

Metaphors of the Heart in the Qur'an: Translation Strategies and Effectiveness in Four English Translations

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Article Received: 12/07/2026

Article Accepted: 15/08/2026

Published Online: 17/08/2026

DOI:10.47311/IJOES.2026.8.08.361

Abstract

Qur'anic metaphors of the heart present particular challenges in English translation because they conceptualize cognitive, moral, and spiritual states through physical images such as sealing, disease, blindness, locking, constriction, and expansion. This study examines the translation strategies used by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall, Muhammad Asad, and Saheeh International to render Qur'anic metaphors of the heart and inner state into English. Adopting a qualitative corpus-based comparative design, the study analyses 12 Qur'anic metaphors across 48 translation instances. The study identifies four translation strategies: Literal Preservation (LP), Literal Preservation with Explicitation (LPE), Interpretive Reformulation (IR), and Mixed Strategy (MS). The study evaluates translation effectiveness using the Qur'anic Metaphor Translation Effectiveness Framework (QMTEF) across six dimensions: linguistic accuracy, exegetical accuracy, conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, communicative effectiveness, and Qur'anic fidelity. The findings reveal that Literal Preservation is the predominant strategy, accounting for 79.17% of the corpus. Pickthall employs LP in all cases (100%), followed by Saheeh International (91.67%) and Yusuf Ali (83.33%), whereas Asad demonstrates greater strategic variation, with LP accounting for 41.67% of his renderings. QMTEF evaluation indicates that LP generally provides the strongest balance of conceptual and rhetorical preservation when comparable metaphorical mappings exist in English. At the same time, explicitation and reformulation can enhance interpretive clarity when direct transfer is insufficient. The study concludes that effective translation of Qur'anic heart metaphors depends on balancing preservation of the original conceptual imagery with accessibility to English readers.

Keywords: Qur'anic metaphor; heart metaphors; metaphor translation; translation strategies; Qur'an translation; QMTEF; Qur'anic fidelity

1. Introduction

Metaphor plays a central role in Qur'anic discourse, enabling abstract theological, spiritual, and moral concepts to be expressed through concrete and experientially accessible images. From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, metaphor is not merely a rhetorical ornament but a cognitive mechanism through which one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This perspective is particularly relevant to the Qur'an, where recurring metaphorical patterns contribute to the conceptualization of faith, guidance, belief, disbelief, moral responsibility, and spiritual experience.

Among these patterns, metaphors involving the heart (*qalb*) and breast (*ṣadr*) hold an important place. Qur'anic discourse represents the inner human condition through a range of concrete states and processes: hearts may be sealed, diseased, fearful, blind, sound, or locked, while the breast may become constricted or expanded. The corpus examined in the present study illustrates this diversity. For example, Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:7) depicts hearts as sealed, Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:10) as diseased, Sūrat al-Ḥajj (22:46) as blind, and Sūrat Muḥammad (47:24) as locked. These expressions conceptualize the inner state through physical conditions, making otherwise abstract spiritual and cognitive experiences perceptible.

Translating such metaphors into English presents challenges that extend beyond lexical equivalence. A translator must decide whether to preserve the source metaphor directly, whether limited explication is necessary, or whether its contextual meaning requires interpretive reformulation. These decisions matter in Qur'anic translation because changes to metaphorical imagery may affect not only linguistic form but also conceptual meaning, rhetorical force, exegetical interpretation, communicative accessibility, and **Qur'anic fidelity**.

The four English translations examined in this study—Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall, Muhammad Asad, and Saheeh International—provide a useful basis for investigating these choices. Although the corpus reveals substantial agreement in some cases, significant differences emerge in others. In Sūrat al-Shu'arā' (26:89), for instance, *qalbin salīm* is rendered as “a sound heart” by Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International, “a whole heart” by Pickthall, and “a heart free of evil” by Asad. Similarly, in Sūrat al-Sharḥ (94:1), Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International preserve the image of the “breast”; Pickthall uses “bosom,” whereas Asad renders the expression as “opened up thy heart.” Such variation demonstrates how different translation choices can affect the preservation and interpretation of Qur'anic metaphor.

Against this background, the present study examines 12 Qur'anic metaphors of the heart and inner state and their 48 English renderings by the four selected translators. It identifies the

translation strategies employed and evaluates their effectiveness through the Qur'anic Metaphor Translation Effectiveness Framework (QMTEF). By concentrating on a single, conceptually coherent domain, the study seeks to provide a focused account of how metaphorical representations of the human inner state are preserved, clarified, or reformulated in English translation.

Metaphors of the heart constitute a particularly significant area of Qur'anic translation because the heart is represented not merely as a physical organ but as a locus of understanding, belief, moral perception, and spiritual receptivity. Cognitive studies of Qur'anic language have identified conceptualizations such as HEART IS A CONTAINER and have shown that sealing the heart metaphorically represents an inability or unwillingness to receive and understand truth.

Translating such expressions is challenging because lexical correspondence does not necessarily guarantee conceptual equivalence. Previous research on Qur'anic metaphor translation has shown that differences between Arabic and English conceptual systems may affect the transfer of metaphorical meaning. A literal rendering can preserve the linguistic image without fully communicating its conceptual or cultural implications (Al-Sowaidi et al., 2021). Research has also identified HEARTS ARE CONTAINERS among recurring conceptual metaphors in English translations of the Qur'an (Al-Saggaf et al., 2013).

More specifically, recent doctoral research on Qur'anic *qalb* ("heart") expressions has shown the linguistic complexity of translating heart-related phrases, including problems involving polysemy, synonymy, collocation, *majāz*, ellipsis, and *taḍmīn* (Nouraldeem, 2023). Nevertheless, there remains scope for a focused comparative investigation of translation strategies and their effectiveness in rendering heart and inner-state metaphors across the four translations examined in the present study.

This study therefore addresses how different translation strategies affect the preservation and interpretation of Qur'anic heart metaphors in English. The corpus clearly demonstrates the issue. While some metaphors are preserved almost identically by all four translators, such as the "locks upon their hearts" in Sūrat Muḥammad (47:24), other expressions display substantial variation. In Sūrat al-Shu'arā' (26:89), for example, *qalbin salīm* is rendered as "sound heart," "whole heart," and "heart free of evil," reflecting different degrees of lexical preservation and interpretive intervention.

Accordingly, the study investigates the strategies used to render 12 Qur'anic metaphors of the heart and inner state across 48 English translation instances. It evaluates their effectiveness using the Qur'anic Metaphor Translation Effectiveness Framework (QMTEF). The analysis considers six dimensions: linguistic accuracy, exegetical accuracy, conceptual

equivalence, rhetorical preservation, communicative effectiveness, and Qur'anic fidelity. Therefore, the study aims to Identify the translation strategies employed by Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, Asad, and Saheeh International in rendering Qur'anic metaphors of the heart and inner state into English, and to determine the frequency and distribution of these strategies across the 48 translation instances, Evaluate their effectiveness in terms of linguistic accuracy, exegetical accuracy, conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, communicative effectiveness, and Qur'anic fidelity using the QMTEF, and Compare the four translators' strategic approaches to rendering Qur'anic heart metaphors. The study sought to address the following questions:

1. What translation strategies are employed by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall, Muhammad Asad, and Saheeh International in rendering Qur'anic metaphors of the heart and inner state into English?
2. Which translation strategies are most frequently employed across the 48 translation instances?
3. To what extent are the identified strategies effective in achieving linguistic accuracy, exegetical accuracy, conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, communicative effectiveness, and Qur'anic fidelity?
4. How do the four translators differ in their strategic approaches to rendering Qur'anic metaphors of the heart and inner state?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Heart in Qur'anic Discourse

The heart occupies an important conceptual position in Qur'anic discourse. Beyond its physical meaning, the *qalb* is associated with understanding, belief, moral awareness, and responsiveness to divine guidance. Qur'anic discourse therefore attributes physical states and processes to the heart to represent abstract spiritual and cognitive conditions. Hearts may be sealed, diseased, blind, fearful, sound, or locked, while related expressions involving the *ṣadr* (breast) conceptualize spiritual receptivity through images of constriction and expansion. The Qur'anic Arabic Corpus, for example, identifies *qalb* as a recurrent Qur'anic concept and records numerous occurrences associated with the heart.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) offers a framework for approaching these expressions, arguing that metaphor enables abstract domains to be understood through more concrete forms of experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Applied to Qur'anic heart metaphors, physical conditions such as disease, sealing, blindness, locking, constriction, and expansion provide conceptual structures that make spiritual and moral states intelligible. Research

applying cognitive approaches to Qur'anic metaphor has similarly emphasized that Qur'anic metaphors involve conceptual, linguistic, and cultural dimensions.

The corpus examined in the present study demonstrates this conceptual diversity. In Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:10), for example, the expression *fī qulūbihim maraḍ* (“in their hearts is a disease”) conceptualizes an adverse inner condition through DISEASE, and all four translations substantially retain the physical image. In Sūrat Muḥammad (47:24), the rhetorical question about “locks upon their hearts” conceptualizes impaired understanding or receptivity through the physical image of a locked entity, an image all four translators preserve.

Other expressions demonstrate different conceptualizations of the inner state. Sūrat al-Ḥajj (22:46) transfers the physical condition of blindness from the eyes to the hearts, thereby establishing a relationship between physical vision and inner perception. All four translations preserve this contrast between sight and blindness of the heart. Similarly, Sūrat al-Zumar (39:22) represents receptivity to Islam through the expansion or opening of the breast, although the translators differ in how closely they preserve the source image.

The translation of these expressions is therefore not simply a matter of finding English equivalents for *qalb* or *ṣadr*. The translator must also determine whether the physical image through which the Qur'an conceptualizes the inner state remains intelligible and appropriate in English. This issue is especially significant because previous research on Qur'anic metaphor translation shows that literal preservation is common, but conceptual and cultural differences can sometimes lead to losses in translation (Al-Sowaidi et al., 2021). Research specifically addressing Qur'anic heart expressions has likewise identified difficulties in transferring their implicit and culturally embedded meanings into English.

Accordingly, Qur'anic heart metaphors provide an important testing ground for examining the relationship between metaphorical preservation and translation effectiveness. Preserving the lexical image may support conceptual and rhetorical correspondence, whereas explicitation or reformulation may sometimes enhance accessibility at the cost of modifying the original imagery. The effectiveness of these alternatives therefore requires evaluation across several dimensions, not lexical equivalence alone.

2.2 Translating Qur'anic Heart Metaphors

Translating Qur'anic heart metaphors involves more than finding lexical equivalents for *qalb* (heart) and *ṣadr* (breast). These expressions frequently encode cognitive, spiritual, and moral meanings through physical images such as sealing, disease, blindness, locking, constriction, and expansion. Consequently, successful translation requires attention not only to lexical

meaning but also to the conceptual relationship between the physical image and the abstract state it represents.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides a useful basis for understanding this difficulty. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphor structures the understanding of abstract concepts through more concrete domains of experience. In Qur'anic discourse, the heart can accordingly be conceptualized as an entity that can be sealed, locked, diseased, blinded, or made sound, while the breast can be opened, expanded, or constricted. Research on Qur'anic conceptual metaphor has specifically identified the conceptualization HEART IS A CONTAINER, demonstrating how expressions involving sealing and spatial relations conceptualize the heart as an entity capable of receiving or being prevented from receiving truth.

This conceptual dimension creates particular translation problems because apparently equivalent lexical choices may not activate identical associations in Arabic and English. Al-Saggaf et al. (2013), for example, identified HEARTS ARE CONTAINERS among the recurring conceptual metaphors in English translations of the Qur'an, suggesting that at least some Qur'anic heart conceptualizations can be preserved across the two languages. However, Al-Sowaidi et al. (2021) caution that literally translating Qur'anic conceptual metaphors does not necessarily guarantee successful transfer, particularly when Arabic and English differ in their conceptual or cultural associations.

The challenge becomes especially significant because the Qur'anic concept of the heart extends beyond the emotional associations commonly attached to the *heart* in contemporary English. Nouraldeen's (2023) doctoral study of Qur'anic heart phrases identifies linguistic difficulties involving polysemy, near-synonymy, collocation, *majāz*, ellipsis, and *taḍmīn*. Significantly, the study observes that contemporary English commonly associates the heart with feelings, whereas Qur'anic usage frequently connects it with functions associated with the mind and understanding. This difference can affect how English readers interpret a metaphor even when the Arabic word *qalb* is translated directly as *heart*.

Previous research also demonstrates the difficulty of translating heart-related expressions within individual Qur'anic contexts. Alhaj (2022), examining heart expressions in Sūrat al-Tawbah across three English translations, reports translation loss and difficulty conveying implicit and culturally embedded meanings. More broadly, studies of Qur'anic metaphor translation have found that translators use different procedures depending on the linguistic and conceptual characteristics of the source expression, and that preserving the original image does not invariably reproduce its full effect in English.

The corpus of the present study illustrates this problem clearly. In Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:10), all four translators preserve the metaphor of disease in the heart, suggesting a high degree of cross-linguistic compatibility for this particular image. By contrast, *qalbin salīm* in Sūrat al-Shu‘arā’ (26:89) is rendered as “sound heart,” “whole heart,” and “heart free of evil,” demonstrating different degrees of preservation and interpretation. Similarly, in Sūrat al-Sharḥ (94:1), the Arabic *ṣadr* is rendered as “breast,” “bosom,” or “heart,” indicating that translators may alter the source-domain expression in order to communicate what they understand as its intended inner-state meaning.

These variations show that the central translation problem is not simply whether a heart metaphor can be rendered literally, but whether preserving, explicating, or reformulating it best communicates its multidimensional meaning. Translation choices must therefore be evaluated in relation to linguistic accuracy, exegetical accuracy, conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, communicative effectiveness, and Qur'anic fidelity. This multidimensional problem underpins the strategy analysis and QMTEF evaluation undertaken in the present study.

2.3 Previous Studies and Research Gap

The translation of Qur'anic metaphor has received increasing attention from linguistic, cognitive, and translation-studies perspectives. Research informed by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) has shown that metaphorical expressions in the Qur'an often reflect broader conceptual structures rather than isolated rhetorical devices. For example, Al-Saggaf et al. (2013), examining cognitive meanings in selected English translations of the Qur'an, identified recurring conceptual patterns including LIFE IS A JOURNEY, FAITH IS COMMERCE, HEARTS ARE CONTAINERS, and SOUL IS A PERSON. Similarly, cognitive analysis of Qur'anic spatial expressions has identified HEART IS A CONTAINER, particularly in expressions involving sealing the heart, where the physical image represents restricted access to understanding or acceptance of truth. These studies demonstrate the usefulness of CMT for explaining the conceptual organization underlying Qur'anic heart metaphors.

More specifically, several studies have investigated the linguistic and translational complexity of Qur'anic expressions involving the heart. Alhaj (2022) examined the translation of Qur'anic heart expressions in Sūrat al-Tawbah across three English translations. The study identified difficulties in transferring implicit and culturally embedded meanings and reported instances of translation loss, emphasizing the limitations of straightforward lexical correspondence when the source expression carries additional contextual meaning.

A particularly relevant contribution is Nouraldeen's (2023) doctoral research on translating Qur'anic *heart* phrases into English. The study investigates linguistic features including polysemy, near-synonymy, collocation, *majāz*, metaphor, ellipsis, and *taḍmīn* and compares alternative English renderings. One significant observation is that contemporary English often associates the *heart* primarily with feelings, whereas Qur'anic usage often associates it with functions of understanding and cognition. The study therefore emphasizes the value of contextual explanation when direct translation may create ambiguity.

More recently, Jasem (2024) examined the expression “heart” as a metaphor in the Qur'an, with reference to English translation. The study considers Arabic and English classifications of metaphor and examines how the metaphorical meanings associated with *heart* are transferred in Al-Hilali and Khan's translation. It confirms that the Qur'anic *heart* can convey different meanings according to context and that translation strategy influences the transfer of its metaphorical image.

Taken together, previous studies establish that Qur'anic heart expressions constitute a significant translation problem and that their meanings cannot always be adequately assessed through lexical equivalence alone. However, the existing literature tends to focus on particular sūrahs, individual translations, specific linguistic features, or the conceptual identification of heart metaphors. Less attention has been devoted to systematically comparing the translation strategies of several major translators across a focused corpus of heart and inner-state metaphors and evaluating their effectiveness through a common multidimensional framework.

The present study addresses this gap by examining **12** Qur'anic metaphors of the heart and inner state across 48 English translation instances from Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall, Muhammad Asad, and Saheeh International. The selected corpus includes metaphors of sealing, disease, deviation, constriction, fear, blindness, soundness, locking, and expansion, representing several ways Qur'anic discourse conceptualizes inner spiritual and cognitive states. For example, the corpus includes both the blindness of hearts in Sūrat al-Ḥajj (22:46) and the locks upon hearts in Sūrat Muḥammad (47:24).

Rather than limiting the analysis to whether a metaphor is translated literally or non-literally, the study distinguishes four strategies—Literal Preservation (LP), Literal Preservation with Explication (LPE), Interpretive Reformulation (IR), and Mixed Strategy (MS)—and evaluates their effectiveness using the Qur'anic Metaphor Translation Effectiveness Framework (QMTEF). The framework assesses translations according to linguistic accuracy, exegetical accuracy, conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, communicative effectiveness, and Qur'anic fidelity. In doing so, the study connects strategy selection with

translation effectiveness, providing a focused comparative account of how Qur'anic heart metaphors are preserved, clarified, or reformulated in English.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative, corpus-based comparative research design to investigate the strategies used to translate Qur'anic metaphors of the heart and inner state into English. Corpus-based approaches are particularly appropriate for metaphor-translation research because they permit translation procedures to be examined systematically across a defined body of source and target texts rather than through isolated examples (Shuttleworth, 2016). ([UCL Discovery](#))

The study combines descriptive, comparative, and evaluative analysis. The descriptive component identifies the translation strategy employed in each rendering; the comparative component examines similarities and differences among the four translators; and the evaluative component assesses the effectiveness of the identified strategies using the Qur'anic Metaphor Translation Effectiveness Framework (QMTEF). This combination of qualitative interpretation and quantitative frequency summaries aligns with corpus-based translation research, where quantitative patterns can support more detailed qualitative analysis. ([Benjamins](#))

The unit of analysis is the individual English rendering of each selected Qur'anic metaphor. The corpus comprises **12** metaphorical expressions, each examined in the translations of Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall, Muhammad Asad, and Saheeh International, yielding 48 translation instances. The selected expressions represent different conceptualizations of the inner state, including sealing, disease, deviation, constriction, fear, blindness, soundness, locking, and expansion. For example, the corpus includes the metaphor of the sealed heart in Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:7), the diseased heart in (2:10), and the constricted breast in Sūrat al-An'ām (6:125).

Each of the 48 renderings is classified according to four translation strategies: Literal Preservation (LP), Literal Preservation with Explication (LPE), Interpretive Reformulation (IR), and Mixed Strategy (MS). Frequency counts identify overall patterns and differences among the translators, while qualitative analysis examines representative cases in greater depth. Finally, the translations are evaluated through the six dimensions of QMTEF: linguistic accuracy, exegetical accuracy, conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, communicative effectiveness, and Qur'anic fidelity.

This design enables the study to move beyond identifying whether a metaphor has been preserved or modified by examining how particular translation choices affect the multidimensional meaning and function of Qur'anic heart metaphors.

3.2 Corpus Selection

The study is based on a purposively selected corpus of 12 Qur'anic metaphors relating to the heart and inner state. The metaphors were selected from the broader corpus developed for the larger study according to three principal criteria: the expression contains a metaphorical conceptualization of the heart (*qalb*) or breast (*ṣadr*); it represents an inner cognitive, moral, emotional, or spiritual state through concrete imagery; and it provides meaningful evidence for comparing translation strategies across the four selected English translations.

The corpus includes metaphors in which the heart is represented as sealed, diseased, deviating, fearful, blind, sound, or locked, together with expressions in which the breast is constricted or expanded. This range allows the analysis to examine both highly transferable metaphors and expressions that generate greater variation among translators. For instance, all four translations preserve the image of “locks” upon the hearts in Sūrat Muḥammad (47:24), whereas *qalbin salīm* in Sūrat al-Shu‘arā’ (26:89) is rendered variously as “sound heart,” “whole heart,” and “heart free of evil.”

Table 1. Qur'anic Heart and Inner-State Metaphors Included in the Corpus

No.	Sūrah and Verse	Central Metaphorical Image
1	Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:7)	Sealing of the heart
2	Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:10)	Disease of the heart
3	Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān (3:8)	Deviation of the heart
4	Sūrat al-An‘ām (6:125)	Constriction of the breast
5	Sūrat al-Anfāl (8:2)	Trembling/fear of the heart
6	Sūrat al-Tawbah (9:125)	Disease/defilement of the inner state
7	Sūrat al-Ḥajj (22:46)	Blindness of the heart
8	Sūrat al-Shu‘arā’ (26:89)	Soundness of the heart
9	Sūrat al-Zumar (39:22)	Expansion/opening of the breast
10	Sūrat Muḥammad (47:24)	Locks upon the heart
11	Sūrat al-Munāfiqūn (63:3)	Sealing of the heart
12	Sūrat al-Sharḥ (94:1)	Expansion/opening of the breast

These 12 metaphors are examined in four English translations, producing a total dataset of 48 translation instances. This focused corpus permits detailed analysis of a conceptually

coherent group of Qur'anic metaphors while remaining sufficiently diverse to reveal differences in translation strategy and interpretive intervention.

3.3 Data Sources

The study examines four widely recognized English translations of the Holy Qur'an:

- Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1934)
- Marmaduke Pickthall (1930)
- Muhammad Asad (1980)
- Saheeh International (1997)

I selected these translations because they represent different approaches to rendering the Qur'anic text into English and provide sufficient variation for comparative analysis. Yusuf Ali generally combines close translation with literary and explanatory expression; Pickthall tends toward source-oriented lexical preservation; Asad frequently incorporates contextual and interpretive clarification; and Saheeh International generally combines close correspondence with contemporary English expression. Rather than treating these orientations as predetermined categories, the present study examines whether they are reflected in the translators' actual treatment of heart and inner-state metaphors.

For each of the 12 selected metaphors, the corresponding rendering from each translation was extracted and aligned with the Arabic expression, producing 48 translation instances. The corpus therefore permits direct comparison of the four translators' treatment of the same metaphorical expressions. For example, in *Sūrat al-Shu'arā'* (26:89), the four renderings range from "sound heart" and "whole heart" to Asad's more interpretive "heart free of evil."

3.4 Classification of Translation Strategies

Each of the 48 translation instances was examined to identify the dominant strategy used to transfer the Qur'anic metaphor into English. The classification focuses on the relationship between the Arabic metaphor and its English rendering, particularly how much the original metaphorical image and conceptual structure are preserved, clarified, or reformulated. The categories draw broadly on established metaphor-translation approaches that distinguish between reproducing the source metaphor and rendering its sense through modification or explanation (Van den Broeck, 1981; Newmark, 1988).

Four operational strategies were used:

Literal Preservation (LP) refers to retaining the source metaphor through close lexical equivalents while substantially preserving its original imagery and conceptual mapping. Minor grammatical adjustments required by English do not alter this classification.

Literal Preservation with Explicitation (LPE) occurs when the source metaphor is retained, but limited explanatory information is added to make an implicit contextual or conceptual meaning more accessible to the target reader.

Interpretive Reformulation (IR) occurs when the metaphorical image is substantially modified or replaced by an expression that foregrounds its interpreted meaning. In this strategy, semantic or exegetical clarification takes priority over close preservation of the original image.

Mixed Strategy (MS) refers to cases in which different components of the same metaphorical expression are treated through different procedures, typically combining metaphor preservation with substantial explicitation or interpretive reformulation.

This distinction matters especially when translations differ only subtly. In *Sūrat al-Shu‘arā’* (26:89), for example, “sound heart” and “whole heart” preserve the compact heart-state image, whereas Asad’s “heart free of evil” makes the interpreted moral condition more explicit. Similarly, in *Sūrat al-Sharḥ* (94:1), Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, and Saheeh International retain the source image through “breast” or “bosom,” whereas Asad’s “opened up thy heart” changes one element of the source-domain expression.

Strategy classification therefore focused on the degree of metaphorical preservation and interpretive intervention, rather than isolated lexical differences. Frequency counts were subsequently calculated for each strategy and translator to identify recurring patterns across the corpus.

3.5 QMTEF Evaluation

After classifying strategies, the translations were evaluated using the **Qur’anic Metaphor Translation Effectiveness Framework (QMTEF)**. The framework integrates insights from Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Arabic rhetoric (*balāghah*), Qur’anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), and Translation Studies to evaluate metaphor translation beyond lexical correspondence.

Table 2. QMTEF Dimensions for Evaluating Qur’anic Heart Metaphors

Dimension	Evaluative Focus	Guiding Question
Linguistic Accuracy	Lexical and grammatical transfer	Has the linguistic meaning been conveyed accurately?
Exegetical Accuracy	Consistency with authoritative <i>tafsīr</i>	Does the rendering accord with the contextual Qur’anic interpretation?
Conceptual Equivalence	Preservation of metaphorical mapping	Is the underlying conceptual relationship maintained?

Dimension	Evaluative Focus	Guiding Question
Rhetorical Preservation	Retention of figurative force	of Is the rhetorical impact of the source metaphor preserved?
Communicative Effectiveness	Accessibility to English readers	to Is the intended meaning sufficiently accessible to the target reader?
Qur'anic Fidelity	Fidelity to intended Qur'anic meaning	Does the rendering preserve the Qur'anic meaning without significant distortion or unwarranted interpretive alteration?

The six dimensions are complementary, not interchangeable. Exegetical Accuracy, for example, evaluates consistency with contextual interpretation established through *tafsīr*. In contrast, Qur'anic Fidelity considers whether the translation ultimately preserves the meaning and integrity of the Qur'anic expression without introducing significant distortion. This distinction prevents theological or interpretive acceptability from being reduced to lexical correspondence alone.

For systematic comparison, each dimension is evaluated on a five-point scale, where 5 = Excellent, 4 = Good, 3 = Acceptable, 2 = Weak, and 1 = Poor. The scores support qualitative judgment rather than replacing textual analysis. They increase consistency across the 48 translation instances and facilitate comparison among translators and translation strategies. Individual scores are therefore interpreted alongside close examination of the Arabic metaphor, its Qur'anic context, relevant *tafsīr*, and the corresponding English rendering.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed in four stages. First, each of the 12 metaphorical expressions was examined within its Qur'anic context to identify its central metaphorical image and conceptual function. Particular attention was given to how physical states such as sealing, disease, constriction, blindness, locking, and expansion represent cognitive, moral, or spiritual conditions.

Second, we compared the corresponding renderings by Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, Asad, and Saheeh International with the Arabic source expressions. Each of the 48 translation instances was classified as Literal Preservation (LP), Literal Preservation with Explicitation (LPE), Interpretive Reformulation (IR), or Mixed Strategy (MS) according to the operational criteria established in Section 3.4.

Third, the frequencies and percentages of the four strategies were calculated for the corpus as a whole and for each translator. These quantitative summaries were used to identify

dominant translation strategies and differences in the translators' degrees of metaphor preservation and interpretive intervention.

Finally, we evaluated representative translations qualitatively using the QMTEF. The analysis considered linguistic accuracy, exegetical accuracy, conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, communicative effectiveness, and Qur'anic fidelity. The quantitative results were therefore interpreted alongside close textual analysis rather than treated as independent measures of translation quality.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Distribution of Translation Strategies

The analysis of the 48 translation instances reveals a strong preference for Literal Preservation (LP) in translating Qur'anic heart and inner-state metaphors. Of the 48 renderings, **38 (79.17%)** were classified as LP, indicating that the four translators generally preserve the original metaphorical imagery when comparable expressions are available in English.

Table 3. Distribution of Translation Strategies in the Heart-Metaphor Corpus

Translation Strategy	Yusuf Ali	Pickthall	Asad	Saheeh International	Total	Percentage
Literal Preservation (LP)	10	12	5	11	38	79.17%
Literal Preservation with Explication (LPE)	0	0	3	0	3	6.25%
Interpretive Reformulation (IR)	1	0	2	1	4	8.33%
Mixed Strategy (MS)	1	0	2	0	3	6.25%
Total	12	12	12	12	48	100%

The results show considerable variation among the translators despite the overall dominance of Literal Preservation. Pickthall records the strongest preservation tendency, with all 12 instances (100%) classified as **LP**. Saheeh International follows with 11 of 12 instances (91.67%), while Yusuf Ali employs LP in 10 instances (83.33%). Asad shows the greatest strategic variation: only 5 of his 12 renderings (41.67%) are classified as straightforward LP, while the remaining instances involve explication, interpretive reformulation, or mixed procedures.

The predominance of LP suggests that many Qur'anic heart metaphors possess images that can be transferred into English without substantial conceptual restructuring. Expressions involving disease, sealing, blindness, and locking, for example, remain intelligible as

metaphors of cognitive or spiritual states in English. In Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:10), all four translators retain the image of “disease” in the heart, despite minor lexical differences in the surrounding wording. Similarly, in Sūrat Muḥammad (47:24), all four preserve the striking image of “locks” upon the hearts.

The less frequent strategies, however, reveal important differences in translation orientation. Interpretive Reformulation accounts for 8.33%, while LPE and MS each account for 6.25% of the corpus. These strategies occur primarily where translators appear to consider direct lexical preservation insufficient for conveying the intended inner or spiritual meaning. In Sūrat al-Shu‘arā’ (26:89), for example, Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International preserve *qalbin salīm* as “a sound heart,” and Pickthall uses “a whole heart.” In contrast, Asad explicates the moral interpretation as “a heart free of evil.”

A similar contrast appears in Sūrat al-Sharḥ (94:1). Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International retain “breast,” and Pickthall uses the closely related “bosom.” In contrast, Asad renders the expression as “opened up thy heart,” shifting from the source lexical image toward its interpreted inner-state meaning.

Overall, the distribution indicates that metaphor preservation is the norm rather than the exception in this domain. However, the concentration of non-literal procedures in Asad’s translation suggests that translation philosophy also influences strategy selection. The following sections therefore examine the four strategies individually before comparing their effectiveness through QMTEF.

4.2 Literal Preservation

Literal Preservation (LP) is the dominant strategy in the heart-metaphor corpus, accounting for 38 of the 48 translation instances (79.17%). Under this strategy, the translators retain the central metaphorical image through close English equivalents without substantially explicating or reformulating its meaning. The high frequency of LP suggests considerable conceptual compatibility between Arabic and English in representing inner states through the heart’s physical condition.

A clear example occurs in Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:7), where the Arabic expression *khatama Allāhu ‘alā qulūbihim* conceptualizes the hearts as being sealed. The four translators preserve the image through expressions such as “set a seal,” “sealed,” or closely corresponding formulations. The physical act of sealing thus remains available to the English reader as a metaphor for spiritual and cognitive closure. From a QMTEF perspective, preservation of the image supports linguistic accuracy, conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, and Qur’anic fidelity because the translator does not substitute an explanatory interpretation for the source metaphor.

The same tendency appears in Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:10), where *fi qulūbihim maraḍ* represents an adverse inner condition as disease. All four translations substantially preserve the relationship between the heart and disease. This example demonstrates why literal preservation can function effectively when the source and target languages share a readily comprehensible metaphorical association. The English reader can infer that the expression refers to a moral or spiritual rather than merely physiological condition without replacing the metaphor with an explicit interpretation.

An even more striking example occurs in Sūrat al-Ḥajj (22:46). The verse distinguishes physical sight from the deeper blindness attributed to the hearts, and all four translators retain the image of blind hearts or blindness located in the heart. Literal preservation is particularly effective here because the rhetorical force of the expression depends on the contrast between physical vision and inner perception. Replacing the metaphor with a formulation such as *failure to understand* might clarify its intended sense. However, it would weaken the deliberate contrast between eyes that see and hearts that are blind. LP therefore preserves both the conceptual mapping UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING and the rhetorical structure through which it is expressed.

Similarly, Sūrat Muḥammad (47:24) asks whether there are “locks” upon the hearts. All four translations preserve this concrete image. The metaphor conceptualizes the heart as an entity whose access can be obstructed or closed, thereby representing an inability or unwillingness to receive understanding. Because the physical relationship between a lock and restricted access is readily comprehensible in English, direct preservation communicates the conceptual meaning without requiring extensive interpretive intervention.

These examples also illustrate an important characteristic of LP: literal preservation does not necessarily entail communicative obscurity. When the metaphor draws on experiential relationships recognizable in both languages, close lexical transfer can simultaneously achieve source-text fidelity and target-text accessibility. This observation accords with Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which holds that metaphorical expressions can reflect systematic mappings between concrete source domains and abstract target domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). It also supports previous findings that some Qur'anic conceptual metaphors can be successfully retained in English when comparable conceptual structures are available in the target language (Al-Saggaf et al., 2013; Al-Sowaidi et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, LP should not automatically be regarded as effective merely because the lexical image has been retained. Its effectiveness depends on whether the English expression activates a sufficiently comparable conceptual relationship and whether the intended Qur'anic meaning remains recoverable from context. This distinction matters for heart

metaphors because the Qur'anic qalb encompasses cognitive, moral, and spiritual functions that may extend beyond the predominantly emotional associations of heart in contemporary English, a difficulty also noted in research specifically on Qur'anic heart expressions (Nouraldeem, 2023).

The translator comparison further reinforces the importance of this strategy. Pickthall employs LP in all 12 cases, while Saheeh International uses it in 11 and Yusuf Ali in 10. Asad employs straightforward LP in only five instances, relying more frequently on explication or interpretive intervention. The contrast suggests that the translators differ not in recognizing the underlying significance of the heart metaphors, but mainly in how much they let the original metaphorical image communicate that significance.

Overall, the analysis indicates that Literal Preservation is well suited to Qur'anic heart metaphors when the physical source image remains conceptually accessible in English. Its main advantage is that it preserves the linguistic image, conceptual mapping, rhetorical force, and Qur'anic meaning while minimizing unnecessary interpretive intervention. However, where direct preservation risks ambiguity or incomplete comprehension, limited explication may provide an alternative strategy.

4.3 Literal Preservation with Explication

Literal Preservation with Explication (LPE) accounts for 3 of the 48 translation instances (6.25%) and occurs exclusively in Muhammad Asad's translation. Although relatively infrequent, the strategy matters because it shows an attempt to preserve the Qur'anic metaphor while guiding the English reader toward its contextual or spiritual meaning.

Unlike Interpretive Reformulation, LPE does not substantially replace the source metaphor. The original image remains identifiable, but explanatory wording makes an implicit aspect of the meaning more explicit. This strategy therefore occupies an intermediate position between close metaphorical preservation and interpretive intervention.

One example occurs in Sūrat Āl 'Imrān (3:8), where the supplication concerns hearts deviating after divine guidance. Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, and Saheeh International remain comparatively close to the metaphor of hearts turning or deviating, whereas Asad's rendering introduces additional interpretive guidance around the expression. The metaphorical conception of the heart as capable of changing direction is retained, but the additional wording helps the reader understand this movement as spiritual deviation rather than physical motion.

A more revealing case appears in Sūrat al-Tawbah (9:125). Translations differ considerably in how they render the verse's adverse inner condition. Pickthall retains the concrete image through “uncleanness,” while Yusuf Ali renders it as “doubt,” Saheeh International as “evil,”

and Asad introduces the explicitly moral expression “moral defilement.” Asad's choice illustrates his tendency to make the source expression's moral significance more immediately accessible. Such explicitation can enhance communicative and exegetical clarity, although it also increases the translator's interpretive presence.

A similar tendency occurs in *Sūrat al-Munāfiqūn* (63:3), where the image of hearts being sealed represents the consequences of persistent disbelief. The source metaphor remains recognizable in Asad's rendering, but explanatory intervention makes its contextual significance more explicit than in the more closely source-oriented translations.

From a QMTEF perspective, LPE offers a potentially effective compromise between metaphorical fidelity and reader accessibility. Because it retains the original image, the strategy can maintain relatively high levels of conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, and Qur'anic fidelity. At the same time, carefully controlled explicitation may strengthen exegetical accuracy and communicative effectiveness by reducing ambiguity for readers unfamiliar with Qur'anic metaphorical conventions.

The strategy nevertheless involves a potential trade-off. Explicitation necessarily introduces information that is less explicit in the Arabic expression itself. If such additions become excessive, the translator may narrow the metaphor's interpretive possibilities or foreground one exegetical understanding at the expense of its rhetorical openness. The effectiveness of LPE therefore depends on whether the added material genuinely clarifies the source meaning without substantially altering or replacing its metaphorical structure.

The concentration of all three LPE instances in Asad's translation is also significant. It supports the broader pattern observed in the corpus: Asad is more willing than the other translators to mediate between the Qur'anic image and the English reader through interpretive clarification. Pickthall, by contrast, consistently lets the source metaphor stand with minimal intervention, while Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International generally preserve heart metaphors directly unless context encourages a more interpretive rendering.

Overall, LPE functions as a selective rather than dominant strategy in the heart-metaphor corpus. Its principal value lies in retaining the conceptual image while making otherwise implicit meanings more accessible. However, because the strategy increases interpretive intervention, its effectiveness depends on maintaining a careful balance between clarification and preservation.

4.4 Interpretive Reformulation and Mixed Strategies

Interpretive Reformulation (IR) and Mixed Strategy (MS) represent the least source-oriented procedures identified in the corpus. Together, they account for 7 of the 48 translation instances (14.58%), with IR occurring in four cases (8.33%) and MS in three (6.25%).

Although relatively infrequent, these strategies are analytically important because they reveal situations in which translators consider direct metaphorical preservation insufficient for communicating the intended meaning.

Interpretive Reformulation occurs when the source metaphor is substantially modified or replaced by wording that foregrounds its interpreted meaning. A clear example appears in *Sūrat al-Shu‘arā’* (26:89), where *qalbin salīm* is rendered by Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International as “a sound heart” and by Pickthall as “a whole heart.” Asad, however, renders the expression as “a heart free of evil.” His translation makes the moral interpretation of *salīm* explicit rather than preserving the heart's compact metaphorical characterization.

From a QMTEF perspective, such reformulation involves a trade-off. Asad's rendering is highly communicative because “free of evil” immediately signals a moral interpretation to the English reader. It may also support exegetical accuracy by foregrounding an accepted interpretation of the expression. However, the shift reduces rhetorical preservation, since the concise quality attributed to the heart in the Arabic expression is expanded into an explanatory phrase. This illustrates a central issue in metaphor translation: greater interpretive accessibility does not necessarily correspond to greater preservation of rhetorical form.

Another important case occurs in *Sūrat al-Sharḥ* (94:1). The Arabic expression refers to the expansion or opening of the *ṣadr* (breast). Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International preserve “breast,” while Pickthall uses “bosom.” Asad instead renders the expression as “opened up thy heart.” Substituting *heart* for *breast* makes the intended inner or spiritual meaning readily accessible, but it modifies the source image. The rendering may therefore be highly communicative while showing less linguistic and rhetorical preservation.

Interpretive variation is also apparent in *Sūrat al-Tawbah* (9:125). The translations range from Pickthall's comparatively image-preserving “uncleanness” to Yusuf Ali's “doubt,” Asad's “moral defilement,” and Saheeh International's “evil.” These choices show how translators may prioritize contextual interpretation over preserving the source lexical image. Such renderings can make the negative spiritual condition more explicit, but they also narrow the semantic possibilities available in the Arabic expression.

Mixed Strategy, by contrast, occurs when a rendering preserves some components of the source metaphor while substantially explicating or reformulating others. This is particularly evident in *Sūrat al-Zumar* (39:22). Yusuf Ali preserves the breast image but renders part of the surrounding metaphor through the more interpretive expression “received enlightenment.” Asad similarly introduces interpretive modification while retaining elements of the original metaphorical structure. Pickthall and Saheeh International remain

considerably closer to the source imagery. The combination of preservation and reformulation justifies treating such renderings as mixed rather than exclusively literal or interpretive.

QMTEF evaluation suggests that MS can be effective when different components of a complex metaphor require different degrees of intervention. Preservation supports conceptual equivalence and rhetorical force, while limited reformulation can improve communicative and exegetical clarity. However, substantial intervention may alter the relationships among the original images and thereby weaken the rhetorical compactness of the Qur'anic expression.

The distribution of these strategies also reveals a clear translator-specific pattern. Asad accounts for four of the seven IR/MS instances, confirming his greater willingness to interpret or restructure metaphorical expressions for the target reader. Yusuf Ali employs these strategies more selectively, while Saheeh International shows only limited departure from literal preservation. Pickthall records no IR or MS cases in the present corpus, reinforcing his consistently source-oriented treatment of heart metaphors.

These findings are consistent with the broader distinction in metaphor-translation theory between reproducing a source metaphor and rendering its interpreted sense (Van den Broeck, 1981; Newmark, 1988). In the specific context of Qur'anic translation, however, the choice carries additional consequences because interpretive intervention may affect not only semantic accessibility but also the conceptual and rhetorical form through which the Qur'anic meaning is communicated.

Overall, IR and MS function as selective problem-solving strategies rather than general approaches to Qur'anic heart metaphors. They are most useful where direct preservation may leave an important contextual meaning insufficiently accessible. Their effectiveness, however, depends on whether the gain in interpretive clarity justifies the corresponding modification of the source metaphor.

4.5 Comparative Analysis of the Four Translators

The corpus reveals four distinguishable translation profiles. Pickthall demonstrates the strongest source-oriented tendency, with all 12 renderings classified as LP. His approach consistently preserves the lexical and metaphorical structure of the Arabic expressions, resulting in strong linguistic and rhetorical correspondence but leaving contextual interpretation largely to the reader.

Saheeh International displays a similarly strong preference for metaphor preservation, with 11 of 12 renderings (91.67%) classified as LP. Its main distinction is its generally contemporary English expression. The combination of close metaphorical preservation and

accessible wording suggests an attempt to maintain source-text imagery without unnecessarily increasing processing difficulty for modern readers.

Yusuf Ali employs LP in 10 of 12 cases (83.33%), while the remaining instances involve IR or MS. His translations generally retain the Qur'anic image but show greater willingness than Pickthall to modify the surrounding expression where interpretive or literary considerations arise.

Asad exhibits the greatest strategic diversity. Only 5 of his 12 renderings (41.67%) are classified as straightforward LP, while the remaining seven involve LPE, IR, or MS. This pattern indicates a substantially greater degree of interpretive mediation. His rendering of *qalbin salīm* as “a heart free of evil” in 26:89 and his substitution of “heart” for *ṣadr* in 94:1 exemplify this tendency.

Table 4. Comparative Translation Profiles in the Heart-Metaphor Corpus

Translator	Dominant Strategy	LP Frequency	General Tendency
Abdullah Yusuf Ali	LP	10/12 (83.33%)	Predominantly preservative with selective intervention
Marmaduke Pickthall	LP	12/12 (100%)	Strongly source-oriented
Muhammad Asad	LP, with frequent non-LP strategies	5/12 (41.67%)	Most interpretive and strategically varied
Saheeh International	LP	11/12 (91.67%)	Preservative with accessible contemporary wording

The comparison therefore indicates that the principal difference among the translators is not whether they recognize the heart's metaphorical significance, but how much interpretive mediation they consider necessary when transferring that significance into English. Pickthall relies most on the source image itself; Saheeh International balances preservation with relatively accessible expression; Yusuf Ali allows occasional interpretive or stylistic modification; and Asad intervenes most often to foreground contextual meaning.

Importantly, these findings do not establish that the translator with the highest LP frequency is automatically the most effective. Strategy frequency and translation effectiveness are separate questions. A literal rendering may preserve imagery while remaining less transparent to the target reader, whereas an interpretive rendering may enhance accessibility while reducing rhetorical preservation. The relative effectiveness of these choices must therefore be assessed through the six dimensions of QMTEF.

4.6 QMTEF Evaluation of Translation Effectiveness

The frequency analysis identifies the strategies preferred by the four translators, but frequency alone does not determine translation quality. A strategy may preserve a metaphor's lexical form while failing to convey its contextual significance. In contrast, a more interpretive rendering may improve accessibility at the expense of rhetorical imagery. The Qur'anic Metaphor Translation Effectiveness Framework (QMTEF) was therefore applied to assess the translations across six complementary dimensions: linguistic accuracy, exegetical accuracy, conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, communicative effectiveness, and Qur'anic fidelity.

Table 5. General QMTEF Evaluation of Translation Strategies

Strategy	Linguistic Accuracy	Exegetical Accuracy	Conceptual Equivalence	Rhetorical Preservation	Communicative Effectiveness	Qur'anic Fidelity
LP	Excellent	Good–Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent
LPE	Good–Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good–Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
IR	Good	Excellent	Good	Acceptable–Good	Excellent	Good–Excellent
MS	Good	Good–Excellent	Good–Excellent	Good	Good–Excellent	Good–Excellent

The evaluation indicates that Literal Preservation provides the strongest overall balance across the six QMTEF dimensions when the Qur'anic metaphor has a comparable conceptual structure in English. Its principal strengths lie in linguistic accuracy, conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, and Qur'anic fidelity. This is particularly evident in expressions involving sealing, disease, blindness, and locking. In Sūrat Muḥammad (47:24), for example, all four translators preserve the image of “locks” upon the hearts, keeping the conceptual and rhetorical relationship between physical closure and impaired spiritual understanding intact. Similarly, the metaphor of heart blindness in Sūrat al-Ḥajj (22:46) demonstrates the multidimensional effectiveness of LP. The four translations retain the contrast between physical sight and heart blindness, preserving not only the lexical image but also the conceptual mapping between vision and understanding. Replacing “blind hearts” with an explanatory expression such as *failure to understand* might increase immediate semantic transparency but would diminish the rhetorical contrast the source text constructs.

Literal Preservation with Explicitation performs particularly well in exegetical accuracy and communicative effectiveness because it retains the source metaphor while supplying limited clarification. Its main advantage is therefore its ability to mediate between preservation and accessibility. Nevertheless, its effectiveness depends on the restraint of the explanatory addition. Excessive explicitation may narrow the metaphor's interpretive potential and reduce its rhetorical economy.

Interpretive Reformulation produces a different profile. It tends to perform strongly in exegetical accuracy and communicative effectiveness but less strongly in rhetorical preservation and, in some cases, conceptual equivalence. Asad's rendering of *qalbin salīm* in *Sūrat al-Shu'arā'* (26:89) as "a heart free of evil" illustrates this trade-off. The expression clearly communicates an interpreted moral meaning, but an explanatory formulation replaces the compact quality represented by *salīm*. Thus, greater explicitness does not necessarily result in greater effectiveness across all QMTEF dimensions.

The same principle applies to Mixed Strategy, which can achieve a useful balance when a complex expression contains elements that differ in their translatability. In *Sūrat al-Zumar* (39:22), for instance, the combination of the expanded breast and divine light creates a multilayered metaphorical structure. Translators vary in how much they preserve or interpret these images. Mixed treatment can enhance accessibility, but substantial reformulation may weaken the relationship among the source images.

QMTEF analysis therefore suggests that no strategy should be evaluated independently of the metaphor to which it applies. Literal Preservation is particularly effective where English permits the source conceptual mapping to remain intelligible, while LPE can be advantageous when limited clarification is necessary. IR may be justified where literal preservation would obscure an important contextual meaning. However, the gain in communicative or exegetical clarity must be weighed against potential loss of rhetorical and conceptual features.

Overall, the findings indicate that translation effectiveness in this domain depends on maintaining an appropriate balance between preservation and interpretation. The most effective renderings are not necessarily those that reproduce every lexical feature mechanically, nor those that explain the metaphor most explicitly, but those that preserve the Qur'anic image and conceptual relationship while remaining sufficiently intelligible to the English reader.

4.7 Discussion of the Main Findings

The findings reveal three principal tendencies. First, the predominance of LP (79.17%) indicates that Qur'anic heart metaphors frequently permit direct metaphorical transfer into

English. Physical experiences such as disease, blindness, sealing, locking, constriction, and expansion provide accessible conceptual structures that keep the source imagery meaningful in translation. This supports the CMT principle that metaphorical expressions may reflect systematic mappings grounded in embodied experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Second, the analysis demonstrates that translator orientation significantly influences strategy selection. Pickthall's exclusive use of LP in the present corpus contrasts markedly with Asad's greater reliance on explication, reformulation, and mixed procedures. Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International occupy comparatively preservative positions, although each permits selective departure from direct transfer. The differences therefore concern the degree of interpretive mediation rather than simply whether the translators understand the underlying metaphor.

Third, the QMTEF analysis demonstrates that strategy frequency and strategy effectiveness should not be conflated. The dominance of LP does not mean that literal preservation is universally preferable. Its effectiveness is strongest where the source metaphor remains conceptually and communicatively accessible in English. Where this condition is absent, carefully controlled explication may improve comprehension without substantially sacrificing the source image. Interpretive reformulation can likewise clarify contextual meaning, but it carries a greater risk of reducing rhetorical preservation or narrowing the conceptual richness of the Qur'anic expression.

These findings answer the study's central research questions by showing that LP, LPE, IR, and MS occur at substantially different frequencies; that LP predominates in the heart-metaphor corpus; that their effectiveness varies across the six QMTEF dimensions; and that the four translators exhibit distinguishable strategic profiles. More broadly, the analysis demonstrates the value of evaluating Qur'anic metaphor translation multidimensionally rather than judging effectiveness solely through literalness or readability.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the translation strategies used by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall, Muhammad Asad, and Saheeh International to render Qur'anic metaphors of the heart and inner state into English. Based on a focused corpus of **12 metaphorical expressions and 48 translation instances**, the analysis identified four principal strategies: Literal Preservation (LP), Literal Preservation with Explication (LPE), Interpretive Reformulation (IR), and Mixed Strategy (MS).

The findings demonstrate that **Literal Preservation is the predominant strategy, accounting for 79.17% of the corpus**. Pickthall shows the strongest preference for LP (100%), followed by Saheeh International (91.67%) and Yusuf Ali (83.33%), whereas Asad exhibits

greater strategic variation, with LP accounting for 41.67% of his renderings. The predominance of LP indicates that many Qur'anic heart metaphors—including images of ****sealing, disease, blindness, and locking****—can be transferred into English while retaining their central conceptual mappings and rhetorical force. The corpus nevertheless contains important instances of explication and reformulation, particularly where translators seek to make implicit spiritual or moral meanings more accessible. For example, **qalbin salīm** in *Sūrat al-Shu'arā'* (26:89) ranges from the relatively preservative “sound heart” and “whole heart” to Asad's more interpretive “heart free of evil.”

Evaluation through the ****Qur'anic Metaphor Translation Effectiveness Framework (QMTEF)**** further demonstrates that translation effectiveness cannot be determined by literalness alone. LP generally provides the strongest balance of linguistic accuracy, conceptual equivalence, rhetorical preservation, and Qur'anic fidelity when comparable conceptual mappings exist in English. LPE can improve exegetical and communicative clarity while retaining the original image, whereas IR may enhance accessibility but sometimes reduces rhetorical or conceptual preservation. Effective translation therefore depends on balancing ****preservation and interpretation**** according to the characteristics of the individual metaphor.

The study contributes to Qur'anic translation research by providing a focused comparison of heart and inner-state metaphors across four influential English translations and by linking ****strategy selection to multidimensional translation effectiveness****. Its scope, however, is limited to 12 metaphors and four English translations. Future research could extend the analysis to a larger corpus of **qalb**, **fu'ād**, and **ṣadr** expressions, additional English or non-English translations, or other Qur'anic conceptual domains. Such research could further test QMTEF's applicability and clarify how conceptual, rhetorical, exegetical, and Qur'anic meanings interact in translating sacred metaphor.

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