CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The Qur’an is the only Holy book available for the Muslims because “the former divine books were revealed in languages that are now dead, the Holy Qur’an was revealed in Arabic that is a living language and spoken by millions of people including millions of non-Arab Muslims. The vast majority of Muslims are non-Arabs and although they might know how to recite the Holy Qur’an in Arabic, they tend to use the translations of the Holy Qur’an in their languages in order to understand it” (Al-Bulusi, 2009:1). It is a fact that both Muslims and non-Muslims, (non-Arabic speakers) in order to understand the meanings of the Holy Qur’an, they completely depend on English translations. Though the Holy Qur’an was originally in Arabic language, it was meant for all human beings around the world.

Translators have carried out several translations of the Holy Qur’an in English around world. These translations have been produced by Muslims and non-Muslims; Binark & Eren (1986:13) say that there are more than two hundred ninety five translations of the Qur’an. Therefore, it is difficult to study all these translations as Al-Bulusi (2009:1) states that “Studying all of them would be a very difficult task bearing in mind that the translation process never stops and new translated versions are being produced from time to time”.

This study mainly aims at producing a comprehensive and systematic comparison of three translations of the Holy Qur’an into English carried out by Muslim and non-Muslim translators in order to examine the translatability of the collocations, the accuracy of the translations, identify equivalences used in each
translation, translation insufficiency and loss of meaning, top translation, methods for translating the collocations, as well as identifying problems in the translated collocations. These renditions are considered to be widely distributed read and also accepted.

The translations used in this Study are:


Since the late 20th century, interest in the translation of the Qur’an has been greatly increased, and a lot of studies have been conducted to evaluate and improve them, and to determine the appropriate method that can be used in them. These studies reflect the advantages of linguistics in the field of Qur’anic studies. “In most cases, this has led to a better understanding of the Qur’anic discourse, and increase appreciation of style, and the more accurate expression of meaning in other languages” (Al-Salem,2008:1).

The present study compares and analyzes the translations of the collocations mentioned in the three translations of the Holy Qur’an carried out by Muslim and non-Muslim translators. It agrees with some translation, disagrees with others, and suggests substitutes. The criteria for evaluating the translations are: principles of intelligibility, accuracy, and interaction.
1.2. Background of the Research

Translation is a difficult task particularly while translating a sacred text; for it is heavily influenced by linguistic, educational and cultural skills of the translator. While discussing about the translator’s ability Nighamathullah (2000:22) says that “it is quite uneven between the two languages and shows a broad group of abilities – from passive skills to active ones, from learnt skills to acquired ones, from just the ability to frame grammatically acceptable sentences in one language to enviable stylistic mastery in the other language”.

In this regards, Nida (1964) introduced what he called “Dynamic Equivalence” in the Bible Translation. His opinion is that dynamic equivalence is more effective than literal and traditional approaches in which the message of the text is almost reproduced with the same effect in the target language.

Therefore, the same text may be translated differently. Based on mother tongue and learnt language, according to Nida translators can be categorized into four categories: a) a translator who translates from a learnt language into his mother tongue, b) a translator who translates from his mother tongue into a learnt language, c) a translator who translates from one learnt language into another learnt language, d) a completely bilingual translator who translates from one mother tongue into another mother tongue. Most of translators belong to categories a, b and c; and few belong to category d (ibid: 149).

Translators whose religions and cultures are different have translated the Holy Qur’an into English mainly to serve their objectives, ideologies, sectarian principles, etc. In this context; it would be appropriate and academically relevant to investigate the
correctness and accuracy of these translations of the Holy Qur’an into English and in other languages.

In this study, the focus is on the Qur’anic collocations whereas the significance of collocations is not only in language but also in translation. The translation of collocations emanates from the significant role they play in a language. On the one hand, language proficiency can be proved through the ability of using and producing agreeable and convenient collocations, and on the other, their association plays a significant role in organizing the relations within a text. Hence, they are “crucial to the interpretations of a text” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:287).

Several scholars such as Ebrahimi & et al (2012:283) clarify that “collocation is one of the most effective and persuasive means of expression in the Qur’an which has contributed to its splendor. It helps Muslims to memorize the Qur’anic verses – a requirement in Islam. Furthermore, the reason behind the excessive collocation of the Qur’anic expression is that it has great persuasive and informative influence on the readers. Also, it has a certain function in exhorting people especially Muslims to obey God”.

1.3. Significance of the Research

The study of collocation in the Holy Qur’an is important because most of earlier studies have been mostly concentrated on investigating English as a foreign language learners’proficiency in translating English collocations into Arabic. But this study mainly focuses on the collocations in the Holy Qur’an. To the best of my knowledge, study in this area is quite limited and therefore this study may fill a gap in literature.
The study shows some useful comparative facts about the most widely used three English renditions of the Qur’an. It is useful especially for those who are seriously seeking knowledge, by helping them to put the differences and similarities in the translations of the Qur’anic collocations and meaning in proper perspective in these three selected translations of the Holy Qur’an. It clarifies the reasons for the differences and helps the readers in developing better appreciation of the works produced by the three different translators.

Further, this study can also identify any gaps in the exiting translations and can pave the way to come with more accurate and functional translations of the Qur’anic collocations in the three selected translations of the Holy Qur’an.

1.4. Review of Literature

Some studies on collocation have been written in English, however, “studies on Arabic collocations and their relation to translation have been considered as quite limited” (Dweik & Abu Shakra, 2011:10). Moreover, some of the available literature on collocation is derived from linguistic study. Bahumaid (2006:136) said, “the relatively few recent studies on collocations attempted by Arab researchers tend to use the conceptual framework developed in English lexical studies”.

The notion of collocation confessed by Arab linguists namely, El-Hassan (1982) and Ghazala (2004) was structured on Firth's definition (1957) of the term collocation. Firth (1957:196) proposed that “meaning by collocation” is a lexical meaning “at the syntagmatic level”. Since then, the concept of collocation became well known as part of the technical expression of linguistics.

Other British and Arab linguists’ formulation of collocation was mostly a replication of Firth’s definitions. However, they expanded it. Leech’s (1974:20) states
that “collocative meaning” which includes “the associations a word acquires on account of the meaning of words which tend to occur in its environment”. Palmer (1986) focused on meaning limitationss that are based completely on the sense of the collocated items. Similarly El-Hassan's (1982:270) has outlined the theory of “semantic compatibility” between lexical items that are combined according to rules that restrict their selections. This selection is based completely on the semantic relation between them, as in the two Arabic adjectives shahiq “high” and tawil “tall”. It is said, rajulun tawilun “a tall man” and not rajulun shahiqun “a high man”, and jabalun shahiqun “a high mountain” and not jabalun tawilun “a tall mountain”.

Additionally, Nofal (2012: 89-90) stated that Arabic, a language singularly rich in lexical and derivational resources, show collocation more often. Classical lexicographers like Tha’alibi and Ibn Sidah were keenly aware of the phenomenon and dictionaries of meanings such as figh ‘al- lugha\(^1\) and al-Mukhassas\(^2\) contain a wealth of collocational information.

Unfortunately, the order of the material is usually idiosyncratic and unsystematic. Also, most of the materials are obsolete and no longer pertinent to Standard Arabic. Particular modern bilingual dictionaries such as Wehr (1979) noted a certain amount of an information collocation but not in a systematic way which could help learners of Arabic. Benson & et al (1986:62) maintain that “Dictionaries should provide such collocations at the entry for the dominant word (verb, noun, or adjectives).

\(^1\) It is an important dictionary and thesaurus carefully researched and arranged with references to sources such as Quran, Hadith, Arab proverbs, and more. By Abdul Malik bin Muhammad bin Ismail (350/961 - 429/1038), known as Abu Mansour Tha’alibi al-Nisabure, the Arabic language expert in grammar, and meanings and usage of words and terms.

\(^2\) A very good set of 17 volumes bound in 5, Principal work of Ibn Sidah (1007-1066), the great blind Andalusian lexicographer: the most important Arabic encyclopedia and dictionary.
Translating collocations in religious texts especially in the Holy Qur’an was the subject of study by Baker 1992; Farghal & Shunnaq 1999; Abdelwali 2002; Ghazala 2004; Abdul-Raof, 2007; Abdullah 2010; Al-Quran and Al-Azzam 2010; Jalabneh 2010; Dweikand Abu Shakra 2011; Ebrahimi and et al 2012.

Baker (1992:66) states that there is difficulty in translating collocations and idioms because of “discrepancies in the collocational patterning of the source and target languages”. This causes “pot Qur’anic entail pitfalls and can pose different problems in translation. Some of these problems are more complicated to handle than others”.

Farghal & Shunnaq (1999) believe that most collocations in the Holy Qur’an carry unique linguistic and semantic features that are culturally specific, yet so comprehensive in meaning that equivalents in target language do not exist. Hence, they are untranslatable. They refer to attayammum⁴ as an evident instance to verify that translators may come across problems in translating certain concepts that do not simply occur in the English–speaking culture.

In light of their findings, they have suggested that translators should be well acquainted with the lexical constraints, and vague expressions not only in the target language but also in the source language. This will finally lead to a better and more natural interpretation of the text. They have also recommended that the translator of the Qur’an should be well versed in the two languages and the two cultures (Arabic and English) so as not to miss any fragment or constituent of the meaning of the collocations existing in the Holy Qur’an. Furthermore, they have stated that translators of religious texts especially translators of the Holy Qur’an should not depend on

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⁴ The Islamic act of dry ablution using sand or dust, which may be performed in place of ritual washing if no clean water is readily available or if one is suffering from moisture-induced skin inflammation or scaling.
bilingual dictionaries only, but should consult the views of Muslim scholars\(^4\) so that adequate interpretations would facilitate the process of comprehending the implicit message.

Abdelwali (2002:4) has referred the problems in translating the Holy Qur’an to the fact that “Qur’anic features are alien to the linguistic norms of other languages”. The collections of phonetic, rhetorical, cultural, and semantic features are not only diversified from the target language but also “distinct from other types of Arabic prose”. On the syntactic level, there are characteristics used for semantic requirements and communicative aims. For example, among the linguistic characteristics that are certain to Qur’an, is the frequent use of shift in personal pronouns from third person to second person and then once again to first person in the same text. This “linguistic mechanism” cannot even be “paraphrased”. He further added that the “Qur’anic lexemes and styles were not captured in most of the English versions of the Quran” (Cited in Dweik and Abu Shakra, 2011:10).

Ghazala (2004:1) in his two-part study on collocations has suggested specific categories of collocations based on their grammatical and lexical structure and rhetorical function. While focusing on the problems which translators may face in translating each type of collocations, he has acknowledged that “Qur’anic expressions in general and metaphoric collocations in particular create a tremendous challenge to translators who often fail to capture the “idiosyncrasies and cultural features of the Qur’anic discourse”.

Similarly, Abdul-Raof (2007:12) verified, “the liturgical, emotive and cultural associations of expressions existing in the Holy Qur’an pose the greatest obstacle to

\(^{4}\) Especially those scholars who are specialized in is the Qur’anic sciences who are known as commentator.
translator”. Furthermore, “Stylistic variation is one of the intriguing linguistic problems of Qur’anic discourse”. He added that each lexical item has a set of intrinsic semantic features that determine their selectional constraints. However, in the Holy Qur’an, for rhetorical and stylistic function, some lexical items violate the selectional constraint rule as in the example: *fa-bashširhum bia’thabın alimin* “So give tidings them of a painful punishment” (84:24). In this verse, the verb *bashšara* “he gave tidings” signifies [+ positive news], has collocated with the noun phrase *a’thabın alimin* “a painful punishment” which signifies [- positive news]. Stylistically, however, the verb *bashšara* “he gave tidings” has violated the selectional constraint rule in order to fulfil the rhetorical objective of irony and sarcasm.

Abdullah (2010:176), after analyzing some examples of collocations in different translations of the Glorious Qur’an into English, has found that the translators have given an appropriate attention to Qur’anic verses especially collocations, a matter that translators have to take into consideration. Consequently, consistency between source language and target language collocations has not been achieved, which led to inaccurate translation.

Al-Quran and Al-Azzam (2010:53) illustrated some examples of collocations in three selected translations of the Holy Qur’an and emphasized that translating the collocation into English causes many cultural and linguistic problems. Culturally speaking, for example, one Qur’anic collocation stands for two groups of people, the *Meccans* and the *Madinas* (two cities in Saudi Arabia), who have made equal efforts to establish the newly born Islamic state. Source language readers, who do not have enough background about the two parties, would not understand the cultural and historical dimensions of the collocation. Moreover, the efforts made by those

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5 The first number refers to the Qur’anic chapter (*sura*), while the second number after the colon refers to the Qur’anic verse (*ayah*).
individuals will not be understood unless footnotes and explanatory details are provided. Linguistically speaking, translating the text literally in the target language would not suffice target language readers, who are supposed to be ignorant in the field, to grasp the collocational linguistic features, associated with the fixed pair of words. Thus, translations have not succeeded in sensitizing the collective meaning of the collocation.

Jalabneh (2010:540) has tested the validity of thematic relations in consolidating the translated meaning of the collocations of *surat ash-shams* “the sun sura” and it is found fit for this work. Though such notions are abstract, non-interpretable features and checked at spell-out, still they are needed in translation to get the exact meaning intended because the meaning is determined by both visible as well as non-visible entities. It has been verified that without knowing the important roles of the covert verb *uqsimu* “swear” and the particle *wa* “a particle to make an oath”, meaning of taking an oath cannot be fulfilled easily. This particle alone cannot check the semantic roles; it is an indicator to theta marking because only the verb has this kind of power. The particle has certain reference to God as a means of showing a direct oath. This is due to the fact that such instruments are created by Him and not by anyone else. A person can make an oath by using the verb *uqsimu* ‘swear’ but cannot use such instruments.

Dweik and Abu Shakra (2011:8) clarified that “the difficult task of translating Arabic collocations into English is further aggravated when the translation of collocations deals with religious texts. Most of the problems encountered are due to the specificity of certain lexical items, which are rooted in the structure of the language

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6 A chapter or section of the Holy Qur’an.
and are deeply immersed in Arabic culture. Consequently, they reflect the cultural setting in which they occur”.

Ebrahimi and etal (2012:275) studied some Qur’anic distinct collocations in Orchard of Sa’di which is considered as one of the greatest works of Iranian nation. One of the most significant features of great poets’ works is using Qur’anic collocations. Sa’di is one of the most distinguished poets in Iran. Because of his familiarity with Quran, among 4133 couplets of Orchard, 31 Qur’anic collocations were based on the Qur’anic stories on prophets’ miracles. What has made these Qur’anic collocations distinctive is their historical background and semantic features. So the analysis of these Qur’anic collocations is of great importance and necessity.

Therefore, they addressed the formal and semantic features of Qur’anic collocations in Orchard of Sa’di to evaluate the semantic and histrical origin of lexical collocations. Although collocations in Persian poetry reflect familiar uses and fixed types, the Qur’anic collocations show distinct usages which considerably vary from other types of collocation.

1.5. History of Translation of the Meanings of the Holy Qur’an

The Holy Qur'an is one of the most translated books. It has been translated into most African, Asian and European languages including English. Translations had been started since the first century of the Islamic calendar, and have been continued so far for different purposes, and will continue till the end of time. Binark and et al (1986) maintain that Qur'an translations in 65 languages have been printed. The number of entire printed translations is 551, and of incomplete works 883. Entire translations have been printed 829 times, and selections were printed 409 times.
Al-fawzaan (2002) mentions that fourteen centuries ago translation of the Qur'an started once the Prophet Muhammed (SAW)\(^7\) sent messages to non-Arab nations calling them to Islam. Since Islam is a text-based religion, it was necessary to translate the Qur'an or at least parts of it into the languages of those nations. The first translation of any part of the Qur'an occurred during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

According to Mubarakaphoori (1990:113), the Muslims in Abyssinia, under the leadership of Jafar ibn Abi Talib, recited the first few verses of *Surat Maryam* “Mary Sura” to the Negus, which were translated to him. This event occurred before the migration of the Prophet to *Madina* “the city” and is probably the first recorded instance of any rendition of the Qur'an.

After the migration of the Prophet (SAW) to Madina (the city), he sent letters to the kaisers of Persia, Bahrain, Egypt, and Rome, inviting them to Islam. These letters including some Qur'anic sections and these sections must have been translated along with the letters (Ibid: 114). In particular, the Prophet (SAW) included the verse that says:

“Say: People of the Book! Come now to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but God, and that we associate not aught with Him, and do not some of us take others as Lords, apart from God.’ And if they turn their backs, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims”.

(3:64).

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\(^7\) SAW stands for *Ṣalla-Allahu 'alaihi wasallam*, meaning “May Allah’s blessing be upon him”, i.e. this is the Muslims’ tradition of greeting and blessing the prophet Muhammad each time his name is mentioned. For the sake of brevity, this abbreviation will not be repeated again in the dissertation and it should be understood as being present.
Moreover, some converts asked Salman al-Faresi, a very famous companion of the Prophet (SAW), to translate some verses of the Qur'an, which he then did (AI-Sarakhsi, 1988).

In response to that, several translations have been produced by both Muslims as well as non-Muslims in different languages, but here our concentration is only on the English translations which are briefly discussed.

1.6. History of English Translations of the Holy Qur’an

Here is a brief review of almost all of the English translations of the Qur’an from the first translation to the latest translations in 2012 which are known to the researcher. There are some brief notes about each one of them that shed light on some of their major features and limitations. The translations are ordered chronologically as per their original publishing dates.


It is the first English translation by Alexander Ross who translated the Qur'an from a French work L’Alcoran de Mahomet which was translated by du Ryer. It was the only English translation for about a century. According to Khan (1997:31), the original author of this translation is not known, but it is ascribed to Ross due to his writing a caveat to it. It has many anti-Islamic concepts in its introduction, appendix and also in the text. Further, it has too many mistakes from the language point of view.

1.6.2. The Koran: Commonly Called the Alkoran of Mohammed, by George Sale (1734).

George Sale produced the first translation of the Qur'an direct from Arabic into English but reflecting his predicatory position. According to Kidwai (2000), it is more accurate than Ross’ translation and has a few explanatory notes taken from the
approved Commentators to which is prefixed a preliminary discourse. It has been famous among non-Muslims. It includes biases against Islam. Its text is difficult to read and understand, the verse numbers are missing, and it is full of examples of omissions and mistranslations. For example, the recurrent Qur’anic address, *yaayyuh annaas* is translated as “0 people of Mecca” that really means “0 prophet”. Parts of some verses have been altogether eliminated. For example, verse 3:98 is not rendered.

1.6.3. The Koran, by J. M. Rodwell (1861).

Nassimi (2008:50) maintains that “its text of translation is considered as a scholarly work and has literal beauty. However, he has changed the order of the *suras* to be chronological, and he has anti-Islamic comments into the body of the text and in his introduction”. In the preface, he describes the prophet as the deceptive author of the Qur’an; and he accuses the Qur’an of being taken from Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian sources. It is also full of mistakes of mistranslation and misinterpretation which questions his primary aim.

1.6.4. The Koran Translated, by E.H. Palmer (1880).

Palmer was a Cambridge scholar authorized with the preparation of a new translation of the Qur’an for Max Muller Sacred Books of the East Series. Nykle (1936) notes no less than 70 examples of omissions and mistranslation in this translation, and Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar called it a neglected and tough piece of work with an amazing performance and grave immaturity. It was Published by Oxford University press, but with very poor quality of translation.
1.6.5. The Holy Qur'an Translated with Short Notes: Based on the Holy Qur'an or Authentic Traditions of the Prophet, or New Testament or Scientific Facts, by Mohammad Abdul Hakim Khan (1905).

This is the first English translation of the entire Qur'an by a Muslim. Kidwai (2000:21) praises this translation since it has commentary with short notes based on references mentioned in its subtitles. All fictitious romance, questionable history and disputed theories have been cautiously evaded. The translator had knowledge of the Qur'an and authored many books on the Qur'an. He expressed his limitations as a human being, not able to fully translate the superiority and profundity of the language of the Qur'an. This is a simple and straight translation avoiding controversies. It was a response to the anti-Islam missionary propaganda of the time. However, it does not include the Arabic text.


According to Nassimi (2008:51), mentions that this translation is the first one includes the Arabic text, but the suras are ordered chronologically. The author published two more editions of his translation in 1916 and 1956, respectively, but both of them do not include the Arabic text. The latest edition had the suras in the traditional order. He had knowledge of the Qur’an and authored many other books on the Qur'an. It has frequent references to the Bible showing the differences of the Qur'an and refuting the missionary views in a casual manner. It involves few notes.

1.6.7. The Koran: English Translation, by Mirza Hairat Dehlawi (1912/1916).

Dehlawi attempted to give a complete and detailed reply answer to the manifold criticisms of the Qur’an by different Christian authors such as Drs. Sale, Rodwell, Palmer, and Sir W. Muir. Its language is easy to understand even by those with basic education. The translator got the help of other scholars at the time of this
translation. He had translated the Qur'an in Urdu language prior to this work. This translation does include neither the Arabic text nor any commentary. The verses are numbered within each part of the thirty parts of the Qur'an instead of within each sura (ibid :52).


It was done by a Qadiani\(^8\) who does not believe in the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) as the final messenger and he claims Ghulam Ahmad as their prophet. This work was continuously updated and four editions published before the death of the author in 1951. Modern critics praised the translation for its nice English and explanatory notes. It became the version adopted by the Nation of Islam.

However, the translator is guilty of mistranslating many Qur'anic verses; especially those related to the Promised Messiah\(^9\), his miracles and the Qur'anic angelology. It was by the Muslim World League reviewed finding it inaccurate and deviated, and condemned it as hurtful translation. According to Kidwai's review (2000), the translator grossly twists and misinterprets the Qur'anic verses related to the Promised Messiah and the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the seal of prophethood. Further, it denies the happening of some miracles pointed out in the Qur'an. For example, in verse 2:60, he has rendered the verse in which Allah requests Moses to “strike the rock with his staff” as “March on to the rock with your staff”, which is not only a mistranslation, but it rejects the miracle that Allah provided 12 springs of water with that strike on the rock.

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\(^8\) Qadiani or Qadiyani is a pejorative term used by some to refer to the Ahmadi Muslims, primarily in Pakistan. While it is considered pejorative by the Ahmadiyya, it is used in official Pakistani documents.

\(^9\) The promised deliverer of the Jewish nation prophesied in the Hebrew Bible.

This is also an Ahmadi/Qadiani translation. It does not include the Arabic text and any notes. The preface is considered as a brilliant criticism of the English translations of the Qur'an by Sale, Rodwell, Palmer and Muhammad Ali. The only swerve Sarwar finds out in Muhammad Ali’s translation is the “very poor construction of a great many passages in the body of the translation”.

Schingler (2013) points out that Sarwar -from the beginning- presents combating the ossification of the Qur’an as one of his main objectives, expressing dismay for the way it has been maltreated and misused. He proposes the lofty visions for human progress at its core faded into excuses for ignorance and darkness. The determination with which he faces and dares mythologies built around translations does effectively muddle that picture; in that sense, the plan may fulfill some of its ends. Even if its ideas fail to sway all adherents or to constitute the way non-Muslims read the Qur’an, this layman’s effort should be praised both for its audacity and its controversial prowess, as well as for the human consciousness that underlies the two.


It has a detailed introduction with review of previous English translations as well as a summary for each sura. Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar, in his Introduction to the translation of the Holy Qur’an, pronounces Sale’s, Rodwell’s and Palmer’s translations as “three notable English translations of The Holy Qur’an by Christians”. The translator was a Hafiz and scholar of the Qur’an as well as a scholar of the Arabic language. He emphasizes on intelligibility, ease, and accuracy in his translation. It has neither the Arabic text nor any commentary. He was against including a commentary in the translation. According to Khan (1997:40), this translation did not get enough
attention due to lack of proper propaganda and also because soon after this, other famous translations by Pickthall and Yusuf Ali were published.

1.6.11. Qur'an Translated with a Crucial Rearrangement of Surahs, by Richard Bell (1937).

This interpretation appeared in 1937 to make an attempt at giving some sort of chronological order to the text of the Qur'an. Khan (1997:49) pointed out that Bell accomplished his work with notes as well, but he usually take the form of brief interpretations of paricular clauses rather than exegeses on the text such as we find in most Muslim translations. Most of the suras, especially the longer ones are composite chapters of passages from different periods of Muhammad's ministry. He alone has attempted to break the suras up into their constituents. The usual criticism of his translation is that the divisions he proposes suggestes cannot be proved and in many cases are disputable.

Watt (1957) studied Bell's “critical re-arrangement of the suras” in details and reviewed his strange illusions. The suras of the Qur'an had been re-ordered by Bell in a wasteful way by cutting out verses and changing them purely for subjective reasons that makes the text virtually illegible and unreadable. Bell claimed that the Prophet (SAW) authored the Qur'an.

His work is nevertheless an extremely significant contribution to this field and serves as a most useful model of the probable divisions of the original revelations. The translation itself focuses on textual accuracy and is therefore a worthy work. His detailed introduction and comprehensive commentary was published later in 1989, and 1991.

The translator was initially a journalist, but later became a great scholar of the Qur'an. His translation is faithful, though largely unacknowledged. It is an abridged edition of Abdul Majid Daryabadi’s Tafsir\(^{10}\) al-Qur'an, well-known for its painstaking English translation of the Arabic and the use of comparative religion, history, and anthropology in its credible commentary of the Qur’an. Another worthy element of the translation is the education it provides—its life-giving articles of faith, its life-alimentary teachings and its life-enriching worldview in a way best suited for the English speaking world.

This translation includes comprehensive commentary and emphasizes on the accuracy over any literal decoration. Nadwi (1981: xvi) comments that “this work and its commentary is unique and most dependable among many other English translations attempted so far”. According to Irving (1985: xii), “Daryabadi’s is clear”; but he states that it “hard to work with because of its order, particularly naming and numbering of chapters”.


This translation is published by the Ahmadiyya\(^{11}\) Muslim Community that overtakes more than 200 countries. According to Nassimi (2008:56), it is the official Qadyani translation of the Qur'an. It has interpolated more blatantly the Qadyani ideologies. It keeps the errors of misinterpretation and mistranslation that exist in Muhammad Ali’s translation.

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\(^{10}\) (Tafsir, Meaning: interpretation) is the Arabic word for exegesis, usually of the Qur'an.
\(^{11}\) Ahmadiyya is a Muslim movement whose followers believe that its founder Mîrzâ Gulâm Ahmad (circa 1839–1908) was the promised messiah.

This translation firstly published in England. Dawood has changed the order of the *suras* since they are not put in their original order but in an assumed chronological form and the verses are not separately numbered. The translation has a pleasing literary style but lacks the perspicacity of the original. Dawood has used recent English in his translation.

He is the only Jewish translator of the Qur'an. He speaks of the influence of Jewish and Christian teachings on the Prophet Mohammed (SAW) and denounces the traditional *sura* order. He mostly followed the chronological *sura* order, but sometimes his order is arbitrary. In one of his latest prints in 1990, the publisher reordered the *suras* in a traditional order. Kidwai stated in his review (1992) that the translation is distorted by serious errors of translation, e.g., *Bani Adam* (7:31) is translated as “children of Allah” not as “son of Adam”.


According to Khan (1997:50), it claims to be: “a true and easy translation of the Glorious Holy Qur'an”. Appended to the translation is a lengthy appendix dealing with diverse topics. However, the appendix is in a bizarre way, and slights the role of *sunna*\(^\text{12}\). It has many mistakes in the translation and the text is difficult to read.


Nassimi (2008:57) states that this translation is produced in a very simple language. The translator took this task as he felt the absence of an English translation

\(^{12}\) *Sunna* is the traditional portion of Muslim law based on Muhammad's words or acts, accepted together with the Qur’an as authoritative and followed particularly by Sunni Muslims.
and commentary from the Shia\textsuperscript{13} point of view. His work has become a standard Shia translation. It has a rich introduction about the Qur'an, its English translation, and the Shia doctrines. It includes beneficial information about the Shia-Sunni differences. It strongly confutes the view that the Shias believe in the alteration of the Qur'an. It claims the Qur'anic guidance for Shia sectarian doctrines. However, there is a recent print of this translation with an introduction and editing done by Yasin al-Jibouri. It has taken off the introduction and avoided any comments about Shia.

\textbf{1.6.17. The Holy Qur'an: Rendered into English, by Abdur Rahman and GHani, Ziauddin Tariq (1966).}

This is an explanatory translation appended by brief notes. It does not include the Arabic text. It is considered as a valid and useful translation. Though this translation is in harmony with the Muslim point of view, its language and display leave a lot to be desired. However, its language and presentation are weak (ibid).


Nassimi (2008:58) mentioned that the translator was a professor of English language and a scholar of the Qur'an. Initially, he translated AbulKalam Azad's Urdu rendition (Tarjumanul Qur'an) in English. His own translation was published later. It is pointed out in its introduction that instead of translating “the verses of the Qur'an clause by clause and word by word”, the translator aimed at communicating “the unified idea meant by the entire sentence”. Kidwai (2000) reviewed this translation as a faithful effort with zealousness, but lacking any special characteristics.


This translation of the Qur'an had been done by Peer who is one of Qadyani scholars. He also introduces the Urdu rendition of the Qur'an.

\textsuperscript{13} One of the two main branches of Islam, followed by about a tenth of Muslims.

Farid is also Qadyani so that commentary of this translation is entirely based on Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahlnad's Urdu translation of the Qur'an.


The translator was the foreign minister of Pakistan between 1947 and 1954. His translation has no any separate explanatory notes, but gathers his thoughts with the translated text. According to Kidwai (2000), this translation is a distinct Qadyani translation, distorted by irresponsible liberties in that Zafrullah Khan, following the footsteps of other Qadyanis, does not believe in the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the last Prophet.


Hashim Amir Ali raised in the palace of SalarJungs of Hyderabad, India and studied at University of Chicago and Cornell, got a Ph. D in rural sociology in 1929.

The translator means in chronological order of revelation. His aim is reflected in the title of his translation as he has attempted to produce a high level and perspective view of the message of the Qur'an so that the reader would be led to a further and more important research of the Qur'an. Nassimi (2008:59) praises this work as a completely good translation in terms of language. In order to justify the thematic unity of the Qur'an, according to Khan (1997:149), the translator has innovated a new *suras* order, re-ordering the *suras* under five sections that he calls as the five books of the Qur'an. Furthermore, he has made up 600 sections of the Text, in place of the standard 558 sections, for, what he calls, perspective purposes. It has disordered the
traditional order of the Qur'an by making a mess of the Sura and Ruku “section” arrangement.

1.6.23. **Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language, by Taquiuddin al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan (1977).**

This is one of the most widely famous translations of the Qur'an in most Islamic libraries and Sunni mosques all over world. This translation aims to produce the meanings of the Qur'an in the way the early Muslims had understood it. It is recommended by most of scholars and it is more common among the Salafi14 people. It usually uses the parentheses to explain the meaning of the text. It is described as an “amplified” translation. Some Arabic words that are difficult to translate are written in Arabic and explained inside parentheses.

1.6.24. **The Koran: The First Tafsir in English, by Muhammad Mofassir Ahmad (1979).**

Kidwai (2000:19) points out that a main issue with this work is that the explanatory notes have been interpolated into the rendered text. It marks a dangerous deviation from the rules of the Qur’anic exegesis and it would open the occlusions for producing any material as the translation of the Text itself. It has misinterpreted numerous significant Qur'anic expressions. For example, *al-Ghayb* (the Unseen) is rendered as the “consequence of one's action”.

1.6.25. **The Message of the Qur'an, by Muhammad Asad (1980).**

This translation is one of the widely used translations, and it is considered to be the first in conveying the meaning and influence of the original Arabic text, making this translation a must for English readers with a budding eagerness in Islamic studies.

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14 Salafi is a member of a strictly orthodox Sunni Muslim sect advocating a return to the early Islam of the Qur’an and Sunna.
According to Nassimi (2008:60), Asad's translation is very prevalent in the academic circles. It is translated in chaste and idiomatic English. The translator usually refers to the *Tafsir* of Zamkhshari and offers logical and persuasive explanations to some complicated texts. However, he uses this method to justify even the miracles of Allah and appears to be unfavorable to accept the literal meaning of some Qur'anic texts. For example, he doubts the throwing of Prophet Ibrahim into fire, Jesus speaking in the cradle; refers to Khidr, Luqman, and Dhulqarnain as mythical figures.


This is one of the popular English translations. It was reviewed and recommended by the Supreme Sunni and Shia Council of Lebanon. Kidwai (2000) says that this translation is fundamentally based on a Jew, N.J. Daud's English translation of the Qur'an. Therefore, it repeats the errors of mistranslation that mar Daud's translations. In the appendix on Muslim religious traditions, practices and law both the Sunni and Shia doctrines have been showed.


The translator was a student of the Islamic Seminary of Najaf, Iraq and Qum, Iran. He depended on Al-Mizan by TabaTaba’i and Mujma'ul Bayan by T’Abasi for translating the textes that could have multiple meanings. He performed this translation without any supplementary notes and introduction. This explanatory translation paraphrases the contents of the Qur’an in a clear style (ibid).

This is one of the famous English translations. It uses clear and modern English. It does not contain any notes. The translator's name is Mahomed Ali Habib with a penname of Shakir.

According to both Kidwai’s (2000) and Smith's (2002) reviews, this translation is an example of awkward plagiarism in that about 90% of it has been verbatim copied from Muhammad Ali Lahori's English translation of the Qur'an. It does not include any notes from Qur'an. Kidwai also mentions that the Shia doctrines have been indicated in the Subject index with pointed reference to the Qur'anic verses in order to give an impression that such Shia doctrines occur in the Qur'an itself. There is a new print of this translation published by Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc. in New York in 2001 with an introduction by Yasin al-Jibouri and with the deletion of the original notes.


The translator was a teacher of English literature. His translation has easy idiomatic English. Mohammed (2005) mentions that Ahmad Ali has put away sometimes the archaic prose of Yusuf ‘Ali and Marmaduke Pickthall in order to produce the Qur'an in modern English. While ‘Ali writes that he attempts to introduce a translation, not an interpretation, theological or otherwise. Inspite of its accessibility to non-Muslim and academic readers due to its novel Princeton University Press publication, many Muslim scholars have criticized the translation because it is written in a liberal method and allegorical interpretations in dealing with specific miracles and commands of the Qur'an. Additionally, Ali’s idea does not acknowledge that the Qur'anic view parallels the Gospel of Thomas. Kidwai, in his review (2000), claims
that it has many examples of mistranslation and it includes unorthodox, apologetic and pseudo-rationalistic views on hell, stoning of Abraha's army\textsuperscript{15}, the Tree, et cetera.


Nassimi (2008:62) considers this translation as one of the famous and popular new translations. It is distinct by its fluency and American English terms. Its language is easy to understand, especially for the youth. Its introduction is about some of the difficulties of the translation of the Qur'an. It has assigned numbers and theme(s) to each Qur'anic \textit{ruku} “section”. It does not include the Arabic text and any explanatory notes other than a brief introduction to each \textit{sura}. The title of this translation as... \textit{the First American Version} could indicate that the Qur'an has different editions for different nations. According to Kidwai's review (2000), it includes some errors in translation and some loose terms, e.g. in verse 2: 157. The verses are not numbered each. A set of verses are produced in a paragraph form with only the number of the beginning verse. Within the paragraph, the verses are separated with "***" marks.

\textbf{1.6.31. The Bounteous Koran: A Translation of Meaning and Commentary, by M.M. Khatib (1986).}

Kidwai (2000) describes this translation as accurate and authentic translation of the Qur'an is readable and in fluent English. It is free from monotonous use of archaic Biblical English as in Pickthall, Yusuf Ali and Daryabadi. It includes a historically based and useful introduction discussing Islam, the Qur'an and \textit{Seerah}\textsuperscript{16}, and brief yet insightful notes on the current setting and the meaning of particular Qur'a'nic allusions and terms. However, it includes a few invalidity in translation, e.g., in verses 25:16, 29, 46 and 62; 5:67; 19:26 and 34, et cetera.

\textsuperscript{15} Abraha also known as "Abraha al-Ashram" declared himself an independant King of Himyar in Yemen from at least 531 -547 AD to 555 - 565 AD.

\textsuperscript{16} Seerah is defined as the life or way the Prophet (SAW) lived.

According to Kidwai (2000); Ahmad (1978); and Sami‘ullah (1981), this translation is full of atheism, deviations, and misrepresentations. Some instances of this translator's distortions are: 1. He has denied the validity of all Hadeeth and Sunna as a reference of Islamic scholarship and law in his comment to verse 33:21, appendix 18, and many other places. 2. He has removed two verses of the Qur'an (9:128-129) from his translation because their presence in the Qur'an did not fit his Number19-theory. 3. He has denied Prophet Mohammed (SAW) as the final messenger of Allah as in his commentary to verse 33:40. 4. He has claimed to be a messenger of Allah in the comment of verse 33:7 and Appendix 26. 5. He has misinterpreted the above and many other verses to fit his thoughts. The atheism and misrepresentations of this translation are emphasized by many other critics.


This translation is one of the best translations currently available. It is based on the work of Taqiuddin and Hilali and Muhsin Khan, but with the following two perfections: 1. the language has been significantly simplified and explained, and 2. notes have been placed to replace the parenthesis within the text. It has a useful introduction and subject index. It examines each verse in Arabic with reference to several works of Arabic tafseer (exegesis) and grammar, selecting modern wording and carefully placing them in order which is similar to that of the original Arabic text whenever possible. Three main aims have served as guidelines: To offer correct meanings, as far as possible. To simplify the language for the benefit of all readers. To allow the Qur'an talk for itself, adding notes only where necessarily required for explanation of points not readily realized or when more than one sense is acceptabl.
This translation of the Holy Qur’an has set new standards of readability and accurate to benefit everyone wanting to understand the Qur’an in English. Its translators have used authentic sources of hadeeth and tafsir and have made comparisons with previous English renditions. The result is a highly accessible and reliable translation that can be used by everyone desiring to understand the meanings of the Holy Qur’an. The first edition of this translation had Um Mohammad as its translator, but the later ones without a translator’s name.


This accurate and comprehensive translation of the Qur’an into modern English has been recommended by Al-Azhar University. It has few notes and an introduction. It uses contemporary English and it is a fluid reading. It is very clear translation since it is one of the only English translations done by a native Arabic speaker. The appropriate use of square brackets [ ... ] to indicate an addition by the translator is amazing.


This work is a unique translation of the Holy Qur'an in contemporary American English. The approach of translation used here is based on the theme rather than the literal translation. It has the following features: - (1) Field Testing the Communication of Divine Message: The prominent feature of this translation is its field testing for many years to better the communication and understanding of the Divine Message. (2) Simplicity: In this translation, simple language and direct method are used for being proper to the common sense of scholars and common people. (3) Understandability: There are no notes to reread and no commentary to read. All necessary explanations have been incorporated right there in the text with italic typesetting to distinguish from the
translation of the meanings of Qur'anic Arabic text. (4) Reviews, Input and Approvals:

This work was started in 1991 and first draft completed in 1994. Then the translation was sent to different Scholars in different countries for their review, input and approval. It was published after their reviews and approvals. It has been printed in two versions: one with Arabic text, and one with no Arabic text.


This fresh spiritual translation transfers the meanings of the Qur’an for the present time English speakers. It is considered one of the top English translations available today.

According to Nassimi (2008:65), it has attempted to use the natural rhythms of the English language gathered with a certain type of style on the page to give a sense of the beauty in the original verses. It was required over a 25- year period to be completed by a married couple. It has two distinctive characteristics: 1. it is conducted fundamentally for the Muslim English speaking readers. Because of this, it does not translate the key Qur'anic terms such as Iman “faith”, Salat “prayer”, taqwa “piety”, etc into English, but keeps them in transliterated Arabic form. 2. The translation is based on the Warsh\textsuperscript{17} reading. It does not have Arabic text.


After a brief review, Smith (2002) finds the writing of this translation clean and straight. It includes commentary between the verses within the parentheses, but isolated from the text. It has been conducted by a committee of four Turkish scholars who have divided the work as follows: Nurettin translated Suras 1 to 8; Tevfik: 9 to

\textsuperscript{17} Warsh is one of the recitations of the Qur’an.
20; Ali: 21-39; Mehmed: 40 to 114. In 2000, a fourth edition was edited by Abdal Hakim Murad, Mostafa al-Badawi and Uthman Hutchinson and titled “The Majestic Quran, An English Rendition of its Meanings”. This fourth edition dropped some spare amplifying words, enriched its English vocabulary, regulated word selection, and augmented it with modern terms (i.e. Muslim rather than “those who have surrendered”). Commentary has been moved from between verses to the bottom of the page. The suitable use of square brackets […] to indicate an addition by the translator is fascinating.


The translator was a scholar of Seerah and Hadith who worked as a lecturer of Islamic History at the Islamic Universities of Madinah and Riyadh for twenty years. This is a unique translation with special effort to present the additional meanings of the words. Parallel to the translated text are references and definitions to prior uses of the words. The objective has been to enable a non-Arab reader to understand the Qur'an as well as to better his knowledge of Arabic; particularly the Qur'anic Arabic. It is published in 3 volumes. The method and style of this translation is much like Khan and Hilali translation, having marks of straight word to word translation and ordering.


This is a new and entire translation of the Qur'an by one of the translators of religious texts in the world. The meanings of this holy text are translated into the English language with skilled touches of poetry, allowing an opportunity to fully understand the spirit of the Qur'an. This direct and timely translation is a necessary reference for the contemporary seeker. It uses contemporary and fluent English. It does not have no commentary notes, no introduction, and no Arabic text. The translation of
some of the Qur'anic key terms, such as *kufr* “disbelief” and *taqwa* “piety” are not accurate. For example, *kufr* “disbelief” has often been translated and limited to scoffing or atheism; *taqwa* as consciousness without associating ascribing it to Allah.


The translator was born in Egypt and studied at al-Azhar, Cairo, before joining Cambridge Universities. He has been teaching Arabic at Cambridge and London Universities for many years. His translation is described as one of the most highly considerable translations by English-speaking scholars, it is written in contemporary language that stays loyal to the meaning and spirit of the original text. It is free from archaic words, incoherence, and strange structures that mar some translations. It uses accurate, contemporary, nice, and intelligible English, and it includes notes that explain historical, personal, and geographical indications. There is a brief introduction for each *Sura*. The translator produced a set of verses in a paragraph format. He depends on Fakhruddin Razi’s *Tafsir* “exegesis” in the interpretation of specific verses which have more than one meaning. However, it does not have Arabic text. In some places extra words are added to make the English text easy. The Arabic names of the *Suras* have not been written but translated into English words.


This translation is an accurate and authentic translation with a very useful introduction. It uses contemporary and easy English to be understood easily. The original text has been deleted to make the translation more portable and user-friendly.

This work is a fresh readable English translation based on Tafhim al-Qur'an, an interpretation of the Qur'an by Moulana Mawdudi which was firstly translated in the Urdu language, aims to answer modern questions and make the Qur'an related to the demands of the present time, i.e., it offers the Qur'an as a book to be lived by, a mission to be lived for, and a must that the reader can no longer avoid or stay away. It is famous with its depth of understanding of the Holy Qur’an, so is a great treasure of knowledge and deep insights. It explains the coherence and unity of the Qur’an. It is an authentic translation with the mainstream Muslim points of view. It includes the Arabic text and presents an explanatory translation appended by brief notes. The language and style is in easy and contemporary English.


The translator attempted to simplify the meaning of the Holy Qur'an. The numbers of Suras and verses are given as “Sura no. : Verse no.” throughout the text. The translator listed names of the prophets in a particular way. He has used parentheses to explain the meaning, but using them frequently makes the text difficult to be read, as in verse 2:33. It has many translation errors especially in the process of paraphrasing and simplification. For example, wherever Allah has mentioned Himself in plural as “we/us”, it has been mistranslated as a third person pronoun mentioning Allah, and the verb has been changed, too. The key term Rabb “God” has not been rendered except in the first Sura.

1.6.44. The Sublime Quran, by Laleh Bakhtiar (2007).

The translator is an Iranian-American Muslim and a clinical psychologist. This translation of the Qur’an was the first one by an American woman. She attempts to take
a female standpoint and to admit alternative meanings of Arabic expressions that are ambiguous or they have not been obviously explained by scholars due to the antiquity of the language of the Qur'an. Bakhtiar’s translation tries to produce understanding between non-Muslims and Muslims. She translates *kafiroon* as “those who are ungrateful” instead of the common translations “unbelievers” or “infidels”. She also translates the Arabic word *daraba* (4: 34), concerning treatment of a husband towards a rebellious wife, as “go away” instead of the common “beat” or “hit”. She uses the English words “God” and “Mary” instead of the Arabic Allah and Maryam since she believes these translations will pull non-Muslims close from Islam.

1.6.45. *The Quran – A Modern English Translation, by Talal Itani (2012).*

The translator has been studying the Quran, researching on and teaching it to others since 1992. He determined to translate the Qur’an when he lost hope of getting an English translation that was accurate and easy to understand. This translation of the Qur’an is in English; and it is intelligible, accurate, easy to read, and it closely goes after the Arabic text.

1.7. An Overview of the Three Selected Translators and Their Translation

An overview of the three English translators and their translations of the Qur'an which are selected for the comparison in this study is given in this section. The overview of each translation includes the translator's background, the translation work, its unique features, and its reviews by some others. The three selected translations are the work of: 1. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall. 2. Abdullah Yusuf Ali. 3. Arthur Jeffery Arberry.
1.7.1. A Survey of Pickthall’s Translation

The translator

Marmaduke Pickthall was born in 1875 in London to an Anglican clergyman. He was a Western Islamic scholar, journalist, novelist, polemicist educationist, political, headmaster, and religious leader. He learned Arabic, Urdu and Turkish because of his travels throughout the Muslim world. He was a Christian and converted to Islam in 1917. After his conversion, he worked for 15 years with Muslims in India as the editor of Bombay Chronicle. While he was in his service of the Nizam of Hyderabad, he published his English translation of the Qur’an entitled *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*. Pickthall passed away in 1936 and was buried in the Muslim cemetery at Brook Wood in Surrey, England.

Translation work

Pickthall’s translation is accurate, intelligible and easy to read. It is attached with an introduction about life of the Prophet Muhammad’s. Moreover, it sheds the light on the Qur’an, its revelation, recording and the order of its *suras*. The translation offers very short explanatory notes but completely indexed, the original Arabic strings along with the English translation and commentaries. It is a significant and famous translation for both academic and public circles, due to the translator’s being faithful to the Qur’an that made it more accurate and readable than many of the preceding English translations.

It is the first translation by an English Muslim man. Pickthall translated the Qur’an almost literally and attempted to select proper language that can be easily understood. In the introduction of his translation, he presents his great appreciation for the Qur’an, saying:
The Qur'an cannot be translated….The book is here translated almost literally and every effort has been made to select convenient language. But the result is not the Glorious Qur'an, that inimitable harmony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and rejoicing. It is only an effort to produce the meaning of the Qur'an and its charm in English. It can not replace the Qur'an in Arabic, nor is it intended to do so (Pickthall, 1938: i).

Maryam Jamila of a Jewish family born in New York considered herself lucky when she got the translation of Qur'an by Marmaduke Pickthall. Although She acknowledged that no translation on earth can replace the Arabic text, yet Maryam could not master herself in praising Late Pickthall saying: “May Allah the Almighty Shower unlimited Mercy on the Late Pickthall. He made the Quran easy to understand for the people of Britain and America and he opened the flood of light for me too” (Gumel, 2013).

Critics point out that there are some mistakes as a result of the little knowledge of the translator in Arabic, though he used his English gifts to compensate this deficiency. Some modern critics note that the use of old-fashioned and antique expressions makes it tough for an average reader to understand, since the text includes some difficult terms, dry style, and ambiguity of meaning in different places.

Abu Siyaam (2013) says that Pickthall’s ideology and cultural background was reflected by the selection of words and terms in his translation. The translation was produced in archaic English language. The selection of prose in the translation of some chapters makes it difficult to understand and grasp the target language text, although the verses exhibit literal translation. The selection of archaic prose in the translation can possibly be a result of the translator supporting specific ideological beliefs as to how a ‘Godly text’ should be at its face value – after all, Pickthall was the son of an
Anglican reverend. This concept may have had influence on the translator’s selection for using the old-fashioned English. Consequently, the selection of this language style, perhaps, was one of the causes for the authorization of further new translations into English. Pickthall attempted to maintain the nature of the Qur’an through the selection of language style, by maintaining close to the origin in its stylistic elegance, and using minimal notes. Footnotes and marginal notes would have been adjusted for the lay-reader, and subsequently, it may have support its popularity amongst modern-day English speakers. To maintain a natural flow in target language, notes are required to some extent because of the difficulty of the Arabic language.

It was mentioned by Mohammed (2005) that “Pickthall first endorsed the position of Muslim scholars that the Qur'an was untranslatable but maintained that the general meaning of the text could still be conveyed to English speakers”. He gave few explanatory notes and attempted to let the text speak for itself, because he was conscious that heavily annotated works distracted from focusing on the actual text. The translation was famous in the first half of the twentieth century but its archaic prose and lack of notes make it limited today.

Ghali (2005:xi) states that Pickthall's translation is in an elegant language that it has become “a classic of accuracy and enlightenment” because it has been translated by a native speaker of English, and this makes it a first-rate rendition recommended by most Muslims.

According to Kidawi (1987), Pickthall's earlier attempt is a loyal translation, attached with useful notes on eschatological, historical, and geographical issues, particularly with a brilliant discussion on comparative religion. Though the notes are not always very exhaustive, they help to remove the doubts in the minds of
Westernized readers. However, it too includes inappropriate background information about the *Suras* and some of his notes need updating.

### 1.7.2. A Survey of Yusuf Ali’s Translation

**The Translator**

Sherif (1994:27) gave a short biography of Abdullah Yusuf Ali who was born on April 4, 1872 in Surat, India. He did not join any institutions of Islamic religious education, just was taught how to read Qur’an and the Arabic language by His father, Khan Bahadur Shaikh Yusuf Ali Sujauddin who was a learned scholar. He studied in many universities such as the Universities of Bombay, India, St. John's College, Cambridge, and Lincoln's Inn, London. In 1894 he joined the Indian Civil Service. He taught Indian language and Indian religious manners in the School of Oriental Studies at the University of London between 1917 and 1919. In 1917 he was awarded CBE. He was appointed as Revenue Minister of the government of Hyderabad during 1921 and 1922.He served the Islamia College, Lahore, as its principal between 1935 and 1937. He retired in September 1914 after serving the Indian Government for twenty years in different fields. He died on December 10, 1953.

In the course of his long career, he attempted to translate the meanings of the Holy Qur'an. He felt that his service to the Qur'an should be offered in a fitting garb in English. This made him to study the Qur'an with serious reflection and comprehension. He cherished this aspiration in his mind by spending forty years in learning and collecting books and materials for it, visiting places, undertaking journeys, and taking notes to prepare himself for the work. Ali (2003: xi) expresses his Qur'anic study mode in the following statement: “The Qur'an ... has to be read, not only with the tongue and voice and eyes, but with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience can give us”. He
finished his work in three years. His translation was published in December 1937 under the title: *The Holy Qur'an: an interpretation in English*, with the original Arabic text and with full explanatory notes.

**Translation Work**

In his preface, Abdullah Yusuf Ali says:-

I do not wish to write a long preface. I wish merely to clarify the history of my project, the scope and plan of this work, and the objects I have in view. I have demonstrated the system which I have used in the translation of Arabic words and names. One may ask, Is there any need for a fresh English translation?

To those who ask this question I commend a careful consideration of the facts which I have set out in my notes on translation. After they have read it, I would invite them to take any particular text in part i, Say ii 74 or ii 102 and compare it with any previous translations they select. If they find that I have helped them even the least bit further in understanding its meaning, or appreciating its beauty, or catching something of the splendour of the original text, I would claim that my little attempt is justified (Ali, 1983: iii).

Then he discusses his translation saying:

Gentle and perceptive reader! What I wish to offer to you is an English Interpretation side by side within the Arabic text. The English translation of the Qur’an shall be not a mere exchange of one word for another, but the best expression I can give to the entire meaning which I can understand from the Arabic text. The rhythm, music and exalted tone of the original should be reflected in the English translation. It may be a weak reflection, but such beauty and power as my pen can provide shall be brought to its service (ibid: IV).
There have been 93 various editions of Yusuf Ali’s translation until 2004. In his translation, the Arabic text and English translation are printed in parallel columns, series of notes are ordered as commentary on the lower half of the page, and a poetical outline written for each individual Sura. The translator starts his book with a general introduction and a table of contents. He divided every Sura into rukus “sections”. Each section starts with an introduction in a verse style could be confounded with the translation of the text of the Qur’an. A brief subject index is done at the end. (Khan, 1986:95) says that the aim of the translator was to elevate and strengthen the faith of his co-religionists in the outstanding excellence of Islam.

Pickthall (1935:519) was the first one to critically discuss this translation. He commented that it was “in better English than any previous English translation by an Indian”. On the other hand, he reviewed that “it could not be mistaken ... for the writing of an Englishman’s translation of the Qur’an. According to Pickthall, it “requires a special type of English”. The Qur’an has Arabic rhythm that is so mesmerized and it “cannot be transported into any other language”. Therefore, according to him, Yusuf Ali was precipitous to tackle translating the meanings of the Qur’an “but broken into lines which look like meter but are neither metrical nor reasoned ... upon a language not his own”. Pickthall also convicted Yusuf Ali’s “conveying the meaning of the sacred text in his own words”. Because, according to Pickthall, “the best way of doing this is in the form of the old commentaries”. Again, Pickthall found that the full translation was “fairly literal and that the freedom arrogated in the preface has been used to avoid some difficulties of the Arabic and ignore some words and idioms with the result that in very many passages fine shades of meaning have been missed”. Pickthall did not desire Yusuf Ali to change these words and expressions that had already been made current by other translators. Take
this example, “Most Gracious, Most Merciful” instead of “the Beneficent, the Merciful”. In Pickthall’s opinion, Yusuf Ali committed “quite a serious error as a Muslim writer” when he used the word “Apostle” to refer to Prophet Mohammed (SAW) throughout. Although the Greek word *apostolos* was equivalent to messenger in Arabic, in English this word was used for twelve messengers of Jesus Christ. But he praised his notes as “valuable for the faith which they reveal and for the frequent apt comparison with Christianity” (Ibid).

Irving (1985: xii), as a famous Professor and after a deep study and pondering over the translation of the Qur’an, came out with his “American version” in 1985. He reviewed the earlier translations and said: “Yusuf Ali’s translation is more satisfactory as a commentary but his English is over-laden with extra words that neither explain the text nor embellish the meaning. True embellishment is a simple telling word that does not detract, but carries the mind directly to the meaning”.

Kidwai (1990:18) says that Abdullah Yusuf Ali is well known in Qur’anic literature. His English translation of the meanings is perhaps the most famous translation and every English-speaking Muslim house has a copy of it. It stands as a main accomplishment in this field. The translator used easy English and a good style for presenting his translation. Yusuf Ali’s vast knowledge is reflected by 6310 notes written down in his work. Though he had been paraphrasing phrases and sentences more than using literal translation, yet it tackles the scene of the original Arabic text.

Arafat (1991) investigated Yusuf Ali’s English translation and found some 400 “incorrect equivalents” in it. Kidwai (1992) reviewed Yusuf Ali’s translation and said that it “represents the sense of original” and he commented on Arafat’s criticism that “literally not one” out “of four hundred alleged incorrect equivalents” was “worthy of serious consideration”.

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Ali-Nadawi (1996), in his review, mentioned that Yusuf Ali has changed the meaning of some Qur’anic words such as *Rabb* which has been translated as sustainer and cherisher, instead of the English word “Lord”.

The critics focused on the unique translation of the first verse of *Sura Baqarah* “Cow Sura” as “This is the Book: In it is guidance sure without doubt to those who fear God”; i.e., the translator ascribes the lack of doubt to the guidance, while all other interpreters and translators of the Qur’an ascribe the lack of doubt to the Glorious Qur’an.

Khan (1997:131) reported that:

In 1962, Yusuf Ali’s translation was investigated by two committees: the committee contained eight members under the leadership of Abdul Fattah alKadi, Vice President of al-Azhar University; and another one was at Damascus under the leadership of Ahmad al-Qasimi. Both of these committees were satisfied with the translation. Muslim World League and the LISA have published their editions of Yusuf Ali’s translation in 1965. The first English translation of the Qur’an was published in 1649, about three and a half centuries back. Within this period of time, 40 entire English translations have been published when committee of scholars was appointed by the Saudi government to select one of the most convenient English renditions published so far, they select Yusuf Ali’s translation for its distinctive features, such as
highly elegant style, a selection of words close to the meaning of the original text, accompanied by scholarly notes and interpretations.

Ali (1983) has written that Amana Corporation, U.S.A, specified a committee included famous Muslim scholars to select the “most appropriate and authentic available English translation” of the Qur'an. The committee agreed that Yusuf Ali’s Work is the most recognized and authentic translation.

Finally it is to be noted that this translation is widely used in the Islamic world for the following two reasons:

1) It is conducted by a Muslim scholar who knows Arabic as well as English.

2) It includes commentary and notes which might help the reader to understand the meaning.

1.7.3. A Survey of Arberry’s Translation

The Translator

Arthur John Arberry (1905-1969) was a British scholar, editor, translator, orientalist, profound teacher and author who wrote, translated, or edited about 90 books on Persian- and Arab-language subjects. His specialization was in Sufi studies, but is also known for his excellent interpretation of the Koran. He completed Portsmouth Grammar School in 1924, and graduated from Pembroke College in 1929. He also entered Cambridge University, where he learned Persian and Arabic with R. A. Nicholson, an experience which was the turning point of his life. After graduation, in 1932 he worked in Cairo University as Head of Classics department. There he got his knowledge of literary and social customs in the Islamic Middle East. In 1934, he became Assistant Librarian of the India Office Library and in 1936 he was awarded a D. Litt by Cambridge University. In 1944 he was appointed to the chair of Persian at
the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University, and Professor of Arabic two years later. In 1947 he moved to Cambridge to fill the Sir Thomas Adam's Chair of Arabic. He was a Christian and remained a Christian until he died on 20 October 1969 at the age of 64.

Translation Work

This is perhaps the nicest English interpretation of the Qur'an. It was first published in London in 1955 in two volumes. In the same year, another edition in one volume was published by Macmillan, New York, while a second edition was issued in 1963. This interpretation was included in the Oxford University Press series in 1961 and published in England as well as in the U.S.A. There were more than nine reissues of this interpretation between 1964 and 1983.

From the seventeenth century down to the middle of the twentieth century, there are several publications of the Qur'anic interpretations. However, the Holy Qur'an had been hardly understood in the West. Khan (1986: 87-88) states that this made Arberry, as he mentioned in his introduction, examine the reasons which made the Qur'an not to capture attention of the Westerners. He verified that the main reason was the weakness in all the available translations, their technique and rhetoric pictures are not equivalent to the original text. In the publication, Arberry suggested how the Qur'an might be presented and introduced in a better English interpretation. The zealous reception to his suggestion stimulated him to devote himself to introduce a translation of the Holy Qur'an. Arberry did his utmost to explain the rhythmic features of the Arabic text along with its “dramatic impact and most moving beauty”.

Arberry (1988: x) clarifies that he has carefully studied the intricate and richly varied rhythms of the Qur'an to transfer the sublime rhetoric of the original text to
mankind. Arberry intensively studied the Qur'an from end to end over many years. In his interpretation, he attempted to find the best English equivalent for every rhythm and every meaning of the original Arabic. In his preface, he says:

I have struggled to devise rhythmic patterns and sequence-groupings in harmonization with what the Arabic presents, paragraphing the grouped successions as they appear to form original units of revelation. In making this interpretation, I have considered the opinions of the learned commentators, and when they have differed, I have been selective in deciding between alternative interpretations. I have tried to write down obvious and unmannered English, avoiding the ‘Biblical’ style favoured by some of my predecessors (ibid: x-xi).

Arberry did not pay attention to the *suras* order and considered the order of the Qur'an *suras* “random and bizarre” because he had some doubt that the Qur'an was the last sacred book came down to the prophet Mohammed (SAW). In fact, Arberry considered the Qur'an as a literary masterpiece authored by Prophet Muhammad similar to the masterpieces written by Shakespeare and Voltaire. This view is showed through several paragraphs of his *The Holy Koran: an Introduction with Selections*. For example; he speaks about the Qur'an, saying,

The literatures and knowledge of all the Muslim peoples germinate from the Qur'an; the majestically flowering river is joined here and there by tributaries running into it from neighbouring cultures, but it endures to this day the same river as that which fulminated thirteen and a half centuries ago in the city land of Arabia. It is among the greatest monuments of mankind (Arberry, 1988: 12).

The Muslim scholars, as it is mentioned above, believe that the Qur'an cannot be translated, but can only be interpreted. Because of that, Arberry called his
translation of the Qur’an into English “an interpretation” rather than a “translation” on the basis that the translation might be equalized with the God’s words whereas interpretation is a human’s words presented to demonstrate the meaning of the Divine Revelation. He entitles his work “The Koran Interpreted”. Regarding this point, Arberry in his preface, says:

I have called my version an interpretation, conceding the orthodox claim that the Koran is untranslatable (ibid: xi).

Mohammed (2005:61) states that Arberry translated the Qur’an into comprehensible English without prejudice and dissociated text from tradition. For this reason it is perhaps the best interpretation. It has earned the respect of scholars all over the world. It has been reprinted several times but remains the reference of selection for most academics. It differs from other translations as it is a “direct and accurate translation” composed in a “striking style that simultaneously translates the spirit and temper of the Arabic original”. The interpreter has mostly succeeded in impressing the sharpness and rhythm of the original text on the reader. It qualifys People who can only read the Qur’an in English to capture the impact the Arabic text smoothly. It seems destined to verify that position for the foreseeable future.

Though Arberry's interpretation of the Qur'an into English is widely considered as the best one, Al-kuran (2013:21, 27) clarifies that it includes several inaccuracies that have minimized the significance of his work. Apparently, Arberry has not made such pitfalls intentionally to deform the intended message of the Qur’anic verses on a sectarian basis. His failures seem to derive from his lack of familiarity with the subtle meanings of some Qur'anic terminologies and some cases of grammar including morphology and derivation, though he once served as professor of Arabic at Cambridge University. The pitfalls Arberry did indicate his linguistic deficiencies in
Arabic. For example, *Ihbitu misran fa'inna lakumma sa'altum* (2:61), we find that Arberry's interpretation “Get you down to Egypt” is erroneous, simply because he disregards the fact that the ending sound of *misran* is marked with double *fatha*, which means that it is not denoting Egypt as a definite noun, rather, it denotes any inhabitant city. Thus, the reader should realize the importance of such distinctive points in the Arabic language, which radically change the meaning of the whole text. Thus *misran* is not what is now known Egypt as a country. Rather, it signifies any inhabitant city.

Ali (2001:158) describes it as “stilted in parts and even inexact on occasion”. It is, according to Ali “celebrated for its lyrical richness and its being supposedly evocative of the Arabic original”. When he assigned it for his undergraduate class on Islam a few years ago, at times he had to stop and disentangle the occasional fractured syntax for his students and reconstruct the original Arabic in his mind to extricate the literal meaning, sometimes sacrificed for literary effect.

Kidwai (1990:20) praises Arberry’s *The Koran Interpreted* (London, 1957) “no doubt it stands out above the other English renderings by non-Muslims in terms of both its approach and quality”. Then, he says “it is not free from mistakes of omission and mistranslation, such as in 3:43, 4:72,147 and 157, 5:55 and 71, 6:20 and 105, 7:157,158 and 199, 8:17, 29,41and 59, 10:88, 11:30 and 46 and 12:61”.

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18 *Fatha* is a small diagonal line placed above a letter and represents a short /a/. The word fatha itself means “opening” and refers to the opening of the mouth when any letter with this mark.
1.8. Objectives of the Research

This study aims at investigating the principles and methods of translating collocations through the analysis of translations of different types of collocations in the three translations of the Holy Qur’an. The translation is evaluated in terms of their linguistic and referential accuracy. Judgments of accuracy will be based on a comparison between the translations and the original text.

The study hopefully contributes to the ongoing efforts aiming at improving the translations of the Qur’an in general and translation of collocations in particular.

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the concept of collocation, and investigate the different types of collocations in the two languages involved, namely Arabic and English.

2. To describe, analyze and examine the principles, methods and procedures of translating collocations of the three selected translations of the Holy Qur’an into English to find out to what extent translators of the Qur’an have been successful in following strategies that maintained the meanings of collocations and produced acceptable translations of the original.

3. To identify, describe and explain the problems of translating collocations of the three selected translations of the Holy Qur’an into English and explore how to increase effectiveness.

1.9. Statement of the Problem

Muslims consider the Qur’anic text to be the perfect speech of Allah revealed in Arabic language, and some of its miraculous aspects can only be realized by knowledgeable people. The Qur’anic text has certain unique features that when
translated may get lost. The style and rhythm of the Qur’an are different from the style of other texts such as poetry and prose.

Additionally, the language of the Qur’an is a very elegant in its linguistic composition, and numerous of its words have different meanings that sometimes are not available or very difficult to be found in other languages, including English. While Arabic is a spirited language, the depth of meanings of the classical Arabic of the Qur’an requires more research in order to be fully appreciated and understood.

Thus, improving the quality of the translations of the Qur’an in other languages is a constant challenge. Moreover, it should be realized that the several translations that exist today, despite, perfect they may be, cannot be described as the Qur’an since they can never substitute the splendour, perfection, depth, style, diction, and the perfection of the original text of the Qur’an.

This study investigates the methods and strategies of translating collocations in the three selected translations of the Glorious Qur’an. When a translator prefers one method to another, this may lead to mistranslation. Mistranslation of Qur’anic text in general and collocations in particular may create lots of problems.

The fundamental problem of this study can be explained in the following question:

- How far do translators regard the context in their translation of selected collocations in these selected translations of the Holy Qur’an?

The following questions came from this main question.

1- What are collocations, and how can we differentiate between them and other types of word combinations?

2- How close are these translations to the original text?
3- What are the methods for translating the Qur’anic collocations?

4- What is the most appropriate way for translating Qur’anic collocations?

5- Why do we have several translations for the same collocation?

6- What is the most appropriate translation among these three different translations?

1.10. Hypotheses of the Research

The following hypotheses can be drawn up for the present problem:

1. Translators of the Quran have faced difficulties when translating collocations.

2. They did not understand collocations in certain cases, and thus translated them as ordinary sequences of words.

3. They reproduced the Qur’anic collocations in English, and thus presented reasons of unintelligibility and unacceptability in their translations.

4. They put aside collocations and replaced them by ordinary lexical items of equivalent meaning.

1.11. Research Questions

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the methods or procedures used in the three translations for translating collocations in the Qur'an?

2. For each procedure identified, the following questions were posed:
   (a) To what extent did the translator succeed in transferring the meaning and the rhetorical impact of the collocation? (b) To what extent did the translator succeed in carrying out an intelligible translation? (c) To what extent is the procedure
consistent in yielding renditions with the same degree of accuracy and intelligibility?

3. Is there an ideal procedure or method for translating Qur’anic collocations? If yes, what is it? If no, what procedures were found successful?

4. Do the different patterns of collocation require different translation methods or procedures?

1.12. Limitations of the Research

The study is limited to two types of collocations in the following selected translations of the Qur’an. Only lexical and semantic collocations are taken into consideration. Forty examples are discussed in details in chapter 4; thirty of them are different patterns under the type of lexical collocations, while the other ten examples fall under the category of semantic collocations.

The generalization of results is limited only to three translations of collocations in the Qur’an. The study will refer to the following authorized Quran translation for analysis:


This study is limited to these three renditions only because of the following four reasons:
1. They are considered to be among the most commonly used translations around the English speaking world because the translators of these three translations fall under different categories with regard to their ethnicity and religion and in this respect provide a wide range of potential approaches to the translation of the Qur'an.

2. Each one of these translations is common among specific groups of readers, and in total, they, includes a large set of the readers of the Qur’an translations in the English language. Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s translation is considered to be one of the most widely used English translations, and is common among lots of the people who read the Qur’an through the English translation. Muhammad Pickthall’s translation is more common in the academic environments and among particular groups of people who are more liberal method towards the Qur’an. Arberry’s translation is common among the non-Muslims all over the world and also popular among some of the Muslims as well.

3. The last reason for selecting these three translations is that they provide the translation of the entire Qur’an.

1.13. Methodology of the Research

The major problem of this work has been mentioned earlier. Here a short demonstration about the methodology used in this study is given. In order to determine the scope of the research to a malleable corpus, it is limited to the three English translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur’an with different categories of translators as it discussed formerly.
To achieve the aim of the research, the researcher uses the descriptive analytical and comparative approaches. These approaches can be used to obtain pertinent and accurate information about events, phenomena and practices that are available for a study and accessible for measurement without interference of the researcher. The researcher can interpret the data by describing and analyzing the recorded information.

In order to be more authentic, major books of *tafsir* (exegesis) and work on Qur’anic sciences as well as different dictionaries in both languages are consulted.

To a greater extent, the researcher follows systematic multi-steps for analyzing collocations translation in the Holy Qur’an. Those steps can be ordered as follows:

- Identifying collocations translations made by the three different translators.
- Grouping and classifying these collocations into categories.
- Giving examples for every type of collocations.
- Giving explanations for the occurrence of mistranslation made by the translators.

**1.14. Organization of the Research**

The study consists of four chapters apart from the chapter on introduction. For a reader who wishes to have a quick overview of the contents of each chapter, the following outlines are provided:-

**Chapter one** examines issues like background of the research, significance of the research, literature review, objectives of the research, statement of the problem, research questions, hypotheses of the research, limitations of the research, methodology of the research, and organization of the research. The chapter also shed light on the history of translation of the meanings of the Holy Qur’an, history of
English translations of the Holy Qur’an and includes a survey of the three English translations under consideration and their translators, supplying biographical and other pertinent background for each of these three translators as well as general stylistic information for each of the renditions.

Chapter two focuses on definitions of collocation, differences between collocations, idioms, and free word combinations as well as it sheds light on sources of collocations in Arabic language.

Chapter three focuses on translation procedures and methods of Qur’anic collocations of the three selected translations.

Chapter four, which is the focus of the study, describes the various types of collocations in the three selected translations of the Holy Qur’an by giving exhaustive examples and translations of as many collocations collected from the Holy Qur’an as possible; and comment on the translation of each Qur’anic collocations into English in detail: how similar / different and why in its three translations to figure out whether the translators convey the secondary meaning in their translations as found in the source text.

Chapter five sums up the main points and conclusions about the whole thesis and suggests further areas of study and recommendations in the light of the results that have been obtained.

1.15. Conclusion

This chapter provides a relevant introduction to the issue of the Qur’anic collocations. Earlier studies that dealt with this topic were presented and commented on. Besides, it includes a hint on history of translation of the meanings of the Holy Qur’an and gives a brief review of almost all the English translations of the Qur’an as
well as an overview of the three English translators and their translations of the Qur'an that are selected for this study. It also introduces background of the research, significance, literature review, objectives, statement of the problem, hypotheses, questions, limitations, methodology and organization.