

An Analytical Evaluation of Translating Doomsday Expressions in the Glorious Qur'an into English

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Abstract:

This study conducts a critical analysis of fifteen Qur'anic expressions denoting the Day of Judgment, compiled by Al-Qurtubi (2004), to evaluate their accuracy and consistency in English translation across ten major digital Qur'an applications. Integrating Ilm al-Bayan for rhetorical analysis with Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation strategy framework, and using Al-Hilālī and Khān's (2019) official version as a benchmark, the research reveals that despite lexical variation, these expressions convey a unified theological message rooted in verbs of motion, force, and transformation central to Qur'anic eschatology. Dense rhetorical features present significant translational challenges, often resulting in inconsistent strategies across platforms. The study calls for the adoption of standardized, rhetorically informed translations to preserve both theological precision and rhetorical integrity, and offers practical recommendations for translators, digital developers, and scholars.

Keywords : (Doomsday Expression, Electronic Qur'sns , Rhetoric).

تقييم تحليلي لترجمة تعابير يوم القيامة في القرآن الكريم إلى اللغة الانكليزية

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المخلص

تُجري هذه الدراسة تحليلاً نقدياً لثلاثة تعبيرات قرآنيًا دألاً على يوم القيامة، جمعها الإمام القرطبي (٢٠٠٤)، بهدف تقييم دقتها واتساقها في الترجمة الإنجليزية عبر عشرة من أبرز تطبيقات القرآن الرقمية. ويجمع البحث بين علم البيان للتحليل البلاغي، ونموذج استراتيجيات الترجمة فيناي وداربلنت (١٩٩٥)، مع اعتماد ترجمة الهاللي وخان (٢٠١٩) الرسمية معياراً مرجعياً. وتكشف النتائج أنه على الرغم من التنوع المعجمي، فإن هذه التعبيرات تنقل رسالة لاهوتية

موحدة متجذرة في أفعال تدل على الحركة والقوة والتحول، وهي عناصر جوهرية في تصوير القرآن للأحداث الأخروية. كما أن كثافة الخصائص البلاغية تمثل تحديًا ترجميًا كبيرًا، مما يؤدي في كثير من الأحيان إلى تباين في الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة عبر المنصات. وتدعو الدراسة إلى تبني ترجمات معيارية تراعي البعد البلاغي للحفاظ على الدقة اللاهوتية وسلامة الخطاب البلاغي، مع تقديم توصيات عملية للمترجمين والمطوّرين الرقميين والباحثين. الكلمات المفتاحية: (تعابير يوم القيامة، مصاحف الكترونية، البلاغة).

1. Introduction

Translating Qur'anic expressions related to the Day of Judgment entails significant theological, rhetorical, and semantic challenges, as variations among translators can affect accuracy, consistency, and lexical equivalence. This study examines fifteen expressions from Al-Qurtubi's *Al-Tadhkirah fi Ahwal al-Mawta wa Umur al-Akhirah* (2004) and compares their renderings in ten digital Qur'an applications with the standardized English translation by Al-Hilālī and Khān (2019), officially approved in Saudi Arabia. The objectives are to assess translation accuracy, investigate linguistic and semantic variations—particularly synonymy and hyponymy—and explore the rhetorical and translational challenges of conveying rich figurative meanings. The study assumes the semantic interconnectedness of these names, their derivation from dynamic verbal roots, and their frequent use of rhetorical devices such as simile, metaphor, and synecdoche. Methodologically, the study employs *Ilm al-Bayan* to analyze rhetorical devices and adopts Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation model to assess strategies, distinguishing between direct and oblique methods. This research provides a systematic evaluation of eschatological terms in digital platforms, emphasizes the importance of linguistic and rhetorical precision, and underscores the need for standardized translations in Islamic applications. The scope excludes full verse analysis, broader contexts, and translations into languages other than English.

2- Arabic Rhetoric

Rhetoric is a linguistic skill that enables the speaker to convey their intended values by employing syntactic and semantic assertions that are aimed at the receptor's perceptual system for simpler comprehension, according to (Al-Askari,1952).

Al-Jarim & Ameen (1957: 8) highlights the art of rhetoric depends on the highest level of primate readiness and the accuracy of beautiful imagery. As a result, it speaks of the fine differences between various styles.

2.1 Type of Rhetoric

Arabic rhetoric, in its classical form as systematized by Arab scholars, is traditionally divided into three core branches: 'Ilm al-Ma'ānī (the science of meaning), 'Ilm al-Bayān (the science of imagery and figurative expression), and 'Ilm al-Badī' (the science of rhetorical ornamentation). This tripartite structure emerged from rigorous analytical efforts by Arab rhetoricians, aimed at articulating and regulating the artistic dimensions of expression in the Arabic language.

3. The Concept of Semantics

This term was first used by Bréal in 1897 to refer to the branch of linguistics that studies “ the analysis and description of the so-called 'literal meaning of linguistic expressions’”(Bussmann, 1996: 1048).

Semantics is the study of meaning through language. It examines the relationships between linguistic phrases and the phenomenon they refer to in the real world, taking into account the conditions under which they might be deemed true or incorrect(Crystal:2003:415).

A descriptive topic is semantics, which is the study of word and sentence meanings detached from usage situations. It is an effort to characterize and comprehend the type of knowledge that people have about language meaning as a result of speaking the language. It is not a prescriptive endeavor that seeks to counsel or coerce authors or speakers into eschewing certain meanings and embracing others (Griffiths, 2006: 15). In a similar vein, it is possible to be quite proficient in a language without being aware of its historical background.

4. The Concept of Meaning

Meaning holds a central position in linguistic research, as it plays a key role in clarifying the connection between language and thought. Language functions not only as a set of sounds or written marks, but as a structured system that carries meanings, reflects conceptual content, and conveys mental representations through discourse. Semantics focuses on exploring the nature of these meanings by analyzing how words and constructions operate within the linguistic framework. Meaning refers to the link between a linguistic sign and the concept or referent it evokes, whether mentally or in external reality. Accordingly, examining meaning serves as a vital process for grasping how language operates and how listeners or readers interpret linguistic messages within diverse contexts.

According to Leech (1974: 1), the term "meaning" has been the subject of debates and debates in an attempt to define it or, more simply, to determine what it means. "The Meaning of Meaning" by Ogden and Richard (1923)

comprises twenty-two definitions, according to Leech's evaluation. Since there isn't a consensus on what the word "meaning" means, he remarks that reading the definitions may highlight the degree of discrepancy. (ibid.).

Meaning is a message sent to the recipient by the sender through a code, which can be non-linguistic (such as hand gestures, facial expressions, bowing, winking, smiling, or sign language) or linguistic (such as a stretch of language). However, meaning can also be described as a series of mental processes or actions that a speaker uses a sentence to elicit from his audience (Al-Sulaimaan, 2011: 63).

Meanings, in general, have been taken to play a variety of roles in theories of linguistic understanding, of the determination of referents, of intentional states, and of a range of semantic phenomena, for example, analyticity, synonymy, entailment, anomaly, semantic redundancy, and polysemy (Al-Sulaimaan, 2011: 63).

5. The Concept of Translation

The art and science of translation involves striking a balance between linguistic accuracy and cultural adaption while transferring meaning from the (ST) to a new text in a (TT). It calls for linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, and innovative problem-solving.

While taking into account the linguistic customs and cultural expectations of the target audience, translators must carefully examine the source material, interpret its intended meaning.

There are many definitions of translation for translation theorists and writers interested in the field of translation, which will be mentioned now :

The intended content, style, and cultural nuances of a source document or speech are conveyed from one language into another language through accurate translation (Foster ,1958:5).

"the transference of a message from one language to another is a valid subject for scientific description" (Nida,1964:3).

"Translation is an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another." (Catford, 1965:1).

"the substitution of textual content in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)," (Catford,1965: 20).

“ a replacement of textual material from one language (SL) into another (TL)) ” (Catford ,1965: 20).

6. Religious Text Translation

According to Dwiek (2010:286), religious writings are "expressive texts". Sacred religious texts such as the Bible and the Holy Qur'an must be dealt with with great precision and caution because they have a great impact on the recipient's soul due to their spiritual status.

Translators specialized in this field find endless difficulty and problems in translating these religious texts, especially when they deal with the Holy Qur'an. The problems that occur are the lack of parity between (ST) and(TT), due to the great difference in rules and cultures between the Arabic and English languages, which creates a large gap between the two

texts (Abdul Raof ,2001: 9). The Holy Qur'an is characterized by an abundance of rhetorical expressions for which it is difficult to find an equivalent translation in the English language.

Al-Samarra'i (2011:7) confirms that the high rhetorical tools found in the Holy Qur'an, such as time related to unseen matters, number, gender, and pronoun references, which constitute a problem of lack of equivalence.

One of the biggest challenges translators have when translating religious statements is selecting the appropriate lexical and culturally similar phrase (Mohammed & Ibrahim ,2019: 15).

7. Translation of the Glorious Qu'ran

Irving (1992 : 9) confirms the previous information: The Qurān is unique. It represents the word of God – unchanged unabridged and uncompromised. It does not contain any element that is a product of a human mind. The Qurān is unique in almost every respect: in its divine origin, its style and methodology, its chronological descent, its textual arrangement, and its approach to the problems of man and society.

Arberry (1996: 24) explains that the method followed in the Holy Qur'an is unparalleled "so characteristic, so powerful, and so highly emotive" that any translated version, no matter faithful, Any translation of the Holy Quran, no matter how great, is "is bound in the nature of things to be but a poor copy of the glittering splendor of the original. The miracle of the Qur'an, which includes its high eloquence and the power of its vocabulary, has become a challenge for translators interested in this field.

Saied (1997 : 57) insists that earlier and later translations of the Holy Quran are just "an approximate interpretation, intended only as a tool for the study and understanding of the original Arabic text" .The translation of the Qur'an relies on honesty and faithfulness in transferring its content from the source language to the target language.

Religious texts possess a sacred nature rooted in faith, where the message, the wording, or both are regarded as holy. Translators often face challenges in conveying these sacred expressions into the target language without diminishing their spiritual significance (Aziz and Lataiwish, 2000: 111).

8. Translating of Electronic Qur'ans

After the introduction of electricity into global industries, the electron became a part of our daily lives, and this is evidence of its importance and urgent need. We have in circulation an electronic device, an email, and an electronic book. Recently, the term (electronic Qur'an) has appeared, which is an exact copy of the paper Qur'an. The papers and inks have been replaced with an integrated system that shows the Qur'anic text as it exists in a manual copy on an electronic screen (Abu Al-Yazid, 2019, 316).

The electronic Qur'an has been referred to as an electronic visual means that preserves everything contained in the paper version, including the arrangement of pages, surahs, and verses, as well as with the same

Uthmani drawing that was done with absolute consensus of the Islamic nation (Ibid).

Some of those interested have defined the electronic Qur'an as "an electronic program that works according to a group of functional units that work together in a consistent and organized manner and is used to process Qur'anic words and their letters and display them in writing when requested, in the order of the verses and surahs according to what was stated in the Uthmani Qur'an" (Abu Al-Yazid, 2019, 297).

Abu Al-Yazid (2019, 321) mentions a legal fatwa stating that the electronic Qur'an is not considered a Qur'an unless two main conditions are met. First, it contains only the words of God Almighty and does not include content that aids in understanding, such as interpretations or translations into other languages. Second, the system is programmed in a mode that prevents it from turning off.

9. Types of Electronic Qurans

Digital formats of the Holy Qur'an currently offer easy access to its content. Users are able to read, listen to, and locate verses quickly without needing a printed version. Many Qur'anic applications include helpful tools such as audio recitations, multilingual translations, and explanatory tafsir. These features enhance both individual learning and scholarly research by combining convenience with interactive elements. By incorporating the Qur'an into mobile platforms, technology helps younger audiences maintain

10. Data Analysis

The names of the Day of Judgment occupy a vital role in Qur'anic and theological discourse, as they convey profound meanings related to scenes of accountability, divine justice, and the afterlife. In his distinguished work *Al-Tadhkirah fi Ahwal al-Mawta wa Umur al-Akhirah*, Imam Al-Qurtubi (2004) compiles seventy-six (76) names for the Day of Judgment, drawn from various Qur'anic verses. Each name embodies a distinct semantic and theological perspective.

This study focuses on three of the names collected by Imam Al-Qurtubi, (2004).

The names of the electronic copies of the Qur'an from which the samples of the names of the Day of Resurrection were taken will be mentioned:

1. iQuran Light
2. Quran Majeed Pro
3. Holy Quran English
4. The Holy Quran
5. The Open Quran
6. iQuran
7. Quran & English
8. Al Quran Word to Word
9. Qura'an English
10. Quran All In One

SL Text (1) :

١ - **مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ** ٤ (سورة الفاتحة, ٤)

Standard translation :

﴿The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of **the Day of Recompense** (i.e. **the Day of Resurrection**) ﴾.

(Sūrat Al-Fātiḥah : 4) , (Al-Hilālī and Khān, 2019:1).

TL texts :

No.	Translation	Application name.
1	The Day of Judgment	I Quran Light
2	The Day of Recompense	Quran Majeed Pro
3	The Day of Recompense	Holy Quran English
4	The Day of Requital	The Holy Quran
5	The Day of Judgment	The Open Quran
6	The Day of Judgment	I Quran
7	The Day Retribution	Quran and English
8	The Day of Judgment	Al Quran word to word
9	The Day of Judgment !	Qura'n English
10	Yawmid-Deen	Quran All in One

Interpretation

The word يوم الدين is one of the names for the Day of Judgment. Al-Sabuni (1981) indicated that the word يوم الدين refers to the Day of Judgment and Reckoning. Al-Ashqar (2007) stated that the Day of Judgment is a specific day on which God will hold people accountable for what they did in this life. Ibn Kathir (2000) stated that the Day of Judgment is a day designated for holding people accountable.

ST	Standard translation	No. of Translation	Standard translation is compatible with application translation.	Translation evaluation for Vinay and Darbelent							
				Direct			Oblique				
				Borrowing	Literal Translation	Calque	Transposition	Modulation	Equivalence	Adaptation	
يوم الدين the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection).	1	+			+						
	2	+				+					
	3	+				+					
	4	-				+					
	5	+				+					
	6	+				+					
	7	-								+	
	8	+				+					
	9	+				+					
	10	+		+							

Text Analysis (1)

Discussion:

The correct standard translation of the word (يوم الدين) is (the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)) as stated in the analysis:

1. Translation No. (1) is consistent with the correct standard translation as the direct translation (literal) was used and this translation is considered to be consistent with the Islamic meaning and is common in many translations. This translation was also repeated five times in the table (1, 5, 6, 8, 9).
2. Translation No. (2) is consistent with the correct standard translation in terms of using the same words. Direct translation (Calque) was also used and was repeated twice in Table (2, 3).
3. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
4. Translation No. (4) does not conform to the correct standard translation, neither in terms of meaning nor in terms of form. Also, the word “Retribution” was used, which indicates imprecise meanings and focuses on the aspect of punishment.
5. Translation No. (5) is consistent with the correct standard translation in terms of meaning, and direct translation (**literal translation**) was used.
6. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (5)
7. Translation No. (6) does not conform to the correct standard translation, neither in terms of meaning nor in terms of form. Also, the word “Retribution” was used, which indicates an incorrect meaning, as the indirect translation “**Adaptation**” was used.

8. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (1)
9. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (1)
10. Translation No. (10) matches the source text in terms of phonetic pronunciation, and direct translation (borrowing) was used.

Data Analysis :

SL Text (2) :

٢- إِنَّمَا يَعْزُمُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ **الْآخِرِ** وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَن يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ١٨ ((سورة التوبة، ١٨))

Standard translation :

﴿ The Mosques of Allāh shall be maintained only by those who believe in Allāh and **the Last Day**; perform Aṣ-Ṣalāt (Iqāmat-aṣ-Ṣalāt), and give Zakāt and fear none but Allāh. It is they who are on true guidance. ﴾

(Sūrat At-Taubah , 9 : 18) , (Al-Hilāli and Khān, 2019:316).

TL texts :

No.	Translation	Application name.
1	the latter day,	I Quran Light
2	the Last Day	Quran Majeed Pro
3	the Last Day	Holy Quran English
4	the Last Day	The Holy Quran
5	the Last Day,	The Open Quran
6	the Last Day	I Quran
7	the Last Day,	Quran and English
8	The Last, and the day	Al Quran word to word
9	the Last Day,	Qura'n English
10	Yawmil Aakhiri	Quran All in One

Interpretation

The word (اليوم الآخر) is one of the names for the Day of Resurrection. It is also considered the day on which life ends and another life begins. At the same time, it is considered the fifth pillar of faith. Al-Sabuni (1981) indicated that the Last Day is the afterlife, meaning the Day of Resurrection. Al-Ashqar (2007) confirmed that the Last Day is the day on which the believer believes in a just reckoning.

ST	Standard translation	No. of Translation	Standard translation is compatible with application translation.	Translation evaluation for Vinay and Darbelent						
				Direct			Oblique			
				Borrowing	Literal Translation	Calque	Transposition	Modulation	Equivalence	Adaptation
اليوم الآخر the Last Day		1	-					+		
		2	+		+					
		3	+		+					
		4	+		+					
		5	+		+					
		6	+		+					
		7	+		+					
		8	-				+			
		9	+		+					
		10	-	+						

Text Analysis (2)

Discussion:

The correct standard translation of the word (اليوم الآخر) is (**the Last Day**) as stated in the analysis:

1. Translation No. (1) does not conform to the correct standard translation, because it used the word (Latter), which means the last day of a specific period of time, instead of the word (Last). This led to a weak translation and an incorrect and inaccurate transmission, as the Modulation strategy from (Oblique Translation) was used.
2. Translation No. (2) is consistent with the correct standard translation, as it used the same words used in the correct standard translation, and the (Literal Translation) strategy was also used from the direct translation, and at the same time this translation was repeated seven times in Table (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9).
3. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
4. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
5. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
6. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
7. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
8. Translation No. (8) does not conform to the correct standard translation due to the use of the conjunction (and) to separate two words, which led to a change in the structure of the word, making it incorrect in terms of its formulation in the English language. At the same time, the (Transposition) strategy from (Oblique Translation) was used.
9. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
10. Translation No. (10) does not conform to the correct standard translation, as the phonetic pronunciation was translated and borrowed from the SL and transferred into the TL using the strategy of (borrowing) from direct translation.

SL Text (3) :

٣- وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِئْتُمْ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِلَى **يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ** فَهَذَا يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ٥٦ ((سورة الروم, ٥٦))

Standard translation :

﴿ And those who have been bestowed with knowledge and faith will say: “Indeed you have stayed according to the Decree of Allāh, until **the Day of Resurrection**: so this is the Day of Resurrection, but you knew not.” ﴾

(Sūrat Ar-Rūm, 30 : 56) , (Al-Hilālī and Khān, 2019:703).

TL texts :

No.	Translation	Application name.
1	the day of resurrection,	I Quran Light
2	the Day of Resurrection,	Quran Majeed Pro
3	the Day of Resurrection,	Holy Quran English
4	the day of being raised up (to be life of the Hereafter)	The Holy Quran
5	the Day of Resurrection.	The Open Quran
6	the Day of Resurrection.	I Quran
7	the Day of Resurrection.	Quran and English
8	(the) Day (of) Resurrection.	Al Quran word to word
9	the Day of Resurrection.	Qura'n English
10	Yawmil Aakhiri	Quran All in One

Interpretation

The word (يوم البعث) is synonymous with the word Day of Judgment in the Arabic language, as the root of the word (resurrection) is a trilateral verb with the pattern (فعل), and the meaning of this name refers to the day on which the dead will be resurrected from their graves, and belief in this day is part of the pillars of faith.

ST	Standard translation	No. of Translation	Standard translation is compatible with application translation.	Translation evaluation for Vinay and Darbelent							
				Direct			Oblique				
				Borrowing	Literal Translation	Calque	Transposition	Modulation	Equivalence	Adaptation	
يوم البعث	the Day of Resurrection	1	-		+						
		2	+						+		
		3	+							+	
		4	-								+
		5	+							+	
		6	+							+	
		7	+							+	
		8	-						+		
		9	+						+		
		10	-	+							

Text Analysis (3)

Discussion:

The correct standard translation of the word (يوم البعث) is (**the Day of Resurrection**) as stated in the analysis:

1. Translation No. (1) does not conform to the correct standard translation and does not adhere to the rules of the English language in terms of using capital letters for names. Also, the strategy of (literal translation) was used from direct translation.
2. Translation No. (2) is consistent with the correct standard translation in terms of form and meaning. The strategy (Equivalence) from (Oblique Translation) was also used, and it was repeated six times in Table (2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9).
3. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
4. Translation No. (4) does not conform to the correct standard translation, as it dealt with explaining the meaning instead of using the conventional religious term as it exists in the correct standard translation, and the Adaptation strategy from Oblique Translation was used.
5. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
6. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
7. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
8. Translation No. (8) does not conform to the correct standard translation, as brackets were used for the definite articles and conjunctions, which does not conform to the religious context, and thus weakens it. The (Modulation) strategy from (Oblique Translation) was used.
9. The same as mentioned in the analysis of the previous point No. (2)
10. Translation No. (10) does not conform to the correct standard translation, as the phonetic pronunciation was translated and borrowed from the Arabic language and transferred to the English language using the strategy of (borrowing) from (direct translation), which is something that is not understood by non-Arabic speakers.

11. Conclusion

It is well known that the Holy Quran was revealed in the Arabic language, making it unique among all languages. Over time, translators have

sought to render its meanings into English, with varying degrees of acceptance.

The study of three names for Yawm al-Qiyāmah shows that, despite differences in form and meaning, they all point to the same eschatological event. Most derive from trilateral verbs, conveying movement and consequence, and are rich in rhetorical features such as metaphors and symbolic imagery that preserve the Qur'anic eloquence. Many are readily understood without extensive explanation, while translation quality varies across digital Qur'an applications, with errors often linked to neglecting rhetorical elements and more accurate results found in standardized versions.

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