

## A Qualitative Probe Into the Translations of Hyperbole in the Qur'anic Verse 7:40

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**Abstract:** The language of the Qur'an is highly eloquent while being at the same time rich in rhetorical devices and figures of speech including exaggeration and hyperbole, metonyms, metaphors, similes and idioms. Presence of such aesthetic qualities has been considered to be one of the amazing aspects of this holy book of Muslims.

Although throughout history, many knowledgeable Muslim scholars have accomplished prolific productions concerning the translation and equivalents of idioms in the Qur'an, still we face obscurities and conflicting views as to how to understand and convey the sheer message of the Qur'an.

Through the study of the Qur'an, we recognize that on the one hand it includes a restricted range of vocabularies which makes it simple enough to read and understand while on the other hand its huge number of complex idioms demand close attention. When it comes to the translation of such figures of speech, different translators opt for various ways of translating and elaborating both the content and the form of the word.

This article aimed to investigate various interpretations and English translations suggested for a purposefully selected idiom from the Glorious Qur'an, which contains a distinguished hyperbole. It also explored different methods of translating Qur'anic idioms into Persian and English. For this reason, the translations of nineteen prominent translators and also the translations of the similar Biblical verse have been compared and contrasted.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study has encompassed the view of Friedrich Schleiermacher; on the basis of his translation strategies, the article has distinguished two approaches of translations for the verse (7:40): 1. An alienating method of translation, in which the values of the source text i.e., the Qur'an are appreciated and its culture and concept are imported into the target language. 2. A naturalizing method of translation, which is reader-focused and so the translation sounds comprehensible for today's readers through naturalization.

**Keywords:** Qur'anic idioms, hyperbole translation, jamal/jummal, Qur'anic rhetorical devices, Surah al-A'raf: 40.

### 1. Introduction

Today's world view is constantly changing. Therefore, people's food for thought should keep pace with these changes. Rendering plain, readable, and acceptable target text which is fluent for the foreign reader is a modern practice. A translated text is judged acceptable by most readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent. (Venuti, 2008: 1)

Degree of faithfulness to the sacred contents as a source text has always been a source of debate amongst linguistic scholars of the past and present. The language of the Qur'an as an example of such texts is so eloquent, so its translation demands considerable attention.

One of the factors that has contributed to the eloquence of this language is the use of idioms and rhetorical devices. Numerous figures of speech used in the Qur'an have added to the beauty, impact, importance and secrets of its words. Such figures, mainly the hyperboles are used in a way that none of them are in contrast with human's reasoning.

The reason as to why hyperboles are used in the Divine text i.e., the Qur'an is that the message behind the hyperbole is meant to become bolded and attract attention. Hence, it is of paramount importance to know how to accurately convey such Divine idiomatic words into another language in a way that neither of the form nor the content deviate from the original.

Different translators have adopted different approaches towards the translation of such idioms. Some have valued the cultural norms of the foreign text, imported them into the target culture and thus ensured faithfulness to the sound and sense of the source text; such approach is compatible with the alienating strategy of Schleiermacher. This is while some limited numbers of translators have decided to only convey the intention of the source text and bring the foreign text in line with the typical patterns of the target language; this choice is compatible with Schleiermacher's naturalizing strategy. However, the real question, according to Schleiermacher, is how to bring the ST writer and the TT reader together (Schleiermacher, 2012, p. 45-49). Keeping both views in mind, we aim to undertake an in-depth study of one of the distinguishing examples of idioms of the Qur'an. By doing so, the 40<sup>th</sup> verse of the seventh chapter of the Qur'an called al-A'raf is selected which enjoys high degrees of exaggeration.

As for the translation, we have provided and compared the translations of the prominent translators of Islamic texts, namely, Sahih International, pickthall, Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Muhammad Sarwar, Mohsin Khan and Arberry, Qara'i, Nasr, Ahmed Ali, Ahmed Raza Khan, Asad, Daryabadi, Hilali & Khan, Itani, Maududi, Mubarakpuri, Qaribullah & Darwish, and Wahiduddin Khan.

This work is meant to offer the most precise equivalents of the above-mentioned verse, by taking into consideration the most valid current translations and interpretations.

Despite the arguments amongst the Islamic scholars in terms of vocabularies and equivalents, the article ends up with a comprehensive decision as to which translation can be claimed to be the most eloquent while at the same time the most precise one.

## 2. Materials and Methods

Flashing back to the history of the researches carried out about Qur'anic Idioms, we find that the usage of rhetorical devices in the Qur'an – mainly the verse (7:40) – has always been sought for by Muslim exegetes.

Rippin, in his research about this verse elaborates the progress of suggested equivalents for the word *jamal* from beginning till now (Rippin, 1980). Montgomery Watt has also called attention to two interpretations of the word *jamal* based on the commentaries in the Qur'an and Gospel (Watt, 1972). Galadari too, compared such metaphor between the Gospel and the Qur'an and suggests that both are alluding to the same context for the metaphor (Galadari, 2018).

In line with the purpose of the study, we have adopted a qualitative approach towards the analysis of the selected verse. The article has taken up the translation theories of Schleiermacher as its main theoretical framework and has studied the all the authentic Quranic translations offered for the verse (7:40) under the shade of his two poles of translation strategies namely alienating and naturalizing approaches. The instrument used in the study consisted of reading, analyzing, comparing and evaluating the existing translations and interpretations. To reach a more appropriate equivalent, we have studied and compared all the translations available in [www.tanzil.net](http://www.tanzil.net) besides those of the similar verse in the Gospel.

Reviewing a wide range of sources, the research attempted to first identify all the recognized meanings of the idiom in the selected verse and second identify and classify the selected translations based on the theoretical framework.

### Related Literature Review

#### Theories About Qur'anic Hyperboles

There has always been a discrepancy amongst Islamic scholars as to whether or not aphorisms, especially those containing exaggerations and overstatements in the language of the Qur'an, harm the conveyance of the exact message.

Concerning this issue, many have denied the existence of metaphorical meanings and interpret the verses based on the denotative meaning of the words. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1975, p. 97) This is while many others have confirmed the metaphorical aspect of the content and believe in its miraculous language.

The former group believe that since hyperboles emanate from the imaginative mind of humans, they aim to deceive the reader through conthe exact degree of reality/truth. Hence, they conclude that if the language of the Qur'an is integrated with imaginative examples, it will cause the message to become unreasonable and unbelievable (Zarkashi, 1957, p. 255).

The latter group opposes the first view and supports its viewpoint by mentioning the following reasons: 1. From a linguistic point of view, Arabic language is filled with figures of speech which are deemed to be a means of beautifying the words and influencing readers (Al-Raghib, 2008, p. 178) The purpose behind using figurative language is both to fully convey the core message through elaboration of the meaning and to leave further impression on the reader through the use of an elevated language (Jurjani, 1988, p. 255). 2. The precondition for being a believer is to consider the words of God free from any falsehood. Therefore, none of the figurative overstatements in the Qur'an are contrary with reason. The holy Qur'an has always warned people about going to extremes (see, for example, (5:77); (17:29); (31:19)). Thus, it is not reasonable that a Book which encourages people towards observing moderation, uses the idioms which bear irrational connotations. 3. Qur'an is neither the word of human to include probable mistakes and unreal imaginations, nor descended on behalf of a biased person who aims to deceive people. The use of figurative features in human words will distance one from the reality but the figurative features that are found in the Divine

words will do the reverse. They will not only bring you close to the truth, but also help you to see the right or wrong more vividly (Tabatabaei, 1973, p. 259).

Taking the viewpoint of the second group into consideration, we find two approaches adopted by the proponents of this view, i.e. the rationality of the words of the Qur'an beside the presence of hyperbole: On the one hand, some translators prefer to remain loyal to denotative meanings. On the other hand, there are some others who believe that the message behind the figurative language cannot be transferred unless through a parallel idiomatical equivalent in the target language. They mention the following reasons in support of their statement: 1. The phrases of the Qur'an consist of multiple hidden layers of meaning. Some of these hidden meanings can be conveyed through literal translation while some other layers must be conveyed through culture-bound idioms of the target language. Passing from the appearance of the words towards the core message behind them is not possible unless through considering the layers to be a whole unit with interwoven relations in between. None of these layers of meaning are in contrast with one another. Each layer is there to strengthen the importance and emphasis of the words of God. 2. Every figurative image in the Qur'an is an indicator of a truth. The figurative sign and the truth behind it are not separable. The one who is well aware of these signs and truth behind them is only God, who has created them. So, He can artfully illustrate His signs to guide us towards the truth behind them (Dinwari, 2005, p. 115).

The writer of this article has accepted and presupposed the figurative aspect of the language of the Qur'an, and considered its language to be free from any irrationality and conducted the present research based on this belief.

### Review of Translation Methods

Reviewing the background of translation studies, we find so many scholars with huge numbers of trends, standards and contributions to this field. The common aspect of all the current methods is that they all offer two ends with some other methods in between based on degree of faithfulness or deviation from the source text.

Earlier in the related history, we see Jerome and Cicero's rejection of word-for-word translation in favor of sense-for-sense one (Munday, 2016, p. 31). Schleiermacher, whose view has been taken into consideration throughout this study, moves beyond the strict issues of literal and free translation, and considers there to be only two paths open for the 'true' translator: "Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him, or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him" (Schleiermacher, 2012, p. 49). Later, in both Nida's Formal Vs Dynamic equivalence and Newmark's Semantic Vs Communicative approach, both two methods introduce a move away from poles of literalness towards more functional and receptor-based translation (Newmark, 1981, p. 39; Nida, 1964, p. 159). Years later, we see Venuti, who broadens the scope of translation to a sociocultural framework and introduces the notions of Domestication and Foreignization, in which the positionality and ideology of the translator plays a major role (Munday, 2016, p. 233-236).

Following this long-lasting attempt, we found that there have been offered two approaches of translations for the idiom under debate which we analyzed based on Schleiermacher's views to satisfy both needs. That is to say, in one of them, which is the most common, the writer is left in peace and the reader is moved toward him while in the other the reader is left in peace.

However, it can be argued that due to the linguistic and cultural diversities, the notion of untranslatability in terms of conveying the spirit of the message is to some extent interwoven with the translation of idioms in Islamic content (Alqahtani, 2017, p. 10-27).

### Interpretations of the Word *Jamal*

If we move towards the roots of the words, we see that various interpretations have been delivered for the word *jamal*. According to some of the authentic interpretations, this word has been read as *jummal* and considered to be the equivalent for a thick rope (Tha'labi, 2001, p. 233).

These exegetes have mentioned the following reasons to support their claim: The first is that neither the size of the camel nor its theme matches with that of the needle eye (Zamakhshari, 2010, p. 142). The second is that in Arabic language *jamal* refers to just male camel while in this verse the sex of the camel is not the matter of debate and importance. Moreover, there are other exact equivalents for the word *Jamal* such as *Ibil* or *Ba'ir*, which also refer to *camel* with no regard to its sex (Qorashi, 1973, p. 51).

Hence, it sounds more appropriate to take *the thick rope of the ship* as an equivalent for *jamal*.

Most exegetes are opponents of the above view and have read the word as *jamal*, which is an equivalent of camel. Rippin, in his research on this subject, claims that the current diversities concerning this verse are all useless arguments that have been broken out during recent centuries. He states that there was no trace of other pronunciation of the word *jamal* in the early years of the advent of Islam and that none of the recent exegetes have taken other readings into consideration (Rippin, 113).

To go further into detail, we need to study some of the authentic exegeses and their opinion about the equivalent of the word *jamal*. On this note, we referred to both old-aged and contemporary interpretations of the Qur'an including *Nemūneh* (Makarim Shirazi, 1995, p. 171), *Nūr* (Ghera'ati, 2009, p. 64), *Tasnīm* (Javadi Amoli, 2019, p. 451), *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (Razi, 1999, p. 241), *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl* (Baydawi, 1997, p. 13), *Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqāiqh Tanzīl* (Zamakhshari, 2010, p. 143), *Majma' al-Bayān* (Tabarsi, 2001, p. 699). All the above-mentioned exegeses have referred to the following reason in support of the word *jamal*: 1. Wide usage of this pronunciation – *jamal* – in Arabic and Islamic context and culture: The word camel has been employed a lot in similar Islamic traditions and narrations. Those scholars and translators who opted for camel as an equivalent for *jamal* quotes a linguistic claim in Arabic language according to which a needle eye refers to a narrow hole or way. 2. Use of hyperbole for the purpose of increasing the beauty and impression of a significant statement: Using the name of huge animals figuratively to refer to indicate the improbability of an event is a common occurrence in the world of languages. The other claim is rooted in the fact that it is much more impossible for a camel than a rope to enter into the needle eye, and in turn it accords more with impossibility for the sinners to enter Paradise. Leafing through the books, we found that in the verse (7:40), camel is the greatest animal in the eye of Arabs and needle is the narrowest hole.

By doing so, the Qur'an has picked two extremes to emphasize the notion of impossibility for the sinner to enter the Paradise (Suyuṭi, 2008, p. 323): 1. Islamic narrations and traditions: There are similar Islamic traditions in which the word *jamal* is mostly used as an equivalent for camel. On this note, there is a narration quoted from Imam Bāqir and Imam Ṣādiq (pbuh). According to this narration the verse (7:40) is about two of the companions of Imam 'Ali (pbuh) — Talha and Zubair — in the battle of *jamal* and their camel in this battle. This battle has occurred after the descent of the Qur'an and since one of the amazing aspects of the Qur'an is to refer to future incidents, this interpretation is also defendable (Bahrani, 1995, p. 542). 2. Similar usage of this term and expression – camel and the needle's eye – in other past religions and cultures (Makarim Shirazi, 1995:171).

### The Camel and the Needle Eye from the Viewpoint of the Bible

One of the evidences to which the proponents of 'camel' refer is the roots and history of similar quotes in other religious cultures.

The expositions in the Old Testament including that of Talmud and Midrash reveal that Babylonian Jews have used the same idiom to refer to impossibility of an incident. So, the wide usage of such expression — *a camel or elephant going through a needle's eye* — is confirmed in Jewish sacred texts and religious literature (Dummelow, 1973, p. 689).

There are also Biblical evidences for a similar quote in Gospel: "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Luke (18:25); Mark (10:25); Matthew (19:24)).

Different translations are offered for such verse, nine of which are listed here:

Translator	Translation
New International Version	Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God (New International Version, 2011).
Young's Literal Translation	for it is easier for a camel through the eye of a needle to enter, than for a rich man into the reign of God to enter (Young, 2017).
World English Bible	For it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God (Johnson, 2014).
Weymouth New Testament	Why, it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God (Weymouth, 2017).

Jubilee Bible 2000	For it is easier to put a cable through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (Stendal, 2010).
Aramaic Bible in Plain English	It is easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God (Bauscher, 2016).
King James Bible	For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (Campbell, 2010).
English Standard Version	or it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God (English Standard Version, 2009).
Webster's Bible translation	For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (Webster, 2016).

Table 1, Biblical translations for the word Camel

Biblical commentators have offered Various interpretations regarding the word *kamêlos* in this verse. Having a look at the expositions on this verse, we find three main approaches towards this scripture:

According to some interpretations, a misspelling has occurred here, as the result of which *kamêlos* meaning camel was written in place of *kamilos*, meaning rope or cable which is without authority (Schopenhauer, 2014:68).

Some other interpreters refer to the fact that the "Eye of the Needle" has been a side-gate for foot passengers in [Jerusalem](#). A camel could not pass through this small gate unless it was stooped with no burden on its back. This imagery matches the sinner casting away his faults or his worldly possessions. However, there is no evidence of such a gate in the time of Christ and that one may see this gate only today.

The last possibility is that Jesus has deliberately used the word camel and the hyperbole for the purpose of emphasis (Talmage, 1973, p. 485).

By and large, it is worth mentioning that in the translation of the Bible into languages other than English such as French, Spanish, Chinese, Hebrew, German and Russian translations show that camel was mostly used and not the rope.

### The English Idioms Implying the Notion of Impossibility

Translation of idioms is beyond mere linguistic transfer; as in fact, we must deal with pragmatics as well. This is exactly where we face practical implications.

Communicative translation aims to solve such implications through leaving the same impression as that of the source text on the reader. When it comes to the translation of idioms, it is on the translator to convey the message of the idiom, not through equal words but through equal sense. Here, the naturalizing method presented by Schleiermacher comes to the help of those translators who prefer to bring the foreign text in line with the typical patterns of the TL. To achieve such kind of translation, the translator should refer to those idioms of target language which fulfill the same purpose as that of the original text. English language is rich with idioms that suggest the notion of improbability, most common of which are listed as follows:

#### 1. Flying pig

A flying pig is a symbol of an impossible event that is traditionally used to mean that the specified event will never take place. (Ayto, 2009, p. 263)

#### 2. Cold hell

Rises from the general belief that [hell](#) is an extremely hot place. This concept includes expressions like 'when hell freezes over', 'a cold day in hell', 'Satan will be ice-skating to work', and 'a snowball's chance in hell'.

#### 3. Don't hold your breath

This expression means that if one held their breath while waiting, they would die.

**4. If the sky falls, we shall catch larks****5. Once in a blue moon**

A [blue moon](#) is variously understood as being a rare event.

**6. Twelfth of Never**

Something that will happen on the 'Twelfth of Never' will 'never come to pass'.

**7. Like getting blood from a stone**

It is taken to mean that doing some tasks are pointless due to their difficulty. Possibly, it is rooted in a similar expression "Squeezing water from a stone", which embraces the same meaning.

**8. Few and far between**

It indicates rarely seen events.

There are also some other expressions the translation of which are injected into English language from other languages such as:

'If wishes were horses, beggars would ride', 'Once in a blue moon', 'When the sun rises in the west', and 'When water runs uphill'.

**Studying the Offered Translations of the Verse (7:40) by the Qur'anic Translators**

To find the degree of faithfulness or deviation of the existing translations from the original meaning, we need to compare and contrast the authentic translations.

Having reviewed various opinions and discussions about the verse (7:40), now we intend to look at some of the translations of the known Qur'anic translators. By doing so, nine of the most remarkable English translations as well as the name of their translators Qur'anic are provided in the following table:

Translator	Translation
Sahih International	until a camel enters into the eye of a needle (Assami, 1997).
Pickthall	until the camel goeth through the needle's eye (Pickthall, 1999).
Yusuf Ali	until the camel can pass through the eye of the needle (Yusuf Ali, 2001).
Shakir	until the camel pass through the eye of the needle (Shakir, 1996).
Muhammad Sarwar	until a camel passes through the eye of a sewing needle (Sarwar, 2001).
Mohsin Khan	until the camel goes through the eye of the needle (Mohsin Khan, 2011).
Arberry	until the camel passes through the eye of the needle (Arerry, 1996).
Ali Quli Qara'i	until the camel passes through the needle's eye (Qarai, 2019).
Seyyed Hossein Nasr	Till the camel pass through the eye of the needle (Nasr, 2017).
Ahmed Ali	not till the camel passes through the needle's eye (Ali, 2001)
Ahmed Raza Khan	until the camel goes through the needle's eye (Ahmed Reza Khan, n.d.)
Asad	any more than a twisted rope can pass through a needle's eye (Asad, 2005)

Daryabadi	until a camel passeth through the eye of a needle (Daryabadi, 2010)
Muhsin Khan & Al-Hilali	until the camel goes through the eye of the needle (Muhsin Khan & Al-Hilali, 2011)
Itani	until the camel goes through the eye of the needle (Itani, 2015)
Maududi	until a camel passes through the eye of a needle (Maududi, 2010)
Mubarakpuri	until the Jamal goes through the eye of the needle (Ibn Kathir, 2000)
Qaribullah & Darwish	until a camel shall pass through the eye of a needle (Qaribullah & Darwish, 2001)
Wahiduddin Khan	until a camel shall pass through the eye of a needle (Wahiduddin Khan, 2004)

Table 2, Qur’anic translations for the word Camel

### 3. Results

Regarding the analysis of the collected data, a Qur’anic idiom was selected. Several significant interpretations and translations offered for this verse were elaborated and compared.

	Camel	rope
Quranic Exegeses	7	0
Quranic Translations	18	1

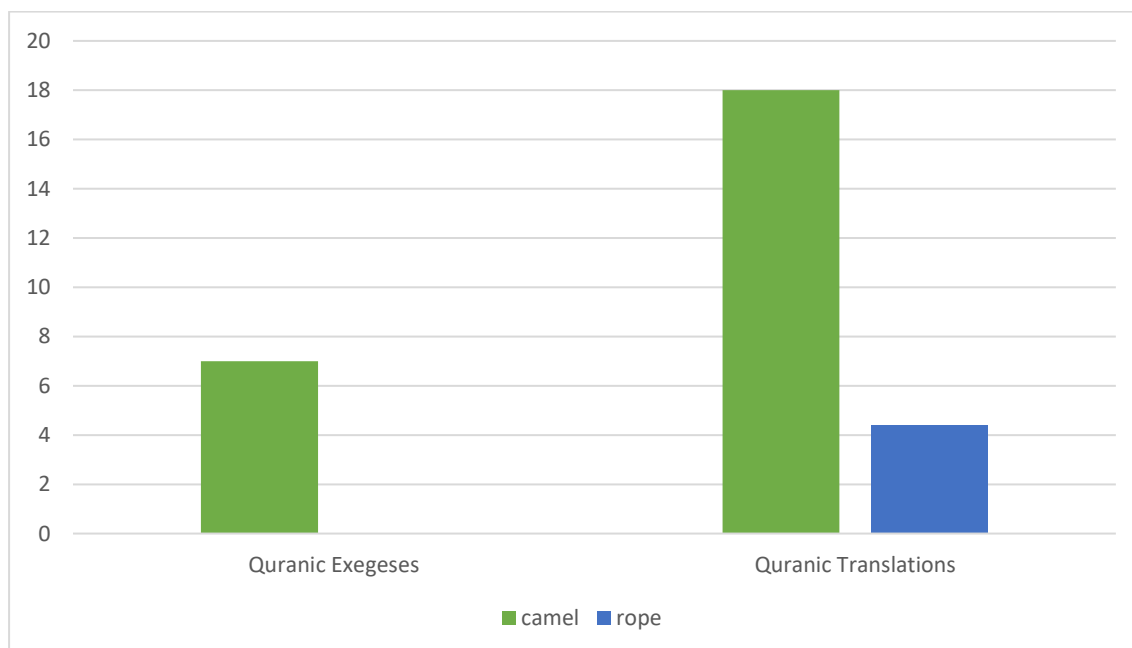


Chart 1, camel to rope usage ratio in translations and exegeses.

Looking at this table we understand that: Firstly, concerning the argument about the precise equivalent for the word *jamal*, all the translators who have translated the Qur’an have opted for camel except one. Concerning the

exegeses offered for the Qur'an, all the well-known exegetes have preferred camel too. Secondly, all the translators have adhered to the literal translation of this expression and preferred the alienating method of translation (Schleiermacher, 2012, p. 49) to those natural idioms of English language which contain a hyperbole of the same meaning.

#### 4. Discussion

Though highly explored, the issue of how to transfer the precise message of God behind the Qur'anic idioms is still under debate and have made translators offer various suggestions. Beside other researches that have been conducted on various interpretations of the word *jamal* in the verse (7:40) — such as that of Rippin which has mainly focused on the same idiom — this article also aimed to share the findings of its descriptive review of different English translations on this Quranic idiom comparing them with that of its Biblical counterpart. While Rippin has mostly focused on different pronunciations of the word *jamal*, this article tries to study all current equivalents within the frame work of Schleiermacher's methods of translation. Other similar articles which have focused on the translations of the Quranic idioms have neither considered translations within a theoretical framework nor drew a comparison between Quranic translations and other Biblical counterparts.

Having a look at the result, we find out that despite the fact that the majority of the translators and exegetes have put the source text at the forefront of their attempt, still we see some others who adhere to the functionality of idioms in target culture rather than in the source one. Keeping in mind that translation is both an art and a science, translation studies have never been free from conflicting views. That's why every translator produces what they consider to be pleasant and scientific. This very fact beside some cultural-bound factors proves that loss of meaning is somehow inevitable while conveying the Qur'anic idioms into another language. The findings of the current study call for further research on the existing English translations of other Qur'anic idioms, as the words of God are worthy of being communicated most and best.

#### 5. Conclusion

As discussed earlier, translation of Qur'anic idioms has received growing interest recently. Arabic is the language of Qur'an and rhetorical devices are frequently used in Arabic language. What is sought in these literary devices is that they contribute to better conveyance of the original message, which is away from misinterpretation. By the use of figurative language especially exaggeration this aim would be achieved, as they provide the reader with deeper explanation and example about the issue. If these figures of speech help us in better understanding of a content, they have fulfilled their intended purpose and increased the eloquence of language otherwise they will mislead the reader due to their overstatement.

The verse 40 of the 7th Chapter of the Qur'an is an example of a distinct hyperbole. The style of translation adopted for this idiom was the focus of our study in this article. Considering all equivalents rendered for this Qur'anic idiom, we found out that almost all of the translators of the Qur'an, have focused on the source text for its importance of the content. As Schleiermacher believed, they have brought the TT reader toward the ST writer and tried to give the reader the same impression that he would receive reading the work in the original language.

We found that whatever our method of translation is for the verse 40 of Surah al-A'raf, it should imply two aspects: impossibility of an occurrence and capability of God to make the impossible acts possible. On the one hand, based on the prominent translations of Qur'anic aphorisms, the word camel is considered to be the most appropriate equivalent for *jamal*. According to the long-lasting research and authentic interpretation about this verse of the Qur'an and that of Gospel in different languages we can conclude that this idiom - entering a camel into a needle eye - is not limited to the Qur'an and Arabic language. Biblical evidences also confirm that such an idiom has become a universal idiom indicating the notion of impossibility and thus can be transferred literally into target languages.

On the other hand, there has always been a gap between young readers of target language and the current lofty literal translations. That is why some translators decided to translate it more naturally and TL-friendly. If we are supposed to opt for communicative translation, we can search for those idioms of target language which embrace the impossibility of an incident to take place. In English language there is an idiom that not only carries the notion of impossibility but also includes the name of a living beings! "pigs might fly or when pigs have wings" can be amongst the best suggested communicative equivalents for our selected aphorism.

It is worth mentioning that the literal translation of this expression is transparent enough for all Muslim and Non-Muslim readers of the Qur'an. (That is to say that the readers will understand from the first glance at this verse that the sinners will not enter the Paradise until the camel passes through the needle's eye.)



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