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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Analyzing And Assessing the Translation of Quranic Terms based on the Tridimensional Exegetic Analysis Model, salah as a Case Study

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| ABSTRACT

The study investigates the hypothesis that there are certain conceptual gaps between the source and target concepts and proposes a translation strategy to avoid that distortion of the intended meanings. It starts from the premise that producing a high-quality translation of Quranic concepts could be attained if the distinctive features of source and target concepts are delimited based on an onomasiological terminological approach and a tri-dimensional textual approach. The objective is to assess an equivalent of a Qur'anic term based on its conceptual match or mismatch with the source concept and to propose improved versions that meet the needs of readers of Quranic translations irrespective of their cultural backgrounds. Thus, after attaining the conceptual delimitation of the Quranic concept of *salah*, an analysis is conducted to check whether its features are well conveyed in the equivalent "prayer". *Salah* is delimited in the Quran (intratextuality), Sunnah (intertextuality), and the historical sociocultural contexts (contextuality).

| KEYWORDS

The Quran, translation, Arabic, English, terms, concepts, terminological approach, textual approach, exegetic approach, equivalent, *salah*, "prayer"

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### 1. Introduction

Translating the Quran is the only means to convey the holy message to non-Arabs. The translation of the Quran is mainly intended to convey its meanings and not to reproduce its inimitability. This objective could be hindered by the difficulty of translating Quranic terms, especially when they designate concepts that carry deep cultural and religious significance. One such term is *salah*, commonly translated as "prayer" in several English translations of the Quran.

The study delves into the conceptual intricacies of *salah* by delimiting its distinctive features from various textual sources, including the Quran which prescribes the concept, and the Sunnah which exemplifies it. This analysis is conducted by a tridimensional exegetic analysis model that uses exegesis, which is indispensable for identifying the distinctive features of Quranic concepts. It includes intratextual, intertextual, and contextual sources that delimit source and target concepts.

### 2. Hypothesis

The paper hypothesizes that the English equivalent of "prayer" does not capture the Qur'anic concept of "*salah*", representing Islam's most compulsory ritualistic worship. It assumes that "prayer" does not encapsulate the full range of the distinctive features inherent in the Quranic concept, which embodies a wide spectrum of physical movements, Quranic recitations, supplications, and spiritualities. It presupposes that the comprehensive nature of *salah* is not transmitted by "prayer",

which designates a concept that refers to a range of religious practices from various traditions and whose use as an equivalent for *salah* results in interpretational biases that deviate from the intended meanings.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study is descriptive, comparative, interpretive, qualitative, and analytical. The conceptual analysis will identify the original lexical denotative meaning(s) based on lexicographic reference works and the distinctive features based on the intra-textual, intertextual, and contextual exegetic references. The resulting conceptual description of *salah* will be compared and contrasted with the equivalent "prayer". This comparative and contrastive analysis will help suggest translation strategies for re-designating *salah* in English.

#### **3.2 Data of the Study**

Samples of textual sources are used as purposive and relevant data and not as statistical representations. Sampling is based on the features that are relevant to research. Diversity is also a characteristic of this data as it includes various texts and co-texts that delimit the concept of *Salah*. The samples from the Quran are written using the transliteration tool of the American Library Association - Library of Congress.

#### **3.3. The Tridimensional Exegetic Model of Analysis**

The translation of the Quran cannot be conducted without the recourse to exegesis whose main purpose is to clarify Quranic meanings. Abdul-Roaf (2010) defines Quranic exegesis as "a literary activity whose function is the elucidation of the clear and ambiguous aspects of the Scripture and its major principles." (p. iv). It is worth noting here that the Islamic exegetic texts teem with intra-textual, intertextual, and contextual references. The Tridimensional Exegetic Model of Analysis uses the works of exegesis that interrelate these references to delimit Quranic concepts.

Exegetes of the Quran adopt the intra-textual approach and consider it the most authentic exegesis. They also rely heavily on intertextual references from the Sunnah. This heavy reliance on such intratextual and intertextual sources is explained by the complementarity between the two main sources of Sharia, the Quran and Sunnah. Contextual references are abundantly found in the works of exegesis as they provide important historical, cultural, and social information that enters into play in the formation of concepts. A large part of the Quran is revealed in response to specific events, incidents, or questions. Identifying the meanings of these verses is dependent on knowing the circumstances where they have been revealed.

##### **3.3.1. An Intra-Textual Based Approach to Exegesis**

Intra-textuality is a network of ideational (conceptual), interpersonal, and textual relationships that bind the different parts of the text into a well-connected and unified whole and, henceforth, guarantee the thematic and structural continuity of the text. Sharrock (2018) states that "Intratextuality is the phenomenon and the study of the relationship between elements within texts" (p. 15). Thanks to these relationships that bring together what seems scattered and form a sophisticated meaningful unity, the gaps in meaning are filled and the ambiguities are clarified. Sharrock (2018) mentions that "intratextuality's interest includes the question of how disparate parts of texts fit together, and how the presence of an element in one part of the text may make itself felt in the realization of a far-distant place" (p. 23). Intra-textuality is achieved through the linkage between usually fragmented textual elements to form an interconnected text.

The Quran is primarily clarified by the Quran itself and not by any intertexts. A Quran verse is generally elucidated through another verse referred to intra-textually. The elucidating verse details what is concise, clarifies what is ambiguous, specifies what is general, or restricts what is unrestricted. According to Saeed (2006), "The Quran contains verses that are absolute (*mutlaq*), others that are qualified (*muqayyad*), abrogating (*nāsikh*) or abrogated (*mansukh*), and others that are aggregated (*mujmal*) or explained (*mubayyan*)" (p. 43).

##### **3.3.2. The Inter-Textual Based Approaches of Exegesis**

A text depends on other texts to convey its meaning. The meaning it communicates to a reader is the outcome of the intertextual relations it bears with other texts. It is thus synthesized through a network of inter-textual relations. Linde (2009) states that reading "becomes a process of moving between texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and

all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations" (p. 169). Hence, a single text cannot stand by itself and in isolation from its interrelated texts. Aichele & Philips (1995) state that "texts acquire meaning to the extent that they are situated in relation to other texts in a web of mutual interference and illumination" (p. 11). The meaning of a text is an echo of the textual network it maintains with previous and subsequent texts, and the translator must refer to this network to form comprehensive meanings of the text.

The Sunnah as a compilation of intertexts delimits Quranic concepts through the Prophet's sayings, deeds, and attestations. This exegetic role of the Prophet is decreed by the verse (16:44) "*W'nzlnā alyk al-dhikr ltbyn lil-nās mā nazala alyhm*" [We have revealed to you the Qur'an so that you can explain to people what was sent down for them]. Being conscious of this role and having the required knowledge of both the Quran and the Sunnah, exegetes relate each Quranic concept with its Prophetic intertexts that clarify it.

### 3.3.3. The Contextual Approach of Exegesis

The delimitation of a Quranic concept is also determined by its context. Exegetes emphasize the pivotal role that the context plays in clarifying the meanings of the Quran. Adopting the contextual approach to the Quran entails having a profound knowledge of the historical and cultural setting of the revelation. It is necessary to situate the Quran within the context of its revelation. Delimiting Quranic concepts and delineating their distinctive features draw upon the defining contexts where they are described.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The term *salah* will be analyzed based on the eclectic analytical model described above. Its analysis will delimit the concept based on the intra-textual, intertextual, and contextual exegetic references. This conceptual delimitation will trace the terminologisation from the original general lexical meaning to the newly specialized meaning acquired in the Quran. A comparison is conducted between the distinctive features of the source and target concepts. Based on this comparative and contrastive analysis, the paper will suggest the translation procedure to be adopted.

### 4.1. The Lexical Meanings of "al-Ṣalāh"

The verb form '*Ṣallā*', according to the dictionary of al-Mu'jam al-Jāmi', means to supplicate. The Quran refers to the lexical meanings of '*Al-Ṣalāh*' in several verses. According to Tabara (1968), the Quran uses '*Al-Ṣalāh*' as it is used before Islam as a supplication to the Almighty and an approach to His Mercy; it is a connection that brings a person closer to His Creator (p.21).

The meanings of *salah* pivot around adhesion, proximity, and commitment. The verses (75: 31-32) "*fa-Lā ṣidq wa-lā ṣallā wa-lakin kadhaba wtwlā*" [He neither believed nor prayed But [instead], he denied and turned away]. The verb '*Ṣallā*' is mentioned here as the antonym of '*Tawallā*' which means 'to turn away', 'abandon', and 'disconnect'; '*Ṣallā*', therefore, refers to the connection, communication, proximity, approaching, and commitment to Allah. Lisān al-'Arab stresses the meanings of supplication, forgiveness, mercy, praising, and glorifying. The same meanings are provided for the form in other lexicographic entries like in the dictionaries '*al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*', and '*al-Mu'jam al-Wasīṭ*'.

The lexicographical analysis of *salah* and its verbs shows a consistency between lexical meanings and jurisprudential ones. The word *salah* in Islamic jurisprudence has kept the meanings of proximity, connection, and commitment as well as those of supplicating Allah's mercy and forgiveness. Thus, *salah* is named after its essential semes, commitment, and supplication, but has been semantically transformed, expanded, and terminologized. The following section will investigate the specialized meanings the word has acquired in the Quran and Sunnah.

### 4. 2. The Distinctive Features of the Concept *Salah*

The Quran has a great influence on Arabic words and their meanings. The word *salah* has been transformed from its lexical meaning to its terminological one. *Salah* is used in different verses in different chapters of the Quran to mean supplication, asking forgiveness, praising Allah and His angels, invocation of blessings on the Prophet, recitation of the Quran, and the place of worship. This study will be on a term that designates the second pillar of Islam.

*Salah* is mentioned in about one hundred instances in the Quran, eighty-five as a noun and fifteen as a verb. In most instances, it conveys the terminological meaning. *Salah* as a term designates a concept whose scope goes beyond the components of its original lexical meaning. It is true that as a process it involves sayings that are supplications for Allah's forgiveness, mercy, and reward. However, it is not limited to those semantic components (semes), which are known even before the revelation of the Quran. There is a transition from the lexical meaning to the terminological meaning. Relying on the lexical meanings is not sufficient to understand the concept. Therefore, reference to the intra-textual, inter-textual, and contextual sources is necessary.

#### **4. 2.1. Distinctive Features from Intra-textual References**

The Quran as the source of intra-textual references, reveals defining distinctive features of the concept. Because this paper cannot cover all the distinctive features that are based on intratextual references, only samples of them will be listed in this section.

- **Second pillar of Islam:** This feature is repeatedly ascertained in the Quran. The verse (2:3), "*Alaadhīna yu'minūna biālgħaybi wayuqīmūna alṣaālāta wamimāā razaqnāhum yunfiqūna*" [who believe in the unseen, establish *Salah*, and donate from what We have provided for them], confirms that practicing this worship is the second characteristic of believers after believing in the unseen which includes believing in Allah and testifying His Oneness (Ibn Kathīr, 2000). In his exegesis of this verse, Ibn Kathīr (2000) refers to the well-known Hadith about the pillars of Islam to prove the verse's emphasis on ranking *salah* second after the belief in Allah.
- **Compulsoriness:** The feature of compulsoriness is attested in several verses. The verse (2:110) that starts with the imperative "*Aqīmū al-ṣalāh*" [establish *Salah*] is one instance of these verses. The command of Establishing *salah* is mentioned 34 times in the Quran to emphasize that the concept is obligatory for every Muslim. Ibn Kathīr (2000) states that establishing *salah* includes completing its bowings, prostrations, recitation, and humbleness. He also contends that establishing *salah* means accomplishing it regularly and constantly. Al-Qurṭubī (1994) explains establishing *salah* in the verse means meeting its principles and fulfilling its pillars regularly.
- **Remembrance of Allah:** The verse (20:14) sets the ultimate objective of *salah* in remembering Allah. The verse (20:14) clearly states this objective, "*W'qm al-ṣalāh ldhkry*" [establish *Salah* for My remembrance]. Al-Rāzī (1981) mentions that this verse emphasizes the remembrance of Allah as an objective of *salah* (Vol. 22, p. 19). It is a means of connecting with Allah and submitting to His will.
- **Purity:** The feature of purifying the body is detailed in the verse (5:6) which prescribes that *salah* is not valid unless it meets this precondition of purity. However, Ibn Kathīr (2000) states that it is obligatory for those who have broken their ritual ablution but only recommended for those who are already ritually pure.
- **Physical movements:** Bowing down and prostrating are essential features of the concept. Numerous intra-textual sources refer to these features and praise those who bow down and prostrate to Allah. In one of these sources, Allah says "*Yā'ayyuhā alladhīna āmanuwā arka'uwā wāsjuduwā wābuduwā rabbakum wāf'aluwā alkhayra la'allakum tufliḥūna*" [O you who have believed, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good - that you may succeed.] (22: 77). According to Al-Qurṭubī (1994), the bowing and prostrating in this verse refer to the obligatory worship.
- **Times of Prayer:** The verse (2:238) "*Ḥāfiẓuwā 'alā alṣaālāwāti*" [Maintain with care *Salah*] confirms that believers have to be diligent and devout in practicing *salah* in its prescribed times. Al-Ṭabarī, M. (1994) mentions that the verse asks believers to perform *Salah* at their appointed times. The Quran refers to the specific times for the five prayers in verses such as "*Aqimi lṣṣalawāta ṭarafāi llna-ārī wazulafanā mmina llaylī*" [And establish *Salah* at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night] (11:114). Ibn Kathīr (2000) states that the ends of the day refer to *salah sobh* and *maghrib* and the approach of the night refers to *salah Isha*.
- **Direction to Mecca:** The verse (2:150) changes the direction of *salah* from Jerusalem to Mecca. Allah says "*Wamin ḥaythu kharajta fawalli wajhaka shatṛa almasjidi alḥarāmi*" [And from wherever you go out [for *Salah*], turn your face toward *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*] (2:150). Al-Qurṭubī (1994) affirms that the orientation towards Macca is mandatory.

The above intra-textual references are only samples of hundreds of verses that delineate essential distinctive features that constitute the conceptual basis that sets forth the principles and the grounds that are emphasized and less likely to be modified in inter-textual and contextual sources, whereas the complementary features have more of an explanatory role.

#### 4. 2. 2. Distinctive Features from Inter-textual References

The Sunnah includes hundreds of intertextual references that delineate the distinctive features of the concept. Examples of these references will be listed to prove the substantial contribution of intertextuality in the delimitation of the concept.

- **Method:** The Sunnah demonstrates how to perform each *salah*, including its postures (standing, bowing, prostrating, and sitting), recitations, supplication, and the number of units (*Rk'āt*). These practical demonstrations are detailed in several Hadiths; one of them is the Hadith (Al-Bukhārī, 2007, no. 6667) that asks a Muslim who wants to perform *salah* to complete the ritual ablution, stand upright facing the *Qibla*, say *Lah Akbar*, recite *Alfatiha* and another *sura* or verses from the Quran, bow and rest his palms on both his knees, glorify Allah, stand upright, prostrate on the ground, sit, prostrate again, and stand upright to start the second *Rk'āt*.
- **Regularity and consistency:** The obligation of abiding regularly and consistently by five particular times of *salah* every day is detailed by the Prophet. According to one of these Hadiths, the Prophet performs *salah* at daybreak before people can recognize each other, at midday, in the afternoon when the shadow of everything is as long as itself, at sunset, and at dusk (Muslim, 2010, no. 614a). The verse (2:238) "*Hāfiẓuwā 'alā alṣaḥāwāti*" [Maintain with care *Salah*] confirms that believers have to be diligent and devout in practicing *Salah* in its prescribed times (Al-Ṭabarī, 1994). Moreover, Allah says "*Fwyl lmslyn alladhīna hum 'an ṣlāthm sāhwn*" [So woe to those who pray [But] who are heedless of their *Salah*] (4-5:107). Ibn Kathīr (2000) states that these verses refer to the ones who do not respect its times. The verse "*Inna al-ṣalāh kānat 'alā al-Mu'minin ktāban mawqūtan*" [*Salah* is enjoined upon the believers at stated times] (4:103) stresses that *salah* should be performed in definite times.
- **Congregation:** The Sunnah stresses the virtues of congregational *salah* in the mosque (Al-Bukhārī, 2007, no. 645). This complementary distinctive feature creates strong social bonds that pervade brotherhood, equality, and love.
- **Reverence:** The Sunnah emphasizes the significance of reverence in *salah*. The Prophet tells his companions that a Muslim may complete his *salah* but get only a tenth part of the reward as he is not concentrating solely on communicating with Allah (Abī Dāwūd, 1996, no. 796). A believer should reflect on the meanings of these sayings. There is a Hadith that warns from being distracted in *Salah* (Ahmad, 2008, no. 995).

#### 4. 2. 3. Distinctive Features from Contextual References

The context in which *salah* was revealed delineates several distinctive features of the concept. The Quranic verses address the concept of *salah* throughout both Mecca and Medina in various contexts. This section will mention examples of the distinctive features that the concept assumes from the context.

- **Connection with Allah:** *Salah* was revealed in the journey of *Israa* and *Miraj* (the Night Journey & Ascension) without an intermediary between Allah Almighty and his Prophet in the seventh heaven. It is a connection that brings a servant close to his Master and a spiritual ascension that ascends his soul to heaven.
- **Conforming:** Imposing *Salah* in the journey of *Israa* and *Miraj* after the death of the Prophet's wife and his uncle and the agony he passes through because of the oppression of the disbelievers reveals the healing and recuperative nature of *salah*. It is a gift to console the Prophet in a year that historians call the year of sorrow for the Prophet. This worship helps Muslims to be patient and surmount the hardships that they go through. Thus, the Prophet used to ask the companion Bilal to comfort him with *salah*.
- **Ancientness:** The dialogue between the Prophet and Moses reveals that *salah* is a pre-Islamic worship.
- **Adhan:** The context explains how some distinctive features of *salah* are prescribed. One of these features whose prescription is incited by immediate needs is Adhan. Muslims in Medina did not have the means to call for *Salah*, so one day they discussed the need for such means, some suggested a bell while others a horn, but the Prophet approved Omar's idea to send a man to announce the time of *Salah* (al-Nisā'i, 2007, no. 626).
- **Tayammum:** Another feature that is incited by historical events is *Tayammum*, which is permitted in a journey led by the Prophet (Mālik, 2009, no. 91). This Hadith talks about a historical incident that was behind the revelation of the provision of *Tayammum*, facilitating the performance of *salah* by discharging Muslims from the pillar of ritual purity when there is no water around.

#### 4.3. "Prayer", an English translation of *salah*

The equivalent most translators choose to adopt for the concept "*Salah*" is "prayer" (Sale, 1825), (Palmer, 1880), (Pickthall, 1930), (Arberry, 1955), (Asad, 1980), (Irving, 1985), (Ali, 1989), (Saheeh International, 1997), (Haleem, 2004). Throughout their translations of the Quran, "prayer" is an equivalent for both *salah* in its terminological meaning as the second pillar of Islam

(2: 3, 2: 43, 2: 45, 2: 83, 2: 110, 2: 277, 4: 103, 5: 5, and 29: 45, etc.) and *salah* in its lexical meaning as a supplication (9: 103 and 33: 56).

“Prayer” refers to specific characteristics in the target language and religion that cannot convey the conceptual features of *salah* as inferred from the textual and contextual sources. The most important difference between the Christian prayer and *salah* lies in the God to whom they perform this worship. Christians pray to a triune God- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Christian prayers are mediated by Christ, the Son, as the ultimate intercessor. They are all intercessions by Christ to God, and without his mediation, no prayer is accepted. God as a father can only be addressed through his son who intercedes for his followers. Prayers always ask Christ’s intercession as it is the only way to God: “Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Hebrew 4:16). Rogers (2018) mentions that “when we pray in Jesus ‘name we will get the God like results that are miraculous” (p.12).

A search for the word prayer in the Old Testament and the New Testament reveals that it mainly refers to conversing with God. The result of this search on the website [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) shows that the word is mentioned 154 times. The biblical conception of prayer is a conversation with the divine. According to Church (2005), “prayer is talking with God. It is the expressing of your heart and mind with Him” (p.53). Lee (1981) defines Christian prayer as “Prayer is the mutual contact between man and God; prayer is man breathing God, obtaining God, and being obtained by God” (p.235). Similarly, Rogers (2018) defines it as “communicating or dialoguing with God in making requests, supplications, giving thanksgivings and interceding on the behalf of others” (p. 8). According to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, “Christian prayer in its full New Testament meaning is a prayer addressed to God as Father, in the name of Christ as Mediator, and through the enabling grace of the indwelling Spirit”. It is also defined by Merriam-Webster as “an address (such as a petition) to God in word or thought”.

Church (2005) classifies biblical prayer into seven types: thanksgiving, petition, prevailing, intercession, supplication, gratitude, and meditation (p.53). Nevertheless, in most cases, it is cited with the meaning of petition and supplication. According to (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Genesis 25:21), “Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.” Thus, prayer is synonymous with supplication. It is mentioned as a supplication for relief from famine and plague (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, King 8:37). These supplications, prayers, are spontaneously motivated by immediate needs that are primarily material more than spiritual. Church (2005) observes that “prayers of petition are generally self-oriented. This is the time we present our personal needs to the Father” (p.56). Prayer is a way a believer expresses his desires and emotions to God.

Biblical prayers determine God’s will and change destiny. God becomes subject to these prayers and surrenders to their wishes; thus, God submits to Israel’s desire to have a king even against his divine wishes:

But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.” When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. The LORD answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.

(English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Samuel 8:19-22)

Prayer is a dialogue that permits complaining, questioning, and making an even more violent and passionate vehemence towards God.

Prayers as petitions are initiated with a thanksgiving preamble that recollects God’s acts throughout history, adores God’s might, confesses one’s weaknesses and sins, or thanks God for His blessings. This preamble is the basis that establishes the ground for the supplication and makes it more likely to be accepted favorably. Church (2005) states that thanksgiving prayer “is set aside for giving glory and thanks to God for all the things in life” (p.53). The concept of prayer refers to the doctrines of Christianity, which are fundamentally different from what *salah* is based on. Apart from the doctrinal differences, Christian prayer diverges from *salah* in terms of its principles, content, and form.

A Christian doesn’t need to pray daily. Prayer is a voluntary worship that he chooses to perform at unspecific times. The Bible does not specify specific times for praying, it just asks its flowers to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Rogers

(2018) notices that "Prayer may be oral or mental, occasional or constant or formal" (p.8). There are also no special formulas that must be recited. Such formulas for how to pray are not mentioned in the whole Bible. Moreover, there are no specific postures that have to be adhered to. Rogers (2018) states "I do not believe there is one correct physical position or posture for engaging in prayer" (p.13).

## 5. Findings

The religious and cultural differences between Arabic and English become apparent when translating Qur'anic terms. The analyses of both the source and target concepts provide evidence that the two concepts are not completely equivalent. They do intersect but they do not perfectly match each other. Based on the above-mentioned analyses, the comparison of the concepts reveals the following partial equivalence:

Prayer	Salah
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communicating or dialoguing with God</li> </ul>	- It is the second pillar of Islam to be mandatorily satisfied;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>using specific words supplicating God and expressing thanks or asking for help</li> </ul>	- It is a multi-phase prayer involving an ordered set of verbal and non-verbal acts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and possibly in ceremonies (religious meetings) that take place regularly in which people say prayers</li> </ul>	- To be performed timely (five times a day)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	- To be valid it has to meet conditions including complete devotion to Allah, sanity, cleanliness, in the direction of Mecca, ...

The two concepts share the features of supplication and veneration of Allah (God), by uttering specific words; however, they differ in others, namely the mandatory nature of the act, which is not only verbal in Islam as it involves a series of steps, like bowing down and prostrating.

Translators do not make the difference between the lexical and terminological meanings. The verb "*ṣalli*" and the plural form "*ṣalawāt*" in the verse (9:103) allude to the lexical meaning of *salah*. Most translators translate the verse accurately; indeed, *salah* in this verse means prayer and supplication, not the terminological meaning, the second pillar of Islam. However, their translations confuse readers and use "prayer" for the terminological and lexical meanings. The reader would not know whether prayer refers to the performance of *salah* or supplication.

Translating *salah* as worship by Pickthall is not accurate either. 'Worship' is defined by Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary as "the practice of showing respect for God or a God, e.g. by praying or singing with others at a service", and according to Merriam Webster Learner's Dictionary, the word also refers to the meanings of adoration, honor, reverence, and a form of religious practice. Such senses are indeed encapsulated in the concept of *salah*, but this latter comprises other more distinctive features.

Based on the considerations above, it is noticeable that the translational equivalents 'prayer' and 'worship' are not the most adequate ones. They partially convey the Islamic Sharia-based concept of *salah*. This poor-quality translation is attributed to the translators' lack of comprehension. The three intra-textual, intertextual, and contextual dimensions of Qur'anic exegesis help translators acquire domain-specific and profound knowledge of Qur'anic concepts. Translating Qur'anic concepts adequately should be preceded by conducting a conceptual analysis that identifies the features to be rendered into the translations.

## 6. Conclusions

Most translators of the term *salah* opt for domesticating this religious concept and omit almost all its conceptual features. In an attempt to produce a more natural translation to the target reader, they fail to convey the features of the concept. They choose a functional equivalent and sacrifice the essential features of the source concept for naturalness and appropriateness distorting the intended meanings and erasing the source culture. They substitute most peculiarities of the concept with an assimilating equivalent that results in a loss of information and disregard of the essential and inessential features of the concept. Adopting "prayer" as an equivalent is treason to the meanings of the concept of *salah*, which are erased, elided, or smoothed out and adapted to an equivalent that bears no relation to the original.

Orthographic transliteration coupled with an explanatory note that presents the essential distinctive features is the strategy the paper suggests for avoiding such conceptual treason. The paper suggests transliterating the term as *salat* instead of

*salah*. *Salat* does not capture the exact sounds of the original term *salah* but still preserves its orthographic look. *Salat* is naturalized to adapt to the pronunciation and morphology of the target language. Transliteration emphasizes the foreignness of the concept, incites the reader's curiosity to know more about it, and encourages him to make an effort to understand it.

The term *salat* is already included in English dictionaries like Oxford English Dictionary and it is referred to as a pillar of Islam, so it has become part of the language regardless of its origin. It is integrated within the corpus used by 'Clarendon Press' although it is considered foreign when it is written in italics.

Using transliteration should be accompanied by an explanatory note which is used once the concept is introduced for the first time and not repeated as repetition could result in boredom and redundancy. The note familiarizes the target reader with the concept and contributes to its Arabic-English infusion. The dissemination of the term is already reinforced by English-speaking Muslim communities using it instead of prayer. The concept should be integrated into English with its distinctive features. Thus, the explanatory note should be based on the Quran's intra-textual, inter-textual, and contextual relations. It is an exegetic footnote that diminishes the misconceptions about this concept, elucidates its meanings, and reinforces its translations with a significant added value.

The tri-dimensional analysis bases its findings on authentic textual sources that reveal the features of the source and potential target concepts. Translators should not translate a key Qur'anic term like *salah* unless they conduct such terminological and textual analysis. The tri-phase analysis provides evidence that the intratextual, intertextual, and contextual references are exclusive sources for delimiting Quranic concepts and that relying solely on lexical analysis is not sufficient and sometimes misleading. Conducting this analysis helps translators acquire domain-specific knowledge of Quranic concepts. The tri-dimensional analysis help translators obtain profound conceptual information about the concepts in question.

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