

## **A Comparative Study of Some Metaphors of Surah Baqarah in French Translations from the Perspective of Newmark (Case study: Regis Blachere's and Jacques Berque's Translations)**

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Received: 19/10/2019  
Accepted: 22/04/2020  
Article Type: Research

### **Abstract**

Today more than ever, in the new era of communication, the role of translation in conveying concepts and creating understanding between cultures and civilizations is evident. One of the issues that has always been discussed in translation studies is the translatability or untranslatability of metaphors. Therefore, theorists in the field of translation have proposed different methods and approaches for translating metaphors so far. Some experts, such as Menachem Dagut and Eugene Nida, believe that metaphors cannot be transferred from one language to another (Jamet, 2003, p.130). In contrast, other translation researchers, such as Raymond van den Broeck and Peter Newmark, have ascertained this possible and have defined solutions for it (*Ibid*).

Considering the significance of sacred texts, the literary arrangement is doubly important, and the need for precision in this regard can be felt more. The Holy Quran, the heavenly book and the miracle of the last prophet of God, in many parts of its verses, shows the unique effects of using different types of metaphors. In this article, we try to provide an analytical comparison between the performance of two famous French translators of the Holy Quran in the twentieth century, Regis Blachère and Jacques Berque, within the scope of selected verses from Surah Baqarah.

The choice of these translations is due to Blachère and Berque's sufficient mastery of the Arabic language and their familiarity with Islamic culture and customs. This has led the two translators, unlike others, to translate the Quran directly from Arabic into French, and to use their meta-linguistic knowledge to understand the concept of metaphors. Regis Blachère's and Jacques Berque's translations of the Holy Quran, were respectively published in 1950 and 1990, by Maisonneuve & Larose and Sindbad Publications, and have been revised and reprinted several times up to now. For this study, we have chosen Surah Baqarah as

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a statistical population, and we focused, in particular, on verses from this surah that are adorned with metaphorical arrays. Surah Baqarah, which is the longest surah and is called the peak of the Quran, is conceptually highly diverse, and addresses several religious, social, jurisprudential, and political issues. It also has a special richness in terms of structure and contains various forms of metaphor. Certainly, examining all the verses containing the metaphor of Surah Baqarah does not fit within the framework of one article. Therefore, after careful examination of all the verses, the authors have provided a detailed analysis of thirteen samples in this study. Of course, the number of verses that have been referred to or compared in these thirteen verses is more than twenty-five. In this report, which summarizes the results of more detailed studies, we have made attempts to select verses that are varied in content and form, to cover and reflect the totality of metaphors and subjects proposed by this surah. The method used in this study was descriptive-analytical based on library tools and within the framework of Peter Newmark's (1988) theories.

The results of this study show that despite the fact that the two translators held similar temporal-spatial horizons, they have adopted different methods for translating Quranic metaphors from Arabic to French. They have used one of the conventional strategies for each metaphor, depending on the context of the verse, the type of metaphor, and the implicit concepts in it. The seven techniques suggested by Peter Newmark (1988) cover all the strategies used by Blachère and Berque. Actually, in translating the metaphors of surah Baqarah, Blachère followed the first, second, fourth, and sixth strategies of Newmark, and Berque used the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth strategies. Perhaps the main reason for this difference in the choice of technique is the difference in the translators' interpretation of the verses. In fact, most verses with metaphors contain words that have multiple primary and secondary meanings. In other words, the semantic scope of these words is wide. Therefore, each translator can deduce one of the possible meanings. Accordingly, his interpretation and therefore his translation of the verse is based on its intended meaning. In some cases, translators have turned to French equivalent words, which also have this multifaceted capability. Hence, the ambiguous state of metaphor is perfectly preserved. This seems to be the best way to translate metaphors. However, it can only be used if there is an equation with these features and specifications in the target language. In other cases, replacing the original metaphor with another metaphor that contains the same semantic and conceptual equivalent in the target language can also be useful. However, considering the concern about loyalty to the source text and the need to observe the requirements of the divine word, and noting the cultural differences between the society in which the Quran was revealed and the target community in the French translation, perhaps it would be better to use this strategy in translating literary texts than sacred texts. Overall, Regis Blachère seems to have been more successful in simultaneous transmittal of the structure and meaning of metaphors, while Berque has sometimes abandoned the metaphorical form and has contented himself with conveying the concept. This study also confirms the views of translators, such as Newmark and Broeck. It also shows that the sacred texts and even the literary arrays used in them are fully translatable and transferable to foreign cultures and languages. However, this indeed depends on the translator's choice regarding the appropriate solution.

**Keywords:** Translation, Metaphor, Quran, Surah Baqarah, French language, Berque, Blachère