

**The Divine Attribute '*Istiwā*' in Three English  
Translations of the Holy Qur'an with Reference to  
Baker's Equivalence Typology**

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## The Divine Attribute '*Istiwā'* in Three English Translations of the Holy Qur'an with Reference to Baker's Equivalence Typology

### Abstract

This study has investigated the Divine Attribute (DA, henceforth) '*istiwā'* استواء in three English translations of the Holy Qur'an, namely, Pickthall's (1930), Abdel Haleem's (2004), and Hilālī and Khān's (1434 AH/2013 AD). This DA is highly controversial among Islamic exegetists, as it is loaded in the Holy Qur'anic text with meanings that need to be carefully studied. By adopting Mona Baker's (1992) Equivalence Typology, this study has examined how the DA '*istiwā'* is rendered into English using an analytical comparative approach. Baker (1992) has discussed the types of non-equivalence problems and presented some strategies for dealing with such challenges. The present study seeks to identify the problems of rendering the DA and the strategies used by the translators to overcome them. The three significant translators are selectively from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds so that their translations could be analyzed in the light of these respective differences. Based on the theoretical framework of analysis, the study results have accordingly circled out the semantic and cultural differences among the three translations in rendering '*istiwā'*.

**Keywords:** Equivalence at word level, semantic complexity, semantic loss, exegeses, exegetic translation, misconceptions

## صفة الله تعالى الاستواء في ثلاث ترجمات إنجليزية للقرآن الكريم بالاحتكام إلى مفهوم الترادف لدى منى بيكر

### مُسْتَخْلَص

تتناول هذه الدراسة ترجمة صفة الله تعالى "الاستواء" لغويًا إلى اللغة الإنجليزية في ثلاث ترجمات للقرآن الكريم، وهي ترجمة بيكتول (1930م)، وترجمة عبد الحلیم (2004م)، وترجمة هلالی وخان (1434هـ/2013م) في إطار تطبيق نموذج الترادف لدى منى بيكر (1992م). ومن خلال هذا النموذج، تطرح منى بيكر المشكلات التي يواجهها المترجمون في ترجمة النصوص باختلاف أنواعها من لغة إلى أخرى في شكل تطبيقي، كما تقترح بعض الاستراتيجيات التي يمكن للمترجم الاستعانة بها للتعامل مع تلك المشكلات. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد المشكلات والتحديات التي واجهت المترجمين الثلاثة عند نقل صفة الاستواء من اللغة المصدر إلى اللغة الهدف فضلًا عن الوقوف على الاستراتيجيات التي استخدمها المترجمون للتغلب على هذه المشكلات أو التحديات. وقد تضمنت هذه الدراسة ثلاثة مترجمين من خلفيات مختلفة من حيث الأصل والثقافة واللغة الأم لدراسة الاختلافات في عملية الترجمة ونقل المعنى المصدر. وفي ظل الإطار النظري وتحليل عينات الدراسة، أظهرت النتائج وجود عدد من الاختلافات والفروق الدلالية بين الترجمات الثلاثة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الترادف على مستوى الكلمة، التعقيد الدلالي، الفقد الدلالي، التفاسير، الترجمة التفسيرية، المفاهيم الخاطئة

**ROMANIZATION**

Consonants			
Arabi c	Roma n	Arabi c	Roman
ء	'	ب	b
ت	t	ث	th
ج	j	ح	<u>h</u>
خ	kh	د	d
ذ	<u>th</u>	ر	r
ز	z	س	s
ش	sh	ص	<u>s</u>
ض	<u>d</u>	ط	<u>t</u>
ظ	<u>z</u>	ع	c
غ	gh	ف	f
ق	q	ك	k
ل	l	م	m
ن	n	هـ	h
و	w	ي	y
ة	a(t)		

Vowels	
Arabic	Roman
وُ	ū
يِ	ī
اَ	ā

Diacritics	
Arabic	Roman
ـُ	u
ـُـ	un
ـِ	i
ـِـ	in
ـَ	a
ـَـ	an

Source: Adapted from Ali (2019)

**1. Introduction**

The present study investigates the problem of non-equivalence arising while translating the DA استواء *'istiwā'* into English in three translations to the Holy Qur'an, namely, Pickthall's (1930), Abdel Haleem's (2004), and Hilālī and Khān's (1434 AH/2013 AD). This study adopts Baker's (1992) Equivalence Typology to highlight the problems and challenges that occur while translating the sacred text of the Holy Qur'an regarding the term *'istiwā'*, and how the three

translators manage to deal with such challenges. It also seeks to identify the influence on conveying the intended meaning of the source text (ST, henceforth) to the target text (TT, henceforth), and whether it causes misconceptions about God or not, depending on the various exegeses of the Holy Qur'an. Each Divine Name (DN, henceforth) largely denotes a DA. The DAs can be proved either by an explicit divine text, or by being derived from a name, verb, or present participle that refers to God. Accordingly, a DA is an attribute in the sense that, regardless of its part of speech at the linguistic level, it describes God. Therefore, the DAs section is wider than the DNs section as the DNs may not be derived from the DAs or deeds of God (Ibn ʿUthaymīn, 1440 AH, pp. 142-143). The present study, however, is dedicated to the analysis of the verb '*istawa*', which carries the meaning of the DA '*istiwā'*', as introduced in the present study.

## 2. Review of the Literature

Since the present study adopts an analytical approach to the English translation of the DA '*istiwā'* in the Holy Qur'an, Arabic and English studies need to be investigated. This section is divided into two sub-sections: (a) Arabic studies on DNs and/or DAs, and (b) English studies on the DNs and/or DAs. Each study is compared with the present study to indicate that it is distinct.

### 2.1 Arabic Studies on DNs and/or DAs

Many Arabic studies have tackled the DNs and/or DAs, but from different viewpoints. 'Al-Jāsir (2017), for example, adopted a theological perspective, yet with a specific focus on one divine attribute. She discussed the attribute of "hand" and its sense relations, related to the "right hand," "palm," and "fingers" (pp. 3426-3441). She followed the analytical critical approach throughout the analysis, and adopted '*as-Salaf*'s approach to DAs. She ended up with the idea that a worshipper would not truly know Allah until s/he believed in His attributes. The present paper, however, investigates the DA '*istiwā'* to manifest God's image in a clearer and more

thorough way.

'Al-<sup>C</sup>azmī (2016) examined the DAs in terms of their *jalāl*, *kamāl*, and *jamāl* focusing the relation of this division to Allah's names from a dogmatic point of view. He highlighted the influence of these names and attributes on the worshiper in elevating his/her inner self to high grades of worshipping. He adopted a comparative approach to shed light on the areas of agreement and disagreement around the DNs and DAs, and applied a critical approach to criticize some aspects of اجتهاد /'ijtihād in understanding some relevant texts. On the other hand, the aim of the present study is to linguistically analyze only one DA (viz., 'istiwā') and to identify the strategies used by the translators, but with only minor reference to ideological issues and their influence on rendering God's image in the TT.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.2 English Studies on DNs and/or DAs

Several studies were conducted to criticize or evaluate the translation of the DNs and/or DAs into English. Firstly, Amjad and Farahani (2013) tracked down the problems and strategies concerning the translation of twenty-six selected DNs in the three translations by Shakir (1985), Qarai (2003), and Nikayin (2006). The two researchers adopted a corpus-based approach in their study, utilizing Chesterman's (1997) model for translation strategies to compare and contrast the three translations. They made use of Abdul-Raof's (2001) study framework with regard to the Qur'anic discourse. They concluded that lexical compression of the DNs was a main problem in translation, resulting from the different layers of meaning typical of rich sacred texts. Their most adopted strategies were near-synonyms and expansion.

Secondly, Al-Bulushī (2009) studied the translatability of eighteen DNs and the way they were rendered into English in the four translations by Pickthall (1930), Yusuf Alī (1934), Hilālī and Khān

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<sup>1</sup> For more illustration, there are other Arabic studies that addressed the DAs or DNs, such as Hakamī (2014), Shams 'Ed-Dīn (2017), and Ghumilār (2017).

(1985), and Mohammed Ghāli (1996). He identified the approaches used in translating the selected names and the problems encountered by the translators. He compared the translations of these names in isolation and in context, but with a special focus on morphological, syntactic, and semantic categories, in order to evaluate the accuracy of these translations in terms of equivalence and the loss of meaning.

Thirdly, in perusing accuracy and consistency, Al Ghamdī (2015) critically and comparatively analyzed the English translation of thirty-five recurring near synonymous root-sharing DNs in five translations, namely, Pickthall (1930), A. Y. Ali (1934), Arberry (1955), Hilālī and Khān (1985) and Abdel-Haleem (2004). He examined the morphological and semantic aspects of root-sharing DNs, and investigated the polysemous DNs. He based the analysis on two stages, including (a) a morpho-semantic analysis with seeking the exegetical meanings of the root-sharing DNs in the Qur'ānic text, and (b) a comparative and critical evaluation of the corresponding target of the same.<sup>1</sup>

Generally, the above studies share some aspects with the present study, such as the focus on the problems and strategies of translating the DAs, or even the selection of the three respective English translations under investigation. However, the present study is primarily an analytical linguistic study, addressing the theological issue of just one DA, '*istiwā'*', while concentrating on its rendering into English. It highlights the problems and strategies of conveying God's image in the three respective translations. It also depends for its theoretical framework on Mona Baker's (1992) Equivalence Typology that is meant to achieve the terminal objective of the analysis. Furthermore, the present study follows a four-step pattern to provide a thorough linguistic analysis of the DA '*istiwā'*' in both the ST and TT (see 3.2 below).

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<sup>1</sup> For some other English studies discussing the DAs or DNs, see, for example, Abbasian and Nazerian (2016).

### 3. Method

This study seeks to analyze the DA *'istiwā'* and how it is conveyed into English in the three selected translations. To achieve this objective, it employs the Equivalence Typology proposed by Mona Baker (1992). This section sets the definition of equivalence and its divisions, the reasons for Baker's bottom-up design, and for the focus of the present study on equivalence at word level. It also tackles the tentative strategies for dealing with problems of non-equivalence at word-level as presented by Baker.

#### 3.1 Baker's Equivalence and Non-Equivalence

Baker (1992) was more neutral when discussing the concept of equivalence as it was affected by some linguistic and cultural factors. Baker (2001) defined equivalence as "the relationship between a source text (ST) and a target text (TT) that allows the TT to be considered as a translation of the ST in the first place" (p. 77). She provided a more detailed overview about the notion of equivalence, indicating that it might occur at both the linguistic and the communicative levels. She divided equivalence into six main types: (a) equivalence at word level, (b) equivalence above word level, (c) grammatical equivalence, (d) textual equivalence, (e) pragmatic level, and (f) semiotic equivalence. This study relies upon the type of equivalence at word level since it addresses the DA *'istiwā'* that occurs in a single word. The following is an explanation for this equivalence type and for the types of non-equivalence that occur at word, level in addition to the recommended strategies for tackling them in translation.

Baker (1992) adopted a bottom-up approach to highlight the significance of the single word, at which translators firstly look when searching for an equivalent (p. 6). She proposed, "There is no one-to-one relationship between orthographic words and their meaning within or across languages" (p. 11). One word in a language can be rendered by a set of words in another language and vice versa. In addition, a word conveys a specific lexical meaning,

which can be denotative (i.e., conceptual, propositional, or literal) or connotative (i.e., associative, expressive, or emotive). A denotative meaning is the literal use of a word or, simply, the dictionary meaning, referring to the main components of its meaning, whereas a connotative meaning is the positive or negative senses associated with words or the various feelings invoked by words onto language users (Yule, 2010, p. 113). Baker argued that these types of meaning are essential components of equivalence when translating a text from one language into another (p. 16).

Based on the above explanation, Baker (1992) addressed those common types of interlingual word-level non-equivalence, which beget challenges for translators, and she proposed some translation strategies to deal with them. When the TT has no direct equivalent for an ST word, word-level non-equivalence occurs, yet the nature of this non-equivalence determines the level of difficulty. Non-equivalence has various types, each of which requires certain strategies; however, some of these strategies are simple while others are not. The purpose and context of translation would exclude some strategies, and recommend some others (p. 19). Attaching specific types of non-equivalence to specific strategies is not always possible or useful, and hence the types of non-equivalence are separated from the tentative strategies.

There are common types and problems of interlingual word-level non-equivalence (Baker, 1992, pp. 19-24). Cultural specific concepts entail a prominent challenge in translation. The ST may include a cultural concept unknown to the TT readers. These concepts may be abstract or concrete, yet unknown due to differences in religion, social traditions, or cultural customs. The ST could require a set of words to express its meaning in the TT when it includes a word that is semantically complicated. The ST and the TT could have distinct features in meaning, as one language may have more or fewer distinctions than other languages do, or as what is important in a language may be not necessarily so in another language. The TT may also lack a specific term or hyponym since most languages include superordinates or general words derived from and related to

their environments. On the contrary, a language may lack a superordinate term that could cover numerous hyponyms.

Translation challenges arising from physical and interpersonal linguistic perspectives and from semantic and morphological features add to the problem of interlingual non-equivalence. The physical perspective, on the one hand, refers to the relation between things and/or people, whether to one another or to a place, as conveyed by word pairs. The interpersonal perspective, on the other hand, involves the relationship between participants (i.e., tenor) in a certain discourse.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, translation linguistic challenges could be grouped under semantics or morphology. As for semantics, differences in the expressive meaning across languages could cause a major problem of non-equivalence. Words across languages may have the same denotational senses, yet they may have different expressive/emotive meanings. Besides, adding an expressive meaning is easier than subtracting it since a neutral TT word may be assigned to a modifier or an adverb in the TT to express more meanings. As for morphology, languages could have different morphological forms, resulting in serious translation difficulties. A language could have suffixes or prefixes that signify certain propositional meanings, but do not have direct equivalents in other languages.

Another type of non-equivalence manifests itself in differences between languages in terms of frequency and purpose of using specific forms. Although a certain source language form could have its target language equivalent, differences often occur in the frequency or the purpose of the form across languages. Finally, the use of loanwords in the ST could also bring a problem in translation. Having outlined the problems of word-level non-equivalence, Baker proposed some strategies to solve these problems (see 3.2).

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<sup>1</sup> For example, *attack* and *defend* indicate a physical relation to a person or an entity. The Arabic words *عم amm* and *خال khāl* have no direct equivalent in English, which uses *uncle* for both of them, but adds a descriptive word, such as, *paternal* or *maternal* to specify the relation.

### *3.2 Baker's Strategies to Overcome Non-Equivalence*

After having presented a brief explanation for the problems and types of non-equivalence at word level, Baker (1992, pp. 24-45) suggested eight strategies for translators and trainees to encountering the relevant translation problems. These strategies are planned steps to overcome the non-equivalence problem in question so that translators or trainees can manage to produce an acceptable TT while maintaining the ST meaning. Translators could render the ST word, using a more general word (superordinate). This is a common strategy for tackling many types of non-equivalence, especially when addressing the propositional meaning. They could also use a neutral/less-expressive word than the ST word, or satisfy themselves with a cultural substitution. However, a cultural substitution depends on the purpose of translation, and it requires an authority from the translation commissioner.

As for loanwords, a translator could translate them without explanation, or use the ST loanword accompanied by an explanation when the word is repeated, as it is highly preferred with cultural specific items and modern concepts. Translators could also paraphrase ST words when they are lexicalized in different forms of the TL, or could use unrelated words<sup>1</sup> when the ST word is not lexicalized in the TT. When a word is semantically complex, translators could paraphrase it by modifying or explaining its meaning using unrelated words. Furthermore, translators may apply omission and illustration by deleting words from the ST or adding to the TT some words not existing in the ST; however, it all depends on whether the context allows omitting or adding words.

The current study tends to frame such strategies proposed by Baker (1992) in the form of tentative technical terms. Seeking to name rather than describe, the researcher attempts to put Baker's suggested

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<sup>1</sup> For example, "affidavit" is paraphrased into "إفادة كتابية مشفوعة بيمين" using unrelated words included within the meanings of the ST word or its definition (Baker, 1992, pp. 40-41).

strategies into noun phrases, mostly of compound adjectives, to use afresh all throughout. These tentative technical terms are as follows: (a) superordinate strategy, (b) neutral/less-expressive-word strategy, (c) cultural-substitution strategy, (d) loanword strategy, (d) explained-loanword strategy, (e) paraphrased-related-word strategy, (f) paraphrased-unrelated-word strategy, (g) omission strategy, and/or (h) illustration strategy.

Generally, these are the strategies proposed by Baker (1992) to encounter the translation challenges of non-equivalence. However, not a certain type of non-equivalence problem can be related to a specific strategy. They are entirely separate, for they may interfere as translators may adopt more than one strategy at the same time. More specifically, a translator may choose a less expressive word equivalent, and may add an illustrative phrase at the same time. To achieve the objective of the present study, this taxonomy of equivalence and non-equivalence is applied to the translations of the DA *'istiwā'* by Pickthall (1930), Abdel Haleem (2004), and Hilālī and Khān (1434AH/2013AD), while specifying the strategies of each translator in tackling the challenges during translation.

The current study follows a four-step pattern of analysis. It firstly provides a clue to the context of the DA *'istiwā'*, consulting some authentic Islamic exegeses. It secondly consults the linguistic dictionaries for the TT terms' meanings. Accordingly, it highlights the different opinions around the meaning of the DA in question as an argument for causing non-equivalence during translation. Thirdly, it compares the ST and the TT shedding light on the non-equivalence problem and the strategy used by each translator in dealing with the problem with reference to Baker's (1992) Typology of Equivalence at word level. All other occurrences of the DA *'istiwā'* in the Holy Qur'an and their corresponding translations in TTs are also counted to compare the three TTs. Fourthly, the results are discussed. Furthermore, DAs, other than *'istiwā'*, are suggested for future research work.

#### 4. Analysis

The present study pursues the DA 'istiwā' in the verb form *استوى* 'istawa because it is only mentioned in this way in the Holy Qur'an. The following is a detailed linguistic analysis for this DA. The interpretation of DAs, in Arabic, is hedged by a series of controversial debates among Islamic scholars and exegetists, resulting in different interpretations and exegeses of the DAs. The analysis below contains only one sample for this DA, and it compares other occurrences of the DA in the Holy Qur'an, highlighting the similarities or differences in the TTs.

**Table 4.1**

*'Istawa in 'al-A<sup>c</sup>rāf 54 and its Three TTs:*

ST	TT1	TT2	TT3
<p>"إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ۗ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ" (7:54)</p>	<p>Lo! your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then <u>mounted</u> He the Throne. He covereth the night with the day, which is in haste to follow it, and hath made the sun and the moon and the stars subservient by His command. His verily is all creation and commandment.</p>	<p>Your Lord is God, who created the heavens and earth in six Days, then <u>established</u> <u>Himself on</u> the throne; He makes the night cover the day in swift pursuit; He created the sun, moon, and stars to be subservient to His command; all creation and command belong to Him. Exalted be God,</p>	<p>Indeed your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in Six Days, and then He <u>rose over</u> (<u>Istawa</u>) the Throne (really in a manner that suits His Majesty). He brings the night as a cover over the day, seeking it rapidly, and (He created) the sun, the moon, the stars subjected to His Command.</p>

	Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the Worlds! (Pickthall, 1930, p. 47)	Lord of all the worlds! (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 98)	Surely, His is the Creation and Commandment. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists)! (Hilālī and Khān, 1434 AH/2013 AD, p. 208)
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According to *'ahl 'as-Salaf 'as-Sālih*, the Arabic verb *'istawa* has more than one meaning, involving “صعد” *ṣaʿada*,” and “ارتفع و علا” *irtafaʿa wa ʿala*,” “استقر” *istaqarra*,” as reported by Ibn Taymiya(t) (see Ibn ʿuthaymīn, 1421 AH, vol. 1, p. 375). The meanings of “العلو” *al-ʿuluwu*,” “الارتفاع” *al-irtifāʿ*,” “الاستقرار” *al-istiqrār*,” and “الاستيلاء” *al-istylā*” are reported by some exegeses, such as *'al-'Alūsī* (1415 AH/ 1994 AD, vol. 16, pp. 154-155) and *'al-Qurtubī* (1427 AH/ 2006 AD, vol. 9, p. 239). *'Istawa* also denotes “*istaqarra*” or “استولى” *istawla*” if it is followed by the proposition *على* *ʿala* or “on” (*'Al-Qurtubī*, 1427 AH/ 2006 AD, vol. 9, p. 239). These different exegeses for the same word in the ST affect the process of conveying the meaning into the TT, and cause a non-equivalence problem. Most importantly, they may bring about some misconceptions about God while rendering God’s image into English.

Regarding the verb *'istawa*, each translation tries to convey the meaning of the ST as much as possible. In TT1, Pickthall (1930) renders the term *'istawa* as “established.” The verb “establish” means “to start or create an organization, a system, etc.” while “to establish oneself at” means “to hold a position for long enough or succeed in something well enough to make people accept and

respect you” (Hornby, 2010, *Oxford advanced learner’s dictionary*, p. 517). When considering the ST meaning and that indicated by TT1, a non-equivalence problem at word-level is found. The ST term is semantically complex due to the various exegeses and interpretations concerning the intended meaning of God’s '*istiwā*'. The verb “established” in TT1 does not carry all the meanings implied in the ST word '*istawa*'. This is the less-expressive-word strategy. Narrowing or reducing the meaning of semantically complex words is a way for solving word-level non-equivalence problems. However, this has its impact on the ST meaning.

In TT2, Abdel Haleem (2004) translates the verb '*istawa*' as “mounted.” The verb “mount” means “to go up something that is raised” (Hornby, *Oxford advanced learner’s dictionary*, p. 999). The problem of non-equivalence at word level takes place because of the semantic complexity of the ST term. The term “mounted” is noticeably less expressive than the ST term, which is typical of the less-expressive-word strategy suggested by Baker (1992).

The choice of the verb equivalent, in TT1 and TT2, causes a semantic loss in conveying the ST meaning, as it results in misconception about God. Both TT1 and TT2 indicate that God is like human beings and that He has their qualities since He has mounted or established Himself on the throne, in the material sense of TT1 and TT2 verbs. Contrary to '*as-Salaf*'s approach to DAs, the verbs “mounted” and “established” also lead a non-native speaker or a non-Muslim to think that God has exerted effort while creating the heavens and earth. The same verse begins with a note about the six-day period of creation that is followed by God’s '*istiwā*' on His throne, yet the use of the coordinator “*ثُمَّ*” or “then” could indicate that this is done after a while, as if He takes a break after feeling tired. 'Al-Qurtubī (1427 AH/ 2006 AD), however, clarifies that God can create the earth and heavens in a moment but He teaches the creatures to be kind and make sure of things (vol. 9, p. 238). The point is that this is not directly verbalized in the respective ST here since the Holy Qur'an often refers to meanings in other contexts. Thus, these implied meanings are not conveyed in TT1 and TT2.

As for TT3, Hilālī and Khān (1434 AH/2013 AD) deal with the non-equivalence problem of the semantic complexity by using a transliterated word *'istawa* accompanied by the explanation *rose over*. Leaving the ST word in the TT is another translation technique that can be exploited along with an explanation. This is the explained-loan-word strategy. To communicate the implied meanings that affect the ST message regarding God's image, they make use of exegetic translation to clarify the controversial meaning of *'istawa* among Islamic scholars and exegetists by adding the brackets: “[really in a manner that suits His Majesty]” (Hilālī & Khān, 1434 AH/2013 AD, p. 208). The TT reader can understand that God may not be liken to human beings, as *'istawa* means “to rise over the throne in a way that befits Him alone.” TT3 is, therefore, closer to the ST term than TT1 and TT2 are.

The verb *'istawa* is repeated nine times in the Holy Qur'an (2:29; 7:54; 10:3; 13:2; 20:5; 25:59; 32:4; 41:11; & 57:4). The following paragraphs tackle the other occurrences of *'istawa* throughout the Holy Qur'an, highlighting the differences among the three TTs and the attitude of each translator in rendering the same term into the TT. Furthermore, an analysis is given when a remarkable difference is detected. Table 4.2 includes the eight occurrences of *'istawa*, other than the one already introduced in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.2**

*Other Occurrences of 'Istawa in the Holy Qur'an and the three TTs:*

	ST	TT1	TT2	TT3
1.	ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ (2:29)	“Then <u>turned</u> He to the heaven,” (Pickthall, 1930, p. 27)	“then <u>turned</u> to the sky,” (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 6)	“Then He <u>rose over</u> (Istawâ) towards the heaven,” (Hilālī and Khān, 1434 AH/2013 AD, p. 7)
2.	ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ (10:3)	“then He <u>established</u> Himself upon	“then <u>established</u> Himself on the	“then <u>rose over</u> (Istawâ) the Throne (really

	ST	TT1	TT2	TT3
		the Throne,” (Pickthall, 1930, p. 209)	Throne,” (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 128)	in a manner that suits His Majesty),” (Hilālī and Khān, 1434 AH/2013 AD, p. 270)
3.	”ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ” (13:2)	“then <u>mounted</u> the Throne,” (Pickthall, 1930, p. 248)	“then <u>established</u> Himself on the throne,” (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 153)	“Then, He <u>rose above</u> (Istawā) the Throne (really in a manner that suits His Majesty),” (Hilālī and Khān, 1434 AH/2013 AD, p. 319)
4.	”الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَىٰ” (20:5)	“The Beneficent One, Who is <u>established</u> on the Throne.” (Pickthall, 1930, p. 318)	“the Lord of Mercy, <u>established</u> on the throne,” (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 198)	“The Most Gracious (Allāh) <u>rose over</u> (Istawā) the (Mighty) Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty).” (Hilālī and Khān, 1434 AH/2013 AD, p. 414)
5.	”ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ” (25:59)	“then He <u>mounted</u> the Throne” (Pickthall, 1930, p. 371)	“and then <u>established</u> Himself on the throne,” (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 230)	“Then He (Istawā) <u>rose over</u> the Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty).” (Hilālī and

	ST	TT1	TT2	TT3
				Khān, 1434 AH/2013 AD, p. 486)
6.	<p>”ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ“ (32:4)</p>	<p>“Then He <u>mounted</u> the throne” (Pickthall, 1930, p. 423)</p>	<p>“Then He <u>established</u> Himself on the Throne.” (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 264)</p>	<p>“Then He <u>rose over</u> (Istawâ) the Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty).” (Hilālī and Khān, 1434 AH/2013 AD, p. 557)</p>
7.	<p>”ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ“ (41:11)</p>	<p>“Then <u>turned</u> He to the heaven” (Pickthall, 1930, p. 491)</p>	<p>“Then He <u>turned</u> to the sky,” (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 307)</p>	<p>“Then He <u>rose over</u> (Istawâ) towards the heaven,” (Hilālī and Khān, 1434 AH/2013 AD, p. 645)</p>
8.	<p>”ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ“ (57:4)</p>	<p>“then He <u>mounted</u> the Throne” (Pickthall, 1930, p. 565)</p>	<p>“then <u>established</u> Himself on the throne.” (Abdel Haleem, 2004, p. 359)</p>	<p>“and then <u>rose over</u> (Istawâ) the Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty),” (Hilālī and Khān, 1434 AH/2013 AD, p. 742)</p>

By looking into the ST, the term *'istawa* is followed by two propositions: the first is *'ala* or “on,” and the second is *ilā* or “to.” On the one hand, the proposition “on” means “over” or “above”; therefore, it is suitable with the meanings of “irtafa‘a wa ‘ala,” “sa‘ada,” “istaqarra,” and/or “istawla.” On the other hand, the proposition “to” means “intending and turning to.” In STs 1 and 7,

the verb '*istawa*' is followed by the proposition '*ila*', which requires to be clarified in the light of the analysis framework. In interpreting the verb *استوى إلى* '*istawa ila*', the exegetists are divided into two teams. The first one thinks that it has the same meaning of *استوى على* '*istawa ʿala*', while the second believes that it means "قصد إلى" *qaṣada ila*." On the one hand, 'Ibn Jarīr 'at-Ṭabarī (1422 AH/2001 AD) supports the first aspect, and reports after explaining the controversy among scholars that '*istawa ila*' means "irtafaʿa wa ʿala" (vol. 1, p. 457). On the other hand, 'Ibn Kathīr (1420 AH/2000 AD) supports the second aspect, recording that '*istawa ila*' means "qaṣada ila" (p. 108).

Sticking to the opinion of the second team, both TT1 and TT2 translate the verb '*istawa ila*' into "turn to." However, this arises a misconception of God's image that He is limited to a certain direction since the verb "turn" means "to move something so that it is in a different position or it faces a different direction" (Hornby, 2010, Oxford advanced learner's dictionary, p. 1664). The problem of non-equivalence occurs due to the various opinions and schools among Arab scholars concerning the meaning of the verb '*istawa*'. TT1 and TT2 fail to render this controversial meaning; they pick a verb that leads the TT reader to understand a wrong God's image. They may use the strategy of illustration, as suggested by Baker (1992), to explain the implied meaning in the ST, clarifying that the manner of '*istiwā'*' must be taken literally. TT3, on the other side, relies upon the exegesis of the first team, and keeps the meaning of the verb '*istawa ila*' as to "rise over," but they add the preposition "towards" as a way to keep the ST context as much as possible. It also adds the term '*istawa*' between two brackets as an illustration and to stick to the ST.

As introduced in the tabular form (Table 4.2), the three TTs differ in one way or another in rendering the same term '*istawa*' throughout its various occurrences in the Holy Qur'an. For TT1, the translator uses three different terms, which are "mounted" (7:54; 13:2; 25:59; 32:4 & 57:4), "turned to" (2:29 & 41:11), and "established" (10:3 & 20:5). It is noticed that the translator sticks to the term "turned to" when he renders the term '*istawa ila*', but uses "mounted" and

“established on/upon” when rendering the term *'istawa 'ala*. On the one hand, the translator follows a fixed pattern while translating the term *'istawa 'ila* using the term “turn to”. On the other hand, there is no fixed pattern in rendering the term *'istawa 'ala* as the translator uses “mounted” five times, and “establish” two times for the same term. As for TT2, the translator only adheres to two terms. He uses “established” (7:54; 10:3; 13:2; 20:5; 25:59; 32:4 & 57:4) seven times as an equivalent for *'istawa 'ala*, and “turned to” (2:29 & 41:11) two times as an equivalent for *'istawa 'ila*. TT3 uses three different forms of the same verb, “rose over” (7:54; 10:3; 20:5; 25:59; 32:4 & 57:4), “rose above” (13:2), and “rose over towards” (2:29 & 41:11) in rendering the same two terms. TT3 uses the term “rose over towards” in rendering the term *'istawa 'ila*, while it uses the other two terms, “rose over” and “rose above,” in rendering the term *'istawa 'ala*. Interestingly, TT3 uses the term “rose above” once. To conclude, among the three TTs, TT3 is more consistent in using only one equivalent “rose over”, “rose above”, or “rose over towards” for rendering *'istawa 'ila* and *'istawa 'ala*, respectively, in all occurrences of the same term. This consistency may in turn reduce the misconceptions about God’s image in the TT.

## 5. Results and Discussion

In this study, the DA *'istiwā'* was linguistically analyzed throughout its occurrences in the Holy Qur’an in the three respective translations. Considering the verb form of the DA *'istiwā'* in the Qur’anic text, the verb *'istawa* was thoroughly pursued in its nine occurrences (2:29; 7:54; 10:3; 13:2; 20:5; 25:59; 32:4; 41:11; & 57:4). The study relied on Baker’s (1992) Typology of Equivalence as the methodology of the analysis. Among the several types of equivalences discussed by Baker (1992), the present study only focused on the at-word-level equivalence because the DA *'istiwā'* is mentioned as a single word in the Holy Qur’an. The study made use of a four-step pattern of analysis in order to consistently examine and compare the ST and the three TTs in light of the theoretical framework of analysis.

The study investigated the problems and challenges arising while translating the verb '*istawa*' into English in order to mark how they affect the process of rendering the ST meaning into the TT. The study also detected which strategies the three translators used to deal with these challenges. The study highlighted the various exegeses regarding the meaning of the DA '*istiwā*'. It also circled out the impact of these exegeses on rendering God's image into the TT. Based on the analysis, both TT1 and TT2 distinguished between the term '*istawa* *ʿala*' and the term '*istawa* *'ila*' using different forms in the TT. They used "turned to" as equivalent for '*istawa* *'ila*' (2:29 & 41:11). However, they interchangeably used other equivalents for '*istawa* *ʿala*'. TT1 used "mounted" and "established on/upon", while TT2 stuck to "established". Considering the dictionary meanings of the TT words, semantic loss in the ST meaning was detected. The TT reader might understand that there is likeness between God and human beings by physically establishing or mounting Himself on the Throne owing to the actual meaning of the TT1 and TT2 equivalents. This misconception might lead to another one that God has made effort in creating the Heavens, which is contrary to 'as-Salaf's approach to DAs. Furthermore, the TT equivalent "turn to" might result in another misunderstanding about God that He is limited to a certain direction based on the lexical meaning of the term "turn to".

TT3 proved to be more consistent than TT1 and TT2, and it was comparatively closer to the ST meaning in all occurrences of the DA '*istiwā*' in the Holy Qur'an, including the main sample of this study. The translators of TT3 used one verb "rose" followed by three different propositions: "over" and "above" in rendering '*istawa* *ʿala*', and "over towards" in rendering '*istawa* *'ila*'. The consistency in using one verb for the same ST word '*istawa*' helped the TT3 encounter the problem of the semantic complexity in the ST. It also reduced the misconceptions among the TT readers. Most significantly, they exploited the explained-loan-word strategy by using the two brackets and the illustrative words and phrases "[*istawa*]" and "[really in a manner that suits His Majesty]" to stick

to their own conception of translation faithfulness. This is why TT3 does not arise a misunderstanding of God among the TT readers, as it corresponds with the translation strategies recommended by Baker (1992). It is recommended for TT1 and TT2 to use brackets or apply the illustration strategy or the explained-loan-word strategy, in order to decode the semantic complexity in the ST term.

## **6. Conclusion**

The present study linguistically analyzed the DA '*istiwā'* in one sample, and traced the other occurrences of the same DA throughout the Holy Qur'an. Three different English translations of the Holy Qur'an were selected from different backgrounds in terms of nationality, mother tongue, culture, and education, for the purpose of comparison. Mona Baker's (1992) Typology of Equivalence was adopted to conduct the framework of analysis. In the study sample, a four-step pattern of analysis is followed. Firstly, the contextual meaning of the DA '*istiwā'* is derived from the Islamic exegeses; secondly, the dictionary meanings of the TT terms used by the three TTs are quoted; thirdly, the two steps are exploited to compare the TT terms by highlighting the translation challenges and strategies; and fourthly, results are discussed to reach a recommendation, sustained by the conclusion. It generally shows how various opinions of scholars about the same DA would affect the process of translation that, in turn, could cause misconceptions about God. Finally, TT3 is nearer to the ST than the other TTs are, and the analysis framework proves suitable for the present study and also for a wider scope that could include the other DAs and DNs in the Holy Qur'an.

Nonetheless, this study has certain limitations in terms of both the thematic thread and the technical thread. As for the thematic thread, the study is limited to only one DA, as the space of the present study does not afford the other DAs. The several various exegeses of the Holy Qur'an may outweigh one translation over another, so it is likely impossible for translators to agree on one translation of the same ST. As for the technical thread, Mona Baker's (1992)

Typology of Equivalence determines several problems or challenges that arise during translation at word level, and suggests some strategies to overcome these challenges or problems. However, not all these problems and strategies can be applied to a DA as it is only one word. For future research, the researcher strives to widely apply this analysis framework to other DAs in the Holy Qur'an. Other researchers may also apply another framework of analysis to DAs or DNs, or apply the same to other terms in the Holy Qur'an with reference to the same three translations investigated herein or other different translations.

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