

## ترجمة زمن الفعل في الخطاب القرآني: ترجمة الهلالي وخان مثلاً

خديجة حسن زينو<sup>1\*</sup>، غياث عبد الوهاب بركات<sup>2</sup>، وفاء أحمد دقماق<sup>3</sup>

1 -طالبة دكتوراه، كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية، جامعة دمشق.

[khadija.zeino@damascusuniversity.edu.sy](mailto:khadija.zeino@damascusuniversity.edu.sy)

2 -أستاذ دكتور في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية، كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية، جامعة دمشق.

3 -دكتورة في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية، كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية، جامعة دمشق.

### الملخص:

يُعد الخطاب القرآني إنموذجاً للخطاب البلاغي المميز إذ إنه يعبر عن غنى اللغة العربية كما يعد أحد المصادر التي تؤخذ عنها اللغة، ومن أهم ما يميز الخطاب القرآني مخالفة ظاهر القول معناه متمثلاً بالتعبير بالماضي عن المستقبل وبالحاضر والمستقبل عن الماضي، ورغم أن هذا مذهب من مذاهب العرب في الكلام ودليل على الفصاحة والبيان فإنه لا يخلو من الإشكال عند ترجمة النص القرآني إلى الإنكليزية. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على هذا الأسلوب البلاغي في القرآن واستراتيجيات الترجمة التي يتبعها المترجم للتعبير عن زمن الفعل باللغة الإنكليزية، ويعتمد البحث على دراسة ابن قتيبة لمشكل القرآن وتأويله، ويشير البحث إلى أن الترجمة اعتمدت على تجاهل التناقض الإشكالي بين الزمن الظاهري والمعنى المقصود وتبني ترجمة المعنى لا المبنى حيث يعتمد المترجم إلى استخدام الزمن المقصود في ترجمته إلا في حالات نادرة، وهذه الطريقة في الترجمة تعد أمراً منطقياً إذا أخذنا بعين الاعتبار الاختلافات البنيوية بين اللغتين العربية والإنكليزية إضافة إلى طبيعة النص المترجم.

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الكلمات المفتاحية: الخطاب القرآني، الترجمة، زمن الفعل.

## Translation of Verb Tense in Quranic Discourse: Al-Hilali & Khan's Translation as an Example

Khadija Hasan Zeino<sup>1\*</sup>, Ghias Abdulwahab Barakat<sup>2</sup>, Wafa Ahmad Dukmak<sup>3</sup>

1-Ph.D student, Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Damascus University.

\*-[khadija.zeino@damascusuniversity.edu.sy](mailto:khadija.zeino@damascusuniversity.edu.sy)

2- Professor, Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Damascus University.

3- Lecturer, Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Damascus University.

### Abstract:

Quranic discourse is an example of a specialized register that is implemented as a typical source of the Arabic language itself. One of the special aspects of the Quranic discourse is the contradiction between the apparent statement and the intended meaning, which is obvious in expressing the future using the past tense and expressing the past using the present or future reference. While this is a method that has long been used by Arabs as a technique to manifest eloquence, it poses some challenges for translators of the Quranic text into English. The aim of this study is to shed light on this rhetorical approach in Quran and to describe the translation strategies implemented by translators to deliver verb tense in English. The study is based on Ibn Qutaybah's (1973) list of problematic issues in Quran. It demonstrates that, just with very few exceptions, in general, translators ignored this problematic contradiction between the apparent tense and the intended reference and attempted a translation based on meaning, where only the referred tense is used. This can be justified taking into consideration the structural differences between the two languages and the nature of the translated text. Some suggestions are provided when appropriate.

**Key words:** Quranic Discourse, Translation, Verb Tense.

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### 1. Introduction:

Quran is regarded in Islam as the Word of Allah. It is not only the holy book that Muslims follow, but also a source from which the Arabic language is taken as it also uses the methods that have long been used by Arabs in their speech. Amirouche & Haddad (2022) state that Arabic linguists unanimously agree on the authenticity of the Quranic text, as it represents the most eloquent, the most accurately-reported, and the least distorted expression of the Arabic language. It is also regarded by them as a significant source of linguistic reference (p. 498). Still, Quranic discourse has its unique linguistic and rhetorical properties, which adds a level of complexity to it. One of the problematic issues that Quranic discourse possesses is the mismatch between the surface meaning and the intended meaning. This mismatch can be exemplified by the use of the future tense to express the past and the use of the past tense to express the future.

This problematic feature can be challenging to translators as they have to exert extra effort to render this problematic aspect in the target language. Abdul-Raof (2001) demonstrates that "The Qur'an translator does not only need a sound linguistic competence in both Arabic and English but also an advanced knowledge in Arabic syntax and rhetoric in order to appreciate the complex linguistic and rhetorical patterns of Qur'anic structures" (p.2). In fact, translators have to understand both the linguistic and contextual considerations of tense, as well as justifications underlying such tense shift based on the interpretation of the source text, Tafsir. The aim of this study is to investigate tense shift in Quranic discourse and the translation alternatives of this complexity. To achieve this goal, Ibn Qutaybah (1973) classification of complexities in Quran is implemented. One of the issues he discusses is the use of the future to refer to the past and the use of the past to refer to the future. The examples he provides for this aspect, together with additional examples, are studied for translation purposes. First, the logical grounds for such shift in tense are set using various interpretation books of Quran, Tafsir, most notably Al-Tabari's (884) since he is interested in the linguistic aspect throughout the interpretation of Quran. After that, the translation of verb tense of the selected examples is provided using the translation of the Noble Quran by Al-Hilali & Khan (1984). Any suggestions for better translation or any other possible alternatives are discussed.

### 2. Literature Review:

The study of verb tense in the Qur'an, particularly concerning its translation from Arabic into English, has been the subject of extensive scholarly research. For example, Al-Taher (2014) contributes to the field by investigating the translation of past tense structures in the Quran that describe future events in the Hereafter. This study highlights the strategies three translations of the Quran resort to in order to convey the past tense in English and emphasizes the importance of context in achieving accurate translations. He finds that the past simple is not used in most cases, although one translation employs it at times. He views that the past is not suitable in this context as it does not imply certainty. "It seems to be unfit for the original function of certainty of future actions in the TL. According to him, "because it implies formality and loftiness and it gives biblical flavor, 'shall' could be communicatively successful in reflecting some of the grandeur of the Noble Qur'an. However, it is likely to have a more powerful effect on native speakers of American English than on speakers of British English" (p. 61). Important as it is, this study did not include one prominent translation of the Quran, the one conducted by Al-Hilali and Khan (1984).

Moreover, Alasmari et al. (2016) explore the verb systems of Arabic and English using the Quranic Arabic Corpus. Their research focuses on the similarities and differences in tense and aspect as expressed by verb structures and their morphology, providing valuable insights for translators and linguists. The study emphasizes the importance of sentence context since it can make the verb in agreement with other elements in the sentence. Although this study is inclusive as it takes into consideration seven translations of the Quran, it is limited to the verb "قال" (say).

Abu-hassoub & Monem (2022) conduct a functional study on tense shift in selected Qur'anic verses translated into English and Hebrew. The study uses Khattab's translation of the Quran and highlights some differences between the English and Hebrew translations of the Quran in relation to tense shifts. The research reveals that

tense shifts are employed to convey specific rhetorical and stylistic effects and that translators must carefully consider these shifts to preserve the original meaning and impact. They highlight the necessity for translators to possess linguistic competence of both the source and target languages, as well as understanding context, to faithfully convey the intended meanings and functions of the original text.

Collectively, these studies underscore the intricate nature of verb tense usage in the Qur'an and the challenges inherent in translating these structures into English. They highlight the necessity for translators to possess a deep understanding of both the source and target languages, as well as the cultural and rhetorical contexts, to faithfully convey the intended meanings of the original text.

### 3. Method:

The method followed in this study is a descriptive method with some analysis and justification. Verses that contain verb-tense shift are selected, and the corresponding translated excerpts are provided. Then, the strategies adopted in the translation are discussed, taking into consideration the functions and the intended meanings conveyed by both versions. Sometimes, some alternatives are suggested.

### 4. Verb Tense in Quranic Discourse:

One of the important issues that interpreters of Quranic verses have discussed extensively is the contradiction between the linguistic verb tense and its actual reference in the source text, which is not uncommon in Quranic discourse. An example of this is the following verse: "والذين كفروا أعمالهم كسراب بقيعة يحسبه الظمآن ماء حتى إذا جاءه لم يجده شيئا ووجد الله عنده فوفاه حسابه والله سريع الحساب"

"As for the disbelievers, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert, which the thirsty perceive as water, but when they approach it, they find it to be nothing. Instead, they find Allah there 'in the Hereafter, ready' to settle their account. And Allah is swift in reckoning."

(Qur'an 24: 39). While the reference of the verb "يحسبه" is present and the reference of "إذا جاءه" and "لم يجده" is future because "إذا" is used in Arabic to refer to the future, the reference of "وجد" and "وفاه" is past on the

surface structure but the actual reference is future, as Al-Tabari (884) comments on "وجد الله" that this will be when a person dies (p.196). In fact, this contradiction between the surface structure of the past tense of the verb and its actual future reference is common in Quran, especially when talking about events of the Doomsday or the Day of Judgment. Another example of this is "وأزلفت الجنة للمتقين/ وبرزت الجحيم للغاوين/ وقيل لهم أين ما"

"On that Day' Paradise will be brought near to the God-fearing, and the Hellfire will be displayed to the deviant. And it will be said to them, 'Where are those you used to worship besides Allah? Can they help you or even help themselves?' Then the idols will be hurled headlong into Hell, along with the deviant" (Quran 26: 90-94). This is interpreted by scholars by the fact that the time for Allah is different from the time for human beings. Therefore, all future events are in God's knowledge a foregone conclusion and an inevitable certainty that makes it as an absolute reality similar to past events in their absoluteness (Al-Qazwini, 1989, p.96). This feature is unique to the Quranic discourse because the semantic property of the past verb in Arabic is being completed within an elapsed period of time.

Another feature of verb tense shift is the use of the present to refer to past events. An example of this is the following: "إن مثل عيسى عند الله كمثل آدم خلقه من تراب ثم قال له كن فيكون" "Indeed, the example of Jesus in the sight of Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust, then said to him, 'Be!' And he was!" (Quran 3:59). Instead of saying "فكان", the use of the present in this context serves an important communicative purpose: it demonstrates that God's capability is not limited to the creation of Adam; rather, it can be applied to anything God desires. In fact, the use of the present shows continuity and durability of creation of all human beings, Adam's descendants. This is justified by the next verse: "الحق من ربك فلا تكن من الممترين" "This is the

truth from your Lord, so do not be one of those who doubt.” (Quran 3:60), which states that this is a fixed fact not an accidental incident. This is also common in Arab's usage, and a clear example is the use of the present of the verb "أمر" instead of the verb "مررت" in the poetic line quoted by Al-Jurjani (1912, p. 159):

ولقد أمر على اللثيم يسبتي، فمضيت، ثم قلت: لا يعنيني.

“Maybe, When I pass by a mean person, he would insult me. However, I go on my way without caring” The present tense is used here to show that this happens whenever he meets a mean person, not just once.

An additional feature of verb tense shift is the use of the future to express a past event. An example of this feature is the following verse: " والله الذي أرسل الرياح فتثير سحاباً فسقناه إلى بلد ميت فأحيينا به الأرض بعد موتها كذلك " "النشور

“And it is Allah Who sends the winds, which then stir up ‘vapour, forming’ clouds, and then We drive them to a lifeless land, giving life to the earth after its death. Similar is the Resurrection.” (Quran 35:9). The use of the present verb "فتثير" as a future reference in the context of surrounding past verbs "أرسل", "فسقناه", and "أحيينا" is to summon up the image of cloud formation that brings rain and to allow readers to visualize it in their mind. This use of the present or the future in this way is to revive the picture and make it dynamic.

### 5. The Notion of Equivalence in Translation:

"Translation can be regarded as a process of finding equivalents from the target language for the source language" (Sinh (2020, p. 126). The concepts of 'equivalence' and 'meaning' have long been central to translation studies. According to Venuti (2000), "equivalence has been understood as 'accuracy,' 'adequacy,' 'correctness,' 'correspondence,' 'fidelity,' or 'identity'; it is a variable notion of how the translation is connected to the foreign text" (p.5). However, Baker (2011, p.6) views that "although equivalence can usually be obtained to some extent, it is influenced by a variety of linguistic and cultural factors and is therefore always relative". She talks about several levels of equivalence; i.e. word, above-word, grammar, thematic structure, cohesion and pragmatic levels. She views that non-equivalence on one of the levels requires certain strategies to be adopted to solve the problem. In fact, this can be relative to the translation of the tense of the verb as finding an equivalent tense is not always an easy task.

### 6. Translation of Tense Shift in Quranic Discourse:

#### 6.1. Using the Past to Refer to the Future:

When the past tense is used to refer to future events in the Quran, like referring to events in the Day of Judgment, translators resort to maintaining the signified tense rather than using the apparent tense. Examples of translated verses containing this kind of tense shift are provided in Table (1) within the context in which they occur.

	Source Text	Target Text
(1)	<p>"ولويرى الذين ظلموا إذ يرون العذاب أن القوة لله جميعاً وأن الله شديد العذاب/ إذ تيرا الذين اتبعوا من الذين اتبعوا ورأوا العذاب وتقطعت بهم الأسباب/ وقال الذين اتبعوا لو أن لنا كرة فنتبرأ منهم كما تبراؤنا منكم كذلك يريهم الله أعمالهم حسرات عليهم وما هم بخارجين من النار"</p> <p>(Quran, 2: 165-167)</p>	<p>"If only those who do wrong could see, when they will see the torment, that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is Severe in punishment/ When those who were followed <u>disown</u> [declare themselves innocent of] those who followed [them], and they <u>see</u> the torment, then all their relations <u>will be cut off</u> from them/ And those who followed <u>will say</u>: 'If only we had one more chance to return [to the worldly life], we would disown...them as they have disowned...us' Thus Allah will show them their deeds as regrets for them. And they will never get out of the fire."</p> <p>(Al-Hilali &amp; Khan, 1984, p.33)</p>

(2)	"هل ينظرون إلا أن يأتيهم الله في ظلل من الغمام والملائكة وقضي الأمر وإلى الله ترجع الأمور" (Quran, 2: 210)	"Do they then wait for anything other than that Allah should come to them in the shadows of the clouds and the angels? [Then] the case <u>would be already judged</u> . And to Allah return all matters [for decision]." (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.44)
(3)	"يقدم قومه يوم القيامة فأوردهم النار" (Quran, 11: 98)	"He will go ahead of his people on the Day of Resurrection, and <u>will lead them</u> into the Fire" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.300)
(4)	"أتى أمر الله فلا تستعجلوه" (Quran, 16: 1)	"The Event...ordained by Allah <u>will come to pass</u> , so seek not to hasten it" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.347)
(5)	"ويوم نسف الجبال وترى الأرض بارزة وحشرناهم فلم نغادر منهم أحداً" (Quran, 18: 47)	"And [remember] the Day We shall cause the mountains to pass away [like clouds of dust], and you will see the earth as a leveled plain, and we <u>shall gather them</u> all together so as to leave not one of them behind." (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.391-392)
(6)	"إن نشأ ننزل عليهم من السماء آية فظلت أعناقهم لها خاضعين" (Quran, 26: 4)	"If We will, we could send down to them from the heaven a sign, to which they <u>would bend</u> their necks in humility." (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.488)
(7)	"ويوم ينفخ في الصور ففزع من في السموات ومن في الأرض إلا من شاء الله وكل أتوه داخرين" (Quran, 27: 87)	"And [remember] the Day on which the Trumpet will be blown – and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth, <u>will be terrified</u> except him whom Allah will [exempt]. And all <u>shall come</u> to Him, humbled." (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.514)
(8)	"جنات عدن يدخلونها يحلون فيها من أساور من ذهب ولؤلؤاً ولباسهم فيها حريص / وقالوا الحمد لله الذي أذهب عنا الحزن" (Quran, 35: 33-34)	"Adn [Eden] Paradise [everlasting Gardens] will they enter, therein will they be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls, and their garments therein will be of silk./ And they <u>will say</u> : 'All the praises and thanks be to Allah Who has removed from us [all] grief.' (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.585-586)
(9)	"ونفخ في الصور فصعق من في السموات ومن في الأرض إلا من شاء الله ثم نفخ فيه أخرى فإذا هم قيام ينظرون / وأشرققت الأرض بنور ربها ووضع الكتاب وجيء بالنبيين والشهداء وقضي بينهم بالحق وهم لا يظلمون / ووفيت كل نفس ما عملت... / وسيق الذين كفروا إلى جهنم زمراً... / قيل ادخلوا أبواب جهنم... / وسيق الذين اتقوا ربهم إلى الجنة زمراً... / وقالوا الحمد لله الذي صدقنا وعده... / وترى الملائكة حافين من حول العرش يسبحون بحمد ربهم وقضي بينهم بالحق وقيل الحمد لله رب العالمين" (Quran, 39: 68-75)	"And the Trumpet <u>will be blown</u> , and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth <u>will swoon</u> away, except him whom Allah wills. Then <u>it will be blown</u> a second time, and behold they will be standing, looking on [waiting]/ And the earth <u>will shine</u> with the light of its Lord...and the Book <u>will be placed</u> [open]; and the prophets and the witnesses <u>will be brought</u> forward; and it <u>will be judged</u> between them with truth, and they will not be wronged/ And each person <u>will be paid</u> in full of what he did.../ And those who disbelieved <u>will be driven</u> to Hell in groups.../ It <u>will be said</u> [to them]: 'Enter you the gates of Hell.../ And those who kept their duty to their Lord [Al-Muttaqun] <u>will be led</u> to Paradise in groups.../ And they <u>will say</u> : 'All praises and thanks be to Allah Who has fulfilled His Promise to us.../ And You will see the angels surrounding the Throne from all round, glorifying the praises of their Lord. And they [all creatures] <u>will be judged</u> with truth. And <u>it will be said</u> , 'All the praises and thanks be to

		allah, the Lord of the Alamin [mankind, jinn and all that exists]". (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.628-629)
(10)	"ويقولون متى هذا الوعد إن كنتم صادقين/ قل إنما العلم عند الله وإنما أنا نذير مبين/ فلما رأوه زلفة سيئت وجوه الذين كفروا وقيل هذا الذي كنتم به تدعون" (Quran, 67: 26-28)	"They say: 'When will this promise [i.e. the Day of Resurrection] come to pass if you are telling the truth?'/ Say [O Muhammad]: 'The knowledge [of its exact time] is with Allah only, and I am only a plain warner.'/ But when they <u>will see</u> it [the torment on the Day of Resurrection] approaching, the faces of those who disbelieve <u>will change</u> and turn black with sadness and in grief and <u>it will be said</u> [to them]: 'This is [the promise] which you were calling for!'" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.773)
(11)	"وكان الله عزيزاً حكيماً" (Quran, 3: 158)	"And Allah <u>is Ever</u> All-Powerful, All-Wise" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.136)
(12)	"ويدع الإنسان بالشر دعاءه بالخير وكان الإنسان عجولاً" (Quran, 17: 11)	"And man invokes [Allah] for evil as he invokes [Allah] for good and man <u>is ever</u> hasty" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.369)
(13)	"يوفون بالنذر ويخافون يوماً كان شره مستطيراً" (Quran, 76: 7)	"They [are those who] fulfil [their] vows, and they fear a day whose evil <u>will be</u> wide-spreading" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.803)

Table 1. Examples of future reference using the past tense and their translation

When reviewing the above examples and many similar examples for the use of the past to refer to the future, one can notice two clear situations for such use. The first situation is to refer to future incidents related to the Day of Judgment or Resurrection. The past tense is often used with contextual evidence that shows that the reference is for the future. The use of the present tense preceding or following the use of the past sets context to the future reference, such as the use of "يرون" and "يريههم" in example (1), the use of "تنزل" in example (6), the use of "ينفخ" in example (7), the use of "يدخلونها" in example (8). The idea of the future is also expressed lexically with words such as "هل ينظرون", "يوم القيامة", "فلا تستعجلوه", "ويوم", "إن نشأ", and "الوعد", all of which denote that the reference is for events in the future. However, sometimes, this is done without any contextual reference for the future like the use of sequential past verbs in example (9).

When translating the past verbs, the future will is commonly used, which eliminates the tense shift that is used in Arabic. Consequently, all the verbs in the translated version appear in the future, whether the verb is in the present or the past in the ST. For instance, in example (3), both "يقدم قومه" and "أوردهم النار" are translated into the future as "will go ahead of his people" and "will lead them into the Fire". This leads to a degree of loss in the TT; the shift in tense that is marked in the ST goes unmarked in the TT. However, in examples (2), (5), (6), and (7), the translator resorts to "would" or "shall" instead of "will" to emphasize the idea of inevitability and absoluteness of the event, which retains a shade of meaning expressed in the past tense in the ST. In example (2), the word "already" is also added to demonstrate the idea that everything in the future is predestined by Allah, so the future for us is past for Him.

The second situation is using the past verb "كان" to refer to the present in examples (11) and (12) and to refer to the future in example (13). In fact, in example (11) and (12), "كان" is timeless as it shows the listed characteristics are true in the past, the present or even the future. Therefore, the translator uses "is ever" instead of "was" or even simply "is" to show that the property is true regardless of time frame. In example (13), the

translator resorts to "will be" as the reference is obviously future, but as the case in Quranic discourse the past tense is used in Arabic to show that all matters are predestined by God before creation. Thus, some degree of loss in meaning is evident in all of the cases of translating the past tense into the future. At least, the shift between the past and the present disappears in the TT, which eliminates the problematic usage of tense and oversimplifies the complex structure and this in turn removes the contrasting effect present in the ST.

## 6.2. Using the Present or Future to Refer to the Past

The present tense or the future tense is used to refer to past events in the Quran, especially when creating a mental image of the event or when referring to events that are repeatable or facts. In this case, the translators resort either to maintaining the signified tense or to keeping the original present reference. Examples of translated verses containing this kind of tense shift are provided in Table (2) within the context in which they occur.

	Source Text	Target Text
(1)	"أفكلما جاءكم رسول بما لا تهوى أنفسكم استكبرتم ففريقاً كذبتم وفريقاً تقتلون" (Quran, 2: 87)	"Is it that whenever there came to you a Messenger with what you yourselves desired not, you grew arrogant? Some you disbelieved and some you <u>killed</u> " (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.17)
(2)	"واتبعوا ما تتلوا الشياطين على ملك سليمان" (Quran, 2: 102)	"They followed what the Shayatin [devils] <u>gave out</u> [falsely of the magic] in the lifetime of Sulaiman (Solomon)" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.20)
(3)	"إن مثل عيسى عند الله كمثل آدم خلقه من تراب ثم قال له كن فيكون/ الحق من ربك فلا تكن من الممترين" (Quran, 3: 59-60)	"Verily, the likeness of Isa [Jesus] before Allah is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then [He] said to him: 'Be!' – and he <u>was</u> / [This is] the truth from your Lord, so be not of those who doubt." (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.77)
(4)	"وإذ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يَخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ" (Quran, 8: 30)	"And [remember] when the disbelievers <u>plotted</u> against you [O Mohammad] to imprison you, or to kill you, or to get you out [from your home, i.e. Makkah]; they <u>were plotting</u> and Allah too <u>was plotting</u> ; and Allah is the best of those who plot." (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.235)
(5)	"ألم تر أن الله أنزل من السماء ماء فتصبح الأرض مخضرة" (Quran, 22: 63)	"See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and then the earth <u>becomes</u> green" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.452)
(6)	"إن فرعون علا في الأرض وجعل أهلها شيعاً يستضعف طائفة منهم يذبح أبناءهم ويستحيي نساءهم إنه كان من المفسدين/ ونريد أن نمن على الذين استضعفوا في الأرض ونجعلهم أئمة ونجعلهم الوارثين/ ونمكن لهم في الأرض.../ وأوحينا إلى أم موسى أن أرضعيه" (Quran, 28: 4-5)	"Verily, Fir'aun [Pharaoh] exalted himself in the land and made its people sects, weakening [oppressing] a group [i.e. Children of Israel] among them: killing their sons, and letting their females live. Verily, he was of the Mufsidun [i.e. those who commit great sins and crimes, oppressors, tyrants]/ And we <u>wished</u> to do a favour to those who were weak [and oppressed] in the land, and to make them rulers and make them the inheritors/to establish them in the land.../ And We inspired the mother of Musa [Moses]: 'Suckle him'" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.516)
(7)	"والله الذي أرسل الرياح فتثير سحاباً فسقناه إلى بلد ميت فأحيينا به الأرض بعد موتها كذلك النشور" (Quran, 35: 9)	"And it is Allah Who sends the winds, so that they <u>raise up</u> the clouds, and We drive them to a dead land, and revive therewith the earth after its death. As such [will be] the Resurrection." (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.582)



(8)	"وَكَمْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَبِيٍّ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ / وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ" (Quran, 43: 6-7)	"And how many a Prophet have We sent amongst the men of old/ And never <u>came</u> there a Prophet to them but they used to mock at him" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.661)
(9)	"اعلموا أنما الحياة الدنيا لعب ولهو وزينة وتفاخر بينكم وتكاثر في الأموال والأولاد كمثل غيث أعجب الكفار نباته ثم يهيج فتراه مصفراً ثم يكون حطاماً" (Quran, 57: 20)	"Know that the life of this world is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children. [It is] as the likeness of vegetation after rain, thereof the growth is pleasing to the tiller; afterwards it <u>dries up</u> and you see it turning yellow; then it <u>becomes</u> straw" (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984, p.742)

Table 2. Examples of past reference using the present tense and their translation

When reviewing the above examples, one can notice that the use of the present (or even the future as the future is expressed in Arabic using present verbs) in two situations. The first situation is to revive the picture and make it vivid in the mind of the reader. This is usually characteristic of visually describing a scene to evoke a mental image of the incidents. Examples (5), (7), and (9) are instances of such use. In these examples, the present verb is used after using a past verb to make it seem as if it was happening now. In fact, the translator resorts to the present tense in the TT to express all the verbs in the verse, not just the ones expressed using the present tense in the ST. This is possible in the TT since the historic present is used in English to narrate past events and create a sense of a recurring vision. For instance, in example (5), the translator uses the present verb "sends" as an equivalent to the past verb "أرسل" and uses the present verb "becomes" as an equivalent to the past verb "فتصبح". Thus, the translated version lacks the tense shift evident in the ST. Likewise, in example (9), the tense shift in the ST disappears in the TT and is replaced by a consistent present tense demonstrating a repeated fact.

The second situation where the present is used to refer to the past is demonstrated in examples (1), (2), (3), (4), (6), and (8). In these cases, the reference is not about factual incidents; rather, the reference is clearly past. Therefore, the translator uses the past tense of the verb to avoid ambiguity in the TT; although this kind of tense shift is acceptable in Quranic discourse, it is improper in English. For instance, in example (1), "تقتلون" is translated into "killed" to achieve pragmatic equivalence as it is consistent with the two past verbs "came" and "disbelieved". In example (2), the verb "تتلو" refers to the past as it tells about what happened during the time of Solomon, so it is translated into "gave out" to maintain the past reference and avoid misunderstanding. A clearer case of such use of the present is example (3), where the present "فيكون" is used in the ST instead of the past "فكان" although the reference is past. That is why the translator employs the past "was" to stick to referential meaning, ignoring the macro effect created in the ST. This loss of a significant shade of meaning is also clear in example (4), where the present form of the verbs "يمكر", "يمكرون", and "يمكر" is translated into the past form of the verbs "plotted", "were plotting", and "was plotting". While the present form of the verbs in Arabic shows continuity, the past form of the verbs shows completion and end. The translator attempts to compensate for this loss in meaning by using the progressive aspect in the past to show that the action takes duration. However, one can argue that using the present tense "plot" and "plots" instead for the two verbs "were plotting" and "was plotting" renders a better effect as it generalizes the rule and reveals that this is always true not just in this incident. Actually, this is valid as it matches the next phrase "Allah is the best of those who plot". This also applies to the use of "wished" in example (6), where the incident narrated is past and specific but the form of the verb "نريد" in the ST suggests a general statement. Thus, here also the translator can use

"wish" instead to maintain this generalized meaning, but "were oppressed" should also be altered in order to achieve consistency in the TT and not to have a defective text.

The present form of the verb "يأتيتهم" in example (8) is used in the ST to show repeatability although the reference is obviously past because the preceding and the following verbs, i.e. "أرسلنا" and "كانوا", are in the past. The translator uses the verb "came" to eradicate any contradiction and reach consistency in tense. This can be justified if the nature of the English language is taken into consideration; it places a great emphasis on consistency of the tense within context. Arabic, on the other hand, may have a greater margin of freedom in this respect. This goes in line with what Mudhsh (2021) concluded that forms, functions, and usage of the tense in Arabic and English differ greatly.

## 7. Conclusion:

When considering the seemingly created contrast in the Quranic discourse between the past and future reference and the possible interpretation of this contrast, one can justify the semantic orientation that the translator opts for to translate the meanings of the Quranic verses. As Dickins et al (2017) express it "The aim of maximizing sameness encourages the belief that, floating somewhere out in the ether, there is the 'right' translation, the TT that is 'equivalent' to the ST, at some ideal point between SL bias and TL bias. But it is more realistic, and more productive, to start by admitting that, because SL and TL are fundamentally different, the transfer from ST to TT inevitably entails difference – that is, loss" (p.18). Thus, if this loss of tense connotations is inevitable, the option of focusing on the meanings of the verses rather than the linguistic form is justified. According to Gadalla (2017), "translating Arabic verb forms into English must be a context-oriented process in order to convey the proper meanings of each form" (p.15). In this way, the translation of the past verb form in Arabic into the present or the future in English is valid. Likewise, the translation of the present verb form in Arabic into the past in English in some cases is also proper. In other cases, other alternatives can be considered to maintain both an equivalent tense and an equivalent effect.

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