

Tense Shifts in Quranic Verses: An Exploration of English Translation

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Abstract

Objectives: This study aims to explore the translation of tense-shifted Quranic verses into English focusing on more frequently used English tense(s). It seeks to examine the frequency of tense-maintaining and tense-shifting translations that have not been thoroughly examined by previous researchers in the literature.

Methods: The data analysis employed a descriptive approach for forty verses collected and adapted from Tabl's (1998) *Auslub Al'iltifatfi Al-Balagha Al-Quraaniya* and their translations by Al-Hilali-Khan (1417AH), Ghali (2003), Ali (1938), and Pickthall (1930) were the corpus. The verses have been divided into two categories, including 24 verses with past-to-present tense shifts and 16 with present-to-past tense shifts.

Results: The results of the study have revealed that tense-maintaining translation is more frequent than tense-shifting, representing 67% and 33%, respectively. The present simple has been used frequently in the translation of the two categories, representing 55.2% in the first category and 53.9% in the second category. The past simple (32.3%) and the future simple (23.4%) tenses have been used in the translation of the two categories.

Conclusions: It is found that in the translation of tense-shifted Quranic verses into English, tense-maintaining target language texts are more common. However, tense-shifted texts are used to maintain the meaning of the source language text.

Keywords: translation shifts, Quranic translation, tense shifts in the Noble Quran, tense maintaining, Arabic-English translation.

الالتفات الزمني في الآيات القرآنية: دراسة للترجمة الإنجليزية

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ملخص

الأهداف: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة كيفية ترجمة الآيات القرآنية ذات أسلوب الالتفات الزمني إلى اللغة الإنجليزية والتعرف إلى أزمنة اللغة الإنجليزية الأكثر شيوعاً في ترجمة مثل هذه الآيات. كما تهدف لمعرفة مدى تكرار أساليب الالتفات والاحتفاظ بالزمن في ترجمة هذه الآيات، التي لم يتم تناولها بشكل كافٍ في الأبحاث السابقة.

المنهجية: استخدمت هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي في تحليل بيانات 40 آية قرآنية مقتبسة من كتاب *أسلوب الالتفات في البلاغة القرآنية* لطبل (1998) وتراجمها الأربعة إلى اللغة الإنجليزية بواسطة الهلالي خان (1417 هـ) وغالي (2003) وعلي يوسف (1938) وبيكتال (1930). تم تقسيم الآيات إلى مجموعتين، شملت 24 آية ذات التفات زمني من الماضي إلى المضارع و16 آية ذات التفات زمني من المضارع إلى الماضي.

النتائج: أوضحت النتائج أن 67% من هذه الآيات تم ترجمتها إلى الإنجليزية باستخدام نفس الزمن و33% من التراجم أظهرت أسلوب الالتفات الزمني في اللغة الإنجليزية أيضاً. كما أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن زمن المضارع البسيط هو الأكثر استخداماً في ترجمة المجموعتين بنسبة 55,2% في المجموعة الأولى إلى 53,9% في المجموعة الثانية. كما أوضحت النتائج أيضاً أن زمن الماضي البسيط مثلاً 32,3% في ترجمة المجموعة الأولى وأن زمن المستقبل البسيط مثلاً 23,4% في ترجمة المجموعة الثانية. الخلاصة: وجد أن أسلوب الالتفات في العادة لا يستخدم في ترجمة الآيات القرآنية ذات أسلوب الالتفات الزمني إلى اللغة الإنجليزية، ولكنه يستخدم عند الحاجة من أجل الحفاظ على معنى النص الأصلي.

الكلمات الدالة: الالتفات في الترجمة، ترجمة القرآن الكريم، الالتفات الزمني في القرآن، الاحتفاظ بزمن الفعل، الترجمة بين العربية والإنجليزية.



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1. Introduction

Translation between any languages "that exhibit sharp linguistic and cultural differences may present recalcitrant problems that would require exerting extra effort on the part of the translator" (Al-Kharabsheh & Al-Jdayeh 2017, p. 51). That is why the translation of the Quran into English has always been a problematic issue and a daunting task that is difficult to handle. Moreover, "no translation of the Quran can compare in beauty and style with the original Arabic" (Abu-Mahfouz 2011, p. 73). The unique features of the Noble Quran make it difficult to render the exact message of this Holy book into other languages.

Switch reference is a common feature of Arabic, and it does commonly occur in Quran. It occurs in different forms, and tense shift is one of them. Tense shift refers to the shift of the tense from past to present or present to past in the same sentence. This study is about the translation of tense-shifted Quranic verses to check how these verses are translated into English. It sheds light on a significant topic with a view to providing valuable insights in the field of translation. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the translation process, specially, how tense-shifted verses are translated into English. Understanding the patterns and preferences in tense usage can provide a foundation for improved translation practices. The study has a potential to contribute to the improvement of translation accuracy. By investigating how tense-shifted Quranic verses are translated into English and which tense is more frequently used in specific contexts can guide translators to more accurate translation of Quranic verses. Moreover, the study not only benefits experienced translators but also serves as a resource for students of translation. It provides them with knowledge to identify how tense-shifted Arabic sentences are translated into English. Overall, the motivation behind this study lies in filling a knowledge gap in the field of Quranic translation, enhancing translators and students' understanding of Quranic translation, and providing valuable insights that can have practical applications in this field. The study starts with the theoretical background that is followed by the research method, data analysis and findings. Finally, it ends with presenting some suggestions and recommendations for future studies. The study attempts to answer these questions:

1. Which structure, tense-consistent or tense-shifted, do translators use when translating tense-shifted Quranic verses? Why?
2. Which English structures, tense consistent or tense shifted, are more frequent in the translation of tense-shifted Quranic verses?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Intralingual Reference Switching

Reference switching refers to the shift from one reference to another. It can be intralingual or interlingual. Intralingual reference shift is the switch of the reference within the same language. This is a common feature in Arabic. As Abdelaal (2020) puts it, "Shifting or reference switching is a common feature of certain Arabic genres, such as poetry, and the Noble Quran" (p. 90). The Arabic language includes different kinds of shifts (called *ʔiltifat* in Arabic). According to Abdel Haleem (2011), *ʔiltifat* could be regarded as the basis of rhetoric by Ibn al-Athir. Al-Zarkashi (as cited in Abdel Haleem ibid, p. 190) defines *ʔiltifat* as the shift from one style of speech to another for different reasons, such as renewing the listener's interest in order not to get bored or frustrated. Abdel Haleem (ibid) has listed six different types of shifts (*ʔiltifat*): shifts in person, number, addressee, tense, case marker, and use of a noun instead of a pronoun.

Intralingual shifts occur in English as well. The following examples have been adapted from Baker (2018, pp. 200-201) to illustrate this point:

1. I like movies.

And I do.

The verb *do* replaces *like movies*.

2. John brought some carnations, and Catherine some sweet peas.

The verb *brought* in the second clause is deleted because it is understood by the reader or listener. Elision is commonly used in English answers to Yes/No questions as well, as in (3).

3. A: Have you had your breakfast?

B: Yes, I have.

In the following example quoted from Barbu et al. (2002), it is noticed that the subject of the sentence is the indefinite pronoun *someone*, and the anaphora is the third person plural pronoun *they*.

4. "Someone will remember to wake me up early in the morning, won't they?"

Thus, intralingual shifts occur in Arabic and English. However, the other type of shift, interlingual, arises when we translate from one language into another. That is, sometimes there is no shift in the ST, but it occurs in the TT. The following section explains the interlingual shifts.

2.2 Translation Shifts

"The small linguistic changes that occur between ST and TT are known as translation Shifts" (Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 26). Translation shift, according to Newmark (1988), is a "procedure involving a change in the grammar from source language (SL) to target language (TL)" (p. 85). In 1965, Catford was the first one who starts using this term in his book *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 26; Munday, 2016, p. 95). Catford (1965) defines translation shift as the "departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL" (p. 73). He categorized shifts into two types: level shifts and category shifts. Level shift means that SL items at one linguistic level have their translation equivalent at another linguistic level. A shift from grammar to lexis is obvious in the translation of (5) into Arabic. Using the Arabic word *ʔalʔaan* indicates the progressive aspect in the translation of the English sentence into Arabic. If the word *ʔalʔaan* had not been used in the Arabic translation, it would have had another meaning whose back translation would be present simple, which conveys a regular action indicating that the speaker's brother generally plays the piano in his room without specifying a particular time. In other words, *ʔalʔaan* is used to ensure the progressive aspect.

5. My brother is playing the piano in his room. يعزف أخي على البيانو في غرفته الآن.

"Category-shifts are departures from formal correspondence in translation" (ibid, 76). They have been subdivided into four types: structure shifts, class shifts, unit shifts and intra-system shifts. Structural shift involves a change in the grammatical structure. Translating Arabic verbal sentences into English involves structural shifts. For example, the translation of the Arabic sentence in (6) with the VSO structure into English involves structural shifts.

6. أكل أحمد التفاحة.

VSO

Ahmad ate the apple.

S V O

Class shifts involve a change of the word class. For example, translating the English sentence into Arabic in (7) comprises a class shift because the adjective *afraid* is translated into Arabic by using a verb *أخاف*.

7. I'm afraid of the dark. أخاف من الظلام.

The following example adapted from Hassan (2014) is another illustration of class shift.

8. softy foaming facial wash رغوة لطيفة منظفة للوجه

Unit shift encompasses using a linguistic unit in the TL that is different from the SL unit. The Arabic cognate accusative noun in (9) is translated into English as a sentence.

9. شكرا Thank you.

Intra-system shift is used in "cases where the shift occurs internally, within a system" (Catford, 1965, p. 80). Arabic and English both have definiteness systems, but sometimes what is definite in Arabic can be translated as indefinite in English. According to Ryding (2005, p. 158), the definite article is used in Arabic to refer to the generic use of a noun. The following example illustrates the point:

10. I like apples. أحب التفاح.

In 1958, Vinay and Darbelnet started using the term transposition to refer to replacing one part of speech with another without changing the meaning of the SL message (Vinay & Darbelnet, quoted in Venuti, 2000, p. 88). Unlike Catford's definition of shifts, Vinay and Darbelnet's definition of transposition is not as comprehensive as Catford's definition of

shifts because it is confined to one of the category shifts, i.e., class shift (al-Khafaji, 2006, p. 42). Blum-Kulka (1986) categorizes shifts in translation as cohesive makers that affect translation in the level of explicitness and/or text meaning.

In addition to the previously mentioned shift categories, Hassan (2014) stated that irony and figurative language are regarded as other kinds of shifts. They can be considered as intralingual shifts that occur within the same language. The question is, how do translators deal with these kinds of shifts in their translation?

Translation shifts also occur when the grammar of the source language does not correspond with the grammar of the target language. According to Djamila (2010), shifts are "problem-solving strategies adopted consciously to minimize the inevitable loss of meaning when rendering textual patterns from one language into another" (p. 53). It is an effort exerted by the translator to establish equivalence between the SL and TL.

2.3 Previous Studies

Reference switching is one of the features in the Arabic language and it is commonly used in certain Arabic genres and the Noble Quran (Abdelaal, 2020; Tabl, 1998). This style is not only confined to shifting from one personal pronoun to another, but it comprises any kind of shift that retains the deep structure of the expression. Tabl (1998) listed the most prevalent shifts in the Noble Quran including tense shifts. This study identified different types of shifts, setting the stage for further investigation. Al-Badani et al. (2014) conducted a study on personal reference switching in the chapter of al-Baqarah, exploring the strategies used by translators to translate them. The study revealed that the English translation of verses that include reference shifts in Ali's (2008) translation of the Quran doesn't indicate these shifts which causes loss of the meaning of the ST. Therefore, translators should focus on reference shifts and read exegeses that discuss them, such as Al-Zemakhshari's to ensure faithful translation. To address this, translators may need to add footnotes providing explanatory paraphrases. In a similar study, Al-Badani et al. (2015) examined the Arabic-English translation of the implicatures, installing fear and sublimity and providing guidance, of switch reference from first person to third person in the chapter of al-Baqarah. The study proves that though implicatures of *iltifat* from 1st person to 3rd person reference are available in exegeses, they are lost and their meanings are not conveyed in Ali's translation. Thus, careful consideration is needed in the translation of implicatures to convey the intended meaning accurately and help the TL audience understand the significance of *iltifat*. The previous two studies focused on the importance of addressing personal reference switching and the implicatures, emphasizing the importance of consulting exegeses to ensure accurate and faithful translation. Mirdehghan, et al. (2012) analyzed the grammatical person shift and cohesion in the Noble Quran. Their study explained that shift in the Noble Quran could be used to demonstrate five matters: exaggeration, reproach, reminding majesty and power, upbraiding and annunciation. According to their analysis, there are eight subdivisions of the grammatical person shifts. These shifts are all related to either person, number, gender, structure, etc., that can occur in one verse or sequence of verses. Translators should be aware of these shifts to accurately convey the intended meaning. Rezvani and Nouraey (2014) studied translation shifts found in 30 verses from the chapter of Yusuf. The researchers have selected seven English translations of the Noble Quran: Arberry, Iring, Pickthall, Sarwar, Saffarzade, Shakir and Yusef Ali. The findings of the study showed that unit shifts and level shifts scored the highest means compared to the other three types of shifts (structural shift, and intersystem shift, and class shift). These findings provided a better comprehension of the process of translating from Arabic into English. Gaining familiarity with the nature of these shifts could be beneficial for translation researchers. It could help translators produce more effective and accurate translations. Salman (2010) examined tense shift patterns in the translations of Part 30 of the Holy Quran by Pickthall, Ali and Shakir and found that the shift from past to present tense was more frequent, followed by shifts from present to future and present to past. The shift from past to future was less frequent than the others. The study also revealed that Shakir's translation showed more frequency of tense shifts than the other two translations of Pickthall and Ali. All the aforementioned studies focused on shifts followed by translators in rendering Quranic verses into English, specifically those which do not involve tense shifts in the original Arabic text. However, Abu-hassoub and Abdel-Momen (2022) explored tense shifts in Quranic verses translated into English and Hebrew. The study found that Hebrew translations had more frequent tense shifts due to linguistic similarities. Khatatb's translation showed shortcomings,

particularly in maintaining past-tense forms, while Al-Adawy closely aligned with the Arabic source text, emphasizing the importance of achieving the intended function by applying tense shifts.

This study differs from the reviewed studies in that it emphasizes the translation of tense-shifted Quranic verses into English, focusing on the more commonly used English tenses. It analyzed the frequency of tense-maintaining and tense-shifting translations that the other studies in the literature have not extensively examined. It bridged the gap by analyzing the translation of tense-shifted Quranic verses, providing insights different from those covered by the other studies.

3. Methodology

The research method followed in this study is descriptive. It adopts the qualitative approach for data analysis that is used to investigate the translation of forty tense-shifted Quranic verses into English to see how the translators of the four selected translations by, Al-Hilali-Khan (1417AH), Ghali (2003), Ali (1938) and Pickthall (1930), deal with these verses in their translation. The forty verses have been divided into two categories: twenty-four verses in which the tense shift is from past to present and sixteen with present-to-past tense shifts.

4. Data Collection

The corpus used for this study has been collected from Tabl's (1998) *أسلوب الالتفات في البلاغة القرآنية* 'Shifting Style in Quranic Rhetoric'. Forty verses have been used, out of which 24 verses mark past to present shift, and 16 verses have present to past shift. It is worth mentioning that the future tense is not excluded here, but in Arabic it is usually formed by using the present verb form, along with a particle that indicates futurity, or the past verb form, especially in the Noble Quran. The main reason for selecting these verses from Tabl's (1998) is the focus of the study on examining tense-shifts within Quranic verses. The translations of the forty verses by Al-Hilali-Khan (1417), Ghali (2003), Yusuf Ali (1938) and Pickthall (1930) have been qualitatively analyzed. The main reason for selecting these four translations is their popularity, and they are considered among the best translations as well.

5. Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to the corpus that has been collected from Tabl's (1998) *أسلوب الالتفات في البلاغة القرآنية* 'Shifting Style in Quranic Rhetoric' and translated by the above-four-mentioned translations. Therefore, the findings of the study can neither be generalized to the translation of all the other tense-shifted verses in the Noble Quran nor to the translations of tense-shifted verses by other translators.

6. Data Analysis

6.1 Tense Shift Analysis

Firstly, Table 1 shows the statistics of translating the Quranic verses with past to present tense shifts. In other words, every verse has two verb forms: the former is past, and the latter is present. That is why the table has been divided into two halves, including two translations, one for the past form and the other for the present form. The same thing comes true with Table 2, which shows the statistics of translating verses with present to past tense shifts.

The presented information in Table 1 focuses on analyzing the first category, the 24 verses that mark past to present tense shifts. The table includes numbers and percentages of each tense used by Al-Hilali-Khan, Ghali, Yusuf Ali, and Pickthall when rendering these verses. Moreover, it reveals the distinctive patterns and various tenses used by them which contributes to understanding each one's individual translation choices. Khan's translation demonstrates a high level of skill in dealing with past to present tense shifts. The translation of the imperfect verbs highlights his careful attention to representing the imperfect nature of the event. Ghali's translation shows a significant use of the present simple tense and a higher frequency of the present perfect, reflecting his focus on conveying the present sense and demonstrating his distinctive approach in rendering the tense shifts. Yusuf Ali's translation ensures a balanced approach he followed in the representation of tense shifts by using various verb forms to produce a clear and coherent translation. Pickthall's translation shows a

common use of the present simple more than the others. The present verb form, whose subject is a second person plural, has been mentioned twice in the verses with past to present shifts. It has been observed that Pickthall has used the past progressive tense in his rendering of such verbs. This might be attributed to his effort to convey the progressive aspect of the verb. Overall, the analysis of the four translations indicates distinctive patterns chosen by each translator in rendering the verses with past to present tense shifts.

Table 1. Statistics of Translating 24 Quranic Verses with Past to Present Tense Shift

	Translation of the Past		Percentage	Translation of the Present		Percentage
Al-Hilali – Khan	Past Simple	11	45.80%	Past Simple	9	37.50%
	Present Simple	11	45.80%	Present Simple	13	54.10%
	Future Simple	1	4.20%	Infinitive	1	4.20%
	Present Perfect	1	4.20%	Past Progressive	1	4.20%
Total		24	100.00%		24	100.00%
Ghali	Past Simple	10	41.70%	Past Simple	6	25%
	Present Simple	8	33.30%	Present Simple	16	66.60%
	Present Perfect	6	25%	Present Perfect	1	4.20%
				Gerund	1	4.20%
Total		24	100.00%		24	100%
Yusuf Ali	Past Simple	10	41.60%	Past Simple	6	25%
	Present Simple	12	50%	Present Simple	16	66.60%
	Future Simple	1	4.20%	Infinitive	1	4.20%
	Present Perfect	1	4.20%	Future Simple	1	4.20%
Total		24	100.00%		24	100%
Pickthall	Past Simple	7	29.20%	Past Simple	3	12.50%
	Present Simple	14	58.30%	Present Simple	16	66.70%
	Present Perfect	3	12.50%	Infinitive	1	4.20%
				Present Perfect	2	8.30%
				Past Progressive	2	8.30%
Total		24	100.00%		24	100.00%

Table 2 presents the analysis of the sixteen verses involving present to past tense shifts. It shows diverse translation patterns used by Al-Hilali-Khan, Ghali, Yusuf Ali, and Pickthall. The diversity in tense selection among them indicates their tremendous efforts to capture and convey the intended meaning. Khan's translation exhibits diversity in rendering present forms, using a combination of present simple, future simple, infinitives after modals, and a gerund. When translating past forms, he continued to use present simple and future simple and introduced the present perfect and present progressive forms. This reflects the dynamic approach and the exerted effort to provide a comprehensive representation of the actions indicated by both present and past verb forms to convey the intended meaning. Ghali's translation reflects consistency in using present simple, future simple and infinitive after modals to render present forms. However, he used a variety of tenses, including the present perfect, future simple and future perfect, to render past forms. This reflects a steady approach for the

former and a deliberate one for the latter to offer an exact representation of the actions indicated by the SL verbs. Yusuf Ali's translation of the verses with present to past tense shifts reveals a certain balance, indicating a measured selection of tenses in rendering both present and past verb forms. The predominance of the present simple in rendering these verses by Pickthall indicates his decision to maintain simplicity and clarity in expressing the nature of the actions. This distinct stylistic approach distinguishes his translation from the translators above, who used a more diverse range of tenses in their translations. Thus, the numbers and percentages shown in Table 2 highlight the approaches the translators' followed in choosing appropriate tense forms. They reflect the various approaches used by the translators to render the intended meaning of the ST faithfully.

Table 2: Statistics of Translating 16 Quranic Verses with Present to Past Tense Shift

	Translation of the Present		Percentage	Translation of the Past		Percentage
Al-Hilali-Khan	Present Simple	7	43.75%	Present Simple	8	50%
	Modal + infinitive	3	18.75%	Future Simple	5	31.25%
	Future Simple	5	31.25%	Present Perfect	2	12.50%
	Gerund	1	6.25%	Present Progressive	1	6.25%
Total		16	100.00%		16	100%
Ghali	Present Simple	8	50%	Present Simple	8	50%
	Modal + infinitive	2	12.50%	Future Perfect	1	6.25%
	Future Simple	5	31.25%	Future Simple	2	12.50%
	Gerund	1	6.25%	Present Perfect	4	25%
				Modal + Infinitive	1	6.25%
Total		16	100%		16	100%
Yusuf Ali	Present Simple	7	43.75%	Present Simple	8	50%
	Modal + infinitive	3	18.75%	Future Simple	5	31.25%
	Future Simple	5	31.25%	Past Simple	0	
	Gerund	1	6.25%	Present Perfect	3	18.75%
Total		16	100.00%		16	100%
Pickthall	Present Simple	11	68.75%	Present Simple	12	75%
	Modal +inf	2	12.50%	Future Simple	1	6.25%
	Future Simple	2	12.50%	Present Perfect	3	18.75%
	Gerund	1	6.25%			
Total		16	100.00%		16	100%

The following are four Quranic verses of each category to see how they were translated into English. The following four verses, that mark past to present tense shifts, were translated into English by Al-Hilali-Khan, Ghali, Pickthall, and Yusuf Ali:

11. قال تعالى: فَفَرِيقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ وَقَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ. (البقرة: 87)

Some *you disbelieved* and some *you killed*. Al-Hilali-Khan

(and) so *you cried lies* to a group of them and (another) group *you kill*? Ghali

and some *ye disbelieve* and some *ye slay* Pickthall

Some *ye called impostors*, and others *ye slay*! Yusuf Ali

In the translation of example (11), Al-Hilali-Khan, Ghali and Yusuf Ali used the past tense form (*you disbelieved*, *you cried lies*, and *you called impostors*, respectively) in the translation of the Arabic past form كَذَّبْتُمْ, but Pickthall used the present simple form (*ye disbelieve*). The Arabic present form verb تَقْتُلُونَ in the same verse was translated into English by using the present simple form by Ghali (*you kill*), Pickthall (*ye slay*) and Yusuf Ali (*ye slay*), but Al-Hilali-Khan used the

past simple form (*you killed*). There is tense consistency in the translations of Al-Hilali-Khan and Pickthall, but Ghali and Ali's translations are tense-shifted. They translated the past and present Arabic verb forms into their English past and present counterparts. Al-Hilali-Khan and Pickthall used the same tense forms; the former used the past forms, and the latter used the present forms. They might have opted for this to maintain tense consistency. However, both Ghali and Ali followed the same forms of verb tenses, past for the *كَذَبْتُمْ* and present for *تَقْتُلُونَ* to keep the same tense shift of the original text.

12. قال تعالى: قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلَّهِ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۚ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ (البقرة: 215)

Say: Whatever *you spend* of good must be for parents and kindred and orphans and Al-Masakin (the needy) and the wayfarer, and whatever *you do* of good deeds, truly, Allah knows it well. Al-Hilali-Khan

Say, "Whatever charity *you expend* is for parents and nearest kin, and orphans, and the indigent, and the wayfarer; and whatever charity *you perform*, then surely Allah is Ever-Knowing of it". Ghali

Say: that which *ye spend* for good (must go) to parents and near kindred and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer. And whatsoever good *ye do*, lo! Allah is Aware of it. Pickthall

Say: Whatever *ye spend* that is good, is for parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers. And whatever *ye do* that is good, -Allah knoweth it well. Yusuf Ali

In the translation of example (12), all, Al-Hilali-Khan, Ghali, Pickthall and Yusuf Ali used the present simple tense form *spend*, *expend*, *spend*, and *spend* respectively in the translation of the Arabic past form *أَنْفَقْتُمْ*. The Arabic present form verb *تَفْعَلُوا* in the same verse was translated into English by using the present simple form *you do*, *you perform*, *ye do*, *ye do* by Al-Hilali-Khan, Ghali, Pickthall, and Yusuf Ali, respectively. In other words, the four translations used tense-consistent structures.

(النحل: 42) 13. قال تعالى: الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ.

(They are) those *who remained patient* (in this world for Allah's sake), *and put their trust in their Lord* (Allah Alone).

Al-Hilali-Khan

(Such are) the ones *who have endured patiently and have put their trust in their Lord*. Ghali

Such as are steadfast and put their trust in Allah. Pickthall

[They are] those *who persevere in patience, and put their trust on their Lord*. Yusuf Ali

Both Pickthall and Yusuf Ali used the present simple tense in the translation of the Arabic past and present verb forms *صَبَرُوا* and *يَتَوَكَّلُونَ* in example (13). However, Al-Hilali-Khan used past simple, and Ghali used present perfect tense for both verbs. That is, the four translators used tense-consistent structures.

(العنكبوت: 59) 14. قال تعالى: الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ.

Those who are patient, and put their trust (only) in their Lord (Allah). Al-Hilali-Khan

Who (endure) patiently and put their trust in their Lord. Ghali

Who persevere, and put their trust in their Lord! Pickthall

Those who persevere in patience, and put their trust, in their Lord and Cherisher. Yusuf Ali

Example (14) which is the same verse as the previous one, but this is mentioned in another chapter (العنكبوت), the four translations used the present simple in the translation of the two verb forms. Pickthall and Yusuf Ali used the same tense in the translation of the two verses, but Al-Hilali-Khan and Ghali didn't use the same tense in their translation though it is the same verse. This might be attributed to contextual factors. It could also be attributed to stylistic preferences or the influence of the surrounding verses. As long as their translations convey the intended meaning of the verses, the use of different tenses is expected and natural, and it might enhance understanding for the receptors. Anyhow, the four translators used tense-consistent structures.

The following are translations, by Al-Hilali-Khan, Ghali, Pickthall, and Yusuf Ali, of four Quranic verses that show present to past tense shift:

(الأعراف: 170) 15. قال تعالى: وَالَّذِينَ يُمَسِّكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ

And as to those *who hold fast to the Book* (i.e. act on its teachings) *and perform As-Salat* (Iqamat as-Salat) Al-Hilali-Khan

And *the ones who hold fast to the Book and keep up the prayer*, Ghali

And as for *those who make (men) keep the Scripture, and establish worship* Pickthall

As to *those who hold fast by the Book and establish regular prayer* Yusuf Ali

16. قال تعالى: وَمَنْ يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ (لقمان: 12)

And *whoever gives thanks*, he gives thanks for (the good of) his ownself. And *whoever is unthankful*, then verily, Allah is All-Rich (Free of all needs), Worthy of all praise. Al-Hilali-Khan

And *whoever gives thanks* (to Allah), then surely he gives thanks only for himself; (i.e., for his own benefit) and *whoever disbelieves*, then surely Allah is Ever-Affluent, Ever-Praiseworthy.” Ghali

and *whosoever giveth thanks*, he giveth thanks for (the good of) his soul. And *whosoever refuseth* - Lo! Allah is Absolute, Owner of Praise. Pickthall

Any *who is [so] grateful* does so to the profit of his own soul: but if *any is ungrateful*, verily Allah is free of all wants, Worthy of all praise. Yusuf Ali

The present simple tense has been used to translate the past verb form in examples 15 and 16. It has also been employed in translating the present verb form in the same examples.

17. قال تعالى: يُقْنِمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ (هود 98)

He *will go ahead* of his people on the Day of Resurrection, and *will lead* them into the Fire, Al-Hilali-Khan

He *will go forward* (before) his people on the Day of the Resurrection. So he *will have herded* them into the Fire, Ghali

He *will go before* his people on the Day of Resurrection and *will lead* them to the Fire for watering-place. Pickthall

He *will go before* his people on the Day of Judgment, and *lead* them into the Fire [as cattle are led to water]: Yusuf Ali

In these four translations, the four translators used the future simple to translate the present form of the verb يُقْنِمُ. The future perfect was used to translate the past verb form فَأَوْرَدَهُم by Ghali, but the other three translators used the future simple to translate this verb. The translators used the future tense to translate the two verb forms in this verse because the verse discusses a future event that will take place on the Day of Judgment.

18. قال تعالى: إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يُخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ (فاطر: 18)

You (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) can warn only those *who fear their Lord* unseen and *perform As-Salat* (Iqamat as-Salat). Al-Hilali-Khan

Surely you warn only (the ones) *who are apprehensive of their Lord* in the Unseen and *keep up the prayer*. Ghali

Thou warnest only *those who fear their Lord* in secret, and *have established worship*. Pickthall

Thou canst but admonish such as *fear their Lord* unseen and *establish regular Prayer* Yusuf Ali

The present form يُخْشَوْنَ was translated by using the present simple in the four translations. Pickthall used the present perfect tense in translating the past form أَقَامُوا, but in the other three translations, the present simple tense was used in translating the past form.

6.2 English Tenses Used in Translating Tense Shifted Quranic Verses

As indicated in Table 3, nearly half of the past Arabic forms are translated into English in the present simple tense, 47% and 39.5% in the simple past tense. The present perfect and the future simple are used less frequently, representing 11.5% and 2%, respectively. On the other hand, 63.5% of the present forms are translated into English in the present simple and 25% in the past simple. This reveals that the present simple and then the past simple are commonly used in the translation of verses that show past to present tense shift, representing 55.2% and 32.3%, respectively. Other tenses, such as present perfect, future simple, etc., are not common.

Table 3. Frequency of English tenses used in the translation of Quranic verses with past to present tense shift

Translation of the Past		Percentage	Translation of the Present		Percentage	Overall Frequency of Tenses		
Present Simple	45	47%	Present Simple	61	63.50%	Present Simple	106	55.2%
Past Simple	38	39.50%	Past Simple	24	25%	Past Simple	62	32.3%
Future Simple	2	2%	Infinitive	3	3%	Others	24	12.5%
Present Perfect	11	11.50%	Present Perfect	3	3%	Total	192	100%
	96	100.00%	Past Progressive	3	3%			
			Future Simple	1	1%			
			Gerund	1	1%			
				96	100%			

It is evident from the results in Table 4 that more than half of the translations of the present Arabic forms are in the present simple, and more than 25% are in the future simple in English. In addition, 56.25% of present simple and 20.5% of future simple translations are used in translating the past Arabic forms. This proves that the present simple tense is more common in the translation of Quranic verses that show present to past tense shifts. The future simple is also used but not as common as the present simple.

Table 4. Frequency of English tenses used in the translation of Quranic verses with present to past tense shift

Translation of the Present		Percentage	Translation of the Past		Percentage	Overall Frequency of Tenses		
present simple	33	51.60%	Present Simple	36	56.25%	Present Simple	69	53.9%
future simple	17	26.50%	Future Simple	13	20.50%	Future Simple	30	23.4%
modale infinitive	10	15.60%	Present Perfect	12	18.75%	Others	29	22.7%
Gerund	4	6.25%	Future Perfect	1	1.50%	Total	128	100%
	64		Modal Infinitive ⁺	1	1.50%			
			Present Progressive	1	1.50%			
				64				

Careful investigation of tables 3 and 4 reveals that the present simple tense is used in the translation of both types of Quranic verses.

6.3 Frequency of Tense Shift in the Target Language

Target language tense shift here means using two different tenses in the TL in translating the Quranic verses that have two verb forms with different tenses. Table 5 presents the overall translation of the forty Quranic verses that have tense shifts. It shows that most of the verses have been translated into English by using the same TL tense. In other words, 67% of the verses have been translated with no tense shift. However, the number of verses that have been translated with different TL tenses (tense shift) is 53 (33%). Pickthall's translation has almost the same percentage of the overall translation, i.e., he translated 67.5% of the verses by using the same English tense and 32.5% by using two different tenses. Ghali translated 50% of the verses by using two tenses and 50% by using the same tense. The other two translations by Al-Hilali-Khan and Yusuf Ali

revealed that three quarters, 75%, of the verses were translated by using the same tense and 25% with different tenses.

Table 5. Translation of 40 Quranic Verses with Tense Shift

Translator	Using the Same Tense	Percentage	Using Two Different Tenses	Percentage	Total
Al-Hilali-Khan	30	75%	10	25%	40
Ghali	20	50%	20	50%	40
Pickhtall	27	67.5%	13	32.5%	40
Yusuf Ali	30	75%	10	25%	40
Total	107	67%	53	33%	160

The results in Table 6 provide the frequency of tense shifting in the translation of the verses that show past to present tense shifts. It shows that the majority of the twenty-four verses were translated into English with no tense shift. Out of the 96 translations, around three quarters, 71 (74%) of them don't show tense shifts. Only 25 (26%) of them are tense shifted. With respect to the four translations, the translation of Alhilali-Khan shows that 20 (83.3%) verses in their translation are not tense shifted and 4 (16.7%) of them are tense shifted. In the translations of Ghali, Pickthall and Yusuf Ali, 15 (62.5%), 17 (70.8%) and 19 (79.2%) verses don't mark tense shift but 9 (37.5%), 7 (29.2%) and 5 (20.8%) are tense shifted respectively. Thus, tense shifts in the translation of this category are less frequent in all the translations.

Table 6. Translation of 24 Quranic Verses with Past to Present Tense Shift

Translator	Using the Same Tense	Percentage	Using Two Different Tenses	Percentage	Total
Al-Hilali-Khan	20	83.30%	4	16.70%	24
Ghali	15	62.50%	9	37.50%	24
Pickhtall	17	70.80%	7	29.20%	24
Yusuf Ali	19	79.20%	5	20.80%	24
Total	71	74%	25	26%	96

The results in Table 7 show the translation of the verses that show present to past tense shifting. The frequency of translations that show tense shift is less than the translations with no tense shift, 28 (43.75%) and 36 (56.25%), respectively. In other words, less than half of the translations mark tense shifting, but more than half of them don't show tense shifts. The translations of Al-Hilali-Khan and Pickthall have the same frequency of translations with tense shift 6 (37.5%) and the others with no tense shift 10 (62.5%). The translations of Ghali and Yusuf Ali have opposite frequencies. That is, the frequency of the translations that have tense shifts in Ghali's translation but don't show tense shifts in Yusuf Ali's translation is 11 (68.75%). The frequency of the translations that show tense shifts in Yusuf Ali's translation but not in Ghali's translation is 5 (31.25%). Tense shifting is more frequent in Ghali's translation. This could be attributed to the translators' individual preferences. Yusuf Ali might choose more tense-maintaining structures to convey the meaning of the verses accurately. However, Ghali might find it more appropriate to express the meaning of the verses by using more frequent tense shifts.

Table 7. Translation of 16 Quranic Verses with Present to Past Tense Shift

Translator	Using the Same Tense	Percentage	Using Two Different Tenses	Percentage	Total
Al-Hilali-Khan	10	62.50%	6	37.50%	16
Ghali	5	31.25%	11	68.75%	16
Pickhtall	10	62.50%	6	37.50%	16
Yusuf Ali	11	68.75%	5	31.25%	16
Total	36	56.25%	28	43.75%	64

7. Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that the translators used both tense-consistent and tense-shifted structures in the translation of the tense-shifted Quranic verses. The translators used tense-consistent structures more frequently than tense-shifted structures. In other words, 74% of the first category (verses with past to present tense shifts) and 56.25% of the second category (verses with present to past tense shifts) were tense-consistent structures. Tables 6 & 7 illustrate this point. This might be attributed to using consistent tenses in the same English sentence to ensure grammatical correctness. Moreover, English readers expect tense consistency in writing. Therefore, translators might consider their expectations using tense-consistent structures and opting for tense shifts only where necessary. Another reason is that Arabic and English have different sentence structures, so Arabic tense-shifted structures might not always have equivalents in English. This result supports the findings of Abu-hassoub and Abdel-Momen (2022) concerning tense shifts, which are less frequent in the English translation of some Quranic verses than in the Hebrew translation of the same verses.

The findings of translating Arabic forms with past to present shifts showed that present simple and simple past tenses were more frequently used than other tenses, representing 86.5% (47% present simple and 39.5% past simple) to translate the past Arabic forms and 88.5% (63.5% present simple and 25% past simple) to translate the present Arabic forms. Consequently, the present simple is more common than the past simple, even in the translation of the past Arabic forms.

As illustrated in Table 4, the findings of translating Arabic forms with present to past shifts showed that the present simple was more frequently used, representing 51.6% in the translation of the present Arabic forms and 56.25% in the translation of the past Arabic forms. The future simple was also used, representing 26.5% in translating the present forms and 20.5% in the translation of the past forms. It is worth mentioning that the past tense was not used in the translation of this category.

Although tense-consistent structures are the common structures in English, shifts are used when there is a good reason for that. In the translation of past-to-present tense-shifted Quranic verses, there are 25 cases that show tense shifts in English (see Table 6). The statistics show that there are 9 cases in which the translators followed the same shifts as in the SL. In 9 cases, the translators used the present perfect in the translation of some Arabic past verb forms. This is because the present perfect is used to discuss past events when the time is not mentioned. In 3 cases, the past progressive was used to indicate the progressive aspect. The gerund and to-infinitive were used in the other 4 cases. In the translation of present-to-past tense-shifted Quranic verses, 28 cases show tense shifts in English (see Table 7). The statistics indicate that there are 11 cases in which the translators used present perfect in the translation of past verb forms. This might be attributed to the same abovementioned reason for using the past perfect. In 8 cases, they used the present simple to describe factual events. The future simple was also used four times in the translation of verb forms that talk about future events on the day of judgment. In the other 4 cases, they used modal auxiliaries and the main verb in the translation of a question used to ask for advice. In one case, the present progressive was used to indicate the progressive aspect. The results in Tables 6 and 7 show that shifts from past to present (26%) are less frequent than from present to past (43.75%). This finding does not correspond to Salman's (2010) findings, which show more frequency in past to present shifts. The reason for this difference could be rooted in the nature of the original texts. Salman's (2010) study concentrated on the translation of Quranic verses without specific regard to whether they contain tense shifts. In contrast, this study focused on translating Quranic verses that already include tense shifts (two verb forms in each). Additionally, while previous studies have primarily investigated aspects such as personal reference switching (Al-Badani et al., 2014), implicatures of switch reference from first person to third person (Al-Badani et al., 2015), and grammatical person shifts (Mirdehghan et al., 2012), this study has focused on another aspect of shifts, namely the translation of tense-shifted Quranic verses into English. This also differentiates it from other studies that have explored various types of translation shifts, such as Rezvani and Nouraey (2014). Abu-hassoub and Abdel-Momen (2022) have examined tense shifts in Quranic verses translated into English, and their study extends to their translations into Hebrew, offering a broader linguistic comparison. Although the current study and the one conducted by Abu-hassoub and Abdel-Momen (2022) are all about the translation of tense-shifted Quranic verses, their emphasis differs. Their study emphasizes the alignment of the translations with the original text through the application of tense shifts. On the other hand,

this study focuses on the translation of tense-shifted Quranic verses without evaluating alignment with the original text. In other words, the former has a particular emphasis on the faithfulness of translations to the original text through the use of tense shifts. However, the latter does not evaluate the textual alignment.

8. Conclusion

Many studies on tense shifting in translation focused on tense shifts of the target language text. This study deals with the translation of tense-shifted Quranic verses from Arabic into English to examine if tense shifts also occur in the TL. The study has shown that both English tense-consistent and tense-shifted structures have been used in the translation of these Quranic verses. That is, not all tense-shifted Quranic verses have been translated into English as tense-shifted, and tense-consistent structures are more common. Tense-consistent is followed in the same sentence in English. However, the results of the study indicate the potentiality of tense-shifted structures. The analysis of the previous results reveals various patterns and different translations used by the four translators when rendering tense-shifted Quranic verses into English. Every translator shows a unique way in their translation, indicating the effort they exerted to convey the intended meaning of the original text. Although tense consistency is observed in some cases, the variations shown in their translations might occur due to contextual factors, the translator's preferences and differences in the interpretation of the original text. The predominance of using the present simple tense in the translation of both present-to-past and past-to-present tense-shifted Quranic verses indicates the translators' choice of this tense to convey the intended meaning in these contexts. Most of the verses have been translated using tense-maintaining structures in English. That means the translators have not followed the original text structures when rendering the verses into English. It suggests that they prioritize readability and adherence to English grammar rules over employing the same structures of the original texts. It also indicates their choice to transfer the original text syntactically and semantically in a way that makes it look naturally English.

9. Implications of the Study

The study provides a comprehensive understanding of reference switching, whether intralingual or interlingual, focusing on translating tense-shifted Quranic verses into English. It offers valuable implications for translators. It is very important to consider the findings of this study in the translation of Arabic tense-shifted forms. Translators, translation instructors and students of translation are recommended to consider them and bear in mind that there is no one-to-one correspondence between Arabic tense-shifted structures and their English translations. Students can identify the translation of tense-shifted Arabic structures from the examples of the Quranic verses mentioned in this study.

10. Recommendations for Future Research

This study has provided insightful knowledge on tense shift and how tense-shifted Quranic verses have been translated into English. Nevertheless, for more benefit, another study is needed to know when and why translators use tense-consistent or tense-shifted structures in translating such verses into English. Moreover, other studies on translating verses with different shifts, such as number shifts, etc., are also needed. Students and translator trainees need to be familiarized with the findings of such studies because they could provide them with insights into the importance of resorting to translation shifts where necessary to preserve the SL meaning in the TL.

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