

Investigating the Meanings of *Rīḥ* (a wind) and *Rīyah* (winds) and their Translation Issues in the Holy Qur'ān

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Abstract

This study investigates the meanings of ریح (a wind) and رياح (winds) and their translation issues in the Holy Qur'ān. It aims at identifying the contextual meanings of these words based on different exegeses of the Holy Qur'ān. Then, it explains the nuances that exist between the two lexical items. The study also examines how the shades of meaning of the Qur'ānic words are reflected in two English translations of the Holy Qur'ān, namely, Arberry (2003) and Irving (2002). The study adopts the RC-S approach by Murphy (2003) as a theoretical framework for data analysis. It also employs the qualitative approach to collect and analyze the data of the study. Different exegeses are consulted to identify the differences between the two words. The results reveal that there are some differences in meaning between these Arabic words in Holy Qur'ān and that the shades of meaning of these words are not reflected in the English translations. The study provides recommendations for readers and translators especially the translators of the Holy Qur'ān.

Keywords: Affective meaning; connotative meaning; contextual meaning; denotative meaning; Holy Qur'ān meaning and near-synonyms

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Introduction

Literature reveals that the Holy Qur'ān includes many words which have seemingly similar meanings but communicate different meanings upon deeper analysis of the semantic constituents of such items. There is a consensus among researchers that these items are termed near-synonyms (Al-Sowaidi, 2011). Scholars (Bint Al-Shaṭī, 1971; Omar, 2001) assert that the Qur'ānic synonyms are near-synonyms which refer to words sharing some but not all shades of meaning. More importantly, Al-Shaṭī (1993) contends that every near-synonym in the Holy Qur'ān has its special meaning that cannot be conveyed by another one in the same context. For instance, the near-synonymous pair *حلف* *ḥalafa* and *اقسم* *'aqsama* (swore) have one general equivalent in English. However, there exist some nuances between these near-synonyms in the Qur'ān. Abu Udaḥ (1985) acknowledges that the word *حلف* *ḥalafa* in the Qur'ān means swore untruthfully and is employed to imply a false oath whereas *اقسم* *'aqsama* means swore truthfully and implicates a true oath. However, these near-synonyms are interchangeably used in Modern Standard Arabic. In fact, the subtle and delicate nuances between the Qur'ānic near-synonyms usually confuse both the reader as well as translator. If a translator fails to realize such nuances between the near-synonyms and misunderstands the original meaning, the near-synonyms will be misinterpreted and consequently the Qur'ānic message will not be appropriately conveyed. Newmark (1988), Abdullah (2003) and Ishrateh (2006) maintain that the differences between near-synonyms are context-dependent and thus the context should be analyzed in order to provide an adequate and faithful translation for the near-synonyms. Besides, the exegeses of the Holy Qur'ān play a great role in explaining the differences between the near-synonyms and consequently facilitate their translation. Therefore, the Qur'ānic near-synonyms will be studied and analyzed in different Qur'ānic contexts and the exegeses of the Qur'ān will be consulted to account for the nuances between the Qur'ānic near-synonyms and how such nuances are reflected in the English translations.

Problem Statement

The near-synonyms in the Holy Qur'ān have special features which make mapping their meanings onto another language highly problematic. Ali (1938) confirms that the Qur'ānic vocabulary is so rich that it gives special words for similar ideas and things which have only a general word in English. Besides, it is applauded that although some words are used interchangeably in Modern Standard Arabic, they are used differently in the Holy Qur'ān (Al-Sowaidi, 2011). An example of these words is the Qur'ānic pair *ريح* (a wind) and *رياح* (winds). In Arabic, the lexical item *ريح* (a wind) is the singular form of *رياح* (winds). These two items are used interchangeably in Modern Standard Arabic. However, there exist some differences in meaning between them in the Holy Qur'ān. More importantly, these words have only one equivalent in English (the wind). In fact, the nuances between these words are vitally important to understand the Qur'ānic text. If the shades of meaning of near-synonyms are not perceived by the reader or specifically by the translator, the Qur'ānic text will be misinterpreted. This study will identify the contextual meanings of these words in the Holy Qur'ān making use of different exegeses of the Holy Qur'ān. Then, it will highlight the differences between these words in terms of denotative and expressive meanings and how the shades of meaning of near-synonyms are reflected in the English translations. It provides the readers as well as translators with a deeper look into the nuances between the Qur'ānic pair and how such nuances should be considered especially in the translation.

Objectives of the study

- 1- To identify the contextual meanings of ریح (a wind) and رياح (winds) in the Holy Qur'ān.
- 2- To compare the denotative and expressive meanings of ریح (a wind) and رياح (winds) in the Holy Qur'ān.
- 3- To explain how the nuances between ریح (a wind) and رياح (winds) are reflected in two English translations.

Questions of the Study

- 1- What are the contextual meanings of ریح (a wind) and رياح (winds) in the Qur'ān?
- 2- How are ریح (a wind) and رياح (winds) different in terms of their denotative and expressive meanings?
- 3- How are the nuances between the two Qur'ānic words reflected in two English translations?

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Relation by Contrast Approach to Synonyms (RC-S) by Murphy (2003). This approach explains synonymy relation in terms of the minimal differences that exist between the synonymous words. In this regard, Murphy acknowledges that in any set of different forms of words which have similar denotations, there exists a slight difference in denotative and/or expressive meaning. Therefore, the differences between synonymous words should be explained in terms of the suggested parameters:

Denotative meaning

Denotation refers to “the relationship between sense and reference, and the sense of a word is the set of conditions on the word’s reference” (Murphy, 2003, p. 148). Murphy states that the near-synonyms punish, correct, discipline, castigate and penalize have differences in denotation.

Expressive elements of meaning

Expressive meaning includes affective meaning, connotative meaning, and other social information that gives denotatively similar words different significance without affecting their contributions to sentential truth-conditions (Murphy, 2003).

a) Connotation is viewed as “the additional meanings that a word or phrase has beyond its central meaning” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 108). It involves associations which do not directly affect the conditions on reference, but which may give some slant to the description (Murphy, 2003).

b) Affect is a non-denotative meaning which is concerned with the speaker’s attitude toward the subject at hand (Murphy, 2003).

c) Social information: Other aspects of social meaning include dialect, register, jargon, and other sub-varieties of a language or vocabulary (Murphy, 2003).

This approach is adopted for the current study because it provides a framework for analyzing the nuances between the near-synonyms in question. In the light of the RC-S approach, the researchers will analyze the denotative, connotative and affective meaning of the Qur'ānic near-synonyms and explain how the shades of meaning of near-synonyms are reflected in the English translation.

Methodology

This study employs the qualitative approach to collect and analyze the data of the study because it seems more relevant and helpful in explaining the nuances between the near-synonymous pair. It also makes use of qualitative content analysis because it is a flexible method to analyze the data of the study. Two English translations have been selected, namely, Irving (2002) and Arberry (2003). These translations are particularly chosen based on several reasons. For instance, the translators have different religious backgrounds since Arberry is non-Muslim while Irving is Muslim and also the two translators adopted different translation approaches when translating the Holy Qur'ān; Irving (2002) employed a communicative approach while Arberry (2003) employed a literal approach in his translation. This study heavily depends on many exegeses of the Qur'ān as well as commentary books. The exegeses of Ibn 'Āshur (1984) and Al-Sha'rawī (1991) are selected because the exegetes worked on explaining the Qur'ānic near-synonyms. Other exegeses like Al-Ṭabarī (2001), Al-Zamakhsharī (2009), Al-Qurṭubī (2006), Al-Mahalī and Al-Sayutī (2003), Al-Alusī (1995) and Al-Makhzumī (1989) are also consulted because they are the most prominent exegeses of the Holy Qur'ān as maintained by (Abdul-Raof, 2001).

Moreover, it is perhaps crucial here to indicate that the Qur'ānic word ریح (a wind) appeared in the Holy Qur'ān eighteen times in seventeen contexts because it is repeated twice in one verse. However, the lexical item رياح (winds) is mentioned ten times. Due to the difficulty of analyzing all the verses in which these words are used, six verses will be analyzed for each word. It is also worth mentioning here that although the translation issues of ریح (a wind) and رياح (winds) are addressed in the studies of Shehab (2009) and AlQainai (2011), their studies were mainly concerned with the assessment of the criteria and the strategies adopted by the translators. This study mainly focuses on the denotative and expressive meanings of the Qur'ānic words and the reflection of these meanings in the English translation. An in-depth analysis of their denotative and expressive meanings is provided in this study.

Analysis of Data

This section highlights the contextual meanings of the Qur'ānic near-synonyms and particularly focuses on the nuances between the two words and how such nuances are reflected in the English translations.

The Contextual Meanings of the Qur'ānic Pair

1- ریح (a wind)

Here is the analysis of the verses in which the word ریح (wind) is used in the Holy Qur'ān.

1- قال تعالى: "فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا مُسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَّتِهِمْ قَالَوا هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطِرُنَا بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهِ رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ" (الأحقاف 24).

"Then, when they saw it as a sudden cloud coming towards their valleys, they said: This is a cloud that shall give us rain! Not so; rather it is that you sought to hasten - a wind, wherein is a painful chastisement" (Al-Aḥqāf: 24; Arberry, 2003).

“When they saw it as a disturbance advancing on their valleys, they said: This is some storm which will bring us rain. Rather it was what you sought to hasten up for yourselves, a wind containing painful punishment” (Al-Aḥqāf: 24; Irving, 2002).

Exegetes provided more descriptions of ریح (a wind) in this verse. For instance, Al-Zamakhsharī (2009) points out that ریح (a wind) was loosed upon the people of Hud. It was destructive since it caused death to them and destroyed their properties. He also maintains that there was something like flames inside that wind. Al-Mahalī and Al-Sayutī (2003) affirm that ریح (a wind) mentioned in this verse was similar to a hurricane which killed the people of the Prophet of Hud, their children, women, men, and destroyed their properties by flinging them all up into the air and tearing them to pieces and fragments. Nothing was left except their dwellings. Al-Ṭabarī (2001) acknowledges that ریح (a wind) in this verse was strong insofar as it destroyed pavilions and bring people from one place into another. Moreover, Al-Qurtubī (2006) maintains that the wind was extremely violent that it flew their livestock in the sky like a feather.

Al-Ṭabarani (no date) affirms that this type of wind is called الدبور (a kind of harmful wind). In fact, Al-Shaʿrawī (1991) differentiates between the word ریح (a wind) and its plural رياح (winds) in the Holy Qurʾān claiming that the word ریح (a wind) implicates harm, torment, destruction and punishment whereas its plural رياح (winds) implies blessing and mercy. One of the differences between them is that رياح (winds) come from different directions and go to different destinations and thus it is helpful (Al-Shaʿrawī, 1991). Unlike رياح (winds), ریح (a wind) comes from one direction and goes to one destination and consequently it is harmful and destructive. Based on different exegeses of this verse, it can be concluded that ریح (a wind) was loosed upon Hud's people as torment, displeasure, punishment and affliction. It was strong, violent, deadly, ruining, and destructive. It is also said that it goes to one destination and that is why it is harmful.

2- قال تعالى ”وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ * مَا تَدْرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَتَتْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا جَعَلَتْهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ” (الذاريات 42-41).

“And also in Ad, when We loosed against them the withering wind that left nothing it came upon, but made it as stuff decayed” (Al-Dhariyat: 41-42; Arberry, 2003)

“And with Ad, when We loosed a devastating wind on them: it left nothing that it chanced upon without turning it into rubble” (Al-Dhariyat: 41-42; Irving, 2002).

Al-Shaʿrawī (1991) and Al-Mahalī and Al-Sayutī (2003) assert that this verse tells the story of the Prophet ʿĀd's people who were punished by a wind. In this verse, the wind was described as الریح العقيم (a devastating wind). In Arabic, these two words literally mean a barren wind. Moreover, the word العقيم (barren) refers to a person who cannot produce babies (Ibn Manzur, 1955). In English, it refers to i) “a person or animal which are unable to produce children or baby animals” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2007). In this verse, the wind is described as الریح العقيم (literally a barren wind) because it is harmful and does not fertilize the trees and clouds and does not help produce rain (Ibn ʿĀshur, 1984, Al-Shaʿrawī, 1991 & Al-Qurtubī, 2006). More importantly, they claim that it is strong and harmful and there is no any mercy, benefit or blessing in this type of a wind. Al-Makhzumī (1989) also confirms

that ریح (a wind) which was loosed upon ʿĀd's people was very poisonous. Based on the interpretations of this verse, ریح (a wind) was unleashed upon the people of ʿĀd as a torment, punishment, infliction and displeasure and was described as barren, withering, poisonous, devastating, strong, deadly and harmful. It does not fertilize the clouds, does not pollinate trees and does not help produce rain.

3- قال تعالى: "مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتْهُ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ" (ال عمران 117)

“The likeness of that they expend in this present life is as the likeness of a freezing blast that smites the tillage of a people who wronged themselves, and it destroyed that; God wronged them not, but themselves they wronged” (Al-ʿEmrān: 117; Arberry 2003).

“What they spend during this worldly life can be compared to a wind containing bitter frost which strikes the crop of people who have injured themselves, and so destroys it. God has not injured them, but rather they injure themselves” (Al-ʿEmrān: 117; Irving 2002).

This verse provides a picture of the upshot of the disbelievers' deeds in their lives. Ibn ʿĀshur (1984) and Al-Mahālī and Al-Sayutī (2003) maintain that what the disbelievers have done in their lives is likened in this verse to ریح (a wind) containing a blast of extreme cold or hot (different views of exegetes) which smote the tillage as well as crops of those who wronged themselves through disobedience and unbelief and ruined it and thus they benefit nothing from it. Ibn ʿĀshur (1984) points out that that صِرٌّ (blast/frost) is the severe coldness of the wind which destroys the crops. He also adds that صِرٌّ is a name for a very cold wind. Al-Shaʿrawī (1991) explains that رِيحٌ فِيهَا صِرٌّ (a wind wherein is a blast/frost) means a strong wind which has frost and the sounds *ṣ* and *r* as in صِرٌّ are used in Arabic to implicate violence, noise and loudness (ibid). While interpreting رِيحٌ فِيهَا صِرٌّ “a wind wherein is a blast/frost”, Al-Qurṭubī (2006) provides a different interpretation of صِرٌّ (a blast/frost) claiming that it is the sound of the flame which accompanied the wind. In fact, providing different meanings of a Qurʾānic word is one of the challenges facing the translators of the Qurʾān (Hassan 2003). Although Al-Qurṭubī's exegesis is regarded as one of the major exegeses, his interpretation of صِرٌّ (blast/frost) is neglected in the two translations.

Moreover, the use of words whose sounds are similar to the things they describe (e.g. صِرٌّ) is called onomatopoeia in Arabic. This onomatopoeia is also available in English as in the words “boom” and “hiss”. In fact, the use of onomatopoeia in the Holy Qurʾān is common. Apart from the example provided in this verse, it is perhaps crucial to cite a similar interesting onomatopoeia in the Holy Qurʾān where the word صِرْصِرًا (clamorous) is also used with the word رِيح (a wind). Al-Ṭabarī (2001) points out that رِيحًا صِرْصِرًا (a clamorous wind) is a cold and violent wind, producing a loud noise. These particular words صِرٌّ (blast) and صِرْصِرًا (clamorous) are carefully selected in the Holy Qurʾān to convey a certain meaning and thus they have a special effect on the readers. The sounds of the word (*ṣ* and *r*) implicate noise and violence. To conclude, it is noticed that رِيح (a wind) is used to implicate harm and violence, and is strong, violent, cold or hot and intensely noisy.

4- قال تعالى: "وَلَيْنُ أُرْسَلْنَا رِيحًا قَرَأُوهُ مُصْفَرًّا أَظَلُّوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ يَكْفُرُونَ" (ال روم 51)

“But if We loose a wind, and they see it growing yellow, they remain after that unbelievers” (Al-Rum: 51; Arberry 2003).

“Even if We sent a wind so they might see it turning things yellow, they would still keep on disbelieving even after it” (Al-Rum: 51; Irving 2002).

This verse is interpreted by Al-Shaʿrawī (1991) and Al-Mahalī and Al-Sayutī (2003) as follows: But if We unleashed a wind which damaged and destroyed their vegetation, and they saw it turn yellow (i.e. destroyed), they would continue to disbelieve in God and to deny the rain grace. Al-Qurṭubī (2006) provides a different interpretation of some words here. He claims that the pronoun it in this verse “فَرَأَوْهُ” (when they see it) is an anaphora of رِيحًا (a wind). In other words, the color of the wind was yellow according to Al-Qurṭubī but not the vegetation as interpreted by other exegetes (e.g. Al-Shaʿrawī, 1991). Al-Qurṭubī (2006) adds that the wind is yellow because it is harmful and does not fertilize the trees nor the clouds.

Coming back to the meaning of the word رِيح (a wind), Al-Shaʿrawī (1991) asserts that it is used in the Holy Qurʾān to implicate harm and damage. Additionally, Al-Rāzī (2004) argues that رِيح (a wind) is loosed by Allah as a torment and thus it rarely blows. On the contrary, the winds blow in days and nights in different places and therefore they are helpful and beneficial. In this verse, it is seen that رِيح (a wind) implicates threat, displeasure, torment, and infliction.

5. قال تعالى: “وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخَطَّفَهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوَى بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ” (الحج 31).

“For whosoever associates with God anything, it is as though he has fallen from heaven and the birds snatch him away, or the wind sweeps him headlong into a place far away” (Al-Haj: 31; Arberry, 2003).

“Anyone who associates anything with God [will feel] as if he had fallen out of the sky and the birds had snatched him away, or the wind had blown him to some far-off place” (Al-Haj: 31; Irving, 2002).

This verse provides a picture of the status of a polytheist who ascribes partners to God. Al-Shaʿrawī (1991) and Al-Mahalī and Al-Sayutī (2003) interpret this verse by saying that those who associate anything with Allah are likened to a person who had fallen from the heaven and had been snatched away by birds or as the wind blew him/her into a far-off place and there is no hope that s/he will be saved. Al-Zamakhsharī (2009) affirms the believing in Allah is likened as the sky in its height, associating anything with Allah is described as falling from the sky, bad thoughts are described as the birds which snatch the person away and finally Satan is described as a strong wind which throws the disbelievers in a far-off place. This verse was revealed upon the Prophet Mohammed to threaten and warn those who associate anything with Allah. Based on these interpretations of this verse, it can be concluded that رِيح (a wind) implicates threat, violence and harm.

6- قال تعالى: “يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا” (الأحزاب 9)

“O believers, remember God's blessing upon you when hosts came against you, and We loosed against them a wind, and hosts you saw not; and God sees the things you do” (Al-Aḥzāb: 9; Arberry, 2003).

“You who believe, remember God's favor upon you when the armies charged at you! We sent a wind and even armies you did not see against them. God was Observant of what you were doing” (Al-Aḥzāb: 9; Irving, 2002).

This verse was revealed upon the Prophet Mohammed about Al-Aḥzāb battle between Muslims and disbelievers. Al-Ṭabarī (2001) and Al-Zamakhsharī (2009) illustrate that رِيحًا (a wind) in this verse is called الصبا (*Al-Seba*) which Allah loosed upon the disbelievers in the battle of Al-Aḥzāb. This wind, called الصبا (*As-Seba*), beat the disbelievers. Ibn ʿĀshur (1984) claims that it was cold and violent. It damaged their camps, killed their horses and camels, overturned their properties and scattered them. Finally, Muslims won the battle. After this battle, it was narrated that the Prophet Mohammed said “I was triumphed over in this battle by الصبا (*Al-Seba*) while the people of ʿĀd had been ruined by الدبور (*Al-Dabur*)” (Two kinds of a harmful wind). Again, the wind (ريح) was loosed upon the disbelievers as torment and punishment. It is strong, violent, destructive and deadly. Based on the interpretations of the previously mentioned verses, the meanings of the Qur'ānic word رِيح (a wind) will be summarized in Table (1), p.11.

2- رِيح (winds)

Here is the analysis of the verses in which the word رِيح (winds) is used in the Holy Qur'ān.

1- قال تعالى: ”وَإِخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَّاحِ آيَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ” (الجاثية 5)

“And in the alternation of night and day, and the provision God sends down from heaven, and therewith revives the earth after it is dead, and the turning about of the winds, there are signs for a people who understand” (Al-Jāthiyah: 5; Arberry, 2003).

“The alternation of night and daylight, and any sustenance God sends down from the sky with which He revives the earth after its death, and the wheeling of the winds are signs for folk who use their reason” (Al-Jāthiyah: 5; Irving, 2002).

Al-Shaʿrawī (1991) affirms that whenever the word رِيح (winds) is used in the Holy Qur'ān, it implicates mercy and blessing. Al-Ṭabarī (2001) maintains that "directing the winds" in this verse means that Allah directs the wind to different destinations for the people's benefits. Al-Shaʿrawī (1991) asserts that directing the winds is intended to stir the clouds up and has many benefits among which the winds renew and purify the stagnant air in order not to be polluted. Al-Alusī (1995) claims that the circulation of winds means to send them to different destinations because if the winds are assembled together and are sent to one destination or direction, such winds will be strong and destroy everything they pass through. Therefore, it is viewed that رِيح (winds) blow to different destinations and spread in different directions and most importantly they are helpful since they stir the clouds up, purify and renew the air and fertilize the clouds.

2- قال تعالى: ”وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَقْلَّتْ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا سُقْنَاهُ لِبَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ“ (سورة الأعراف آية 57)

“It is He who looses the winds, bearing good tidings before His mercy, till, when they are charged with heavy clouds, We drive it to a dead land and therewith send down water, and bring forth, therewith all the fruits” (Al-Aʿrāf: 57; Arberry 2003).

“He is the One Who sends winds to announce His mercy directly, so that whenever they lift up heavy clouds, We drive them along to a dead countryside and send down water from them; and thus We bring forth every kind of fruit” (Al-Aʿrāf: 57; Irving 2002).

Ibn ʿĀshur (1984) contends that the winds which bear the good tidings of rain are kind, gentle and blessed, and are described as such because the winds disperse before rain. In addition, Al-Ṭabarī (2001) applauds that the winds in this verse is نشورا meaning in Arabic the gentle and pleasant winds which peacefully and smoothly blow and spread in different directions. Therefore, it can be concluded that the winds are associated with Allah's mercy as well as blessing; bear good tidings of rain, disperse before rain, bear heavy clouds, and are helpful.

3- قال تعالى: ”وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيَّاحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِخَازِنِينَ“ (الحجر 22)

“And We loose the winds fertilising, and We send down out of heaven water, then We give it to you to drink, and you are not its treasurers” (Al- Ḥejr: 22; Arberry, 2003).

“We send forth fertilizing winds and send down water from the sky and offer you something to drink from it. You are not the ones who store it up” (Al- Ḥejr: 22; Irving, 2002).

Al-Ṭabarī (2001) maintains that رياح (winds) are fertilizers since they fertilize trees as well as clouds. He also adds that there is another view of such winds; it is claimed that the winds are described as fertilizers because such winds function as a bearer of fertilizers but not they are fertilizers by themselves. Al-Ṭabarī (2001) asserts that the winds which function as fertilizers are completely different from ريح (a wind) which is described in another verse as الريح العقيم (a barren wind). Therefore, رياح (winds) and ريح (a wind) are quite different.

Ibn ʿĀshur (1984) and Al-Qurṭubī (2006) claim that this verse illustrates the benefits of the winds; the winds are described as fertilizers since they contain humidity which is the reason behind the rainfall, and bear helpful dust, benefits and blessings. Moreover, Ibn Manzur (1955) confirms that the winds function as fertilizers because they carry dew and then they insert it in the clouds. As a result, the clouds will assemble and become rain. In terms of trees' fertilization, Ibn ʿĀshur (1984) states that the winds transfer the pollen from the male into the female trees and consequently the female trees will be fertilized and will, as a consequence, produce crops. In fact, the process of tree fertilization by the winds is called wind fertilization in biology. Al-Shaʿrawī (1991) claims that رياح (winds) purify the air because if it is still, it will be polluted and becomes harmful and poisonous. Consequently, it can be said that the winds are multiple and helpful. The winds implicate mercy and blessing and are described as fertilizers for trees as well as clouds. They purify the air for if it is still, it becomes harmful and poisonous.

4- قال تعالى: ”وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ الرِّيَّاحَ مُبَشِّرَاتٍ وَلِيُذِيقَكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَلِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلُكُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ“ (الروم 46).

“And of His signs is that He looses the winds, bearing good tidings and that He may let you taste of His mercy, and that the ships may run at His commandment, and that you may seek His bounty; haply so you will be thankful” (Al-Rum: 46; Arberry, 2003).

“Among His signs is [the fact] that He sends the winds to bring news so he may let you taste some of His mercy, and so ships may sail at His command, in order that you may seek some of His bounty and so that you may act grateful” (Al-Rum: 46; Irving, 2002).

Al-Ṭabarī (2001) says that this verse emphasizes that Allah alone can send رِيّاح (winds) to prove His singleness and the One Who is over all things competent. Ibn ʿĀshur (1984) demonstrates that the winds are described as good tidings because such winds come before rain. The Arabic word مبشرات (bearing good tidings) is derived from the word بشارة which means good news. Ibn Al-Jawzī (2002) claims that all mentioned blessings in this verse are due to the winds, providing his own exegesis of this verse as follows: “For among His wonders is this: He sends forth [his messages as He sends forth] the winds that bear glad tidings” means that the winds make the people happy; “so that He might give you a taste of His grace” means that Allah may bring blessing and provision through the rain which is carried by the winds; “and that ships might go about” means that the ships sail with the help of such winds; “in quest of some of His bounties” through the marine commerce “and that you might have cause to be grateful” for the blessing of the winds. Ibn ʿĀshur (1984) contends that the winds are described as harbingers of the mercy of Allah and that such winds help form the clouds. So the winds are helpful and blessed because they bear good tidings of rain, fertile the soil, and help ships sail to their destinations.

5- قال تعالى: ”اللّٰهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ فَتُثْبِرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسْفًا فَنَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خَلَالِهِ فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْسِرُونَ” (الروم 48)

-6

“God is He that looses the winds, that stir up clouds; and He spreads them in heaven how He will, and shatters them; then thou seest the rain issuing out of the midst of them, and when He smites with it whomsoever of His servants He will, lo, they rejoice” (Al-Rum: 48; Arberry, 2003).

“God is the One Who sends the winds to blow the clouds along. He spreads them out in the sky just as he wishes, and breaks them up into patches so you see a shower coming from inside them. When He strikes any of His servants whom He wishes with it, they are overjoyed” (Al-Rum: 48; Irving, 2002).

Ibn ʿĀshur (1984) and Al-Mahalī and Al-Sayutī (2003) assert that this verse means that Allah is the One Who sends the winds stirring up and raising the clouds. Ibn ʿĀshur (1984) explains that sending the winds as good tidings of rain is an evidence that Allah alone Who is over anything competent. He also acknowledges that this verse explains the role of the winds in forming the clouds. Ibn ʿĀshur (1984) and Al-Qurṭubī (2006) state that whenever the word رِيّاح (winds) is used in the Holy Qurʾān, it implicates blessing and mercy. Therefore, the winds are beneficial because they raise and stir up clouds and consequently rain comes down out of such clouds.

7- وقال تعالى: ”وَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيَّاحَ فَتُثْبِرُ سَحَابًا فَسُقْنَاهُ إِلَى بَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا كَذٰلِكَ النُّشُورُ” (فاطر 9).

-8

“God is He that looses the winds, that stir up clouds, then We drive it to a dead land and therewith revive the earth, after it is dead. Even so is the Uprising” (Fāṭer: 9; Arberry, 2003).

“God is the One Who sends the winds to blow the clouds along. We drive them on to a dead land, and revive the earth by means of them after it has died. Such is regeneration” (Fāṭer: 9; Irving, 2002).

Al-Ṭabarī (2001) asserts that it is the winds that carry and transfer the clouds. Al-Shaʿrawī (1991) explains the words “send the winds” by saying that Allah is the One Who moves the winds and when the winds move from one place into another, it benefits the people a lot. It purifies the air, stir the clouds up and transfer the clouds to different places and consequently rain comes out of such clouds. Al-Qurṭubī (2006) says that the winds are sent as good tidings of rain and this is a sign of the perfection of the capacity of Allah. It can be concluded that the winds are the good tidings of rain, raise the clouds, stir them up and carry them along to different destinations. Based on these interpretations, the meanings of the Qurʾānic word رِيح (winds) will be summarized in Table (1) p.11.

Nuances between the two words and their reflection in the translation of the Qurʾān

After conducting an in-depth analysis of the contextual meanings of the two words in the Qurʾān, it appears that there exist some nuances between these two words which seem to be synonymous at the first glance. The following sections highlight the nuances that exist between the two near-synonyms based on RC-S approach and shed light on how such nuances are reflected in the two English translations.

Denotative meanings

The analysis of the contextual meanings of the two words revealed that there exist some nuances between رِيح (a wind) and رِيح (winds) in terms of their denotative meanings. It seems that there are some differences in denotation between رِيح (a wind) and رِيح (winds) in terms of the nature, function and effect of this moving air. Such nuances are summarized in the following Table:

Table (1) *The Denotative Meanings of the Two Words*

رِيح (a wind)	رِيح (winds)
is tight and assembled together and goes to one direction and that is why it is harmful;	are multiple and spread in different directions and go to different destinations;
rarely blows;	blow every day and night;
implicates harm, damage, violence, punishment, displeasure, infliction and torment;	implicate mercy, blessing and benefit;
brings nothing of good since it does not bear rain;	are sent to unfold with the mercy of Allah i.e. disperse before rain;
is described as withering, devastating, strong and harmful;	are described as fertilizer since they fertilize the clouds as well as trees;
was strong, violent, extremely cold, poisonous, deadly and destructive;	are helpful because they renew and purify the air for if it is still, it becomes polluted, harmful and poisonous;
-is strong, violent, furious, deadly, ruining, destructive, clamorous and intensively noisy; -is described a hurricane;	are described as نشورا, meaning in Arabic the gentle, kind, and pleasant winds which peacefully and smoothly spread in different

	directions;
is a wind containing a blast, of extreme cold or hot that smote the tillage as well as the crops and destroys it;	are helpful and blessed winds;
is described as being barren in the Holy Qur'an because it does not fertilize clouds or trees;	fertile the soil and help ships sail to their destinations and fertilize the trees as well as clouds;
does not help form clouds and does not help produce rain;	are beneficial because they bear heavy clouds, with rain, stir them up, and carry them along to different places; and
-was loosed upon some nations (e.g. Hud's people) and the disbelievers in Al-Aḥzāb battle as torment, displeasure, punishment and affliction.	are described as the bearers of good tidings and the harbingers of Allah's Mercy (rain).

Coming back to the translations of these words, it seems that the translators failed to map these nuances onto English while translating these words. It seems that the translators thought that the difference between these two words is only in terms of whether the word is singular or plural. In fact, translating these words into "a wind" and "winds" does not reflect all the nuances between these near-synonyms and thus the reader or the listener will not perceive the differences in denotation that exist between such near-synonyms.

Connotative meaning

Connotative meaning is the associative meaning that a word has besides its denotative meaning. Based on the analysis of the contexts of different verses of the Holy Qur'an, it seems that the lexical item ریح (a wind) has a negative associative meaning apart from its denotative meaning. It is always associated with torment, punishment, displeasure, threat, ruination and affliction. On the contrary, the lexical item رياح (winds) has a positive associative meaning aside from its denotative meaning. The word رياح (winds) is always associated with mercy, benefit and blessing. Translating these two words as (a wind) and (winds) does not communicate their connotative meaning and the reader will not gain access to the intended meaning and therefore the Qur'anic message will not be faithfully conveyed. In other words, the translators failed to convey the positive connotative meaning of رياح (winds) and also the negative connotative meaning of ریح (a wind). If the connotative meaning of the two words is not reflected in the translation, the emotive meaning of these words will not be also conveyed and the translated words do not have the same effect on the readers or listeners as the original words do on the first language readers. This will be highlighted in the next section.

Affective meaning

By using the word رياح (winds), the Speaker's (Allah) implied attitude to the listeners or readers is to produce highly emotional overtones of His blessing and mercy on the mankind. These emotional overtones have an impact on the listeners or readers. On the contrary, the word ریح (a wind) is used by the Speaker to convey an attitudinal overtone of anger as well as threat. However, these emotional and attitudinal overtones are not reflected in the English translations. Consequently, the translated words do not have the same impact on the readers or listeners as the original words do on the first language readers or listeners. Both translators failed to produce

such emotional overtones by introducing no impact into the target text while translating these two Qur'ānic near-synonyms. In other words, both translators could not render the attitudinal effect of the original near-synonyms and could not communicate the nuances respecting the attitudinal meanings faithfully as demonstrated in the original Qur'ānic near-synonyms. The emotional overtones of mercy and blessing are not reflected in both English translations and the emotional overtones of anger and threat are not also preserved in the translations.

Findings and Discussions

The contextual analysis of the two Qur'ānic near-synonyms reveals that the difference between the two words is not in terms of whether the word is singular or plural. Such words have nuances in terms of their denotative and expressive meaning. It seems that they have distinct and different semantic constituents as noticed in the semantic analysis of the two words in their Qur'ānic contexts insofar as the speaker can affirm one while denying the other. It is perhaps crucial to indicate that Cruse (2000) proposes that two lexical items are considered near-synonyms if it is possible to assert one while denying the other. Cruse provides this sentence as an example: “He was not killed but I can assure you that he was not murdered, madam”. The analysis of the verses of the Holy Qur'ān reveals that it is possible to say it is ریح (a wind) but not رياح (winds). It is noteworthy that this is also asserted in the Hadīth narrated by Ibn 'Abbās in which the Prophet Mohammed said when he saw wind(s): “O Allah! Make it رياح (winds) and do not make it ریح (a wind)”. Therefore, these words are deemed to be near-synonyms. This conclusion goes in congruence with Al-Sha'rawī (1993) and Al-Omari and Abu-Melhim (2014) who applaud that full synonymy does not exist in the Holy Qur'ān and what exists in the Holy Qur'ān should be simply termed near-synonymy.

It is also revealed that although the two Qur'ānic near-synonyms seem to be synonymous, they convey different semantic meanings. However, while translating the two near-synonyms in the Holy Qur'ān, the translators failed to realize the subtle differences between these two near-synonyms and rendered them inadequate in the target language. Although ریح (a wind) was rendered singular and رياح (winds) was rendered plural in the target language, the nuances between the two lexical items are not reflected in the translation. In other words, the translators failed to preserve the denotative, connotative and affective meanings of these Qur'ānic near-synonyms while translating such near-synonyms. Therefore, it would have been better had the translator explained ریح (a wind) as a [harmful] wind or gale and رياح (winds) as [helpful] winds. Such translation could be more faithful.

As explained in the preceding paragraph, the translations of such near-synonyms seem to be relatively literal and are not equivalent to the Qur'ānic near-synonyms in terms of their denotative and expressive meaning. Baker (2011) asserts that the equivalence at the lexical level contributes to the achievement of the overall equivalence of a certain text. Baker also claims that the denotative and expressive meanings of a word should be reflected in the translation in order to achieve the equivalence at the lexical level.

Moreover, it should not be left unmentioned that the use of onomatopoeia in ریح فيها صير (a wind wherein is a blast) and ریحاً صرّصراً (a clamorous wind) represent one of the excellences of the Holy Qur'ān which are so sublime. Such onomatopoeia is inimitable and is difficult or perhaps impossible to translate in another language. Although these specific words are used to

convey a meaning in the Qur'ānic text, it is noticed that such a meaning is not conveyed and that there is inevitable translation loss in conveying the effect made by such onomatopoeia.

These unfaithful translations of the Qur'ānic near-synonyms might be attributed to many factors among which the lack of the English equivalents since there is only one word for ریح (a wind) and رياح (winds) in English. It might be also attributed to the fact that the translators did not delve deeply in the exegeses of the Holy Qur'ān which are of great significance to understanding and perceiving the meanings of the Qur'ānic words. It seems that the context-based meanings of the Qur'ānic near-synonyms are not conveyed and that is why the context should be analyzed before the translation of the Qur'ānic near-synonyms takes place. This result is similar to that of Issa (2011) who points out that translators should consider the contextual meaning of Qur'ānic near-synonyms in their translation.

It is worth mentioning here that Arberry (2003) did not only fail to reflect the nuances between the near-synonymous pair but also inappropriately used a word which does not collocate with the word ریح (a wind). Arberry inappropriately translated the verb يرسل as (loose) with both Qur'ānic near-synonyms. In English, this verb means “to make something unpleasant begin” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2007) and consequently it has a negative meaning. Since رياح (winds) has a positive meaning, it can be said that the verb (loose) does not collocate with this word and thus his translation of this verb in the context where رياح (winds) is used is inappropriate. In fact, English has the equivalent of the Arabic verb يرسل (send) which is appropriately used by Irving (2002) in the context where the word رياح (winds) is used. Apart from the previously mentioned motives, this might be attributed to the lack of Islamic backgrounds on the part of the translator since the translator (Arberry) is non-Muslim. It seems that the Islamic background significantly contributes to understanding the Qur'ānic words. This result is allied to that obtained by Behzadi & Mirza (2016). Overall, the results of this study are congruent with those provided by Al-Sowaidi (2011), Issa (2011) and Alazzam (2005) in terms of the fact that the Qur'ānic near-synonyms are inadequately translated because the nuances between near-synonyms are not reflected in the translation.

Conclusion

It is perhaps crucial to indicate that the Qur'ānic text is distinct from all other texts written by human beings for it is revealed by Allah in Arabic language. Every Qur'ānic word is carefully selected to convey a certain meaning and thus replacing a Qur'ānic word by another does not communicate the intended meaning in that context. This study reveals that the nuances between near-synonyms do exist which are, in some cases, difficult to understand even by the native speakers of Arabic. Such differences in meaning need a lot of consideration, especially when they are translated into another language.

Finally, it is recommended that the translators of the Holy Qur'ān should pay much more attention to the shades of meaning of near-synonyms. They should identify the nuances between the Qur'ānic near-synonyms and make sure that the differences in meaning between near-synonyms are reflected in their translations. Moreover, it is found the context of verses in which the Qur'ānic near-synonyms are used plays a key role in providing the differences between the near-synonyms. Therefore, translators of the Holy Qur'ān should carry out contextual analysis so as to identify the differences between near-synonyms before the translation takes place. Readers and translators should look for the differences between the Qur'ānic near-synonyms whenever

they find two words with seemingly synonymous meanings in order to perceive the Qur'ānic message appropriately. They should also consult the exegeses of the Holy Qur'ān since they are intended to clearly explicate the Qur'ānic words and texts. In particular, translators should deeply delve in the exegeses of the Qur'ānic verses in which the near-synonyms are used. Then, they should do their best to convey the nuances between the near-synonyms in their translation. For future research, it seems that there are a few studies which investigated the Qur'ānic near-synonyms and how the nuances between near-synonyms are reflected in the translation. Much research is needed to investigate the translation of the near-synonyms particularly in the Holy Qur'ān since it is an important religious book for all Muslims all over the globe.

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