

Translation of Polysemous Meanings of the Word “Qadha” (قضى) in the Holy Qur’an: An Analytical Semantic Study

Jibrel Al-Saudi * 

Department of English Language & Literature, The World Islamic Sciences & Education University, Amman, Jordan.

Received: 30/7/2021

Revised: 17/10/2021

Accepted: 21/12/2021

Published: 30/3/2023

* Corresponding author:

jibrel.alsaudi@wise.edu.jo

Citation: Al-Saudi, J. (2023).
Translation of Polysemous Meanings
of the Word “Qadha” (قضى) in the
Holy Qur’an: An Analytical
Semantic Study. *Dirasat: Human
and Social Sciences*, 50(2), 265–274.
<https://doi.org/10.35516/hum.v50i2.4936>



© 2023 DSR Publishers/ The University
of Jordan.

This article is an open access article
distributed under the terms and
conditions of the Creative Commons
Attribution (CC BY-NC) license
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

Abstract

Objectives: The main focus of this study is to translate the polysemous word "Qadha" / قضى in the Holy Qur'an. Additionally, it aims to explore and analyze the various meanings of the word "Qadha" / قضى as translated by different interpretations of the Holy Qur'an.

Methods: In order to achieve the objective of this study, three well-known translations of the Holy Qur'an were utilized to examine the polysemous meanings conveyed in the selected verses. Furthermore, ten different polysemous meanings were identified and analyzed using three respected Qur'an-related exegeses.

Results: The study indicates that the word "Qadha" / قضى possesses several distinct polysemous meanings in the discussed verses. The findings of the study reveal that the context and collocation in which the word is used play a significant role in translating Qur'anic polysemy.

Conclusions: The study also demonstrates that the translation of the word "Qadha" / قضى in some verses is inaccurate, which can be attributed to the literal translation strategy employed by translators. Another possible reason for literal translation could be the style and form of the verse. Finally, the study recommends further research to be conducted on Qur'anic polysemy in order to examine the accuracy of translating the meanings of the Holy Qur'an.

Keywords: Holy Qur'an, polysemy, Qadha (قضى), sense relations, translation.

ترجمة تعدد المعاني لكلمة "قضى" في القرآن الكريم: دراسة دلالية تحليلية

جبريل السعودي*

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية الآداب والعلوم، جامعة العلوم الإسلامية العالمية، عمان، الأردن.

ملخص

الأهداف: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى ترجمة معاني كلمة قضى متعددة المعاني في القرآن الكريم. كما تهدف إلى تحليل ترجمة معاني هذه الكلمة كما وردت في ترجمات معاني القرآن الكريم.

المنهجية: استخدمت الدراسة النهج الوصفي لتحقيق هدف هذه الدراسة حيث جرى تطبيق ثلاث ترجمات مشهورة للقرآن الكريم لدراسة تعدد المعاني الواردة في الآيات المختارة. كما جرى تحديد وتحليل عشرة معاني متعددة باستخدام ثلاثة تفاسير للقرآن الكريم.

النتائج: تشير الدراسة إلى أن لكلمة "قضى" معاني عديدة ومختلفة في الآيات التي نوقشت. وتبين نتائج الدراسة أن السياق والترابط في استخدام الكلمة يلعبان دوراً مهماً في دراسة تعدد المعاني القرآنية. كما بينت الدراسة أن ترجمة كلمة قضى في بعض الآيات كانت غير دقيقة، ويعزى ذلك إلى استراتيجية الترجمة الحرفية التي يطبقها المترجمون في ترجماتهم. وقد تشير الاحتمالية الأخرى للترجمة الحرفية إلى أسلوب بناء الآيات.

الخلاصة: نتيجة لذلك، أوصت الدراسة بضرورة إجراء المزيد من الأبحاث حول تعدد المعاني القرآنية لتحليل وتصحيح ترجمة معاني القرآن الكريم.

الكلمات الدالة: القرآن الكريم، تعدد المعاني، قضى، علاقة المعاني، الترجمة.

Introduction

Meaning negotiation between any two languages often causes many problems due to critical linguistic and cultural differences in both languages. This paper is particularly concerned with semantic problems in the translation of the Qur’anic polysemy. As the meanings of the Holy Qur’an are translated by different translators from different cultures, there appear some deviations in the interpretations and loss in English translations of lexical terms of certain verses (*Ayaat*). According to Abdelaal & Rashid, (2015), nonreflecting the interpretations of the Holy Qur’an and lack of understanding of Arabic language to interpret and convey the subtleties of polysemous terms cause such deviations and semantic loss in English translations (Abdul-Raof, 2004; Al-Qinai, 2012).

Further, this paper gives special attention to some semantic problems in the translation of the Qur’anic polysemy as the semantic value of the meanings of Arabic words is largely context-based, which makes the translation particularly subtle, and therefore dangerous. Of a particular interest in this paper is transferring a polysemous term, which is “*Qadha*” / قضى/ from Arabic into English and the different senses revealed by this term in different texts (Chapters) in the Holy Qur’an. Therefore, this paper is concerned with various meanings and senses provided by this word referring to the context where such a lexical term is used in the Holy Qur’an, and so giving rise to different interpretations and understanding of its meaning. In fact, more research has been recently conducted on sense relations; however, little has been made on polysemy, this word in particular, from a translational perspective. The word “*Qadha*” / قضى/ is mentioned more than 27 times in different verses in the Holy Qur’an, conveying different senses and unrelated meanings in most of these verses. This paper examines only ten different verses from different chapters translated into English, indicating the interpretations of such verses using this word “*Qadha*” / قضى/.

To achieve the objective of this study, which is to examine the sense relation, polysemy, of the word “*Qadha*” / قضى/, three translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur’an were selected in this study. These include *The Clear Quran* (2015) by Mustafa Khattab; *Quran Arabic-English* by Talal Itani (2008); and *Translation of the meanings of the Noble Qur’an* (2007) by Hilali & Khan. Further, three exegesis books (commentaries) were selected to determine the meaning and sense revealed by each verse, which are *Al-Jami’ li Ahkam Al-Qur’an* (2006) by Al-Qurtubi, M. bin Ahmad, *At-Tafseer Al-Waseet Lil-Qur’an Al-Kareem* (1997) by Tantawi, M.S., and *Qamus Al-Qu’ran Aw Eshlahol-Wujuh Wan-Nazaar fil-Quran Al-Karim*- Dictionary of the Quran; or Repairing the Polysemy and its Sense in the Glorious Quran by (1983) by Al-Dāmaghāny, H.M.

Polysemy and Homonymy

The semantic relations between words and their meanings are complicated and sometimes difficult to determine. Polysemy is one of the semantic relations that refers to a variety of meanings when the same word is used in different context expressing different meanings (Al-Qinai, 2011; Geeraerts, 2010; Abdelaal & Rashid, 2015). Polysemy is one of the sense relations between two words that draw heavily on lexicology, syntax, and translation. Taylor (1995) stated that polysemy is “the association of two or more related senses with a single linguistic form (p. 99). According to Kreidler, (2002), polysemous words have at least two or more (obviously) related meanings. For example, the noun *head* appears to be related to the “meanings when speaking of the head of a person, the head of a company, head of a table or bed, a head of lettuce or cabbage” (P.52). Palmer (1996) pointed out that polysemy is a case where one word gives rise to a set of various meanings, which is a phenomenon that exists in all-natural languages.

Furthermore, Crystal (1991) defined homonymy as a sense relation when two words are similar in spelling and pronunciation, but different in meaning. In homonyms, such as the ‘classical example’ the word “*bank* ‘a financial institution’ and *bank* ‘the edge of a stream,’ pronunciation and spelling are identical, but meanings are unrelated” (Kreidler, 2002, p.52). Based on the generative lexicon approach when distinct senses are stored independently, homonymy occurs (Klepousniotou, 2002). According to Penam (1982), polysemy is “the phenomenon where two or more identical forms have different but related meanings (P.108). However, Kharma & Hajjaj (1989, p. 64) argued that both polysemy and homonymy are closely related. The distinction between polysemy and homonymy is recognized in dictionaries, where such dictionaries make “a polysemous item a single dictionary entry and make homophonous lexemes two or more separate entries” (Kreidler, 2002, p.52).

Another sense relation is that ambiguity of lexical words, which is one of the quandaries of the translation process. Lexical ambiguity is resulted from a variety of some such semantic relations as polysemy, homonymy, hyponymy, and synonymy. Ambiguity occurs when two or more possible senses might be understood (Quiroge-clare 2003). In addition, lexical ambiguity seems common in language as the same word may have different meanings based on the interpretation of the context (Klepousniotou, 2002; Simpson, 1981). Lexical ambiguity occurs because of the two sense relations, polysemy and homonymy, through which a word may lead to different interpretations since the same word has more than one meaning.

Translation of the Qur'an

Translating the Holy Qur'an into other languages has long been challenging in Islam. It is a fact that translating the Holy Qur'an is problematic because of the essence of the Holy Qur'an, which is considered untranslatable and because the Holy Qur'an is regarded as miraculous and unique. As translation is one of the processes of communication between two languages, it is necessary to achieve a successful communication between the two linguistic codes (Abdelaal & Rashid, 2015). According to Mathieu, (2015), the transposition process of Qur'an into another language leads to separate the text from its original language or written form, at least not without the Arabic text being intact. However, it is essential to translate the Holy Qur'an into other languages in order to convey the message of Islam to all people in the world. Both non-Arabic speakers and non-Arab Muslims need a good translation to help them understand the meaning of the Holy Qur'an. Besides, translating the Holy Qur'an is not an easy task as it is confirmed that some of its texts are difficult to understand even in the Arabic origin (Balla & Siddiek, 2017).

Another significant issue is that some deviations and under-translations occur as a result of not consulting the Holy Qur'an's interpretations, the lack of knowledge of Arabic linguistics, and the lack of ability to decode and transmit the complexities of polysemous words. (Abdul-Raof, 2004; Al-Qinai, 2011). Moreover, the historical conditions of the prophet Muhammad's life and the early society in which it originated affect the original meaning of a Quranic text. The investigation of that context typically calls for a thorough understanding of hadith and Sirah, which sometimes creates an additional element of ambiguity in translating some texts in the Holy Qur'an. Mollanazar and Mohaqeq (2005), pointed out that "one of the important factors which influence translation of the Holy Qur'an is the ideological presuppositions of the Qur'an translators" (p.59).

According to Balla and Siddiek, (2017), the significance of interpreting the meanings of the Holy Qur'an stems from the fact that the Qur'an is "the source of Islam that spread throughout the world, and it is truly a divine book full of wisdom, teaching, and great values" (P. 172). Therefore, a decent translation is required to help non-Arabic speakers, as well as non-Arabic Muslim speakers understand the meanings of the Holy Qur'an and benefit greatly because they will have a better chance to learn it. This will also serve as a first step toward establishing a dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims in order to promote global peace and mutual human feelings. Other subjects such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and theoretical linguistics may benefit from the findings.

Polysemy in the Holy Quran

Polysemy is a language feature, which is based on the principle of metaphor where words can be used in new conceptual meanings (Marzari, 2006, p. 15). Unlike English, the Arabic language is rich with polysemy and fertile in concepts that make it unique. Geeraerts, (2010) reveals that polysemy is sense multiplicity as when a word is used in different context giving different meanings. For example, the word عين [Ayn] has different meanings in Arabic such as عين the eye, and عين the spring. It can also refer to عين the Senator, the member of the Senate of Jordan, and sometimes it refers to a spy; however, as a verb, it means to watch or to observe, in addition to many other polysemous meanings. Polysemy in such examples might create ambiguity for translators.

Concerning the Holy Qur'an, polysemy is one of its linguistic characteristics. According to Abdul-Ghafour et al, (2019), polysemous words are widely used in the Holy Qur'an. The word أمة [ummah], for example, has nine polysemic meanings in the Holy Qur'an (Abdelaal & Rashid, 2015). In Surah Yūsuf (Verse 45), it means a period of time, whereas in Surah An-Nahl (Verse 120), it means a religious leader who leads people to the right path. Ali et al., (2012) argued that many

translators were not successful in picking the correct meaning; therefore, it was rendered incorrectly (Abdelaal & Rashid, 2015). Another example is the word *الساعة* Al-Sa'ah, which gives two different meanings in the following verse:

“وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لَبِثُوا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يُؤْفَكُونَ”

“*Wa-Yawma Taqoomos Sa'Ato Yuqsimol-Mojrimoona Ma-Labitho Ghyra Sa'atin, KatheAlika Kanoo Yu? 'fakoon*”

This verse can be interpreted as follows: On the day when the *Hour* *الساعة* comes, and God raises the creatures from their graves, the sinners swear they lived in the world for only a *short period of time*. The first meaning indicated in this verse is that the *Hour* *الساعة* refers to the Judgement Day, the day when the World ends. The other polysemous meaning for the same word *الساعة* refers to ‘a short period of time, which is an hour’.

Many studies have been conducted on polysemy in the Holy Quran. For example, Abdussalam (2008, p. 66) indicates that Muslim scholars paid much attention to the diversity of word meaning in the Quranic verses, under what is called “*Al-Ashbāh Wan-Nazā'ir or Al-Wūjūh Wan-Nazā'ir*,” which refer to sense relations and lexical ambiguity. These are only two examples out of many scholars in the science of the Holy Quran, who have been interested in studying polysemy in the Holy Quran. Polysemy in the Holy Quran is one of the sense relations that have been studied and discussed by Muslim researchers for a long time. According to Abdussalam, (2008), Al- Dāmaghānī (1983), is one of the interpreters in the science of the Quran, who indicated that more than 500 polysemic words exist in the Holy Quran. Further, Al-Nīsābūrī (1998) pointed out that there are 540 entries of polysemic words in the Holy Quran.

Recently, polysemy has become the concern of researchers in linguistics and translation. This is attributed to the debates arisen from theories of semantic and translation. Translation has given rise of the critical issues in semantic relations, which is the meaning of most words perceived that can be different from one context to another. Therefore, this paper is concerned with analyzing the polysemous meanings of the word *قضى* (qadha) in the translation of the meanings of the Holy Quran. Translating polysemous words in the Holy Quran is of a particular interest in this study, where certain specific challenges might occur, knowing that the Holy Qur'an is associated with various semantic properties (Al-Saudi, 2021). Such properties determine a supreme and effective style that makes this Holy Book distinctive and difficult to be handled by translators.

Methodology

The use of this specific word *قضى* (qadha) in this study is due to the multiple meanings and different senses manifested by the translation of verses in the Holy Qur'an. The objective of this study is to examine the translation of Qur'anic polysemy into English and scrutinize the polysemous meanings of the word *قضى* (qadha) with its different senses. Using the descriptive approach, the researcher has compared and contrasted the translation of the meaning of three authoritative translations of the Holy Quran, which were selected for the purpose of this study. These references include *The Clear Quran* (2015) by Mustafa Khattab; *Quran Arabic-English* by Talal Itani (2008); and *Translation of the meanings of the Noble Qur'an* (2007) by Hilali & Khan. It is worth mentioning that these translations of the Holy Qur'an were translated by Arabic native speakers.

Furthermore, three exegeses (commentaries) have been referred to in this study to clarify the interpretations and analyze the meaning established in the Quranic verses where the word *قضى* (qadha) is used. These exegeses are as follows: *Al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Qur'an* (2006) by Al-Qurtubi, M. bin Ahmad, *At-Tafseer Al-Waseet Lil-Qur'an Al-Kareem* (1997) by Tantawi, M.S., and *Qamus Al-Qu'ran Aw Eshlahol-Wujuh Wan-Nazaar fil-Quran Al-Karim*- Dictionary of the Quran; or *Repairing the Polysemy and its Sense in the Glorious Quran* by (1983) by Al-Dāmaghānī, H.M. The meaning of the word *قضى* (qadha) has been analyzed in light of the interpretations provided by these exegeses conveying different meanings for this word.

A descriptive qualitative approach was employed in this study by using content analysis type. Based on the interpretations of the verses in the exegeses, the researcher analyzed the meanings of the word *قضى* (qadha) in each verse by comparing and contrasting the different senses revealed by the above-mentioned English translations of the Holy Qur'an. Besides, the researcher examined the translation of ten verses, examples extracted from Suras of the Holy Qur'an, containing this word to analyze and understand their polysemous meanings. These verses have been transcribed into

authentic Arabic, followed by an English transliteration. The reason for choosing these verses is mainly related to the different senses of ambiguity exhibited from one verse to the next.

Discussion

This study aims at examining and analyzing the polysemic meanings of the word **قضى**(qadha) as it is used in different verses (Ayaat) in different Suras in the Holy Qur'an. It provides clear examples using this word and analyzes the polysemous meanings expressed in each Qur'anic verse discussed in this study. Besides, it is worth mentioning that the word *Qadhi* (Judge) is a noun derived from the verb (qadha, **قضى**), which is the focus of this study, as it is the past form of the verb used in most of the verses discussed. In this study, ten different polysemous meanings were introduced for the word **قضى**(qadhaa) and its translations in different verses, starting from Surat Al-Baqarah, the second Sura in the Qur'an, where it is mentioned more than three times. The following are ten illustrative examples of the evident polysemous meanings for the word **قضى**(qadha):

Example (1):

Verse (117) at Surat Al-Baqarah:

"وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ" (البقرة: 117)

Wa Ethea qadhaa amran fa innamaa yaqoolu lahoon kun fayakoon

This verse was translated as follows:

1. "When He decrees a matter, He simply tells it, "Be!" And it is!". (Khatab, 2015).
2. "When He decrees a matter, He only says to it: "Be!" - and it is". (Hilali & Khan, 1997).
3. "Whenever He decrees a thing, He says to it, "Be," and it becomes". (Itani, 2008).

The three translations show that the word **قضى**(qadhaa) was translated as "decrees", which means (command or order) as revealed in the translations above. However, when referring to the exegeses to investigate the meaning of this word, it was found out that the meaning of the word **قضى**(qadhaa) in this verse means *wants* or *requires* not *decrees* (Al-Qurtubi, 2006 p.86; Tantawi, 1997 p. 256). Further, Al-Damaghany (1983, p. 383) presented a different meaning for the word **قضى**(qadhaa), which is (Wassa) in the sense of (*recommended*). Given this, the verse can be interpreted as follows: "When Allah *wants any matter*", not necessarily a legal or official matter, but any matter in general, "He just says Be, and it will be". Thus, according to Al-Qurtubi and Tantawi, it appears that the correct translation of the polysemous sense of the word **قضى**(qadhaa) in this verse is *want* not *decree*. It is also worth noting that the same verse with the same meaning is mentioned in other Suras like Al'Imran (47) and Ghafir (68) in the Holy Qur'an.

Example (2):

The word **قضى**(Qadhi) is also used in another verse (Ayah) at Surat Al-Baqarah and with different meaning from that discussed above. This is verse (210), which says:

"وَقَضَىٰ الْأَمْرُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ" (البقرة: 210), "Wa Qudiyal amro; wa elal laahi turja'ulumoor"

This part of the verse (210) is translated into English as follows:

1. "... then the matter would be settled 'at once'. And to Allah 'all' matters will be returned 'for judgment'." (Khatab, 2015).
2. "(Then) the case would be already judged. And to Allah return all matters (for decision). (Hilali & Khan, 2007).
3. "... and thus, the matter is settled? All things are returned to God". (Itani, 2008).

These translations show that both Khatab (2015) and Itani (2008) have the same translation for the word (Qudiyaa), which is the passive form of the verb (*qadha*), that is (*settled*). Nevertheless, Hilali & Khan (2007) translated this word as (*judged*), which is the literal meaning of the word *qadha*. Having examined the three exegesis commentaries used in this study, it was found that, based on the first part of the verse, was interpreted into the matter (torment) was decided, and it occurred and finished (Tantawi, 1997, p. 450), Al-Qurtubi, 2006, Al-Damaghany (1983, p. 384). Further, it was noticed that the same word is mentioned in other Suras such as Yusuf (41), Al-An'Aam (8), and Al-Ahqaaf (29), with the same meaning as decided and finished.

Example (3):

Another polysemous meaning for the word قَضَى (qadha) is expressed in Surat Al-Isra'a verse (23), which says:

"وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا" (الإسراء: 23)

Wa qadhaa Rabboka allaa ta'budo illaaa iyyaahu wa bilwaalidaini ihsaanaa;

This verse was translated as follows:

1. “For your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and that you be good to your parents.” (Khattab, 2015).
2. “And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents.” (Hilali & Khan, 2007).
3. For your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And honour your parents.” (Itani, 2008).

The translations of this verse indicate that the word قَضَى (qadha) was translated into *command* or *decree*, which are both synonymous to (order) as stated in *Mariam-Webster Dictionary*, (2000). Additionally, referring to the exegeses applied in this study, (Al-Qurtubi, 2006, Tantawi, 1997, and Al-Damaghany, 1983), it was found that the word قَضَى (qadha) conveys the same meaning of the words *order* or *command*, and so the translations shown above are correct.

Example (4):

A different polysemous meaning for the word قَضَى (qadha) is shown in the following verse, where it means *deciding* or *judging*:

"ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا" (النساء: 65)

Thomma laa yajidoo fee anfusihim harajam mimmaa qadaita wa yusallimoo tasleemaa

This verse was translated as follows:

1. “.. and find no resistance within themselves against your decision and submit wholeheartedly.” (Al-Khattab, 2015).
2. “.. and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission.” (Hilali & Khan, 1997).
3. “.. and then find within themselves no resentment regarding your decisions, and submit themselves completely.” (Itan, 2008).

As seen in the translations above, the three translators agree on the meaning of the word قَضَى (qadha) as “*decision*”, which is synonymous to “*judgement*” that is more precise to the meaning of the word in relation to the context of the verse. This is indicated in the three exegeses as they also agree on interpreting the word as *judged* (حَكَمَ hakama) (Al-Qurtubi, 2006, Tantawi, 1997, and Al-Damaghany, 1983). Further, it is worth mentioning that the meaning of the word قَضَى (qadha) the literal meaning of the word *judge*, from which the noun قَضَاء (Qadha'a) is derived. However, the translator used a synonymous word i.e., *decision* instead of using the word *judge*.

Example (5):

The following verse was taken from Surat An-Nisa'a, (Ayah 103), where the word قَضَى (qadha) conveys a different polysemous meaning, which is *finish* or *complete*:

"فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ" (النساء: 103)

Fa ethaa qadaitumus Salaata fazkurul laaha qiyaamanw wa qu'oodanw wa 'alaa junoobikum

This verse was translated as follows:

1. “When the prayers are *over*, remember Allah-whether you are standing, sitting, or lying down.” (Khattab, 2015).
2. “When you have *finished* As-Salat (the prayer - congregational), remember Allah standing, sitting down, and lying down on your sides,” (Hilali & Khan, 2007).
3. “When you have *completed* the prayer, remember God, standing, or sitting, or on your sides.” (Itani, 2008).

As shown in the above translations of the verse, the meaning of the word قَضَى (qadha) is (over, finished, completed). That is performing the prayer and completing it. This indicates that this is another polysemous meaning for the word قَضَى (qadha). Referring to the interpretation of this verse, it was found that the meaning of performing and finishing the prayer

(Al-Qurtubi, 2006 p. 371). Similarly, Tantawi, 1997 p. 293, and Al-Damaghany, 1983, p. 384) interpreted the word as completing the prayer and then praise Allah. This indicates that when the word **قضى**(qadha) is collocated with *prayer* (Us-Salat), it means “finish” and “complete”. For example, verse (10) in Surat Al-Jumu’ha shows that the word (quḍiyati Salato), which is the passive form of the word qadha, is collocated with *Prayer* (Salato): meaning finishing prayer. This is attributed to the fact that collocation plays a significant role in determining the meanings or senses of the words in a context.

Example (6):

Another polysemous meaning for the word **قضى**(qadha) is as follows:

12: فصلت “فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ”

Faqadaa-hunna sabh'a samaawaatin fee yawmaini

1. “So, He formed the heaven into seven heavens in two Days...” (Khattab, 2015).
2. “Then He completed and finished from their creation (as) seven heavens in two Days”. (Hilali & Khan, 2007).
3. “So, He completed them as seven universes in two days,” (Itan, 2008).

Different senses conveyed by the translations above, which reveal the polysemous meanings of the word discusses in this study. Khattab, (2015) translated the word **قضى**(qadha) as *formed*, whereas the other translations used another word, which is *completed*. Al-Qurtubi (2006, 344:15) and Tantawi (1997, 332: 12) in their interpretations of this verse assert that this word means *completed the creation* of the heavens, that is “ordained them or made them to be”, which is simply finished forming the seven heavens. However, (Al-Damaghany, 1983: 385) used the word *created* for the meaning of **قضى**(qadha) in this verse. This indicates the fact that the meaning of the word is close to its meaning in the previous example. However, the meaning in this context is related to creating the heavens, that is, starting a new creation, not finishing a task or an action.

Example (7):

The following verse describes the dialogue occurred between Pharaoh and his Magicians, who believed in Moses, and so Pharaoh threatened them. Therefore, they replied to him by saying:

فَأَقْضَ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا 72: طه

faqdi maaa anta qaad; innamaa taqdee haazihil hayaataad dunyaa

1. “So do whatever you want! Your authority only covers the ‘fleeting’ life of this world.” (Khattab, 2015).
2. “So decree whatever you desire to decree, for you can only decree (regarding) this life of the world.” (Hilali & Khan, 2007).
3. “So issue whatever judgment you wish to issue. You can only rule in this lowly life.” Itani, 2008).

This verse presents the Magicians’ reply to Pharaoh, who “saw those whose help he sought accept faith in the presence of all people”, being definitely defeated, he “began to behave arrogantly and cast accusations” (Ibn Kathir, 2002,468). As shown in the translations above, the meaning of the word (faqdi), which is an imperative sentence, is *do whatever you want*; *decree whatever you desire to decree*; and *issue whatever judgment you wish to issue*. These sentences, Magicians’ reply, do seem to have the same sense though they are different, which reveal that the Magicians refused to follow Pharaoh anymore and that they believed in Moses as the Prophet of God, so “do whatever you want” (Tantawi, 1997: 129, 9).

In addition, the word “qadha” is used in this verse for three times with different forms. The first one is an imperative verb “*Iqdhi*” preceded by “*fa*”, which is a conjunction, and it means “do”, while the second one “*qaad*” is an agent noun meaning *judge*. However, the third word “*taqdhi*” is a present verb form, which means issuing or decreeing. According to Al-Damaghany, (1983: 384) and (Tantawi, 1997: 129, 9), the word **فأقضى**(faqdhi), means “do”, that is the Magicians refused to obey Pharaoh and did not consider his threats at all, and so they told him “do whatever you want to do”. Besides, Al-Qurtubi (2006) interpreted the word **فأقضى**(faqdhi) as ‘*issue judgement*’, which is considered in Itani’s translation as well.

Example (8):

The following verse involves another meaning for the word **قضى**(qadha), which is illustrated as follows:

القصص: 29 “فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَجَلَ وَسَارَ بِأَهْلِهِ آنَسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَارًا”

Falammaa qadaa Moosal ajala wa saara bi ahliheee aanasa min jaanibit Toori naaran

1. “When Moses had completed the term and was travelling with his family, he spotted a fire on the side of Mount Tūr.” (Khattab, 2015).
2. “Then, when Musa (Moses) had fulfilled the term, and was travelling with his family, he saw a fire in the direction of Tur (Mount).” (Hilali & Khan, 2007).
3. “When Moses had completed the term, and departed with his family, he noticed a fire by the side of the Mount.” (Itani, 2008).

The translations of this verse show that the meaning of the word **قضى**(qadha) is ‘completed the term’ as translated by Khattab (2015) and Itani (2008), but Hilali & Khan (2007) translated the word as ‘fulfilled the term’. And when referring to the exegeses, it is found that these translations took the interpretations of the verse into consideration. Thus, Tantawi, (1997: 401/10) and Al-Damaghany, (1983: 385) interpreted the word into completed the term, which indicates that Moses had completed the term that he agreed upon with the old man, his father-in-law. However, Al-Qurtubi, 2006: 287/13) used the phrase ‘spent ten years’ to mean **قضى**(qadha), which reveals the term or period that Moses spent working for his father-in-law. Thus, it is another polysemous meaning given in this context, which is different from the ones mentioned earlier.

Example (9):

This example expresses a different polysemous meaning included in the following part of the verse in Al-Qasas Sura, verse (15), which says:

(15) **فَوَكَزَهُ مُوسَى فَقَضَى عَلَيْهِ** (القصاص: 15) *fawakazaho Musaa faqadaa 'alaihi*

1. “... So Moses punched him, causing his death.” (Khattab, 2015)
2. “...So, Moses struck him with his fist and killed him. (Hilali & Khan, 2007).
3. “...So Moses punched him, and put an end to him. (Itani, 2008)

In the Qur’anic verse above, the three translations come up with different expressions that convey the same meaning, which is ‘death’. Therefore, ‘causing his death, killed him, and put an end to him’ all give the sense of death. This indicates that the word **قضى** (qadha) expresses the meaning of *causing death* or simply *killing*. This is suggested by the Qur’anic exegeses of Al-Qurtubi, (2006: 260/13) and Tantawi, (1997: 387/10), giving a literal meaning for the phrase **فَقَضَى عَلَيْهِ** (*faqadaa 'alaihi*) as *killed him*. However, the same meaning is expressed differently by Al-Damaghany, (1983: 384), who used ‘put an end to him’.

Further, the Holy Qur’an comprises other examples where the word **قضى**(qadha) expresses the meaning of *killing* or *causing death*. One of such examples is mentioned in Az-Zukhruf Sura (77): **وَنَادُوا يَا مَلِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ**, which means “And they will call out, ‘O Malik -- the [name of the Keeper of the Fire] -- let your Lord finish us off!’ let Him make us die.” (Tantawi, 2006: 100/13). Another example with a related positive meaning for the word **قضى**(qadha) is expressed in the phrase **قَضَى نَحْبَهُ** (*qadhaa nahbahu*), which means ‘fulfilled their pledge ‘with their lives’ (i.e., have been martyred) (Khattab, 2015, and Hilali & Khan, 2007). This reveals that the word **قضى**(qadha) has many different polysemous meanings in the Holy Qur’an based on the context where this word is used as shown in the examples above.

Example (10):

The example below also provides another polysemous meaning for the word **قضى** (qadha):

الْأَحْزَابُ 37 فَلَمَّا قَضَى زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا

falammaa qadaa Zaidum minhaa wataran zawwajnaa kahaa

1. “So when Zaid totally lost interest in ‘keeping’ his wife, We gave her to you in marriage,” Khattab, 2015).
2. “So when Zaid had accomplished his desire from her (i.e. divorced her), We gave her to you in marriage,” (Hilali & Khan, 2007).
3. “Then, when Zaid ended his relationship with her, We gave her to you in marriage,” (Itani, 2008).

The meanings expressed in these translations, though different as shown above, convey the same meaning of the word **قضى**(qadha). This verse describes a situation between the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and Zaid, who was one of His Companions. Zaid got married of a woman and after a period of time, he lost interest in her, and subsequently, decreed by Allah, the Prophet married her. Therefore, as shown above, the translators used different expressions to give the meaning

of the word i.e., (*lost interest in 'keeping' his wife, accomplished his desire from her, and ended his relationship with her*). By referring to the exegeses used in this study, it is found out that this word was interpreted as '*ended his relationship*' and so divorced her, as suggested by Al-Qurtubi, (2006), Tantawi, (1997), and Al-Damaghany, (1983).

Conclusion

The main concern of the present study is to examine the polysemous meanings of the word **قضى**(qadha) and its associations in the Holy Qur'an. This study provides further evidence taken from different Qur'anic Suras to prove that this word is polysemous. Ten examples have been chosen, discussed, and analyzed by referring to three different translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an and by consulting three Qur'anic exegesis interpretations. These exegeses could provide clear evidence for the different meanings of the word examined in this study. In addition, the above analysis and discussion of the selected Qur'anic verses clearly indicate that polysemy is one of the problems encountered by the translators of the Holy Quran. Therefore, translating polysemous words in the Holy Qur'an should follow and adopt practical strategies for better translations through deep analysis for the meanings of the words (i.e., literally and metaphorically).

The results of this study reveal that some verses discussed in the study were translated correctly. This is due to the fact that this word **قضى**(qadha) is not ambiguous and so it is easy to translate in the selected verses, despite the variety of its polysemous meanings. Further, it has been noticed that the translations of the meanings of this word are based on the context in which the word occurs, i.e., (collocation). This indicates that collocation plays a significant role in determining the polysemous meanings or senses of the words in a context. Besides, the study shows that there appears a problem in translating some verses in which this word is used. This problem is faced by the translators of the Holy Qur'an, especially in translating sense relations from Arabic into English. Therefore, it is recommended that more research should be conducted on sense relations and translating lexical terms in the Holy Qur'an. In fact, translation of polysemy as one of such relations is still in need for more research to deal with the translational problems, so that translating polysemous words can be clearer and more accurate. Finally, translators can build on practical methods in translating polysemous words in the Holy Qur'an.

References

- Abdelaal, N. M. (2015). Semantic Loss in the Holy Qur'an Translation with Special Reference to *Surah Al-WaqiAAa*.
- Abdul-Raof, H. (2004). The Qur'an: Limits of translatability. In *Cultural encounters in translation from Arabic* (pp. 91-106). Multilingual Matters.
- Abdussalam, A. S. (2008). *Concordance of Qurānic Polysemy*. International Islamic University Malaysia Press.
- Al-Damaghany, H. (1983). *Dictionary of the Quran; or Repairing the Polysemy and its Sense in the Glorious Quran*. (4th ed.). Darul-Elm Lil-Malayeen. Beirut. Lebanon.
- Al-Kharabsheh, A., & Al-Jdayeh, Gh. (2017). Translatability of Qur'anic Antonymy. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literature*, 9(1), 51-72.
- Al-Munjid, M. (1999). *Al-Ishtirak al-Lafzi fi al-Qur'ān al-karīm bayna al-Nazariyah wa-al-Tatbiq*. Damscus: Dār Al-Fikr.
- Al-Nishapuri, A. (1998). *Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahīhayn*. Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rīfah, Lebanon.
- Al-Qinai, J. (2012). Convergence and divergence in the interpretation of Qur'anic polysemy and lexical recurrence. *Kalby Studijos*, 19, 27-38.
- Al-Qurtubi, M. (2006). *Al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Qur'an*. Cairo: Dār al-Sha'b, Egypt.
- Crystal, D. (1991). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. (3rd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Balla, A. S. & Siddiek, A.G. (2017). Complications of Translating the Meanings of the Holy Qur'an at Word Level in the English Language in Relation to Frame Semantic Theory. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 8(5).
- Geeraerts, D. (2010). *Theories of lexical semantics*. (1st ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Al-Hilali, M. T. U. D., & Khan, M. M. (1998). Noble Qur'an, The English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary.
- Ibn Kathir, H. D. (1996). *Tafsirul-Qur'ani alkarim*. Beirut, Lebanon: Maktabat Nour Al'ilmijja.
- Itani, T. (2008). *Quran in English: Modern English Translation. Clear and Easy to Understand*. www.Clearquran.com
- Karma, N.N., A.H. Hajjaj, (1989). Use of the Mother Tongue in the ESL Classroom. *IRAL*, 27(3), 223-235.
- Khattab, M. (2015). *The Clear Quran*. Furqan Foundation. Canada.
- Klepousniotou, E. (2002). The processing of lexical ambiguity: Homonymy and polysemy in the mental lexicon. *Brain and Language*, 81, 205–233.
- Kreidler, C. W. (2002). *Introducing English Semantics*. London: Routledge.
- Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. UK.
- Demographic. (2000). *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. (8th ed.). Springfield, MA: Encyclopedia Britannica.
- Marzari, R. (2006). *Arabic in Chains: Structural Problems and Artificial Barriers*. Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiler.
- Mathieu, C. (2015). *Translation stories: The Qur'an*. Argentina: Clutch Top Translation.
- Palmer, F. (1996). *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Paman, O. (1982). Homonymy and Polysemy. *Lingua*. 58 (1-2), 105-136.
- Quiroga-Clare, C. (2003). Language ambiguity: a curse and a blessing. *Translation Journal*, 7(1), 57-61.
- Simpson, G. B. (1981). Meaning dominance and semantic context in the processing of lexical ambiguity. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 20, 120-136.
- Tantawi, M. (1997). *At-Tafseer Al-Waseet Lil-Qur'an Al-Kareem*. (1st ed.). Cairo: Dar Nahdat Misr for Printing, Press, and Distribution.
- Taylor, J. (1995). *Linguistic categorization: Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*. (2nd ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.