

Translating Euphemisms of Sexual Taboos in the Qur'an: A Trans-Linguistic Approach¹

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ARTICLE DATA	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 6 Oct. 2021 Accepted: 20 Nov. 2021 Volume: 1 Issue: FALL DOI:</p>	<p>Translating the Qur'an is an extremely challenging task because of the special nature and the distinctive style of the Book. The Qur'an has some unique characteristics that may hinder translators from rendering the intentional Qur'anic stylistic deviation, ambiguity, metonymy, and many other figurative images as well as euphemism and its intended meaning into English with high accuracy. This study tackles euphemism and dysphemism in religious discourse, namely the Qur'an. It is a trans-linguistic study that delves into the problems of translating euphemism and dysphemism in three translations of the meanings of the Qur'an. The study thoroughly examines and analyses nine Qur'anic verses of illegal sexual relations, i.e., adultery and lesbianism. The study finds that translators, especially of holy texts, should merge domestication and foreignization according to the skopos (i.e., purpose) of the translation. The impact of conveying euphemism adequately or inadequately seems to be identical for both Ali and Ghali, but it is discrepant in Pickthall, which indicates that the translators' background plays a pivotal role to render euphemism adequately into the TL culture.</p>
<p>KEYWORDS</p> <p>euphemism, dysphemism, taboo, politeness, skopostheorie, functional approach, domestication, foreignization</p>	

1. Introduction

Euphemism is a linguistic tool that is universal in almost all languages in both spoken and written discourses. People tend to use euphemism to mitigate discourteous discourses, to hide unmannered ideas, to camouflage unpleasant thoughts, or to use any figure of speech such as metonymy, pun, metaphor and so on for replacing taboo words. Because the Qur'an is a further refined text, euphemism, in almost all sensitive issues, is extensively used especially in the field of illegal sexual relations, i.e., **adultery and lesbianism**. Consequently, it is vitally important to highlight the overlap that might result from rendering such euphemistic expressions into English. Sometimes dysphemism, the opposite of euphemism, is used to clearly underline specific objectives in the Qur'anic ordinances. Some scholars agree that the mission of translating the Qur'an is highly sophisticated since it is an 'inimitable' Book that covers meanings and images that might go beyond intellectual human capabilities; whereas other scholars believe in the human abilities that could convey and render most of the meanings of such holy books based on the trust interpreters and commentators' point of views.

If euphemism is rendered into the TL as it is, using the strategy of 'foreignization', without the translators' interference in the original text even through using paraphrase, marginal annotations, or footnotes, it may lead to ambiguity and vagueness in the

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TL text due to the foreignized term. However, if euphemism is rendered into the TL text domestically, i.e. using the strategy of 'domestication', without referring to the original term and putting it as the original one in the SL text, such as Khan and Al-Hilali's rendering of 'مُتَخَذِي أَدَان' into "girlfriend", it may lead to unreliability of the translation.

This study is intended to highlight how the three translations of Ali, Pickthall, and Ghali render euphemism and dysphemism into the TL text with a thorough evaluation of the Functional Approach, Skopostheorie, Politeness, and Domestication versus Foreignization. Additionally, Khan and Al-Hilali's *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an* (1995) will be evaluated in some verses just to shed light on the dangers of insisting on one system in the translation process, namely domestication.

Religion is one of the topics that require decorum and decency when handling any of its issues, especially with socially tabooed topics. Taboo is "a Polynesian language... among Polynesian peoples, a sacred prohibition put upon certain people, things, or acts which makes them untouchable, unmentionable, etc." (Webster's, 1989: 1361). Originally, taboo comes from the Polynesian polysyllabic word, which /ta/ means 'mark', and /bu/ means 'adverb of intensity' (Ullmann, 1962: 204). Similarly, the term "euphemism" is derived from the Greek eu "good", and pHEME "speech" or "sayings", and thus it means literally "to speak with good words or in a pleasant manner" (Neaman & Silver, 1983: 1). Taboo expressions are found in many areas of human language, such as death, diseases, depression, as well as divorce, sexual issues, negative human qualities and women's private questions. In other words, many areas related to sex, religion, and death and other areas tend to require decorum both in formal and informal communication.

This study attempts to investigate the problems of translating euphemistic expressions, concerning adultery and lesbianism in highly selective Qur'anic verses in three translations of the meanings of the Qur'an, namely "Towards Understanding The Ever Glorious Qur'an", by Muhammad Mahmoud Ghali (1997); "The Holy Qur'an", by Yusuf Ali (1946); and "The Glorious Qur'an", by M. Pickthall (1930). Also, Khan and Al-Hilali's *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an* (1995) will be evaluated in some verses just to shed light on the dangers of insisting on one system in the translation process, namely domestication.

It may be noticed at a close investigation of dysphemistic expressions that speakers always revolve around the same idea of being delicate, demure and polite in human interaction. Therefore, politeness strategies will be applied as a linguistic tool of social interaction saving the hearers' positive "face". Moreover, the approach to translation devised by Skopostheorie which "minimizes the importance of the source text and maximizes the significance of the cultural situation" (Nord, 1997: 18), will be adopted. Additionally, this study demonstrates how theories of 'politeness' and 'face saving' may be useful to the translator in rendering euphemism communicatively by offering strategies overcoming some problematic cases, in other word, how "face threatening acts" FTA's can be useful in translating such religious texts.

2. Statement research problem

This study attempts to tackle the translation of some euphemistic expressions related to extramarital sexual relations, i.e., adultery and lesbianism. Some translated texts of the meanings of the Qur'an fail to convey such euphemistic language into English. As the target reader is a non-Arab Muslim, the translator has not conveyed only literal meaning, in general, but the speaker's intention is the main target as well. Euphemisms in such religious texts should be translated by either 'foreignization' or 'domestication' so as to maintain the source language cultural input and to communicate with the target reader as well: foreignization is a term used to designate the type of translation in which a translated text deliberately breaks the target language conventions by keeping the flavour of the original text, moving the reader towards the source culture. Domestication, in contrast, refers to a translation

strategy in which a transparent fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for the TL reader, in which the author moves towards the reader (Venuti, 1995). However, the foreignized version is to guarantee adequate understanding of euphemisms by the foreign term but to increase the alienation of the translated text.

Moreover, euphemisms of illegal sexual intercourse, i.e., verses dealing with adultery and lesbianism in the Qur'an are the main focus of this study. Therefore, the selected examples represent a real challenge to the translator and the issue is how s/he could offer a convincing text to the reader or find an adequate equivalent to "the spirit of TL, and more likely to win the readers' approval" (Enani, 2000: 9).

3. Research objectives and questions

The study aims to: (1) identify the translation techniques used by the translators, Ali, Pickthall, and Ghali, to handle and convey the euphemistic meanings of adultery and lesbianism into English for non-Arab target readers; and (2) measure the impact of cultural specificity on rendering such sensitive issues into the TL.

Accordingly, this article seeks to address two lines of enquiry:

1. How do translators of the Qur'an, namely Ali, Pickthall, and Ghali, handle and convey such euphemistic expressions into English for non-Arab target readers?
2. What is the impact of culture/specific contexts in using and rendering euphemism?

4. Literature review

In his "American Euphemisms for Dying, Death, and Burial", Louise Pound (1936) collects some expressions in a purely incidental fashion and examines their co-occurrences when death and its trappings are concerned. It appears that one of mankind's gravest problems is to avoid a straightforward mention of dying or burial. He discovers that the number and variety of such euphemisms are amazing and although a list of the expressions may not be of much value, a curious interest attaches to them.

In his "Al-Mahzurat Al-Lughawiyyah" [Linguistic Taboos], K. Z. Husaam Eddiin (1985) attempts a linguistic study of Arabic taboos and euphemisms. This study falls in two chapters. The first one tackles the definitions and the reasons for linguistic taboos, and the second chapter investigates the semantic fields of taboos which occur in Ath-tha'aalibi's "Al-kinaaya wa-tta'riid" and Al-Jurajaani's "Al-Muntakhab min Kinaayaat al-'Udabaa' wa isharaat al-bulaghaa' ". These two books represent the main corpus of Hussam Eddiin's study. He points out four semantic areas of taboo and euphemism in those two books, which are linguistic differences, beliefs and habits, disease, death and sexual issues.

Hijaazi (1986) focuses on 'kinaaya', metonymy, as a rhetorical feature of Prophetic Hadith as an Arabic text, with special application to Sahih Al-Bukhari in the Arabic version. Reference to sexual intercourse appeared in 12 Hadiths in Sahih Al-Bukhari which he mentions under the name Ahaadiith al-Wat', i.e., 'want intercourse Hadiths' (pp. 64-77). He asserts that the function of 'kinaaya' in Arabic as a euphemism for al-wat' is embarrassing or repugnant to mention. He concludes that such linguistic use in Prophetic Hadith attests to the prophet's decency and decorum and that Hadith is a source of politeness that teaches one how to improve his manners.

In their "Euphemism and Dysphemism", Keith Allan and Kate Burridge (1991) explore English euphemism and dysphemism (the opposite of euphemism) in the language used in wars, sex, and some abusive ways such as the taboo terms of insults, epithets,

and expletives. They analyze euphemism in addressing and naming, bodily effluvia, sex, and tabooed body parts. They thoroughly compiled a lexicon for the above euphemistic areas. Besides, they present a contrastive study of euphemism in the area of death titled *Never Say Die: Death, Dying and Killing*, to what extent such expressions are used in wars and how language is used as a veil, i.e., artful euphemism.

Farghal (1995) investigates categories of euphemism in Arabic and relates them to the politeness principles and Grice's Cooperative Maxims. He explains that euphemism is a pragmatic mechanism that reflects the interlocution between the politeness principles and conversational Maxims. Euphemism flouts one or more of the conversational Maxims, thus giving rise to particularized conversational implications or "floutings" (Farghal: 368). He adds that Arabic euphemisms are relevant to particularized rather than standardized "floutings". He focuses on main categories of euphemism: circumlocutions, figurative expressions and antonyms. Farghal's analysis deals with some dysphemistic issues from MSA (Modern Standard Arabic) and Jordanian Arabic such as death, defecation, sex and other taboo topics.

Shabana (2000) deals with euphemism in the Qur'an from a lexical semantic approach. He indicates that politeness and respect for sacred objects are the motive behind using euphemism, not fear or good omen in religious texts. He analyzes euphemisms in the Qur'an with special reference to man-woman relations, man's private parts, husband-wife relationship, among other things. Examples in this respect are discussed such as 'rafath' "to lie with one's wife", 'libaas' "garment" among others (pp. 81-83).

Abd-Ennabi (2001) discusses taboo words in Arabic with special reference to Hadith of Sahih Al-Bukhari. He focuses on sex, defecation, and names. He just lists the euphemistic expressions in the Hadith and provides a statistical account of their occurrence in Sahih Al-Bukhari, but he does not provide an in-depth analysis of each euphemistic expression as he is content with just identifying the taboo term and its euphemism based mainly on the dictionary meaning of each.

Trinch (2001) investigates euphemism used by women in expressing rape assaults. She reports that women use terminology that "palliates indecency and indelicacy in order to uphold decorum" in narrating their experiences to veil the offensiveness presumably produced by the referential rape (572). She asserts that although ambiguity flouts the Gricean Maxim of manner, euphemism can be expressed through ambiguity. It is a politeness strategy used to avoid loss of face or a way out of potentially offensive interpretation.

Mazid (2003) investigates euphemism and dysphemism in the war-on-Iraq discourse. He analyzes newspaper texts and on-line texts from news agencies following Allan and Burridge's (1991) metaphor of language as "a shield and weapon", with reference to the discourse of Bush and Saddam. He analyzes American euphemism and Iraqi dysphemism in referring to the war, such as Americans referring to the invasion of Iraq as "liberation", whereas Iraqis describing the invaders as "imperialist blood-suckers".

In his *"Al-Mahzuur Al-Lughawi and Al-Muhassin Al-Lafzi"*, Abu-Zlail (2004) investigates the linguistic taboo and its euphemism with special focus on the Qur'an in its Arabic version. He analyzes four areas of euphemism: (I) 'Disasters' which include death, diseases, defeat, and divorce. (II) 'Sexual issues' that include sexual relations, sexual private parts, and sexual practices. (III) 'Human negative qualities' which include ignominy, arrogance, stinginess, waste, and treason, and (IV) 'Woman and other semantic fields' which include women, slaves, and human activities. He discusses the characteristics of taboo and euphemism, the factors that prevent taboo and encourage the use of euphemism, in addition to the definition of both taboo and euphemism. He explores the semantic relations between taboo and euphemism in the Qur'an. Finally, he concludes his study with the semantic change of taboo and euphemism in the Qur'an.

In a paper titled *Translating Euphemism in Prophetic Hadith*, Nagwa El-Zeiny (2005) thoroughly focuses on some euphemistic expressions selected from Prophetic Hadith, particularly in Sahih Al-Bukhari. She tackles certain euphemisms in Prophetic Hadith that deal with marriage, illicit sexual intercourse, and husband and wife relationship. In her study, she concludes that euphemisms are used neither in the sense of doublespeak nor in the sense of good omen, but rather in the more recent perspective which mainly aims to avoid taboos (p. 220). She analyzes some problems with the translation of Sahih Al-Bukhari by Khan (1997), such as

يدور على نسائه / حتى يذوق (الأخر) غسيلتك و تذوق غسيلته and "إذا أعجلت أو أقحطت فعليك الوضوء".

She adopts the politeness phenomenon and considers it as the main factor that motivates the use of euphemism.

5. Theoretical Background

5.1 Methodology

5.1.1 Domestication versus Foreignization

Zhao Ni sees that domestication refers to the target-culture-oriented translation in which unusual expressions to the target culture are used and turned into some familiar terms so as to make the translated text intelligible and easy for the target readers. Foreignization, on the contrary, is a source-culture-oriented translation which endeavours to preserve the foreign flavour as much as possible in order to transfer the source language and culture into the target one.

According to Venuti (1995: 20), foreignization is a term used to determine the type of translation in which a translated text deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original and which moves the reader towards the author "only by disturbing the cultural codes that prevail in the target language". Some translators prefer changing the SL values and making them readable for the TL audience using the strategy of domestication.

5.1.2 Politeness

Politeness is an interdisciplinary phenomenon. Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) model of politeness will be introduced and discussed in this study because its relevance to euphemism and decent speech. There is a "mammoth-like" literature on politeness in almost every culture now (Chen, 2001: 87). However, the number of studies of politeness in Arabic is very rare and hardly addresses the religious discourse. This study starts with notes on the politeness and cooperative principle.

It is virtually impossible to tackle politeness without mentioning Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP). Grice's theory has three components: natural meaning and non-natural meaning, the Cooperative principle (CP) and implicature. The CP covers four maxims and a number of sub-maxims which provide inference beyond the semantic content of the sentence (Grice, 1975: 45-46):

1. The maxim of QUANTITY relates to the quantity of information to be provided, and two sub-maxims:

-Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).

-Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. The maxim of QUALITY—"Try to make your contribution one that is true"—and two more specific sub-maxims:

-Do not say what you believe to be false and do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3. The maxim of RELATION "Be Relevant"

4. The maxim of MANNER —Be perspicuous" and "How what is said is to be said"—and other sub-maxims such as:

-Avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity), be orderly.

These maxims might be violated, flouted or abandoned or they may clash together and remain meaningful (blatantly unfulfilled when the speaker is faced with a problem, such as flouting the maxim of quality in case of irony, quantity in the case of tautology, and manner in the case of prolixity). Maxims are "exploited" to give rise to implicatures. The interpretation then goes: "How can his saying what he said be reconciled with the supposition that he is observing the overall CP?" (Grice, 1975: 49).

5.1.3 Skopostheorie and functional approach

The core of Skopostheorie is that the translation purpose plays the most important role in a translational process, or the translation purpose justifies the translation actions. But problems arise when the translation purpose is not in line with the communicative intentions of the original text. Another member of the German School, Christiane Nord, proposes her "loyalty" principle, which commits the translator bilaterally to the source and the target sides. It refers to the responsibility the translator has toward the source text creator, the target receiver and other agents involved in a translational interaction. The term cannot be mixed up with fidelity or faithfulness concepts that usually refer to a relationship holding between the source text and the target text (Nord, 1988/91). Loyalty is an interpersonal category referring to a social relationship between people. Loyalty demands that the translator should be in charge of the target readers, but this does not mean that the translator is always obliged to do exactly what the readers expect. Yet in the same vein, the translator should also have a sense of moral responsibility not to deceive his readers (Nord, 1997: 125) especially in translating religious discourse.

In her *Translating as A purposeful Activity: Functional Approaches Explained*, Nord (1997) states that there are three main elements to the theory: purpose, coherence and culture. There are three kinds of purpose in the process of translating: the general purpose (skopos) "aimed at by the translator (perhaps to earn a living)" (27), the communicative purpose aimed at by the target text (perhaps to instruct the reader) and "the purpose aimed by a particular translation strategy (for example to translate literally to show the structural particularities of the source language)" (28). The second element of the skopostheorie is coherence with its two types: intratextual coherence (i.e., the translator has to produce a target text that matches the target reader's background; the target text should be coherent with the receivers' situation) and intertextual coherence (i.e., the translator should show faithfulness to the source text and the skopos of the original author). The third element of the skopostheorie is culture: each culture represents a system of values and modes of behaviour. What is acceptable in one culture may be rejected in another. The translator has to be aware of the specificity of certain cultural phenomena that will cause, if not properly handled, a cultural gap between the ST and TT. Thus, the translator is free to choose any strategy of translation as long as s/he preserves both the central message and its rhetorical effectiveness. This functional approach connected with purpose facilitates the translator's task to reach accuracy of the TT and to produce the intended impact on the reader.

This debate gives rise to the functional approach which is regarded as a quantum leap in the field of translating the meanings of the Qur'an. In this approach, the translator should specify the purpose of the translation and s/he should choose the appropriate translation method (whether literal or free or may be a mixture of both). It gives the translator the chance to adopt what s/he

judges to be the appropriate translation strategies, as long as they "produce a functionally adequate result" (Munday, 2001: 79). This theory is based on the idea that "the skopos of a particular translation task may require a 'free' or a 'faithful' translation, or anything between these two extremes, depending on the purpose for which the translation is needed" (Nord, 1997: 29). The functional approach also regards the reader as an active participant in the process of translation because the "audience [is an] ...important component of Skopos and is crucial to translation as communication" (162). The next step is to choose whether to leave "the text world as it is, explaining some details if necessary, or whether it is possible to neutralize or adopt the text world in order to keep the cultural distance invariant and thus achieve a particular function and effect" (Nord, 1997: 87).

5.2 Euphemism in Arabic:

Arguments about the equivalent of euphemism in Arabic have been translated differently by Arab translators and linguists. However, the five main translations as cited in Abd-Ennabi (2001) are:

Translation of euphemism	Documentation of the author
الكناية	(Add-Dawaakhly and Al-Qassaas 1950; Shabana 2000: 22)
لطف التعبير	(At-Tuuni, 1987, vol.1: 205; Al-Baa'labaki, 1990: 495)
حسن التعبير	(Bishr, 1992: 196)
التلطف في التعبير	(Umar, 1988: 295)
تحسين اللفظ	(Husam Eddin, 1985: 14)
كناية عما يستهجن	(Ath'aalibi, 1981:5)

Table 1: (Translation of euphemism)

Abd-Ennabi (2001: 8-20) argues that حسن التعبير ، تحسين اللفظ do not always refer to this phenomenon since they imply a rhetorical use of words and expressions regardless of whether or not they cover bad or embarrassing meanings. As for لطف التعبير ، التلطف ، في التعبير and تحسين اللفظ they are not adequate as they are too general, which does not match the specificity indicated by the English term, although they are the closest terms to euphemism. He offers the example of using nice expressions by a doctor to a patient in order to alleviate his/her pains and to give him/her hope of speedy recovery, which he does not consider euphemistic though it is a kind of لطف التعبير. Therefore, Abd-Ennabi (2001) concludes that كناية is the closest equivalent term to euphemism. However, he prefers to use the participle نكتية in order to avoid overlapping with the Arabic rhetorical meaning of كناية, which makes it hardly acceptable as an equivalent of euphemism as a sociolinguistic term.

Nonetheless, the researcher agrees with Enani that التلطف في التعبير is the most suitable equivalent to the term "euphemism", since the other proposed equivalents, especially تحسين اللفظ result in confusion as they have shades of the meaning of the rhetorical term محسن بديعي 'figure of speech' such as الطباق 'antithesis' and الجناس 'homophony' in Arabic. Thus, التلطف في التعبير is the closest term that has the morphological pattern تَفْعَل, derived from the verb تَلَطَّف, which implies a deliberate choice of a more decent and pleasant term, namely the closest to the definition of euphemism.

5.3 Motives for Euphemism

One of the main motives for euphemism is the desire to avoid harming the face of any party involved, in verbal or written interaction. For this reason, people should handle sensitive issues in softened language and demure expressions to draw attention away from any possible offence. This partly explains why euphemism helps to drive some words to camouflage, creating softer terms instead (Hasan, 2002: 391). For example, 'the big C' is a euphemism for 'Cancer' disease, and 'lingerie' is a euphemism for 'underwear' and so on.

According to Ath'aalibi, the great Arab linguist, there are several reasons for using euphemism:

"هذا الكتاب في الكنايات عما يستهجن ذكره، ويستقبح نشره، أو يستحيا من تسميته أو يتطير منه، أو يترفع ويتصون عنه بالفاظ مقبولة وتحسن القبيح مع العدول عما ينبو عنه السمع". (الثعالبي، 1981: 5)

Euphemisms are metonymies substituted for shamle or ugly issues and embarrassing or ominous topics. They are employed to avoid unpleasant words, displaying a tendency to mitigate blunt expressions which may cause loss of face by using more acceptable terms (Translation mine).

5.4 Forms of Euphemism

Euphemism can be achieved in various ways. Some of the basic strategies for achieving Euphemism in English are offered by William (1957), Warren (1992) and Ham (2001). Examples from Egyptian Arabic are provided.

5.4.1 Word formation devices

William (1957) examines five semantic processes through which euphemism is created:

5.4.1.1 Borrowing: (e.g., WC and toilet for lavatory).

5.4.1.2 Semantic expansion or innovation: in which the connotations of a word are expanded to widen the scope of meaning of that word to make it more appealing to the hearer (e.g., to sleep for sexual intercourse).

5.4.1.3 Semantic shift: a total change in the meaning of a word is created by inventing a new use for it (e.g., pass away for die).

5.4.1.4 Metaphorical transfer: in which an indirect expression replaces a harsh meaning or word, because of the embarrassment that may be caused in such case (e.g., watermelon for women's breasts).

5.4.1.5 Phonetic distortion: which is produced by using phonetic alternation to avoid uttering an embarrassing word (e.g., vamp for vampire). Also, in Arabic there are 'شوشو' for 'شيطان' and 'ديك' for 'دين', especially in informal or slang discourses. When we face names that we do not dare to utter, we shorten or omit the last syllable and reduplicate them (Neaman & Silver 1983: 11). Phonetic distortion has the following forms:

5.4.1.5.1 Abbreviation is the shortening of the word ladies for ladies' room.

5.4.1.5.2 Apocopation is another form of abbreviation apparently in the use of sperm for spermatozoon, (meaning "seed") and refers to the male reproductive cells. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sper>)

5.4.1.5.3 Initialing is the use of acronyms instead of their full forms, which "are formed from the initial letters of a set of other words, these can remain essentially 'alphabetisms' such as FFI for "free from infection", i.e. "not suffering from venerable disease" (Holder, 1995: 141).

5.4.1.5.4 Back-forming is the substitution of a part of speech for another as in certified and certifiable, which are derived from certify, as euphemism for mad, and changeling which is derived from change for idiot (Holder, 1995: 58,59).

Reduplication is the repetition of a syllable or a letter of a word. This phenomenon is common in children's bathroom vocabulary; it substitutes pee-pee for piss.

5.5 Tabooed words

Words are not only restricted to books or dictionaries, but people communicate with more speeches than mentioned in those dictionaries or books. These words have superior domination upon us, so we may utter some of them seeking for power and protection while we avoid other words to get rid of dread, in some cases, and tabooed words. Therefore, the study tries to shed light on the linguistic phenomenon "taboo" which depicts the approved and disapproved speech. This phenomenon covers two main parts: the first part is the tabooed words and the second part is the euphemistic words.

6. Application and data analysis

Figure (1) shows the semantic areas of most of the dysphemistic and euphemistic expressions in the Qur'an, focusing on the sexual field. This field is a very broad one in the Qur'an and it has some scopes that have not yet been thoroughly tackled, namely illegal sexual relations (the main focus of the present study). Therefore, this study divides the sexual area of dysphemism and euphemism in the Qur'an into three main categories. The first category is sexual relations, which cover two sub-categories, i.e. the legitimate and the illegitimate sexual relations. The legitimate sexual relations include marriage and sexual intercourse, and the illegitimate sexual relations (the scope of the study) include adultery, sodomy, and lesbianism. The second category focuses on the private parts of the human body. The third category concerns the sexual habits which cover four different scopes, namely menses, wet-dreams, post discharge state, and sperm drop.

In translating the meaning of the Qur'an, translators may face some challenges related to euphemism. Thus, a translator may fail to find an accurate equivalent of the Qur'anic euphemistic expression. If a translator fails to distinguish, for instance, between *يطمئنهن* and *انتوهن/تغشاها* and *لامستم* or *باشروهن/تقربوهن* s/he may fail to find an informative euphemistic equivalent in the TL. Dictionaries are sources of "sense" i.e., semantics. Communicative meaning is a different matter; it is pragmatic. In this respect, a dictionary distinction must be shown, in the analysis, so as to distinguish between the different terms rendered for the same notion in the SL and to evaluate which is the nearest equivalent term to the SL one. The following Figure (1) shows the map of illegal relations mentioned in the Qur'an. Only two types of them, i.e., adultery and lesbianism, will be demonstrated in this study.

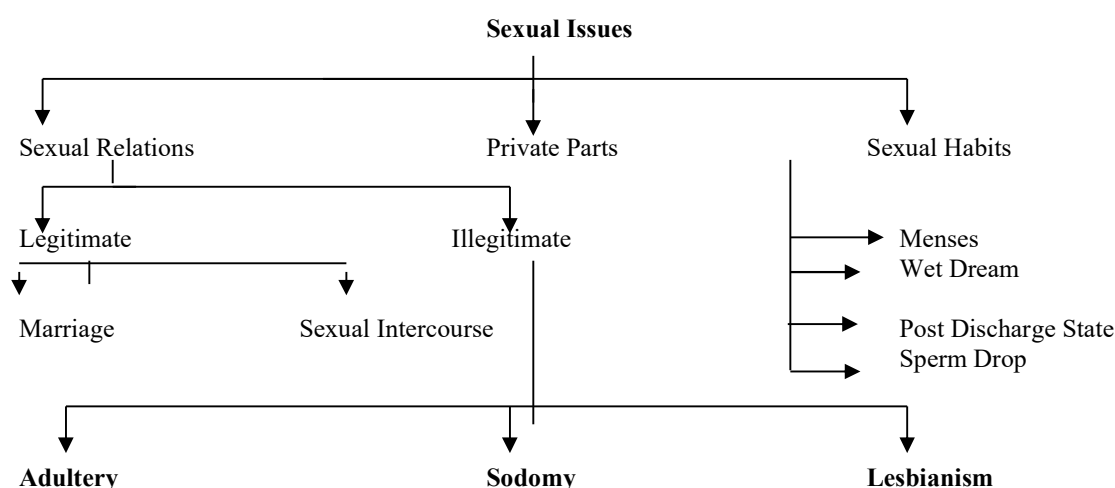


Figure 1 (Sexual Issues)

6.1 Procedure of data analysis

Data of this study is collected from the three translations of the Qur'an. In the following analysis section, each translated verse in question is presented and analyzed, the euphemistic expression is extracted, then an assessment of the three translations, in question, is attempted, to mark some translational pitfalls that might confront translators, and finally a suggested translation is proposed. A comparison is held between the three translations of the meanings of the Qur'an, pointing out some euphemistic expressions, and determining some problems of translating euphemism in such verses. All examples of euphemistic expressions are going to be identified, analyzed and evaluated in the analysis section.

6.2 Illegal Sexual Relations

6.2.1 Adultery

In the following lines, 14 euphemistic Qur'anic verses and their problems in translation, concerning the issue of adultery, are discussed and evaluated. At the beginning, the original Arabic version of the verse is mentioned followed by the three translations in question, i.e., Ali, Pickthall and Ghali. After that some commentaries of different commentators are presented, followed by extracting the euphemistic expressions of the translated texts and carrying out an assessment of these translations. Then, a suggested translation comes to produce another alternative and a possibility of translating euphemism in those verses.

Example 1

{وَلَا تُكْرِهُوا فَتِيَاتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِّبِتْنَعُوا عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا}. النور (33)

"But force not your maids to prostitution when they desire chastity in order that ye May make again in the goods of this life"

(Yusuf Ali: 906)

"Force not your slave girls to whoredom that ye may seek enjoyment of the life of the world, if they would preserve their chastity"

(Pickthall: 363)

"And do not compel your handmaids to prostitution, in case they are willing to be chaste, that you may inequitably seek the advantages of the present life" (Ghali: 354)

In this verse, people are strictly exhorted to keep away of prostitution and nor to compel their maids (slave girls) to copulation.

In the pre-Islamic time (i.e., jahilyia) people who owned slave girls were forcing them to go for prostitution for two reasons; the

first reason is for collecting taxes, and the second reason is for seeking sons to be theirs. However, prostitution became completely forbidden after Islam (Ibn-katheer: 266). The term prostitution is bluntly used as a dysphemistic word in Ali's and Ghali's translations, which may embarrass target readers. 'بغاء' is an Arabic euphemistic term which means to take prostitution as a profession or sinful commerce, so slave women were forced to have sex and copulation with men for money in the pre-Islamic time. Euphemism is lost as the dysphemistic words "prostitution" and "whoredom" are used instead. A prostitute is "a person who has sex for money...but that other people do not respect because you are not capable of doing something better" (Oxford: 1060) and "whore" carries the same meaning, but is old fashioned, i.e., too classical. Thus, the three translations may render the right meaning, but not the right style of the original.

Translators may use a lot of euphemistic expressions and terms written in parenthesis to refer to prostitution, such as "AMW, accost, filth, besom, sinful commerce, hawk your mutton, and tramp" (Holder 1995), then paraphrase the meaning in a marginal footnote or annotation. The three translators selected to do the FTA off-record without redressive action, baldly. They did not preserve the hearer's positive face in order to convey the intended meaning of the lexical word, at the expense of producing a rhetorical effect in the mind of h. It is rather inclined to render the euphemistic term as is and the intended meaning in a parenthesis as shown in the suggested translation. The suggested translation is 'And do not force your slave maids to sinful commerce (prostitution) when they seek to be chaste...'.

Example 2

{الْيَوْمَ أَجَلٌ لَّكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ جُلٌّ لَّكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ جُلٌّ لَهُمْ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ} المائدة (5)

"... (lawful unto marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among ... When ye give them their due dowers, and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor *secret intrigues*" (Yusuf Ali: 241).

"... And so are the virtuous women of the believers and the virtuous women of those who received the Scripture before you (lawful for you) when ye give them their marriage portions and live with them in honour, not in fornication, nor taking them as *secret concubines*" (Pickthall: 102).

"... And (so) are believing women in wedlock, and in wedlock women of (the ones) to whom the Book was brought even before you when you have brought them their rewards in wedlock, other than in fornication, neither *taking* them to yourselves as *mates*" (Ghali: 107).

Ibn Abbas, Ash-shabi, Ad-dhaak and other scholars mention that متخذات آذان are those prostitute women who were committing an illegal sexual intercourse secretly in the pre-Islamic time. They were secretly copulating (having adultery) and calling men one by one during that time (Abu-hyan). After Islam, all forms of adultery were forbidden.

In the rendering of this verse, euphemism is retained but the meaning is not clear. Intrigue is "a secret plan or relationship, especially one which involves somebody else being deceived" (Oxford: 417). Concubine is a classical term that means "a woman who lives with a man, often in addition to his wife or wives, but who is less important than they are" (269). However, the word 'mate' has 8 different meanings; the fifth meaning refers to a "sexual partner" and each meaning has different connotations.

Thus, none of these renderings conveys the meaning of secret illegal sexual intercourse, i.e., adultery, as richly as it is in the Arabic composition. In Yusuf Ali's and Pickthall's translations, euphemism is retained through the strategy of domestication, but

referring to different notions of the original. They sacrifice the lexical and cultural meanings at the expense of the style. However, Ghali's translation seems to follow the strategy of foreignization which results in losing euphemism and retaining an informal term 'mate'. Yusuf Ali and Pickthall give hints of the intended meaning, which is relatively clear but not maximally efficient, using the off-record politeness strategy. They seem to be vague and threaten the hearer's positive face. However, Ghali overgeneralizes the meaning and uses tautologies (i.e., neither taking them to yourselves as mates) to explain the intended meaning which is not clear in the three translations. Off-record politeness euphemism is based on flouting Grice's maxim of manner (be clear) which results in ambiguity regarding the FTA. Thus, the three translations violate the manner maxim due to their vagueness.

Although Khan and Al-Hilali dysphemistically render a domesticating term "girl-friend" (1995: 175) in an attempt to retain the idea as original as it is, the term refers to a different concept which implies a usual and lawful romantic relationship without referring to any sexual intercourse. Thus, (متخذي أقدان) is an Arabic expression that should be paraphrased in annotation or footnote to make it clear for non-native readers. The suggested translation is '... nor taking them as secret concubine (for an evil act)'.

Example 3

{الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ} النور (26)

"Women impure are for men impure, and men impure for women impure" (Yusuf Ali: 902).

"Vile women are for vile men, and vile men are for vile women" (Pickthall: 362).

"Wicked women (are) for wicked men, and wicked men (are) for wicked women" (Ghali: 352).

Al-qortobi says that this verse is based on verse number 3 (Surat An-nur): "the fornicator shall marry none except a female fornicator or a female associate; and the female fornicator, none shall marry her except a fornicator or a (male) associate; and that is prohibited for the believers" (Ghali: 350). /xabiiθaat/ /xaboθa/ 'خَبِيثَاتُ'.

Abu-Hyan adds that impure men tend to impure women, in addition to the impure words and the impure actions which are accepted only by impure people, namely prostitutes. /xabiiθaat/ 'خَبِيثَاتُ' is the plural form of /xabiiθah/ 'خَبِيثَةٌ' referring to females, whereas /xabaa'θ/ 'خَبَائِثُ' is a plural form denoting bad words, deeds, things... etc. In Arabic, it is not allowed to say 'قَطَطُ كَثِيرَاتٍ', but we rather say 'قَطَطُ كَثِيرَةٍ'. Although 'قَطَطُ' can be either a masculine or feminine plural form, it does not take a plural adjective 'كَثِيرَاتٍ' as it is an irrational object. In the same vein, the prophetic Hadith people should say before entering the bathroom "أعوذُ بأعوذِ الخبيثات والخبيثين" confirms that 'خَبَائِثُ' in this context denotes deeds, words or any irrational object.

Impure is a classical written word which means the "thoughts or feelings, morally bad, especially because they are connected with sex" (Oxford: 682), vile is "(formal) wicked: completely unacceptable" (1502), and wicked is "morally bad synonym to evil" (1539). So, impure, vile, and wicked are calling up less disagreeable images in the mind, namely they are used as euphemistic expressions.

Ali's and Ghali's translations conveyed the euphemistic expressions without referring to the essence or the implied meaning of impure or wicked, i.e., prostitute. However, Pickthall conveys the euphemistic expression but ignores the intended meaning (i.e. prostitute). For non-Arab readers, it is too difficult to anticipate the meaning of prostitute from these euphemistic terms, as they are ambiguous. So, it is preferable to use euphemism followed by a paraphrase in a parenthetical statement or to use an annotation.

The three translations use off-record politeness to camouflage the intended meaning of prostitutes, so they are ambiguous. Flouting the maxim of manner is a direct result to the use of ambiguity which carries multiple interpretations of these euphemistic terms. The suggested translation is ‘....and impure men (i.e., prostitutes) for impure women’.

Example 4

{وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ} النور (4)

"And those who launch a charge against *chaste women*, and produce not four witnesses (To support their allegations), - Flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their evidence ever after: for such men are wicked transgressors" (Yusuf Ali: 897).

"And who accused *honourable women* but bring not four witnesses, scourge them (with) eighty stripes and never (afterward) accept their testimony- they indeed are evil-doers-" (Pickthall: 359).

"And the ones who throw (accusations) upon (*women*) in *wedlock*, (and) thereafter they do not come up with four witnesses, then lash them with eighty lashes and do not accept any testimony of theirs at all; and those are they (who are) immoral," (Ghali: 350).

In interpreting this verse, Abu-hyan says that ‘القذف’ or slander is to charge someone with adultery, and what is meant by ‘رَمَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ’ here is the false accusations against chaste women, because of the four witnesses who are needed to be sure of such accusation in the rest of the verse. Chaste women are those who have sex only with their husbands. It is not restricted to women, but it also applies to men. However, ‘slander’ against women is more odious. In any case except adultery, two witnesses are sufficient in the Islamic law ‘Sharia’. But in case of adultery, four witnesses are required to assure that they have really watched the accident with their naked eyes. Chaste women may be married or not; if they are not married, they will be virgin and if they are married, they will be chaste by their husbands. They should be honourable women, and they are supposed to have sex with none, except with their husbands (if they are married). Those who throw accusations upon such honourable women and do not come up with four witnesses must be lashed with eighty lashes.

Chaste is a classical word which means “not having sex with anyone; only having sex with a person that you are married to” (Oxford: 211). Honourable is “deserving respect and admiration (and) showing high moral standards” (653). Wedlock is an old fashioned term which means “the state of being married” (1527).

The three translators sacrifice the meaning at the expense of the euphemistic expressions, i.e. Chaste women, Honourable women, and women in wedlock, which represents a lexical gap between English and Arabic. Chaste may be acceptable in connection with married women only (women in wedlock) and honourable is a very common and broad term which does not render any reference to married or unmarried women. So, it would be better to transliterate the euphemistic Arabic term ‘محصنات’ and to provide the original term as is, i.e. using the strategy of foreignization, in parentheses or annotations, so as to ascertain the reader’s understanding of the intended meaning that might be unclear enough as it stands. According to the functional approach, foreignization is more appropriate than domestication. The intended meaning is not clear as the three translators flout the sub-maxim of manner “avoid ambiguity” and use the off-record indirect politeness to take the pressure off the hearer and to preserve the hearer’s positive face. The suggested translation is ‘And those who launch a charge against muhSanaat (chaste women or vestal virgin women)’.

Example 5

{وَرَأَوْنَاهُ الْآتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ} يوسف (23)

"But she in whose house he was, *sought to seduce him from his (true) self*: she fastened the doors, and said: "Now come, thou (dear one)!" He said: God forbid!" (Yusuf Ali: 558).

"And she, in whose house he was, *asked of him an evil act*. She bolted the doors and said: Come! He said: I seek refuge in Allah!" (Pickthall: 229).

"And she in whose home he was *solicited him*, and bolted the doors (on them), and said, "Come! Everything is ready for you." He said, "Allah be my refuge!" (Ghali: 238).

At-Tabary mentions that Abu-Ga'far says that the king's wife, i.e. Zulaikha, tried to seduce the prophet 'Joseph' while he was staying in their house but he refused.

Linguistically, 'رَاوَدَ' means that someone attempts to have illegal intercourse with another person. In this verse, euphemism is realized in two places, the allusion of the verb 'رَاوَدَ', i.e. to have illegal intercourse with 'Joseph', and the second part of euphemism is realized through at-ta'riid, i.e. 'hedging' (indirect hint) by using the possessive pronoun 'himself' which refers to 'Joseph's private parts'. As such, it leaves the reader to infer from the context and to draw the conclusion that the king's wife tried to commit adultery, but she failed.

Seduce is "(often passive) to persuade someone to have sex with you, especially someone who is younger than you or in a weaker position than you" (Oxford: 1203). Solicit is "to offer to have sex with people in return for money" (1278).

Although Ali and Ghali render euphemism as rich as it is in the Arabic composition and refer to the intended meaning in footnotes, Yusuf Ali's translation is more accurate than Ghali's, although the woman, i.e. the king's wife 'Zulaikha', did not ask Joseph for money, he was still in the weakest position in the king's house, he was a slave. However, the Arabic term carries both the implied meaning of sexual intercourse and the image of seduction in one picture; the English translation is not as rich as the SL text. Pickthall's translation does not render the meaning nor the figurative image. He uses the transitive verb 'ask' which indicates 'demand' and the noun phrase 'evil act' that refers to any bad deed or behaviour, and both expressions, do not convey the image of seduction. The three rendered expressions are ambiguous, as the translators use the off-record politeness to preserve the hearer's positive face. The vagueness violates the maxim of manner.

In their translation, Khan and Al-Hilali render the exact meaning of the term 'رَاوَدَتْهُ' and the euphemistic expression as rich as the original in a parenthetical sentence: "... sought to seduce him (to do an evil act)" (Khan and Al-Hilali, 1995: 340). The suggested translation is '.... seduced him (to have illegal intercourse)'.

Example 6

{ وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَى الْبَابِ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ } يوسف (25)

"So they both raced each other to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back: they both found their lord near the door. She said: "what is the (fitting) punishment for one who *formed an evil design* against thy wife, but prison or a grievous chastisement?" (Yusuf Ali: 559).

"And they raced with one another to the door, and she tore his shirt, from behind, and they met her lord and master at the door. She said: What shall be his reward, who *wisheth evil* to thy folk, save prison or a painful doom?" (Pickthall: 229).

"And they raced with one another to the door, and she ripped his shirt from the rear. And they come upon her master close to the door. She said, "What is the recompense of him who was willing to (commit) *an odious (deed)* to your family except that he should be imprisoned or (receive) a painful torment?" (Ghali: 238).

Az-zamakhshary says that 'سوء' is one of the preambles which may lead to adultery and all evils, and it covers all faces of fornication, i.e., a kiss and an insatiable sexual look. Al-qorTobi asserts that 'سوء' means "lust" as an introduction to commit illegal intercourse. Zulaikha was furious with Joseph as he scorned her love and mad passion when he rejected to fulfill her demands, i.e., to have illegal sexual intercourse with her, and when her husband 'Al-Aziz' saw her in such an awful situation, she was embarrassed, thus "One guilt leads to another" (Yusuf Ali: 559). She fabricated a charge against him to have her revenge on Joseph, saying that he seduced her to commit adultery with her and she totally refused. She had to resort to this lie for two reasons; the first is to justify and acquit herself before her husband, and the second is to get her revenge on the man who had scorned her love and to coax him to rethink about her passionate offer after a while.

The term 'سوء' is considered euphemistic as it is a metonymy referring to adultery. Evil is "having a harmful effect on people" (Oxford: 452), so it is morally bad or unpleasant. Odious is "extremely unpleasant" (914).

The three translations use foreignization without referring to the domestic meaning of 'سوء' in this verse which carries the meaning of adultery, even in Yusuf Ali's translation that tends to refer to the interpretation in the annotation. The three translators sacrifice the meaning at the expense of the euphemistic image. Evil and Odious do not refer to adultery, which is implicitly meant in this verse, they use umbrella terms that cover a meaning of a lot of bad aspects. Therefore, the target non-Arab reader cannot draw a conclusion about the intended meaning based on these euphemistic adjectives. It would be more adequate to use one of these terms, then refer to the intended meaning in a marginal footnote or in parentheses.

Ghali's translation successfully attempts to convey the verb commit in parentheses which refers to having an illegal action, but odious is not a quite equivalent to the euphemistic term 'سوء'. On the other hand, he renders the literal meaning of the word 'أهل' as family which is another kind of euphemism too. Arab people prefer not to call their wives neither by their first names nor by surnames as they consider them taboo words. They tend to call them euphemistically by any reference for fear of hurting them from foreigners. In this verse, the word 'أهل' euphemistically refers to wife in classical Arabic (Ibn-Manzur). The three terms rendered by the translators are not clear enough for non-Arab target readers, as they follow an off-record politeness strategy in order not to threaten the hearer's positive face. They also flout the sub-maxim of manner, i.e., avoid ambiguity, since the intended meaning is vague. The suggested translation is 'What is the penalty for one who was willing to (commit) a sin (cheat) against your wife ...'

Example 7

{وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ} يوسف (24)

"And (with passion) *did* she *desire* him, and he would have desired her, but that he saw the evidence of his Lord." (Yusuf Ali: 558).

"She *verily desired* him, and he would have desired her if it had not been that he saw the argument of his lord." (Pickthall: 229).

"And indeed she *already designed on* him, and he (would have) designed on her, had he not seen the proof of his Lord." (Ghali: 238).

At-tabari says that 'الهِمَّ' means the interior monologue to do something, but not really doing it. Interior monologue is "a representation of a character's unspoken thoughts" (Baldick, 2001: 161). In the prophetic Hadith no. 19027 in At-tabari's commentary, he explains that she lay down over him and he (would have) put off his clothes between her legs (At-tabari: 279). Ibn-Katheer asserts that commentators have differed in the interpretation of the term "desire" in connection with Joseph's and Zulaikha's desire: Zulaikha's desire is to have illegal sexual intercourse, whereas Joseph's desire is merely an interior monologue about unlawful or evil act.

Desire for someone is "a strong wish to have sex" (Oxford: 359). To have designs on someone is a formal idiom that means "to want to start a sexual relationship with somebody" (Oxford: 358). The term 'هَمَّتْ بِهِ' is a metonymy that is a euphemism for an extramarital sexual relation motivated by a sense of propriety to avoid mentioning an embarrassing term, namely illegal sexual intercourse. The meaning is thus reduced and became vague than the direct term, aimed at hiding the unpleasant denotative referent. It is worth mentioning that ambiguity is one of the tools of euphemism.

The three translations succeeded in conveying the original style and meaning. Both expressions (i.e., desire for someone and design on someone) are slightly equivalent to the original term 'الهِمُّ بِالشَّيْءِ'. Yusuf Ali's translation is more convincing than the other two translations, as he adds a parenthetical phrase (i.e., with passion) to show the difference between her desire and his, which are completely different as many scholars and interpreters have stated. The three translations seem to select ambiguous expressions which result in flouting the sub-maxim of manner, in an attempt to preserve the hearer's positive face.

Example 8

{وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الزِّنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا} الإسراء (32)

"Nor come nigh to *adultery*: For it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils)" (Yusuf Ali: 703).

"And come not near unto *adultery*. Lo! it is an abomination and an evil way" (Pickthall: 281).

"And do not come near to *adultery*; surely it has been an obscenity and odious as a way." (Ghali: 285).

Abu-Hayan says that when Allah prohibited killing children, He also prohibited getting these children in an illegal way. Therefore, Allah prohibited any approach or temptation to the way of adultery rather than committing adultery. Adultery refers to a great obscenity, so how awful this route of adultery is which results in hell. Yusuf Ali (1946: 703) states that "Adultery is not only shameful in itself and inconsistent with any self-respect or respect for others, but it opens the road to many evils. It destroys the basis of the family; it works against the interests of children born or to be born; it may cause murders and feuds and loss of reputation and property and loosen permanently the bonds of society. Not only should it be avoided as a sin, but any approach or temptation to it should be avoided." The term adultery and its derivatives are intentionally and dysphemistically mentioned nine times in five verses in the Qur'an to represent one of the main Islamic ordinances, i.e. punishments 'حد'. These are verse no.68 (Surat Al-Furqan) verse no.12 (Surat Al-Mumtahanah) verse no.32 (Surat Al-Isra), verse no.2 and 3 (Surat An-Nur), and the verse in question.

Literally, adultery is "sex between a married person and somebody who is not their husband or wife" (Oxford: 18). In Arabic, it is originally the 'adversity' or the difficult situation. In the original Qur'anic verse, it is not euphemized, but the dysphemistic term 'زنا' or 'adultery' is mentioned overtly to indicate one of the most important punishments stipulated in the Qur'an and make

it crystal clear for all people. So, euphemism is intentionally avoided in the original text due to the importance of the Qur'anic punishment and not to open the door sheepishly for commentators to interpret and differ around one of the clearest verses.

The term has been rendered into the three translations and the dysphemism adultery is retained as it is in the original. The direct meaning is meant to ascertain the readers' understanding of the Islamic ordinance, i.e., the Qur'anic punishment for adultery. Hence, the translators have successfully rendered this instance of dysphemism through bald on-record politeness strategy to guarantee maximally efficient communication with the hearers and readers as well. It is worth mentioning that they did not flout any of Grice's maxims, as the three translations are informative, true, relevant, brief and clear, following the four maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner respectively.

On the contrary, Khan and Al-Hilali render the translation of this verse as "And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse" (405). They committed what Massoud called 'too little respect for the source text' as they imposed their own interpretations and views on "what they translate and have no scruples about twisting the actual words of a text" (Massoud, 1988: 38). Too much knowledge of the topic, i.e., the Qur'anic punishment of the crime of adultery motivates them, as highly trained and professional translators, to euphemize what Qur'anically is intentionally and originally dysphemized for the sake of style and using elegant terms. The strategy of domestication or the politeness principles are not the reason beyond using this euphemistic expression, since the concept of 'adultery' exists in English. It is not tolerable of a translator to grant him/herself a license to interpret, comment, re-emphasize, or substitute the SL terms for other terms, especially if they are enough clear expressions in a religious discourse. Hence, in this verse the 'meaning' of the term is not the point, because the message has been sent, but methodologically unreliable. Competent professional translators should not put on the hat of the author's editors but should always be after a TL text equivalent in meaning to the SL. Khan and Al-Hilali flouted the maxim of quantity as they rendered more informative rhetorical images than is required. They attempt to preserve the hearer's negative face using the on-record politeness strategy in order not to impinge on the hearer's face.

6.2.2 Lesbianism

In the following lines, only one euphemistic Qur'anic verse and its problem in translation, concerning the issue of lesbianism, will be tackled and evaluated, by means of mentioning the Arabic translation, commentaries, euphemism, assessment and suggested translation.

Example 1

{وَالَّذِينَ يَأْتِينَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ فاسْتَشْهَدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةً مِنْكُمْ} النساء (15)

"If any of your women are guilty of lewdness, take the evidence of four (reliable) witnesses from amongst you against them." (Yusuf Ali: 183).

"As for those of your women who are guilty of lewdness, call to witness four of you against them." (Pickthall: 76).

"And (as for) the ones of your women who come up with the obscenity, so, call four of you to witness against them." (Ghali: 80).

Most commentators of the Qur'an say that 'الْفَاحِشَةُ' in this verse refers to adultery. However, Muhammad Rashid Reda's Al-Manar commentary, Mujahed's commentary and Abu-Muslim assert that 'الْفَاحِشَةُ' here is lesbianism which is a homosexual attraction between one woman and another woman. According to the above interpreters, 'الْفَاحِشَةُ' refers either to "sodomy" or to "lesbianism". The penalties on the three kinds of 'فَاحِشَةٌ' (adultery, sodomy and lesbianism) are strictly mentioned in the Qur'an. So, in this verse, it is most likely to be lesbianism from a semantic and lexical point of view (Reda, 1947: 483). It is worth mentioning that this verse is abrogated in verse no. 2 (Surat An-Nur) to set a new punishment 'حد' for adulterers and adulteresses.

Yusuf Ali asserts in the footnote no. 523 in the annotation that "it refers to unnatural crime between women, analogous to unnatural crime between men in verse no.16" in the same Surah (Yusuf Ali: 183).

'الْفَاحِشَةُ' is derived from the lemma 'فَحَشَ' which refers to any kind of abominable actions, sayings or sins, such as adultery. That is why 'الْفَاحِشَةُ' is the euphemistic expression of the dysphemistic term 'زنا' or adultery. The verse is addressing females, i.e. adulteresses, because of using the feminine plural pronoun 'اللاتي' which support the interpretation of lesbianism.

Both Yusuf Ali's and Ghali's translations succeeded in conveying the euphemistic expressions as it is in the original verse and in referring to the intended meaning in the annotation, i.e., "adultery or fornication" and "illegal sexual intercourse; abomination" respectively. But Pickthall's translation sacrifices the meaning of the term and the euphemism involved. The three translations flout the sub-maxim of manner due to the several potential interpretations of these ambiguous terms. They preserve the hearer's positive face using the off-record politeness strategy. The translation of this verse could be more comprehensible had the translators referred to the three potential meanings of 'الْفَاحِشَةُ' in the annotation, i.e., adultery, sodomy or lesbianism.

Khan and Al-Hilali render this verse as "And those of your women who commit illegal sexual intercourse, take the evidence of four witnesses ..." (141). They strictly insist upon one strategy, i.e., domestication, to convey the intended meaning and the finest style. They made praiseworthy effort to put domestication in practice, as they render one of the potential meanings as mentioned above. This translation flouts the maxim of quantity as produces a combination between interpretation and translation into the TL without referring to these explanations in a parenthetical statement. It uses the on-record politeness strategy to preserve the hearer's positive face using these expressions, i.e., illegal sexual intercourse.

7. Conclusion

In answering the questions of the study, the three translations of the Qur'an in question, i.e., Ali, Pickthall, and Ghali attempted to translate and communicate semantically with the TL as much as possible, but at the expense of conveying euphemism adequately into the target culture. The first two translations of the Qur'an, i.e., Ali and Pickthall, are selected because they follow the original Qur'anic order of Suas and they communicate domestically with the TL. The third translation of Ghali was selected as it represents an example of a recent translation written by an Arabic native speaker. Whereas Khan and Al-Hilali's translations are adopted just to shed light on the dangers of insisting on one system in the translating process, namely domestication. This translation is very popular and is widely published around the world and in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Skopostheorie and the functional approach place emphasis on the function of target texts and translation. Therefore, domestication and foreignization are highly compatible and well complement each other. They represent two different systems of translation that translators should keep in a state of balance and not bring them to extremes. Choosing one of them does not negate the application and importance of the other. However, insisting on one method and completely ignoring the other may render the translation methodologically unreliable. Even if the translators use domestication as a dominating strategy to facilitate the foreign concepts and ideas to the target recipients, exactly as Khan and Al-Hilali did, they can also retain the flavour of the original images concerning culture-specific expressions. Nevertheless, if the translators consider foreignization as the only comprehensive strategy in order to preserve all the exotic concepts and to convey the culture-specificity concepts into the TL, the translation might be turned into extremes, since the translated text might be quite unnatural or even unacceptable to the target readers. Therefore, translators should follow both domestication and foreignization on the basis of skopos and the functional

approach. It is incumbent to say that no one strategy is better than the other, both strategies have their central roles in the translating process.

Euphemism, as an off-record polite linguistic tool, is indirectly used to save the hearers' face and to hint at some embarrassing issues they mean to communicate. In the same vein, the off-record FTAs cannot be held accountable and any inferred meanings are deniable, as the "linguistic realizations of off-record strategies include metaphor and irony, rhetorical questions, understatement, tautologies, all kinds of hints as to what a speaker wants or means to communicate, without doing so directly, so that the meaning is to some degree negotiable" (Brown and Levinson: 69). This is done to avoid awkwardness or loss of face between the addresser and the addressee in the give and take interactions.

If translators ignore the euphemistic terms in the translation process, they will delude the target receivers, especially those of a different culture or non-Arab Muslims. As a result of ignoring euphemism in the translation action, the target receivers may relatively misunderstand the whole context in which the text is produced. Experienced translators are those who mention the euphemistic expression followed by a paraphrase or a footnote to facilitate its understanding to the target readers.

It is highly recommended in translating euphemistic terms to use some strategies to render the intended meaning to the TL, especially in religious discourses, for example, paraphrasing, using parenthesis, using footnote or marginal annotation (or even transliteration as a last resort) to convey the intended SL meaning as rich as it is in the original composition. Other linguistic tools and other fields and discourses may reveal more about the integration of the Qur'an and of euphemism and dysphemism as sociolinguistic phenomena since euphemism is "not rule teachable" (Hasan, 2002: 415). Thus, translators' cross-culture knowledge and language awareness tools are highly recommended.

This study still leaves much to be done on the Qur'an. Euphemism and dysphemism are not the only rhetorical features or fields of research in the above studied verses. Further studies may tackle the other illegal sexual relations or other fields, such as disasters, death, diseases, defeat, divorce, humiliation, arrogance, stinginess, extravagance, betrayal, slavery, etc.

8. Appendices

Symbols Used in the Phonemic Transcription of Arabic

A. Consonant			
Symbol		Description	Example
/b/	ب	voiced bilabial stop	/baab/ "door"
/t/	ت	voiceless alveolar stop	/kitaab/ "book"
/T/	ط	voiceless velarized alveolar stop	/Taalib/ "student"
/d/	د	voiced alveolar stop	/diin/ "religion"
/D/	ض	voiced velarized alveolar stop	/Dariir/ "blind"
/k/	ك	voiceless velar stop	/kaatib/ "writer"
/g/	ج	voiced velar stop	/gwatimala/ "Guatemala"
/q/	ق	voiceless uvular stop	/qalam/ "pen"
/ʔ/	ء	glottal stop	/ʔahmar/ "red"
/j/	ح	voiced palatal affricate	/jamal/ "camel"

/c/	ع	voiced pharyngeal fricative	/culuum/ "science"
/f/	ف	voiceless labio-dental fricative	/filfil/ "pepper"
/θ/	ث	voiceless dental fricative	/θaman/ "price"
/ð/	ذ	voiced dental fricative	/ðaalik/ "that"
/Z/	ظ	voiced velarized dental fricative	/Zalaam/ "darkness"
/s/	س	voiceless alveolar fricative	/sacaada/ "happiness"
/S/	ص	voiceless velarized alveolar fricative	/Saaboun/ "soap"
/z/	ز	voiced alveolar fricative	/zaaʔir/ "visitor"
/ʃ/	ش	voiceless palato-alveolar fricative	/ʃaacir/ "poet"
/x/	خ	voiceless velar fricative	/xaadim/ "servant"
/g/	غ	voiced uvular fricative	/gariib/ "strange"
/h/	هـ	voiceless laryngeal fricative	/haadiʔ/ "calm"
/ħ/	ح	voiceless pharyngeal fricative	/baħr/ "sea"
/r/	ر	flap/trill	/rajul/ "man"
/l/	ل	Lateral	/laacib/ "player"
/m/	م	bilabial nasal	/mudarris/ "teacher"
/n/	ن	alveolar nasal	/hinnaaʔ/ "henna"
/w/	و	bilabial glide	/walad/ "boy"
/y/	ي	palatal glide	/yawm/ "day"
B. Vowels			
/i/	ي	short close front vowel	/θiyaab/ "clothes"
/a/	ا	short half-close central vowel	/naħr/ "river"
/u/	و	short close back vowel	/qul/ "say"

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