

Lacunarity or Conspicuous Translatability: The Internet Phenomenon in the Holy Quran?

A Lexical Semantic Exploration of Prototypicality and Exemplarity in Seven Quranic Constructions and Their Translations into English^(*)

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Abstract

Seven Quranic nominal and verbal phrases exhibit onomasiological and semasiological semantic features that could amount to their being conspicuously translatable to a projection or reporting of several 'internet phenomena'. This study aims at presenting their semantic features as a case of the transcendence of the language of the Holy Quran, not from the elongated perspective of untranslatability or (lexical semantic) matchlessness, but from the perspective of time-bound translatability of some Quranic lexes. The phrases are: (1) "يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ" [ymūġu fī b'ḍ] ('lkahf. Q. 15: 99); (2) "بَيَّتُ اللَّعْنَكُوتِ" [bāyt 'l'nkbūt] ('l'nkbūt, Q. 20: 41); (3) "لَجُؤاً فِي عَنُورٍ وَنُفُورٍ" ('lmulk, Q. 67: 21); (4) "مُكِبّاً عَلَى وَجْهِهِ" [muklībānn 'la wġhihi] ('lmulk, Q. 67: 22); (5) "يَسُوءُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ" [ysu'ū wuġūhakum] ('l'isrā', Q. 17: 13); (6) "يُبَيِّتُكُمْ أَأَذَانُ الْأَنْعَامِ" [Yubatikun 'ādān 'l'n'ām] ('l'isrā', Q. 17: 13); and (7) "طَائِرُهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ" [tā'iruhū fī 'unuqih] ('l'isrā', Q. 17: 13). The research explores translations of these constructions in 'Abdelhaleem (2004), Al-Hilali & Khan (1998), Arberry (1955), Asad (1980), Bewely (1999), Gerrans (2016), Ghali (2003), Hammad (2009), Itani (2012), Naser et al. (2015), Pickthall (1938) and Yusif-Ali (1934). The exploration shows that these constructions were sometimes treated or rendered as lacunae. Linking the phrases to internet phenomena is discussed based on feature prototypicality and exemplarity addressed in (cognitive) semantics theories as well as lexicological and contextual research of their meanings. The study underscores the semantic time bound nature of some Quranic lexes and the necessity of consulting Islamic exegeses to support proposed renderings of (these) Quranic constructions.

Keywords: Quran Translation, Time bound Semantic Translatability of Quranic Lexes, Cognitive Semantic Theories and Quran Translation, Lacunarity in Quran Translation, Untranslatability of Quran, Interdisciplinary Qur'anic Studies

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**قابلية جلية للترجمة أم ثغرات مانعة لها: هل حقا هناك إشارات دلالية ل
مصطلحات الإنترنت "الإنجليزية" في القرآن الكريم؟
دراسة استكشافية مبنية على نظريتي الطراز اللغوي الإدراكي وامتداداته
لسبعة تراكيب قرآنية ومكافئاتها باللغة الإنجليزية**

الملخص العربي:

البحث يدرس احتمالية قابلية الترجمة الجلية لسبع تراكيب قرآنية إلى مصطلحات الإنترنت والتراكيب القرآنية ينتمي عدد منها إلى غريب القرآن وهي على النحو التالي:

- (١) "يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ" (سورة الكهف: الآية ٩٩)
- (٢) "يَبْتَثُ الْعَنْكَبُوتَ" (سورة العنكبوت: الآية ٤١)
- (٣) "لَجُورًا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ" (سورة الملك: الآية ٢١)
- (٤) "مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ" (سورة الملك: الآية ٢٢)
- (٥) "يَسُوءُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ" (سورة الاسراء: الآية ٧)
- (٦) "طَائِرُهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ" (سورة الاسراء: الآية ١٣)
- (٧) "فَلْيَبْتَئِكُنَّ آدَانِ الْأَنْعَمِ" (سورة النساء: الآية ١١٩)

والدراسة استكشافية تعتمد على التفاسير القرآنية والدلالات المعجمية والتحليل اللغوي المبني على نظريتي الطراز الدلالي الإدراكي /العرفاني وامتداداته وتستطلع وتحلل طرق ترجمة تلك التراكيب في اثنتي عشر ترجمة للقرآن الكريم إلى اللغة الانجليزية هي ل عبد الحليم (٢٠٠٤)، الهاللي وخان (١٩٩٨)، أربيري (١٩٥٥)، أسد (١٩٨٠)، بيولي (١٩٩٩)، جرانز (٢٠١٦)، غالي (٢٠٠٣)، حماد (٢٠٠٩)، عيتاني (٢٠١٢)، ناصر وآخرون (٢٠١٥)، بيكنال (١٩٣٨) ويوسف علي (١٩٣٤).

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغويات الإدراكية في ترجمة القرآن، قابلية الترجمة الزمنية لألفاظ القرآن، الإعجاز اللغوي الإنبائي لألفاظ القرآن عند الترجمة، ترجمة غريب القرآن، الثغرات أو الفجوات في ترجمة القرآن

Introduction

The presence of source language (SL) lexes with no match in the target languages (TLs), i.e., lacunae, or expressions treated as such is evident in numerous translations of the Holy Quran into English, e.g., *yhtānūn* 'nfsəhm يَحْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ. Henceforth, lacunarity is used as

the presence of any meaning gap evident in the choice of a TL lexical item that does not fully capture the nuances of meaning of a source text (ST) lexis. The notion of lacunarity was originally touched upon and referred to in translation studies tackling cultural differences that would form barriers in translation (See Baker, 1992; Bikova, 1999; McKendrick, 1991; Pym, 1993; Sorokin & Markovina, 1987; Venuti, 1995, 2002) before it became a term for translation gaps in general (See Anokhina, 2013; Rasuljanovna, 2020). Indeed, Quran translators tended to bridge the gap caused by lacunarity by resorting to Islamic exegeses as well as the most common lexicological meaning to render the translation of āyāt employing footnotes, commentaries and addenda. Despite the persistent attempts, linguists and Quran translators acknowledge that achieving impeccable semantic equivalence in the translation of Quranic lexes is unattainable as the elected target words are not always completely successful in capturing the semantics of Quranic Arabic lexes (See Abdul-Raof, 2004). In numerous cases, translators lose partially, sometimes fully, the packed meaning of a lexeme in the tedious process of favoring one lexeme over another. In this research, I would like to underscore the time-bound nature of interpretations of some Quran lexes that could be one of the causes of lacunae, i.e., meaning gaps, in (English) translations of the Quran.

Particularly, numerous āyāt host a unique semantic class of Quranic lexes such as *خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ*. The āyah became fully understood onomasiologically and semasiologically when *عَلَقٍ* was linked to phases of embryo growth as it represents a description that was scientifically undocumented till advances in medicine broke through (see Alshirazy, 2013; Moore, 1986 for a detailed account of Quranic lexes related to embryology). In the same vein, there are other emerging instances that a linguist or a translator should not ignore, e.g., *لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ* (l'īnšqāq, Q. 84: 19) and *الرَّيْحَ الْعَقِيمَ* (daryāt, Q. 51: 41). In exegesis, *لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ* was given different interpretations with one being the most commonly translated

interpretation into English, i.e., the state of moving from a level or status to another (See exegeses of 'bn Kfīr, 'sa'dy, 'lbaḡwy, 'lqurtuby and 'Ṭabary, KSU Electronic Mushaf Project). Specification of that status differs in exegesis. It was interpreted as moving from sickness to health, from poverty to wealth (and the opposites) or moving from life to death. Here, the focal meaning of لَتَرْكَبُنَّ is ride a plate on a plate or use a saucer or a plate as a means of transport. See Table 1 below for renderings of the construction. The focal meaning is not signaled in translation except for one case (Pickthal, 1938) which is closer to the meaning of riding. Here, Pickthal (1938) used "journey on from plane to plane". Interestingly, reports are circulating about NASA testing an innovative technology, a recent shape/design of spaceships and satellites termed "flying saucers" (Aerospace Corporation, 2022; NASA, 2014). The announced breakthrough is in the shape that differs from the cubic shape that NASA has been using since 1976. Do we now have a possible lexical English match for the construction لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ?

Table 1

Renderings of لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ and الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ

Translator	لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ	الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ
Abdelhalim	...you will progress from stage to stage...	...the life-destroying wind...
Aisha bewely	...you will mount up stage by stage!	... barren wind...
Alhilali and khan	...you shall certainly travel from stage to stage (in this life and in the Hereafter)...	...the barren wind...
Arberry	...you shall surely ride stage after stage...	... the withering wind...
Asad	...[even thus, O men,] are you bound to move; onward from stage to stage...	...life-destroying wind...

Ghali	...Indeed you will definitely ride state after state (i.e., travel from one stage "of life" to another)...	...the sterile wind.
Hammad	...You shall, most surely, mount through stage upon stage "from conception to Resurrection'.	... a desolating wind
Yousef ali	...You shall surely travel from stage to stage...	...the devastating wind.
Itani	...You will mount stage by stage...	...the devastating wind.
Nasser et al.	...thou wilt surely journey from stage to stage...	...the barren wind.
Pickthal	...That ye shall journey on from plane to plane...	...the fatal wind.
Sam Gerrans	...You will embark upon state after state...	... the barren wind

Moreover, a similar situation has unfolded with الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ whose focal meaning is the barren or sterile wind. The sense of the word عقيم was not always indicated (see Table 1 above). The verb pivotal meaning is dismissed in many translations in favor of the meaning of a destructive wind. Recently, there seems to be support in modern science for the focal meaning. According to the University of Toronto official website, their scientists were able to answer questions about the "pollination mystery blowing in the wind" (Bettam, 2019; Timerman & Barrett, 2018). Now we have studies explaining why the wind can be described as 'barren'. The bottom line here is: These constructions were treated or rendered as lacunae in translation because of their being scientifically obscure at the time of translation.

Evidently, the presence of this type of lacunae (and others) motivates the common stand advocating for the untranslatability of many Quranic lexes. Advocates of the stand have accounted for untranslatability by connecting the semantics of Quranic lexes generally to the linguistic transcendence of Quranic Arabic and the

impoverished nature of the TLs linguistic inventories. However, transcendence of the aforementioned expressions lies in their precise description of phenomena that were unidentified to people then, I mean, at the time of Quran's translation or even revelation. Thus, based on semantic (and factual) analyses, *لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ* and *خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ* should be treated in translation as semasiologically and onomasiologically time bound expressions. They represent a semantic phenomenon that should be given due attention in researching and translating Quran into English or any other language. Here, linguists, translators and researchers of Quran translation should not dismiss the causal nexus between the time bound semantics of Quranic lexes and lacunae in Quran translations, as being subjective or religious in nature. On the contrary, at the linguistic level, it should be explored rigorously.

In what follows, the semanticity of seven Quranic constructions is researched in light of their lexicological meanings, exegeses, semantic prototypicality and exemplarity and importantly the time bound nature of the semantics of some Quranic lexes.

The Present Study

Here, I explore the translatability of seven Qur'anic constructions to seven current English terminology suggesting that they can be related to the internet, a twentieth century phenomenon, in light of (classic) Arabic lexicological meaning, the conceptualization of semantic feature prototypes, and cognitive exemplars. The study consults authentic Qur'anic exegeses resources such as 'bn K̲t̲īr, 'sa'dy, 'lbaḡwy, 'lqurṭuby and 'Ṭabary. The constructions are:

- (1) "يُمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ" [ymūḡu fī b'ḍ] ('lkahf. Q. 15: 99);
- (2) "بَيَّتَ الْغَنَكُبُوتَ" [kmṭlī' l' nkbūt 'ṭḥṭ bāytānn] ('l' nkbūt. Q.20:41);
- (3) "الْجَوُّ فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ" [laḡū fī 'utuw wa nfūr] ('lmulk, Q. 67:21);
- (4) "مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ" [mukl̲bānn 'la wḡhihi] ('lmulk, Q. 67:22);
- (5) "لَيْسُوا عَوَا وَجُورُكُمْ" [ysu' ū wuḡūhakum] ('l'isrā', Q. ١٧:٧);
- (6) "طَائِرُهُ فِي عُقَّةٍ" [ṭā'iruhū fī 'unuqih] ('l'isrā' Q. 17 : 13);

(7) "فَلْيُبَاطِكُنْ أَذَانَ الْآتَمِ" [Yubatikun 'ādān'l'n'ām] ('nisā', Q. ٤: ١١٩).

Translations of these constructions are explored in twelve widely circulated translations published in print or online; six of them are relatively old (before the year 2000) and six are recent (after 2000). The translations are ^cAbdelhaleem (2004), Al-Hilali & Khan (1998), Arberry (1955), Asad (1980), Bewely (1999), Gerrans (2016), Ghali (2003) Hammad (2009), Itani (2012), Naser et al. (2015), Pickthall (1938) and Yusif-Ali (1934).

The Semantic Theoretical Background: Reference, Extension, Prototypes and Exemplars in Translation

Deeply rooted in linguistics, translation studies can connect with two cognitive linguistics theories, i.e., the prototype and exemplar semantic theories in particular, to explain and/or to sharpen translators' ability to make informed lexical semantic choices (See Shreve & Angelone, 2012; Tymoczko, 2014). The connection could aid in translators' pursuit of equivalence between nominal and verbal constructions available in (Quran as) an ST or in our assessment of equivalence, if any.

In semantics, meaning can be captured essentially by establishing the connection(s) among reference, extension and prototypes. Indeed, the act of translation, the transfer of meaning from an SL to a TL, entails the ability to adequately comprehend and apply reference, extension and prototype meaning transfer from the SL to the TL. Reference is straight forwardly defined as the basic relation that connects between names and things (Searle, 1969). It is a concept that could be linked effortlessly to Saussure's posthumously published definition of the linguistic sign as being made up of two intertwined parts: The signifier and the signified (Saussure, 1983). In some cases, when we have a well-established signifier, we can associate it with more than one object and at this point, we would have what is called extension. When a term is extended to signify other members/objects, there would be a typical representative of the term (a prototype) and other members that are less representative of the

featural set of the term. Indeed, an extension of a term connotes the group of things it applies to, based on its attributes (Davidson, 1967; Kripke, 1980). Hypothetically, a translator in search for a TL lexical match for a concept or an object would go through the process of a reference check. The reference check includes a list of criteria against which the translator should compare and contrast SL-TL lexes characteristics. This hypothetical description conforms to the classic binary view, either core meaning or linkage between a lexical item and the set of semantic or referential features associated with the term is present or core meaning is absent, i.e., the definition applies or it does not apply. Contra this traditional view, a couple of cognitive semantic theories, i.e., prototype and exemplar theories (Rosche, 1973, 1978, 2013; Taylor, 2015; Lakoff, 1987, 2008; Geeraerts, 1989) challenge the classic conceptualization that the core lexical semantics of classifying a word meaning has straightforward (mental) boundaries as a bird can take so many shapes, even creatures that do not fly (Godville, 2023). The prototype theory posits that our understanding or storage of a word meaning is rather categorical where the prototype, the exact lexical match for an object or a concept, motivates our perception of a group. Particularly, according to prototype theory, the penguin is not a prototype of the category "bird". An eagle can successfully be a prototype of this category as it is "birdier" than a penguin. An ostrich, in this case, would be less "birdy" if compared to the eagle. Obviously, Rosch holds that one member hosts the featural set of the term; other members would be peripherally determinative of meaning if they have less characteristics of that featural set. Comparisons to the prototype defines the meaning linkage(s) between the non-prototype member and the term. Contra prototypicality, exemplarity does not classify members according to a set of features that one member has. Rather, all members provide mental or meaning experiences and exemplars about the category or the term. Each member may provide a different sense, and this in turn allows for extensions or exemplars. The collective senses of the

members would provide an accumulative sense of what the category can be.

Applying prototype and exemplar theories to comprehend translators' election of an equivalent for *لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ*, one can easily notice that many translators (table 1) refrained from using the prototypical meaning of the word saucer or plate perhaps because they could not grasp any association between the prototypical meaning of the verb *لَتَرْكَبُنَّ* in the phrase and the plate. Pickthal (1938), however, used "journey on from a plane to plane" which is an exemplar, not a prototypical meaning. In our modern time *لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ* seems to exemplify an experience of what a plate can extend or evolve into, i.e., the flying saucer. In the case of *الرَّيْحَ الْعَقِيمَ*, the exemplars or the knowledge experience(s) accumulated about the phenomenon of wind now include the scientifically documented function of systematic pollination. With this lexical semantic conceptualization of prototypicality and exemplarity taken into consideration, in addition to the semantically time bound nature of some Quranic lexes, I would like to approach the constructions under investigation.

The Case of "يُمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ"

The verb *يُمُوجُ* occurs once in the first āyah in the final decuplet of sūrat-ʿlkaḥf. Referred to as having eschatological significance in Hadith and Islamic exegeses, ʿlkaḥf final decuplet can be treated contextually as thematically one unit. The āyah where the construction occurs is:

"وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَجَمَعْنَهُمْ جَمْعًا"

(ʿlkaḥf. Q. 15: 99)

The prototypical semantics of the verb *يُمُوجُ* [ymūğ] would lead us directly to a mental image of sea waves surging against each other. Renderings of the verb *يُمُوجُ* are classified by translator in Table 2 below where the word surge is used dominantly in collocation with

waves as an equivalent to **يَمُوجُ**. Here, it has to be noted that there has not been a consensus in exegeses on the agent of the verb **يَمُوجُ** [ymūğ]. It is interpreted as Mankind, Ġīn and Ġīns, or Gog and Magog (seeʿbn Kīr, ʿsaʿdy, ʿlbağwy, ʿlqurṭuby and ʿṬabary). The reason for the different exegeses is the innominate nature of the agent of the verb, i.e., a pronoun with an ellipped or far antecedent.

Table 2

*Renderings of **يَمُوجُ***

The Translator	The Rendering
Abdelhalim	We shall let them surge against each other like waves
Bewely	We will abandon them, that Day, to pound against each other in surging waves
Alhilali and khan	And on that Day [i.e. the Day Yaʿjuj and Maʿjuj (Gog and Magog) will come out], We shall leave them to surge like waves on one another;
Asad	We shall [call forth all mankind and] leave them to surge like waves [that dash] against one another;
Pickthal	We shall let some of them surge against others,
Gerrans	we will leave them that day to surge one upon another.
Yusuf Ali	We shall leave them to surge like waves on one another:
Ghali	We will leave some of them surge against others
Itani	We will leave them surging upon one another.
Hammad	We shall let some of them on that Day surge “over the earth” against others.
Nasr et al.	We shall leave them, on that Day, to surge against one another like waves.
Arberry	We shall leave them surging on one another

The diverse exegeses affected the translations of **يَمُوجُ**. Alhilali and Khan (1998) presented the agent as (Gog and Magog). Asad (1980) translates it as mankind. Others refrain from specifying the agent and use pronominals with no clear antecedent linkage creating a

gap of meaning in the translations, i.e., lacunarity, by literal using literal translation. My question here is: Can the verb **يَمُوجُ** be time bound?

Now, each one of us has a specific wave (a cellphone number, an email, or a website) and we use these waves to interact with others in a “net of waves”. Straightforwardly, it is proposed here that though the prototypical set of features associated with the verb **يَمُوجُ** unquestionably link it to water movement or sea waves, the formation of updated exemplars for **يَمُوجُ** can take us into another direction given the antecedent’s undecided case. The equivalent could be surf the internet. Here, the thematic roles can be assigned as follows: the agent to **بعض** and the patient/recipient to **بعض في** suggesting that the waves form an internet. The exemplar of **يَمُوجُ** or surf the internet capture the intricacies of the (electromagnetic) waves of radio or Wi-Fi. Possibly, the antecedent can be Mankind. Importantly, any link between exemplarity and prototypicality in Quran translation should be maintained from Quran or exegeses. Fortunately, the semantic link can be drawn from sūrat ‘lkahf itself. Recall that ‘lkahf final decuplet is referred to as one unit in Hadith and exegetical resources. In the decuplet, an āyah contains an explicit order to prophet Mohamed to say or state the possibility of a link between **البحر** “the sea” and “ink of words of Allah” and I quote:

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مَدَادًا لَكَلِمَتِ رَبِّي لَنَفَذَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَذَ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ
مَدَدًا (109)

“(O Mohamed) Say if the sea were to be ink to the words of my Lord,

the sea would end up but His words would not even if We brought

one more ...” ((‘lkahf. Q. 15: 109)

Unpacking the meanings included here, first, we have an image of the continuity of Allah’s words by linking it to the sea. Second, in

Allah's order the 'image' that the prophet must communicate to us focuses on the usage of the colorless seawater as ink to Allah's words. The sea, the carrier or the exhibitor of the message, would end before Allah's words would. Neither paper nor the pen is mentioned here as part of the inking process, possibly ellipted for a reason. The divine order establishes a conceptual metaphor where the colorless seawater or sea waves represents a tool of communication just as ink (or internet) is.

An inevitable question that a linguist should contemplate about is: Should linguists/translators cling to the prototypical meaning of the lexis 'sea' or should they acknowledge that exemplars exist, extend the reference of the lexis 'sea' and the experience of waves to host other types of waves that can communicate words following the Quranic order/ conceptualization? The prudent answer would be they need to carefully assess equivalence first. Assessing equivalence, the English verb, surf, has the prototypical meaning of water waves or water movement in English and has been extended to form an exemplar to capture internet activity when it collocates with the internet. Evaluating *surf the internet* as a translation of يَمُوجُ, the case would not only be a case of conspicuous translatability on a semantic level but also on a structural level evident in the collocation of the Quranic words بعضهم...-في بعض. It is a case of one lexis that exhibits SL prototypicality-exemplarity relationship that has an identical lexical semantic relationship in English as a TL.

is used once in the whole Quran, it is يَمُوجُ Note, that while seldom used in fuṣḥā or Modern Standard Arabic. The proposed English equivalent started to be prolific in English in modern time as the internet phenomenon emerged in 1983 (and was not known to the public then). Amazingly, the semanticity of other internet terms used in English now can be semantically linked as exemplars to English lexical items denoting water (activity), i.e., stream, a tube, leak info, and log in.⁽¹⁾ Again, should we ignore the sublimity of the projections ? Out of curiosity I used يَمُوجُ signalled way in advance by the word

Google Books Ngram Viewer to find out the birth timings of “surf the internet” in contrast to “surf the sea” or “surf the waves” in English books dating from 1800 till 2019. The use of the expression surf in English to refer to internet activity is not traced until 1990. If , how can this be **يَمُوجُ** we decided not to ignore the semantics of described in linguistic terms and how can we suppress the religious subtext?

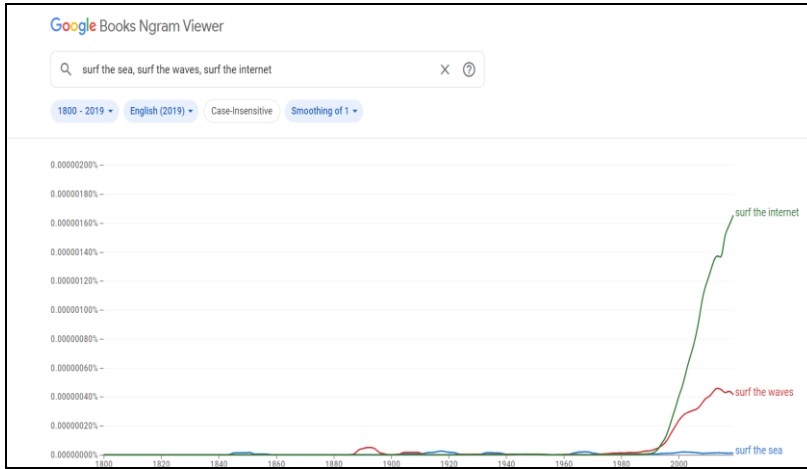


Figure 1: Google NGram of Surf

Linguistically, the usage of the verb **يَمُوجُ** with its agent **بعض** could be described as a protologism. The translation of **يموج في بعض** into “surf the internet” captures impeccably a recent exemplarity relation to waves of a recently discovered type. The proposed rendering is time bound, i.e., it would not be clear to a linguist or a translator or even an interpreter till the phenomenon itself is released in time (or till it occurs). Full semantic compatibility between the SL and TL lexis shows that the sublimity of the holy text can take us to unprecedented levels where Quranic lexes can capture epistemological features that surpass the knowledge available to man at the time of the revelation. The transparent equivalence between Arabic and English lexemes may signal an eschatological significance in conformity with exegeses, which is not within the domain of expertise of this paper. I could not relate this case to any linguistic theory that I know of any

further and decided to specify that the protologism **يَمُوجُ** here is known only to its Coiner at the time of its genesis. ⁽²⁾ The proposed translation for the āyah is:

We have let some of them surf the waves of others (for a duration unspecified) and then the Trumpet will be blown...

The Case of “بَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ”

The phrase **بَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ** [bāyt’l’nkbut] occurs in Quran in only one context in a sūrah bearing the name, **الْعَنْكَبُوتِ** ‘the spider’ [l’nkbut]. The sūrah starts with a rhetorical question to which the remainder of the sūrah is an elucidation:

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يَبْرُكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ (2) وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَذِبِينَ (3)

“Did mankind think that they would testify saying
“we have

believed” without their testimony being verified and
examined? We have
tested those before them. Verily Allah will know who
exemplified the truth in
words and deeds and those who are liars.” [My
translation]

The āyāt following the question provide consecutive failures in the test overtime. Then, we reach the immediate context of **بَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ** which is as follows:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ (41) إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (42) وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ (43)

In exegesis, the āyāt indicate the evenness of the useless endeavor of people who follow allies inferior to Allah (the first agent),

and the spider (the second agent) selecting a breakable house. (see 'bn Kṭīr, 'sa'dy, 'lbaḡwy, 'lqurtuby and 'Ṭabary). Table 3 provides translations for these āyāt. All of the translations set the similitude of endeavor between the spider building a house for herself and people seeking guidance and protection from entities other than Allah. My question here is: Can we extrapolate the Quranic similitude of a useless and baseless quest of a group of misled people following allies inferior to Allah to include their actual choice of a locative/site with characteristics similar to a spider's web? Can the similitude be in the actual name bearing as well as the fragility and the fruitless quest, i.e., can the term website or web page (which happens to be synonymous also to a home page) be a possible English equivalent?

Here, the spider's house is a prototype. The exemplar we have today forged by scientists using the same lexical item is Website (part of a larger entity known as the WEB). Semasiological and onomasiological semantic resemblance should be clearly noted in Quran translations. The website, as an exemplar, refers to a virtual fragile home. Another question is: Should we indicate in translation that the similitude here is a warning about the possibility of a (spider's) website being built by liars? Probably yes, in Quran, the presence of fragile lies and falsehoods is insinuated in this context because of the baseless claim of the misled.⁽³⁾

**Lacunarity or Conspicuous Translatability: The Internet
Phenomenon in the Holy Quran**

Table 3

Renderings of “تَبَيَّنُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ”

Translator	The Renderings
Abdelhalim	Those who take protectors other than God can be compared to spiders building themselves houses— the spider’s is the frailest of all houses—
Aisha Bewely	The metaphor of those who take protectors besides Allah is that of a spider which builds itself a house; but no house is flimsier than a spider’s house, if they only knew.
Alhilali and khan	The likeness of those who take (false deities as) Auliya’ (protectors, helpers) other than Allah is the likeness of a spider who builds (for itself) a house; but verily, the frailest (weakest) of houses is the spider’s house-if they but knew.
Arberry	The likeness of those who have taken to them protectors, apart from God, is as the likeness of the spider that takes to itself a house; and surely the frailest of houses is the house of the spider, did they but know.
Asad	THE PARABLE of those who take [beings or forces] other than God for their protectors is that of the spider which makes for itself a house: for, behold, the frailest of all houses is the spider's house. Could they but understand this! (29:42)
Ghali	The likeness of the ones who have taken to themselves patrons apart from Allah is as the likeness of the spider that takes to itself a home; and surely the feeblest of homes is indeed the spider’s house, if they knew (the Truth).
Hammad	The parable of those who take to themselves "false

	gods as" patrons "to give them shelter" apart from God, "is this": They are like the spider. It makes "for itself" a home "for refuge which cannot avail it against destruction". For, indeed, the frailest of all homes is, most surely, the spider's home if only they "who disbelieve" were to know
Yusef Ali	The parable of those who take protectors other than God is that of the Spider, who builds (to itself) a house; but Truly, the flimsiest of houses is the Spider's house
Itani	The likeness of those who take to themselves protectors other than Allah is that of the spider. It builds a house. But the most fragile of houses is the spider's house. If they only knew.
Nasr et al.	The parable of those who take protectors apart from God is that of the spider that makes a house. Truly the frailest of houses is the spider's house, if they but knew.
Pickthal	The likeness of those who choose other patrons than Allah is as the likeness of the spider when she taketh unto herself a house, and lo! the frailest of all houses is the spider's house, if they but knew.

Again, I urge for a thorough treatment of semantic prototypes and exemplars in Quran translation as they may host links to modern day concepts. The proposed translation for the āyāt is:

The similitude of those who have selected and prioritized allies –inferior to Allah- apart from Him is that of a spider selecting the making of a house for herself --And the weakest of all houses is a Spider's Web(site)--- if they were to understand—Such are the similitudes we set forth

as signs. Only the knowledgeable will reason and comprehend. [My translation]

The Case of طَائِرُهُ فِي غُنْقِهِ “ṭā’iruhū fī ‘unuqih”

The phrase طَائِرُهُ فِي غُنْقِهِ occurred once in the Quran in sūrat ‘l’isrā’. The āyāt are:

وَكُلُّ إِنْسَانٍ لَّزِمْنَهُ طَائِرُهُ فِي غُنْقِهِ ۖ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا (13) أَقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ ۖ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ

حَسِيبًا (14)

(‘l’isrā’ Q. 17: 13-14)

The āyāt present: 1) An obligation that Allah made on every ‘īnsān who has a ‘bird on the neck’; and 2) Allah’s bringing a book on the Day of Judgement, ‘īnsān’s own book, that he/she will be ordered to read by himself/herself and assess as a judge or a witness to what is in the book. In Ṭabary exegesis, Ibn Abbas mentions that the bird could be many things, it could be the collective deeds of a person in life or an omen that people despise. An exploration of translators renderings show that the bird image was treated as a lacuna in different ways (see Table 4 below). The first way of rendering either utterly dismisses the lexis “bird” or renders it as fully equivalent to destiny or fate while keeping the lexical item neck (Abdelhalim, Aisha Bewely, Alhilali and Khan, Asad, Hammad, Yusef Ali, Itani, Pickthal, and Garrans). The second type of renderings treated the bird as a sign or an augury or part of an omen while keeping the lexical item neck or dismissing it altogether. Assessing equivalence, the dismissal of the bird image inhibits reference and possible connections to the lexis. Importantly, in Islam the birdy omen or the association between a bird and destiny is not accepted following prophet Mohamed’s Hadith, *la tairat wa la tayr* (see albukhary Hadith no. 5756, Muslim Hadith no. 2224). My questions here are: What is the actual role of the bird in the neck (mental) image in here? Is there a relationship between this conceptual image and the fact that the top symbol for sending, receiving and

publishing information worldwide has been a bird till a few months ago? Amazingly, the message or the post on that platform was actually called a “tweet”. Any tweet would need a larynx which is in the neck. It is in the neck, isn’t it? Additionally, before you use “the bird in the neck” you have to actually sign an agreement to have an account. The obligation evident in [’lzmñāh] could be adhering to agreement conditions a priori.

Table 4

Renderings of طَائِرٌ فِي عُنُقِهِ

Translator	Renderings
Abdelhalim	We have bound each human being’s destiny to his neck.
Aisha Bewely	We have fastened the destiny of every man about his neck.
Alhilali and khan	And We have fastened every man’s deeds to his neck,
Arberry	And every man -- We have fastened to him his bird of omen upon his neck;
Asad	And every human being's destiny have We tied to his neck;
Ghali	And every man We have imposed on him his bird (of augury) upon his neck,
Hammad	Moreover, We have securely bound the destiny. Of every human being to its own neck in a scroll of one’s works.
Yusef Ali	Every man’s fate -We have fastened -On his own neck -On the Day of Judgement- We shall bring out for him a scroll which he will see Spread open
Itani	For every person We have attached his fate to his neck.
Nasr et al.	And [for] every man We have fastened his omen upon his neck,
Pickthal	And every man's augury have We fastened to his own neck,
Garrans	And every man, we have attached his fate to his neck.

There are other valid questions about the tabulated translations above: Do Quran translators have the right to delete an image or a sign and thus inhibit a conceptual image that could have popped up if mentally linked to a reference in the modern world thinking it to be a lacuna, or irrelevant, or probably far-fetched, and replace it by words that are more convenient for their readers? Assessing the translations, I would value keeping the bird to the ‘neck image’ in translation. If it did not signal a reference to a meaning for us, for some, perhaps it would signal a meaning for a following generation. We are not dealing with

an ordinary book to delete any image or icon from it. Thus, instead of deletion, I would keep the relationship of a published record on the day of judgement with the bird in the neck image closely associated. I would also modify man with forgetfulness acknowledging memory weakness or haughtiness in recognition of all the contexts and sentiments the lexis 'īnsān “إنسان” has been associated with in Quran (see 'Imāwsū'ah 'lqur'ānyah 'lmutaḥaṣṣah, 2002, p. 789). The following is the proposed translation within its immediate context in sūrat'l'isrā':

And every 'īnsān – every forgetful human being-
bound by terms of an agreement attaching a Bird on
his or her neck, the records will be published- wide
open on the day of judgement. Read thy records by
thyself. Let your soul be the witness against thee.
[My translation]

**The cases of لَجُوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ ('lmulk, Q.
67:21) and**

وَجْهَةً مُكَبَّأَةً عَلَى "muklānn 'la wḡhihi" ('lmulk, Q. 67:22)

In two consecutive āyāt, the two constructions are used in sūrat 'lmulk (Kingship or Dominion). The immediate context of the āyāt include three rhetorical questions about actions in the here, not in the hereafter, and are as follows:

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَكُمْ يَنْصَرُّكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنِ الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي
عُرُورٍ (20) أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنَّا أَمْنُكُمْ رَزَقْنَاكُمْ بَلْ لَجُوا فِي عُتُوٍّ
وَنُفُورٍ (21) أَمَّنْ يَمْتَشِي مُكَبَّأَةً عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَى أَمَّنْ يَمْتَشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ (22)

The construction لَجُوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ is explained in exegeses as continuing in arrogance and haughtiness by 'bn Kṭīr, 'sa'dy, 'lbaḡwy, 'lqurṭuby and 'Ṭabary. The meaning of continuity is rendered in all the explored translations in Table 5 below where the verb 'persist' is the dominant target language lexis selected in the renderings as an

equivalent to لَجُّ. Lexicologically, in addition to continuity, لَجُّ is related to voice frequency or repetition, a meaning that is utterly dismissed in the translations in favor of continuity (see 'lfayrūz 'bādiy, 1992, p. 420). Morphologically, the verb لجوا shares the same morphological origin with لجة a sea or water wave. In baṣā'ir 'tamyīz (vol. 4), 'lfayrūz 'bādiy (1992) notes that the lexis لجة البحر is about the frequency of its waves. The lexis لجة الصوت is the frequency of sound or voice. The lexis لجة الليل is the flow of its darkness (p. 420). Here, it is evident that لجة can collocate with three different types of waves: water, sound and dark color waves. This would lead to the question: Can the phrase لَجُّوا فِي عُنُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ be related to a communication method that is related to waves where words of arrogance and superiority are signaled? I suggest that it is not just the arrogance or the contempt for the truth that is revealed in the āyah, the medium of signaling that arrogance is indicated as well. The following is the proposed time bound translation:

They stream in arrogance and disdain ...

Now we come to the following āyah where the verbal phrase يَمْشِي مُكَبِّاً عَلَى وَجْهِهِ occurs. The adverb مُكَبِّاً is listed in sūrat 'lmuḥkamat uncommon Quranic words, Ġarīb 'lqur'ān, in 'ldainūri's book. The adverbial phrase يَمْشِي مُكَبِّاً عَلَى وَجْهِهِ consists of the adverb مكبا and the propositional phrase على وجهه acting together as a modifier for the verb يمشي. Here, there are three main points about the linguistics of this construction that need attention.

First, the semanticity of the modifying adverbial phrase, particularly مُكَبِّاً, creates the image of a physical separation between the agent /the person walking and his own face. Literally, it denotes that this person is leaning willingly on his own face. Syntactically, at the sentential level, the person and his face are in a binding anaphoric relationship that logically should not involve a physical separation between the two. The adverbial phrase يَمْشِي مُكَبِّاً عَلَى وَجْهِهِ, however, emphasizes the physical separation forming a question about the syntax and the semantics of the construction as a person should

logically be leaning on something, not on his own face. In exegeses, 'Iqurtuby notes that it is the case of a person whose face is down, neither looking on his right or left or forward or backward and thus not safe from falling in opposition to somebody whose face is upright. However, an interesting Hadith is reported by 'Ṭabary's in his explanation of the āyah in which the Prophet was asked about how people can walk on their faces so he replied whoever let them walk on their feet can make them walk on their faces. ⁽⁴⁾ The latter incident/Hadith means that there were questions raised about the meaning in light of the unique relationship between the semanticity and the syntax of the construction. I mean that the prototypical meanings of the lexes were not grasped as the preposition عَلَى connotes bending on the face without specifying how the walking can happen in this way.

Table 5

The renderings of لَجُوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَتُفُورٍ and مُكِبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ

Translator	Renderings
Abdelhalim	...they persist in their insolence and their avoidance of the Truth. Who is better guided: someone who falls on his face, or someone who walks steadily on a straight path?
Aisha Bewely	...they obstinately persist in insolence and evasion. Who is better guided: he who goes grovelling on his face ...
Alhilali and Khan	... they continue to be in pride, and (they) flee (from the truth). Is he who walks prone (without seeing) on his face, more rightly guided, ...
Arberry	they persist in disdain and aversion. What, is he who walks prone upon his face better guided than he who walks upright on a straight path?
Asad	... they [who are bent on denying the truth] stubbornly persist in their disdain [of God's messages] and in their headlong flight [from Him]! But then, is he that goes along with his face close to the ...
Ghali	they still insist on (their) rebellion and repulsion. Then, is he who

	walks tossed down upon his face better guided than he who walks (perfectly) level on a straight Path?
Hammad	...they persist in insolence and aversion to the truth-. Then is one who walks pitched on his face in damnation - more guided, or one who walks upright upon a straight way of salvation-?
Yusef Ali	they obstinately persist -In insolent impiety-And flight (from the Truth) Is then one who walks headlong, with his face-Grovelling, better guided, Or one who walks-Evenly on a Straight Way?
Itani	they persist in defiance and aversion. Is he who walks bent on his own design better guided, or he who walks upright on a straight path?
Nasr et al.	...they persist in insolence and aversion. " Is one who walks with his face stooped down more guided, or one who walks upright upon a straight path?
Pickthal	...they are set in pride and frowardness. Is he who goeth groping on his face more rightly guided, or he who walketh upright on a beaten road?
Garrans	...they persist in scorn and aversion. Is then he who walks prone upon his face better guided Or he who walks evenly upon a straight path

The second point is about the choice of the action by free will. Here, *يمشي*, a 3rd person singular intransitive verb form connotes moving from a position to another with freedom and no coercion; it is a chosen activity by the agent. Choice is emphasized in the rhetorical question in the āyah which includes comparison between two choices in life; moving upright or willingly choosing to move from a place to another with a head constantly down “on his face”. How can the latter be a choice?

The third point has to do with the lexicology and the morphology of the adverbial phrase. Lexicologically, 'ldainūri' notes that the order *كبا رواحلکم* means make your ride stick to the road and is similar to *تکب رجلا على العمل فيکب هو*. The latter form means that a person would diligently focus on his work if ordered to. Notably, in

the construction *مَكِبًا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ*, the origin of the verb *كَب* can be linked morphologically to water. Therefore, lexicologically and morphologically, a literal translation would be bending on his face in a state like pouring water as the morphological root *Kab* is related to water. The three points lead to the question: Can *face* in this case be time bound? How can this construction be translated?

Translators treated this uncommon phrase as a lacuna (see Table 5 above). A number of them dismissed *walk* and used *fall on* or *grovel*. Others added the ground to the phrase “that goes along with his face close to the ground” though the lexis *ground* is not mentioned in the ST. The translators who used *walk* added adverbs and descriptions that are not given in the āyah; *walk prone on his face* (indicating predisposition), *walks tossed down upon his face* (indicating coercion), *walks pitched on his face in damnation* (indicating that the action is a divine punishment), *walks headlong with his face groveling* (indicating a creepy situation which is not signaled in the āyah), and *walks bent on his own design* (design is not mentioned in the āyah, *face* is). The interpretations provided so far leaves one question: How could someone walk and bend on his face (with a suggestion of water being poured down)? Recall that the previous āyah signals water activity: *لَجُورًا فِي عُنُقٍ وَتُفَوِّرُ*. Can this be relevant to people having personal profiles displaying *faces*. Again, should we ignore the prototypical and exemplar meanings of this construction? Well, some translators ignored it. The common factor between the translations is that no resonance with a present day usage is exhibited in any of the renderings.

The case of *لَيْسُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ* “*ysu’ ū wuḡūhakum*” (’*l’isrā’*. Q. ١٧:٧)

So far, there has been an emphasis on the validity of keeping Quranic expressions as faithful to the original as possible and on managing lacunarity prudently as a Quranic lexis might be semantically time bound and might host lexicological nuances that can be revealing. The construction *لَيْسُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ* may run in the same vein. The exemplar of the lexis *مَكِبًا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ* could

be extrapolated here as well. The construction **لَيْسُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ** appeared once in Quran in l'isrā':

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسُوءُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ وَيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَلِيَبُتَرُوا مَا عَلَوْا تَتْبِيرًا

In exegesis, 'lbaḡwy and 'lqurṭuby explain the meaning of the construction **لَيْسُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ** as possibly to bring sadness to faces. By way of a comparison of conciseness, it has to be noted that in sūrat 'lmuḡādlh (Q. 58:10) one verb denoting causing sadness; **الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا** **لِيَحْزَنَ** is used where the agent is mentioned with no locative of sadness as it could be in the heart or the face or both. Taking a different exegetical direction, 'Ṭabary went for an explanation of a physical damage to the faces, i.e., **ليَقْبَحُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ**. Ibn katheer explains that it is emotional related to insult and oppression, **يهينوكم ويقهروكم**. It is evident here that there is no consensus on the nature of the bad deed happening to the faces as it could be emotional (e.g., sadness) or physical (e.g., injury). The present tense of the verb signals continuity and is associated with two other actions. Is it shame that is being signaled? Shame is not clear here, by way of a comparison, shame is clearly signaled in sūrat 'lfath **فَتُصِيبُكُم مِّنْهُمْ مَّعَرَّةٌ**. My point here is that sadness, shame, injury or oppression are possible forms of the bad deed that could happen to the faces if we followed the prototypical meaning. The prototypical meaning of the word **وجه** face is that it refers to the front part of a person or a thing. Being vertical in design, bringing any bad thing to the face would not remain in place due to its shape. This led some translators to interpret the action as causing harm to the face so they use verbs like injure, vex, ravage or wrretch. Table 6 below provides the renderings of the construction **لَيْسُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ** where the meaning of disgracing a face with shame is also present. Also, there was a choice of another equivalent “to do odious deeds” which avoids explicitly the meaning of injuring. My question is: What if there is an exemplar to the prototypical meaning of face? An exemplar or an extension to the term has linguistically emerged in our modern time as *face* has become a virtual entity. Semantically, reference to the

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word face could extend to include a platform where people can access and comment. Bad comments or negative feedback can stick in to damage people's *faces*. I suggest that that the construction may host signals of an internet associated phenomenon. The exemplar or extension of reference in today's world would be equivalent to a negative comment or feedback.

Table 6

Renderings of لَيْسُوا وَجُوهَكُمْ

Translator	Rendering
Abdelhalim	... [We sent them] to shame your faces...
Aisha Bewely	... it was so that they could injure you...
Alhilali and Khan	...(We permitted your enemies) to disgrace your faces...
Arberry	...We sent against you Our servants to discountenance you...
Asad	...[We raised new enemies against you, and allowed them] to disgrace you utterly
Ghali	... (other bondmen of Ours) are to deface (Literally: to vex your faces, i.e. to do odious deeds to you) ...
Hammad	your enemies were left to defile you very faces.
Yusef Ali	...(we permitted your enemies)To disfigure your faces...
Itani	...they will make your faces filled with sorrow...
Nasr et al.	...they will make wretched your faces...
Pickthal	...(We roused against you others of Our slaves) to ravage you...
Garrans	...they should disgrace your countenances...

The case of فَلْيَبْئُتَنَّ عَادَانِ الْأَنْعَمِ

The verbal phrase فَلْيَبْئُتَنَّ عَادَانِ الْأَنْعَمِ occurred in Quran only once and is referred to as having lexes of uncommon lexicological usage (Ġarīb 'lqur'ān). The āyah appears in sūrat'nisā' which addresses several (money) issues of marriage, inheritance, debt and prohibits usury. The phrase is part of the reported speech of Satan

where he lays out his swaggering plan to mislead Mankind after damnation and I quote:

...وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَّرِيدًا (117) لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَالَ لَأَتَّخِذَنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا (118) وَلَا ضِلَالَهُمْ وَلَا ضَلَالَنَّهُمْ وَلَا مَنِيْنَهُمْ وَلَا مَرْنَهُمْ فَلْيُبَيِّنَنَّ عَادَانِ الْآتَعَمِ وَلَا مَرْنَهُمْ فَلْيَغْيِرَنَّ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ... (119)

(‘nisā’, Q. ٤: 117-١١٩).

The exegesis of *فَلْيُبَيِّنَنَّ عَادَانِ الْآتَعَمِ* is that it is possibly relevant to an old pagan practice known as *bahīrah* where pagan Arabs marked the livestock they intended to sacrifice to their gods by cutting off or tearing apart their ears (see ‘bn Kfīr, ‘sa‘dy, ‘lbaḡwy, ‘lqurṭuby and ‘Ṭabary). Obviously, this interpretation restricts the meaning of the construction to a specific time and a long gone practice. The phrase is followed by Satan’s order to his followers *فَلْيَغْيِرَنَّ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ* [I will order them to change God’s creation]. In exegetical resources, the phrase *فَلْيَغْيِرَنَّ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ* is said to be different from *فَلْيُبَيِّنَنَّ عَادَانِ الْآتَعَمِ* [cutting the ears of cattle as a pagan ritual] as the former refers to a specific meaning of emasculation of animals and a general meaning include any change in Allah’s religion (‘Ṭabary). Table 7 below presents translations of the construction where synonyms of “cut the ears of cattle” are used dominantly.

Table 7

Renderings of فَلْيُبَيِّنَنَّ عَادَانِ الْآتَعَمِ

Translator	Renderings
Abdelhalim	I will command them to slit the ears of cattle.
Aisha Bewely	I will command them and they will cut off cattle’s ears.
Alhilali and khan	certainly, I will order them to slit the ears of cattle,
Arberry	I will command them and they will cut off the cattle’s ears;
Asad	and they will cut off the ears of cattle [in idolatrous sacrifice];

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Ghali	and indeed I will definitely command them (and) so indeed they will definitely cut off the cattle's ears;
Hammad	And they shall slit the ears of cattle in false ritual.
Yusef Ali	I will order them to slit the ears [o]f cattle and to deface the (fair) nature created [b]y God.
Itani	and I will prompt them to slit the ears of cattle,
Nasr et al.	I shall command them and they will slit the ears of cattle
Pickthal	I will command them and they will cut the cattle's ears,
Garrans	And I will command them and they will cut the ears of cattle And I will command then and they will change the creation of God

The question here is: Can prototypicality and exemplarity be at play here? Possibly, yes. Explaining my point would need tracking semantic/referential changes that the Quranic word **الانعام** underwent overtime. It is evident that the lexis 'l'n'ām went through an important semantic/referential change in the development of money/currency usage. While the lexis is defined exegetically and lexicologically as referring to livestock, it is well defined in economics as the currency of trade referred to as commodity money in the original/ancient bartering system. Importantly, an āyah in the Quran establishes the linguistic/ referential links between **الانعام** [livestock] and business contracts and deals, and I quote:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَوفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ أَجَلْتُ لَكُمْ بِهَيْمَةِ ٱلْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرِ مُجْلِى ٱلصَّيِّدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ
مَا يُرِيدُ (1)

(ʿImāʿidah, Q. ٥ :1)

O you who believe in Allah, fulfill your contract obligations.

Lawful to you are graminivore livestock animals except what have been recited

to you [in the Holy Quran]. Hunting is not permitted in the state of

Ithram (Umrah and Haj). Allah decrees what he intends.

The phrase *الأنعام* is used solely in reference to creatures who have souls but no reason, i.e., cattle or livestock. The lexical category *الأنعام* may allow for many things that we own or possess not just cattle or livestock as provided in the following āyah:

وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ وَمِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ (5) وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرْجَعُونَ وَحِينَ يُسْرَحُونَ (6) وَتَحْمِلُ أَوْقَالَكُمْ إِلَى بَلَدٍ
لَمْ تَكُونُوا بِهِ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرْءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ (7) وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (8)

(‘nāhl, Q. ١٦: 5-8)

And cattle He has created for you, from them you get warmth and benefits

and on them you feed. And in them there is beauty when you bring

them home in the evening and when you lead them early in the morning. They carry your heavy belongings to a land that you would not be able to reach save with difficulty. Indeed, your Lord is Compassionate and Merciful. And He has created horses, mules and donkeys for

you to ride and as adornments and He created other things that you do not know of.

In our modern time, livestock is no longer used as currency or money. Particularly, change in currencies started with the use of metallic

money (e.g., silver, copper and gold) followed by the advent of paper money, i.e., bills, at a later stage. This marks a huge semantic referential change that should be signaled in Quran translation (studies). Furthermore, an important question would follow in the semantic exploration of the construction **فَلْيَبْذُكُوا أَزْوَاجَهُمْ**: What is the meaning of the plural word **أَزْوَاجَهُمْ** in this context? In *lisān 'l'rab*, **أذن** is a polysemous Arabic lexis. Particularly, 'ibn manzūr (1992/1414H), clarifies that it connotes **مقبض** the handle of anything that enables holding it (Volume 13, p. 11). Here, 'ibn manzūr illustrates that **أذن الكوز** [literally the ear of a cup], is the handle that enables holding that cup. It follows from 'ibn manzūr's example of **أذن الكوز** that **أذن** can be related to an animate or an inanimate entity. Straightforwardly, I suggest that **أذن الأنعام**, cattle and sheep, represent the prototype of currency or money used at ancient times while the other forms, silver, gold, or paper bills are exemplars, or extensions of the original term. Here, silver, gold, and paper money could be **أذن الأنعام** or **مقابض الأنعام** that facilitates possession or holdings of wealth in different forms. Notably, there are sacred documentation rules concerning trade, business deals and debt that stress proper certifying and documentation of deals (see *sūrat albaqarah* (282), *sūrat 'nisā'* and *'Imā'idah*). Now, can we draw semantic connections between Satan's order of a tearing apart (btk), the semanticity of **أذن الأنعام** and the sacred rules of documenting contracts (see *sūrat albaqarah* (282)). Can Satan's braggish scheme be extrapolated to our modern time as cutting or tearing apart money or the sacred rules of documenting ownership/holding of **الأنعام**? Can we relate this to the presence of an emerging technology, i.e., digital currencies. What provides some motivation to my questions is that the controversial technology has been heavily criticized by AlAzhar, Egypt as well as 'mānit 'lfatwāh of Dār 'l'iftā' Imasryiah as it allows for the elimination of a trusted authority (Contract witnesses), improper identification or lack of credentials of both the seller and the buyer in the process of buying and selling and importantly it does not have a specific basis for

determining its actual value or worth (see Dār 'l'iftā''lmasryiah Juridicial Opinion given by Shawqi Allam, Former Mufti of Egypt).

Commentary and Conclusion

Numerous āyāt host a unique semantic class of Quranic lexes. Some of these lexes belong to Ġarīb 'lqur'ān and should not be treated as lacunae without proper investigation. Linguists need to address the issue of having lexical semantic indicators that surpass the time and the knowledge of interpreters of Quran and that can be analyzed semantically using semantic prototype and exemplar theories. Via exploring semantic, lexicological and contextual analyses of seven Quranic constructions possessing semasiological and onomasiological features that are argued to report or project several semanticity features of internet phenomena way in advance, this study draws attention to the need to having a systematic linguistic approach to a Quranic linguistic phenomenon, a valid stand, that I refer to as "Conspicuous Time-bound Translatability". The stand may run opposite to the well-established untranslatability stand and could actually be the prime cause of it. Evidently, lacunarity or incompatibility between Quranic Arabic and TLs is not only about an impoverished TL or a rich SL where cases of matchlessness would emerge, it has other facets. The theories are quite applicable to Quran translation as a process requiring a mental comparison of the lexical semantic features representing the sense or core meaning of words in Quranic Arabic and the TL in addition to the cultural and contextual bearings which would need to be carefully thought about by linguists.

Notes:

- (1) Etymologically, the term log means to record the speed of a ship sailing at sea to record its progress.
- (2) Protologism is a term presented by Mickail Epstein (2003). It refers to an original term circulated only by its coiner, and thus known only to him.
- (3) Interestingly, the spider's web is also mentioned in the Old Testament (King James Version of the Bible), and I quote: (1) "The **spider** taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces" (Proverbs 30:28, King James Bible); (2) "So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish: Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a **spider's web**. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure." (Job 8: 13-15, King James Bible) and (3) "None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave **the spider's web**: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands." (Isaiah 59: 4-6, King James Bible).
Amazingly, in *sūrat l' nkbūt*, a number of *āyāt* refer to previous Holy Books that reads:

وَلَا تُدْخِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأَنْزَلَ الْبُكْمَ وَالْهَكْمَ وَجَدَّ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ (46) وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ فَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الْكَافِرُونَ (47) وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذَا لَأَزْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ (48) بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الظَّالِمُونَ (49)

- (4) 'bn Kīr reports a similar Hadith but the verb is يحشر "gather" not walk.

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