

A Comparative Study of Figurative Language and Metaphor in English, Arabic, and Persian with a Focus on the Role of Context in Translation of Qur'anic Metaphors

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ABSTRACT

This article examined the aspects of similarity and diversity between English, Arabic and Persian languages in terms of defining the notion of figurative language generally and metaphor specifically. It was revealed that the concept of metaphor in Arabic and Persian is the same and the difference between these two languages and English language in terms of defining metaphor is that the deletion of the particle "like" or "as" does not yield a metaphor as it would in the Western tradition. Moreover, the study aimed at discovering which type of metaphor poses more problems in translation with the specific attention to metaphors in the text of the Qur'an as a classical literary masterpiece. The conclusion was that the absence of tenor can cause obstacles on the way of rendering the metaphors of the Qur'an as a text with cryptic references while textual and cultural contexts can pave the way to identify the meaning for translators and also for readers who may face the exact reproduction of the image without addition of the sense.

KEYWORDS:Figurative Language, Metaphor, Tenor, Context, the Qur'an.

1. INTRODUCTION

So readily did interest in metaphor obtrude itself upon even the earliest philosophical and grammatical analyses of language that one can say that the study of metaphor begins with study of language itself [1]. For Carlyle in the *Flesh-Garment Language*, the primitive elements of natural sound (the primitive garments) are the osseous fixtures and the metaphors are its muscle and living integuments [2]. Robinson [3] and Soskice [1] also point out the significance of metaphor; the former contends that it has been called the super trope (the trope that contains or implies all the others) and the latter mentions that since antiquity it is recognized as chief amongst the tropes.

Soskice [1] also emphasizes the dependence of religious language in almost all traditions upon metaphorical talk and adds that no philosophical account of religious language will be either complete or sufficient if it fails to take account of the ways forms of figurative discourse, like metaphor, functions in the task of saying that which can not be said in other ways.

This phenomenon, metaphor, has regularly been of concern to translation scholars. As Newmark [4] holds, "whilst the central problem of translation is the overall choice of a translation method for a text, the most important particular problem is the translation of metaphor".

In this study first the broad field of figurative language and then the specific realm of metaphor are discussed in three languages of English, Arabic, and Persian. The most challenging type of metaphor in Arabic and specifically in the text of the Qur'an is identified and examples from the Qur'an plus their English and Persian translations are presented to clarify the role of textual and cultural contexts in comprehending the metaphors.

Figurative Language and Metaphor in English

The word "figurative" comes from the Latin "figurativus", in which figura means a form, shape, device, or ornament [5]. Shaw [6] points out that "figurative" means "not literal" that is metaphorical, ornate, rhetorical, and based on or making use of figures of speech, while literal means "true to fact", "actual", "not exaggerated", and "in accordance with strict meaning". In classical rhetoric and poetics there was an inherent contrast between figurative or ornamental usage on the one hand and literal or plain and conventional usage on the other; in this contrast, figures of speech are regarded as embellishments that deviate from the 'ordinary' uses of language [7]. Medieval rhetoricians, for instance, emphasized in great detail the ornamental function of figures of speech; in the 17 century, common sense and

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reason drove out the conceit and Wordsworth and Coleridge also relegated most figurative language to the fancy; A. E. Housman said that all metaphors and similes are ornamental, and inessential to poetry [8].

As McArthur [7] maintains, in the late 20 century, a change of approach was under way. For instance, while referring to figures as an intentional deviation from the normal (in the traditional way), Shipley [8] observed: "Figures are as old as language. They lie buried in many words of current use. They are the backbone of slang. They occur constantly in both prose and poetry". In fact, current views of language suppose another function or purpose for language which is communication through suggesting or arousing a mental image which is carried out by figurative language. According to Abrams [9],

Figurative language is a conspicuous departure from what users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect.

Figures are sometimes described as primarily poetic, but they are integral to the functioning of language and indispensable to all modes of discourse.

As Abrams [9] contends, most modern classifications and analyses are based on the treatment of figurative language by Aristotle and classical rhetoricians. He adds that since that time, figurative language has often been divided into two classes: 1) Figures of thought, or tropes (meaning "turns", "conversions"), in which words or phrases are used in a way that effects a conspicuous change in what we take to be their standard meaning which is the same literal meaning. 2) Figures of speech, or rhetorical figures or schemes (from the Greek word for "form"), in which the departure from standard usage is not primarily in the meaning of the words, but in the order or syntactical pattern of the words. However, he also mentions that, all critics do not agree on the application of this distinction.

The most important tropes are metaphor, simile, metonymy, synecdoche, personification and irony [10]. Although metaphor is often loosely defined as "an implied comparison", "a simile without 'like' or 'as'", it is distinct, logically and probably psychologically the prior figure [8]. Aristotle is credited with introducing the word 'metaphor' in two of his major treatises, Rhetoric and Poetics and his view of metaphor is a literalist one, i.e. metaphors stand in contrast to ordinary language [11]. Aristotle [12] states that metaphor is the "transference of a word of another significance either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species or by analogy or proportion". As Nuessel [11] maintains, Aristotle's third type of metaphor best illustrates 20th century views of metaphor as a tripartite concept, e.g. I.A. Richard's notion of a metaphor as consisting of a tenor (the metaphorized term), a vehicle (the metaphorizing term), and ground (the meaning created by the interaction of the tenor and the vehicle). This type of metaphor has the form (A (B) C), i.e., A is the tenor, C is the vehicle and B is the ground or the intermediary term which provides the meaning of the metaphor supplied by the interpretant, or the person who seeks to make meaning of the comparison. The tenor (often called the topic now) is the A-referent (what is talked about in the metaphor). The vehicle is the C-referent (something concrete or familiar) and the ground is the meaning of the comparison or the B-referent.

In his Rhetoric, Aristotle [13] defines metaphor as "the application to one thing of a name belonging to another thing" and considers it to be "by far the most important thing to master" for it enables us "to get hold of new ideas". He asserts that "strange words simply puzzle us, ordinary words convey only what we know already, it is from metaphor we can best get hold of something fresh". Overall, what is worth considering is that for Aristotle the term 'metaphor' "applies to every transposition of terms" [1]. In fact Aristotle's 'metaphor' designates a broader category than does 'metaphor' as placed in later taxonomies of the tropes.

Quintilian, in his *Institutio Oratoria* [14], equates metaphor and simile and classifies metaphor into four groups: in the first we substitute one living thing for another, in the second, inanimate things may be substituted for inanimate, in the third inanimate may be substituted for animate, and in the fourth animate for inanimate. Quintilian's classification indicates that for an analyst of metaphor, providing the types of metaphor according to their subject matter is the most important thing [1]. As Nuessel [11] contends, the Roman rhetorician, Quintilian, espoused Aristotle's comparison view of metaphor and claimed that it was a substitutive process. This substitution theory urged that in the metaphor, 'John is a rat', the use of 'rat' for 'man' (in the sense of a vile and loathsome creature) was simply a deviation from a pristine literal language. Neither Aristotle nor Quintilian offered a psychological explanation for the pervasive use of metaphor in world languages and that would not take place in any systematic way until the 20th century [11].

Figurative Language and Metaphor in Arabic

In Arabic language *majaz*, as a technical term, had already had a history of its own, before it became coupled with *haqiqa*, thus the marked term in an opposition that is variously translated as "figurative" vs. "proper" or "tropical" vs. "veridical" speech [15]. It is sometimes rendered as "metaphor" and "metaphorical meaning" which should be avoided since with most medieval authors the term *majaz* covers more than just this type of figurative

speech [15]. Throughout the history, different critics have rarely defined this word alike. The first who is known to have used the term *majaz* is Abu Ubayda in his book, *Majazal-Quran*. However, he did not mean by that the counterpart of *haqiqa* and figurative language. He mostly uses the word in the formula: "A, its *majaz* is B", where A denotes the Qur'anic word or phrase and B its "natural" equivalent [15]. In fact, Ubayda was concerned with the first meaning of the term "majaz" which means 'explanatory re-writing' in 'natural' language, of idiomatic passages in the Scripture, while the second sense of "*majaz*" is figurative language which was developed later. In his *Majaz al-Qur'an*, Ubayda does not define *majaz*, but at the beginning of his work he does give a list of thirty nine cases of deviation from the 'natural' language that can be found in the Qur'an [16].

Abu-Deeb [17] is doubtful about Heinrichs' statement regarding the first use of this term by Abu Ubayda. He also contends that Abu Ubayda used the word *majaz* in its original, ordinary, linguistic sense that is generated by its morphology and etymology; that is, as the *ism al-makan* derived from the verb "*jaza*" (crossed over, passed from to) to mean "the original point from which a certain word or phrase *jaza* (crossed over) from its original or more familiar mode of formulation to the different mode in which it appears in the Qur'an". In fact, for him *majaz* is not the later form or meaning that has resulted from the usage of such a word for a meaning other than its original one but it is the original usage or etymological form or meaning of the word under consideration. Abu-Deeb [17] also adds that, this is exactly the opposite of the concept of *majaz* which was to develop later on in Arabic Studies. AL-Suyuti, for instance, says: "They say: 'someone mounted the road', while the road does not have a back and 'the war stood on a leg'. All these are *majazat*". Abu-Ubayda would not have called these expressions *majazat*. He will, in fact, look for what he calls the *majazat* of these expressions, their original form. All in all, Abu-Ubayda was not thinking of the transference in the word, or the metaphoric relations in it, when he was thinking of its *majaz*.

For IbnQutayba[15] *majazat* (plural) are "the ways (methods) of speech and the modes of handling it". A clear notion of his concept of *majaz* is provided by the list of subcategories which follows his quasi-definition, they include: *isti'ara* (metaphor plus metonymy), *tamthil* (analogy), *qalb* (inversion), *taqdimwa-ta'khir* (hysreronproteron), *hadhf* (ellipsis), *takrar* (repetition), *ikhfawa-izhar* (concealing and revealing, exact meaning unclear), *ta'ridwa-ifsah* (allusion and clear speech), *kinayawa-idah* (periphrasis and proper designation), addressing a singular as a plural, a plural as a singular, a singular or a plural as a dual, and intending something general with a phrase referring to something particular and vice versa. Heinrichs [15] also adds that, all this makes it patently clear that for IbnQutaybamajaz refers to the linguistic phenomena themselves and in this regard figurative speech plays an important role.

Another source for *majaz* discussions is Al-Jahiz. According to Heinrichs [15], what is obtained from some scattered material shows that, for al-Jahiz*majaz* refers to the idiomatic expressions themselves and that it denotes cases of figurative speech, more particularly: metaphors. In a discussion of the various metaphorical meanings of the verb "akala" occasioned by his teacher Al-Nazzam's denial that fire "eats" or "drinks" the oil of the lamp Al-Jahiz states that, the Arabs use this verb in the way of an image, and in the way of a comparison. After listing and explaining several different metaphorical uses of the verb, he takes up the Qur'anic verse "They shall eat naught but fire in their bellies" (Surah2, verse 174), remarking that this is another *majaz*. Abd al-QahirAl-Jurjani offered several tightly reasoned statements on *majaz*, in his two major works. He rids the concept of its non-figurative components, ellipsis and pleonasm, and distinguishes two types of *majaz*, one based on similarity, i.e. the metaphor, the other on contiguity, i.e. the metonymy [18].

In fact, the word that comes closest to the notion of "metaphor" in English is *isti'arain* Arabic which literally means "borrowing" [19]. Al-Soyuti [20] believes that the essence of metaphor is when a word is borrowed from something for which it is known and applied to something for which it is not known. In other words, *isti'ara* occurs when a concept is borrowed from its customary semantic domain and applied to a semantic domain in which it is not usually employed. Al-Soyuti continues that the purpose of metaphor is to reveal an aspect that is hidden, to emphasize something that is not sufficiently clear, to exaggerate, or to achieve the joining or overlap of concepts.

IbnQutayba[15] who starts his discussion of the *majazat* with the chapter on *isti'ara*, maintains that he did so since "most cases of *majaz* fall into it". It is worth considering that *isti'ara* is the main component of writing since it strengthens what is said, dress it with beauty and charm garments and in *isti'ara*, the feelings are aroused [21]. Al-Radi[22] contends that *isti'ara* "is of the heart of rhetorical eloquence (*balagha*) and the inner core of elegant speech (*fasaha*). For an *isti'ara* can add greater splendence to the meaning of the narrative. I say that words (*alfaz*) are always servants to the meanings, for they beautify their narrations and bestow order on their significations".

According to Abu-Deeb [23], for Al-Jorjani, *isti'arais* based on transference involving the similarity relation and similitude is its basis. In fact, Jorjani[24] contends that *isti'ara* in Arabic language is based on a simile and substitutin of the tenor (*mushabbah*) with the vehicle (*mushabbahonbeh*). This definition of *isti'ara* is mentioned by Qazwini and Soyuti too [24].

Hashemi [21] states that *isti'ara* is a condensed simile but is more eloquent than simile. The reason is that among the four basic elements of a simile in Arabic language which are the subject of comparison (tenor), its object (vehicle), its particle and its aspect (the ground of comparison), only the vehicle is preserved in *isti'ara* and other elements are deleted. Hashemi also defines *isti'ara* as the application of a word to denote a meaning that is not the real (*haqiqi*) sense of the word, because there is similarity between the real (*haqiqi*) sense of the word and its figurative (*majazi*) sense. He adds that there should be also another word (*gharinahsarefah*) that prevents the meaningfulness of the word with its real sense in that context.

Although Arabic, as a language and a literary tradition, was quite well developed by the time of the Prophet Mohammad, it was only after the emergence of Islam, with its founding scripture in Arabic, that the language reached its utmost capacity of expression, and the literature its highest point of complexity and sophistication [25].

Concerning the Qur'an, it is worth considering that it was the intense interest in this holy book which generated the first profound contemplations of the nature of poetic imagery in Arabic literature and the birth of the very notion of two modes of using language: one real or literal (*haiqi*), the other non-real (*majazi*) [17]. As Heinrichs[18] maintains, literary theory in Arabic language was influenced and partly shaped by the Qur'anic disciplines and due to the confluence of poetic and Qur'anic notions of the properties of text, the definition plus terminology of even as central a term as *isti'ara* had become rather confused and contradictory. As an instance of this contradiction one can refer to the definition of metaphor that is given by Peter Heath [20] in *Encyclopedia of Qur'an*. He maintains that the basic distinction between simile and metaphor resembles that found in the Western rhetorical tradition. He adds that in both, simile achieves comparison by means of a linking particle (as, like), while metaphor denotes semantic overlap or "borrowing" (*isti'ara*) which is direct and does not rely on linking particles. However, as it was examined in this section, the difference between simile and metaphor (*isti'ara*) in Arabic language is that in metaphor, two constituents (*arkans*) which are the linking particles and the tenor or vehicle are deleted not just the linking particles. On the other hand, it is just the deletion of linking particles which results in the creation of metaphor in English language. Of course as it will be discussed in the subsequent sections in the special case of implicit metaphor, there is the absence of both linking particles and the tenor.

In fact, in Qur'anic studies the term metaphor had a much wider field of application, namely any type of figurative usage [19]. For instance, Al-Radi[17] in his *Talkhis al-Bayan fi Majazat al-Qur'an* identifies *isti'ara*, *kinaya*, and *tamthil* with one another and for him the only distinction which seems to matter is the distinction between the literal and non-literal usage of words. Abu-Deeb[17] also contends that even the best and most theoretically aware of poets at times treat symbol, metaphor, simile, and other figures interchangeably and discuss them sometimes in opposition to the term image and at other times as incorporated into this generic term. However, in the main stream of Arabic studies of *majaz*, the figures involving a non-literal way of expression had been almost always separated and analyzed with a fine degree of discrimination and awareness of the differences between them as it is the case in the present study.

Figurative Language and Metaphor in Persian

In Persian literary researches, *majaz* is one of the techniques in creation of poetry and it is studied in the "*fan-e bayan*" (technique of expressing). Based on the same studies, "*bayan*" means to express one single subject matter or one sense in various ways using imagery [26].

Literally, *majaz* means "to cross over" and from the vantage point of "*elm-e bayan*", it is the use of word in a sense other than its original meaning through a non-similarity or similarity relation. There should also be another word there in the expression or the sentence which prevents the hearer or reader from referring to the original and literal sense. Ahani[27] also, in his definition of *majaz*, points to this word that is called "*gharineyesarefe*" and defines it as a sign or a hint that implies the invalidity of literal sense of the word that is going to be considered as *majaz*. In fact, it is called "*gharineyesarefe*" (a word that prevents) since it prevents the mind of hearer or reader from going to the literal sense. "*gharineyesarefe*" is of two types; it can be a word like the verb "shooting" in this sentence: "I saw a lion was shooting", in which the word "lion" is *majaz* and it can be a situation such as when somebody calls an uneducated person a doctor.

According to Kazzazi[26], *majaz* is another method to express the poetic thoughts, and it is the application of a word in a sense other than the literal and original meaning. He adds that the original sense of the word is its real meaning while the sense used in the poem by the poet, for instance, is its artistic sense.

Aiming at defining *majaz*, ShafieKadkani[28] first goes through the word "truth". In this regard, he quotes from Ebn-e Jenni (1952, p.422) that "truth is that the word is used in accordance with the original sense and strict meaning first established, without any change when using it". Then ShafieKadkanistates that, in every language, it is widely accepted that each word denotes a special sense and this is the truth; whenever a word is used in contrast

with its usual usage, we have used *majaz*. He also quotes from Ebn-e Asir (1959) that defining *majaz* is easier than *haqiqat*; adding that in the light of definition of the truth (*haqiqat*), *majaz* can be clearly defined.

It is worth noting that time and place are two significant factors in the science of *bayan* and they influence the definition of *majaz*. In fact, in every time and place, people's understanding from a word is of significance. In other words, the criteria to distinguish whether a word is used in its true sense or metaphorically is people's understanding at that time and place [29].

Like Arabic language, the Persian word for metaphor is also *este'are*. It is the commonest among the literary devices in poetry and even prose and is richer and more desirable than the rest [30].

According to ShafieKadkani[28], the definition of *este'are* is one of the most confusing in the old books of rhetoric. It was first mentioned by Radviani as one of the literary devices [31]. Radviani[32] defines *este'are* as the use of a word with a different sense which is not its real and original meaning. However, he does not mention anything about the similarity relation (*alagheyeshabahat*). However, for Homaei[33] *este'are* is based on simile and it is the use of a word in a figurative sense because there is a similarity between real and non-real sense of the word.

For Kazzazi[26] *este'are* is a trap which is hidden and tighter than simile that the writer or speaker spreads for the reader or listener. He also adds that *este'are* is more valuable than simile aesthetically since it surprises the addressee more than simile.

Shamisa [29] states that "*este'are* is the simile condensed and it is the most significant in figurative language on the basis of similarity". He then continues that *este'are* is a simile in which the vehicle or tenor is deleted and another necessary component in *este'are* is an adjective or a characteristic related to the vehicle or tenor which is called "*gharine*". For example, in the sentence "I saw a lion in the battlefield", the word "battlefield" is a *gharine*. In fact, it is a noun which is related to the deleted tenor that is a "brave man".

What is of significance is that in Persian language, the concept of metaphor is the same as Arabic language. However, the difference between Arabic and Persian language with English language in this regard is that, the suppression of the particle ('like', etc.) does not yield a metaphor, as it would in the Western tradition; the resulting equation (e.g. 'Zayd is a lion') is still considered a simile since both the tenor and vehicle are mentioned.

The Most Challenging type of Metaphor for Translators of the Qur'an

Isti'ara is the subject of much discussion and classification in the science of Arabic rhetoric and Arab rhetoricians detail numerous subcategories for it.

Al-Hashemi [21] classifies *isti'ara* into three groups. The first one is *isti'aratasrihiyya* (*mosarraha*) in which, only the vehicle is mentioned and the tenor is deleted. This type of *isti'ara* is called so since here the vehicle is explicitly stated. For example instead of saying "a beautiful woman" in Arabic language one may say "a gazelle" which is the vehicle in a metaphor based on the similarity between this animal and the person in terms of beauty and elegance. The second is *isti'aramakniya* (*belkenaya*) in which, only the tenor is mentioned and the vehicle is deleted. This type is called so since here the vehicle is only implied by mentioning a verb or a noun that always accompanies it. For instance, in "death sinking its claws in" there is an *isti'aramakniya* in which death which is the tenor is likened to a wild beast which is the vehicle and absent in the sentence. Bringing one of the characteristics of vehicle for tenor is called *isti'aratakhyiliya* which form the third group and is inseparable from *isti'aramakniyya*. In the above example "claws" is *isti'aratakhyiliya* and having "claws" is one of the characteristics of beasts.

Al-Hashemi[21] also contends that, based on the metaphoric term (*lafzemosta'ar*), *isti'ara* is divided into two classes. The first one is *isti'araasliyya* in which the metaphoric term is a solid-stem noun (*jamid*) and unanalyzable into roots and patterns. For instance, "moon" (*badr*) in Arabic language is an *isti'ara* for a beautiful person and is a *jamid* noun too; in fact, it is called *isti'aratasrihiyyaasliyya*. The second one is *isti'aratabaiyya* in which the metaphoric term (*lafzemosta'ar*) is a verb or a noun which is analyzable into roots and patterns (*mushtagh*). For instance, in the sentence "my agonies slept" (*namathomumianni*), the verb is *isti'aratasrihiyyatabaiyya*.

Among these types of metaphors the most difficult type for translators to render is the first type in which they face the sole image and the absence of the topic. The second group is not that problematic because in this type tenor is already there ("death" in the example of *isti'aramakniya*) and through the presence of a verb or noun that is always coupled with the vehicle (the noun "claws"), the absent image ("a wild beast") can be easily identified.

In English also metaphors can exhibit many different forms. Most attention has been paid to metaphorically used words, with some attention being paid to the various word classes, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives [34].

According to Baldick [10], metaphors may appear as verbs (a talent blooms) or as adjectives (a novice may be green), or in longer idiomatic phrases, e.g. to throw the baby out with the bath-water.

Among various classifications, implicit metaphor as one form of metaphor in which the tenor is not specified but implied [9] corresponds the Arabic *isti'aratasrihiyyaasliyya* and the metaphoric use of a verb corresponds *isti'aratasrihiyyatabaiyya*. If one were to say, while discussing someone's death, "that reed was too frail

to survive those storms", the situational and verbal context of the term "reed" indicates that it is the vehicle for an implicit tenor, a human being, while "storm" is the vehicle for "sorrows". As an example of metaphoric use of a verb one can refer to Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* where he writes "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank" in which the verb "sleep" which is used for the animates becomes the vehicle for the absent tenor that is the spread of the light on the bank.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study in order to illustrate how *isti'aratasrihiyyaasliyya* and *isti'aratasrihiyyatabaiyya* can be problematic for translators and how the textual and cultural contexts can be helpful in identification of absent tenors, three cases of these types of metaphors were selected based on Sabbagh's book [24] titled *Metaphors in the Qur'an* to be examined along with their three English and three Persian translations which are as follows respectively: Saffarzadeh's English rendering [35], Qarai [36], Nikayin [37], Saffarzadeh's Persian translation [35], Ansariyan [38] and Aminiyan [39]. To grasp the meaning of the metaphoric terms Lane Arabic-English lexicon [40], Arabic-English dictionary of Hans Wehr [41], Qarashi's Qamus Qur'an [42], a Persian version of an Arabic-Arabic dictionary titled Monje al-Tollab by Bostani [43], and Al-Mizan Commentary by Tabatabaei [44] were used as resources.

REUSLTS AND DISCUSSION

The first metaphoric item examined is the word "سِرَاجٌ" in verse 13 of surah Al-Naba where God reminds people of the blessings bestowed upon them.

The word "سِرَاجٌ" literally means "lamp" and it is repeated four times in the Qur'an in surah Al-Furqan, Nuh, Al-Naba, and Al-Ahzab [42]. In the aforementioned verse, وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَاجًا (and we placed a radiant lamp), this word is used as a case of *isti'aratasrihiyyaasliyya* because the vehicle is mentioned without the tenor and also the word "سِرَاجٌ" is a solid-stem noun (*jamid*) and unanalyzable into roots and patterns. As it is shown below in table 1, among the translators Nikayin, Ansariyan, and Aminiyan reproduce the original image while Qarai and Saffarzadeh in both her English and Persian translations bring the image and add the tenor as well. Yet, it is worth mentioning that in Saffarzadeh's Persian rendering the tenor is brought beside the vehicle in the form of what is in Persian language a simile.

Table 1. English and Persian Translations of the Metaphoric word "سِرَاجٌ"

Translator	Saffarzadeh	Qarai	Nikayin	Saffarzadeh	Ansariyan	Aminiyan
Metaphor						
سِرَاجًا	Lamp, (by the name of sun)	(the sun for) a radiant lamp	Lamp	چِراغِ درخشنده ی خورشید	چِراغی روشن و حرارت زا	چِراغی

As it is obvious, all of the translators who bring the tenor, identify the sun as the topic which can be the result of referring to the textual context that is the previous verse where after describing the earth under the men's step, God points to the seven skies above them. Logically, after referring to the sky the radiant sun is described and since the noun "سِرَاجًا" is singular, "the stars" as another possible tenor is dismissed.

The next case examined is the word "العُقْبَةَ" in surah Al-Balad, verse 11: فَلَا أَقْحَمَ الْعُقْبَةَ (yet he has not attempted the steep pass). This word denotes "a mountain pass towards the summit which is rocky and difficult to pass" [40] [41] [42]. But in this surah it is another case of *isti'aratasrihiyyaasliyya* referring to the good deeds and rendered as follows:

Table 2. English and Persian Translations of the Metaphoric word "العُقْبَةَ"

Translator	Saffarzadeh	Qarai	Nikayin	Saffarzadeh	Ansariyan	Aminiyan
Metaphor						
العُقْبَةَ	The Hard Task	the uphill task	Steeper Path	مسنولیت مشکل	گردنه ی سخت	پشته

Among the translators Nikayin, Ansariyan and Aminiyan bring solely the vehicle with no other explanation probably because they thought as the readers proceed, in the next verses that are verses 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, it is clarified completely what is meant by this image.

As it is brought in the aforementioned verses, "العُقْبَةَ" is the task of freeing a slave (verse 13), feeding and helping the orphans and the indigents (verse 14, 15, 16), plus believing in God while recommending each other to the patience and kindness (verse 17). In fact, in this Qur'anic image the good deeds that are too difficult to do are likened to a rocky mountain pass which is hard to cross.

As it is tabulated above, Saffarzadeh in her Persian translation converts the metaphor to sense and deletes the image which leads to the omission of the sense of suspense that exists in the original text when it addresses the man as the one who did not bother himself with the steep mountain road (verse 11) and the one who does not know what that steep track is (verse 12).

In her English rendering, Saffarzadeh again refers to the meaning of this image, like what is in her Persian translation, but this time she capitalizes the two words to imply that “العقبة” is a special hard task, mainly donating; a good deed that is difficult to do since it involves giving money which is always dear to the owner [44].

Qarai’s translation differs from the rest in translation of this metaphor as he conveys both sense and, to some extent, image through using the phrase “the uphill task” which means “a task that is difficult and takes a lot of effort over a long period of time” [45]. Actually, the word “uphill” can have the role of original image which is now transferred in the target language although it is not a precise equivalent for the word “العقبة”.

The last example is a case of *isti'aratasrihiyyatabaiyya* in “فَتَيْلٌ” /fatil/ as it is brought in surah Al-Isra verse 71:

يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمامِهِمْ هُنَّ أَوْتَىٰ كِتَابَهُ بِرَيْمُونِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ يَرْءُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يَلِامُونَ كِتَابًا

(the day when we shall call together all human beings with their imam. So whosoever is given his record in his right hand, such will read their records, and they will not be dealt with unjustly as much as a date-thread). The word “فَتَيْلٌ” denotes “a threadlike thing that is in the groove of a date pit” [42] [43] nonfiguratively and in the above verse it denotes “a small amount” figuratively. Its translations are as follows:

Table 3. English and Persian Translations of the Metaphoric word “فَتَيْلٌ”

Translator	Saffarzadeh	Qarai	Nikayin	Saffarzadeh	Ansariyan	Aminiyan
Metaphor						
فَتَيْلًا	will not be dealt with unjustly <u>at all</u>	not be wronged so much as a <u>single date-thread</u>	have not been wronged <u>a grain</u>	وحتى اندکی به آنها ظلم نخواهد شد	و به اندازه ی رشته ی میسان هسته ی خرما مورد ستم قرار نمیگیرند	حتی به قدر ذره ناچیز هم ستم، در حق آن کسان نرود (خود ز بیش و کم)

As it is tabulated, Nikayin tries to bring both the image, though a cultural equivalent of the original, and the sense. However, Qarai and Ansariyan reproduce the original image very precisely and Saffarzadeh and Aminiyan convert it into sense. Yet, the point is that preserving the original image will not hinder comprehension as the cultural context helps in clarifying the meaning. Generally, the verse describes the Day of Judgment when all human beings and their *imams* will be called and the records of what they did, will be given to them. Based on Islamic teachings it is well known that on doomsday no person will be dealt with unjustly in the least and having this in mind the tenor of this image can be easily understood.

Conclusion

In this study first the notion of figurative language and then the specific realm of metaphor in English, Arabic and Persian languages were compared to each other. It was concluded that in English language, figurative means non-literal and it involves a departure from standard meaning of words. In Arabic, the word denoting figurative language is *majaz*. Yet, this term was not first used as opposed to *haqiqa* (truth) to mean figurative language and this latter sense developed later on in Arabic Studies. In Persian language also the term *majaz* denotes the use of word in a sense other than its literal and original meaning.

Moreover, it was discussed that one of the subcategories of figurative language is called metaphor in English, *isti'ara* in Arabic and *este'are* in Persian language. In English, metaphor is defined as an implied comparison without “like” or “as”. However, the concept of metaphor in Arabic and Persian is the same and the difference between these two languages and English language in terms of defining metaphor is that the deletion of the particle “like” or “as” does not yield a metaphor as it would in the Western tradition.

It was then concluded that the two types of metaphors in Arabic language called *isti'aratasrihiyyaasliyya* and *isti'aratasrihiyyatabaiyya* can cause problems in translation of Qur'an due to the absence of their tenors and the mere presence of their vehicles. Yet, the textual and cultural contexts can pave the way for translators in this regard and help readers of translation in guessing what the tenor is even if the translators have not added the sense in rendering these metaphors.

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