Application of Eugene Nida's Theory of Translation to the English translation of Surah Ash-Shams[1]

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1. Introduction

For Muslims, and many other people following other religions, the Holy Qur'an is the last sacred book revealed by Allah, the Almighty, to Prophet Muhammad (Allah's prayers and peace be upon him) through Angel Jibril (Gabriel) (Kelen; Jones). Therefore, it is widely believed that Allah's message to humanity is preserved in this holy book (Saeed). The Holy Qur'an is the latest version of Allah's message to human beings: "And it was not [possible] for this Qur'an to be produced by other than Allah, but [it is] a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of the [former] Scripture, about which there is no doubt, from the Lord of the worlds" (276)[2], and Prophet Muhammad (Allah's prayers and peace be upon him) is Allah's last messenger to human beings. "Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and last of the prophets. And ever is Allah, of all things, Knowing" (586). As non-Arab Muslims outnumber Arab Muslims, there has been a pressing need to read the Holy Qur'an in the native languages of these non-Arab Muslims. Therefore, numerous translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an have appeared in many languages.

The earliest translations of the Holy Qur'an presumably date back to the 16th century (Saab cited in Al-Salem), and these were produced by religious missionaries and not professional translators. That is why those translations were believed to be inaccurate and exhibited many linguistic inconsistencies and errors. However, the first English translation produced by a Muslim translator named Abdullahaleem Khan appeared in 1905 (Al-Salem). There have also been other English translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an. The one from which the sample chapter (surah) was taken is *The Qur'an Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meanings produced by International* (888-889). The reason for choosing this version is because it is widely used and recognized as one of the most accurate and reliable translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an. Besides, this version has been developed as a downloadable application for Apple and Android devices and smartphones as well as an online website (https://quran.com/), which can be used to look for surahs or ayahs in Arabic and their English meanings or translations.

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[2] Designated as "Qur'an" hereafter.

Interest in the Holy Qur'an has recently increased as the Holy Qur'an is the main source of Islamic Law (Sharia) for the Muslim population which exceeds 1.8 billion people all over the world (Shleifer 292). As such, the Holy Qur'an prescribes what Muslims should do and what they should not do (Saeed) to live peacefully and righteously in this life and be rewarded the permanent residence in Paradise in the hereafter. Over two-thirds of Muslims come from countries where Arabic is not an official language (Saeed). To access and follow the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, these non-Arab speakers will have to either learn Arabic besides their native languages or read translations of the Holy Qur'an in their native languages. Since English is now considered the lingua franca of the world, and with the spread and accessibility of technology everywhere, English translations of the Holy Qur'an have not only reached every nook and cranny of the world, but they have also been developed into online websites and applications for Apple and Android devices as well as smartphones. This has all resulted in the widespread availability of English translations of the Holy Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an consists of 114 chapters (surahs) each of which is comprised of several verses (ayahs). It is stated in the Holy Qur'an that no human being can fully know or understand all the intended meaning of the Holy Qur'an except Allah the Almighty "And no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah" (Qur'an 63). In the most common form of the Holy Qur'an, the surahs are arranged in descending order according to length; from the longest to the shortest surahs. The topics presented in the Holy Qur'an cover all aspects of existence and tell of past incidents and future references to the permanent dwelling of believers and do-gooders in Paradise or sinners and unbelievers in Hell.

One can imagine the volume of research studies and books written on the difficulties of translating the Holy Qur'an, or part of it, into English or any other living language. However, there has been no study of the application of Eugene Nida's theory of translation to the English translation of surah Ash-Shams by Saheeh, based on a rigorous review of the literature conducted by the researcher.

1.1 *The Objectives of the Study*

Despite the fact that some aspects of Nida's theory of translation have been examined in relation to the English translation of some surahs of the Holy Qur'an as the literature review section will show later on, the researcher could not find any study bearing the title of the present study or addressing the topic which the present study tackles. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct a research study to see whether Nida's theory of translation, or any of its salient aspects, can be applied to an English translation of surah Ash-Shams as produced in *The Qur'an Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meanings* (Qur'an 888-889). With this general aim in mind, the present study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To provide a case study of Nida's theory of translation;
2. To examine the application of Nida's theory to the English translation of surah Ash-Shams;
3. To provide a contrastive analysis of the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) concerning Nida's theory of translation.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

The present study seeks to answer the following two questions:

1. Is it applicable to employ Nida's theory in the English translation of surah Ash-Shams?
2. What are the aspects of Nida's translation theory that cannot be applied to the English translation of surah Ash-Shams understudy?

1.3 Literature Review

This section, along with its subsequent subsections, is meant to shed light on Eugene Nida's theory of translation which will be used as the theoretical framework of the present study, to provide a detailed presentation and discussion of the Editor's Preface to the English translation of the Holy Qur'an (Qur'an) and finally present a review of previous studies found to be relevant to the current study in some aspects.

1.3.1 Eugene Nida's theory of translation

It is interesting to learn that Nida's theory of translation resulted from his work as a professional translator of the Bible as well as his training of beginning translators in the same area of translation (Munday). His theoretical and practical efforts culminated in producing two very important books *Towards a Science of Translation* (1964) and *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Nida and Taber).

Nida adopted Chomsky's universal generative-transformational grammar as well as semantic and pragmatic perspectives on meaning (Nida) to provide a scientific umbrella for his theory of translation. For the current study, only two aspects of Nida's theory of translation will be examined, highlighted and applied to the English translation of surah Ash-Shams as they fall within the scope of the present study and help realize its objectives.

The first aspect of Nida's model is the three-stage system of translation which operates on the ST and TT together. Nida suggests that before translators perform any translation act, they first have to analyze the ST linguistically to understand its various components. This means they will have to delve deeply into the basic parts of the ST to come to grips with its intended meaning. Then follows the second stage where translators 'transfer' this intended meaning into the target language, and the

last and final stage is the restructuring of the transferred meaning both 'semantically and stylistically' (Nida 60) to produce the equivalent TT. The following figure helps understand the three basic stages of the translation process proposed by Nida:
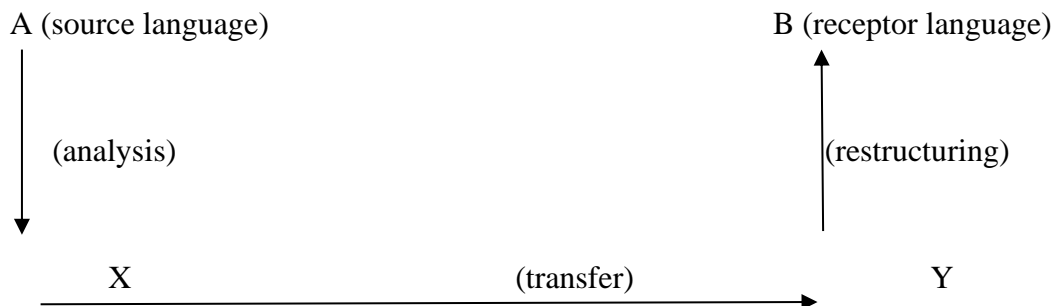

Figure 1.3.1 Nida's three-stage system of translation (33)

This three-stage translation process will be discussed further in a subsequent section dealing with the translation strategy and procedure presented in the preface to the translation of The Qur'an under study. At the transfer stage, as Nida and Taber (185-187) suggest, the message of the ST undergoes three processes before it is finally expressed in the TT. These processes are 'literal transfer', 'minimal transfer' and 'literary transfer' with the last one being the one which maintains equivalent effect on the TT audience or readers.

The second aspect of Nida's theory of translation that is pertinent here is the concept of dynamic equivalence. Dynamic equivalence aims at 'complete naturalness of expression' (Nida and Taber 12) which can be achieved by seeking 'the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message' (12). In this respect:

Dynamic, later 'functional', equivalence is based on what Nida calls 'the principle of equivalent effect', where "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message" (Nida159).

As can be understood, dynamic equivalence adopts a receptor-oriented approach which takes into account some adjustments related to the grammar, vocabulary and cultural elements of the target language and culture to achieve what Nida calls 'naturalness'. Dynamic equivalence is related to the source message intended to be conveyed in the TT and the equivalent effect it will have on the target audience or readers. Nida believes that the success of translation depends on achieving the equivalent effect on the TT audience or readers. This equivalent effect is one of the 'four basic requirements of a translation' (Nida 164) which are:

1. making sense;
2. conveying the spirit and manner of the original;
3. having a natural and easy form of expression;
4. producing a similar response.

These requirements will be referred to later in the discussion of the translation strategies and procedures followed in the production of the translation of surah Ash-Shams of The Qur'an under study to see if the translation meets these requirements or not.

1.3.2 Editor's Preface to The Qur'an

An understanding of the English translation provided in this edition can be made both possible and justifiable to some extent if the Editor's Preface to the translation is read very carefully. The Preface provides general information about the previous translations of the Holy Qur'an by other renowned translators such as Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1934) and Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (1930) and the translation guidelines, strategies and decisions adopted in the current translation of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an. The Preface is also instrumental in understanding the contrastive analysis conducted on both the ST and the TT under study.

In the Editor's Preface to The Qur'an (ii), the editor declares the main objectives of the translation. These are as follows:

1. To present correct meanings, as far as possible, in accordance with the 'aqeedah of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah'.
2. To simplify and clarify the language for the benefit of all readers.
3. To let the Qur'an speak for itself, adding footnotes only where deemed necessary for the explanation of points not readily understood or when more than one meaning is acceptable.

As stated in the Editor's Preface, the word order of the target text "could often be adjusted to conform more closely with that of Arabic, although admittedly, this was not possible in every instance" (iii). The editor mentions that this adherence to ST word order was intended so that "the Arabic text is facilitated for the student, and the reader is brought, however slightly, closer to the feel of the Arabic original" (iii). This commitment to Arabic word order goes against Nida's equivalent effect on the TT audience or readers which means 'naturalness' will not be achieved. In other words, the TT will not sound natural to native speakers of English.

Furthermore, the editor had to make one more adjustment to the English translation regarding punctuation "which has a definite role in defining meaning in the English language" (iii). This adjustment is in line with Nida's dynamic equivalence which can be achieved by making some

adjustments related to the grammar of the target language. Another point regarding the English translation as highlighted by the editor has to do with bracketed additions which are "words not taken from those in the Arabic text but added by us for the purpose of clarification or completion of English meaning" (iii). This stylistic decision seems to agree with one of Nida's 'four basic requirements of a translation' which is 'making sense' (Nida 164).

The editor also justified the translation of the past tense in Arabic into the future tense in English when talking about the Hereafter "Due to the flexibility of Arabic tenses. […] Through the use of the past tense the feeling is given that one is already there, having experienced what is described. Much of this is lost in English, where such descriptions are confined to 'will' of the future" (v). For the editor, "Arabic is richer not only in vocabulary but also in grammatical possibilities. […] Arabic grammar is free from many limitations found in that of other languages, allowing for much wider expression" (v). This grammatical adjustment is also in line with Nida's dynamic equivalence that can be maintained through such an adjustment. One last comment on the Arabic dictionaries used for deciding on the meaning of Arabic words was made by the editor: "Care was taken to avoid using the definitions of modern Arabic dictionaries, upon which contemporary translators frequently depend" (iv).

It is worth mentioning that transliteration is not used often in the English translation under investigation. For example, 'the name of Allah with praises to Him' is mentioned as follows "In the Name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful" (1) after the name of the first chapter (surah) in the Holy Qur'an. Then, the English transliteration of the Arabic cliché *Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Raheem* (In the Name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful) is used for the rest of the chapters (surahs) including the English translation of surah Ash-Shams.

1.3.4 Previous studies

Since the Holy Qur'an is the sacred book of over 1.8 billion Muslims all over the world, it is not surprising to find so many books, postgraduate theses and research studies tackling various aspects of its varied English translations. There are plenty of studies comparing or evaluating different English translations of one surah, or another, of the Holy Qur'an. However, after a laborious review of the relevant literature, few research studies have been found to remotely relate to the topic of the current study. It should be emphasized here that the researcher could not find any study in English on the application of Nida's theory of translation to surah Ash-Shams of Saheeh's English translation of the Holy Qur'an.

Colas (2019) conducted a study on the accurate translation of Jihadist concepts used and propagated by ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) applying Nida's dynamic equivalence. The justification for using Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence in this kind of politico-religious study was that:

The translation theory of dynamic equivalence suggests that accurate translation consists not of word-for-word correspondence between a source language and a reception language, but instead by finding concepts in the reception language that provide the same sense of emotive meaning that exists in the community using the source language. (Colas 779)

The above-mentioned study provides support for the choice of Nida's theory of translation as the theoretical framework of the present study. Besides, the above study drew on some Islamic concepts taken from the Holy Qur'an such as holy war (Jihad) and Islamic law (Shariah) and called for rendering such concepts into English using Nida's dynamic equivalence to "convey the connotative meaning experienced by the jihadist groups using them" (Colas 779).

Al-Tarawneh touched very briefly on Nida's theory of translation regarding the translation of the Holy Qur'an. In specific terms, he considered Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence an approach to domesticating the Holy Qur'an for English readers. Al-Tarawneh's study is a general study which aims to propose a hybrid approach to translating the Holy Qur'an into English based on domestication and foreignization. Since the study's main objective is to propose such an approach, it will be practically very hard to test its applicability, reliability and validity to all the chapters (surahs) of the Holy Qur'an.

Abdelaal and Rashid carried out a study on grammar-related semantic losses resulting from translating surah Al A'araf into English. Although the study lacks a theoretical framework, it only mentions Nida's definition of translation along with other scholars' definitions of translation without shedding any light on his important contributions to the translation of religious texts. The study could have made use of existing theories of translation concerning translation loss in religious translation. One more drawback with the above study is that the authors seem to confuse translation shifts (Catford) with grammatical or semantic losses: "The investigated translations revealed mostly a change in the word class of the Quranic verb to different word classes, namely, adverbs, verbal constructions, and adjectives" (Abdelaal and Rashid 2). Finally, the focus and scope of the above-mentioned study is quite different from the focus and scope of the present study.

Zadeh et al carried out a comparative study in which they compared four English translations of surah Al-Fatiha using Nida's theory of translation as the analytical framework for their comparative study. The findings of the study revealed that two translations adhered to 'formal correspondence' (Nida) "since they are faithful to the structure and the word order of the source language" (Zadeh et al 83), while the two other translations adopted 'dynamic equivalence' (Nida) as "[t]hey are based on the structure of the target language" (Zadeh 83). It seems that the researchers mistook the term 'verse' for 'chapter' as Al-Fatiha is a chapter and not a verse (ayah) because a verse is a sentence or a phrase in a chapter (surah). Their study also lacks a theoretical framework and does not provide an overview of Nida's theory of translation although it uses his theory to compare and evaluate four English translations of surah Al-Fatiha.

There is another study which made use of Nida's theory of translation with regard to the translation of the Holy Qur'an. The study was conducted by Najjar on the translation of metaphors in the Holy Qur'an. Although the study is specific and relates only to some selected metaphors in the Holy Qur'an along with their translations in three English versions of the Holy Qur'an, the researcher did mention Nida's dynamic equivalence and literal translation as appropriate methods to translate religious or sacred texts. However, Nida's theory of translation was not adopted as a theoretical framework for the above research study, probably because the focus of the study was on metaphors which require strategies other than literal translation or dynamic equivalence, although the equivalent effect on the TT readers should be retained when translating metaphors. Equivalent effect proposed and highlighted by Nida (Nida 159) was overlooked in the above-mentioned study, but it will be utilized in the current study.

In another study which made a passing mention of Nida's dynamic equivalence and literal translation, Al-Salem quoted Nida because he translated the Bible. Her comparative analytical study required her to map out the various studies on the translation of sacred texts such as the Bible and the Holy Qur'an. In her opinion, Nida's dynamic equivalence and literal translation (lexical translation) can be followed in the translation of the Holy Qur'an since these two strategies worked for Nida's translation of the Bible. Al-Salem's study was on the English translation of metonymy as used in the Holy Qur'an, but she touched on Nida's theory of translation in passing without any specific reference to its applicability or inapplicability to any specific surah or ayah of the Holy Qur'an, whereas the present study elaborates on Nida's theory of translation and attempts to test its applicability to the English translation of surah Ash-Shams.

2.   Methods

2.1   Data Collection Tools

In this study the researcher used two data collection tools, one represented in Nida's theory of translation and the other one represented in the English translation of surah Ash-Shams taken from The Qur'an and the Editor's Preface to the English translation of the Holy Qur'an under study.

2.2   Data Collection Procedure

The topic of the current research study required the researcher to examine Eugene Nida's theory of translation as thoroughly as possible and select certain aspects of this theory and test their applicability to an English translation of a specific surah of the Holy Qur'an. The choice of this particular surah was made for two reasons: first, this surah has not been the focus of any research study in the field of translation to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Second, the surah is relatively short and fits into the qualitative nature of this study.

The choice of this English translation of the Holy Qur'an by Saheeh was made because it is recognized internationally as one of the most accurate and accessible translations of the meaning of the Holy Qur'an. Besides, the translation comes with an editor's preface which highlights the strategies, procedures, decisions and difficulties of producing an accurate and intelligible English translation of the Holy Qur'an. The researcher studied the editor's preface to the English translation of the Holy Qur'an under investigation and compared it to Nida's theory of translation and found that some aspects of Nida's theory of translation were followed by the translator(s) of the Holy Qur'an and some other aspects were not followed. Some different strategies or considerations were also proposed by the translator(s) as has been discussed in a previous section.

Then followed a contrastive analysis of the ST and the TT to test the applicability of Nida's theory of translation to both the ST and TT. To achieve that, each verse (ayah) of surah Ash-Shams was examined in the ST and the TT with regard to Nida's 'three-stage system of translation', 'dynamic equivalence' and 'four basic requirements of a translation' (Nida 167-8).

2.3   Data Analysis

The data were presented in a simple descriptive table to help readers compare the source text with the target text in terms of structure, length, number of words and emotive effect. For example, each Arabic verse was set against its English translation to see if there was a match in terms of form, meaning and effect on the intended reader.

Table 3.1 in the following section presents a contrastive analysis of the source text and the target text along with the researcher's literal translation of the Qur'anic surah under study. It is hoped that this will help create an understanding of the translation process and strategies followed by the translator of the Qura'nic surah under study and highlight the areas where Nida's theory of translation could apply to the English translation of the Qur'anic surah. Moreover, the table provides information about the number of words in the source text compared to the number of words in the target text. The table also presents the footnotes accompanying the English translation of surah Ash-Shams.

3.   Results and Discussion

As Table 3.1 below shows, there are six footnotes in the translation of this relatively short surah. The first footnote concerns the English transliteration of the Arabic name of the surah. The footnote explains that Ash-Shams means the sun. The second footnote relates to the third verse and explains the referent of the second pronoun 'it' which is the sun in this case. The third footnote interprets the implications of the verb phrase 'proportioned it'. The fourth footnote adds extra information 'to hamstring the she-camel' not overtly expressed in the ayah. The fifth footnote does what the fourth footnote has done. It adds extra information, 'and killed,' not expressed in the ayah concerned. The

sixth footnote again gives extra information not expressed or implied in the ayah concerned and refers the reader to another ayah in another surah. This brief discussion of the footnotes proves that footnotes do require the target text readers to exert more effort and time and can distract them from reading the target text altogether (Wendland). Although the editor's preface mentions that footnotes would be used 'only when deemed necessary' (Qur'an ii), some of the above footnotes were used unnecessarily. For example, the second footnote can be done without as it does not add any additional or important information with regard to the meaning of the ayah or verse. Besides, the context makes it clear that the reference of the pronoun 'it' is to the sun. The third footnote is also unnecessary as the verb 'proportioned' implies balancing and refining. The sixth footnote is further added unnecessarily as the translation alone makes it clear that He, Allah, does not fear the consequences of what He does as He is the Creator of all things.

One striking feature of the English translation of surah Ash-Shams as illustrated in Table 3.1 is the disparity between the total number of words in the Arabic surah and the number of words in the English translation provided therein. The total number of words in the ST is 69, while the total number of words in the TT is 157, which is over twice the number of words in the ST. This difference in the length of both the ST and the TT was one of the universals of translation proposed by Toury (2004) as well as Chesterman (2004). They suggested that TTs tend to be longer than the STs. This shows that the translator followed Nida's transfer stage (Figure 1.3.1). This stage consists of three processes which are 'literal transfer', 'minimal transfer', and 'literary transfer' with the last one being the one which maintains equivalent effect on the TT audience or readers (Nida 33). The literary transfer seems to account for the difference in the word number in the ST and the TT because it seeks to retain the same effect of the ST on the TT readers or receivers regardless of such restrictions as word count and the like.

Table 3.1 Contrastive analysis of ST and TT

Verse Number	ST	TT	The researcher's literal translation
	سُوْرَةُ الشَّمس	Surah Ash-Shams / The Sun (1)	The Sun Chapter
	بَسمَ اللهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرّحيمِ	*Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Raheem*	*In the name of Allah, the most merciful and the most compassionate*
1	والشَّمسِ وضُحَاها	By the sun and its brightness	By the sun and its early rise
2	والقَمرِ إذا تَلاها	And [by] the moon when it follows it	And the moon when it follows it
3	والنَّهارِ إذا جَلّاها	And [by] the day when it displays it (2)	And the day when it displays it
4	والليلِ إذا يَغْشَاها	And [by] the night when it covers it	And the night when it hides it
5	والسَّماءِ ومَا بَنَاها	And [by] the sky and He who constructed it	And the sky and the one Who built it
6	والأرْضِ ومَا طَحَاها	And [by] the earth and He who spread it	And the earth and the one Who spread it
7	ونَفْسٍ ومَا سَوَّاها	And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it (3)	And the soul and the one Who created it
8	فألْهَمَها فُجُورَها وتقْواها	And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness,	So, He inspired it with its wickedness and righteousness.
9	قَدْ أفلحَ مَنْ زَكَّاها	He has succeeded who purifies it,	He who purified it succeeded
10	وقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاها	And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].	And he who corrupted it failed.
11	كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بطَغْوَاها	Thamud denied [their prophet] by reason of their transgression,	Thamud disbelieved through their transgression.
12	إذِ انْبَعَثَ أشْقَاها	When the most wretched of them was sent forth. (4)	When the most wretched of them was sent,
13	فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللهِ نَاقةَ اللهِ وسُقْيَاهَا	And the messenger of Allah [Salih] said to them, "[Do not harm] the she-camel of Allah or [prevent her from] her drink."	The messenger of Allah advised them not to harm Allah's she-camel or stop it from drinking.

14	فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذَنْبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاها	But they denied him and hamstrung (5) her. So their Lord brought down upon them destruction for their sin and made it equal [upon all of them].	They did not listen to him. So, their Lord destroyed them on account of their sin and made their dwellings level with the earth.
15	وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاها	And He does not fear the consequence thereof. (6)	And He does not fear its consequences.
Total Number of Words in Surah	69	157	
Footnotes in the TT	(1)	Ash-Shams: The Sun	
	(2)	The earth. Also interpreted as the sun. the same applies to the following verse.	
	(3)	i.e., balanced and refined it, creating in it sound tendencies and consciousness.	
	(4)	To hamstring the she-camel which had been sent by Allah as a sign to them.	
	(5)	And then killed.	
	(6)	Allah is not asked about what He does, but His servants will be asked. See 21:23.	

Another eye-catching feature of the English translation of surah Ash-Shams, as the above table shows, is the use of bracketed additional explanations which appear in almost all the English translations of the ayahs (verses). These additional explanations do make target texts longer than source texts as Toury and Chesterman suggested. This is probably the case because translators over-translate (Mounin) and provide additional words in an attempt to make their translation clearer. As mentioned in the editor's preface in a previous section, the translator opted for adding extra explanations to make the TT clearer to the TT readers or recipients. Nida's requirement of a good translation 'making sense' can be detected in the translator's choice of adding some explanations in brackets to the translation.

Upon scrutinizing the above table, it becomes clear that in the English translations of some ayahs (verses) namely ayahs (8, 9, 10, 14) the translator adheres to the word order of the source language, hence making the TT sound foreign instead of natural. So, Nida's third basic requirement of a translation 'having a natural and easy form of expression' (Nida 164) is greatly affected here, and therefore cannot be applied to the English translations of these ayahs. The English translation of ayah (8) in the above table follows the word order of the source language: 'And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness'. An English translation which follows the word order of English reads as follows: 'And inspired its wickedness and its righteousness into it'. The English translations of ayahs (9 and 10) again follow the word order of the source language 'He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instils it [with corruption].' In English, we normally say, 'He who purifies it has succeeded, And he who instils it has failed.' The second sentence of the English translation of ayah (14) follows the word order of Arabic, not English 'So their Lord brought down upon them destruction for their sin and made it equal [upon all of them].' An English translation following the English word order reads as 'So their Lord brought down destruction upon them for their sin and made it equal [upon all of them]'.

Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence with regard to considering some adjustments to fit more into the grammar, vocabulary and culture of the target text applies to some extent to the English translation of surah Ash-Shams provided in the above table. This can easily and readily be recognized as the English translation displays a good command of the grammar of the target language and reflects, to a great extent, the correct use of English vocabulary and punctuation, while attempting to use certain words and syntactic structures reminiscent of archaic English to retain the emotive effect of the original text in the English translation. The English translations of ayahs (11–15) are good examples of such adjustments which reflect the observance of the grammar, vocabulary and syntax of the target language.

The above discussion of the contrastive analysis of the ST and the TT with regard to Nida's theory of translation has not only contributed to realizing the third objective of the present study, but it has also detailed the findings of this study. These findings, in their entirety, speak in favour of the applicability of Nida's theory of translation to the English translation of surah Ash-Shams taken from the Qur'an, with minor exceptions highlighted in the above paragraphs of this section. In this way, the research questions of the present study have also been answered.

4.   Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study has provided a case study of Nida's theory of translation, investigated its applicability to the English translation of surah Ash-Shams and found that in general the theory can be applied, with the exception of one aspect related to word order in the English translations of some ayahs (verses). Due to the fact that Arabic and English belong to two different families whose word

order is greatly different (Jabak; Al-Nakhalah), Nida's theory of translation could not be fully applied to the English translation of surah Ash-Shams. Since the Holy Qur'an is the most important book for Muslims and scholars interested in Islam, it is very likely that there will be research on the difficulties in the translation of this holy book, the applicability of some translation theory to some parts of the Holy Qur'an, the assessment of a specific translation of a specific part of the Holy Qur'an and comparative studies on different translations of the Holy Qur'an or parts of it.

As this study is small-scale research, its findings cannot be generalized to include the whole English translation of the Holy Qur'an produced by Qur'an. To validate the findings or refute them, large-scale studies need to be undertaken with an eye to applying Nida's theory of translation to the whole English translation of the Holy Qur'an which can be a Herculean task that fits more into a bulky book or collaborative project undertaken by a group of scholars and supported by a governmental research institution. Nevertheless, it is the researcher's hope that the findings of the present study will encourage researchers interested in this field to carry out research on the translation of the Holy Qur'an into languages other than English and pinpoint various types of difficulties encountered by translators who translated the Holy Qur'an into other foreign languages.

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