Foreignization and Domestication in Translating Culture-Specific Items: A Case Study of Yusuf Ali's Surah Al-Baqarah

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Abstract: Translation of culture-specific items (CSIs) has always posed a challenge for translators, as these items are deeply rooted in the culture of the source language. To address this issue, scholars have proposed various translation strategies. This study aimed to achieve two objectives: (1) to explore the translation strategies employed by Yusuf Ali in his English translation of CSIs in Surah Al-Baqarah, based on Venuti's (1995) theoretical framework of domestication and foreignization, and (2) to categorize the types of CSIs found in the text. The study adopted a qualitative approach, collecting data from the second chapter of the Noble Qur'an. The findings revealed that the translator employed both strategies. Domestication was the most frequently used strategy (67%), whereas foreignization was employed less often (33%). In terms of CSI categories, proper nouns were the most dominant (39.66%), followed by religious activities (25.86%) and material culture (20.69%). The ecology and miscellaneous categories were less common, comprising 3.45% and 10.34%, respectively. The results of this study could be beneficial for both translation students and practitioners in the field, helping them become familiar with the most influential strategies for rendering CSIs.

INTRODUCTION

The translation serves as a means of communication between different languages. It is a craft in which a written message in one language is replaced by the same message in another language. A good translation has the same impact on the target language (TL) audience as the original text does in the source language (SL). Translators must be aware of various aspects to produce high-quality translations (Newmark, 1988). Among these aspects, one particularly challenging area is the translation of religious texts, such as the Quran, which presents unique difficulties for translators. According to Beaugrande (2003), the Noble Qur'an is among the

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most challenging religious books for translators. Although the Noble Qur'an is regarded as "a major human contribution in cross-cultural interfertilization" (Abdul Raof, 2001, p. 1), its translation into other languages remains a questionable and disputable matter among Muslims due to its sacred nature (Siddiek, 2012). There is a consensus that the Noble Qur'an is untranslatable, meaning that no translation can truly convey the essence of the Noble Qur'an itself (Irving, 1985; Turner, 1997; Moir, 2009; Abdul-Raof, 2018). It is also closely associated with Islam and Arabic cultures, making it challenging to translate into another language. Even the most proficient translators have faced numerous problems and challenges in their efforts to translate the Qur'an (Tabrizi & Mahmud, 2013). The Noble Qur'an itself, in Chapter Israa Verse 88, states:

"قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا" سورة الإسراء: ٨٨

(Translation: "If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Noble Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support." (Quran 2:88, trans. Ali, 1983)

One challenge faced by translators of the Noble Qur'an is the translation of Culture-Specific Items (CSIs), which refer to concepts unique to a particular culture (Persson, 2015). For example, in the verse إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوِ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ, the Qur'anic term يَطَّوَّفَ [Tawaf] has no direct English equivalent, as it is specific to the Arabic language and Islamic cultural practices. Translating such items is particularly challenging. While there may be equivalents for some of these items in the target culture, many are unique to the source culture. Issa and Hammood (2020) claim that even the believers of Islam—whether native or non-native speakers—sometimes find it challenging to comprehend specific lexical units, known as Qur'anic-specific words. Given that the Noble Qur'an is a highly sensitive text, translators must pay close attention to these items, as any mistranslation may result in distortion of its meaning (Ayyad & Mahadi, 2019). To avoid such problems, translators must have a comprehensive knowledge of both cultures (Obeidat & Mahadi, 2019). Furthermore, it is essential to apply translation strategies and procedures that either approximate these terms or provide acceptable compensation for any inevitable cultural loss. (Al-Azzam et al., 2015).

To address this problem, scholars have suggested several translation strategies. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), for example, proposed strategies such as literal translation, borrowing, explicitation, and modulation procedures. Similarly, Newmark (1988) introduced procedures like cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, description, and notes. However, Ayyad and Mahadi (2021) argue that certain translation strategies proposed by scholars may not be suitable for rendering religious texts. For instance, the omission procedure is considered unsuitable for translating the Qur'an because a translator cannot simply omit the words of Allah. When a translator faces items that do not have direct equivalents in the TL, they should employ an appropriate strategy to convey the intended meaning as accurately as possible. Although some of these words might have equivalents in the TL, most are unique to the source culture and are not found in the TL culture. Nida (2000) asserts that cultural

differences between the SL and the TL can present greater challenges for translators than structural variations between the two languages.

Among many translation strategies, two commonly used approaches are domestication and foreignization. The former involves adjusting the text to fit the linguistic and cultural norms of the audience. In fact, it intends to produce a translation that reads naturally and fluently in the TL, which may require altering the text's structure or style for better comprehension by the target audience. The latter, on the other hand, refers to preserving as much original content as possible, even though the translation may be more difficult for the target audience to comprehend. The purpose of this strategy is to maintain not only the style and tone of the original text but also the cultural and linguistic differences between the source and target languages (Venuti, 1995). In other words, a translator needs to be either author-oriented or reader-oriented (Schleiermacher, 1992).

A few studies have been conducted worldwide on the question under investigation (Fallah Tafti, 2016; Robati, 2016; Ayyad & Mahadi, 2019; Valipoor, Heidari Tabrizi, & Chalak, 2019; El Haj Ahmed & Abu Shammala, 2020; Ayyad, Obeidat, & Mahadi, 2021). However, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, a gap remains in studies examining CSIs and the translation strategies applied in translating them in Surah Al-Baqarah, particularly through the lens of Yusuf Ali's translation. Furthermore, existing research has not adequately explored the translation strategies employed in translating CSIs in Surah Al-Baqarah, especially their classification. Thus, the present study aims to address these deficiencies by exploring the translation strategies—domestication and foreignization—employed by Yusuf Ali (1934) in translating CSIs in Surah Al-Baqarah (The Cow). Additionally, the study aims to identify and categorize the CSIs present in the text.

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge by identifying the types of CSIs present in Surah Al-Baqarah and the strategies used to translate them. The findings may also serve as a baseline for future research exploring translation strategies for other religious texts. In addition, this research offers practical insights for translators working with religious texts, notably the Noble Qur'an, by presenting effective strategies for rendering and addressing the challenges related to CSIs. By understanding appropriate translation strategies, translators can improve the quality of their work, ensuring that the intended meanings are conveyed accurately without distorting the original message. The study may also benefit publishers and associations involved in producing translations of religious texts, serving as a valuable reference for those interested in translation practices and theories related to sacred texts.

Research Questions

Q1: Which translation strategy—domestication or foreignization—has the translator used in translating culture-specific items in Surah Al-Baqarah?

Q2: What is the frequency of each translation strategy used in translating culture-specific items in Surah Al-Baqarah?

Q3: What culture-specific items are found in Surah Al-Baqarah?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Translation of the Noble Qur'an

The Noble Qur'an is regarded as the sacred scripture for Muslims, written originally in the Arabic language. Given its importance, it has been translated into various languages, including English, Persian, French, and Spanish. Such translations are considered part of conveying Allah's message to Muslims and furthering the propagation of Islam (Peachy, 2013). Abdul-Raof (2001) also notes that the translation of the Noble Qur'an is a significant contribution to humanity and a vital means of fostering cross-cultural understanding. Furthermore, since it is initially in Arabic and contains numerous Islamic concepts unfamiliar to non-Muslims, it is essential to translate it into other languages so that those seeking the truth can understand the word of Allah (Manafi Anari & Sanjarani, 2016). Without its translation, it is undoubtedly challenging to convey its virtues effectively to both Muslims and non-Muslims (Hilmi et al., 2014). Therefore, translating this divine Scripture into other languages is crucial not only to spread its messages and teachings to all Muslims around the world, but also to promote global harmony through its humanitarian virtues.

However, despite these efforts, translating the Noble Qur'an presents challenges. Allaithy (2020) notes that it is even challenging for translators and linguists. The translatability and untranslatability of the Noble Qur'an have remained controversial issues since its revelation. The issue of whether it should be translated or read in its original language has been the subject of much debate among religious scholars and translation experts (Anari & Sanjarani, 2016). Some scholars, such as Manafi Anari (2003), claim that the Noble Qur'an is linguistically sublime, eloquent, and unmatched; its unique and remarkable characteristics could not be challenged, even by the most skilled and prominent rhetoricians of its time. They reason that it is inimitable both in terms of its form and content, and its miraculous nature is evident in the perfection of its Arabic language, which prevents it from being translated into other languages with total equivalence. Likewise, Rahman (1988) believes that translating the Noble Qur'an into another language can never achieve a satisfactory level. This notion is further supported by Dastjerdi and Jamshidian (2011), who argue that "the Noble Qur'an is untranslatable due to its use of the untranslatable in its text" (p. 141).

As noted by Manafi Anari (2003), the untranslatability of the Noble Qur'an can be examined from two angles: linguistic and theological. He points out that linguistic challenges are typically seen as barriers in poetry translation. However, in the case of the word of Allah, a theological element also contributes to the untranslatability of divine verses. This element is the 'divine presence' found in the original text, which will certainly not be present in any translation. Ali et al. (2012) also note that the linguistic and stylistic features of the Noble Qur'an pose challenges for translators.

Manafi Anari (2003) adds that from a theological standpoint, no translation of the Noble Qur'an holds the same sacredness as the original text, which is why reciting Noble Qur'anic

verses in their original Arabic during canonical prayers and other acts of worship is essential to receiving the grace of the Divine Book. The Noble Qur'an's original text is sacred not because it is written in Arabic but because it is the exact words spoken by Allah. As a result, the 'Divine presence' within it cannot be transferred into a translation written in human words and style. He further considers the notion of total equivalence to be an unrealistic concept that can never be realized in the translation of the Word of Allah, as he believes that the theological aspects of the Noble Qur'an will inevitably be absent in any translation of the Holy Book.

Saeed (2008) also contends that the Noble Qur'an is untranslatable because it is the word of Allah, and its unique style is unmatched; that is to say, no one can write anything in Arabic that resembles the Noble Qur'an. Thus, it cannot be rendered into any other language. Meanwhile, Moir (2009) emphasizes that translating the Noble Qur'an could lead to a "loss of its authority and authenticity" (p. 32). Also, Ramli and Baker (2021) report that "it is found that some scholars opposed the Noble Qur'an translation by non-Muslims because the translation would eliminate i'jaz al-Noble Qur'an" (p. 487).

In line with other scholars, Abdul-Raof (2001) states that the translation should be considered an interpretation of the Noble Qur'an's underlying meanings rather than a substitute for the original text. He further asserts that it is essential to distinguish between the Noble Qur'an and its translations. Murata and Chittick (19950 also say:

A translation of the Koran is not the Koran but an interpretation of its meaning. The Koran has been translated dozens of times into English. Each translation represents one person's understanding of the text; each is significantly different from the others, and none is the Koran itself. There is but one word, but there are as many interpretations of that word as there are readers (p.10).

Atta Ur Rahman (2023) also maintains that the translation is considered the act of reconstructing a text into another language. The Holy Noble Qur'an mentions in Surah Yousuf: "We have sent it down as an Arabic Noble Qur'an." The translated text is typically regarded as a commentary, explanation, or paraphrasing of the source text. Generally speaking, an exact translation is never fully achieved; it can be considered solely a straightforward interpretation of the Noble Qur'an.

Overall, regardless of how precise the translations of the Noble Qur'an may be, they will never serve as true substitutes for the original (Aldahesh, 2014). Nevertheless, scholars continued their efforts to translate the Noble Qur'an. Some translations were produced by non-Muslims, such as George Sale and Alexander Ross, who were not influenced by the controversy among Muslim scholars. In fact, the early work of non-Muslim translators encouraged Muslims outside the Arab world to translate the Noble Qur'an into their own languages (Woolworth, 1927, as cited by Betty Mauli & Rika Astari, 2018).

Culture-Specific Items (CSIs)

According to Baker (2011), CSIs refer to words in the SL that may express a concept entirely foreign to the target culture. Likewise, Gambier (2007) points out that CSIs can also relate to various aspects of a specific community or people's lives, such as names of people and places, clothing, religious practices, transportation, sports, and more. Additionally, Li et al. (2010) describe them as "unique and specialized in their nation's culture" (p. 695). Such items may arise from an intercultural gap between the source and target languages (Daghoughi & Hashemian, 2016).

Moreover, CSIs are referred to as the "most troublesome elements of a translation" (Blažytė & Liubinienė, 2016, p. 42). As mentioned by Ayyad and Mahadi (2020), they are deeply embedded in a particular culture and are almost untranslatable. Furthermore, Ordudar (2007) says that one of the "most challenging tasks" for a translator is translating CSIs (p. 8). Translators must be aware of cultural differences between the source and target cultures in order to translate them efficiently (Bracaj, 2015). It is also important for translators to choose words from the TL that effectively convey both the connotative meaning and the cultural relevance of the CSIs (Bassnett, 2011). More importantly, to address the challenges of translating CSIs, numerous translation strategies and procedures have been proposed to aid translators in accurately rendering the meanings of these items.

Culture-specific Items in the Noble Qur'anic Context

As previously discussed, the term 'culture-specific' refers to elements that lack equivalents in the target reader's cultural context, thereby creating difficulty in translating their meanings and functions from the source text to the target. This suggests that the word in the SL might convey an idea that is entirely unknown to the culture of the TL. In terms of CSIs, Kashgary (2011) notes that religious concepts are highly culture-specific. They constitute a significant category of translation non-equivalence since their dictionary equivalents do not provide an accurate translation of them. For instance, the Arabic term زكاة (zakāt) is often translated into English with single words like "charity" or "alms," as done by many notable Qur'an translators. However, these equivalent terms do not accurately convey the underlying meaning of the Arabic word as Muslims interpret it. To approximate its whole meaning, it is better to translate it by describing its conditions and adding a qualifier such as "obligatory" or "ordained" to its English translation. Zakat, for example, can be defined as "an obligatory amount of a person's property given to the poor and needy."

Abdul-Raof (2001) also argues that while certain concepts may be, absolute equivalence is never achieved. For instance, he states that the terms (الصلوة – prayers) and (الحج – pilgrimage) exist in both Islam and other religions. However, the core essence of these concepts is entirely different between Arabic and other languages. The Noble Qur'an is replete with such items, each representing unique Islamic concepts that exist solely in the Arabic language of the Noble Qur'an. These terms, which are crucial in communicating the message of the Noble

Qur'an, are so complex and rich in meaning that finding even an approximate equivalent in other languages is virtually impossible (Anari & Sanjarani, 2016).

Atta Ur Rahman (2023) adds that when translating the Noble Qur'an, its language, CSI items, and rhetorical features cannot be imitated and reproduced in other languages. Translating such concepts is a challenging task because they hold unique meanings tied to their original culture and language.

Moreover, the translation of such concepts "involves not just two languages, but a transfer from one culture to another" (Hervey &Higgins, 1992, p. 28). The translator may encounter significant challenges, mainly when no exact or even approximate equivalent exists to convey the underlying meaning (Issa & Hammood, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

Given the numerous translation strategies for translating CSIs, this study opted to employ Venuti's (1995) model, which encompasses both domestication and foreignization. This model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how translations can either bring the text closer to the target culture (domestication) or retain elements of the source culture (foreignization). By applying his framework, this study aims to systematically examine the translation strategies used by Yusuf Ali in translating the CSIs of Surah Al-Baqarah. In addition, this study adapted elements from Newmark's (1988) classification of CSIs, specifically the categories of Ecology (including flora, fauna, winds, plains, and hills) and Material Culture (encompassing food, clothing, housing, and transport). However, to capture the full range of CSIs in Surah Al-Baqarah, the model was further expanded with three additional categories: Proper Nouns, Religious Activities, and Miscellaneous, developed specifically for this study.

RESEARCH METHOD

The current study used a descriptive-analytic approach to analyze data drawn from the Noble Qur'an and its translation by Yusuf Ali (1934). Descriptive studies are categorized into three types: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed; this study falls under the qualitative category. Furthermore, the study employed content analysis to examine the translation systematically. This method enables the identification and analysis of the translation strategies—domestication and foreignization—employed by the translator. The research design also includes a comparative analysis of CSIs present in the source text and their corresponding translations.

The Corpus of the Study

The data were collected from the second chapter (Surah) of the Holy Noble Qur'an, Al-Baqara (The Cow), and its English translation by Yusuf Ali (1934). The former is primary data (source text), while the latter is secondary data (target text). The units of analysis were words and phrases. The transliteration of the Noble Qur'an's phrases was obtained from the website "transliteration.org" to ensure their accurate representation. The present study leveraged

parallel corpora, which comprise both the source text (ST) and its translation. The reason for selecting Surah Al-Baqarah for gathering data was that it is the longest Surah, with 286 verses, which includes numerous instances of CSIs. In total, 58 cases were identified in the Surah, making it an ideal source for obtaining the necessary data for this research. The reason for choosing Yusuf Ali's translation was that it is among the most widely read English Translations of the Noble Qur'an in the English-speaking world. Moreover, some previous studies have also employed the same strategies for translating CSIs (Haj Ahmed & Abu Shammala, 2020).

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

In collecting data and analyzing it, the following steps and procedures were taken into account. Firstly, the researcher read both the original text of the Noble Qur'an in Arabic and its English translation by the translator. The researcher then reviewed the entire chapter of Al-Baqarah and its English translations multiple times, examining each verse and its translation to identify and extract instances of CSIs.

In classifying the CSIs, the study adapted Peter Newmark's (1988) model. It retained two of his original categories—Ecology and Material Culture—while introducing additional categories to better align with the text's religious nature. These new categories are Proper Nouns, Religious Activities, and Miscellaneous.

After categorizing the CSIs, the researchers placed all instances from both source text and target text on the table and compared the extracted ones from the original version with their corresponding parts in the English translation. The comparison aimed to determine which translation strategy was used for translating each CSI based on the model. Following that, the number of domestication and foreignization strategies used in translating the items was determined and classified, along with the respective verse numbers. Finally, the frequency and percentages of each strategy were summarized in tables and illustrated in figures to provide an overview of their distribution and application.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting the data, the instances of CSIs were presented in two tables, with the frequency and percentage of each strategy calculated and reported as follows:

Table 1. Foreignized Culture-Specific Items

No.	Verse	Transliteration	Verse No.	English Translation
1	الم	A.L.M	1	A.L.M
2	وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مَّثْلِهِ	Sūra	23	Surah
3	وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا	Ādam	31	Adam
4	وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ	Iblīs	34	Iblis
5	يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ	Isrā'īl	40	Israel
6	وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ	mannā	57	Manna
7	إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَىٰ وَالصَّابِئِينَ	Şābi'īna	62	Sabians

8	وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَوْا مِنكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ	Sabti	65	Sabbath
9	وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ	Hārūta Wa Mārūta	102	Harut and Marut
10	قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا	Imāmāan	124	Imam
11	وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ	Ismā`īla	125	Isma`il
12	سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّاهُمْ عَن قِبْلَتِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا	Qiblatihimu	142	Qiblah
13	وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا	Ummatan	143	Ummah
14	إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ	Aş-Şafā	158	Safa
15	إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ	Al-Marwata	158	Marwa
16	شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ	Ramađāna	185	Ramadan
17	شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ	Al-Qur'ānu	185	Noble Qur'an
18	وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ	Al-Ĥajja Wa Al-`Umrata	196	Hajj or `Umra
19	فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُم مِّنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِندَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ	Arafātin	198	Arafat

As shown in Table 1, a total of 19 instances of foreignized CSIs were identified in the English translation of Surah Al-Baqarah. These CSIs were directly transferred from Arabic into English without being domesticated, preserving their cultural and religious significance. While some of these terms appeared more than once throughout the Surah, the analysis focused on identifying unique instances, without calculating the frequency of repeated occurrences. Examples of foreignized items include names such as Adam, Iblis, and Israel, which retain their religious and historical significance. Religious concepts, such as the Noble Qur'an, Ramadan, and Hajj, were also preserved in their original form to maintain their intended meaning. Places like *Safa*, *Marwa*, and *Arafat* were also left unchanged because of their importance in Islamic rituals. By using foreignization, the translation preserves these important terms as they are, enabling readers to understand the original Islamic context of the text.

Table 2: *Domesticated Culture-Specific Items*

No.	Verse	Transliteration	Verse #	English Translation
1	وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُم بِمُؤْمِنِينَ	Bil-Yawmi Al-'Ākhiri	8	the Last Day
2	وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ	Bil-Kāfirīna	19	But God is ever round the rejecters of Faith!
3	ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ	Samāwātin	29	Heavens
4	وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ	Al-Malā'ikati	31	Angels
5	وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ	Zakāata	43	Charity
6	وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُم مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ	Fir`awna	49	Pharaoh
7	وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ	Al-Furqāna	53	Criterion(evidence, proof)
8	وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا	Al-Qaryata	58	town
9	اهْبِطُوا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُم مَّا سَأَلْتُمْ	Mişrāan	61	Town(land, city,region)
10	وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ	Aţ-Ţūra	63	mount
11	وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ	Rusuli	87	Apostles

|				
12	قُلْ مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّجِبْرِيلَ	Lijibrīla	97	Gabriel
13	مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِّلْكَافِرِينَ	Mīkāla	98	Michael
14	وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُو الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَى مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ	Sulaymāna	102	Solomon
15	وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ	Bibābila	102	Babylon
16	وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصَارَى عَلَى شَيْءٍ	Al-Yahūdu	113	Jews
17	وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصَارَى عَلَى شَيْءٍ	An-Naṣārá	113	Christians
18	وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ	Masājida	114	places for the worship of God
19	وَإِذِ ابْتَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ	Ibrāhīma	124	Abraham
20	مَقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ	Maqāmi 'Ibrāhīma	125	the station of Abraham
21	وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى	Muṣallan	125	place of prayer
22	أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ	Lilṭṭā'ifīna	125	compass it round
23	رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً	Ummatan	128	People
24	وَوَصَّى بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ	Wa Ya`qūbu	132	Jacob
25	وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ	Wa 'Isĥāqa	133	Isaac
26	وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ	Mūsá	136	Moses
27	وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ	Īsá	136	Jesus
28	مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ	Ṣirāṭin Mustaqīmin	142	a way that is straight
29	الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ	Al-Masjidi Al-Ĥarāmi	144	Sacred Mosque
30	يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا	Ĥalālāan	168	lawful
31	وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ	Ash-Shayṭāni	168	the evil
32	يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلَى	Al-Qiṣāṣu	178	the law of equality
33	يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ	Aṣ-Ṣiyāmu	183	Fasting
34	فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ	Fa`iddatun	184	from days later
35	فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ	Fidyatun	184	ransom
36	وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ	Al-Masājidi	187	Mosques
37	الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ	Ash-Shahru Al-Ĥarāmu	194	the prohibited month
38	وَأَنفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ	Wa 'Anfiqū	195	spend
39	أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ	Ṣadaqatin	196	feed the poor

As indicated in Table 2, 39 cases of domestication were traced in the data. This strategy has been adapted to make the concepts more understandable for readers who may not be familiar with the original text (Arabic). For example, "the Sacred Mosque" replaces the Arabic term "Al-Masjidi Al-Ĥarāmi," making the concept accessible to readers. Similarly, "fasting" stands for Aṣ-Ṣiyāmu, simplifying the idea for English speakers. Other terms include "Abraham" for "Ibrāhīma," which connects readers with a well-known religious figure, and "the Last Day" for "Yawm Al-Akhir," conveying an important religious concept.

The study's findings revealed that foreignization accounted for a small portion (approximately 33%) of the total CSIs, while domestication comprised the majority, making up over 67% of the data. Given that most of the CSIs in Surah Al-Baqarah have been translated using a domestication strategy by the translator, it can be concluded that the translator adopted a target-oriented approach rather than a source-oriented approach when translating

Specific religious items from the Noble Qur'an. Figure 1 below illustrates the percentages of strategies used by Yusuf Ali in his English translation.

The findings are consistent with those of Valipoor, Tabrizi, and Chalak (2019), who found that domestication was the most commonly employed strategy in Irving's English translation of Surah Al-Baqarah. This suggests that both studies reveal a similar trend among translators, who aim to bring the text closer to the target culture to facilitate better understanding for English-speaking audiences. Likewise, the results of this study align with those of El Haj Ahmed and Shammala (2020), who found that despite translators' tendencies toward both foreignization and domestication, Yusuf Ali and Talal Itani favored domestication over foreignization in their translations of fifty CSIs from the Noble Qur'an. Moreover, Ramli and Bakar (2021), in their study titled "Domestication as a Strategy in Translating Religious Cultural Elements into English," further support these findings. They claim that the domestication strategy can only provide the closest adequate meaning when combined with the compensation strategy.
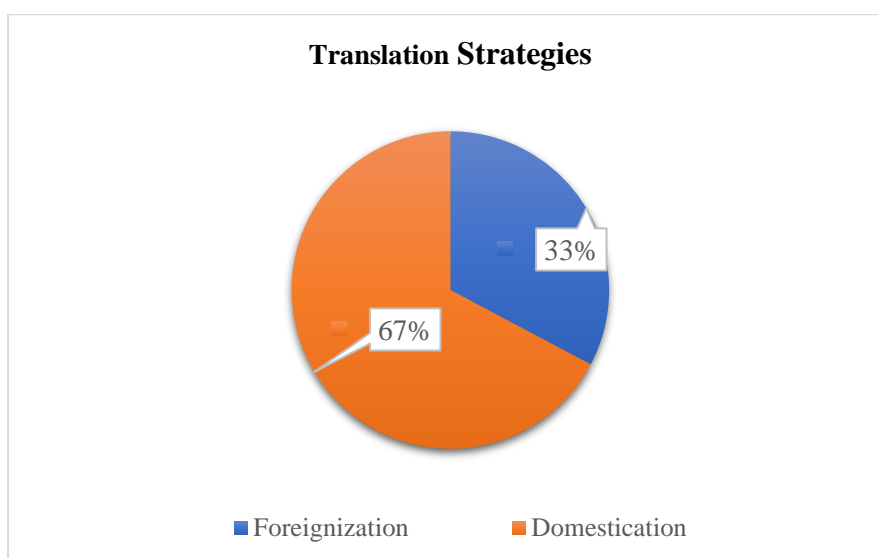
Figure 1: *Percentage of domestication and foreignization in Yusuf Ali's translation*

As for the classification of CSIs, a total of 58 CSIs were identified and classified into five main categories: Proper Nouns, Material Culture, Religious Activities, Ecology, and Miscellaneous. As Figure 2 indicates, the most prevalent category of CSIs was Proper Nouns (such as Adam, Abraham, Solomon, Moses, Jacob, Isma`il, Iblis, etc.), comprising 39.66% of total items, followed by religious activities (such as fasting, feeding the poor, Hajj and Umrah, Sabbath, etc.), which made up 25.86% of the total items. Material Culture accounted for approximately 20.69% of CSIs, including terms such as Manna, Safa, Marwa, Sacred Mosques, Abraham Station, Arafat, and Babylon, among others. The Ecology was identified as the least frequently used category among the CSIs, making up only 3.45% of the total CSIs. Terms such as "mount" and "heavens" fall under this category. The Miscellaneous category accounted for 10.34% of the total CSIs, including terms such as "lawful," "angels," "the Last Day," and

"A.L.M." The concepts that did not fit under the other categories were classified as Miscellaneous.

The findings are consistent with those of Valipoor, Tabrizi, and Chalak (2019), who identified proper nouns as the most frequently occurring CSIs in Surah Al-Baqarah, with religious activities ranked third. However, the results of the current study indicate that religious activities are the second most frequently used CSIs.
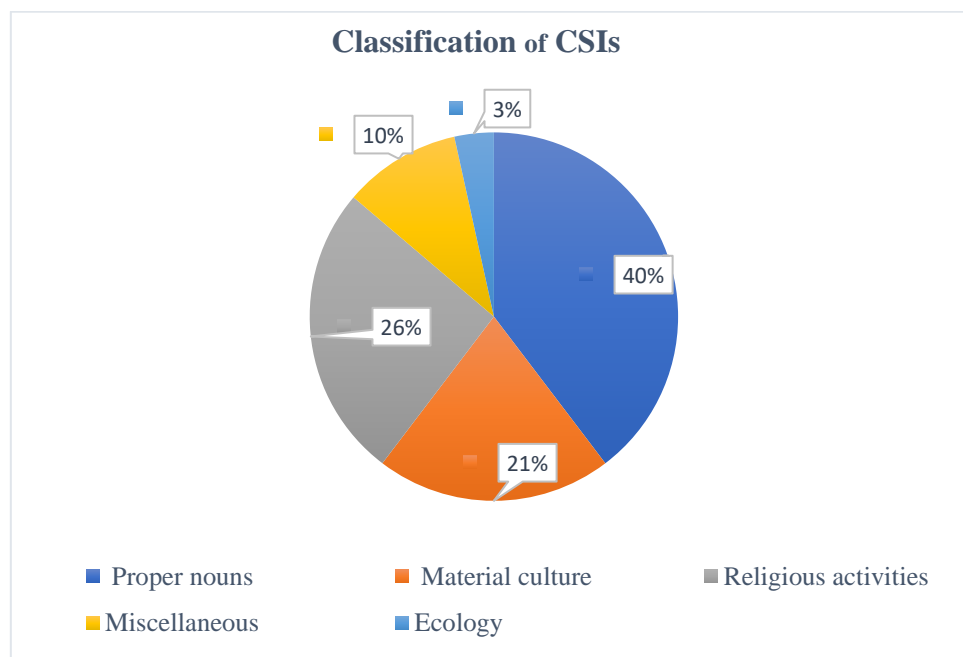

Figure 2: Percentage Distribution of Culture-Specific Items

CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of the present study was to explore the translation strategies employed by Yusuf Ali in his English translation of Surah Al-Baqarah, based on Venuti's (1995) model, and to identify the types of CSIs found in the text. The findings revealed that domestication was the most frequently used translation strategy, accounting for over 75% of the instances, while foreignization made up 25% of the total data. This suggests that the translator generally favored domestication to make the Noble Qur'anic text more accessible and relatable to English-speaking readers by adapting complex or foreign concepts into familiar terms. However, heavy reliance on domestication might risk losing some important cultural and religious meanings, which remains a common challenge in translating sacred texts. Finding the right balance between clarity and preserving original meaning is crucial.

Regarding the types of CSIs, a total of 58 items were identified. Proper nouns emerged as the most prevalent category (39.66%), followed by religious activities as the second most common category (25.86%). Material culture ranked third (20.69%), while ecology and the miscellaneous category were the least frequent, constituting 3.45% and 10.34%, respectively. This distribution demonstrates that proper names and religious concepts comprise the majority of culture-specific elements, presenting particular challenges for translators due to

their profound cultural and spiritual significance. Therefore, translators must handle these terms carefully to preserve their meanings and prevent misunderstandings by target readers.

The findings of this study could assist translation students and practitioners in understanding the key strategies used for translating CSIs and their classification. Moreover, researchers, educators, language policymakers, publishers, editors, and cultural analysts may benefit from these insights to enhance their practices and deepen their understanding of cultural nuances in translation.

However, like other studies, this research has certain limitations that need to be taken into consideration. It focused on one chapter of the Noble Qur'an due to its considerable length, which makes a comprehensive study challenging. Thus, future research could explore different chapters, each containing unique culture-specific items (CSIs) that may differ from those identified in this study. Another limitation is that this study identified the use of domestication and foreignization strategies without thoroughly investigating the pragmatic and cultural motivations behind these choices. It is recommended that future studies expand the theoretical analysis by conducting a detailed examination based on Venuti's (1995) framework, clarifying the linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic reasons behind the use of each strategy. This should include a semantic-pragmatic analysis of how these choices influence the delivery of religious and cultural meanings, as well as consideration of the target audience's prior knowledge of Islamic concepts. Additionally, future researchers might compare Yusuf Ali's translation with those of other translators, such as Talal Itani, Abdel Haleem, Arberry, and others, to better understand variations in translation strategies and their interpretive, rhetorical, or communicative intentions. Finally, as this study focused on the religious genre, investigating CSIs in other genres, such as literary texts or everyday discourse, may open new avenues for research.

Authors' Contributions

- Sakhi Murad Ghorianfar conceptualized and designed the study, selected the theoretical models, analyzed the data, and wrote the manuscript with input from the co-authors.
- Muhammad Nabi Rahimi assisted in verifying the accuracy of the classification of culture-specific items and translation strategies based on the selected models and checked the correctness of transliterations as well.
- Obaidullah Burhani contributed to data validation, proofread the manuscript for language accuracy—especially in translating from English to Arabic and provided constructive feedback during the editing and revision stages.
- All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

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literature review to drafting, editing, and finalizing the manuscript, each author contributed thoughtfully and diligently. The outcome represents the result of joint intellectual engagement and consistent teamwork throughout the writing process.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in full within this published article and their frequencies, and percentages are tabulated in Tables 1 and 2. However, the dataset of culture-specific items (CSIs) identified during the analysis is not publicly shared. Researchers seeking further information or clarification about the data may contact the corresponding author directly.

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