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Examining the retranslation hypothesis

Focusing on 30 English translations of Qur'anic personal proper names

Abstract

The present paper is aimed at investigating personal proper names (PPN) in *the Holy Qur'an* and its 30 English translations. Kalashnikov's (2016) taxonomy, the latest specialized model for analyzing PPNs in literary texts, was selected as the initial model of the study. Translators were divided into two groups of the 20th- and the 21st-century translators. It was found that translators generally adopted the procedures of Normalization, Transliteration, Descriptive Translation, Omission and Notes in rendering the Qur'anic PPNs. Normalization (47.80 %) and Omission (0.30 %) were found to be the most and the least frequently used procedures, respectively. Furthermore, the findings revealed that both 20th- and the 21st-century translators tended to adopt more 'target-oriented' procedures than 'source-oriented' ones. It was also found that later translations showed greater tendency towards the target-language than the earlier ones. In other words, the Retranslation Hypothesis was disproved in the case of the Qur'anic PPNs and their equivalents in 30 English translations.

1 Introduction

Proper names (PNs) are among the challenges that translators, mainly literary ones, grapple with. PNs are sometimes challenging since they "may be culture-bound markers of identity" (Afrouz 2021a: 22). While in informative or scientific texts translators can simply transliterate the PN, the procedure of transliteration does not always seem to be the best choice for rendering all types of PNs in expressive or literary texts – especially personal proper names (PPNs), which may potentially bear specific connotations. Sometimes "literary writers" even intentionally opt for PPNs "in respect of the characters they are developing" (Nyangeri/Wangari 2019: 349). Under such circumstances, it would seem absolutely useless to use transliteration.

In the present paper, PPNs in *the Holy Qur'an*, as the greatest literary text for Muslims, are studied. PPNs in sacred texts are majorly considered as allusions and need to adopt appropriate procedures on the part of religious-text translators.

From 1980s up until now, a number of procedures for translating PNs have been proposed by a number of researchers in the form of taxonomies (e. g., Hermans 1988; Vermes 2003; Pym 2004; Fernandes 2006; Särkkä 2008; Grima 2018; Kalashnikov 2016). In the current study, Kalashnikov's (2016) model, as the latest and most related model, was adopted for the data analysis. His model, specifically used for dealing with PPNs, will be discussed in detail in section 2.1.

The Holy Qur'an, as the corpus of the present study, is translated into many languages. It is by far mostly rendered into English language; therefore, a lot of retranslations of *the Book* are available. Retranslation, referring to later translations "of a single source text into the same target language" (Koskinen/Paloposki 2010: 294) or "the act of producing another iteration of an already-translated text, has a long and storied history" (Cox 2019: 232).

The Retranslation Hypothesis "is formed of positions taken by Bensimon (1990) and Berman (1990) in two separate works in a special issue of *Palimpseste*" (Bywood 2019: 2). Earlier translations tend to be nearer to the target-language culture than succeeding translations (Bensimon 1990: ix; Afrouz 2021b: 2). Retranslations, based on this hypothesis, are expected to be "more source culture oriented than first translations" (Desmidt 2009: 669).

In the current study, PPNs in 30 English translations of *the Holy Qur'an* are meticulously studied to test the validity of the Retranslation Hypothesis in the context of sacred texts. The study intends to provide answers for the following questions: (1) What procedures were employed by *the Holy Qur'an* translators in rendering the PPNs? (2) To what extent did Kalashnikov's (2016) taxonomy cover all the procedures used by the translators? (3) What is the general distribution of procedures? (4) What is the tendency of the procedures mainly selected by the 20th- and the 21st-century translators? (5) Does the Retranslation Hypothesis hold true for the Qur'anic PPNs in 30 English translations?

2 Literature review

2.1 Theoretical framework

Kalashnikov's (2016: 16–18) taxonomy includes the following four key "formal approaches to rendering names" of characters in classical literary texts: (i) transliteration, (ii) descriptive translation, (iii) omission, and (iv) notes.

- (i) Transliteration: writing the source-language PPNs by using the target-language script,
- (ii) Descriptive Translation: providing literal translations for the source-language PPNs,
- (iii) Omission: deleting the source-text PPNs,

- (iv) Notes: providing further information (for the source-language PPNs' transliterated or descriptive equivalents) in parenthetical "notes", "commentaries", or "footnotes" (Kalashnikov 2016: 16).

Although Kalashnikov's (2016) model is one of the latest models used for dealing with proper names, we could not merely rely on it since it may not comprehensively address the unique challenges of translating religious texts. In a conference paper by Ordudari and Mollanazar (2014), which focused specifically on proper names in *the Holy Quran*, they referred to a strategy unmentioned in Kalashnikov's (2016) model. The strategy is called 'substitution'. It occurs when translators substitute the source language (SL) PPNs by the nearest target language (TL) names. In the case of Qur'anic PPNs, the nearest TL names would be the Biblical names. In the current paper, we prefer to use the term 'Normalization' instead of *substitution* since the employment of this procedure by translators can in one or other out of several possible ways normalize the use of the Qur'anic PPNs in the target culture.

The tendency of each procedure is presented in Figure 1:

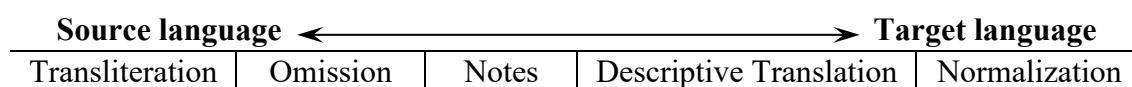


Fig. 1: The tendency of each procedure

The procedure of 'Transliteration' produces equivalents which tend towards the source-language, while the final products of 'Normalization' and 'Descriptive Translation' majorly incline towards the target-language. While 'Normalization' and 'Descriptive Translation' provide the TL readers with extra information and help them understand the underlying meaning of the PPN, 'Transliteration' does not help much and 'Omission' totally deprives the TL readers of the potentially related allusive references of the Qur'anic PPN. 'Omission' and 'Notes' are in the middle, while 'Normalization' and 'Transliteration' are in the extremes. Since 'Notes' is not an independent procedure, it stands in the middle ground.

2.2 Previous studies

Dastjerdi and Sahebbonar (2008) studied the PNs in *the Mathnawi*'s English translations by Redhouse (1881) and Nicholson (1940). Dastejerdi and Sahebbonar (2008: 41) examine how translation techniques can help translators extract "meanings associated with" the PN allusions. They employed Leppihalme's (1997) model. The researchers found that the most frequently used technique for translating PPNs was transliteration without additional notes (Dastjerdi and Sahebbonar 2008: 41). The researchers did not attempt to compare strategies used by the two translators in terms of the retranslation hypothesis.

Dazdarević, Milovanović and Fijuljanin (2013: 7) examined Arabic names of prophets, mentioned in *The Holy Qur'an*, and their English equivalents in three translations (by Pickthall 1930; Yusuf Ali 1934; Al-Hilali/Muhsin Khan 1999). The researchers found that

translators mostly used “transcription of Biblical names” while translating the Arabic PNs into English (Dazdarević/Milovanović/Fijuljanin 2013: 7). In other words, they showed a preference for TL-oriented procedures. Dazdarević, Milovanović and Fijuljanin (2013) contended that the procedure translators most frequently used was to transliterate the original name and add a “common existing equivalent” in brackets. The researchers considered this procedure as the most effective one in rendering PNs in religious texts (Dazdarević/Milovanović/Fijuljanin 2013: 8–10). There seem to be two major drawbacks attributed to their study: limited number of PNs and restriction of these PNs merely to the names of the prophets.

Concentrating on rendering Arabic PNs, Halimah (2016) investigated challenges posed by transliteration of Arabic PNs. The researcher used “Venuti’s Foreignisation Approach” as the model for the analysis of the data and concluded that “standardising the transliteration of Arabic proper names into English is still possible if individuals and governmental authorities take this issue on board and put it into practice” (Halimah 2016: 1–13).

Tabatabaee Lotfi (2017) also explored translations of Qur'anic PNs. The researcher worked on the English translations by Sale (1734), Rodwell (1861), Pickthall (1930), Yusuf Ali (1934) and Arberry (1955). Based on his findings, the least and the most frequently used procedures for rendering PNs were the replacement of a PN “by a common noun” and by “a counterpart” in the TL, respectively (Tabatabaee Lotfi 2017: 99).

Afrouz (2022) focused on the challenges faced by translators of *the Holy Qur'an* in translating proper names into English. Although the corpus included 26 English translations, the researcher only focused on God’s Names. Afrouz (2022) concluded that “English translators of *the Holy Qur'an* showed greater tendencies to adopt target-oriented procedures in rendering God’s Names” (Afrouz 2022: 1).

Various studies, as reviewed, were conducted focusing on proper names to show the strategies employed in rendering PNs by translators of literary texts. However, as far as the researcher explored, no study is conducted thus far concentrating on the personal proper names in English translations of *the Holy Qur'an* to explore the validity of the Retranslation Hypothesis. The current study is an effort to fill the research gap.

3 Methodology

The present study is a qualitative and quantitative corpus-based research.

3.1 Corpus

The Holy Qur'an, the Muslims’ greatest religious book, was selected as the corpus of the study. The corpus includes 1,240 Arabic personal proper names accompanied by their English equivalents. The whole chapters (= Surahs) of *the Holy Qur'an* and the following English translations were studied:

Muhammad Ali (1917)	Abdul Mannan Omar (1990)	Shabbir Ahmed (2003)
Pickthall (1930)	Faridul Haque (1990)	Starkovsky (2005)
Yusuf Ali (1934)	Sahih International (1997)	Qarai (2005)
Sher Ali (1955)	Amatul Rahman Omar (1997)	Unal (2006)
Arberry (1955)	Al-Hilali and Khan (1998)	Yüksel et al. (2007)
Daryabadi (1957)	Muhsin Khan (1998)	Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (2008)
Al-Mubarakpuri (1976)	Abdul Aziz (2000)	Wahiduddin Khan (2009)
Asad (1980)	Nikayin (2000)	The Monotheist Group (2012)
Aziz Ahmed (1981)	Qaribullah and Darwish (2001)	
Khalifa (1981)	Ghali (2001)	
Ahmed Ali (1988)	Saffarzadeh (2001)	

3.2 Procedure

The following steps were taken to carry out the study: specifying Qur'anic PPNs and their English equivalents; identifying the procedures selected by translators in dealing with the PPNs; categorizing translators of the same century; tabulating and analyzing the data; exploring the status of Re-translation Hypothesis in the context of religious texts.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Qualitative analysis

In order to analyze the data, examples of PPNs were categorized based on the type of procedure used in their translation.

4.1.1 Transliteration

The source-text oriented procedure of 'transliteration' was used in rendering almost all instances of PPNs by Saffarzadeh (as the 21st-century translator), Daryabadi and Al-Mubarakpuri (as two translators of the twentieth century). Except for 'آدم' /ādam/ and 'هَامَانُ' /hāmān/, which were translated by them as 'Adam' and 'Haman', other PPNs were transliterated by them. It should; however, be mentioned that Daryabadi was the only one who strangely transliterated the PPN 'قَارُونَ' /qārūn/ as 'Quran'. The way he transliterated the anthroponym seems really problematic since it is similar to the name of *the Qur'an*, while these two words are quite different, and they are even pronounced differently in Arabic. Such an equivalent would most presumably lead to confusion among the TL readership. It is also worth noting that Al-Mubarakpuri (for rendering the PPNs 'هَارُونَ' /hārūn/, 'طَالُوتُ' /ṭālūt/, 'جَالُوتُ' /jālūt/ and 'عَزَّيْرُ' /o'zayr/) and Saffarzadeh (for translating the PPNs 'السَّامِرِيُّ' /sāmeri/ and 'ذَا النُّونِ' /dhannūn/) provided the TT readers with informative notes.

All of the 20th- and the 21st-century translators rendered the PPNs 'شُعَيْبُ' /šoayb/, 'صَالِحٌ' /sāleḥ/, 'زَيْدٌ' /zayd/, 'لُقْمَانَ' /loqmān/, 'آزَرَ' /azar/, and 'مُحَمَّدٌ' /mohammad/ by using the procedure of 'transliteration'. Interestingly, while almost all translators transliterated 'عِمْرَانُ' /e'mrān/, one of the 20th-century translators (i. e., Khalifa) used a different strategy by choosing the equivalent 'the Amramite'.

4.1.2 Normalization

'Normalization' is a target-text oriented procedure which provides the target reader with the most conventional equivalent (i. e., the Biblical correspondent).

Instances of 'normalization' could be detected in translations of the two groups of translators. Rendering PPNs like 'هَارُونَ' /hārūn/, 'مُوسَى' /mūsā/, 'أَيُّوبُ' /ayyūb/, 'يَحْيَى' /yaḥyā/, 'يَعْقُوبُ' /ya'qūb/, and 'يُوسُفُ' /yūsuf/, respectively as 'Aaron', 'Moses', 'Job', 'John', 'Jacob', and 'Joseph' are just a few number of such instances. In these cases, the readership usually faces no challenge, or spends the least processing effort, in understanding such equivalents since the original Arabic PN is simply replaced by its Biblical counterpart (especially based on protestant Christian conventions).

A number of translators (e. g., Abdul Aziz, Aziz Ahmed, Arberry, Khan, Nikayin, Amatul Rahman Omar, Pickthall, Qarai, Qaribullah and Darwish, Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Sher Ali, Starkovsky, Unal) substituted 'قَارُونَ' /qārūn/ with 'Korah' – "an Israelite who rejected Moses' prophethood" (Muhammad Ali 1917: 910).

Considering the equivalent opted for the PPN 'إِدْرِيسُ' /edrīs/ by the 21st-century translators, Yüksel et al., and the MG simply used the equivalent 'Enoch'. While Shabbir Ahmed used 'Enoch' in the main text and added 'Idrees', Abdul Aziz used 'Idris' in the main text and added 'Enoch' and a question mark '?' within parentheses to show his uncertainty concerning whether the PPN really refers to 'Enoch' or not. Similarly, Nikayin (2000: 347), simply transliterating 'إِدْرِيسُ' /edrīs/ in the main text, showed his uncertainty in a footnote pointing out that the PPN refers "[m]ost probably" to "Enoch". Interestingly, all of the 20th-century translators transliterated the PPN as 'Idris' and none of them selected 'Enoch' in the main text. Only five translators (i. e., Al-Hilali and Khan; Amatul Rahman Omar; Abdul Mannan Omar; Aziz Ahmed and Muhsin Khan) used 'Enoch' in brackets. This interesting point may show that the 20th-century translators were more conservative than the 21st-century translators.

The same conservative behavior could be observed in rendering the PPN 'ذَا الْكُفْلِ' /dhalkefl/. While Yüksel et al. and the MG (the 21st-century translators) translated the PPN 'ذَا الْكُفْلِ' /dhalkefl/ as 'Isaiah' in the main text, the 20th-century translators (Muhsin Khan; Al-Hilali and Khan) preferred to use 'Isaiah' in brackets. It should be noted that "[s]ome commentators" (Abdel-Haleem 2005: 207) or "most commentators" (Nikayin, 2000: 347) considered 'ذَا الْكُفْلِ' /dhalkefl/ as "Ezekiel". A lot of translators also identified 'ذَا الْكُفْلِ' /dhalkefl/ to be "Ezekiel" (e. g., Muhammad Ali 1917: 655; Starkovsky 2005: 248; Abdel-Haleem 2005: 207, etc.). As one of the earliest translators of *the Qur'an*, Sale (1734: 250) expressed his doubt by pointing out that "[o]ne commentator will have him

to be Elias, or Joshua, or Zacharias: another supposes him to have been the son of Job, and to have dwelt in Syria” and to this some commentators added “that he was first a very wicked man, but afterwards repenting, died; upon which these words appeared miraculously written over his door, Now hath God been merciful unto Dhu'lkefl”, while the third commentator believed that “he was a person of great strictness of life, and one who used to decide causes to the satisfaction of all parties”, since “he was never in a passion: and that he was called Dhu'lkefl from his continual fasting, and other religious exercises”. Even in interpreting the PPN ذَا الْكُفْلِ /dhalkefl/ as ‘Ezekiel’ the conservative behavior of the 20th-century translators were revealed. While Nikayin and Shabbir Ahmed (the 21st-century translators) used ‘Ezekiel’ in the main text, three of the 20th-century translators (Rahman Omar; Mannan Omar and Aziz Ahmed) referred to ‘Ezekiel’ in brackets.

4.1.3 Descriptive translation

The target-text oriented procedure of ‘Descriptive Translation’ was used in rendering a number of PPNs by both groups of translators.

The PPN أَحْمَدُ /aḥmad/, as one of the names of Prophet Muhammad, denotes ‘the Praised One’ or ‘most acclaimed’. Pickthall and the MG referred to the mentioned senses by adopting the strategy of ‘Descriptive Translation’. Shabbir Ahmed was the only translator who referred to the meaning of the PPN in brackets. Other translators simply transliterated the PPN.

Sahih International, Asad and Qarai translated the name ذَا النُّونِ /dhannūn/ as ‘the man of the fish’, ‘him of the great fish’, and ‘the Man of the Fish’, respectively. Although ذَا النُّونِ /dhannūn/ literally means “The man of the fish” (Nikayin 2000: 347), the translator could have also referred to the Biblical equivalent of this Qur’anic character (i. e., Jonah). Saffarzadeh (2001: 700), the first woman translator of *the Holy Qur’an*, confirmed that ذَا النُّونِ /dhannūn/ refers to “Yunus” (i. e., *Jonah*). Khan did so by initially translating ذَا النُّونِ /dhannūn/ as ‘the man in the whale’ in the main text, and then referring to ‘Jonah’ in brackets. Abdul Aziz, Ali, and Aziz Ahmed preferred to transliterate the PPN and then provided informative notes in brackets. The equivalents selected by Yüksel et al. and the MG (i. e., the one with N) and the note provided by Khalifa in brackets (i. e., “the one with an ‘N’ in his name”) were in accordance with the point that the word نُونِ /nūn/ in the PPN ذَا النُّونِ /dhannūn/ also refer to the Arabic alphabetical letter ‘ن’ or ‘N’.

The PPN أَبِي لَهَبٍ /abīlahab/ refers to “[t]he holy Prophet’s parental uncle, a wealthy, ruthless arch-enemy, the nickname means ‘father of flames’” (Nikayin 2000: 713). Three 21st-century translators of the Qur’an rendered أَبِي لَهَبٍ /abīlahab/ as “The Father of Flame” (Abdul Aziz), “the flaming provocateur” (Yüksel et al., 2007: 393) and “the fire maker” (The Monotheist Group 2012: 443). Concerning the 20th-century translators, interestingly, three translators chose “the Father of Flame”, two translators used brackets to merely refer to the fact that أَبِي لَهَبٍ /abīlahab/ was “an uncle of the Prophet”, two other translators provided more details in brackets by mentioning that أَبِي لَهَبٍ /abīlahab/ was “the Prophet’s uncle, one of his most inveterate opponents and other fiery tempered

enemies of Islam”, and the rest of translators just sufficed it to refer to the transliterated equivalent of this PPN.

4.1.4 Omission

Only three translators failed to provide an equivalent for some Qur'anic PPNs. Asad, in rendering 'ذَا الْكُفْلِ' /dhalkefl/ (Surah 21, Ayah 85) and 'زَيْد' /zaid/ (Surah 33, Ayah 37), and Aziz Ahmed and Abdul Aziz, in translating 'إِسْحَاقَ' /esḥāq/ (Surah 4, Ayah 163), opted for the strategy of 'omission'.

4.1.5 Notes

Some translators did not simply abandon the target readership with mere transliteration of the PPNs by using the strategy of 'notes'. For instance, in the case of 'طَالُوتُ' /ṭālūt/, in a footnote, Abdel-Haleem explained that it is “[t]he Arabic name for Saul” (29). No translator or commentator denied the fact that Talut was the Biblical king 'Saul'. In this respect, Muhammad Ali (1917) explained that 'طَالُوتُ' /ṭālūt/ is derived from "tala, meaning *he* or it was *tall*, and he is so called on account of the tallness of his stature. It appears from the Bible narrative that Saul was the tallest of men among his compatriots” (Muhammad Ali 1917: 115).

Similarly, in rendering 'ذَا الْكُفْلِ' /dhalkefl/ as 'Dhu'l-Kiff', Muhammad Ali (1917: 207) explained in a footnote that “[s]ome commentators suggest this refers to the prophet Ezekiel”. It is also confirmed by Nikayin (2000: 347), the only poet-translator of *the Holy Qur'an*, that “most commentators take” 'ذَا الْكُفْلِ' /dhalkefl/ “as the Arabized form of Ezekiel”.

Likewise, in Abdel-Haleem's (2005: 188) footnote for 'ذِي الْقُرْنَيْنِ' /dhehqarnayn/, he provided the target-text audience with informative notes regarding the Qur'anic anthroponym by referring firstly to the literal meaning of the PN (i. e., “the two-horned one”), and secondly, to the historical figure (i. e., “Alexander the Great”) that some commentators suggested it referred to.

In the case of 'ذَا النُّونِ' /dhannūn/ Abdel-Haleem's (2005: 207) footnote was limited simply to one word: “Jonah”. He did not explain why he had chosen “the man with the whale” as the equivalent for the original PPN. Starkovsky (2005: 248) provided his readership with a highly informative footnote explaining that “Jonas” was called 'ذَا النُّونِ' /dhannūn/ or “the one with the fish” since “according to the Bible, when a storm hit the ship on which he was sailing, he was cast into the sea where a big fish swallowed him” (Starkovsky 2005: 248). This particular instance could delicately show the significance of 'notes'.

It should be remembered; however, that 'notes' are not embedded in translations just for providing extra explanations; in other words, they are not simply like ornamental entities or just for further information. In some cases, they are absolutely necessary in clarifying a key point. For instance, in the case of the PPN 'هَامَانَ' /hamān/, which was merely transliterated by 24 translators, TL readers could have been provided with an

informative and clarifying note that they should not confuse this Qur'anic Haman “with Haman of the Old Testament (Esther III, 1), the minister of Xerxes, king of Persia, which is perhaps a Hebraized form of a Persian Name” (Nikayin 2000: 414). This example could clearly show the pivotal role of ‘notes’ in rendering sacred-text PPNs.

4.2 Statistical analysis

In Table 1, on the basis of Kalashnikov’s (2016) model, the overall tendency of procedures adopted by translators of both 20th and the 21st century are revealed:

Procedures Distribution	Source-oriented	Middle		Target-oriented	
	<i>Transliteration</i>	<i>Omission</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Descriptive Translation</i>	<i>Normalization</i>
Frequency	440	4	171	12	573
Percentage	36.70 %	0.30 %	14.20 %	1.00 %	47.80 %
TOTAL	36.70 %	14.50 %		48.80 %	

Table 1: General tendency of procedures adopted by all translators

In order to better understand the figures in Table 1, in terms of the orientation of procedures towards either the source- or the target-text, we need to disregard ‘the middle’ section of the table and represent the data in Figure 2:

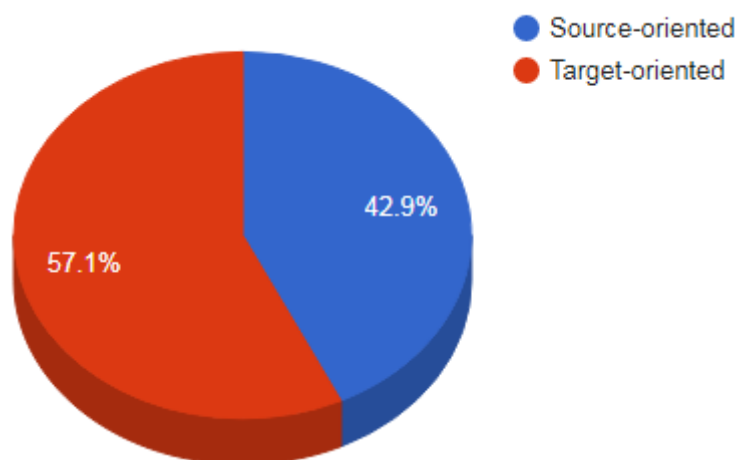


Fig. 2: Total tendency of procedures

In Table 2, the tendency of procedures employed by the 20th-century translators are displayed:

Procedures Distribution	Source-oriented	Middle		Target-oriented	
	<i>Transliteration</i>	<i>Omission</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Descriptive Translation</i>	<i>Normalization</i>
Frequency	273	3	105	7	292
Percentage TOTAL	40.10 %	15.80 %		43.90 %	

Table 2: Tendency of procedures used by 20th-century translators

Disregarding ‘the middle’ section of Table 2, we presented the percentages in Figure 3 to make the comprehension of the figures easier:

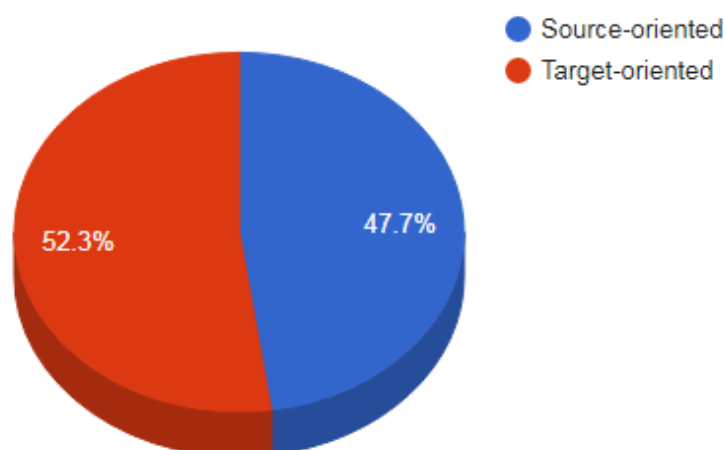


Fig. 3: Tendency of procedures used by 20th-century translators

In Table 3, the orientation of procedures used by the 21st-century translators are revealed:

Procedures Distribution	Source-oriented	Middle		Target-oriented	
	<i>Transliteration</i>	<i>Omission</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Descriptive Translation</i>	<i>Normalization</i>
Frequency	167	1	66	5	281
TOTAL Percentage	32.10 %	12.90 %		55.00 %	

Table 3: Tendency of procedures adopted by 21st-century translators

In Figure 4, only the percentages of the procedures oriented either towards the source- or the target-text are taken into account:

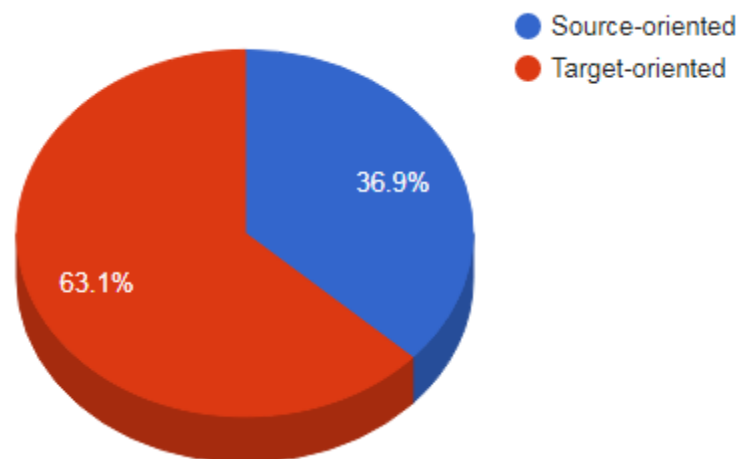


Fig. 4: Tendency of procedures adopted by 21st-century translators

4.3 Addressing the research questions

Concerning the first research question, it was found that the following five procedures were employed by *the Holy Qur'an* translators in rendering the PPNs: Normalization, Transliteration, Descriptive Translation, Omission, and Notes.

As for the second research question, the data analyzed in the present study revealed that the procedure of Normalization was left unmentioned in Kalashnikov's (2016) taxonomy.

Concerning the third research question, as is shown in Table 1, Normalization (by 47.80 %) and Transliteration (36.70 %) are by far two most frequently used procedures of rendering Qur'anic PPNs. On the other hand, Omission (by 0.30 %) and Descriptive Translation (1.00 %) were the two least adopted procedures.

Regarding the fourth research question, Table 2 and Table 3 showed that 'target-oriented' procedures were the most frequent procedures used by both 20th- and the 21st-century translators.

As far as the fifth research question is concerned, Figure 3 and Figure 4 revealed that while 47.70 % of the whole procedures adopted by 20th-century translators tended towards the source-language, only 36.90 % of the procedures adopted by 21st century translators were SL-oriented ones—it shows 10.80 % less tendency of later translations towards the SL. In other words, the figures revealed 10.80 % less tendency of earlier translations towards the TL (which is in stark contrast to the main principle of the Retranslation Hypothesis).

5 Conclusion

In the present paper, personal proper names in the Muslims' greatest literary text, *the Holy Qur'an*, and its 30 English translations were studied. Translators were divided into two groups (i. e., the 20th- and the 21st-century translators) based on the publication-date of their works.

It was found that translators adopted the procedures of Normalization, Transliteration, Descriptive Translation, Notes and Omission in rendering the Qur'anic PPNs. Normalization (47.80 %) and Omission (0.30 %) were found to be the most and the least frequently used procedures, respectively. Furthermore, the findings revealed that both 20th- and the 21st-century translators tended to adopt more 'target-oriented' procedures than 'source-oriented' ones.

Interestingly, earlier (20th-century) translators were found to be somehow more conservative than the later (21st-century) translators. As an instance, the PPN 'إدريس' /*edrīs*/ was transliterated by all of the 20th-century translators studied in this paper and none of them dared to insert the normalized equivalent (i. e., Enoch) in the main text; while three of the 21st-century translators mentioned 'Enoch' in the main text and one translator referred to it in brackets attached to the transliterated equivalent.

Finally, on the basis of the findings of the study, we found 10.80 % less tendency of earlier translations towards the target-language; therefore, the Retranslation Hypothesis could not be confirmed in the case of the Qur'anic PPNs and their equivalents in 30 English translations.

Although 30 English Translations of Qur'anic personal proper names were examined in the present study, one limitation still concerns the limited size of the corpus used since there are more than 100 English translations of *the Holy Qur'an*. Such a limitation could be taken into consideration as a barrier in generalizing the results.

In general, the findings of this study could be of immediate use to the researchers working on proper names and anthroponyms. It also raises the awareness of translation teachers and students in their dealing with PPNs in religious texts. However, the most noteworthy contribution of the current endeavor lies in the study of the Retranslation Hypothesis. It would help future researchers to better understand the Retranslation Hypothesis and attempt to examine its basic concepts and principles in different text-types and from various perspectives.

This study was conducted by concentrating merely on English translations of *the Holy Qur'an*. The results might have been different in other languages. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to work on other language pairs and translations of PPNs in other sacred texts. Prospective researchers are also recommended to follow the same line of research and examine the validity of the Retranslation Hypothesis for retranslations of other text-types, such as literary (non-sacred) texts, multi-modal texts, etc.

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