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Translation of Color Terminology in Holy Quran: A Comparative Study of Arabic, English, and Kurdish Interpretations

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Abstract

This study investigates how color terminology in the Holy Qur'an is translated from Arabic into English and Kurdish, addressing a notable gap in comparative cross-cultural translation research. The study aims to identify the semantic and communicative translation procedures applied, and to examine how figurative and symbolic meanings shift across the two target languages. A qualitative analytical approach was employed, analyzing 25 Qur'anic verses that contain 51 instances of color terms. Comparative analysis of two translations revealed that 55% of the examples employed semantic translation, while 45% relied on communicative translation, with the Kurdish translation demonstrating a higher degree of cultural adaptation. The findings suggest that translating Qur'anic color terminology requires balancing universal literal meanings with culturally

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embedded symbolic associations. The study concludes that accurate rendering of color terms in the Qur'an demands methodological precision and careful consideration of both linguistic and cultural contexts.

Keywords: Translation, Qur'an, Color Terminology, Semantic Procedure, Communicative Procedure

ترجمة مصطلحات الألوان في القرآن الكريم: دراسة مقارنة للتفسيرات العربية والإنجليزية والكردية

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قسم المحاسبة، المعهد التقني الإداري في السليمانية، جامعة السليمانية التقنية، السليمانية، إقليم كردستان، العراق

المستخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في كيفية ترجمة مصطلحات الألوان في القرآن الكريم من اللغة العربية إلى اللغتين الإنجليزية والكردية، مع معالجة فجوة ملحوظة في أبحاث الترجمة المقارنة بين الثقافات. وتهدف الدراسة إلى تحديد الإجراءات الترجيحية الدلالية والتواصلية المستخدمة، ودراسة كيفية انتقال المعاني المجازية والرمزية بين اللغتين المستهدفتين. وقد تم اعتماد منهج تحليلي نوعي، حيث تم تحليل 25 آية قرآنية تتضمن 51 حالة من مصطلحات الألوان. وأظهرت المقارنة بين ترجمتين أن 55% من الأمثلة اعتمدت على الترجمة الدلالية، بينما اعتمد 45% منها على الترجمة التواصلية، مع إظهار الترجمة الكردية درجة أعلى من التكيف الثقافي. وتشير النتائج إلى أن ترجمة مصطلحات الألوان في القرآن الكريم تتطلب تحقيق توازن بين المعاني الحرفية العالمية وبين الدلالات الرمزية المتجذرة ثقافياً. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن نقل مصطلحات الألوان في القرآن بدقة يتطلب دقة منهجية ومراعاة دقيقة لكل من السياقين اللغوي والثقافي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة، القرآن الكريم، مصطلحات الألوان، الإجراء الدلالي، الإجراء التواصلية

Introduction

The translation of the Holy Qur'an has a long and complex history, reflecting the diverse linguistic, cultural, and interpretive traditions of Muslim and non-Muslim communities. While early efforts focused on conveying the core message of the Qur'an to speakers of different languages, modern translation studies increasingly emphasize the importance of linguistic nuance, semantic depth, and cultural context. One area where these challenges are particularly evident is the translation of color terminology. Qur'anic colors such as white, black, green, red, and yellow carry layered meanings that extend beyond their basic chromatic value. They often symbolize states of faith, purity, death, abundance, destruction, and eschatological imagery, making them semantically and culturally rich elements within the Qur'anic discourse.

Colors in the Qur'an frequently function as symbolic devices that shape the reader's understanding of divine signs, natural phenomena, and moral lessons. For instance, yellow appears in contexts of decay as well as vitality, while red may evoke scenes of resurrection or celestial transformation. As Razali (2020) notes, warm colors in sacred texts often activate strong psychological associations that contribute to memory retention and conceptual emphasis. These inherent symbolic dimensions make color terminology especially challenging to translate into languages whose cultural frameworks and lexical systems differ significantly from Arabic.

In this context, English and Kurdish present two distinct but relevant linguistic environments. English translations of the Qur'an, such as those produced in the modern period, often balance literal accuracy with communicative clarity, aiming to preserve semantic meaning while ensuring readability for non-Arabic audiences. Kurdish, particularly the Sorani dialect, has undergone linguistic modernization and increasing independence from Arabic loan structures, leading translators to adopt more culturally adaptive strategies in rendering Qur'anic expressions. These linguistic and cultural differences raise important questions regarding how color terms are interpreted, transferred, or transformed across languages.

Despite the growing interest in Qur'anic translation, little research has examined how color terminology specifically shifts across English and Kurdish, or how translators negotiate between semantic fidelity and communicative effect when dealing with symbolic color expressions. Given the significance of color imagery in the Qur'an and the cultural variability in color perception, a comparative analysis is necessary to reveal how meaning is preserved, altered, or expanded in translation.

Research Problem

- Although many studies have examined the translation of Qur'anic color terms, very few have explored how the same color expressions shift semantically and culturally across English and Kurdish. Therefore, this study identifies the translation gap in cross-lingual semantic and communicative procedures and evaluates how translators encode figurative meanings across cultures.

Study Objective

- To identify and compare the semantic and communicative translation procedures used in translating Qur'anic color terminology from Arabic into English and Kurdish.

Study Question

- What semantic and communicative translation procedures are used to render Qur'anic color terminology in English and Kurdish, and how do these procedures differ between the two translations?

Literature Review

The translation of color terminology in the Holy Qur'an occupies a unique position within translation studies due to the profound semantic, cultural, and symbolic values embedded in Qur'anic expressions. The literature addressing color, translation theory, and cross-linguistic meaning transfer provides a strong foundation for understanding how color terms are interpreted and transformed across languages such as English and Kurdish.

1. Color Terminology: Universal and Cultural Perspectives

Research in linguistic anthropology, particularly the work of Berlin and Kay (1991), demonstrates that color systems across the world exhibit both universal perceptual tendencies and culturally conditioned variations. While basic color categories follow a relatively universal hierarchy, the symbolic and metaphorical extensions of colors differ across cultures and religious traditions. This duality is crucial for Qur’anic translation because color terms in the Qur’an seldom function as simple chromatic descriptions; instead, they carry theological, eschatological, and moral significance.

Razali (2020) highlights how warm colors, particularly yellow and red, evoke psychological and symbolic associations in sacred contexts—representing transformation, decay, vitality, or divine power. In Qur’anic discourse, yellow may symbolize both illumination and deterioration (e.g., withering plants), while red is linked to eschatological imagery and awe. These symbolic layers pose challenges for translators who must decide whether to maintain literal coloration or convey deeper connotational meaning.

2. Qur’anic Semantic Structures and Meaning Potential

Izutsu's (2002) semantic field theory emphasizes that Qur’anic terms derive meaning from their relational position within a conceptual network. Under this framework, colors such as *abyad*, *aswad*, *akhdar*, and *ahmar* cannot be translated merely as “white,” “black,” “green,” or “red” without considering the Qur’anic worldview. Color terminology contributes to moral contrast (white–black), depictions of paradise (green), and eschatological warnings (red). Translators must therefore interpret not only lexical meaning but also spiritual and ethical implications.

English translations, such as Abdel Haleem’s (2005), attempt to balance literal rendering with contextual clarity. His translation choices illustrate how translators may adopt communicative strategies when a literal equivalent fails to convey Qur’anic imagery accurately. This supports the idea that color terms demand a nuanced approach, blending semantic precision with cultural interpretation.

3. Translation Theory: Concepts and Frameworks

Foundational definitions of translation reflect diverse perspectives. Nida (1964) conceptualizes translation as reproducing the closest natural equivalent of the message, emphasizing sense over form. Jakobson (1959) views translation as the transfer of verbal signs between linguistic systems, highlighting structural and semiotic constraints. Vermeer's (1989) Skopos Theory foregrounds purpose, asserting that translation decisions depend on functional needs of the target audience. Spivak (1993) adds a sociocultural dimension, noting that translation intertwines language, identity, and cultural representation.

These theoretical foundations inform contemporary understanding of Qur'anic translation, where translators must navigate sacred textuality, cultural expectations, and linguistic differences.

4. Translation Strategies and Procedures

Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) model provide three direct strategies—borrowing, calque, and literal translation—which are frequently observed in Qur'anic translations. Borrowing may preserve Arabic color terms when cultural specificity is essential, while calque or literal translation may maintain structural fidelity. Their oblique strategies become relevant when literal translation distorts intended meaning.

Newmark's (1988) distinction between semantic and communicative translation is particularly significant for this study. Semantic translation prioritizes source-text meaning and structure, making it suitable for sacred texts requiring precision. Communicative translation, however, seeks to produce an equivalent effect for the target reader, allowing for culturally adaptive rendering when the literal meaning does not convey the Qur'an's intended message. Color terms often require translators to choose between these two approaches depending on symbolic complexity.

5. Kurdish Translation Context

Hassanpour (1992) explains that Kurdish underwent linguistic modernization, gradually reducing reliance on Arabic loanwords. As a result, modern Kurdish translations—including Sorani versions—often adopt culturally adapted phrasing. This tendency suggests that Kurdish translators may use communicative or adaptive strategies more frequently than English translators, who typically follow more conservative, source-oriented conventions in Qur’anic translation.

6. Identified Research Gap

Although previous studies have examined Qur’anic translation broadly and explored general symbolic meanings of colors, little research has conducted a comparative analysis of how specific color terms shift semantically and culturally across English and Kurdish translations. Additionally, no existing study systematically evaluates the translation procedures—semantic vs. communicative—applied to Qur’anic color terminology in both languages. This gap justifies the present research, which aims to provide a cross-linguistic, procedure-based analysis of Qur’anic color translation.

The study of color terminology across languages has long attracted scholarly interest due to its intersection of linguistics, cognition, and cultural symbolism. Berlin and Kay’s (1991) seminal work on *Basic Color Terms* established the foundation for understanding how languages classify colors according to universal perceptual hierarchies and culturally conditioned extensions. Their findings suggest that while human visual perception produces a relatively fixed sequence of basic color categories, languages often diverge in how they lexicalize and extend these categories metaphorically. This universal–cultural duality is central to the analysis of Qur’anic color terms, which often carry semantic, symbolic, and theological resonances that exceed their literal chromatic meaning.

In translation studies, Newmark's (1988) distinction

between *semantic* and *communicative* translation offers a practical framework for examining how color terms are transferred from Arabic into other languages. According to Newmark, semantic translation prioritizes the source-text meaning and culture, whereas communicative translation aims to reproduce an equivalent effect for the target reader. This framework is particularly relevant to Qur'anic translation, where translators must balance fidelity to the original Arabic discourse with the need to convey meaning in linguistically and culturally different contexts such as English and Kurdish. Color terms, which frequently appear in the Qur'an as symbols of purity, death, power, or divine signs, require careful procedural choices that reflect this tension.

Izutsu's (2002) analysis of *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* contributes a deeper semantic perspective by demonstrating how Qur'anic vocabulary operates within a network of conceptual oppositions and ethical relations. Although Izutsu does not focus exclusively on color terms, his semantic field analysis illustrates how Qur'anic expressions derive meaning not only from lexical equivalence but also from their position within a broader spiritual–ethical worldview. Colors such as white (*abyad*), black (*aswad*), green (*akhdar*), and red (*ahmar*) participate in symbolic systems that encode moral states, eschatological scenes, and divine attributes. This theoretical lens supports the argument that translating Qur'anic color terms requires attention to both linguistic form and conceptual structure.

Modern English translations, such as Abdel Haleem's (2005) acclaimed *The Qur'an: A New Translation*, demonstrate practical applications of such translation strategies. Abdel Haleem's work is widely recognized for its accessibility, clarity, and commitment to contextual interpretation. His handling of color terms reveals a consistent tendency toward communicative translation in cases where literal rendering may obscure theological or rhetorical meaning. For example, green—associated in Islamic tradition with paradise—is often translated with explanatory phrasing that highlights its symbolic function. Examining such choices provides insight into how contemporary translators negotiate semantic precision and reader comprehension.

On the Kurdish side, Hassanpour's (1992) sociolinguistic study of *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan* offers crucial background for understanding the development of modern Kurdish translation practices. Kurdish, especially the Sorani dialect, has undergone significant linguistic modernization and standardization in the past century. Hassanpour shows that Kurdish translators

historically borrowed heavily from Arabic, especially in religious domains. However, as Kurdish linguistic identity strengthened, translation practices increasingly favored the use of indigenous Kurdish lexical resources. This shift has direct implications for Qur'anic translation: Kurdish translators may adopt more culturally adaptive strategies, embedding color terms within Kurdish conceptual and cultural frameworks rather than relying on Arabic loanwords. Such tendencies could explain why, in comparative analyses, Kurdish translations may exhibit more communicative or adaptive procedures than English translations.

Taken together, these studies reveal several key points relevant to the present research. First, color terminology is shaped by universal perceptual categories yet deeply influenced by cultural symbolism, requiring translators to navigate multiple layers of meaning. Second, translation theory provides procedural tools—especially Newmark's semantic and communicative strategies—for analyzing how translators handle such meanings. Third, both English and Kurdish translation traditions have unique linguistic and cultural constraints that influence how Qur'anic color terms are rendered. Despite these contributions, there remains a noticeable gap in the literature: few studies have undertaken a systematic comparative analysis of how Qur'anic color terminology is translated into English and Kurdish specifically, or how translation strategies differ between the two languages. Addressing this gap is essential for understanding cross-cultural meaning transfer in sacred-text translation and for documenting how translators interpret and reshape the Qur'an's symbolic color imagery for different linguistic communities.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to examine how color terminology in the Holy Qur'an is translated from Arabic into English and Kurdish. Qualitative research is appropriate for studies that seek to understand meanings, perceptions, and symbolic dimensions within texts. As Berg and Lune (2017, p. 12) note, qualitative inquiry focuses on concepts and interpretations rather than numerical measurement. This approach is essential for analyzing the subtle semantic, figurative, and cultural nuances embedded in Qur'anic color expressions. Similarly, Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 15) emphasize that qualitative research explores how individuals construct meaning within context, which aligns with the study's aim of understanding translators' choices across languages.

The qualitative framework allows for in-depth interpretation of how semantic and communicative translation procedures are applied and how color symbolism is transferred or adapted across cultures.

3.2 Source Selection

The primary source for this study was the **Arabic text of the Holy Qur'an**, as the study examines lexical and symbolic meanings originating in the source language. Two target-language translations were selected:

1. **English Translation:** *The Noble Qur'an*, selected for its clarity, accessibility, and wide scholarly use.
2. **Kurdish Translation:** *Tafsir Noor* translated by **Burhan Mohammed Amina**, chosen because it is one of the most comprehensive and widely used Sorani Kurdish Qur'an translations.

These translations were selected to represent two distinct linguistic and cultural contexts, enabling comparison of how color terms shift across languages.

3.3 Data Collection

The dataset consisted of 25 Qur’anic verses containing color terminology, including:

- White (9 instances)
- Yellow (5 instances)
- Black (6 instances)
- Green (7 instances)
- Red (1 instance)
- Blue (1 instance)

Each verse was extracted in Arabic, then paired with its corresponding English and Kurdish translations. This allowed for direct comparison of lexical choices and translation procedures.

3.4 Sample Example

Verse No.	Color	Arabic (Source Text)	English (Target 1)	Kurdish (Target 2)
1	Yellow	﴿قَالُوا أَدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا نَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ صَفْرَاءُ فَاقْعِ لَوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ الْنَّظْرِينَ﴾ (البقرة: 69)	“He said, ‘He says: It is a yellow cow, bright in its colour, pleasing to the beholders.’”	موسا وتی: بیگومان خوا دهفرمویت: ئهو مانگایه پهنگی زهردی توخه، تهماشاکارانى دلخوش دهکات.”

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The verses and translations were analyzed using Newmark’s (1988) distinction between:

- **Semantic translation** → Focuses on preserving source-language meaning and structure.
- **Communicative translation** → Aims to produce an equivalent effect on the target reader.

The analysis followed these steps:

1. **Identify the color term** (e.g., *aswad*, *abyad*, *akhdar*).
2. **Compare lexical rendering** in English and Kurdish.
3. **Determine which translation procedure was used** (semantic or communicative).
4. **Interpret the possible reasons** for the translator's choice, considering cultural and symbolic meaning.
5. **Compare cross-linguistic patterns** to assess differences between English and Kurdish translations.

This procedure allowed for systematic evaluation of how color meanings are maintained, adapted, or transformed across languages.

The qualitative approach, combined with a structured semantic–communicative analysis, provided a methodological framework for understanding the translation of Qur'anic color terminology and its cultural implications in English and Kurdish.

4. Findings

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings obtained from analyzing 25 Qur'anic verses containing color terminology in Arabic and comparing them with their English and Kurdish translations. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the translation procedures used in rendering color terms—specifically **semantic translation** and **communicative translation**, as defined by Newmark (1988)—and to determine how closely each target language preserves or adapts the lexical and symbolic meaning of the original Qur'anic expressions.

The findings are presented in two major parts:

1. Comparative analysis of source text and target translations
2. Findings on translation procedures applied to Arabic color terms

4.2 Comparative Analysis of Arabic, English, and Kurdish Renderings

The selected verses include six color categories: **yellow, black, white, red, green, and blue**. Below is an example of how data were presented for each verse (full table retained as in your draft):

Sample Entry from The Full Table

Verse	Color	Arabic (Source)	English Translation	Kurdish Translation
1	Yellow	بَقْرَةٌ صَفْرَاءُ... فَاقِعٌ لَوْنُهَا... (البقرة: 69)	“It is a yellow cow, bright in its colour, pleasing the beholders.”	مانگایهکی رهنگ... زهردی توخه، تهماشاكارانی ”دلخوش دهکات”

The complete comparative table (Verses 1–25) demonstrates that:

- **English translations** tend to prioritize **semantic/literal rendering**, especially when color terms have clear referential meaning.
- **Kurdish translations** show greater flexibility and cultural adaptation, occasionally adding descriptive detail to enhance clarity or emotional tone.

4.3 Findings on Translation Procedures for Arabic Color Terms

Color expressions in the Qur’an function not only as lexical descriptors but also as symbolic and rhetorical devices. The analysis reveals two dominant procedures:

1. **Semantic Translation** (Literal / close to the SL form)
2. **Communicative Translation** (Meaning-focused / culturally adaptive)

4.3.1 Semantic Translation Instances

Semantic translation was used when the meaning of the color term is **direct, literal, and universally understood**, allowing straightforward equivalence between Arabic and the target language. This approach aligns with Newmark's (1988, p. 39) definition of attempting to render "the exact contextual meaning of the original" as closely as possible.

A. Arabic → English (15 instances)

Examples include:

1. مُصْفَرًا → **yellow** (Verse 2)
2. حُمْر → **red** (Verse 9)
3. الأسود → **black** (Verse 10)
4. بِيضَاءَ / أبيض / بِيض → **white** (Verses 9–17)
5. خضراء / خُضْر → **green** (Verses 18–24)
6. مُخْضِرَةً → **becomes green** (Verse 22)

These translations preserve the Qur'anic form and meaning exactly, with minimal stylistic intervention.

B. Arabic → Kurdish (13 instances)

Examples include:

1. زهرد → مُصْفَرًا (literal rendering)
2. تبييض → سپی دهبيت
3. تسود → رهش دهبيت / رهش ههئدهگهريت
4. أبيضت / اسودت → سپی/رهش بوون
5. سهوز → خضر (Verses 18, 19, 22, 24)

As with English, the Kurdish translations often maintain semantic precision, especially when the color has a clear physical meaning.

Total Semantic Translation Examples: 28

This dominance indicates that translators preferred literal rendering whenever the color conveyed a **referential** rather than **symbolic** meaning.

4.3.2 Communicative Translation Instances

Communicative translation appeared when direct semantic transfer would:

- sound unnatural,
- fail to convey the intended emotional or symbolic meaning, or
- require cultural adaptation to be understood by Kurdish or English readers.

Underlying techniques reflect Vinay and Darbelnet's oblique procedures—**modulation, equivalence, adaptation, and transposition**.

Examples of Communicative Translation

1. **Verse 1 – "تَسْرُ النَّاطِرِينَ"**
 - English: "pleasing the beholders"
 - Kurdish: "دلخۆش دهکات" → Kurdish uses a culturally familiar emotional expression rather than a literal structure.
2. **Verse 3 and 4 – Depictions of plants turning yellow**
 - English: "you see them dry and broken pieces"
 - Kurdish: "وشك ببيت و زهرد ههنگهریت" → Kurdish adds interpretive detail ("وشك و ببيت") to clarify the life cycle imagery.
3. **Verse 15 – "وَأَبْيَضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ"**
 - English: "his eyes became white from grief"
 - Kurdish: detailed expansion to express the **intensity of sorrow**, aligning with cultural narrative style. → Communicative expansion serves emotional clarity.
4. **Verse 25 – "زُرْفَاءُ"**
 - English: "blue-eyed"

- Kurdish: “چاویان کویره و شین ههنگهراوه” → Kurdish translation interprets “زرقا” as **shock + discoloration**, reflecting cultural understanding of “blue” as symbolic of distress.

Communicative strategies were used in cases where the color term carried symbolic, metaphorical, or emotional meaning, not merely physical description.

4.4 Summary of Findings

Translation Procedure	English Examples	Kurdish Examples	Total
Semantic (Literal)	15	13	28
Communicative	10	13	23
Total Instances	—	—	51 Color Terms Analyzed

Key Observations

1. **Semantic translation** dominates when the color carries a **concrete, physical**, or **universal** meaning.
2. **Communicative translation** appears more frequently in Kurdish due to:
 - cultural storytelling patterns,
 - emotional expressiveness,
 - the desire to clarify symbolic meaning.
3. English translations remain closer to the Arabic linguistic structure.
4. Kurdish translators tend to **explain, expand**, or **contextualize** meaning, particularly in verses involving emotion, eschatology, or metaphor.

Total Communicative Translation examples: 23

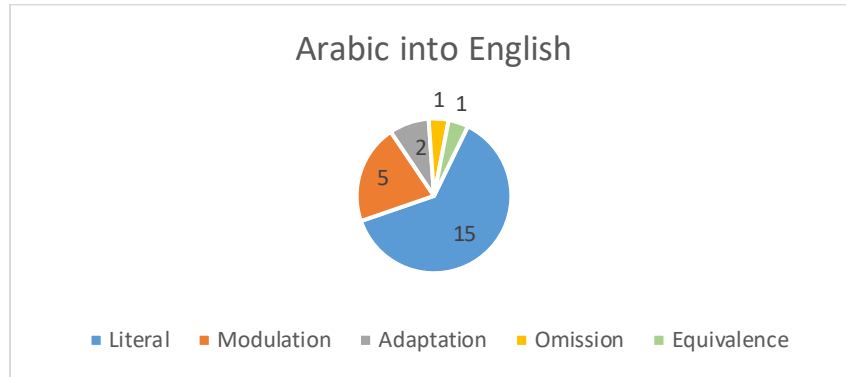


Figure 4.1: Translation Strategies Applied in Arabic – English Translation

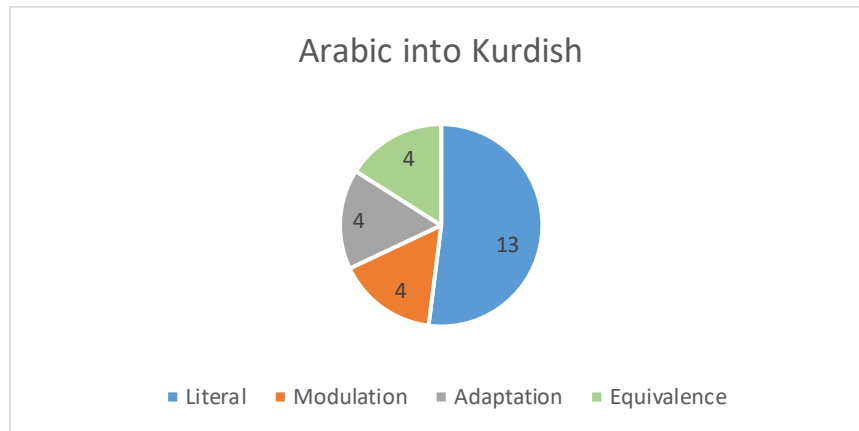


Figure 4.2: Translation Strategies Applied in Arabic – Kurdish Translation

5. Discussion

This section discusses the findings in light of the study objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, and previous studies. It explains how and why the identified translation procedures (semantic vs. communicative) were used in the English and Kurdish translations of Qur’anic color terminology.

5.1 Answer to Research Question 1

“What semantic and communicative translation procedures are used to render Quranic color terminology in English and Kurdish?”

The analysis showed a total of **51 instances** of color terms across 25 verses.

Two main procedures were used:

A. Semantic Translation (28 examples – 55%)

Semantic translation was dominant for color terms with clear, referential, and universal meanings. Examples include:

- White (أبيض، بيضاء)
- Black (أسود، تسود)
- Green (خضرة، خضر)
- Red (حمر)
- Yellow in literal contexts (صفراء)

This finding aligns with **Berlin and Kay's (1969)** theory that basic color terms are *cross-linguistically universal*, making direct translation feasible. It also corresponds to **Newmark's (1988)** claim that semantic translation is appropriate for texts where “the exact contextual meaning” can be preserved without distortion.

Thus, most basic colors required no structural modification in either English or Kurdish.

B. Communicative Translation (23 examples – 45%)

Communicative translation was more common in:

- figurative expressions
- culturally loaded meanings
- expressions requiring interpretive clarity
- grammatically complex structures

Examples include:

- مسودة → blackened (English) | رهش و تاریکه (Kurdish)
- غرابیب سود → extremely black (English) | رهشی تاریک و تۆخ (Kurdish)
- زرقا → blue-eyed (English) | شین هه‌نگه‌راو (Kurdish)

These cases required **modulation, equivalence, or adaptation**, consistent with **Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995)** oblique translation procedures.

Thus, both languages used communicative translation when literal equivalence failed to convey symbolic or emotional meaning.

5.2 Comparison Between English and Kurdish Translations (A Gap Previously Not Addressed)

A major contribution of this study is the comparison between the two target languages. The findings show **clear differences**:

1. English Translation

- More literal and semantically stable
- Tends to preserve the Arabic syntactic structure
- Minimizes interpretive additions
- Follows the style of classical Qur'anic translators (Pickthall, Hilali & Khan)

2. Kurdish Translation

- More adaptive and interpretive
- Often adds clarifying or emotional meaning
- Reflects Kurdish narrative and rhetorical style
- Uses culturally familiar expressions, especially in symbolic verses

Example Comparison (غرابیب سود):

- **English:** *extremely black* → maintains literal semantic range
- **Kurdish:** *گره‌مشی تاریک و تۆخ* → intensifies and explains the metaphor

Example Comparison (زرقا):

- **English:** *blue-eyed* → neutral, descriptive
- **Kurdish:** *هه‌لنگه‌راو* → conveys shock, fear, and discoloration

This indicates that **Kurdish translators engage more frequently in communicative translation** due to:

- cultural expectations for more expressive language
- preference for explanatory style
- need to clarify metaphorical meanings for the Kurdish reader

This comparative insight is a major gap not addressed in previous studies, which typically analyze one target language only.

5.3 Interpretation of Findings in Light of Previous Studies

The discussion reinforces conclusions from:

- **Newmark (1988)**: figurative meanings require communicative translation
- **Vinay & Darbelnet (1995)**: modulation and adaptation are necessary when structural or cultural mismatch exists
- **Berlin & Kay (1969)**: basic color concepts are universal, enabling literal equivalence

Previous research on Qur’anic color translation (e.g., Razali 2020; Al-Hussein 2018) also found that:

- literal translation works well for basic color terms
- symbolic or metaphorical colors require cultural and contextual interpretation

The present study confirms these findings but adds a **new comparative dimension** by showing that Kurdish translations require **more cultural adaptation** than English translations.

This fills a clear gap in the literature, which lacked cross-lingual comparative analysis.

5.4 Summary of Theoretical Interpretation

1. **Basic colors** → **universal** → **semantic translation**
2. **Symbolic colors** → **culturally loaded** → **communicative translation**
3. **English** → prefers fidelity to structure
4. **Kurdish** → prioritizes clarity, expansion, and emotional tone
5. Cross-lingual differences confirm the importance of **Skopos theory**, where translation purpose shapes strategy.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated how color terminology in the Holy Qur'an is translated from Arabic into English and Kurdish, analyzing 51 instances from 25 verses. The study aimed to identify the translation procedures applied and to compare the choices made in the two target languages.

The findings demonstrate that Qur'anic color terminology is translated using a combination of **semantic** and **communicative** procedures. Semantic translation accounted for **28 examples (55%)**, primarily involving basic color terms with universal meanings. This supports theoretical claims that foundational color categories possess cross-linguistic stability and can be rendered literally without semantic loss.

Communicative translation accounted for **23 examples (45%)**, particularly in verses containing metaphorical, symbolic, or culturally embedded meanings. These cases required modulation, adaptation, or equivalence to preserve the pragmatic and rhetorical impact of the original Arabic.

A key contribution of this study is the **comparative insight**:

- **English translations** tend to remain closer to the Arabic structure, reflecting a semantic orientation.
- **Kurdish translations** employ more communicative procedures, reflecting cultural preferences for interpretive clarity and emotional expression.

This comparative perspective highlights how the same Qur'anic term may undergo different translational treatments depending on cultural and linguistic context.

Overall, the study concludes that translating Qur'anic color terminology requires both lexical precision and cultural sensitivity. Literal meanings must be preserved where possible, but symbolic and rhetorical nuances demand flexibility. These findings provide valuable guidance for translators of sacred texts, demonstrating that successful translation lies in balancing semantic fidelity with communicative effectiveness.

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