

## The Noble Quran: A Critical Evaluation of Al-Hilali and Khan's Translation

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***Abstract:** This paper aims to critically evaluate Al-Hilali and Khan's translation of the Holy Quran on several levels of linguistic and non-linguistic analysis. Although the study covers the whole work, the data consists of 261 instances which markedly diverge from normal English usage. The results indicate that the translation is replete with errors grammatically, lexically, stylistically, and discursively. The errors are due to language transfer, overgeneralizations, ignorance of rule restrictions, and language/faith loyalty. The main conclusion is that while the translators tried very hard to present a factually accurate and linguistically faithful translation into English, the end product was too literal and so of no good practical value. The English is not only weak and awkward but also repels the reader from the text, thus discouraging him to carry on the joy of reading and learning.*

***Keywords:** Quranic translation, Al-Hilali and Khan's Translation, language errors, translation evaluation*

### 0. Introduction

The translation of the Holy Quran is a very interesting subject to scholars and laymen alike. Apart from being an academic subject, it also shows how far Islam has spread in the world, whether people from different languages are keen to know about it, and how well they receive it. All this depends very much on the quality of translations of the Quran that are available in their native tongues, which need to be accurate, precise, and appropriate. Hence the importance of Quranic translation evaluation. This subject has drawn the interest of scholars from around the world who gathered in a symposium on Quranic translation held by King Fahd Complex for Printing the Holy Quran in Madina, KSA from 23-25 April 2002. Sixty-three papers were presented on various translations in a good many major languages of the world in all continents such as English, French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Persian, Malay and so on.

This paper considers one of the most widespread interpretations and translations of the meanings of the Holy Quran into English with the intention of improving on such a translation so that readers understand and enjoy them better. The work was co-translated by Dr Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali, formerly Professor of Islamic Faith and Teachings at the Islamic

University, Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, KSA, and Dr Muhammad Muhsin Khan, formerly Director of University Hospital, Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, KSA. The translation went through several editions by different publishers in several countries. It was first published in Istanbul, Turkey in 1974 and then in the USA (Al-Hilali and Khan 1994: vii). This earlier edition was later removed from circulation and replaced by their newer 2000-page edition in Riyadh, KSA, which went through several editions and reprints (Al-Hilali and Khan 1994: vii). The translation, which has forewords and laudatory comments by professors at the Islamic University, Al-Madinah, comes in two forms: a shorter one-volume translation and an expanded 9-volume one. The full title of the former is *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language: A Summarized Version of At-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Katheer with Comments from Sahih Al-Bukhari Summarized in One Volume*.

Another edition was published by King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran under the title *The Noble Quran: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*. This work contains around 856 pages of text translation in addition to three appendices: a) a 32-page-long glossary of terms, b) topics, and c) index of topics. It also has a foreword and an attestation by the Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs and the General President of Scientific Research Departments. Although this work was revised by a panel of four PhD holders, it can be safely said that the changes made therein were few and non-substantial. The main text is, therefore, not different in any way from the above-said Dar-us-Salam's. The last edition will be used for the analysis below.

The remainder of this paper is organized several sections as follows: a) grammatical aspects including morphology, syntax and vocabulary, b) style, c) discourse, d) translation writing mechanics, e) typography, f) comparative assessment with similar translations, g) public evaluation, and h) conclusion.

## 1. Research Methodology

### 1.1 The Sample

Sampling is very controversial and vexing in applied studies (see Jassem 1993a, 1994a, 1994b for further detail). In this study, the whole text of the above-said King Fahd Complex edition constitutes the sample of the analysis. Nonetheless, this is not to say that every potential case was cited as it is a huge task which falls beyond the scope of one or two papers. In fact each aspect of the following analysis can be undertaken for further research on its own. For practical reasons, therefore, the sample consisted of 261 instances.

### 1.2 Data Collection

The study extended over a long period of time with two main phases. The first stage started and lasted for a month or so in 1998 in London when the author was on academic leave

there. Initially, the whole translation was thoroughly read for enlightenment, enjoyment and enrichment first and foremost. Thus there was no intention of assessing it analytically. However, as many problems were noted during the reading process, erroneous examples were noted down on separate sheets of paper by citing the verse or ayat text along with surah, verse and page numbers. In addition, brief comments were made on each error, naming the linguistic type of the problem alongside each case. This accidentally developed into further linguistic analysis later.

The next stage came after a long 4-year hibernation period. More precisely, it set off from around mid-till-end-of April 2002 in Buraida, Saudi Arabia during which three drafts were made. The first draft concerned typing the material into computer files, the second and third being revisions and further revisions. The main concern of this stage was to sort out the examples by category into grammatical, stylistic, lexical, and discourse. This was easy to do by collecting similar problems under one main category.

The third step was describing and analysing the examples linguistically more precisely. Each case was explained as to what was wrong with it and compared with other similar cases in the same text, if any. In most cases, this proved straightforward although certain examples were amenable to more than one interpretation as they involved more than one error.

The fourth step was to compare the translation with other translations such as Ali's in certain respects. This was done on a limited scale, though, and was confined to those cases, which were very vaguely rendered in the translation. Finally, some global evaluation of the translation was made by eliciting certain people's views about it. The evaluation was carried out at various points in late 2001 and early 2002.

### *1.3 Data Analysis*

The data will be analysed subjectively or qualitatively in the main. That is, the examples will be described by category as grammatical, lexical, stylistic, explaining the type of error therein, and suggesting their correct substitutes.

In addition, a quantitative analysis of the data will be employed, using frequency and percentage scores. Quantifying the data makes it comparatively simpler, swifter, and more inclusive for the reader to have a global outlook onto general patterns and tendencies.

## **2. The Results: Grammatical Aspects**

These refer to the use of morphology, syntax, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. In this section, only the first three will be described; the last two in another section.

### *2.1 Morphology*

Morphology refers to the use of forms such as the singular and plural, derivation and word building (Stageberg 2005; Jassem 2004). In general, the morphological side of the translation is good save for three derivational errors. These included:

- i) In \*17:21 (371), ...greater in preferment. **\*\***(cf. preference)
- ii) In 20:27 (416), And loose the knot from my ...(cf. loosen)
- iii) In 76:28 (805), ...made them of strong built. (cf. build)

\*Notes: Reference to surah/chapter number, verse/ayat number, and page number in that order

\*\*Suggested alternative bracketed

## 2.2 Syntax

Syntax refers to sentence structure, article use, parts of speech, relative pronouns, prepositions and so on (see (Stageberg 2005; Jassem 2004). In general, the grammatical side of the translation is riddled with various types of errors. A full list of erroneous use is given below.

### 2.2.1 Articles: Definite "the" and Indefinite "a/an"

Both the definite and indefinite articles are erroneously employed in certain places. These errors fall into three categories: a) missing, b) additional, and c) inconsistent.

#### 2.2.1.1 Missing

In the following examples, the definite article is missing (marked ##), which must be inserted.

- i) In 2:1 (1-fn), ## English language
- ii) In 2:04 (44) who is ## most quarrelsome of the opponents
- iii) In 39:22 (621), ..against ## remembrance of Allah.
- iv) In 5:106 (166), We shall not hide ## Testimony of Allah.

#### 2.2.2.2 Additional

In the following examples, the articles (all underlined here) should be deleted.

- i) In 3:117 (90): the Christ
- ii) In 11:73 (296), O the family [ of Ibrahim]
- iii) In 12:8 (305), ..in a plain error
- iv) In 26:97 (..), ...in a manifest error:
- v) In 36:59 (593), ...in the Islamic Monotheism

- vi) In 39:32 (623), ..and the Islamic Monotheism
- vii) In 42:7 (652), warn the Mother of the Towns.
- viii) In 49:7 (699), ..endeared the Faith to you.
- ix) In 49:17 (701),.. guided you to the Faith.
- x) In 59:20 (752), ... the dwellers of the Fire ... the dwellers of the Paradise.
- xi) In 77:20 (806), Did we not create you from a despised water (semen)?
- xii) In 6:121 (190), ...at the time of the slaughtering of the animal (cf. deleting the & of)

### 2.2.2.3 Inconsistent

This means that the use of the articles is haphazard, sometimes used, sometimes not although the same context is involved. None should be used anyway. Here are the examples.

- i) In 12:8 (305), ..in a plain error
  - ii) In 12:30 (307), ... in ## plain error
  - iii) In 26:97 (..), ...in a manifest error
  - iv) In 49:7 (699), ..endeared the Faith to you.
  - v) In 49:11 (699),...after having ## Faith.
  - vi) In 49:14 (700), ..for ## Faith has not yet.
  - vii) In 49:17 (701),.. guided you to the Faith.
- N.B.: ## indicates place of missing article; Underlined element indicates error .

### 2.2.2 Prepositions

On the whole, prepositions are employed well. However, a few instances of erratic prepositions were noted which can be classified as a) substitutive (preposition replacing another), b) additional (preposition not needed), c) inconsistent (incorrect fluctuation between forms), and d) literal (direct translation from the original). Listed below are some examples.

#### 2.2.2.1 Substitutive

This concerns using one preposition in place of another as in the following examples.

- i) In 1:7 (2), in the bottom of the valley: (cf. at)
- ii) In 4:12 (108), In that which your wives leave, your share is a half...  
(This can be better reworded by postposing the prepositional phrase; otherwise, “As to...” should be used instead.)
- iii) In 10:22 (273), ... till when you are in the ships,.. (cf. “aboard, on”).
- iv) In 23:75 (462), And though we... : (cf. if)

- v) In 24:13 (468), Then with Allah they are the liars. (cf. to)
  - vi) In 41:53 (651), Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord... (cf. with)
- \*Underlined element indicates error whilst brackets correction/comparison.

#### 2.2.2.2 Additional

This means there is no need for the preposition in this place as is shown below. Thus, deleting it is recommended.

- i) In 11:62 (295), ...you have been amongst us as a Figure of good hope.
- ii) In 41:12 (643), ... finished from their creation.
- iii) In 52:18 (714), Enjoying in that which.
- iv) In 100:1 (846), By the (steeds) that run, with panting.

#### 2.2.2.3 Inconsistent

This shows a fluctuation between using and not using the same preposition in the same place as in the examples below.

- i) In 59:22 (753), He is Allah, beside whom...
- ii) In 60:4 (754), ... you worship besides Allah. (cf. beside)
- iii) In 67:20 (773), Who is he besides the Most Gracious that .. (cf. beside)

#### 2.2.2.4 Literal

This is a direct copy from the Arabic original, which does not suit English style. Either deleting the preposition or rewording the text is recommended in the following.

- i) In 6:34 (174), ...; till our help reached
- ii) In 7:84 (212), And We rained down on them a rain..
- iii) In 7:57 (209), Till when they have.., We ...
- iv) In 9:98 (261), ...on them be the calamity of evil.
- v) In 11:34 (291), ...even if..., if.
- vi) In 41:12 (643), ..finished from their creation.
- vii) In 46:13 (683), On them shall be no fear, nor...
- viii) In 52:18 (714), Enjoying in that which.

#### 2.2.3 Conjunctions

Few erroneous instances were recorded, including:

- i) In 6:50 (176), I but follow. (cf. only)
- ii) In 76:31 (855), He will admit into His Mercy whom He wills and as for the Zalimun ... (cf. but)  
Indeed, the most common conjunction being erroneously utilized was “and”, which is described in further detail below (2.6.4.1).

#### 2.2.4 Comparison

In general, comparison is dealt with efficiently albeit with some exceptions as in the following two examples.

- i) In 11:95 (299), ..So away with Madyan as away with Thamud (cf. So away be it with .... as it was with....)
- ii) In 4:172 (140), ...who are the near (to Allah). (cf. nearest)

#### 2.2.5 Exclamation

One problematic example was noted which is

- i) In 3:159 (97): And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently (cf. How mercifully, thanks to Allah, you....)

#### 2.2.6 Relative Pronouns

Some relative pronouns were confused with personal pronouns and vice versa (see below); others were improperly deleted; still others unnecessarily added. The following examples illustrate that.

##### 2.2.6.1 Substitutive

Here relative pronouns are mixed up with personal pronouns as is shown below.

- i) In 3:167(100), And that He might test the hypocrites, it was said to them (cf. for whom it was said)
- ii) In 5:27 (147), ...sacrifice, it... (cf. which)
- iii) In 7:46 (207), ..., ## they will call out. (No proper links; replace “they” by “who”.)
- iv) In 17:64 (377), And befool them gradually those whom you can among them with your voice...(cf. rewording as it’s very confusing)
- v) In 22:20 (445), With it will melt (cf. which)
- vi) In 36:71 (595), ..the cattle, so that they are their owners (cf. which they own)
- vii) In 50:45 (706), But warn by the Quran; him who fears My Threat (cf. the one/those who)
- viii) In 54:34 (725), ..except the family of Lut (Lot), them We saved. (cf. whom)
- ix) In 66:8 (769), ..The Day that Allah..(cf. when)

### 2.2.6.2 Deleted

In the following examples, the relative pronouns are deleted for no reason.

- i) In 5:54 (153), ...*Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him; ## humble towards the believers, stern towards ..*  
(There is no linkage between both sentences; “who” may be inserted to achieve that.)
- ii) In 6:9 (170), We would have certainly confused them in ## which they are...(cf. inserting that)
- iii) In 6:71 (180), ... , ## *his companion calling him*  
(No link with preceding; better use “where his...”)
- iv) In 7:38 (206), ... *the Fire. ## The last of them will say..*  
(Again no good links between both. Use “where” to link.)

### 2.2.6.3 Additional

In the following example, the relative pronoun is not needed.

- i) In 9:40 (251), ...while the Word of Allah that became the uppermost. (cf. deleting that)

### 2.2.7 Pronouns

There are several problems with pronominal usage. These involve substituting one form for another such as subject and object, possessive adjective and pronoun, and misplacement (i.e., fronting or preposing as in “me and you”). Here are some examples.

- i) In 4:35(113), ...one from his family and one from her's (cf. hers)
- ii) In 16:53 (354), And whatever of blessings..., it is from Allah. (cf. they)
- iii) In 16:71 (357ffn), except you and I (cf. me)
- iv) In 40:82 (641), ...than them.. (cf. they are)
- v) In 41:15 (644), ..mightier than us in strength. (cf. we are)
- vi) In 48:29 (697), .. The mark of them...(cf. their mark)
- vii) In 74:31 (797), ..but He. (cf. Him)
- viii) In 90:20 (837fn), except he himself. (cf. him(self))
- ix) In 6:19 (171), ...between me and you. (cf. you and me)

### 2.2.8 Count/Non-count Nouns

Several erroneous cases were noted in count (singular and plural) versus non-count (often singular) nouns which relate to substituting one for another as in the following examples.

- i) In 4:94 (125), ...There are much more profits..(cf. many)



- ii) In 9:108 (26), ... water from urine and stools (cf. stool)
- iii) In 29:51 (fn), ..with many worldly pleasure. (cf. pleasures)
- iv) In 67:8 (771), ...its keeper will ask. (cf. keepers)
- v) In 67:15 (772), ..so walk in the path.. (cf. paths)
- vi) In 68:1 (774), These letters are one of the miracles. (cf. some)
- vii) In 6:21 (172), evidences...(cf. deleting -s)
- viii) In 8:65/66 (240), ...two hundreds. (cf. deleting -s.)

### 2.2.9 Adjectives as Nouns

Only one case was recorded in which the adjective was incorrectly used as a noun, which was:

- i) In 16:112 (364), ...made it taste extreme of hunger (cf. deleting “of” or placing it after “taste”)

### 2.2.10 There

One erroneous “there” was recorded in a footnote, which was:

- i) In 105:5 (850-fn), Then there took place negotiations between...(cf. “Then negotiations took place between..)

### 2.2.11 Subjunctive

Four problematic cases were noted down in this respect, three of which involved missing “be”. These were:

- i) In 10:18 (272), Glorified ... is He above (cf. be)
- ii) In 10:68 (28), Glory is to Him. (cf. be )
- iii) In 8:60 (239), And whatever you shall... shall.. (cf. unEnglish shall)
- iv) In 11:95 (299), .. So away ## with Madyan as away ## with Thamud (cf. inserting be it ; also cf. above)

### 2.2.12 Questions

There were some problems with questions and statements being confused with one another. These involved wh-clauses and wh-questions.

#### 2.2.12.1 Wh-clauses

In wh-clauses or subordinate clauses, subject-verb inversion was improperly used as these cases are not direct wh-questions. Statements should be used instead. The following examples were isolated.

- i) In 10:48 (277), ...When will be this promise?
  - ii) In 12:109 (319), Have they not travelled and seen what was the end of...?
  - iii) In 16:36 (352), So travel... and see what was the end of...
  - iv) In 27:51 (510), Then see how was the end of their plot!
  - v) In 27:69 (513), ...and see how has been the end of..
  - vii) In 30:9 (541), ..and see what was the end of..
  - viii) In 35:44 (587), ...and see what was the end.
  - ix) In 42:52 (660), ..You knew not what is the Book, nor what is Faith?
  - x) In 67:17 (772), Then you shall know how (terrible) has been My Warning.
- In all of the above, the underlined elements must be moved to end position alongside of removing the question marks.

#### 2.2.12.2 Wh-Questions: Missing Auxiliary

In the following examples, questions were not properly inverted. More precisely, the auxiliary verb is missing, which implies that the whole question should be reworded.

- i) In 68:36 (777), How ## judge you? (cf. inserting do and preposing you)
- ii) In 74:31 (797), What ## Allah intends by this (curious) example? (cf. inserting does, removing underlined –s)

#### 2.2.13 Verbless

In a few sentences, subjects were found without appropriate verbs, which is unacceptable in English as in the following examples:

- i) In 11:95 (299), ..So away ## with Madyan as away ## with Thamud (cf. inserting “be it---it was” as lacking both subject and verb ; also cf. 2.2.4 above)
- ii) In 16:32 (351), Those whose lives the angels take ## while they are in a pious state...
- iii) In 16:28 (351), Those whose lives the angels take ## while they are doing wrong to themselves
- iv) In 25:17 (480), ...these ## my slaves.
- v) In 42:15 (654), For us our deeds ## and for you your deeds ##.

In all, verbs are lacking. In the last example, the verbs “belong, are” may be used.

#### 2.2.14 Subjectless

Five cases were without subjects, where the verb was improperly fronted and the actual subject backed. These were the following:

#### 2.2.14.1 Missing

In the following examples, there are no subjects, where appropriate ones must be inserted.

- i) In 6:108 (188), Later on when ## came to me. (cf. inserting he)
- ii) In 46:13 (683), On them shall be no fear, nor... (cf. There shall be neither fear on them nor ...)

#### 2.2.15 VSO versus SVO Pattern

Arabic has a VSO (verb-subject-object) pattern whilst English has an SVO (subject-verb-object) pattern. In the three examples below, the translation is too literal, using Arabic VSO (verb-subject-object) pattern; therefore, they must be reworded to fit English SVO (subject-verb-object) pattern.

- i) In 21:1 (429), ## Draws near for mankind their reckoning
- ii) In 21:2 (429), ## Comes not unto them an admonition
- iii) In 50:12 (702), ## Denied before them the people of Nuh..  
## indicates missing subject position whereas the underlined actual subject.

#### 2.2.16 Objectless

One case was noted, which was:

- i) In 40:82 (641), ..yet all they.. availed them not. (cf. nought)

#### 2.2.17 Passive

Two wrong cases of passivization were isolated, which were:

- i) In 85:4 (826), ... (to be bring)... (cf. brought)
- ii) In 102:5 (848), ... you would not have been occupied yourselves in.. (cf. deleting been)

#### 2.2.18 Statistical Summary of Data

In the following table a statistical summary of the above grammatical data is given.

Table 1. Grammatical Data Summary

Category	Type	Frequenc y	Perc ent
Morphology	Derivational	3	03.65
Syntax	Articles	23	20.35
	Prepositions	21	18.58
	Conjunctions	2	01.77
	Comparison	2	01.77
	Exclamation	1	00.88
	Relative Pronouns	14	12.93
	Personal Pronouns	9	07.96
	Count/Non-Count	8	07.08
	Adjectives	1	00.88
	Dummy "There"	1	00.88
	Subjunctive	4	03.54
	Questions	11	09.73

	Verbless	5	04.42
	Subjectless	5	04.42
	Objectless	1	00.88
	Passive	2	01.77
Total	All	113	100.0 0

As can be seen in the table, almost all errors are syntactical in type, which cover all grammatical categories. Most such errors, however, are in article use and prepositions, followed by pronouns, and then questions.

Although the list is not inclusive in the sense that not every eligible instance was incorporated into the study which leaves ample scope for further work to be done here, one notices, nonetheless, that adverbs are missing in the analysis. It is very strange that no such instances were elicited or employed. Why?

The reason is that an accurate usage of English adverbs is synonymous with a sound overall control of its grammar and style. The inability of the translators to use it is indicative of their unawareness as to how useful and common adverbs are in English. Indeed, adverb use is one area, which can distinguish between Arabic and English very well. In other words, English relies far too much on adverbs than Arabic does. It can even be safely said that Arabic stands diametrically opposed to English in this connection. Therefore, revising this translation should take this fact into account. Hence the need for more adverbs in the translation especially in those constructions which require an identical verb-noun pattern (i.e., verb and its derived noun as in “to plot a plot” (مكروا مكرا؛ يكيون كيذا) in Arabic but verb-adverb pattern in English such as “designed a plot”.

Another device of fluent academic English is passive voice use. As only two erroneous instances were elicited, this area merits further research in its own right. This becomes more especially relevant as the Holy Quran is full of “Arabic” passive constructions.

### 2.3 Vocabulary

This concerns words, their use and selection in the translation. The main features fall into the following categories.

#### 2.3.1 Ordinary

The lexical items used in the translation are, in general, of the ordinary type, which implies that the text is readily comprehensible. However, there are a few exceptions. Some words are archaic or too technical; more precisely, only one such instance (in italic below) occurred in the whole translation in a footnote to verse 2:139 (28): viz., “his feet used to become *edematous* or swollen”. The word is explained by the subsequent synonym “swollen”, though. Others are exotic such as infrequent words, which are very rarely used. For example, in 5:89 (161), “... or manumit, a slave”.

#### 2.3.2 Imprecise

Many words were rendered imprecisely. That is, they were not given their true equivalents, thus leading to imbalanced equivalence. For example, in

- i) In 2:148 (30), the word “alkhairaat” is “good” as in (Hasten towards all that is good).
- ii) In 2:237 (52), “AlfaDI” is “liberality” as in (And do not forget liberality between yourselves.) It’s worth noting that Ali made the same rendering, hence the influence.
- iii) In 4:46 (116), “wasma3 wanDhurna” is (Do make us understand).
- iv) In 4:146 (134), “waaSli2oo” is (do righteous good deeds) for which “mend your deeds” would be better.
- v) In 6:64 (179), “worship besides Him” (bihi tushrikoon). “beside” should be used instead.
- vi) In 6:81 (182), ...*you have joined in worship with Allah things for which* (cf. partners, objects)
- vii) In 7:130 (218), “wanaqSin mina ath-thamaraat” is (shortness of fruits), which is the same as in Ali’s. “Shortage” should be used instead.
- viii) In 9:100 (262) “was-sabiqoon al-awwaloon” (And the foremost to embrace Islam...) cf. Ali.
- ix) In 10:61 (278), “wa ma takunu fi sha?n” is (Neither you (O Muhammad) will do any deed...) In Ali’s, “whatever ...”
- x) In 11:99 (300), “wa bi?sa ar-rifdu-l-marfood” is (Evil indeed is the gift gifted [i.e., the curse in this world] pursued by another curse (in the Hereafter)]. Cf. Ali.
- xi) In 17:21 (371), “in preferment” for “in preference”.
- xii) In 39:75 (629), “wa qaDa bainahum bil2aq” (..will be judged with truth.) “justice” is more appropriate.

- xiii) In 66:4 (768), “in tatooba ila Allahi, faqad Saghat quloobuluma” (If you two... turn in repentance to Allah, (...), your hearts are indeed so inclined) in which the meaning is being confused.
- xiv) In 66:8 (769) “The Day that...” should be “...when”.
- xv) In 67:5,6 (771), use of “and” for “moreover, in addition”
- xvi) In 68:1 (774), “These letters are one..” should be “..were ones/some”.
- xvii) In 69:44 (782), “And if he ...forged” should be “moreover”.
- xviii) In 114:6 (856), “Of jinn and men” should be “from...”.

### 2.3.3 Literal

Many words were translated verbatim without any consideration to the target language structure; for example,

- i) In 6:19 (183), “qaddarahu taqdeera” (estimate ... with an estimation).
- ii) In 7:84 (212), (And We rained down on them a rain of stones). “sent down” would be better.
- iii) In 18:70 (396), “..tatta u2ditha laka minhu dhikr” is (...ask me not about anything till I myself mention of it to you.)
- iv) In 22:74 (454), “wa ma qadaru Allaha 2aqqa qadrihi” is (They have not estimated Allah His Rightful Estimate.)
- v) In 71:22 (789), “And they have plotted a mighty plot” should be “devised”.
- vi) In 74:6 (796), “wala tamnun tastakthir” (And give not a thing in order to have more (or consider not your deeds of obedience to Allah as a favour to Him.) cf. Ali.

All uses of “and” in the translation fall under this category, which is described in detail below (2.6.4.1). (Also see 2.5.1 below.)

### 2.3.4 Repetitive

Repetition is very common on a lexical scale, which makes style very awkward. Deleting or re-wording such occurrences is more appropriate. Here are some examples;

- i) In 16:16 (355), “...neither can they delay nor can they advance it an hour.”
- ii) In 20:121 (426), “... began to cover themselves with the leaves of Paradise for their covering.”
- iii) In 48:10 (694), “Then whosoever breaks his pledge, breaks only to his own harm.” It would be better to say “he does so..”.
- iv) In 49:2 (698), “...nor speak aloud to him, talk as you speak aloud to one another.”
- v) In 58:5 (746), “...will be disgraced, as those... were disgraced.”
- vi) In 69:14 (781), “...and crushed with a single crushing” should be “blow, jerk, once”.

As can be seen from the examples, all spring from being literal in translating as referred to in (2.3.3 above).

### 2.3.5 Redundant

This refers to circumlocution which is obvious in using too long, periphrastic expressions. Sometimes several words are used for one word. Shorter equivalents are more preferable, though. For instance,

- i) In 2:255 (57), “Alqayyoom” is (the One Who sustains and protects all that exists).
- ii) In 4:141 (132), “alam nasta2widh 3alaikum” is (Did we not gain mastery over you?)
- iii) In 4:153 (135), “albayyinaat” is (clear proofs, evidences and signs).
- iv) In 6:142 (194), “2umulatan wa farshan” is “cattle” as in (And of the cattle (are some) for burden (like camels) and (some are) small (unable to carry burden like sheep and goats- for food, meat, milk, and wool.)) In Ali’s, “for burden and meat” is used.
- v) In 23:77 (462), “mublisoon” is (with deep regrets, sorrows and in despair).

### 2.3.6 Arabisms

Arabisms are Arabic loan words which occur in text in the form of transliteration. There are hundreds of such words that are kept in their Arabic original forms. These were transliterated into English, using, in addition to Romanized alphabet, strange diacritics that most English people don’t know how to read. However, a glossary was given at the end of the translation (Appendix 1: 859-90), which listed most such transliterations in the text. Loans are given in italic form first, followed by Arabic spelling in brackets, followed by an explanation of each term. It is noteworthy that the glossary is not limited to transliterated words in the translation; in fact, it contains hundreds that are not. So it is an all-purpose glossary meant to introduce the reader to certain concepts associated with such terms as well as others.

The authors did not justify why they used so many transliterations in text. However, in a footnote to ayat or verse 26:2 (7) concerning the word “Al-Fasiqun” (the rebellious, disobedient to Allah), they noted: “We have retained this peculiar English construction in order to capture the Arabic idiom here.” Other Arabic idioms were already used in text for which no justification was made such as “Al-Alamin” of 1:2 (1). The “Al-Fasiqun” is not included in the glossary, though.

Transliteration may be harmful and damaging to the text which may produce an awkwardly boring and unintelligible text as far as the reader is concerned. As most such words have real and/or potential equivalents, transliteration should be confined to proper names only; all else should be given their nearest English equivalents (see Jassem 1996b). This is because a text needs to respond to the reader and his needs. If necessary, these must be kept to a minimum. Islamic scholars writing in English have already suggested such lists; for example, Faruqi (1986)



tried to standardize certain terms in English by listing transliterations of 60 common terms (see Jassem and Jassem (1995b, 1996a,1997) for full detail).

### 2.3.7 Additions

In too many places insertions and interpolations were unnecessarily added in text, thus making it too lengthy, dull and boring (see 2.6.3 below). Indeed, such are a common feature of the translation whose place must be in the footnotes rather than in text. For example,

- i) In 6:142 (194), “2umulatan wa farshan” is “cattle” as in (And of the cattle (are some) for burden (like camels) and (some are) small (unable to carry burden like sheep and goats- for food, meat, milk, and wool.) In Ali’s, “for burden and meat” is used. (Also see 2.3.5 above.)

In contrast, in certain cases there were omissions. Only one instance was noted

- ii) in 69:19 (781), (Here ##! Read my book.) It should be “Here you are!”

### 2.3.8 Inconsistent

Certain recurrent words were variably rendered although they had the same meaning. For instance,

- i) In 2:225 (49) “la yuakhidhkum” is (...will not call you to account for...) versus
  - ii) In 2:286 (67) “la tuakhidhna” is (punish us not).
  - iii) In 42:43 (658), “inna dhalika min 3azmi-l-umoor” is (...that would truly be from the things recommended by Allah.) versus
  - iv) In 3:186 (103) ... (affairs of great resolution).
- There are many similar such items in the text.

### 2.3.9 Statistical Summary

Below is a summary of the lexical data in statistical form.

Table 2. Lexical Data Summary

Category	Type	Frequency	Percentage

Lexis	Non-ordinary/infrequent	2	04.44
	Imprecise/non-equivalent	18	40.00
	Literal	6	13.33
	Repetitive	6	13.33
	Redundant	5	11.11
	Arabisms	2	04.44
	Additions	1	02.22
	Deletions	1	02.22
	Inconsistent	4	08.88
Total	All	45	100.00

As can be seen from the table, only 45 errors were listed, about half of which fall into the “non-equivalence” or “imprecision” type. Furthermore, “Arabisms” are much more numerous than the figure indicates. In general, the entire vocabulary is of the ordinary type, which means that the cases cited are for technical and exotic words. Again, the list does not cover all eligible cases.

## 2.4 Translation Mechanics

Translation mechanics refer to purely mechanical writing customs such as spelling, capitalization and punctuation marks. On the whole, they were dealt with well in text. However, certain errors remained as follows.

### 2.4.1 Spelling

The use of spelling in the translation is, in general, very good except for a few misprints and/or errors. The misprints include:

- a) running two words together, as in: “inspite” (2:75 15), “infront of” (57:22 (742fn),
- b) adding or doubling prefixes such as “in incumbent” (2:191 (40fn),
- c) misprints such as “Messanger” (6:20 (172), “degrace” (11: 78 (297),
- d) splitting the same word into two such as “may be”(12:21 (306) and 12:83 (315) and fair- seeming (6:43(175)), and
- e) capitalization instead of small letter use as in “And after!” (10:10 (271); Then 10:23 (273); Paper 20:133 (428).

There is also weird spelling where biblical names are not given in their English forms first such as Noah (Nuh), Moses (Mosa), Jesus (Isa), Joseph (Yusuf). It is important to spell proper names as is commonly done in English to facilitate understanding. Indeed, the translators gave both forms side by side. But is it useful to do so every time the name occurs?

### 2.4.2 Capitalization

Capitalization is tackled correctly. However, it is often misplaced in abstract nouns such as “mercy, bounty, monotheism, faith, threat, anger, wrath”, which are usually capitalized. The text is replete with such cases, which make it sound rather German, a language in which all nouns are capitalized. For example,

- i) In 39:32 (623), ... and the Islamic Monotheism
- ii) In 49:7 (699), ... endeared the Faith to you.

(For further examples, see 2.2.1 above.)

### 2.4.3 Punctuation Marks

Punctuation marks are very important in dividing sentences into appropriate thought groups and pauses to assist the reader in understanding the text more effectively. They are also important for discourse organization. Although, roughly speaking, the punctuation of the text is good, there are certain awkward cases. Here are some examples.

- i) In 5:65 (156), lack of comma before “We”.

- ii) In 5:109 (166), semicolon should replace comma.
- iii) In 8:74 (242), semicolon should replace comma.
- iv) In 11:81 (297), semicolon should replace comma before “Verily”.
- v) In 18:106 (401), semicolon should be removed before “because”.
- vi) In 32:20 (557), semicolon or full stop should replace comma.
- vii) In 41:12 (644), comma needed after “Him”, the Almighty.
- viii) In 41:35 (647), end bracket to move and place after “world”.
- ix) In 46:15 (683), period to be replaced by comma.
- x) In 47:15 (689), period needed before “therein”. (Long explanation better placed in footnote.)
- xi) In 50:45 (706), semicolon to be removed.
- xii) In 67:13 (772), semicolon or full stop to replace comma before “verily”.
- xiii) In 114:1 (856), comma needed after “Allah”.

#### 2.4.4 Summary of Mechanical Data

The table below displays the data in statistical summary.

Table 3. Mechanical Data Summary

Category	Type	Frequenc y	Perce nt
Writing Mechanics	Spelling	11	45.84
	Capitalization	NA	----

	Punctuation	13	54.16
Total	All	24	100.00

As can be seen from the table, all errors are in spelling and punctuation. They are small in number, though.

## 2.5 Style

Style concerns the overall use of language in text; it relates to an overview of the use of grammar and vocabulary in text. The style of the translation is in most cases not without its problems. It neither reflects the majestic grandeur of the Arabic original nor does it imitate the elegance of English. It can be characterized as follows:

### 2.5.1 *Literal*

This means that the style closely resembles the Arabic original by placing English words in the same position or order as their Arabic counterparts, an inappropriate procedure in any case. As each language has its structure, the aim of the translator should be to produce an English-English text and not an Arabic-English one, a kind of pidgin English. There are many such examples on this:

- i) In 6:91 (187), ...estimate ... with an estimation
- ii) In 26:155 (498), on a day, known
- iii) In 32:18 (557), Not equal are they
- iv) In 40:58 (638), And not equal are to ...
- v) In 41:34 (647), between whom and you there was enmity
- vi) In 42:13 (653), Intolerable for the Mushrikeen
- vii) In 43:38 (664), Would that ... a worst type (should be What a worse type!)
- viii) In 43:48 (665), And not an Ayat we showed them
- ix) In 44:45 (674), Like boiling oil, it will boil.

- x) In 46:13 (683), On them shall be no fear, nor...
- xi) In 50:12 (702), Denied before them... the people of Noah (verb fronting)
- xii) In 52:37 (716), Or are with them the treasures of your Lord
- xiii) In 54:34 (725), ...Last, them We saved. (should be whom)
- xiv) In 59:20 (752), Not equal are the dwellers of the Fire..
- xv) In 69:14 (781), ... and crushed with a single crushing
- xvi) In 69:19 (781), Here I read my Record
- xvii) In 71:22 (789), And they have plotted a mighty plot

The solution for such double (verb-noun) repetitions such as “plot a plot”, would be to use an appropriate verb like “devise, make, do” for the first instance and noun or adverb for the second instance. This equals the use of “maf3ool muTlaq” (Absolute Object) in Arabic. It cannot be translated by repeating the verb and its noun as such a structure is not English at all. (Also see 2.3.3 above.)

### 2.5.2 Repetitive

There are two types of repetition. The first is purely lexical where a word is repeated more than once, which has already been tackled in 2.3.4 above. The second is stylistic where a word or definition/explanation is repeated every time the word is encountered in the text, which makes it seem really awkward. For example,

- i) In 8:37 (236), ...wicked (disbelievers, polytheists, and doers of evil deeds)..., wicked (disbelievers, polytheists, and doers of evil deeds)...

Repeating such a definition in the same verse is totally meaningless. There are many such instances, which should be avoided in the interests of the needs of the intelligent English reader and his language. (See 2.6.4 below.)

### 2.5.3 Monotonous

This emanates from repetitive style, which makes it lack variety. It is evident in the use of the same word over and over again. For example, the word “torment” is used for “3athaab” several times although “punishment, chastisement, torture” are readily available.

#### 2.5.4 Digressive and Distractive

This results from inserting countless bracketed explanations inside the translation which interrupt the reader's speed and comprehension, thus depriving him of much needed focus as in the example in 2.5.2 above. To avoid diverting the attention of the reader, interpolations and insertions may be kept in footnotes.

#### 2.5.5 Sloppy

Although it is easy to understand, using simple grammar, words, and structures creates a text which is far from being literary, esthetic or beautiful. This contributes to the fact the translation may not be taken seriously or given the attention it merits. It may even be "repelling/repulsive" to the readers (see 5 below). Take any example and you will instantly discover that. Thus producing a beautifully structured translation is a must as readers care for beauty and elegance in style and expression. And why not? Isn't the Quran very beautiful in style besides all else?

#### 2.5.6 Documentative

The Holy Quran is not a history book or a science book where references for further reading and full bibliographical information is given in parentheses whenever and wherever it may be necessary. Rather it is a book of guidance for mankind in straightforward, beautiful, and logical style. Despite all this, the translators tended to document their translation not only in footnotes and appendices but also in the main text. They did this by employing two devices. First, they often utilized cross-referencing to other verses in the text like "See V.2:2 for 9:36 (250) and 9:44 (251)", for example. In one Surah (no. IX) alone- i.e., "The Repentance IX (243-269)"- eight cross-references were made, three of which appeared on the first page; even more so, two in the same ayat. Here is an example,

- i) In 9:4 (243), "Except those of the Mushrikun (see V.2:105) with whom you have a treaty.... Surely Allah loves Al-Muttaqun (the pious- See V.2:2).

The cross-references here are for definitions of the underlined words (originally italic in text). One can only ask here whether cross-referencing was useful in making the text more comprehensible.

Secondly, an italic reference note is given in square brackets at the end of certain verses, which specifies the interpretation source upon which the translation was based. Such a procedure can be called referencing. For example,

- i) In 9:94 (261), They (the hypocrites) will present their excuses to you... to do. [*Tafsir At-Tabari*]

Obviously, the proper place for both cross-referencing and referencing would be in footnotes. Although the footnote procedure is widely used in the translation, it is not systematically followed there. Why mixing up practices then? Consistency is needed everywhere in the text.

### 2.5.7 Statistical Summary

The table below summarizes style data statistically.

Table 4. Statistical Summary of Style Data

Category	Type	Frequency	Percent
Style	Literal	17	85.0
	Repetitive	1	05.00
	Documentative	2	10.00
Total	All	20	100.00

As shown in the table, stylistic errors are not many; all are in the area of literal usage, which shows first language transfer and inability to discern suitable English style. This makes the text un-English, and so drives potential readers away from it rather than attracts them closer to it.

## 2.6 Discourse Aspects

Discourse organisation is closely related to style. In this paper, discourse refers to text structure as a whole. More precisely, it deals with register, length, and the connections and links between sentences in text known as cohesive devices or discourse markers.

### 2.6.1 Register

One of the major features of discourse is register, which means the special usage of English in text. All languages have their specific registers, for example, legal English, business English, medical English, literary English, etc. In this translation, English is used in a special way as far as words, grammar, and structure are concerned. Such a register may be distinguished by being a) Quranic English, b) Pak(istani)-English, and c) Ar(abic)-English.

#### 2.6.1.1 PakEng-cum-ArEng



As one translator was of Pakistani (and Afghan) origin and education while the other of Arab origin and education, their use of the language is certainly influenced by their respective mother tongues. Many language interferences were due to this fact. For example, most of the errors above such as the use of “the” (2.2.1), repetition (2.3.4, 2.5.2, 2.6.2), literalness (2.3.3) are cases in point. It’s not the respective errors that make it so; rather it’s the sum total of all such errors and non-errors.

### 2.6.1.2 Quranic-Islamic English

The text uses a special variety of English, which can be termed Quranic English, another subtype of Islamic English (for further detail, see Jassem 1995, 1996; Al-Faruqi 1986). Such a variety can be characterized as the sum total of all the previous features such as the use of Arabic loans or transliterations (2.3.7), the special use of morphology and grammar as shown in the cited examples, and the use of Arabic-modeled discourse. An extreme example of this is a footnote to (3:73 (81fn), concerning “Sifaat Allah” or God’s qualities where Arabic text is followed by the translation. In fact, the whole translation is the main proof of Quranic-Islamic English where parallel texts are used: placing the English translation parallel to the Arabic text of the original.

Quranic English is variable in the sense that its ratio varies from verse to verse. Some verses have higher concentration of Arabisms, others lower, and others none. The following examples are illustrative.

- i) In 2:3 (3-4), Who believe in the *Ghaib* and perform *As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat)*, and spend out of what we have provided for them [i.e., give *Zakat*, spend on themselves, their parents, their children, their wives, etc., and also give charity to the poor and also in Allah’s Cause-Jihad]
- ii) In 109:1-6 (852-53),

#### **Surat Al-Kafirun**

(The Disbelievers) CIX

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

1. Say: (O Muhammad ﷺ to these *Mushrikun* and *Kafirun*): “O *Al-Kafirun* (disbelievers in Allah, in His Oneness, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, in the Day of Resurrection, and in *Al-Qadar*.)!
2. “I worship not that you worship,

3. “Nor will worship what I worship.
4. “And I shall not worship that which you are worshipping.
5. “Nor will you worship that which I worship.
6. “To you be your religion, and to me my religion (Islamic Monotheism).”

As can be seen in this text, some verses such as 2-6 are entirely empty of any Arabisms while some are full of them such as 1 above which also has Arabic greeting and blessing of the Prophet.

### 2.6.2 Repetition

So far repetition has been referred to in several places (2.3.4, 2.5.2) in this paper. With regard to discourse, there is a lot of repetition in the text, which is of two types. One type is supra-clausal or supra-sentential which relates to the repetition of hadith (the sayings of the Prophet) or story several times in the same part. For example, the hadiths in connection with verses 81:27 (819) are repeated in 84:22 (825); 82:10 (820) repeated in 86:4 (829); 82:11 (820) repeated in 86:4 (829); and 88:2 (831) repeated in 81:27 (819), 84:22 (825), and 98:6 (845). Also another hadith is repeated in connection with 1:7 (2) and 2:135 (26) and many others.

The second type is clausal or phrasal repetition which concerns repeating explanations of certain words that are given in transliterated forms of which there are hundreds and hundreds; the same words are given over and over again. For instance, “Al-Alamin” (mankind, jinn and all that exists) in 2:1(1) is repeated wherever this word occurs. The same bracketed interpretation is given which makes it dull and boring for the reader. Sometimes the same explanation is reiterated in the same verse where the same word occurs twice. For example,

- i) In 8:37 (236), ...wicked (disbelievers, polytheists, and doers of evil deeds), ... wicked (disbelievers, polytheists, and doers of evil deeds)...

### 2.6.3 Length

One aspect of discourse organization is length. Sentences must have appropriate length; otherwise, they become too difficult to keep track of. For this reason, it is not advisable to have sentences that are too lengthy. In such circumstances, breaking them up into more manageable chunks is recommended. The translation has countless lengthy sentences; here are a few examples:

- i) In 4:113(128), ...*and...and....and....and...*

(There are too many “and’s” for which other alternatives are needed for better English.)

- ii) In 9:74(256), *They swear.... Bounty.*

(This is too lengthy, which must be broken up into several sentences for better comprehension and cohesion.)

- iii) In 11:110 (301), ...,and, ... and

(Using too many sentences in one is clumsy which should be split up. First “And” can be replaced by “in fact” whilst the second can be deleted. In fact, all uses of “and” in such sentences contribute to unwanted lengthy statements.) (Also see 2.6.4.1.1 below.)

- iv) In 4:135 (132), *O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor, ## Allah is a Better Protector to both (than you)...*

(The sentence is too long without good links; the second sentence marked ## does not link with its forerunner. So better divided.)

- v) In 5:97 (164) *Allah has made the Ka’bah .....everything.*

(Again it’s too long; it should be broken into at least two. Make the split before “that”; also replace “that” by “this”..)

- vi) In 47:15 (689), *The description of Paradise.... Their Lord.*

(There are two or more sentences in one here, without suitable links; better split up.)

#### 2.6.4 Discourse Markers

These are sentence links and connectives without which the text will be very difficult to understand. Using appropriate links such as conjunctions (e.g., and, but, or, so) and connectives (e.g., therefore, however, although) is not only a mark of good flow and command of English but also better of cohesion. There are many problems with discourse markers in the text, some of which are listed below along with brief comments.

##### 2.6.4.1 Misusing “And”

The conjunction “and” is misused in the text in three ways: a) one serial, b) one substitutive, and c) one inconsistent. The first concerns using “and” wherever its Arabic counterpart “wa و” is involved, which may not be the case on semantic and contextual grounds.

The second relates to the fact that other conjunctions or connectives might be substituted for it. The last indicates fluctuating and troubled use.

#### 2.6.4.1.1 Serial “And”

Serial “and” is a direct transfer from Arabic in which it is a common feature of Arabic discourse. Indeed, it may be the most commonly used feature to link not only items in a series within a sentence but also sentences together in Arabic or as a transitional marker from one sentence to the next. Any investigation of Arabic discourse, spoken or written, will clearly show this. In contrast, English is intolerable to more than one occurrence of “and” in any one single sentence in general. Moreover, it is totally unacceptable as a transitional marker from sentence to sentence with very, very few exceptions, if any. That is, it is not usually used initially. Below are some examples.

- i) In 4:106 (127), *And seek the Forgiveness of Allah, certainly, ## Allah is Ever-forgiving, Most Merciful*
- ii) In 4:113(128), *...and...and....and....and...*  
(There are too many “and’s” which must be found alternatives for better English.)
- iii) In 4:152 ( ..), *And those who believe, We shall give them..*  
(“And” better substituted for by “ As to”.)
- iv) In 27:64 (513), *..., and..., and...?*  
(The same holds as in the above: i.e., deleting serial “and”.)
- v) In 46:15 (683), *...parents. His mother... And*
- vi) In 56:18 (734), *With cups, and jugs, and a glass of flowing wine.*  
(Serial “and” again; only second instance to be retained.)
- vii) In 67:5 (771), *And..., and..., and..*  
(The same problem with serial “and”.)
- viii) In 67:6 (771), *And..., and ...*  
(Replace first “and” by “in addition” and delete the second.)
- ix) In 69:44 (782), *And if he ... had forged.*

(“And” to be replaced by “moreover”.)

- x) In 5:111 (167), *And we believe. And we bear witness that..*

(Serial “and” again.)

- xi) In 6:3 (169), *He knows what ... and....and...and*

In the above examples, transitional or initial “and” is used 6 times.

#### 2.6.4.1.2 Substitutive “And”

Substitutive “and” occurs most frequently sentence initially in which case it means something other than its usual meaning. It has to be noted that this usage is very common in Arabic but not in English which uses other more explicit cohesive devices, connectives or transitional phrases such as “moreover, as to, therefore, but, in contrast, unlike.” Here are some examples:

- i) In 4:152 ( ..), *And those who believe, We shall give them..*

(“And” better substituted for by “As to”.)

- ii) In 69:44 (782), *And if he ... had forged.*

(“And” to be replaced by “moreover”.)

- iii) In 76:31 (805), *He will admit to His Mercy whom He wills and as for the Zalimun...*

(Inaccurate use of “and” in place of “but” as contrast is involved.)

- iv) In 6:8 (170), *.. and no respite would be granted to them.*

(Replace “and” by “as”.)

- v) In 6:135 (193), *..., and you will come to know*

(Using “for” more proper.)

#### 2.6.4.1.3 Inconsistent

In certain cases, items in a series or list are sometimes correctly joined and sometimes incorrectly joined, using “and”. Such fluctuation is unacceptable. For example,

- i) In 56:18 (734), *With cups, and jugs, and a glass of flowing wine.*

(Serial “and” again; only second instance to be retained.)

- ii) In 75:4 (803), ..*iron chains, iron collars, and a blazing fire.*

(Here “and” is correctly used, which is inconsistent with the above-mentioned serial one.)

#### 2.6.4.2 Deleted Markers

In certain cases, some markers are lacking, leading to sentences that do not cohere or link well. The problem of discourse marker deletion can be most clearly seen in missing relative pronouns as discussed above (2.2.6.2). Here are a few other miscellaneous examples.

- i) In 4:106 (127), *And seek the Forgiveness of Allah, certainly, ## Allah is Ever-forgiving, Most Merciful*

(Inserting “for” before “Allah is certainly...” makes it link better.)

- ii) In 4:135 (132), *O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor, ## Allah is a Better Protector to both (than you)...*

(The sentence is too long without good links; the second sentence marked ## does not link with its forerunner. So better divided.)

- iii) In 5:1 (141), ... *Lawful to you... are all the beasts of cattle., ## game (also) being unlawful when you assume...*

(No cohesion; use “whereas, while” to link contrasts.)

- iv) In 5:2 (141), *But when you finish the Ihram., you may hunt, and let not the hatred of some people... lead you ..*

(No discourse cohesion; replace “and” by “however” preceded by full stop or semicolon.)

- v) In 6:25 (173), ... *they will not believe therein; ## to the point that when...*

(no cohesive links between the sentences; remove semicolon.)

- vi) In 6:52 (177), ...*And turn not away those who invoke their Lord... You are accountable for them in nothing...that you may turn them away, and thus become...*

(No good links; reword as “If you do so, you’ll thus become...”

vii) In 6:138 (193) .. *And (they say) there are cattle forbidden to be used for burden...; lying against him.*

(No cohesion with preceding statement; better reworded.)

viii) In 8:7 (231) *And (remember) when... yours; ## you wished*

(No good links; replace semicolon by comma.)

ix) In 58:11 (747), .. *When you are told to make room, (spread out) make room. ## Allah will give you (ample) room...*

(No cohesion; link with “so that, then, etc.) to cohere well.)

#### 2.6.4.3 Statistical Summary of Discourse Data

The following table summarizes the discourse data statistically.

Table 5. Discourse Data Summary

Category	Type	Frequency	Percent
Discourse	Register	NA/All	----
	Quranic English	NA/All	----
	Repetition	11	24.44
	Length	6	13.33
	And	19	42.23
	Deletions	9	20.00

Total	All	45	100.00
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As is shown in the table, most errors are in the use of “and”, repetition, deletion, and length in that order. However, the description is not inclusive and is meant as a rough guide. Indeed, the text is replete with many more cases, which could not have been included here. Indeed, concerning “register” and “Quranic English”, for example, the whole text can be characterized thus without any statistical figures.

### 3. Typography

This refers to purely technical matters like printing form, page layout, space use, and font size. On the whole, typography is in excellent shape with page layout being nicely presented, space being efficiently used with no blank spaces left unused. However, the rest of the translation of verse 33: 73 (573) can be easily accommodated on page 572.

As to font size, this is good on the whole. However, a thinner and lighter font size would be more desirable in footnotes for distinguishing them from the main text of the translation.

### 4. Similarities with Other Translations

As translating the meanings of the Noble Quran is a gigantic task beyond the capability of any single individual, Quran translators have often depended on, and so are indebted to, earlier translations. Most translations acknowledge earlier works; for instance, A. Y. Ali acknowledged his dependence on Pickthall.

In contrast, Al-Hilali and Khan made no acknowledgement of benefiting from earlier translations in the field although a cursory look at their translation shows deep influences and heavy dependency on them. For example, a comparison of their translation with A. Y. Ali's shows that it is in a great many ayws, the same as Ali's, the difference being the insertions and interpolations. So it seems that their translation is largely based on Ali's as can be clearly seen in Chapter 1, “The Opening/Al-Fatiha” (see Jassem and Jassem 2002).

### 5. Public Evaluation Comments: Measuring Readers' Attitudes

Translation evaluation is an important reflection of its reception by the scholarly community and the wider public at large. The evaluation can be done at a linguistic level, at an ideological or belief-based level, and/or at a public level. The first two are common in research. An example of the first is the above description of errors in this article; indeed, most studies of Quran translation fall into this category. The second is less so common, an example of which is



discontinuing publishing Ali's translation by King Fahd Complex due to 50 or so ideological aberrances therein as was noted by one participant at *International Conference on King Fahd 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: His Achievements*; another example is the apathy and rejection of Muslim adherents to adopt non-Muslim translations of the Quran such as Rodwell, Arberry, and Dawood (see Jassem and Jassem 2002).

The last is almost non-existent as far as one can determine although it is widely used in other fields such as psychological and sociolinguistic research (see Jassem (1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1993a, 1993b)). Thus, despite the fact that translation evaluation is alien to Quranic translation, it is necessary to conduct such evaluation from time to time especially when the translation concerned is sponsored and distributed worldwide by the major publishing and printing house in the field, King Fahd Complex. The evaluation will show one the general trend of receiving the translation by the general public: viz., how acceptable it is to them! Also it contributes to decision-making on whether to continue publishing it in the future in the same form, linguistically and stylistically speaking.

The researcher carried out a few interviews in this direction, eliciting the views of some scholars on the subject. These scholars were both native and non-native speakers of English, Arabs and non-Arabs. The evaluation took the form of open-ended discussions without the respondents knowing that their views will be recorded for research purposes. They were frank and spontaneous.

On the whole, the translation was not well received on stylistic and linguistic grounds. For example, Dr William S. Peachy, an American professor of English at College of Medicine, King Saud University at Qasseem, commented: "Nobody likes it except the Saudis who don't know English, whose native language is not English". He also said: "It's repulsive." This comment is in harmony with what most native English speakers believe it to be. Reporting on the subject, Dr AbdulHalim, Arabic Professor at SOAS, London University, noted that they find it "repelling", unlike A. Y. Ali's translation, which is very much respected, perhaps the most respected of all. The Director of King Fahd International Centre for Translation, King Saud University, Riyadh, Dr. A. Al-Muhandis, expressed his dissatisfaction with the translation's style and language, being too poor and simplistic. Indeed, almost everyone the researcher had a chance to talk to about the subject during the above-named Symposium (over 200 participants from all over the world) held similar views. Sirhani (1998: 7) was an exception, though, who claimed that this translation is the best, but without any substantial evidence.

## 6. Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The above description has been a thorough analysis of Al-Hilali and Khan's translation of the meanings of the Noble Quran on linguistic, stylistic and discourse grounds as well as others. It was found that the translators tried to present a factually accurate and precise interpretation of

the text in a linguistically faithful style in an elegant form and shape typographically speaking. However, the translation suffers from countless weaknesses on all counts of linguistic study, as can be seen in the table below which summarizes all the data analyzed so far in statistical form briefly.

Table 6. Statistical Summary of Linguistic Data

Level		Category	Frequency	Percent
Linguistic	Lower Level	Morphology	3	1.20
		Grammar	113	45.02
		Lexis	45	17.93
	High Level	Style	20	07.96
		Discourse	45	17.93
Non-linguistic	Mechanical	Punctuation	24	9.56
Technical	Formal	Typography	1	0.4
Total			261	100.00

As can be seen from the table, the majority of errors are linguistic, which may be lower level or high level. The former are so called as they do not affect text intelligibility while the latter do so. More precisely, grammatical errors account for 168 of the data whereas style and discourse errors amount to 68 errors. Altogether they amount to 236 out of a total of 261.

The major sources of error were many. Language transfer or the interference of first language was a major factor where many of the errors can be attributed to the influence of Arabic or Urdu on English. Another is overgeneralization and/or the ignorance of rule restrictions such as capitalizing all nouns of all types such as proper and abstract ones. A third is the attempt to present a factually and linguistically faithful text which matches the Arabic original very closely. The end result is a weak and awkward text, which repels rather than attracts one.

Thus, for a translation to achieve its universal goals, it should have an elegant, beautiful style, be readily comprehensible, and, consequently, well received. Therefore, in light of the above description and analysis, there is and will always be a need for a translation with a depth in faith and vigour in style. Depth in faith means commitment, sincerity, piety, and sound knowledge; vigour means proper language, eloquent style, a refined sense and flair for good, appropriate, and beautiful structure and discourse. Indeed, factual accuracy depends on linguistic correctness and stylistic appropriacy. In short, the translation needs to be entirely revised.

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