible translating. Nida (1947, p. ix) introduced his earliest practical handbook "Bible Translating" on translating the Bible with a "rule-of-thumb orientation", i.e., a methodical procedure based upon experiential and commonsensical principles that are roughly correct but not scientifically accurate. This might be the reason why Nida (1964) introduced his scientifically oriented book "Toward a Science of Translating" with special reference to the principles and procedures of Bible translating. Therein Nida presents his dyadic model of equivalence: one is *formal* and the other *dynamic*. Nida (1964, p. 159) calls formal equivalence, which is structural in nature, a "gloss translation". In this type of translation, the translator tries to literally and meaningfully restructure forms and contents of the source text. This scholarly endeavor has been paid more attention by Nida and Taber (1982) in their take on the grammatical analyses of SL structures and their formally correspondent transfers into TL. That "grammar has meaning" (Nida & Taber, 1982, p. 34) is an explicit reference to how meaning consists in surface and deep structures whose transposition into TL is occasionally inevitable.

On translating religious texts, the Qur'anic text is no exception, Jasper (1993) expounds that the entire process of translation requires an acknowledgment that French can never be English, so can English never be Arabic, especially the Qur'anic. (Qur'an) translators themselves are aware of their inability to interpret and transpose the prosaic-poetic subtleties and idiosyncrasies of the Qur'an. On religious translation and strictly Qur'an translation, Naudé (2010) ascribes the majestic and esthetic appeal of the Qur'an to its oral recitation and hence no translation thereof would be

able to reproduce its peculiar language and style. It is its inimitably miraculous composition which imposes restrictions on its translatability across languages. On limits to Qur'anic translatability, Abdul-Raof (2004) presents a variety of structural voids in translation of the Qur'an owing to its language-specific syntactic patterns and lexical orders. These grammar patterns and word sequences are semantically and stylistically oriented. Therefore, grammar and meaning, or form and function, stand together for communicative purposes in the Qur'an. Hassanein (2023a) stresses the interlinks between such dyads and recommends reuse of the grammar-translation method in the Qur'anic transposition, particularly when form and function are in tandem not in conflict. One typical case of forms performing functions is the noncanonical ancillary opposition whose syntactic frames are said to perform discourse functions in the Qur'an.

'Noncanonical ancillary opposition' is a discursive function created by Hassanein (2023b) but credited to Jones's (2002) 'ancillary antonymy'. Both terms, however, are lexicosyntactically and lexicosemantically so distinct that they should not be confused together. By 'ancillary antonymy' Jones (2002) denotes a pair of canonical opposites labeled as 'A-pair' and 'B-pair' wherein the members of the former pair, necessarily opposite ones, serves auxiliary roles in signaling conventional, sharpening less conventional, or triggering nonconventional contrast between those of the latter. For example, بارد 'cold' is a conventional opposite of حار/ساخن 'hot', بارد 'cold' a less conventional opposite of دافئ 'warm', and بارد 'cold' a nonconventional opposite of فاتر 'cool'. By 'noncanonical ancillary opposition' Hassanein (2023b) denotes a couple of trios: a canonically, less canonically, or noncanonically opposite A-pair signaling, honing, or generating contrasts in another canonically, less canonically, or noncanonically opposite B-pair. A litanic, formulaic collocation such as الصَّلَاةُ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ (Q. 5:55) 'performing prayers and giving alms' is a prototypical instance of noncanonical ancillary opposition.

The main aim of the present study is to conduct a comparative translational analysis of noncanonical ancillary oppositions from Qur'anic Arabic into English to investigate whether the Qur'an translators have managed to transpose the translational units of noncanonical ancillary oppositional frames and sequences from the source language (Arabic) to the target one (English). Specific objectives include:

1. to compare the syntactic frames and discursual functions of noncanonical ancillary opposition in the SL against their counterparts in the TL; and
2. to compare the sequential orders of noncanonical ancillary opposition in the SL with their counterparts in the TL.

The two specific objectives above are set to be realized through the earnest quest for putting answers to two basic questions:

1. How have syntagmatic patterns and pertinent functions of noncanonical ancillary opposition in SL been restructured into TL?
2. How have syntagmatic sequences and paradigmatic choices of noncanonical ancillary opposition in SL been reproduced in TL?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Past linguistic literature on الطابق 'antonymy' and المقابلة 'opposition', always confusable concomitants, in Qur'anic Arabic (QA) is fairly sparse (e.g., Al-Jammās, 2002; Hassanein, 2013, 2020a, 2020b, 2023a, 2023b). Deplorably, previous translational research on both phenomena is rather scant. Only a handful of previous studies were conducted upon the bicultural and cross-cultural transfer of these two into English. Probably telepathically, الطابق 'antonymy' in its canonical configuration (i.e., conventional opposites like النهار/الليل 'day/night') was examined through the prism of translation. One study, a semantically oriented one, was undertaken by Al-Kharabsheh and Al-Jdayeh (2017) who examined two types of meaning duplicity at two linguistic levels: literally overt and metaphorically covert. Their generalizable and replicable conclusion is that the semantic duplicity of antonymy can be rendered with resort to literal-and-exegetical approaches. There is then an explicit emphasis by them on the literal and formal aspects of antonymy in the Qur'anic discourse. The other study, a lexicosemantically oriented one, was conducted by Hassanein (2017) on the transposition of lexical-semantic facets of conventional ('systemic', see Mettinger, 1994). Focus was laid on the translatability of source text grammar and meaning via canonically opposite lexical items into English in comparison with their target lexical choices. The main conclusion thereof consists in revealing a number of voids and losses in translating canonical Qur'anic opposition grammatically, lexically, semantically, and hermeneutically.

Translationally speaking, just one single study on ancillary antonymy was initiated by Hassanein and Moustafa (2024) who sought to explore the transferability of ancillary antonym frames and functions from Qur'anic Arabic into English. They conducted their analysis thereof by comparing and contrasting the syntactic patterns and discursive functions of the A-pair members serving an ancillary role in designating, elevating, or generating more significant oppositions between members of the B-pairs. They revealed that ancillary antonymy causes some problematic issues: mutation of its pattern grammars and discourse functions, and voids of semantic roles and relations borne by ancillary antonymous pairs between source and target texts. To generalize and replicate such findings regarding translatability of canonical ancillary antonym frames and functions, the need for the current study on noncanonical ancillary opposition arises. This study is intended to make the following contributions. First, it explores a general phenomenon known as 'noncanonical opposition' which includes pairs of unconventional opposites. Second, it examines anew the orders favored by paired opposites in terms of sequence rules amalgamated from previous studies. Last, it serves as a combinatory inquiry complementary to canonical ancillary antonymy by Hassanein and Moustafa (2024).

III. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This skeletal section is devoted to provision of a methodological framework and commences with data collections, then synergic methods, and analytical procedures.

A. Data(set) Collection

The present study gathers its data(set) from the Qur'an, Muslims' first canonical source of Islamic thought, and two English translations thereof, one by Abdel Haleem (2004) and the other by Yüksel et al. (2015). It must be noticed that these are two of the linguistically and translationally understudied renderings of the Arabic Qur'an. The two translators have noticeably distinct sociocultural and theodotinal backgrounds. The former seems to have adopted a communicative, target-oriented approach to translation said to have rendered the Qur'an into a more comprehensible and fluent target language (see Hassanein, 2017, 2020a). This translation is claimed to have targeted both fluency and readability at the expense of accuracy and fidelity. The other, as its name suggests, is a reformed translation with many annotations and paratexts. Both translations bring into question an everlasting clash between naturalness and accuracy.

B. Synergic Model

The current study develops a synergy of two analytic(al) models of ancillary opposition frames, functions, and sequences. The typological model of ancillary opposition frames and functions draws mainly upon Jones's (2002) tripartite classification of ancillary antonymy: (a) if the B-pair members are innately not opposites, the A-pair members trigger opposition between them; (b) if they are innately less conventional opposites, the A-pair members sharpen their opposition; and (c) if they are innately conventional opposites, the A-pair members assert their opposition up the scale of antonymity. The model builds on Hassanein's (2020a) development of ten paradigms, as Table 1 shows.

TABLE 1
TEN PARADIGMS OF ANCILLARY ANTONYMY (HASSANEIN, 2020A)

Ancillary paradigms	Canonical	Semicanonical	Noncanonical	Analogs Duplicates
Canonical	+	+	+	+
Semicanonical	+	+	+	+
Noncanonical	+	+	+	+
Analogs Duplicates	+	+	+	+

In Table 1 each of the horizontal categories co-occurs interchangeably with each of the vertical ones. Ancillary antonymy is said to be not restricted to a particular syntactic frame which it borrows from other discourse functions and categories (see Jones, 2002; Hassanein, 2020a), as Table 2 demonstrates.

TABLE 2¹
SYNTAGMS OF ANCILLARY ANTONYMY ACROSS OTHER DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS (HASSANEIN, 2020A)

S/P	C/C	C/S	C/N	C/AD	S/C	S/S	S/N	S/AD	N/C	N/S	N/N	N/AD
COO	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
NEG	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-
INT	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-
SUB	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
COM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IDI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
REP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CAS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2 illustrates that ancillary antonymy engages the ten paradigms in opposition across the first four as marked by the (+) sign. Paradigms I, II, III show canonical A-pairs, whose function is to signal, sharpen, or trigger oppositions between canonical, semicanonical, or noncanonical B-pairs, respectively. Paradigms IV, V, VI include less canonical A-pairs, the functions of which are to signal, sharpen, or trigger oppositions between (non)canonical or semicanonical B-pairs. Paradigms VII, VIII, IX comprise noncanonically opposite A-pairs to signal, sharpen, or generate oppositions between canonical, semicanonical, or noncanonical B-ones. Paradigm X interchanges analogs or duplicates in A-pairs and B-pairs. Combined with the typological model of paradigms and syntagms (Table 1 & Table 2) is the typological model of noncanonical ancillary oppositional sequences as shown in Table 3.

¹ Key. S = syntagm, P = paradigm, C = canonical, S = semicanonical, N = noncanonical, AD = analog & duplicate, COO = coordinated, NEG = negated, INT = interrogative, SUB = subordinated, COM = comparative, IDI = idiomatic, REP = replacive, CAS = case

TABLE 3
PRINCIPLES OF NONCANONICAL ANCILLARY OPPOSITION SEQUENCES

Principle	Definition	Example
Morphology	Root opposites before derived ones	<i>correct/incorrect</i>
Positivity	(More) positive opposites before less (positive) or negative ones	<i>well/badly</i>
Magnitude	High-caliber opposites before low-caliber ones	<i>high/low</i>
Chronology	Precedent opposites before subsequent ones	<i>begin/end</i>
Gender	Masculine opposites before feminine ones	<i>him/her</i>
Phonology	Short opposites before long ones	<i>boom/recession</i>
Idiomacity	Noncompositional opposites before compositional ones	<i>war/peace</i>
Frequency	More frequent opposites before less frequent ones	<i>rich/poor</i>
Markedness	Unmarked opposites before marked ones	<i>true/false</i>
Iconicity	Culturally and historically dominant opposites before less dominant ones	<i>up/down</i>
Viewpoint	Closer opposites to before farther ones from speaker(s)	<i>big/small</i>
Neutrality	Neutralized opposites before biased ones	<i>long/short</i>
Context	Contextualized opposites before decontextualized ones	<i>ladies/gentlemen</i>
Hierarchical superiority	Opposites higher in a hierarchy before those lower therein	<i>employer/employee</i>
Spatial superiority	Opposites superior in space before those inferior therein	<i>right/left</i>
Perceptual accessibility	(More) accessible opposites before less (in)accessible ones	<i>friend/enemy</i>
Age	Old opposites before young ones	<i>old/young</i>
Agency	Agentive opposites before patientive ones	<i>lesser/lessee</i>
End-rhyme	More assonantal or consonantal opposites before less ones	<i>fire/mire</i>

C. Analytical Approach

The current study seeks to conduct a qualitative data analysis based on a grounded theory approach (see Glaser & Strauss, 1999) in which focus in this methodological approach is laid on the development of a theory grounded in the data(set). The data collected for analysis through a grounded-theory approach are to be gathered until a saturation point (see Dawson, 2009) is reached, i.e., until no further representative examples and information are needed. The qualitative approach adopted here is viable enough to explore the tabulated paradigms and syntagms of noncanonical ancillary oppositions from (Qur'anic) Arabic into English by drawing both comparisons (similarities) and contrasts (dissimilarities) between SLT and TLT. The approach is aimed to investigate whether the grammar-translation method recommended by Hassanein (2023c) is viable for rendering orders and sequences of noncanonical ancillary opposition from the original language to the receptor language. The procedure of analysis is planned to start from a source text analysis of noncanonical ancillary opposition functions and sequences to that of their target text counterpart(s).

IV. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This section conducts a qualitative analysis of a representative convenience sample from the Qur'anic text (ST) by comparing and contrasting the functions and sequences of noncanonical ancillary opposition in ST with their translated counterparts in TT. To maintain space and word limits, we denote the comparison and contrast with STA (Source Text Analysis) and TTA (Target Text Analysis). The A-pair members are in underlines whereas the B-pair ones are in bold, as quoted from the Qur'an (chapter/verse numbers) and the two English translations in comparison.

A. Noncanonical A-Pair vs. Noncanonical B-Pair in Coordination

A: (43-2: قرآن: ۴۳-۲) وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَتُوا الزَّكَاةَ.

E: Keep up the prayer, **pay the prescribed alms**. (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 8)

E: Observe the Contact prayer, and **contribute** towards **betterment**. (Yüksel et al., 2015, p. 58)

STA. Verse (2:43) enshrines noncanonical ancillary oppositions between members of the A-pair and those of B-pair, *aqīmū/ātū* 'perform/give' and *al-ṣalāh/al-zakāh* 'prayers/alms', respectively. The imperative verb *aqīmū* stands in noncanonical opposition to its counterpart *ātū* whereas the commanded *ṣalāh* stands in noncanonical opposition to its counterpart *zakāh*. The ancillary A-pair serves to lay more contrastive focus on the noncanonically opposed B-pair items in a highly profiled collocational and recurrent manner. Prayer-performing gains superiority over almsgiving as the former is hierarchically superior to the latter from the divine viewpoint and vantage point and in prescription. The former is the cornerstone of Islamic faith and cannot by any means forsaken. Hence chronology and viewpoint are the rules of such a favored sequence of both pairs of opposition. Prayer occurs prior to alms because the former is given more precedence and prominence than the latter in the Islamic faith.

TTA. At first sight and search, consistency in the recurrence of the afore-mentioned pairs is a marked pattern in ST in contrast to an inconsistency in their co-occurrences in TTs, with variations in the target lexical equivalents chosen as 'keep up', 'perform', and 'observe' for *aqīmū*, 'pay', 'give', and 'contribute' for *ātū*, and 'alms' and 'betterment' for *zakāh*. The collocational restrictions which are imposed upon the consistently used source items have been violated with inconsistently and markedly used collocations. It is indeed usual for 'perform' and 'say' to collocate with 'prayers' and for 'give' to collocate with 'alms'. The lexical choices 'keep up' and 'observe' and 'betterment' result in marked

collocations quite awkward in TL. The favorite sequence of the source opposites has been observed by both translators and both chronology and viewpoint have been maintained in TT. Likewise, coordination has been observed by Y üksel et al. who are source-text oriented but not by Abdel Haleem who is target-text oriented.

B. Duplicate A-Pair vs. Analogous B-Pair in Correlation

A: فَلَنْ نَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَنْ نَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا. (قرآن: 43-35)

E: You will never find any **change** in God's practice; you will never find any **deviation** there. (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 280)

E: You will not find any **change** in God's *sunna*. (Y üksel et al., 2015, p. 372)

STA. Verse (35:43) shows a noncanonical ancillary opposition between duplicate opposites of an A-pair, *tajid/tajid* 'find/find', and a noncanonical pair of plesionymous opposites, *tabdīl/tahwīl* 'change/diversion'. The function of the A-pair is to sharpen the noncanonical contrast between the B-pair items. It is exegetically broached that God's normal practice of punishing bygone nations for their faithlessness would neither change nor divert in respect of the current nation, the Qurayshites (Alzamakhsharī, 1998, p. 163). The ancillary opposition borrows its correlative frame *lan-walan* 'neither-nor' from the coordinated category to negate the two B-pair members. The speaker viewpoint and vantage point prioritizes *tabdīl* 'change' over *tahwīl* 'diversion' since the nation destined by the Divine incurred His wrath and hence His irrevocable and indivertible punishment.

TTA. By comparing both English translations, one would evidently notice a partial negligence of the syntactic frame and its syndeton ('neither XX nor YY') by Abdel Haleem who rendered it asyndetically (not XX; not YY) and total negligence of the entire syntactic frame and discourse function of ancillarity by Y üksel et al. We would soundly claim that both the frame and function are source grammatical and discursive units that should have been rendered as such by the two translators in focus. The recommendation of reviving and reusing the grammar-translation method at this juncture by Hassanein (2023c) is absolutely viable without any prejudice to the ST fidelity and TT legibility. Abdel Haleem caused injury in translation units marked by easily transferable grammatical patterns whereas Y üksel et al. added insult to injury by way of implicitation: deframing the pattern grammar, defunctioning the discourse category, considering the pair items as being utterly not nearly synonymous, and by flouting the sequence principle of viewpoint.

C. Canonical A-Pair vs. Noncanonical B-Pair in Negation

A: وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا. (قرآن: 102-2)

E: Not that **Solomon** himself was a disbeliever; it was **the evil ones** who were disbelievers. (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 12)

E: **Solomon** did not reject, but it was **the devils** that rejected. (Y üksel et al., 2015, p. 61)

STA. Verse (2:102) features canonical and noncanonical facets of opposition between members of the A-pair and B-pair, *kafar/kafarū* 'disbelieve/disbelieve' and *Sulaymān/al-shayātīn* 'Solomon/devils'. The noncanonical ancillary opposition herein accommodates a highly frequent syntactic frame, 'not X but Y', from negated opposition in which the X-member is categorically negated in favor of the Y-counterpart. The A-paired lexical choices have been duplicated in opposition by fronting the first duplicate with the negative marker *mā* 'not/never'. Two central stylistic features mark the verse under scrutiny. One is lexicogrammatical parallelism in which the opposed members in both pairs are phrasally and sententially parallel in structure and are lexically and semantically parallel in form and function (two verbs and two nouns in a negated frame). The other is the linguistic co(n)text, preceding and following items, as a sequential rule for foregrounding Solomon and backgrounding the Devils owing to acquitting the former of unbelief and charging the latter with disbelief. The 'not X but Y' framework necessitates the hysteron proteron and anastrophe of the structure at hand, which would not read as such if it were an 'X but not Y' framework.

TTA. There is a clear infringement on the syntactic framework of ST due to Abdel Haleem's rendering that has kept the negative marker *mā* 'not' but has lost the functionally concessive and contrastive marker *lākin* 'but'. The source marker *lākin* serves several different functions whose negligence in cross-cultural transfer is a translation loss in dire need of a compensation strategy (Hussein, 2008; Alhuqbani, 2013; Alsager et al., 2020). Both *lākin* and *but* are too concessive, contrastive, and corrective to go untranslated into TT. The source frame in focus has roughly been retained by Y üksel et al. but at the expense of lexical and structural parallelisms because of nominalization and relativization. An alternative translation would be "It was not Solomon who disbelieved but it was the devils (~~who disbelieved~~)"; "Solomon never disbelieved but the Devils disbelieved". Culling from Alzamakhsharī (1998, p. 305), we tend to argue against Abdel Haleem's referential expression 'the evil ones' as a target equivalent of *al-shayātīn*. The devils, a perfect equivalent indeed, is more referentially expressive and inclusive of Satan, *Iblīs* the archangel and archfiend, and the evil jinn who work black magic on humans. However, the ordering principle of the linguistic context has been retained and maintained by both translators, who kept the sequential opposition intact.

D. Canonical A-Pair vs. Noncanonical B-Pair in Interrogation

A: أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ. (قرآن: 109-9)

E: Which is better, the person who founds his building on **consciousness of God and desire for His good pleasure**, or the person who founds his building on **the brink of a crumbling precipice**. (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 12)

E: Is one who lays his foundation on **obtaining awareness from God and His acceptance** better, or one who lays his foundation on **the edge of a cliff which is about to crumble**. (Yüksel et al., 2015, p. 211)

STA. Verse (9:109) builds a noncanonical opposition between a duplicate pair *assass bunyānah/assass bunyānah* ‘lay a foundation for one’s building/ lay a foundation for one’s building’ and between a noncanonical pair of opposites (one abstract; the other concrete) *taqwā/shafā jurf hār* ‘piety/brink of a crumbling precipice’. The abstract is compared and measured against the concrete with a rhetorical and tropological conceptual metaphor used to instantiate an abstract target domain by mapping it onto a concrete source domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), as in FAITH IS BUILDING, PIETY IS STRUCTURE, PIETY IS SOLID, SATISFACTION IS STRUCTURE, SATISFACTION IS SOLID, and hence FAITH IS SOLID. Figure 1 provides a graphical representation hereof.

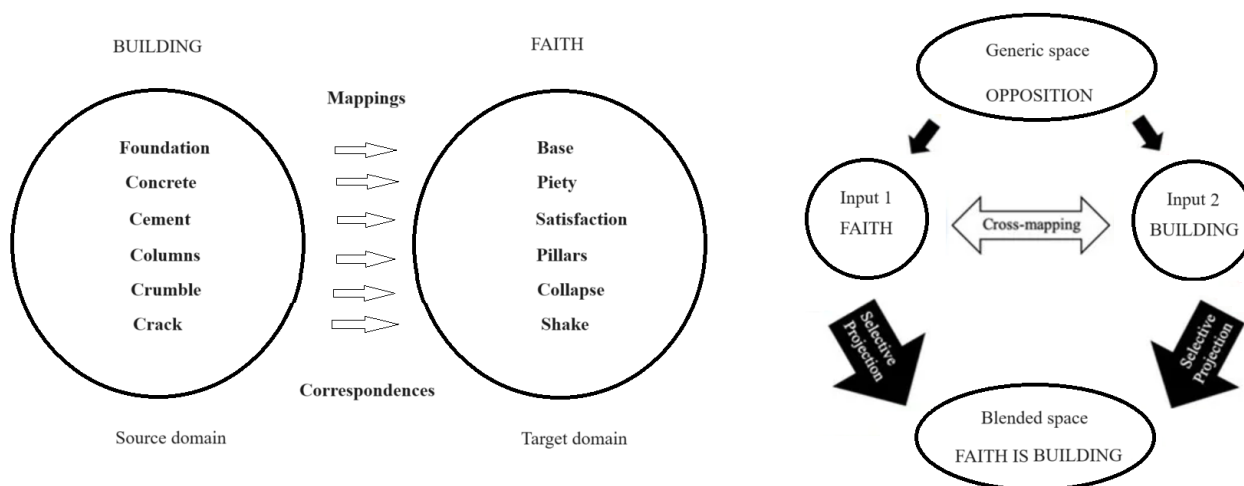


Figure 1. Conceptual Metaphor and Blending of Verse (9:109)

As illustrated in Figure 1 and explicated in Verse (9:109), the founding of faith on a solid base of piety and divine satisfaction is far better than the founding of a building on the brink of a collapsing cliff verging and tending to crumble and fall with its founder into hellfire. Using an interrogatively comparative frame (‘Which of the two is the better: XX or YY?’ or Is XX better or YY?’ in a need-no-answer rhetorical question, the noncanonical ancillary opposition bases its substance upon a comparative interrogation premising and concluding that whoever base their belief and structure their religion on right are matchlessly better than whoever base them on wrong—a conceptual metaphor and blending in which solid piety is instantiatively opposed to a collapsing brink. The instantiation is that the wrongdoers build their faith on the edge of a cracking and collapsing cliff verging to crumble into water (Alzamakhsharī, 1998, pp. 94-95). Positivity is the sequential principle that governs the order that the (more) positive item tends to precede (less) positive or negative counterpart.

TTA. The source frame ‘X more adj. or Y?’ has formally been mutated by Abdel Haleem whose target-oriented approach to translation prioritizes TT legibility over ST fidelity, unlike Yüksel et al. whose source-oriented approach prefers the latter to the former. The source frame has been rendered as ‘Which is better: X or Y?’ by Abdel Haleem and as ‘Is X better or Y?’ by Yüksel et al. What is common between the two target frames is their transference of the noncanonical ancillary opposition in the comparative frame borrowed from the interrogative category of opposition. Both translators are at great variance in their lexical choices which seem to be at odds with each other: consciousness vs. awareness for *taqwā* which has an indexical relationship with firm faith, pleasure vs. acceptance for *riḍwān*, brink vs. edge for *shafā*, and precipice vs. cliff for *jurf*. We consider ‘piety’, being biblical and generic, a dynamic equivalent for the generic and qur’anic *taqwā*, ‘satisfaction’ for *riḍwān*, brink or verge for *shafā*, and ‘cliff’ for *jurf*. The two translators somehow managed to render the structural-ontological metaphor in ST by representing an abstract concept in terms of a concrete one. Abdel Haleem maintained the structural and ontological aspects of the conceptual metaphor, contrary to Yüksel et al. who hit the structural but missed the ontological by including the structure but excluding the building. Both translators transposed the order rule of positivity in their renderings wherein the positive term precedes the negative one: a piety-based building prior to a cliff-based building.

E. Canonical A-Pair vs. Duplicate B-Pair in Subordination

A: (66-9: قرآن) *إِنْ نَعْفَ عَنْ طَائِفَةٍ مِنْكُمْ نُعَذِّبْ طَائِفَةً*

E: We may forgive **some** of you, but We will punish **others**. (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 122)

E: Even if We pardon one **group** from you, We will punish another **group**. (Yüksel et al., 2015, p. 208)

STA. Verse (9:66) comprises a noncanonical ancillary opposition whose syntactic framework is borrowed from the subordinated category, ‘if X then Y’, whose hypotactic structure conditionally appends an apodosis to a protasis. The A-pair *na’fu/nu’addib* ‘forgive/punish’ serves to trigger an opposition between the B-pair duplicates *tā’ifah/tā’ifah* ‘party/party’. God positions his forgiveness prior to his punishment, which attests to the viability of positivity principle

of ordering oppositions in discourse. That more positive or positive terms tend to precede the less positive or negative ones in most cases is patently typical of the above-mentioned case. Reward is given priority over punishment, and just so is forgiveness prioritized over torture. In tandem with positivity, speaker viewpoint is at play here, too. The divine vantage point or stance gives precedence and prominence to forgiveness against punishment and chastisement—a fact reported by Abūhurayrah on the authority of the prophet Muhammad who said: “When Allah completed his creation, he wrote ‘My mercy precedes My wrath’ on his throne (Albukhārī, 1981, p. 73; Alnaysabūrī, n.d., p. 95).

TTA. Grammatically and syntactically at surface structure, it is evident that Abdel Haleem has not attended to the construal of the source syntactic frame whose main function is to subordinate a protatic clause to an apodotic one. He misframed and defunctioned the verse in focus by transposing a hypotactic source structure to a paratactic target one and by rendering a subordinate frame and function into coordinate and concessive counterparts. The clause structure in parataxis and hypotaxis is formally and functionally distinct and should not be mutated. Parataxis juxtaposes ideas while hypotaxis appends one idea to another causally, conditionally, chronologically, transitionally, and relationally. Lexicosemantically, the ancillary opposition between the two duplicates, *tā'ifah/tā'ifah* figuring so prominently and frequently as a stylistic feature of ST, has not been tended, either. However, he tended to the religious register of his target A-pair members, ‘forgive/punish’. Oppositely, Yüksel et al. tended to the duplication of the B-pair members rendered as ‘group/group’ but did not attend to the registerial use of the religious item ‘forgive’ (“to err is human, to forgive divine”) rather than the modern French synonym ‘pardon’. They also achieved formal correspondence and equivalence in their transposition of the syntactic frame (‘if X (then) Y’).² Their lexical choices of ‘forgive/pardon’ and ‘punish’ can be condoned but not the pitfall of phraseological inconsistency they present in regard of the duplicates *tā'ifah/tā'ifah* rendered variedly as ‘some’, ‘others’, ‘group’, to name but a few. A more appropriate equivalent thereof would be ‘party’ being selectionally restricted to people rather than ‘group’ which unmarkedly includes things.³

F. Noncanonical A-Pair vs. Semicanonical B-Pair in Comparison

A: (263-2: قرآن: 263-2) قَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَدَىٰ.

E: A **kind word** and **forgiveness** is better than **a charitable deed followed by hurtful [words]**. (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 30)

E: **Kind words** and **forgiveness** are far better than **charity that is followed by harm**. (Yüksel et al., 2015, p. 74)

STA. Verse (2:263) employs noncanonical ancillary A-pair members, *qawl/sadaqah* ‘word /charity’, for sharpening a semicanonical opposition between the B-pair members, *ma'rūf/yaṭba'uhā 'aḍā* ‘kind/followed by hurt’. The frame ‘X (more) adj. (-er) than Y’ has been borrowed from the comparative category to pinpoint that a sweet reply is better than a charity-induced hurt. Immediately in the next verse (2:264) appears the reason why a nice word is better than a favor done to a person who is frequently then reminded of it by the doer and hence is hurt (Alzamakhsharī, 1998, p. 496). The divine speaker’s viewpoint renders a good word better than a hurting charity because the former is deemed far more positive than the latter which is rendered negative out of the recurrent reminder of a favor done to others and the feeling of hurt stimulated in response. Positivity guides the vantage point expounded by the speaker and governs the order of oppositions in the verse. Charity must be given without any detriment to mental hygiene and psychological health.

TTA. This is the first time both translators coincidentally and unknowingly agree in forming the syntactic framework, serving the textual function of ancillary opposition, and opting for lexicogrammatical choices: ‘kind word/ kind word’, ‘charitable deed/charity’, and ‘hurt/harm’—all in one identical syntactic pattern, ‘X is better than Y’. Two criticisms may be levied here against Yüksel et al.’s lexical choices of ‘far better’ and ‘harm’ rather than ‘better’ and ‘hurt’ opted for by Abdel Haleem. One is the overstatement in using an unnecessary intensifier ‘far’ which tells more than the truth spoken in the verse. No exaggerative or hyperbolic expression is relayed herein. The other is the use of ‘harm’ that is less frequent than ‘hurt’ when feelings are concerned. Baker (2018) posits that frequency of occurrence is a criterion for choosing one lexeme over another in the target language. Hence, we argue that ‘hurt’ is significantly more frequent and more natural in the description of feelings. The former is more mental whereas the latter is more physical. Consider the collocational restrictions imposed by the propensity of certain words like ‘hurt’ and ‘feelings’ to usually co-occur in the target language, however semantically arbitrary their selectional restrictions seem.

G. Duplicate A-Pair vs. Semicanonical B-Pair in Idiomaticity

A: (23-33: قرآن: 23-33) فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قُتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَنْتَظِرُ.

E: **Some** of them have **fulfilled it by death**, and **some** are still **waiting**. (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 268)

E: Thus, **some** of them **died**, while **some** are still **waiting**. (Yüksel et al., 2015, p. 359)

STA. Verse (33:23) sheds light on a prototypical case of noncanonical ancillary opposition whose A-pair members are same duplicates, *minhum/minhum* ‘some/some’, and whose B-pair counterparts, *qadā nahbah/yantazir* ‘die/wait’ are truly semicanonical if interpreted literally but canonical if interpreted conceptually idiomatically. The A-pair ones help to draw attention to a literally less conventional opposition between achieving a *nahb* ‘aim’ and waiting to achieve it—namely, to fight and die for the sake of God. According to Alzamakhsharī (1998, p. 59), a party of companions, during the lifetime of the Prophet of Islam, vowed to fight and die in the course of God. Some fulfilled the vow while some

² See a consensus on this frame by seven translators: <https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=9&verse=66>.

³ See a majority on this choice by six translators: <https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=49&verse=9>.

others did not yet but were waiting to fulfil it. The B-pair member *qadā nahbah* is an idiomatic expression whose noncompositional meaning is ‘to die in martyrdom for God’s sake’. On this meaning, Alzamakhsharī expounds that *qadā’ al-nahb* is idiomatically representative of death since every human being is doomed to die like a vow committing one to it: ‘Martyrdom is the eventual result of the vow made’ (p. 59). What is robustly good about the intensionally specific reference made in the verse to exact human referents like ‘Uthmān, Talha, and Hamza is the fact that the reference is also extensionally generic, i.e., the extension of the believers who made an honest vow to God includes the set of all faithfully vowing individuals to whom the reference can be applied from the time of the Prophet to the Resurrection Day (on ‘extension and intension’, see Hurford et al., 2007, p. 110). Chronology is at work to arrange oppositions by setting those who are dead first and those who are still waiting to die next. It is just a matter of time.

TTA. Although Baker (2018) states that translators’ competence in using an idiom hardly ever matches that of the source text’s native speakers (and writers), the idiomatic expression in hand is transparent enough for both translators to be alerted to its noncompositional and compositional natures, being amenable to a transparent literal interpretation and hence translation and also to an opaque nonliteral interpretation and hence translation. The two translators could easily understand both interpretations and therefore opted for death as the idiomatic meaning and pledge as the literal. The idiom *qadā nahbah* is noncompositional because it carries the meaning of death that cannot be deduced from the meanings of its constituents *qadā* and *nahb* particularly with the truth that *qadā* co-occurs preponderantly with other Qur’anic expressions to communicate collocational and idiomatic meanings. For the first time herein, we come across a surprising agreement between both translators in rendering the noncanonical ancillary oppositional A- and B- pairs. However, both translators fell into the pitfall of rendering a euphemistic source idiom dysphemistically, thus infringing on the registerial parameters of SLT (mode, field, and tenor) by supplanting the roundabout expression of death, *qadā nahbah*, with a topically sensitive and culturally tabooed cacophemism ‘death’ and ‘die’. A more appropriate idiomatic TL equivalent may be ‘fulfil the vow’ or ‘pass away’. Chronology, the time order of the oppositions in focus, has been maintained and retained into the TT.

H. Duplicate A-Pair vs. Semicanonical B-Pair in Idiomaticity

A: (61-2: قرآن: 61-2) أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ.

E: Would you exchange **better** for **worse**? (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 9)

E: Would you trade what is **lowly** with what is **good**? (Yüksel et al., 2015, p. 59)

STA. Verse (2:61) constructs a noncanonical ancillary opposition between a couple of duplicates, a pair of relative pronouns, *al-ladī/al-ladī* ‘what/what’ (alternatively, ‘that which/that which’) to oppose less conventionally contrastive B-pair members, *‘adnā/khayr* ‘lower/better’ whose conventional and canonical opposites are *a ‘lā/sharr*, respectively. Children of Israel (lexically, ‘Israelites’) grew impatient with having the same dish of the heavenly foods, *al-mann/al-salwā* ‘manna/quail’, and requested Moses to ask his Lord to make the land grow earthly foods like lentils and onions. The request drew strong denunciation from Moses who compared both foods and rendered the heavenly one as better and the earthy one as lower on a quality-valuing continuum. The prophetic gist is that the pronounced earthly food is lower in value and quality than the denounced heavenly food—a gist framed within a ‘Would you substitute X for Y?’ pattern which is a formally and dynamically equivalent TT frame for the ST counterpart (Alzamakhsharī, 1998, p. 275). It is the (linguistic) co(n)text of the verb *tastabdilūn* ‘substitute’ and the preposition *bi* ‘for’ that dictates how both opposites must be arranged in discourse: first the substitute, then the substituted.

TTA. The ST syntactic frame *tastabdilūn sīn bi sād* ‘substitute X for Y’ or inversely ‘replace Y with X’ is properly tended to and rendered by Abdel Haleem who, unfortunately, defunctioned the ancillary role of the relativized A-pair members (i.e., ‘what/that which with what/that which’). The syntactic frame has been transposed as ‘exchange X for Y’ but the ancillary function has been deformed. Oppositely, Yüksel et al. transferred the ancillary role appropriately (‘XX vs. YY’) but misrendered the ST framework as ‘trade X with Y’ rather than ‘trade X for Y’, the former of which relates to a commercial transaction while the latter relates to a processual replacement. Both frames, however, would read as a mistranslation thereof, because the ST framework foregrounds the substitute and backgrounds the substituted. A final pitfall concerns Abdel Haleem’s misinterpretation and in turn mistranslation of *‘adnā* as ‘worse’ because the wished foods are not worse but of lower value than the relinquished ones in the sense that X is better than Y does not mean Y is worse than X. Both are good not bad, but one is better not worse in value than the other. Abdel Haleem did reverse the linguistically contextualized order by using “Exchange better for worse”, unlike Yüksel et al. who retained the order but in a misframed pattern as explicated above.

I. Canonical A-Pair vs. Duplicate B-Pair in Case-Marking

A: (233-2: قرآن: 233-2) لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ.

E: No mother shall be made to suffer harm on account of **her child**, nor any father on account of **his**. (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 27)

E: No mother shall be harmed because of **her child**, nor shall a father be harmed because of **his child**. (Yüksel et al., 2015, p. 71)

STA. Verse (2:233) would be considered by any competent reader to be a prototypical example of a noncanonical ancillary opposition in a coordinate frame, ‘neither XX nor YY’. However, case-marking is too overriding in the verse above to go unnoticed and unmentioned, just as Jones’s (2002) idiomaticity in idiomatic antonymy is overriding. In the

same manner, the decision to isolate case-marking examples rather than include them under other major or minor categories is because the semantic and participant roles of such cases override the original textual function of ancillary opposition (cf. Jones, 2002, p. 94). The ancillary ST frame *lā sīn wa-lā šād* ('neither XX nor YY') hosts a canonically opposed A-pair, *wālida/mawlūd lah* 'who gives birth/whom childbirth is given to', and a B-pair of opposed duplicates, *walad/walad* 'child/child'. The propositional point of the verse is that the child(ren) shall not be used by either parent to cause harm to the other (Alzamakhsharī, 1998, pp. 456-457). The salient rule of sequencing the ancillary pairs above is agency ('agent', Wu & Zhang, 2022) whereby the agent(ive) participant *wālida* precedes the other participant, i.e., the beneficiary *mawlūd lah* in the verse under scrutiny.

TTA. Both translators managed to transpose the ST framework *lā sīn wa-lā šād* into the TT as 'no X nor Y', which is an appropriate variant of 'neither X nor Y'. More problematic in the given translations is the lexical choices opted for identically by both translators. Hassanein (2022) provides a rigorous analysis of the (un)translatability of semantic cases from Qur'anic Arabic into English and highlights some cases of nonequivalence in translation, one of which is the verse under analysis here. His analysis is retrievable and replicable here, too. Following Baker (2018), we tend to consider the ST lexical items *wālida/mawlūd lah* as prototypical cases of nonequivalence between languages since English has no direct equivalents for these ST items but provides only non-dynamic equivalents, 'mother' and 'father', only for which the two translators opted. The case at hand is indeed representative of some of Baker's (2018) problems of nonequivalence: (a) the SL concept of the trivalent verb *w-l-d* is not lexicalized in the TL, (b) semantically complex, and (c) both SL and TL make different semantic distinctions. English provides the neuter lexeme parent(s) whose sex-biased masculine form is 'father' and feminine form is 'mother' while Arabic draws significant semantic distinctions between *wālida/umm* and *wālid/abb*. The former *wālida/wālid* are necessarily related to the parturition, childbearing, and childbirth; the latter are not necessarily so. More semantically distinctive is the difference between *wālid(a)* and */mawlūd (lah)* entailing a distinction in participant roles, 'agent', 'experiencer', and 'beneficiary', respectively—roles hardly translatable through 'mother, child, and father'. Agency has been maintained in the TTs, nonetheless.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Just as canonical ancillary antonymy was proven to co-occur in preponderant syntactic frames borrowed from other fellow categories like coordination, subordination, transition, etc., and serve frequent textual functions whose translation into TLs is deemed very problematic (Hassanein & Moustafa, 2024), so are noncanonical ancillary oppositions, too. Noncanonical oppositions including the ancillary ones have been found to be greater and wider than canonical counterparts (Hassanein, 2023a). In concomitance with their syntagmatic co-occurrences in patterns, they were also shown to have a tendency for a particular order in texts and corpora. This constitutes the reason why we set to tackle them from a translation perspective in the current inquiry. Torn between Scylla (the Devil) and Charybdis (the Deep Blue Sea), translators are found to oscillate between fidelity and fluency, loyalty and legibility, and sincerity and readability in their transposition of noncanonical ancillary oppositional syntagms and paradigms in tandem and parallel with their orders in TT. Source-text fidelity figures prominently in the translatorial ordering and sequencing of noncanonical ancillary oppositions with no prejudice against target-language fluency and readability since both translators have followed the source-text ordering sequence without reversals. Polemical issues are more evident and prominent in syntagmatic combinations and paradigmatic selections, briefly in syntactic frames (XX and YY, neither XX nor YY, if XX then YY, etc.) considered as must-see and must-be translation units and in lexical choices regarded as building blocks and bricks for information structures. In some cases of translations, colligational patterns and discoursal functions therewith went untended and unrendered into TL and TTs due to translatorial inattention to their presence as part of functional sentence perspective (FSP, see Firbas, 1992). Syntactic patterns and sequential orders of noncanonical ancillary opposition play a crucial role that contributes to the semantic ends of the structures. The contribution of this study might be generalized and replicated with Qur'an translations across other languages.

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