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# Translation Analysis of Qur'anic Idioms in the Form of *Jumlah Fi'liyyah*: A Newmark and Nida-Taber Study of Three Indonesian Translations

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**Abstract**

*Idiomatic expressions in the Qur'an pose distinctive challenges for translators, since their meaning cannot be derived from the literal sum of their lexical components. This study examines the translation of three Qur'anic idioms constructed in the jumlah fi'liyyah (verbal sentence) pattern: yuqallibu kaffayhi (QS Al-Kahf: 42, expressing regret), la taj'al yadaka maghlulatan ila 'unuqik (QS Al-Isra: 29, prohibiting stinginess), and qad afda ba'dukum ila ba'din (QS An-Nisa: 21, a euphemism for marital consummation). Each idiom's rhetorical status is first established through seven classical and contemporary tafsir works (Ibn Kathir, Al-Kasysyaf, Jalalayn, At-Tahrir wa At-Tanwir, Al-Munir, Safwah At-Tafasir, and Al-Bahr Al-Muhit), before its rendering is compared across three Indonesian translations representing institutional, contemporary-academic, and interpretive translation philosophies (Kemenag RI, M. Quraish Shihab, and Muhammad Thalib respectively). Employing a qualitative descriptive method with content analysis, each rendering is classified according to Newmark's (1988) translation procedures and evaluated for its degree of equivalence following Nida and Taber's (1969) formal-dynamic framework. The tafsir synthesis reveals that the three idioms occupy distinct rhetorical categories, kinayah (metonymy) for the regret idiom, isti'arah tamthiliyyah (representational metaphor) for the stinginess idiom, and an unlabeled lexical euphemism for the marital idiom, a distinction that correlates closely with the translation procedures each idiom subsequently receives. This case-based study offers a methodological model for grounding idiom translation analysis in classical tafsir and its implications for Arabic-Indonesian translation pedagogy.*

**Keywords:** Equivalence; Idiom Translation; Jumlah Fi'liyyah; Newmark; Nida-Taber

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## INTRODUCTION

A 2025 analysis of 37 metonymic expressions in the Qur'an found that both human and AI-assisted translations frequently rendered figurative expressions into non-figurative forms, accounting for 44.1% and 59.9% of the cases, respectively (Metwally & Bin-Hady, 2025). Recent scholarship has likewise demonstrated that Qur'anic translatability problems extend beyond lexical equivalence, as the semantic density of Qur'anic Arabic often requires contextual mediation when a single expression carries multiple layers of meaning (Almjlad, 2025). Within the Indonesian context, an investigation of the official Qur'an translation produced by the Ministry of Religious Affairs identified 90 instances of *kināyah*, from which

ten legally oriented expressions were selected as cases of semantic modulation from denotative to connotative meanings (Nurfauzia et al., 2024). A comparative study of three English translations of the Qur'an further revealed that translators alternate between preserving metaphorical imagery and explicating figurative meanings according to contextual and communicative demands (Hammoodi & Moindjie, 2024). These findings indicate that the central challenge of Qur'anic translation does not merely concern lexical substitution but rather the simultaneous preservation of meaning, rhetorical function, and accessibility for target-language readers.

The challenge becomes more complex in the translation of idiomatic expressions because their meanings cannot be adequately reconstructed through the cumulative lexical meanings of their individual constituents, requiring translation procedures that account for both semantic and pragmatic functions (Newmark, 1988). From the perspective of Nida and Taber, equivalence involves maintaining the source message while producing a natural and comprehensible response in the target language, thereby placing formal correspondence and communicative effect in a productive tension (Nida & Taber, 1969). Qur'anic figurative language intensifies this challenge because shifts from denotative to connotative meanings may function not only to communicate propositional content but also to preserve politeness, rhetorical subtlety, and interpretive clarity (Nurfauzia et al., 2024). Consequently, the decision to retain or remove source-language imagery cannot be evaluated independently of the rhetorical status of the expression, since particular images may perform semantic and pragmatic functions that cannot always be replaced by direct lexical equivalents. This problem is particularly relevant to the Indonesian translations by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, M. Quraish Shihab, and Muhammad Thalib, which represent institutional, contemporary-academic, and interpretive approaches to rendering Qur'anic discourse.

Within the corpus examined in this study, this translational problem is manifested in three idioms structured as *jumlah fi'liyyah* that literally describe physical actions but pragmatically activate substantially different meanings. The expression *yuqallibu kaffayhi* in QS. Al-Kahf [18]: 42 represents a bodily gesture associated with intense regret, *lā taj'al yadaka maghlūlatan ilā 'unuqik* in QS. Al-Isrā' [17]: 29 constructs an embodied image of miserliness, whereas *qad afḍā ba'ḍukum ilā ba'ḍin* in QS. An-Nisā' [4]: 21 euphemistically conveys marital intimacy. Although all three expressions share the syntactic form of a verbal sentence, the tafsir tradition does not classify them under an identical rhetorical category. Their Indonesian renderings also reveal different translational orientations, since some retain the source imagery while others directly express the intended figurative meaning. The central issue, therefore, is not whether literal or non-literal translation should be preferred in principle, but whether the selected translation procedure corresponds to the rhetorical status of each idiom while maintaining an acceptable degree of equivalence.

Previous studies have generally examined Qur'anic figurative translation through the lenses of translation techniques, strategies, modulation, metaphor, or equivalence, although they differ considerably in rhetorical unit, language pair, and analytical foundation. Nurfauzia, Al Farisi, and Maulani (2024), using content analysis of *kināyah* in the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs translation, identified ten legally oriented expressions undergoing semantic modulation and showed that their implicatures were associated with sensitive meanings such as sexual relations, marriage, and menstruation. Metwally and Bin-Hady (2025) compared 37 Qur'anic metonymic expressions in human and AI-assisted translations and found a strong tendency to convert metonymic expressions into non-figurative equivalents, while human translators demonstrated relatively greater capacity to preserve rhetorical depth. Hammoodi and Moindjie (2024), applying Newmark's translation procedures and Nida's equivalence framework to three English Qur'an translations, found that translators moved between retaining metaphorical imagery and explicating figurative meanings in order to negotiate adequacy and acceptability. Collectively, these studies demonstrate a persistent tension between rhetorical-image

preservation and semantic accessibility, yet they have not adequately integrated tafsir-based rhetorical classification with a comparative analysis of three Indonesian translations and a systematic evaluation of both translation procedures and equivalence.

The present study shares with previous research an interest in the difficulties of translating Qur'anic figurative language when the intended meaning cannot be reduced to the surface meaning of the linguistic expression. It also adopts a qualitative orientation toward translation products in order to examine the relationship among translational choices, preservation of meaning, and rhetorical effects. The principal difference lies in the placement of a synthesis of seven classical and contemporary tafsir works as an analytical stage preceding the classification of translation procedures and the evaluation of equivalence. A further distinction is the parallel comparison of three idioms sharing the syntactic configuration of *jumlah fi'liyyah* but occupying different rhetorical categories, examined across three Indonesian translations through Newmark's procedural framework and Nida–Taber's formal–dynamic equivalence perspective. These differences create an analytical space that has not been sufficiently addressed by studies limited to a single rhetorical device, a single translation procedure, or translation comparison without prior tafsir-based determination of rhetorical status.

Variation in Qur'anic translation strategies indicates that semantic clarity alone cannot determine whether the rhetorical characteristics of an idiom have been adequately represented, whereas previous studies have generally evaluated translation products after figurative units have already been identified. The dominant limitation can therefore be characterized as a *knowledge gap* reinforced by a *methodological gap*. The *knowledge gap* arises because the relationship between the rhetorical category of an idiom, the translation procedure selected to render it, and the resulting degree of equivalence remains insufficiently explained, while the *methodological gap* concerns the limited incorporation of tafsir synthesis as a verification stage prior to translation analysis. In particular, insufficient attention has been given to whether *kināyah*, *isti'ārah tamthīliyyah*, and lexical euphemism, despite being realized through the same *jumlah fi'liyyah* pattern, produce different translational tendencies when rendered by Indonesian translators representing different translation philosophies. This study addresses these gaps by establishing tafsir-based rhetorical categories before systematically relating them to Newmark's translation procedures and Nida–Taber's degrees of equivalence across three Indonesian Qur'an translations.

The urgency of this investigation arises from evidence that translating Qur'anic *kināyah* may involve movement between denotative and connotative meanings, with direct implications for semantic clarity, linguistic politeness, and readability in the target language (Nurfauzia et al., 2024). From an academic perspective, evaluating translations without first determining the rhetorical status of the source expression may lead to an analytical conflation of semantic explicitness and rhetorical fidelity, although these two dimensions do not necessarily coincide. From a pedagogical perspective, excessively literal translation may obscure the idiomatic meaning for learners, whereas excessive explicitation may remove rhetorical imagery, stylistic subtlety, or euphemistic functions embedded in Qur'anic discourse. This issue is particularly consequential for Arabic language educators, translation instructors, students of Arabic, Qur'anic studies scholars, translators, editors, and institutions that employ translated Qur'anic texts as instructional resources. A systematic comparison of three Indonesian translations is therefore necessary to clarify how source imagery, interpretive accessibility, and rhetorical function can be balanced within the pedagogical and scholarly context of Arabic–Indonesian translation.

The distinguishing feature of this study lies in its sequential analytical design that connects tafsir-based rhetorical classification, translation procedures, and degrees of equivalence across three *jumlah fi'liyyah* idioms and three Indonesian Qur'an translations. Conceptually, the study demonstrates that translation procedures should be evaluated in relation to whether the source expression functions as *kināyah*, *isti'ārah tamthīliyyah*, or

lexical euphemism, rather than through a simplified opposition between literal and free translation. Empirically and methodologically, the case-based design introduces an analytical sequence consisting of tafsir synthesis, Newmark-based procedural classification, and Nida–Taber-based equivalence assessment, enabling translation decisions to be traced from the rhetorical status of the source expression to the quality of its target-language rendering. Pedagogically, this framework can support Arabic language and translation education by training learners to distinguish expressions whose rhetorical imagery should be retained from those for which a functional equivalent may offer a more appropriate solution. The study's added value therefore lies not merely in combining Newmark and Nida–Taber, but in positioning tafsir-based rhetorical verification as the interpretive foundation for analysing Arabic–Indonesian Qur'anic idiom translation.

This study aims to analyse the translation of three Qur'anic idioms structured as *jumlah fi'liyyah* by establishing their rhetorical categories through seven tafsir works, classifying their translation procedures according to Newmark, and evaluating their degrees of equivalence through the Nida–Taber framework in the translations of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, M. Quraish Shihab, and Muhammad Thalib. It further compares the three cases to explain the relationship among rhetorical category, translation procedure, and the resulting degree of equivalence.

**METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach with library research to examine the translation of Qur'anic idioms structured as *jumlah fi'liyyah* in three Indonesian translations. The approach was selected to interpret the relationship between rhetorical meaning, translation procedures, and equivalence rather than to measure statistical relationships.

The research design was descriptive-analytical, drawing on Qur'anic rhetoric, Newmark's translation procedures, and Nida and Taber's equivalence framework. The analysis focused on *yuqallibu kaffayhi* in QS. Al-Kahf [18]: 42, *lā taj'al yadaka maghlūlatan ilā 'unuqik* in QS. Al-Isra' [17]: 29, and *qad afḍā ba'ḍukum ilā ba'ḍin* in QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 21. Each idiom was first interpreted through tafsir before its translation procedure was classified according to Newmark (1988) and its degree of equivalence was evaluated through Nida and Taber's (1969) framework.

The research data consisted of the three Qur'anic expressions, their renderings in the translations of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, M. Quraish Shihab, and Muhammad Thalib, and explanations from seven tafsir works. These included *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Al-Kashshāf*, *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, *Ṣafwah al-Tafāsīr*, and *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*. These sources were selected because they provide linguistic, semantic, and rhetorical interpretations relevant to the selected idioms.

Data were collected through documentation by compiling the Arabic expressions, their Qur'anic contexts, tafsir explanations, and corresponding Indonesian translations. The process involved identifying relevant passages, recording their interpretations, and organizing the data according to each idiom and translation source.

The research instrument consisted of structured analysis guidelines covering literal meaning, figurative meaning, rhetorical category, translation procedure, and degree of equivalence. Translation procedures were identified using Newmark's (1988) framework, particularly literal translation, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, and paraphrase. Equivalence was assessed through Nida and Taber's (1969) formal–dynamic perspective and classified as high, moderate, or low according to semantic accuracy, rhetorical preservation, and naturalness in the target language.

The data were analysed using content analysis with an interpretive-comparative approach. The analysis proceeded through four stages: synthesizing tafsir interpretations, determining rhetorical categories, identifying translation procedures, and evaluating equivalence. The findings were subsequently compared across the three idioms and

translations to identify patterns connecting rhetorical category, translation procedure, and equivalence (Newmark, 1988).

This method enabled an in-depth examination of Qur'anic idiom translation by integrating tafsir-based interpretation with modern translation theory. The integration of rhetorical interpretation and equivalence assessment also provides a systematic basis for evaluating how figurative meanings can be preserved or adapted in Arabic–Indonesian translation (Nida & Taber, 1969).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Idiom of Regret: *Yuqallibu Kaffayhi* (QS. Al-Kahf [18]: 42)

The verse reads: **عُرُوشِهَا عَلَىٰ خَاوِيَةٌ وَهِيَ فِيهَا أَنْفَقَ مَا عَلَىٰ كَفَّيْهِ يُقَلِّبُ فَأَصْبَحَ بِثَمَرِهِ وَأُحِيطَ** ("And his fruits were destroyed, so he began turning his palms over in regret for what he had spent on it, while the garden lay collapsed upon its trellises.").

### Synthesis of Seven Tafsir Works

The five tafsir works that discuss the idiom *yuqallibu kaffayhi* consistently classify it as *kinayah* (metonymy), rather than *isti'arah*. Al-Zamakhsyari, in *Al-Kashshaf* (Vol. 2, p. 724), explicitly describes it as *kinayah 'an al-nadam wa al-tahassur* ("a kinayah for regret and deep sorrow") and associates it with similar expressions such as "biting one's fingers," both functioning as conventional signs of regret in the Arabic rhetorical tradition. Ibn 'Ashur, in *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir* (Vol. 15, p. 327), reinforces this classification through the expression *kinayah 'an al-tahassur* and provides an intratextual comparison with another Qur'anic idiom of a similar pattern, namely "biting the fingertips out of rage" in QS. Ali 'Imran [3]: 119. This comparison indicates that bodily gestures functioning as markers of emotion constitute a recurring rhetorical pattern in the Qur'an. Wahbah al-Zuhaili in *Al-Tafsir al-Munir* (Vol. 15, p. 249) and Ali al-Sabuni in *Safwah al-Tafasir* (Vol. 2, p. 179) likewise affirm its status as *kinayah*, while adding a more specific description of the gesture, namely "striking the right hand against the left" (*yadribu bi yaminihi 'ala shimalihi*), following al-Qurtubi's explanation. *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* (p. 386) does not employ the technical term *kinayah*, but provides a semantically consistent interpretation, namely *nadaman wa tahassuran* ("out of regret and sorrow") (Naseef, 2018).

*Tafsir Ibn Kathir* further supports this interpretation through a report from Qatadah stating that the disbelieving man struck his hands together as a sign of regret and disappointment over the destruction of his wealth. This report, originating from the generation of the *tabi'in*, indicates that such an interpretation of the expression as a sign of regret had already been recognized in the early exegetical tradition, long before it was formally conceptualized by later scholars of *balaghah* (Mut, 2016).

Abu Hayyan, in *Al-Bahr al-Muhit* (juz. 7, p. 181), provides the most detailed account of the mechanics of this gesture. He explains that the palms are turned from a downward-facing to an upward-facing position, describing the movement as *fi'lat al-nadim al-mutahassir* ("the characteristic action of a person overwhelmed by regret and sorrow"). He also explicitly confirms its status as *kinayah* through the statement *lamma kana hadha al-fi'lu kinayatan 'an al-nadam* ("since this action constitutes a kinayah for regret"). Abu Hayyan further explains the grammatical reason why the verb *yuqallibu* in this verse is made transitive through the preposition *'ala*, following the general transitivity pattern associated with verbs denoting regret (Al-Heeh & Diek, 2021).

The agreement among the seven tafsir works regarding its classification as *kinayah* is methodologically significant. The idiom should not be treated merely as an open metaphor subject to unrestricted interpretation, but rather as an established rhetorical unit in the exegetical tradition that has consistently been understood across generations as a conventional marker of regret. Its translational implication is that such a *kinayah* requires the translator to preserve the bodily image of turning the hands while simultaneously ensuring that its emotive function regret is communicated. In this respect, *kinayah* functions as a bridge between a concrete image and an abstract meaning, both of which are

intentionally activated rather than rhetorically concealed (Hammoodi & Moindjie, 2024).

**Comparison of the Three Translations**

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (2008, p. 521) renders this idiom as "*membolak-balikkan kedua telapak tangannya (tanda menyesal)*" ("turning both of his palms over [as a sign of regret]"). M. Quraish Shihab (2021, p. 298) translates it as "*membolak-balikkan kedua telapak tangannya (sebagai pertanda penyesalan yang luar biasa)*" ("turning both of his palms over [as a sign of extraordinary regret]"). Muhammad Thalib (2018, p. 298), by contrast, renders the passage as "*jadilah dia termangu-mangu*" ("he became stunned and bewildered"), while also introducing an independent causal interpretation in the preceding clause, "*buah-buahan di kebunnya disambar petir hingga musnah*" ("the fruits in his garden were struck by lightning and completely destroyed"), an elaboration not explicitly stated in the Qur'anic wording or in the five tafsir works examined.

Newmark's Procedure. Both the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Quraish Shihab employ literal translation with addition. The original *kinayah* image of turning the hands is fully retained in accordance with the consensus of the seven tafsir works, while the parenthetical explanations function as interpretive glosses. Shihab adds the intensifier "extraordinary," which slightly strengthens the emotional intensity but remains within the same translational procedure. Thalib, in contrast, applies a functional equivalent, completely removing the bodily image of the *kinayah* and replacing it with the emotional state "stunned and bewildered." He also introduces a paraphrase in explaining the cause of the event through the additional phrase "struck by lightning."

Nida–Taber Equivalence. The translations by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Shihab demonstrate a high degree of equivalence because the established *kinayah* image is fully retained, remains consistent with the seven tafsir works, and is made semantically accessible through explanatory glosses without erasing its rhetorical trace. Thalib's translation is classified as low in terms of fidelity to the *kinayah* image established in the tafsir tradition because "stunned and bewildered" entirely eliminates the hand gesture that constitutes the rhetorical identity of the idiom according to the five tafsir works. The additional phrase "struck by lightning" also introduces a causal elaboration extending beyond the explicit Qur'anic wording and the seven tafsir sources consulted. Nevertheless, in terms of readability and target-language naturalness alone, Thalib's translation remains communicative; its lower degree of equivalence is therefore specific to rhetorical fidelity rather than general comprehensibility.

**Idiom Prohibiting Miserliness: *La Taj'al Yadaka Maghlulatan ila 'Unuqik* (QS. Al-Isra' [17]: 29)**

The verse reads: **مَحْسُورًا مَلُومًا فَتَقْعُدَ الْبَسْطِ كُلَّ تَبْسُطْهَا وَلَا عُنُقِكَ إِلَىٰ مَغْلُولَةً يَدَكَ تَجْعَلْ وَلَا** ("Do not keep your hand shackled to your neck, nor extend it completely, lest you become blameworthy and regretful.").

**Synthesis of Seven Tafsir Works**

Unlike the first idiom, the five tafsir works that discuss this expression consistently classify it as *isti'arah tamthiliyyah* (representational metaphor), rather than *kinayah*. Wahbah al-Zuhaili, in *Al-Tafsir al-Munir* (juz. 15, pp. 50–51), explicitly employs the technical designation *isti'arah tamthiliyyah*, explaining it as *mathalan lil-bakhil alladhi habasa yadahu 'an al-'ata' biman shuddat yaduhu ila 'unuqihi* ("a representational metaphor comparing a miser who withholds his hand from giving to a person whose hand is bound to his neck"). Ali al-Sabuni, in *Safwah al-Tafasir* (juz. 2, p. 149), uses the same term, *al-isti'arah al-tamthiliyyah*, with an almost identical explanation. Al-Zamakhsyari, in *Al-Kashshaf* (Vol. 2, p. 662), describes it as *tamthil* (representation) for the prohibition of both miserliness and extravagance, emphasizing that the verse advocates moderation (*al-iqtisad*) between the two extremes. Ibn 'Ashur, in *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir* (juz. 15, p. 85), enriches this interpretation through an etymological explanation: *al-ghull* refers to shackles used to bind a prisoner's hands, so the image of a hand bound to the neck specifically evokes a captive

whose hand is completely immobilized. *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* (p. 369) offers a concise gloss without employing a technical rhetorical label: *la tumsikha 'an al-infaq kulla al-imsak* ("do not completely withhold it from spending") (Al-Saud, 2025).

Ibn Kathir (juz. 5, p. 70) broadens the interpretation through an intertextual reference. The expression "a shackled hand" appears not only in this verse but also in QS. Al-Ma'idah [5]: 64, where the Jews are described as blasphemously alleging that "Allah's hand is shackled" (*yadullahi maghlulah*). Ibn Kathir interprets this allegation as an attribution of miserliness to Allah. The recurrence of the same expression in two different Qur'anic contexts strongly suggests that "a shackled hand" had become an established Qur'anic idiom for miserliness rather than an image constructed exclusively for a single verse (Naseef, 2018).

Abu Hayyan, in *Al-Bahr al-Muhit* (juz. 7, p. 42), provides the most technically elaborate rhetorical analysis among the seven tafsir works. He explicitly defines the device through the statement *hadhihi isti'aratun ustu'ira fiha al-mahsus lil-ma'qul* ("this is a metaphor in which something perceptible to the senses is borrowed to represent something abstract"). Miserliness is an abstract condition that prevents a person from disposing of wealth, and the image of shackles binding the hand to the neck is therefore employed to represent it. Abu Hayyan also identifies a *tibaq* between *qabd* (contracting/withholding) and *bast* (extending), which constitute two opposing poles reinforcing the metaphorical contrast. His analysis is further supported by a verse of Abu Tammam describing the generosity of Caliph al-Mu'tasim, whose hand had become so accustomed to being extended that his fingers would no longer respond when he wished to close them. This illustrates that the hand as a rhetorical marker of miserliness and generosity was also conventional in classical Arabic poetry rather than exclusive to Qur'anic discourse (Sardaraz & Ali, 2021).

The explicit agreement of five of the seven tafsir works on the designation *tamthil* or *isti'arah tamthiliyyah*, reinforced by Ibn Kathir's intertextual evidence, demonstrates that this idiom operates differently from the first. It is not merely an indexical marker (*kinayah*) of a single characteristic, but rather a paired representation that constructs a continuum between two deficiencies: miserliness at one extreme, represented by the hand shackled to the neck, and extravagance at the other, represented by the fully extended hand. Methodologically, a translation that disrupts either side of this representational pairing risks weakening the overall rhetorical structure of the *isti'arah tamthiliyyah*, since its force lies precisely in the contrast between the two poles rather than in either image considered independently (Hammoodi & Moindjie, 2024).

**Comparison of the Three Translations**

The Ministry of Religious Affairs (p. 500) renders the idiom as "*janganlah engkau jadikan tanganmu terbelenggu pada lehermu*" ("do not make your hand shackled to your neck"). M. Quraish Shihab (p. 285) translates it almost identically as "*janganlah engkau jadikan tanganmu terbelenggu ke lehermu*" ("do not make your hand shackled to your neck"), accompanied by the brief gloss "(*kikir*)" ("miserly"). Muhammad Thalib (p. 285), as in the first idiom, completely removes the representational image and directly renders its intended meaning as "*dan janganlah kamu berlaku kikir*" ("and do not be miserly").

Newmark's Procedure. The Ministry of Religious Affairs employs literal translation without an additional gloss for the idiomatic phrase itself. Shihab also adopts literal translation but adds the brief explanatory gloss "miserly," thereby explicitly bridging the representational image and its intended meaning. According to the tafsir synthesis above, this strategy is particularly effective because *isti'arah tamthiliyyah* requires the reader to recognize both the image and its conceptual meaning, which may not be immediately accessible to readers unfamiliar with the rhetorical convention. Thalib again applies a functional equivalent, removing the entire representational structure of hand–shackle–neck and replacing it with the direct characterization "be miserly."

Nida–Taber Equivalence. Shihab's translation demonstrates a high degree of

equivalence because it preserves the image of the *isti'arah tamthiliyyah* while explicitly bridging it to its intended meaning through a gloss. The Ministry of Religious Affairs translation is classified as moderate because the rhetorical image is retained without an explanatory gloss on the phrase itself, potentially requiring additional interpretive effort from readers unfamiliar with the metaphor, particularly because the second half of the representational pair the fully extended hand appears in a separate clause and is likewise not glossed. Thalib's translation is classified as low in terms of rhetorical fidelity because it removes the *isti'arah tamthiliyyah* structure that, according to four of the five tafsir works, constitutes the rhetorical core of the verse. Nevertheless, from the perspective of semantic explicitness, Thalib's version may be the most immediately accessible to general readers.

**Euphemistic Idiom: *Qad Afda Ba'dukum ila Ba'din* (QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 21)**

The verse reads: **غَلِيظًا مِّيثَاقًا مِنكُم وَأَخَذْنَ بَعْضُكُمْ أَفْضَىٰ وَقَدْ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَكَيْفَ** ("And how could you take it back when some of you have already come intimately to one another, and they [your wives] have taken from you a solemn covenant?").

**Synthesis of Seven Tafsir Works**

The five tafsir works discuss the idiom *afda* differently from the previous two expressions. None of them consistently assigns it the formal technical label of *kinayah* or *isti'arah*; instead, the discussions concentrate on the lexical shift in the meaning of *afda* itself and its ethical function. *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* (p. 103) provides the most concise explanation: *afda: wasala, ba'dukum ila ba'din: bi al-jima' al-muqarrir li al-mahr* ("afda: to reach or connect; some of you to others: through sexual intercourse that establishes the dowry"). *Al-Tafsir al-Munir* (juz. 4, p. 300) offers the most explicit account of the euphemistic nature of the expression, citing a report from Ibn 'Abbas: *al-ifda' fi hadhihi al-ayah al-jima', wa lakinna Allah karimun yakni* ("al-ifda' in this verse means sexual intercourse, but Allah, the Most Generous, speaks of it indirectly"). Al-Zuhaili further explains that Allah intentionally uses *al-ifda'* as a *kinayah* for sexual intercourse in order "to teach believers refined manners" (*li ta'lim al-mu'minin al-adab al-rafi'*). This formulation employs the concept of *kinayah* functionally, although not as a formal rhetorical classification of the entire idiom in the same manner as the first expression (Hidayat et al., 2024).

Ibn 'Ashur, in *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir* (juz. 4, p. 290), provides an etymological explanation by tracing *al-ifda'* to *al-fada'* ("open or spacious space"), since "reaching" involves crossing the space separating two parties. He also emphasizes the ethical dimension of the verse by arguing that reclaiming the dowry after such intimacy contradicts *al-muru'ah*, or moral dignity and honour. *Al-Kashshaf* (p. 492) highlights the strength of the marital bond through a distinctive rhetorical comparison: "It has been said that even twenty days of companionship creates kinship; how much more so what occurs between husband and wife in terms of union and intimate intermingling." *Safwah al-Tafasir* (Vol. 1, p. 244) offers the most direct paraphrase: "How could it be lawful for you to take it back after you have enjoyed marital relations with them?" (Syafi'i et al., 2023).

Ibn Kathir (Juz 2, p. 245) reinforces the interpretation of *afda* as a euphemism for sexual intercourse by relating it to the concept of *al-bud'*, namely the right to marital intimacy associated with the dowry in Islamic marital jurisprudence. He also cites the authentic hadith narrated by Muslim from Jabir in the Farewell Sermon, in which the Prophet Muhammad instructed Muslims to treat their wives well because they had taken them under Allah's trust and made marital intimacy lawful through Allah's word. This hadith situates the idiom *afda* within a broader ethical and theological framework concerning the sanctity of the marital bond, reinforcing al-Zuhaili's explanation of the pedagogical function of Qur'anic euphemism (Mustika et al., 2025).

Abu Hayyan, in *Al-Bahr al-Muhit* (juz. 3, p. 574), makes an important contribution by documenting differences among early Muslim authorities concerning the precise meaning of *afda*. Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, and al-Suddi interpret it as *al-jima'* (sexual intercourse), whereas 'Umar, 'Ali, and several other authorities, together with al-Kalbi and

al-Farra', associate it with *khalwah sahihah* (legally valid seclusion) and the marriage contract itself. Abu Hayyan also provides a rhetorical analysis of the interrogative construction *kayfa ta'khudhunahu*, identifying it as a multilayered *istifham inkari* that rejects both the legitimacy of taking the dowry back and the appropriateness of doing so after *afda* has occurred. In this interpretation, *afda* signifies such a degree of intimacy that reclaiming the dowry becomes ethically incongruent with the relational state already established (Anis & Fareh, 2023).

The absence of a uniform formal *balaghah* label across the seven tafsir works constitutes an important finding in itself and distinguishes this idiom from the preceding two, which receive more explicit and consistent rhetorical classifications. Nevertheless, al-Zuhaili's functional use of *kinayah*, Abu Hayyan's documentation of divergent early interpretations, and the Farewell Sermon hadith cited by Ibn Kathir collectively support the consensus that *afda* represents a semantic shift from the lexical meaning of "reaching" toward marital intimacy. The expression therefore operates as an established lexical euphemism with an explicitly ethical-pedagogical function, rather than as a formally structured *kinayah* or *isti'arah* based on concrete imagery comparable to the first two idioms (Al-Taher & Almahasees, 2025).

**Comparison of the Three Translations**

The Ministry of Religious Affairs (p. 137) renders the idiom as "*kamu telah bergaul satu sama lain (sebagai suami istri)*" ("you have associated intimately with one another [as husband and wife]"). M. Quraish Shihab (p. 81) translates it as "*sebagian kamu telah bergaul luas (sebagai suami-istri) dengan sebagian yang lain*" ("some of you have associated intimately [as husband and wife] with others"). Muhammad Thalib (p. 81) adopts the most direct rendering: "*kalian sudah mengumpuli istri kalian itu*" ("you have already had intercourse with your wives"), while also inserting the address "*wahai para suami*" ("O husbands"), which does not appear in the Qur'anic wording or the five tafsir works.

Newmark's Procedure. All three translations employ a functional equivalent, abandoning the literal lexical meaning of *afda* ("to reach" or "to approach") and replacing it with expressions that directly communicate the euphemistic function of the verse. This is consistent with the tafsir consensus that *afda* functions as a lexical euphemism rather than as an image whose literal form must necessarily be retained. The principal difference lies in the degree of stylistic delicacy: Shihab's "*bergaul luas*" is closest to the refined register emphasized in the tafsir tradition, the Ministry of Religious Affairs uses the more concise "*bergaul*," whereas Thalib employs the much more direct "*mengumpuli*." Thalib further introduces an addition through the vocative "O husbands," which is absent from both the verse and the tafsir sources consulted.

Nida–Taber Equivalence. The translations by Shihab and the Ministry of Religious Affairs demonstrate a high degree of equivalence because both successfully convey the euphemistic function while maintaining a relatively refined target-language register, consistent with al-Zuhaili's emphasis on the Qur'an's deliberate use of *al-adab al-rafi'* ("refined expression"). Thalib's translation is classified as moderate. Its core meaning remains comprehensible and factually accurate, but the greater directness of the expression "*mengumpuli*," together with the added vocative absent from the Qur'anic text and the tafsir sources, slightly weakens the euphemistic subtlety explicitly emphasized in *Al-Tafsir al-Munir*. The reduction in equivalence therefore concerns rhetorical nuance rather than the accuracy of the basic semantic content.

**Cross-Idiom Pattern: Rhetorical Categories and Translation Procedures**

The synthesis of the seven tafsir works across the three idioms produces the central finding of this study: although all three expressions share the *jumlah fi'liyyah* pattern, they occupy three distinct rhetorical categories within *balaghah*. The first, in QS. Al-Kahf [18]: 42, is classified as *kinayah*, explicitly identified by five of the seven tafsir works and reinforced by the report from Qatadah transmitted through Ibn Kathir. The second, in QS.

Al-Isra' [17]: 29, is classified as *isti'arah tamthiliyyah*, explicitly identified by five of the seven tafsir works, including Abu Hayyan's technical definition and his identification of *tibaq*, while also receiving intertextual support from Ibn Kathir. The third, in QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 21, functions as a lexical euphemism without a uniformly assigned formal *balaghah* label; all seven tafsir works recognize the semantic shift and ethical function, while some also preserve differences among early interpreters regarding whether *afda* refers specifically to *jima'* or more broadly to *khalwah*. These different rhetorical categories closely correspond to the translation procedures selected by the three translators.

In the idioms classified as *kinayah* and *isti'arah tamthiliyyah*, where the concrete imagery is explicitly preserved and analysed as a rhetorical unit in the tafsir tradition, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Shihab consistently retain the source imagery through literal translation, accompanied where necessary by explanatory glosses. Thalib, by contrast, consistently removes the rhetorical image in favour of a more direct functional equivalent. The pattern changes in the euphemistic idiom of QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 21 because the tafsir tradition itself does not require preservation of the literal image of "reaching" or "approaching"; rather, *afda* is explicitly understood as a shift toward an intimate meaning. Consequently, all three translators, including the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Shihab, employ functional equivalents. Thalib therefore displays a relatively uniform procedural tendency across the three idioms functional equivalence or paraphrase accompanied by the removal of rhetorical imagery whereas the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Shihab exhibit a more adaptive pattern, retaining imagery when the tafsir tradition foregrounds it and releasing it when the tafsir tradition treats the expression as a lexical euphemism.

These findings indicate that a high degree of equivalence is not inherently associated either with preserving literal form or with consistently abandoning it. Rather, equivalence depends on the correspondence between the selected translation procedure and the rhetorical category established by the tafsir tradition. A translator who applies a single procedure uniformly across different idiomatic types, as observed in Thalib's pattern within this corpus, risks producing lower rhetorical equivalence when an idiom specifically requires preservation of its source imagery, even if the resulting translation remains communicatively clear for general target-language readers.

**CONCLUSION**

This research demonstrates that the translation of Qur'anic idioms structured as *jumlah fi'liyyah* is closely related to the rhetorical characteristics established in the tafsir tradition. Based on the analysis, the three idioms examined do not belong to a single rhetorical category but represent *kinayah*, *isti'arah tamthiliyyah*, and lexical euphemism. These distinctions influence the translation procedures selected by the three Indonesian translators and the degree of equivalence achieved in the target language. Qur'anic idiom translation therefore involves an interrelated process of rhetorical identification, semantic interpretation, translation procedure selection, and equivalence assessment.

The research also shows that the preservation of rhetorical imagery does not automatically determine translation quality. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and M. Quraish Shihab generally adopt adaptive procedures by retaining source imagery when the tafsir tradition emphasizes its rhetorical function and using functional equivalents when the expression operates primarily as a lexical euphemism. Muhammad Thalib, in contrast, tends to prioritize semantic explicitness through functional equivalents and paraphrase, which improves immediate comprehensibility but may reduce rhetorical fidelity. This pattern indicates that translation equivalence depends more strongly on the correspondence between rhetorical category and translation procedure than on the consistent application of a single strategy.

This research confirms that integrating tafsir-based rhetorical analysis with Newmark's translation procedures and Nida and Taber's equivalence framework provides a broader perspective for understanding Qur'anic idiom translation than relying on

translation theory alone. The findings demonstrate that tafsir can function as an interpretive foundation for determining whether a Qur'anic expression should retain its figurative image or be rendered through a more functional target-language equivalent. This integrated approach contributes to Arabic translation studies by connecting classical rhetorical interpretation with modern translation analysis, particularly in examining the relationship between figurative meaning, translation strategy, and target-language equivalence.

Based on these findings, the central proposition developed in this study is that Qur'anic idiom translation requires procedural flexibility grounded in rhetorical interpretation. *Kinayah* and *isti'arah tamthiliyyah* may require greater preservation of source imagery when that imagery constitutes an essential part of the rhetorical meaning, whereas lexical euphemism may be more effectively conveyed through a functional equivalent that preserves semantic delicacy and communicative appropriateness. Qur'anic idiom translation can therefore be understood as an interpretive process that connects tafsir, rhetorical structure, semantic meaning, and translation procedure. This perspective also provides a practical foundation for Arabic translation pedagogy by encouraging learners to identify the rhetorical function of an expression before selecting the most appropriate translation strategy.

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