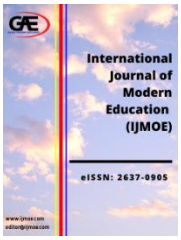
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TRANSLATING THE UNSEEN: METAFUNCTION, NARRATIVE FRAMING, AND SEMANTIC LOSS IN ESCHATOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine how eschatological monologues are reconfigured in Arabic–English translation while preserving rhetorical force and epistemic authority. It develops an interdisciplinary framework integrating Muqtada al-Hal from Ilmu Ma'ani with Systemic Functional Linguistics by M. A. K. Halliday and Narrative Theory in Translation Studies by Mona Baker. Drawing on Qur'anic texts such as Surah Al-Waqi'ah and monologues from Hamlet by William Shakespeare, the study proposes a Corrective Mapping Model to trace metafunctional shifts and narrative reframing, focusing on mood, modality, and framing strategies to analyze how authority and the unseen (al-ghaib) are reconstructed in translation. The findings reveal a pattern of semantic normalization, whereby culturally dense terms such as Sa'ir, Saqar, and Laza are rendered as "fire" or "Hell," thereby reducing rhetorical intensity and theological specificity, and the study ultimately offers a transferable model for analyzing metaphysical discourse in translation.

Keyword:

Arabic–English Translation, Eschatological Discourse, Metafunction (Systemic Functional Linguistics), Narrative Framing, Semantic Normalization

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Introduction

Translation is not merely the transfer of words from one language into another; rather, it is an interpretive act that reconstructs meaning, ideology, authority, and worldview across linguistic and cultural boundaries. This complexity becomes significantly intensified when the translated discourse concerns metaphysical realities, eschatological imagery, and theological concepts associated with the unseen (*al-ghaib*). In such contexts, language performs not only an informational function but also a rhetorical and epistemic one, shaping the reader's perception of divine authority, moral urgency, and spiritual truth. Consequently, the translation of religious and literary monologues dealing with existential and eschatological themes often involves substantial semantic negotiation, metafunctional shifts, and narrative reframing.

Within Qur'anic discourse, eschatological descriptions are constructed through highly sophisticated rhetorical mechanisms rooted in Arabic balaghah, particularly the sciences of *Ilmu Ma'ani*. Concepts such as *Muqtada al-Hal*emphasize the appropriateness of linguistic selection according to context, audience, emotional state, and communicative purpose. These rhetorical considerations are especially prominent in verses depicting divine judgment, punishment, Paradise, and Hell, where lexical choice, syntactic arrangement, modality, and tonal variation collectively function to establish epistemic authority and emotional intensity. The Qur'an employs a rich repertoire of eschatological lexicons such as *Sa'ir*, *Saqar*, *Laza*, and *Jaheem*, each carrying distinct semantic, theological, and rhetorical implications beyond their general association with "Hell" or "fire." However, many English translations normalize these culturally and theologically dense expressions into generalized equivalents, thereby reducing semantic specificity and rhetorical force.

Recent studies on Qur'anic translation continue to demonstrate that semantic loss remains one of the most significant challenges in Arabic–English translation, particularly in relation to metaphysical, culture-bound, and eschatological expressions. Contemporary scholarship argues that lexical compression, semantic normalization, and cultural adaptation frequently reduce the theological specificity and rhetorical intensity embedded in Qur'anic discourse (Abdelkarim, M., B., A., et, al, 2025). Research published between 2020 and 2025 further highlights that translators often prioritize readability and target-language accessibility over preserving the layered semantic and rhetorical architecture of the source text. According to Alasmari (2022), many English renderings of Qur'anic eschatological terminology fail to preserve connotative distinctions that are central to Qur'anic warning discourse, especially terms associated with divine punishment and the unseen. Similarly, Alhaj. A,. A., M., (2023) argue that semantic reduction in Qur'anic translation frequently emerges through generalized lexical substitutions and syntactic restructuring, resulting in weakened epistemic force and diminished affective resonance. These findings indicate that contemporary Qur'anic translation still struggles to balance linguistic accessibility with theological and rhetorical fidelity.

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At the same time, contemporary Translation Studies have increasingly shifted from purely linguistic models toward sociocultural, ideological, and narrative-oriented approaches. Recent scholarship emphasizes that translation is not a neutral act of transfer but rather a process of reframing meanings, identities, and systems of authority within new cultural environments (Chen, 2021; Sue-Ann et, al, 2022). Within this development, Narrative Theory remains particularly influential in explaining how translators actively reconstruct interpretive frameworks through lexical choices, omission, emphasis, and contextual repositioning. Recent studies applying narrative approaches to religious discourse demonstrate that translation can significantly alter perceptions of authority, morality, and sacred meaning through framing strategies and ideological mediation (Ekrema Shebab & Bilal, 2025; Fatemeh Kazemi & Dianoosh Sanei, 2020). Although these studies provide important insights into ideological framing, the application of narrative theory to eschatological and metaphysical discourse remains relatively limited, particularly within Arabic–English Qur'anic translation.

Parallel to this development, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) continues to provide one of the most influential frameworks for analyzing how meaning is constructed through interpersonal, ideational, and textual metafunctions. Recent SFL-based translation studies have demonstrated that shifts in mood, modality, appraisal, and thematic structure significantly influence how authority and evaluation are represented in translated discourse (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The interpersonal metafunction is particularly relevant to the translation of eschatological monologues because it explains how language constructs certainty, warning, obligation, fear, and speaker–listener relations. In Qur'anic discourse, modality and mood structures function as key mechanisms for establishing divine authority and epistemic certainty regarding the unseen. However, recent research suggests that such metafunctional resources are frequently weakened in translation through lexical simplification, modulation, and syntactic normalization, thereby reducing rhetorical impact and emotional intensity

The problem of semantic and rhetorical reduction is not exclusive to sacred texts. Literary monologues in Western dramatic traditions also demonstrate how linguistic framing constructs authority, existential anxiety, and metaphysical contemplation. One of the most notable examples appears in Hamlet by William Shakespeare, where monologues such as "To be, or not to be" articulate psychological conflict, mortality, and existential uncertainty through intricate rhetorical and syntactic structures. Similar to Qur'anic eschatological passages, Shakespearean monologues rely heavily on modality, mood selection, and narrative positioning to produce emotional and philosophical impact. Comparing Qur'anic eschatological discourse with Shakespearean dramatic monologues therefore enables a broader interdisciplinary investigation into how translators reconstruct metaphysical meaning and rhetorical authority across genres, cultures, and belief systems.

Despite the growing body of scholarship on Qur'anic translation, significant theoretical gaps remain. First, most existing studies focus predominantly on lexical equivalence, semantic loss, or grammatical shifts without sufficiently examining how rhetorical authority and epistemic positioning are reconfigured in translation. Second, very limited research integrates Arabic rhetorical theory, particularly *Ilmu Ma 'ani* and *Muqtada al-Hal*, with contemporary linguistic and translation frameworks such as SFL and Narrative Theory. Third, although scholars have acknowledged semantic normalization in Qur'anic translation, there remains a lack of systematic models capable of tracing how metafunctional shifts and narrative reframing jointly contribute to the reconstruction of metaphysical discourse.

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To address these gaps, the present study proposes an interdisciplinary analytical framework integrating *Muqtada al-Hal*from *Ilmu Ma'ani*, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, and Mona Baker's Narrative Theory in Translation Studies. Through this integration, the study develops a Corrective Mapping Model designed to identify and trace metafunctional shifts, semantic reductions, and narrative reframing strategies in Arabic–English translation. Particular attention is given to interpersonal metafunctions, mood structures, modality systems, lexical density, and framing strategies in order to investigate how rhetorical force and epistemic authority are reconstructed when metaphysical discourse is translated into English.

The study draws primarily on selected verses from Surah Al-Waqi'ah alongside selected monologues from Hamlet to examine how translation mediates the unseen and repositions authority within the target language. It argues that semantic normalization often transforms culturally dense Qur'anic expressions into generalized English terms such as "fire" or "Hell," thereby reducing theological specificity, rhetorical intensity, and affective resonance. Similarly, shifts in modality and framing strategies may alter the degree of certainty, existential tension, or authority embedded within literary monologues. By tracing these shifts systematically, the study aims to contribute not only to Qur'anic Translation Studies but also to broader discussions on metaphysical discourse, narrative framing, and intercultural meaning-making.

Ultimately, this research seeks to offer a transferable analytical model for examining the translation of metaphysical and eschatological discourse across languages and traditions. In doing so, it highlights the need to move beyond surface-level equivalence toward a more comprehensive understanding of how translation reconstructs worldview, authority, and the unseen within target-language contexts.

Literature Review

Introduction to Qur'anic Translation Studies

Qur'anic Translation Studies has emerged as an important interdisciplinary field integrating linguistics, translation theory, Arabic rhetoric, theology, discourse analysis, and cultural studies. Unlike ordinary literary or technical translation, Qur'anic translation involves the transfer of sacred discourse that simultaneously functions as divine revelation, moral guidance, and rhetorical communication. Consequently, scholars consistently argue that translating the Qur'an should not be understood merely as a linguistic activity but also as an interpretive and epistemological undertaking requiring sensitivity to theological meaning, contextual intentionality, and rhetorical structure (Abdul-Raof, 2004; Baker, 2006).

Within the Malaysian academic context, research on Qur'anic translation has expanded significantly through contributions from scholars in institutions such as Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, and International Islamic University Malaysia. Malaysian scholars increasingly emphasize that Qur'anic meaning is closely connected to Arabic *balaghah*, semantic contextualization, and rhetorical intentionality rather than lexical equivalence alone. Studies conducted within the Malaysian scholarly tradition therefore tend to focus on semantic interpretation, rhetorical reconstruction, and contextual meaning in Qur'anic translation analysis (Khairul Asyraf & Mohd Sukki., 2021; Khairuldin et al., 2021).

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One of the most persistent issues discussed in Qur'anic Translation Studies concerns the preservation of semantic precision and rhetorical intensity. Qur'anic discourse frequently employs condensed lexical structures, metaphorical imagery, syntactic foregrounding, repetition, and emotionally intensified eschatological expressions rooted in Arabic rhetorical traditions. Abdul-Raof (2004) argues that Qur'anic rhetorical structures operate cohesively to construct persuasion, emotional resonance, and epistemic authority. Consequently, English translations often encounter difficulties in reproducing the semantic density and rhetorical force embedded within the source text. Similar observations are highlighted by Abdelaal and Rashid (2015), who demonstrate that semantic reduction frequently occurs in English translations of Surah al-Waqi'ah due to lexical simplification and grammatical restructuring.

Recent Malaysian scholarship further highlights that the translation of metaphysical and culture-bound expressions presents significant interpretive challenges because Qur'anic terminology frequently carries layered theological and rhetorical implications. Khairul Asyraf and Mohd Sukki (2021) argue that semantic interpretation in Qur'anic discourse requires attention to contextual and rhetorical dimensions because many Qur'anic lexical items derive meaning through contextual positioning rather than isolated denotative reference. This issue becomes particularly significant in the translation of eschatological expressions associated with divine punishment, resurrection, and the unseen (*al-ghaib*), where semantic reduction may weaken emotional resonance and theological specificity (Ahmed & El Halabi, 2022).

The integration of Arabic rhetorical theory into Qur'anic translation analysis has also received increasing attention among Malaysian scholars. Khairul Asyraf Mohd Nathir (2023) argues that Qur'anic eschatological terminology should be analyzed through the framework of *Muqtada al-Hal* within *Ilmu Ma'ani*, which emphasizes contextual appropriateness and rhetorical intentionality in discourse construction. According to his analysis, eschatological expressions derive meaning not merely from lexical reference but also from emotional positioning, communicative purpose, and contextual resonance. Consequently, translation strategies that prioritize surface lexical equivalence may unintentionally reduce theological emphasis and rhetorical force in the target language (Khairul Asyraf Mohd Nathir, 2023).

Recent studies further argue that the translation of Qur'anic metaphysical discourse remains particularly challenging because concepts associated with *al-ghaib* derive meaning not only from lexical structures but also from theological worldview and rhetorical positioning. Eschatological passages concerning Hellfire, resurrection, and divine judgment frequently employ emotionally intensified discourse intended to shape moral consciousness and spiritual awareness. Consequently, contemporary Qur'anic Translation Studies increasingly focus on semantic loss, rhetorical transformation, ideological mediation, and narrative reframing in order to investigate how sacred meaning is reconstructed within target-language contexts.

Despite the growing body of scholarship on Qur'anic translation, existing studies remain theoretically fragmented, particularly in relation to the interaction between semantic loss, metafunctional transformation, and narrative reframing within eschatological discourse. Most studies continue to examine these dimensions separately without developing an integrated framework capable of tracing how rhetorical authority and metaphysical meaning are reconstructed simultaneously in translation. Therefore, the present study seeks to contribute to contemporary Qur'anic Translation Studies by integrating Arabic rhetorical theory, Systemic Functional Linguistics, and Narrative Theory in Translation Studies in order to examine how

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authority, rhetorical intensity, and the unseen (*al-ghaib*) are reconstructed in Arabic–English translation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Baker, 2006; Khairul Asyraf Mohd Nathir, 2023).

Semantic Loss in Eschatological Terminology

The translation of Qur'anic eschatological terminology represents one of the most challenging areas within Qur'anic Translation Studies due to the semantic complexity and rhetorical depth associated with such expressions. Eschatological discourse in the Qur'an encompasses descriptions of Hellfire, Paradise, resurrection, divine judgment, punishment, reward, and the unseen (*al-ghaib*). These descriptions are not merely informational in nature; rather, they function rhetorically to construct fear, warning, hope, spiritual reflection, and moral consciousness. Consequently, the translation of eschatological terminology requires sensitivity not only to lexical meaning but also to theological implication, contextual positioning, and rhetorical intentionality embedded within the source text (Abdul-Raof, 2004).

One of the major difficulties in translating eschatological expressions lies in the semantic specificity of Qur'anic Arabic. Many Qur'anic terms associated with punishment and the afterlife carry nuanced meanings that are closely tied to Islamic theological discourse and Arabic rhetorical traditions. Terms such as *Sa'ir*, *Saqar*, *Laza*, *Jaheem*, and *Hutamah* are often translated into English using generalized equivalents such as "Hell" or "fire." Although these translations may preserve the basic denotative meaning, they frequently fail to convey the rhetorical distinction and theological nuance associated with each term in the Qur'anic context. Abdul-Raof (2004) argues that such lexical simplification weakens the semantic stratification intentionally constructed within Qur'anic discourse and reduces the persuasive force of divine warning.

This issue reflects a broader phenomenon of semantic normalization in translation. Abdelaal and Rashid (2015) explain that translators frequently adopt lexical approximation and contextual simplification in order to make Qur'anic discourse more accessible to English-speaking audiences. However, this process often results in semantic reduction because many Arabic eschatological expressions contain layered meanings that cannot be adequately represented through single English lexical items. Their analysis of Surah al-Waqi'ah demonstrates that semantic loss frequently emerges when rhetorical and contextual dimensions are subordinated to target-language readability. Consequently, translated expressions may communicate the surface meaning of punishment while losing important emotional and theological implications embedded within the original Arabic text (Abdelaal & Rashid, 2015). The rhetorical nature of Qur'anic eschatological discourse further intensifies the challenge of translation. Ali Albashir, M. A. et al (2025) argues that Qur'anic expressions frequently derive meaning through metaphorical imagery, repetition, syntactic emphasis, and rhetorical arrangement rather than through isolated vocabulary alone. In many eschatological passages, lexical choices function performatively to evoke emotional response and reinforce epistemic certainty concerning the afterlife and divine judgment. Therefore, translations that prioritize literal equivalence without preserving rhetorical structure may unintentionally weaken the emotional intensity and spiritual urgency of discourse.

Similarly, Ahmed and El Halabi (2022) observe that semantic reduction in English translations of Qur'anic verses often affects the relationship between warning and emotional resonance. Their findings indicate that some translations simplify contextual implications associated with fear, accountability, and divine punishment in order to produce more fluent English renderings.

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However, this simplification may alter how target readers perceive the seriousness and theological authority of the original message. The authors further argue that semantic loss in eschatological discourse is closely related to the translator's interpretive choices, particularly when balancing readability against rhetorical fidelity (Ahmed & El Halabi, 2022).

From the perspective of Arabic rhetorical studies, the semantic force of eschatological terminology is deeply connected to contextual appropriateness and communicative intention. Khairul Asyraf Mohd Nathir (2023) argues that Qur'anic eschatological expressions should be interpreted through the framework of *Muqtada al-Hal* within *Ilmu Ma'ani*, which emphasizes the relationship between linguistic selection and rhetorical context. According to his study, many eschatological terms derive meaning through emotional positioning, audience orientation, and contextual resonance rather than through lexical reference alone. Consequently, translation strategies that focus solely on dictionary equivalence may fail to preserve the theological intensity and rhetorical effect intended in the source discourse.

Malaysian scholarship has also increasingly emphasized the importance of contextual semantics in Qur'anic interpretation and translation. Khairul Asyraf & Mohd Sukki (2021) argue that Qur'anic lexical items frequently possess multidimensional meanings that emerge through interaction with surrounding rhetorical structures and theological contexts. Their findings suggest that semantic loss often occurs when translators isolate lexical items from the broader discourse framework of the verse. This issue becomes particularly significant in eschatological passages because rhetorical intensity functions directly to shape moral awareness and spiritual reflection among readers.

In addition, the translation of eschatological terminology is complicated by differences in worldview between Arabic-Islamic and English-speaking cultural contexts. Concepts associated with *al-ghaib*, divine punishment, and the afterlife are deeply rooted within Islamic theological understanding and may not possess direct conceptual parallels in English linguistic traditions. As a result, translators often employ domestication strategies to facilitate comprehension for target readers. However, such strategies may unintentionally reduce transcendental and metaphysical dimensions embedded within Qur'anic discourse (Baker, 2006).

Ilmu Ma'ani and Contextual Rhetoric

Arabic rhetorical theory has long emphasized the relationship between language, context, and communicative intention in discourse construction. Within the tradition of *balaghah*, *Ilmu Ma'ani* focuses on how meaning is shaped through contextual appropriateness and rhetorical arrangement rather than through lexical meaning alone. One of the central concepts in this framework is *Muqtada al-Hal*, which refers to the suitability of discourse according to contextual circumstances, audience expectation, emotional condition, and communicative purpose. In other words, a linguistic expression is considered rhetorically effective when it corresponds appropriately to the context in which it is delivered.

In Qur'anic discourse, *Muqtada al-Hal* functions as a major rhetorical mechanism for constructing warning, persuasion, emotional resonance, and divine authority. Qur'anic expressions frequently derive their rhetorical impact from contextual positioning and audience orientation rather than isolated lexical reference. This is particularly evident in eschatological

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passages where the Qur'an employs intensified rhetorical structures to evoke fear, reflection, and spiritual awareness.

For example, in Surah al-Qari'ah, Allah states:

"Wa mā adrāka mā al-qāri'ah"

"And what will make you know what the Striking Calamity is?" (Qur'an 101:3)

The interrogative structure in this verse does not function merely as a request for information. Rather, according to Arabic rhetorical analysis, the question operates rhetorically to magnify fear and suspense concerning the events of the Day of Judgment. The phrase creates emotional anticipation and psychological intensity before the description of divine punishment is introduced. From the perspective of *Muqtada al-Hal*, the interrogative form is selected because it suits the emotional and rhetorical context of warning and spiritual shock.

Similarly, in Surah al-Humazah, Allah refers to Hellfire using the term *al-Hutamah*:

"Kallā layunbadhanna fī al-ḥuṭamah"

"No! He will surely be thrown into the Crusher." (Qur'an 104:4)

The lexical choice *al-Hutamah* carries rhetorical implications beyond the generalized meaning of "Hell." The term originates from the root meaning "to crush" or "to shatter," thereby evoking imagery of destruction and humiliation. However, many English translations render the term simply as "Hellfire" or "the Fire," reducing the semantic and rhetorical specificity embedded within the Qur'anic expression. Abdul-Raof (2004) argues that such lexical simplification weakens the emotional and persuasive force intended in the original discourse.

Another example can be observed in Surah al-Muddaththir, where Allah refers to Hell as *Saqar*:

"Sa-uṣlīhi saqar"

"I will drive him into Saqar." (Qur'an 74:26)

The use of *Saqar* rather than a generalized term for Hellfire reflects a specific rhetorical function within the verse. The term carries associations of burning intensity and irreversible suffering, reinforced further by the subsequent verse:

"Wa mā adrāka mā saqar"

"And what will make you know what Saqar is?" (Qur'an 74:27)

Again, the interrogative structure intensifies emotional gravity and spiritual warning. From the perspective of *Muqtada al-Hal*, the rhetorical arrangement corresponds directly to the communicative purpose of evoking fear and emphasizing divine authority.

Abdul-Raof (2004) argues that Qur'anic rhetoric derives persuasive power through contextualized discourse structures that are often difficult to reproduce in English translation. According to his analysis, rhetorical features such as foregrounding, repetition, interrogative intensification, and lexical specificity frequently lose impact when translators prioritize readability over rhetorical reconstruction. Consequently, English translations may preserve surface denotative meaning while weakening emotional resonance and theological intensity.

Recent Malaysian scholarship has further reinforced the importance of contextual rhetoric in Qur'anic interpretation and translation. Khairul Asyraf Mohd Nathir (2023) argues that

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eschatological terminology in the Qur'an should be interpreted through the framework of *Muqtada al-Hal* because rhetorical meaning emerges through the interaction between lexical choice, contextual positioning, emotional resonance, and audience orientation. His study on the terminology of *Syaqqa* in Qur'anic eschatological discourse demonstrates that semantic meaning is inseparable from rhetorical intentionality within Arabic *balaghah*.

For instance, the Qur'an employs different lexical forms to describe cosmic destruction during the Day of Judgment:

"Idhā al-samā'u inshaqqat"
"When the sky is split open." (Qur'an 84:1)
and
"Idhā al-samā'u infatarat"
"When the sky breaks apart." (Qur'an 82:1)

Although both expressions describe cosmic rupture, the lexical variations reflect different rhetorical intensities and contextual implications. According to Khairul Asyraf Mohd Nathir (2023), these distinctions are rhetorically significant because each expression contributes differently to the emotional and psychological construction of eschatological imagery. However, English translations often render both expressions using similar generalized terms such as "split" or "cleft asunder," thereby reducing semantic differentiation and rhetorical depth.

These examples demonstrate that meaning in Qur'anic discourse cannot be fully understood through lexical equivalence alone. Rather, rhetorical force emerges through contextual appropriateness, emotional positioning, and communicative intentionality. Therefore, the integration of *Ilmu Ma'ani* and *Muqtada al-Hal* into Qur'anic Translation Studies provides a more comprehensive framework for examining how theological meaning and rhetorical intensity are reconstructed across languages.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative textual and comparative research design to investigate how eschatological discourse is reconstructed in Arabic–English translation through processes of semantic transformation, metafunctional shifts, and narrative reframing. The study focuses specifically on the translation of metaphysical and eschatological monologues within Qur'anic discourse and selected literary texts in order to examine how rhetorical force, emotional intensity, and theological authority are negotiated across languages and cultural contexts. A qualitative approach is considered most appropriate because the study seeks to interpret contextual meaning, rhetorical intentionality, interpersonal positioning, and ideological framing rather than measure statistical patterns. The research is therefore interpretive in nature and emphasizes close textual analysis of discourse structures and translation strategies.

The corpus of the study consists of selected Qur'anic eschatological passages together with their English translations, as well as selected existential monologues from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The Qur'anic data are drawn from surahs that contain highly intensified eschatological imagery, including Surah al-Waqi'ah, Surah al-Qari'ah, Surah al-Humazah, Surah al-Muddaththir, Surah al-Infitar, and Surah al-Inshiqaq. These passages were selected because they contain lexical, rhetorical, and emotional features strongly associated with divine punishment, resurrection, cosmic destruction, and the unseen (*al-ghaib*). The study examines

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multiple English translations, including those by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall, Saheeh International, and Muhammad Asad, in order to identify variations in translation strategy and rhetorical reconstruction.

The literary corpus consists of selected monologues from *Hamlet*, particularly passages involving existential anxiety, metaphysical reflection, and psychological conflict. The inclusion of literary monologue allows the study to compare how sacred and literary discourses construct emotional intensity, authority, and metaphysical contemplation through rhetorical language. This comparative dimension strengthens the interdisciplinary scope of the study by positioning Qur'anic discourse alongside literary monologic structures that similarly rely on emotional and rhetorical persuasion.

The theoretical framework of the study integrates three major approaches: Arabic rhetorical theory, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and Narrative Theory in Translation Studies. The first framework is based on *Ilmu Ma'ani*, particularly the concept of *Muqtada al-Hal*, which emphasizes contextual appropriateness and rhetorical intentionality in discourse construction. Through this framework, the study examines how lexical choices, rhetorical structures, and contextual arrangements function to construct fear, warning, persuasion, and divine authority within eschatological passages. The framework is particularly important for identifying rhetorical meanings that may not be visible through lexical analysis alone.

The second framework employed is Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, with emphasis on interpersonal metafunction. This framework is used to analyze how mood structures, modality, appraisal systems, thematic organization, and evaluative language construct interpersonal relationships and authority within the discourse. Through SFL analysis, the study investigates how translation shifts influence certainty, emotional alignment, warning, and epistemic force in the target text. Particular attention is given to modality because eschatological discourse frequently employs intensified modal structures to reinforce divine certainty and moral accountability.

The third framework is Narrative Theory proposed by Mona Baker (2006, 2007), which conceptualizes translation as a process of narrative reconstruction and ideological reframing. This framework enables the study to examine how translation choices reshape theological narratives, emotional positioning, and metaphysical meaning for target-language readers. Through narrative analysis, the study investigates how translators mediate the representation of the unseen (*al-ghaib*) and how domestication strategies may influence readers' perceptions of divine punishment, fear, and transcendence.

Data collection in this study is conducted through purposive document analysis. Qur'anic verses and literary monologues are selected based on several criteria, including the presence of eschatological or metaphysical discourse, rhetorical intensity, interpersonal structures, modality patterns, and semantic variation across translations. The selected verses are compiled together with multiple English translations and organized systematically into analytical tables. These tables function as the primary analytical instrument for tracing semantic shifts, rhetorical modification, and narrative reframing across source and target texts.

To facilitate analysis, the study categorizes data into four analytical dimensions: semantic loss, metafunctional shifts, rhetorical reconstruction, and narrative reframing. Each selected verse or monologue is examined comparatively according to these dimensions. The analysis focuses on

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lexical reduction, theological simplification, modulation of modality, emotional repositioning, and ideological adaptation occurring within the translated texts.

The following table illustrates the analytical structure used in the study:

Source Text	**Translation**	**Semantic Shift**	**Metafunctional Shift**	**Narrative/Reframing Effect**
Sa-uṣlīhi Saqar (Qur'an 74:26)	"I will cast him into Hell-fire"	*Saqar* generalized as "Hell-fire"	Reduction of rhetorical intensity	Weakening of eschatological specificity
Wa mā adrāka mā al-qāri'ah (Qur'an 101:3)	"And what will explain to thee what the Calamity is?"	Partial reduction of emotional suspense	Interrogative intensity moderated	Reduced psychological impact
Idhā al-samā'u inshaqqat (Qur'an 84:1)	"When the sky is rent asunder"	Symbolic imagery simplified	Cosmic intensity moderated	Reduced metaphysical imagery

In addition to textual analysis, the study also maps modality patterns and rhetorical intensification strategies found within the source texts and translations. For example, expressions involving divine certainty, threat, warning, and judgment are examined through mood and modality analysis in order to identify how interpersonal authority is reconstructed in English translation. Lexical items associated with fear, destruction, punishment, and transcendence are similarly analyzed to determine whether semantic specificity is maintained, weakened, or normalized in translation.

The analytical procedure is conducted in several stages. The first stage involves identifying eschatological expressions and metaphysical terminology within the selected corpus. The second stage examines semantic shifts through comparative lexical analysis between the Arabic source text and English translations. The third stage applies SFL analysis to identify changes in mood, modality, appraisal, and interpersonal positioning. The fourth stage investigates narrative reframing and ideological mediation using Baker's Narrative Theory. Finally, the findings are synthesized through the proposed Corrective Mapping Model, which traces semantic reduction, rhetorical transformation, metafunctional shifts, and narrative reframing simultaneously.

The Corrective Mapping Model developed in this study functions as an interdisciplinary analytical framework for identifying how theological meaning and rhetorical authority are reconstructed across languages. Rather than treating translation as a purely linguistic process, the model conceptualizes translation as a multidimensional negotiation involving semantics, rhetoric, interpersonal meaning, and narrative positioning. Through this approach, the study aims to contribute a more comprehensive methodology for analyzing metaphysical discourse in Qur'anic translation and contemporary Translation Studies.

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Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis of selected Qur'anic eschatological passages and their English translations in order to examine how semantic meaning, rhetorical intensity, interpersonal authority, and metaphysical representation are reconstructed across languages. The analysis integrates Arabic rhetorical theory, particularly *Muqtada al-Hal* from *Ilmu Ma'ani*, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and Mona Baker's Narrative Theory in Translation Studies.

The chapter focuses on four analytical dimensions:

1. Semantic loss and lexical normalization.
2. Metafunctional shifts involving mood and modality.
3. Rhetorical reduction and contextual transformation.
4. Narrative reframing and ideological mediation.

The analysis demonstrates that translation shifts occur not merely at the lexical level but across interconnected rhetorical, interpersonal, and narrative dimensions. In many cases, English translations preserve surface semantic meaning while reducing theological specificity, emotional intensity, and rhetorical force embedded within the Qur'anic discourse.

Translation of *Saqar*

One of the clearest examples of semantic normalization appears in the translation of the term *Saqar* in Surah al-Muddaththir.

Sa-uṣlīhi saqar (Qur'an 74:26)

The term *Saqar* is not merely a general reference to Hellfire. Within Qur'anic discourse, the lexical item carries intensified rhetorical implications associated with burning severity, irreversible punishment, and existential terror. The rhetorical force of the expression is strengthened further through the following verse:

Wa mā adrāka mā saqar
"And what will make you know what Saqar is?"
(Qur'an 74:27)

The interrogative structure functions rhetorically to intensify fear and suspense rather than seek information. From the perspective of *Muqtada al-Hal*, the interrogative form corresponds directly to the emotional and rhetorical context of warning.

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Translation Comparison of Saqar

Source Text	Translator	English Translation	Semantic Shift
Sa-uṣlīhi saqar	Yusuf Ali	"Soon will I cast him into Hell-Fire"	*Saqar* generalized into "Hell-Fire"
Sa-uṣlīhi saqar	Pickthall	"Him shall I fling unto burning"	Reduction of theological specificity
Sa-uṣlīhi saqar	Saheeh International	"I will drive him into Saqar"	Partial preservation through transliteration

The data demonstrate that generalized renderings such as "Hell-Fire" reduce the rhetorical distinction and semantic specificity embedded within the original Arabic expression. Saheeh International partially preserves theological specificity by retaining the transliterated form *Saqar*, although the emotional implications still require contextual explanation.

Semantic Reduction Process in the Translation of Saqar

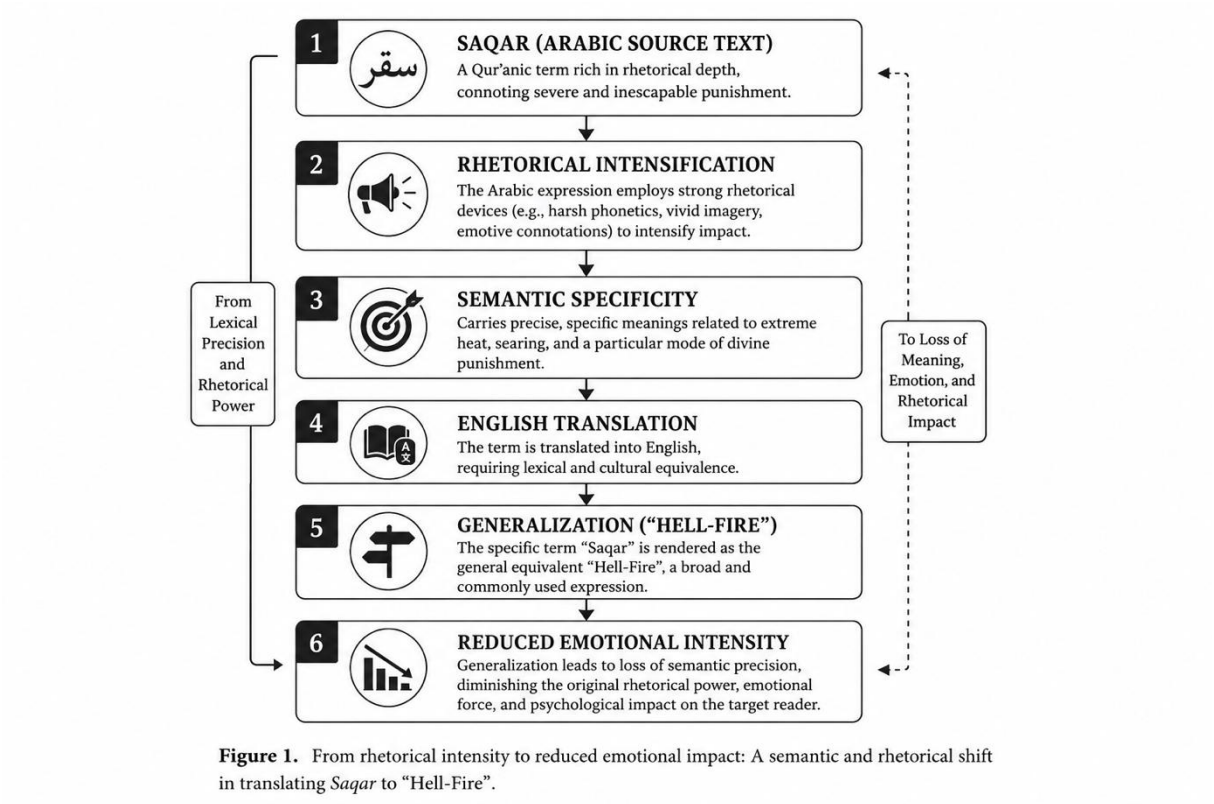


Figure 1. From rhetorical intensity to reduced emotional impact: A semantic and rhetorical shift in translating *Saqar* to "Hell-Fire".

The figure illustrates how semantic normalization weakens rhetorical intensity and theological nuance during translation.

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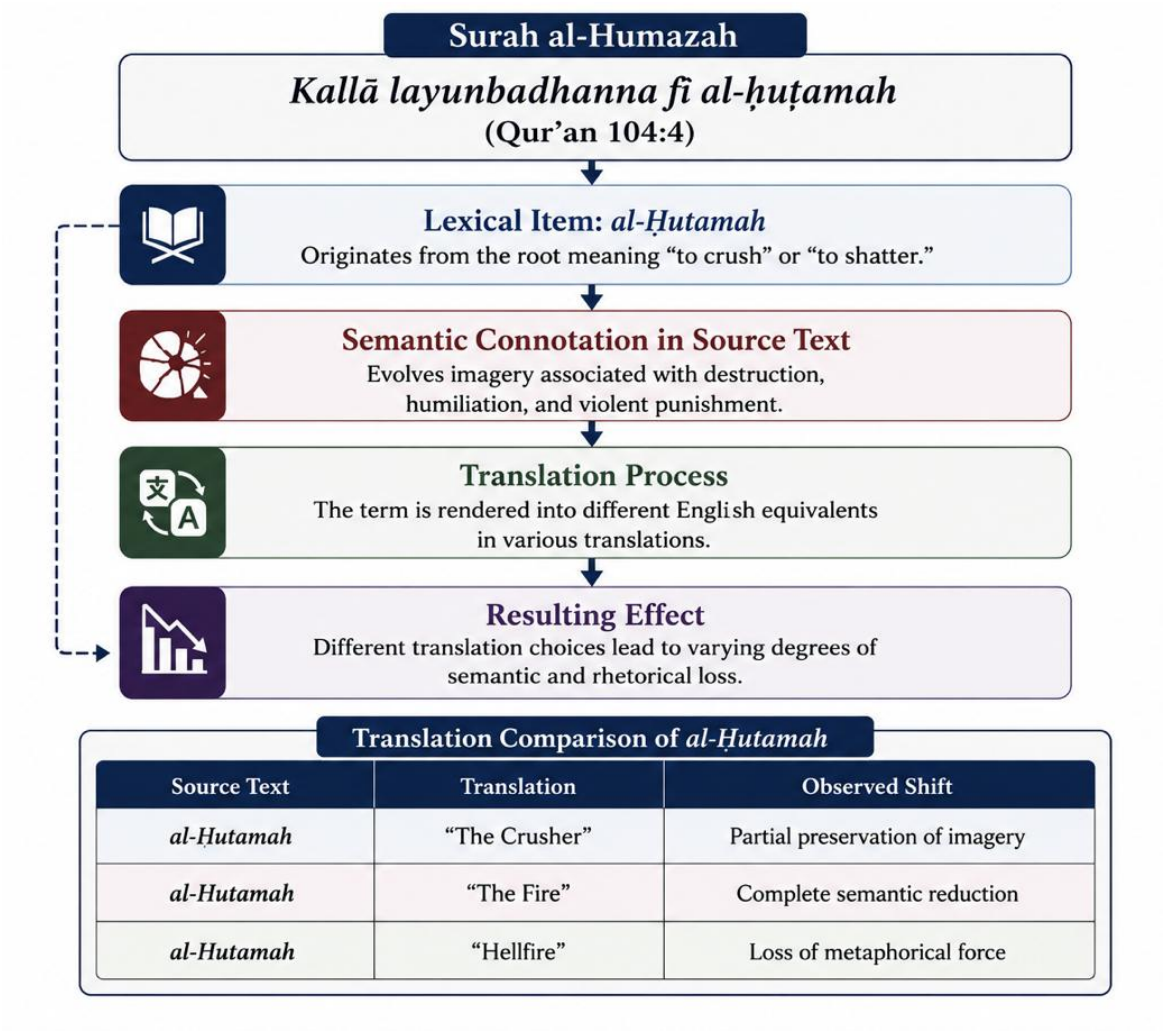
Translation of al-Hutamah

Another important example can be observed in Surah al-Humazah:

Kallā layunbadhanna fī al-ḥuṭamah
(Qur'an 104:4)

The lexical item *al-Hutamah* originates from the root meaning "to crush" or "to shatter." The expression therefore evokes imagery associated with destruction, humiliation, and violent punishment.

Translation Comparison of al-Hutamah



Translation Comparison of *al-Ḥutamah*

Source Text	Translation	Observed Shift
al-Ḥutamah	"The Crusher"	Partial preservation of imagery
al-Hutamah	"The Fire"	Complete semantic reduction
al-Hutamah	"Hellfire"	Loss of metaphorical force

The analysis shows that generalized translations weaken the metaphorical imagery associated with crushing destruction. Consequently, the emotional and rhetorical dimensions of divine punishment become less forceful in the target language.

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Interrogative Structures and Emotional Intensification

Qur'anic eschatological discourse frequently employs interrogative structures to intensify emotional suspense and spiritual fear. These interrogatives function rhetorically rather than informationally. For example:

Wa mā adrāka mā al-qāri'ah
(Qur'an 101:3)

Yusuf Ali translates the verse as:

"And what will explain to thee what the Day of Noise and Clamour is?"

From the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics, the source text demonstrates strong interpersonal force through interrogative modality and evaluative intensification. However, the English translation restructures the expression into a more explanatory form, thereby moderating emotional tension.

Metafunctional Analysis of Interrogative Structure

Linguistic Feature	Arabic Source Text	English Translation	Effect
Mood Structure	Interrogative intensification	Explanatory interrogative	Reduced suspense
Emotional Force	Fear and anticipation	Informational tone	Lower rhetorical impact
Interpersonal Function	Divine warning	Narrative explanation	Moderated authority

The findings suggest that metafunctional shifts influence how readers experience emotional urgency and divine authority within translated discourse.

Modality and Divine Certainty

The analysis further reveals that modality structures associated with divine certainty are frequently softened in translation. For example:

Kallā sawfa ta'lamūn
"No! You are going to know."

In Arabic, the structure conveys strong certainty and warning through emphatic particles and future modality. However, several English translations weaken this intensity by employing less forceful modal structures.

Modality Shift in Eschatological Translation

Source Feature	Arabic Function	Translation Shift	Result
Sawfa	Strong future certainty	Neutral future tense	Reduced epistemic force
Emphatic particle	Intensified warning	Omitted emphasis	Reduced authority

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Source Feature	Arabic Function	Translation Shift	Result
Divine modality	Certainty and threat	Descriptive tone	Lower emotional urgency

This shift affects interpersonal meaning because modality functions as a mechanism for constructing divine authority and moral accountability.

Domestication of Metaphysical Discourse

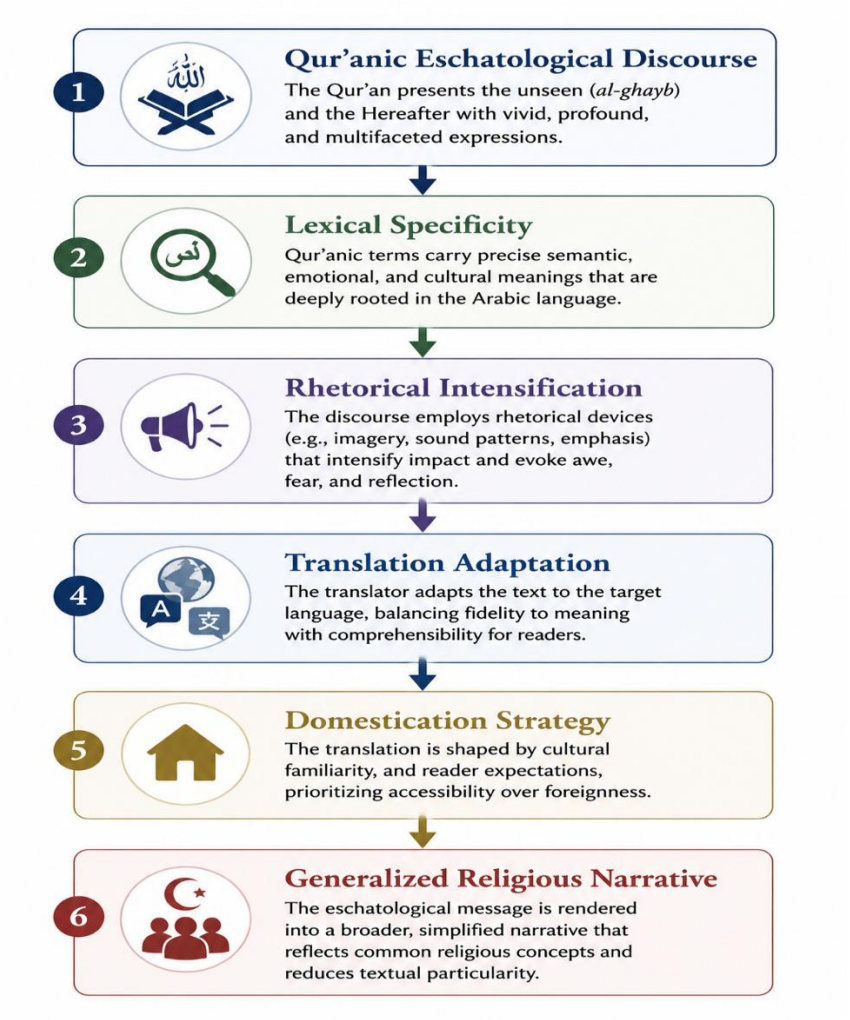
The analysis demonstrates that many English translations employ domestication strategies in order to improve readability and accessibility for target-language audiences. However, this process frequently contributes to narrative simplification and metaphysical reduction. Terms such as *Sa'ir*, *Jaheem*, and *Laza* are often translated uniformly as "Hell" despite possessing different rhetorical and theological implications within Qur'anic discourse.

Qur'anic Term	Literal/Rhetorical Meaning	English Translation	Narrative Effect
Sa'ir	Blazing intensified fire	Hellfire	Reduced specificity
Laza	Flame tearing the skin	Fire	Reduced imagery
Jaheem	Fierce consuming fire	Hell	Generalized punishment

The findings indicate that lexical domestication contributes to narrative reframing by reconstructing eschatological discourse into broader and less rhetorically differentiated categories.

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Narrative Reframing Process



Emotional Repositioning in Translation

Another significant pattern identified in the analysis is emotional moderation. In several cases, emotionally intense expressions associated with divine punishment and eschatological fear are translated into more neutral English structures.
For example:

Yawma yakūnu al-nāsu kal-farāsh al-mabthūth
"The Day when mankind will become like scattered moths."
(Qur'an 101:4)

Arabic imagery evokes chaos, helplessness, and existential terror associated with the Day of Judgment. However, some English translations reduce the emotional imagery by emphasizing descriptive clarity over rhetorical intensity.

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Emotional Repositioning in Translation

Source Imagery	Intended Effect	Translation Style	Result
Scattered moths	Chaos and fear	Literal descriptive rendering	Reduced emotional gravity
Cosmic destruction	Existential terror	Neutralized imagery	Lower psychological impact

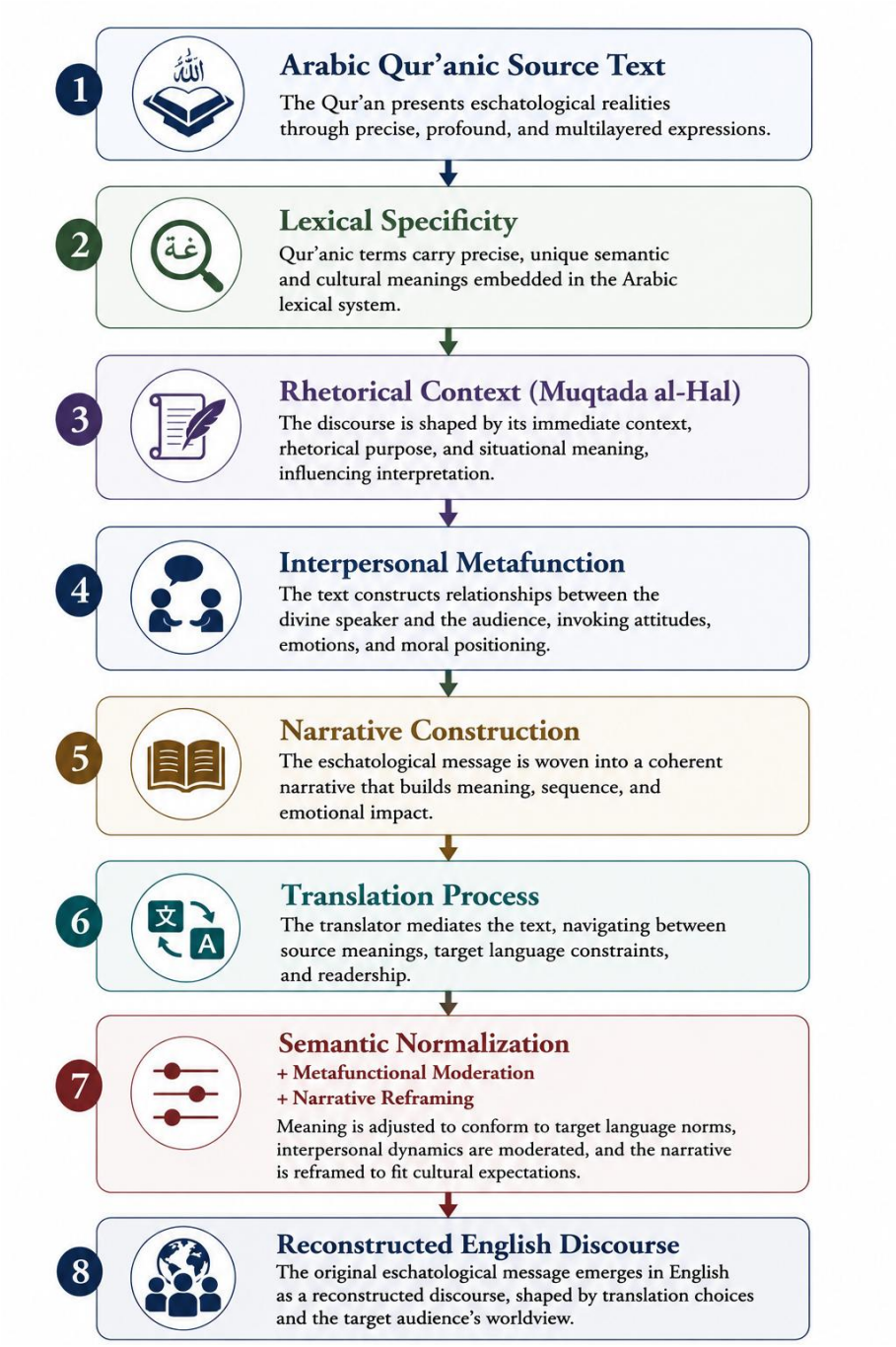
The findings suggest that emotional repositioning alters how readers perceive metaphysical fear and divine judgment.

Corrective Mapping Model

Based on the findings, this study proposes a Corrective Mapping Model for tracing semantic loss, rhetorical reduction, metafunctional transformation, and narrative reframing simultaneously.

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Corrective Mapping Model



The model demonstrates that translation shifts occur simultaneously across multiple dimensions rather than through isolated lexical transformation alone. Semantic loss is therefore interconnected with rhetorical reduction, interpersonal moderation, and narrative reconstruction.

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Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that English translations of Qur'anic eschatological discourse frequently preserve denotative meaning while weakening rhetorical intensity, emotional resonance, and theological specificity. The findings indicate that semantic normalization often occurs through generalized lexical substitution, grammatical simplification, and domestication strategies intended to improve target-language readability.

From the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics, metafunctional shifts involving modality, interrogative structures, and interpersonal positioning significantly influence how divine authority and emotional urgency are reconstructed in translation. Meanwhile, Narrative Theory reveals that translation functions not merely as linguistic transfer but also as ideological and emotional reframing.

Most importantly, the findings confirm the importance of Arabic rhetorical theory, particularly *Muqtada al-Hal*, in understanding how eschatological meaning is constructed within Qur'anic discourse. The study demonstrates that rhetorical force in the Qur'an derives not only from lexical meaning but also from contextual appropriateness, emotional positioning, and communicative intentionality. Consequently, translations that prioritize surface equivalence without preserving contextual-rhetorical relationships may unintentionally weaken metaphysical intensity and theological authority.

Overall, the integration of Arabic rhetorical theory, Systemic Functional Linguistics, and Narrative Theory provides a more comprehensive analytical framework for examining how eschatological meaning and the unseen (*al-ghaib*) are reconstructed in Arabic–English translation.

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Declaration on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) "The author(s) declare that generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used during the preparation of this manuscript. The following tool(s) were used: [ATLAS.ti AI and GEMINI]. The tool(s) were used for [Graphic and ilustration]. All AI-assisted content was reviewed and verified by the author(s), who take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the manuscript."

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