

## ARTICLE

# The Roles of Theta absorption, Argument Fusion and Argument Structure Theory in Translating Arabic Religious Verbs

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## ABSTRACT

The objective: this article explores the new version translation of Arabic religious verbs, namely, *?i<sup>c</sup> tamara* ‘travelled’, *hajja* ‘travelled’, *sabbaha* ‘sanctified’, *?asra* ‘ordered’, *salla* ‘granted, asked’, *saama* ‘fasted’, *zakka* ‘gave’, *?itaqa* ‘feared’ and *?aamana* ‘believed’. It was difficult for translators of the Holy Quran and others in the recent relevant literature to give satisfactory meanings for the verbs to convince the reader. As these verbs have remote argument religious contents which were not covered in the literature, they were given the correct English equivalents to uncover the religious contents. Methodology: the researchers used qualitative and theoretical approaches to discuss data gathered from Holy Quran and written books in modern Arabic syntax. Therefore, the researchers referred to Theta Absorption Mechanism, Argument Fusion and Argument Structure Theory to analyze the data. Conclusions, the researchers proved that there are intransitives verbs that have several fused syntactic constituents, which are overt at D-structure but must be translated at the logical form. They carry specific theta roles that constitute the syntactic structure and meaning of the verbs which lead to correct religious translation at the logical form (LF). However, there are certain religious transitive verbs that posit their essential arguments at D-structure, but they can absorb them as the

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arguments carry semantic connotations in translation at LF; Also, there is another category of transitive verbs that cannot absorb the internal arguments, and all of them must be translated; thus, whether the verb is intransitive or transitive, fused theta roles constitute the religious contexts.

**Keywords:** Argument Structure; Semantic Roles; Phonetic Form; Absorption; Logical Form; D- structure

## 1. Introduction

This article explores the translation of Arabic religious verbs, namely, *?i<sup>c</sup>tamara* ‘travelled’, *hajja* ‘travelled’, *sabbaha* ‘sanctified’, *?asra* ‘ordered’, *salla* ‘granted, asked’, *saama* ‘fasted’, *zakka* ‘gave’, *?itaqa* ‘feared’ and *?aamana* ‘believed’ (The “?” mark refers to the glottal stop, the same applies below.) (Jalabneh <sup>[1]</sup>, p. 67, 145–146); Abdulaziz <sup>[2]</sup>, p. 63, 774, 1264, 1687). As the verbs have remote argument religious contents which were not covered in the literature, the verbs, in this article, were given the correct English equivalents to uncover the religious contents. Therefore, the researchers referred to the theta absorption mechanism (Chomsky <sup>[3–5]</sup>), Argument Fusion (Jackendoff <sup>[6]</sup>) and Argument Structure Theory (Grimshaw <sup>[7]</sup>) to analyze the selected data. To achieve the objective, the researchers posited the following two research questions: How do intransitive verbs of Holy Quran fuse the non-essential arguments/ad-junct at D-structure but deleted at the logical form (LF)? And how do transitive verbs of Holy Quran posit essential arguments at D-structure but absorbed at the logical form? Then, the hypothesis has been posited as “the used verbs in this work have specific Islamic and religious connotations; therefore, their remote constituents must be translated at the logical form”. The verbs, in this work, have specific Islamic and religious connotations; therefore, their remote constituents must be translated at the logical form. It was difficult for translators of the Holy Quran and others in the recent relevant literature to give satisfactory meanings for the verbs to convince the reader. This problem was obvious due to the fact that verbs are very tricky and include religious specific meanings. The translators delved on the surface meaning and forgot the hidden meanings that are decided by certain theta roles in the D-structure. In such situations the derived meanings are insufficient to convey the exact religious contexts. Thus, they need to be investigated carefully from different perspectives, namely, argument structure theory. The question of theta roles has received very much attention from different linguists; they are significant in modern syntax because they map the semantic

relationships between verbs and their essential arguments in the sentence. They support the formal structure with hidden meanings at D-structure. They explicate the needed number of arguments a verb needs by applying the mechanism of theta criterion to ensure that each argument is assigned one semantic role and each semantic role is assigned to one and only one argument.

In recent relevant literature, it is evident that the verbs have been translated in Holy Quran as *hajja* and *?i<sup>c</sup>tamara* [*faman hajja ?aw ?i<sup>c</sup>tamara* ‘those who visit The House in the Session Or at other times.’], *salla* [*?in allaaha wa malla?ikatuhi yusaalluna ‘ala al-nabi* ‘Allah and his Angels Send blessings on the Prophet.’], *sabbaha* [*sabbaha lilaahi* ‘declares The Praise and Glory of Allah.’], *?asra* [*subhaan allathi ?asra bi’abdihi lailan min al-masjidi al-haraami ila al- masjidi ?alqsa* ‘ Glory to Allah Who did take His Servant for a Journey by night From the Sacred Mosque To the farthest Mosque.’], *?itaqa* [*walaakin al- birra mani ittaqa* ‘it is virtue if ye fear Allah’], *saama* [*faman shahida minkumu al-shshara falyasumhu* ‘Who is present (at his home) During that month Should spent it in fasting’], *zakka* [*w?aatu al-zakaata* ‘give Zakat’] and *?aamana* [*wa?mma man ?aamana* ‘But whoever believes’] Abdulaziz <sup>[2]</sup> (p. 19, 63, 76, 79, 774, 846, 1264, 1687) and (Jalabneh <sup>[1]</sup>, p. 67 for *saama* ‘fast’). Abdulkarim & Alhaj <sup>[8]</sup> carried out a study from a linguistic perspective in which they examined the translation of certain particles in Holy Quran; they found that the translators have common sense but with certain comparative difficulties. Alhaj & Alwadai <sup>[9]</sup> argued that the substantial lexical and cultural challenges facing the translators of the in rendering the Qur’anic Arabic words; they confirmed that the result of translation gain or loss of meaning in translation — an issue that cannot be avoided. Thus, any loss has a significantly negative impact on the reader’s understanding and interpretation of the Holy Quran in general and the words of this study found in Qur’anic in particular. Shan et al. <sup>[10]</sup> examined Quranic argumentation structures and their translation strategies. Quranic verses with argumentative structures were identified on the basis of literature review and specific criteria. They empha-

sized the importance of consulting exegesis books to ensure translations align with scholarly interpretations; otherwise, there are problems in translation. Their findings offered valuable insights into Quranic argumentation and its translation. Almjlad <sup>[11]</sup> argued that translating the Quran remains one of the most intellectually demanding and theologically sensitive undertakings in the field of translation studies. Translating the religious texts posed exceptional semantic challenges that transcend ordinary linguistic barriers. The study concluded that while the Quran may resist full equivalence, informed and ethically responsible translation practices can serve as a bridge between the sacred original and diverse global audiences. Al-Trawneh <sup>[12]</sup> discussed issues involved in the translation of the Quran, highlighting that its sanctity lies in the original Arabic religion. The language of the Quran is not Modern Standard Arabic; therefore, it makes the translation more difficult. Translation does not recreate the Quran but aims at conveying its meaning. The study highlighted the linguistic, cultural, and theological problems that beset the hands of translators. To achieve accuracy in translations, translators should not adhere to strict standard translations but should use alternative methods to retain the essence of the Quran (Sadiq <sup>[13]</sup>). tense is an obvious syntactic problem that translators usually encounter in translating the Holy Quran. In translating the religious verb, it should be guided by the overall context and by stylistic considerations. Ali et al. <sup>[14]</sup> confirmed that the linguistic difficulties in translating religious verbs are inevitable because they contain devotions that are full of both literal and figurative styles. Due to lack of English religious lexical, syntactic and semantic equivalents, problems in translation are raised. Al-Abdullatif <sup>[15]</sup> and Hidayat and Solehan <sup>[16]</sup> confirmed that translating religious verbs is linguistically stunning, vivid, unique, sensitive, and breathtaking. They possessed characteristics that are so rare and incomparable that even the most eloquent and eminent rhetorician of the epoch could not compete with it. Alhaj and Alwadai <sup>[17]</sup>, and Alhaj <sup>[18]</sup> conducted a study in which they assured that the translation of Holy Quran verbs is incomparable in both its form and content; therefore, it cannot be rendered into the English language with complete faithfulness to the original. Jalaluddin and Abdelkarim <sup>[19]</sup>, Alhaj <sup>[20]</sup>, and Mounadil <sup>[21]</sup> assured that qur'anic verbs do not exist in any other culture. Hence, this study of Arabic religious verbs will be useful by addressing this research gap from different perspectives.

## 2. Methodology And Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Methodology

This paper adopted theoretical and qualitative approaches to analyze the Islamic religious data. The sample data was restricted to (9) verbs; it was collected in part and full forms from the Holy Quran and published books mentioned in the analysis. The data was analyzed by following the theta absorption mechanism (Chomsky <sup>[3-5]</sup>), Argument Fusion (Jackendoff <sup>[6]</sup>) and Argument Structure Theory (Grimshaw <sup>[7]</sup>). The data collection process encompasses selected resources such as syntactic work and authentic texts in Arabic, including work by Jalabneh <sup>[1]</sup> and Abdulaziz <sup>[2]</sup>. The collected data is utilized, in this work, to translate religious verbs in Holy Quran within these new theoretical views.

### 2.2. Theoretical Literature Review

Vinay and Darbelnet <sup>[22]</sup> (p. 41) proposed certain methods of translation, namely, (i) borrowing, (ii) calque, (iv) literal, (v) modulation, (vi) transposition, (vii) equivalence and (viii) adaptive; however, Newmark <sup>[23-25]</sup> (p. 81) proposed direct method which involves (a) bound free translation and (b) loose free translation. Translators used these methods for a very long time to translate materials from one language to another. As they relied, primarily, on the surface meaning of words, there were problems in translation. Therefore, this work highlighted the significance of theta roles to show their impact on the translation of Holy Quranic verbs by clarifying semantic relationships between invisible arguments to ensure the accurate meaning at LF, and to prevent misinterpretations in the target language. This article highlighted how understanding unique theta roles and their retention at (LF) representations is crucial for accurate translation, preventing loss of meaning and maintaining the intended message. Translating theta roles helps identify problems like deletion of arguments at D-structure with intransitive verbs and absorption of certain arguments with transitive at (LF). Thus, semantic roles guided translators to choose appropriate strategies to bridge the gap in research between Arabic and English in this work.

The researcher adopted the theta absorption mecha-

nism (Chomsky <sup>[3-5]</sup>) to tackle the question of missing elements at (LF). This mechanism explains how certain complements are semantically present at (LF) but syntactically posited at D-structure. They maintain the argument structure of the verb and stick to the mechanism of theta criterion which requires that each argument is assigned to one theta role, and each theta role is assigned to one and only one argument in the structure. He theorized that essential arguments are generated by optimally efficient derivations that must satisfy the conditions that are held on interface levels, which are the only levels of linguistic representation. All syntactic conditions express properties of these interfaces and reflect the interpretive requirements of language to keep very restricted conceptual resources intact. In this context, arguments are either (i) complements which are essential arguments and (ii) adjuncts which are additional arguments. Though the absorbed arguments are overt at D-structure, they are the bases that lead for correct translation of Arabic religious verbs at LF.

Jackendoff <sup>[6]</sup> (p. 50–55) confirmed that incorporation takes place at the conceptual level. Whenever an entity is incorporated, it is implied and expressed in the conceptual structure information by its predicate. To combine the reading of the unexpressed entity reading of the verb, argument fusion device is used. The term argument fusion means the selectional restrictions are imposed on the argument, the argument adjunct, propositions and adjuncts in isolation to predict the incorporated argument at the conceptual level. Such entities carry specific roles that will be the platform that leads for correct translation of the Arabic religious verbs used in this work.

Grimshaw <sup>[7]</sup> argued that the thematic relations of a verbs are represented by the lexical information about the arguments of the verbal structure i.e., their semantic selection) and syntactic selection properties at D-structure and other interface levels of syntax, namely, logical form (LF) and phonetic form (PF). Thus, argument structure is an interface between the semantics and syntactic predictors which are verbs. Argument structure encodes lexical information about the number of arguments, their syntactic types and their hierarchical organization necessary for the mapping meanings from D-structure to the syntactic structure at S-structure and other interface levels. Argument structure theory accounts for the assignment of theta roles, namely,

agent, patient/theme, goal, source, location, benefactive, experiencer and instrument to arguments at D-structure. Theta role bearers are [NPs, PPs, CPs, TPs], but non-theta role bearers are [V, P, AdjP, AdvP]. The importance of argument structure theory is significant in this work because it takes care of theta roles which is the platform that leads to correct translation of the Arabic religious verbs used in this article.

## 2.3. Samples of Theta Roles

To understand the above theoretical views, the researchers exemplified (1).

### 2.3.1. Constituent-Selection

1a.

i. Zaid opened Amr's door (with his key).

ii. Zaid's key opened Amr's door.

iii. Amr's door opened.

Radford <sup>[26]</sup> (p. 446–447, for similar ergative verbs in English)

iv. Amr's door was opened by John.

v. \* Zaid's key opened

vi. \* Zaid opened

Note: The \* in this paper means the sentence or phrase is incorrect.

### 2.3.2. Semantics-Selection

1b.

i. OPEN:	[N" Zaid	N" door	P" key ]
	agent	theme	instrument

### 2.3.3. Theta Grid

ii.

ii.. OPEN: [agent, theme, (instrument)]

In (1ai), the verb 'opened' projects the theme [N"] 'Amr's door' as the internal complement in the argument structure. The instrument [P"] 'with his key' is not projected by the verb because it is an adjunct. The subject agent [N"] 'Zaid' is the external argument as per the extended projection principle (EPP). In (1aii), the same verb projects the [N"] theme 'Amr's door' as the internal object comple-

ments in the same argument structure. The instrument [P"] 'with his key' is an adjunct; thus, it can be deleted without causing any grammatical deficit to the sentence. Likewise, the agent [N"] 'Zaid's key' is the external argument. As the verb is an ergative verb, (1aiii) is grammatically correct. It is because the theme 'Amr's door' is sufficient to render the grammaticality of this sentence. Similar verbs of English that enjoy the same nature are the ergative verbs [close, break, sink, drown and roll] and the middle verbs [translate, transfer, transmit, transpose, transport] (Radford <sup>[26]</sup>, p. 446, 447). The sentence (1aiv) is grammatical because it is in passive form. The theme 'Amr's door' has already moved in NP- movement from the object position to the subject position retaining the same theta role in theta chain; it has moved to get the nominative case by [T] in theory. (1av) is ungrammatical because the instrument theta role 'Zaid's key' cannot either syntactical or semantically build up a grammatical sentence. (1avi) is also ungrammatical because the agent theta role 'Zaid' cannot either syntactical or semantically build up a grammatical sentence; this is because this verb 'open' cannot absorb the theme at the interface levels. In short, the verb has the theta grid [ agent, theme, (instrument)] in which the theme is the only essential internal argument in the syntactic structure. With the help of the above theoretical views, the researchers translated the examples in (2) correctly to Arabic.

2.

2. فُتِحَ زَيْدُ بَابِ عَمْرِ بِمِفْتَاحِهِ.

Zaid opened Amr's door with his key.

2ب. فُتِحَ مِفْتَاحُ زَيْدٍ بَابَ عَمْرِ.

#### D-Structure

3a. ?i'tamara-

?i'tamara	[N"]2 Kaaba]	[P"] at any time of the year]	[T"] to round seven circles]	[T"] to act two kneeling prayers]	[T"] to walk seven circles between Safa and Marwa rocks]	[N"]1 zaidun]
travelled to	goal	location	goal	goal	goal	Zaid agent

زارَ زَيْدُ الْكَعْبَةَ فِي أَيِّ وَقْتٍ مِنَ السَّنَةِ لِيَعْتَمِرَ، وَلِيَطُوفَ سَبْعَةَ أَثْوَابٍ، وَيَصِلِي رَكْعَتَيْنِ وَيَسْعَى بَيْنَ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَى.

'Zaid travelled to Kaaba at any time of the year, to perform seven circles, to act two prayers and to walk seven rounds between Safa and Marwa rocks respectively.'

#### LF/PF

3b.

?i'tamara	a	zaidun.
travelled	past	Zaid agent

Zaid's key opened Amr's door.

2ت. انفتح بابُ عمر .

Amr's door opened.

2ج. فُتِحَ بَابُ عَمْرِ عَلَى يَدِ زَيْدٍ .

Amr's door was opened by Zaid

2ح. \*فتح مفتاحُ زيدٍ.

\*Zaid's key opened.

2خ. \*فتح زيدٍ.

\*Zaid opened

To sum up, though theta roles are non- interpretable features in syntax, they guarantee the grammaticality of the sentences and holy verses to be translated at LF.

### 3. Analyses and Results

The relationship between the verb and its arguments in the structure is syntactically and semantically manifested; therefore, they are categorized on the bases of these relations.

#### 3.1. Intransitive Verbs that Fuse Non-Essential Arguments at D-Structure

Based on the above theoretical views, the researchers may look at various intransitive religious verbs that have different theta grids in Arabic syntax that need careful attention in translating them to English by providing the exact contents and equivalent counterparts. The first category of verbs include: ?i'tamara 'travelled, *hajja* 'travelled' and *saama* 'fasted' and ?aamana 'believed'. We may look at D-structure (3a) and LF/PF in (3b).



cf. Jalabneh <sup>[1]</sup> (p. 146–154)

اعتَمَر زيدٌ.

‘Zaid travelled.’

The sentence (3a) is the actual D-structure of the verb *?a<sup>c</sup>tamara* ‘travelled to’. In it, the theta role of goal [N” ‘Kaaba’, location [P” ‘at any time of the year’, goal [T” ‘to round seven circles’, goal [T” ‘to walk seven circles between Safa and Marwa rocks] and goal [T” ‘to act two kneeling prays’ are syntactically and semantically projected by the verb *?i<sup>c</sup>tamara* at D-structure. However, the external subject *zaidun* ‘Zaid’ bears the theta role of agent. This is the correct version of translation in this work. The sentence (3b) is grammatical though the intransitive verb is satisfied with the external subject *zaidun* ‘Zaid’ at LF. In this case, the researchers adopted Jackendoff’s <sup>[6]</sup> views of argument fusion in which theta roles are visible at D-structure but fused in the intransitive verb at the interface levels. For instance, the selectional restrictions are imposed only and only on the internal fused arguments at D-structure but not on the external argument subject *zaidun* ‘Zaid’. The theta roles of goal, location, goal and goal that are included in theta grid of the verb in (3a) are parts of the thematic tier and not included in interpretation and finally not in translation. So, the syntactic constituents, namely, [N”2], [P”] and [T”s] are, in fact, adjuncts but not complements; they are fused in the intransitive verb *?a<sup>c</sup>tamara* at the interface level. But they must be translated in (3a). This intransitive verb has an idiosyncratic kind of religious nature in Arabic syntax and enjoys a unique religious semantic connotation in the Islamic religion. In short, the theta roles of [goal, location, goal, goal] constitute the meaning of the verb at D-structure; thus, they must be fused by the verb at interface level after being translated; otherwise, the sentence is ungrammatical as they amount repetition. This is obvious in (3c) below when the arguments [N”2, P” and T”s] are phonetically visible at interface level.

**PF**

3c. *\*?i<sup>c</sup>tamara*

Zaid travelled to Kaaba at any time of the year, to round seven circles, to act two kneeling prayers and to walk seven circles between Safa and Marwa rocks.

*zaidun*

Zaid

\*زار زيدٌ الكعبةَ في أي وقت من السنة ليطوف سبعة اشواط، ويصلي ركعتين ويسعى بين الصفا والمروى.

‘\*Zaid travelled to Kaaba at any time of the year, to perform seven circles, to act two prayers and to walk seven rounds between Safa and Marwa rocks respectively.’

cf. Jalabneh <sup>[1]</sup> (pp. 145, 146)

The sentence (3c) is ungrammatical because the theta role of goal [N” ‘Kaaba’, the location [P” ‘at any time of the year’, the goal [T” PRO ‘to round seven circles’, the goal [T” PRO to walk seven circles between Safa and Marwa rocks] and the goal [T” ‘to act two kneeling prays’ are overt at the phonetic form. Such phenomenon is impossible in syntax.

What if the propositions [T”s] are overt at the phonetic form but not the subject *zaidun* ‘Zaid’, the sentence (3d) is also ungrammatical.

**PF**

3d. *\*?i<sup>c</sup>tamara*

travelled round seven circles, to act two kneeling prayers and to walk seven circles between Safa and Marwa rocks

*zaidun*

Zaid

Jalabneh <sup>[1]</sup> (p. 145, 146)

\*زار ليطوف سبعة اشواط، ويصلي ركعتين ويسعى بين الصفا والمروى.

and Marwa rocks’ ing prayers and to walk seven circles between Safa ‘\*Zaid travelled round seven circles, to act two kneel-

The sentence (3d) is ungrammatical because the goals [T”s to round seven circles, to act two kneeling prayers and to walk seven circles between Safa and Marwa rocks] are overt at the logical form and **PF** levels.

In short, the intransitive verb *?i<sup>c</sup>tamara* maintained its religious meaning at LF though it fused the internal theta roles at D-structure; it has an idiosyncratic kind of religious nature in the Islamic religion wherever it is used in Arabic.

We may look at the second verb *hajja* ‘travelled to’ in

the sentences (4).

#### D-Structure

4a. *hajj*-

*hajj*-

travelled to[N”2 Kaaba]

goal

[T” to act two kneeling prayers],

goal

[T” to move to Mina],

goal

[T” to collect several stones ],

goal

[T” to round seven circles in farewell].

goal

[N”1 zaidun].

agent

[P” at a specific time],

location

[T” to walk seven times between Safa and Marwa rocks],

goal

[ T” to move to Arafah mountain],

goal

[T” to shift to throw the Devil],

goal

[T” to round seven circles in welcome],

goal

[T” to move to Muzdalifa],

goal

[T” to celebrate Eid Adha]&

goal

زار زيد الكعبة في وقتٍ محددٍ من السنة ليطوف سبعة أشواط، ويصلي ركعتين ويسعى بين الصفا والمروة وينتقل الى منى وينتقل الى عرفات وينتقل الى مزدلفة ويجمع عدد من الحجارة وينتقل لرمي الجمار ويحتفل بعيد الأضحي ثم يطوف طواف الإفاضة.

‘Zaid travelled to Kaaba at a specific time to round seven circles in welcome, to act two kneeling prayers, to walk seven times between Safa and Marwa rocks, to move to Mina, to move to Arafah mountain, to move to Muzdalifa, to collect several stones, to throw the Devil, to celebrate Eid Adha and to round seven circles in farewell.’

#### LF/PF

4b.

*hajj*

travelled

zaidun

Zaid

agent

حج (زار) زيد.

‘Zaid travelled’

Jalabneh <sup>[1]</sup> (pp. 145,146)

(4a) is the internal structure of the verb *hajja* ‘travelled’. In it, the theta roles of goal [N” ‘Kaaba’], location [T” ‘at a specific time’], goal [T” to round seven circles in welcome], goal [T” to act two kneeling prayers], [T” to walk seven times between Safa and Marwa rocks], goal [T” to move to Mina], goal [T” to move to Arafah mountain], [T” to move to Muzdalifa], goal [T” to collect several stones], goal [T” to throw the Devil], goal [T” to celebrate Eid Adha] and goal [T” to round seven circles in farewell.] are fused. This correct version of translation. (4b) is correct because all the internal propositions mentioned in (4a) are fused in the verb *hajja* ‘travelled’ at the logical form. In short, the semantic roles constitute the meaning of the verb at D-structure; thus, they must be fused by the verb at interface level after being

translated; in case the internal arguments [T”s] are overt at PF, the sentence is ungrammatical in (4c).

#### PF

4c. \* *hajja*

travelled to round seven circles in welcome, to act two kneeling prayers, to walk seven times between Safa and Marwa rocks, to move to Mina, to move to Arafah mountain, to move to Muzdalifa, to collect several stones, to throw the Devil, to celebrate Eid Adha and to round seven circles in farewell.’

zaidun

Zaid

\*زار ليطوف سبعة أشواط، ويصلي ركعتين ويسعى بين الصفا والمروة وينتقل الى منى وينتقل الى عرفات وينتقل الى مزدلفة ويجمع عدد من الحجارة وينتقل لرمي الجمار ويحتفل بعيد الأضحي ثم يطوف طواف الإفاضة.

\*‘Zaid travelled to round seven circles in welcome, to act two kneeling prayers, to walk seven times between Safa and Marwa rocks, to move to Mina, to move to Arafah mountain, to move to Muzdalifa, to collect several stones, to throw the Devil, to celebrate Eid Adha and to round seven circles in farewell.’

In short, the intransitive verb *hajja* ‘travelled’ must fuse the internal arguments at D-structure but not the subject *zaidun*; such arguments must be translated at LF nevertheless they cannot be overt at interface level as they amount repetition which causes the ungrammaticality of the sentence; the verb has an idiosyncratic kind of religious nature in the Islamic religion wherever it is used.

We may look at the verb *saama* ‘fasted’ in (5).

#### D-structure

5a.  

saama-		zaidun
fasted	[N” ramadaana]	Zaid
	theme	agent

صامَ زيدٌ رمضانَ.  
 ‘Zaid fasted Ramadan,’

#### LF/PF

5b.  

saama-	zaidun
fasted	Zaid
	agent

صامَ زيدٌ.  
 ‘Zaid fasted’

#### LF/PF

5c. \* saama  
 صامَ\*  
 ‘\*fasted’

Jalabneh <sup>[1]</sup> (p. 67)

(5a) is the internal structure of the verb *saama* ‘fasted’. In it, the theta role of theme [N” ramadaana ‘Ramadan’] is fused. This is the correct version of translation. (5b) is correct because this internal argument is fused in the verb *saama* at LF. In short, the semantic role constitutes the meaning of the verb at D - structure; thus, it must be fused by the verb at interface level after being translated into English. In case the internal argument and the subject are deleted from the sentence, (5c) is ungrammatical. In short, the intransitive verb *saama* must fuse the internal theta roles at D-structure but not the external subject; it has an idiosyncratic kind of religious nature in the Islamic religion wherever it used. The verb is used in Islam only to fast the month of Ramadan , in particular, and nothing else in this context.

We may look at the verb *aamana* ‘believed’ in (6).

#### D-structure

6a.  

aamana-	zaidun
---------	--------

believed [P” (in) God] Zaid  
 goal agent

آمنَ زيدٌ بربه.

‘Zaid believed in his God.’

#### LF/PF

6b.  

aamana-	zaidun
believed	Zaid
	agent

آمنَ زيدٌ.  
 ‘Zaid fasted’

#### PF

6c.  
 \* aamana  
 believed  
 آمنَ\*  
 ‘\*Believed’

Jalabneh <sup>[1]</sup> (p. 67)

(6a) is the internal structure of the verb *aamana* ‘believed’. In it, the theta role of goal [ [N”] ‘in God’] is fused. This is the correct version of translation. (6b) is correct because this internal argument is fused in the verb *aamana* at the logical form after being translated. In short, the semantic role of goal constitutes the meaning of the verb at D-structure; thus, it must be fused by the verb at interface level. In case the internal argument and the subject are deleted from the sentence, (6c) is ungrammatical. In short, the intransitive verb *aamana* must fuse the internal theta role at D-structure but not the external subject; it has an idiosyncratic kind of religious nature in the Islamic religion. The verb is used in Islam only to believe in God and no one else in this universe.

### 3.2. Transitive Verbs that Absorb Arguments at LF

However, there are transitive verbs of religious background used in Arabic that have different argument structures, and they need to be translated correctly with reference to theta absorption mechanism and argument structure theory. The second category includes *sabbaha*, *itaqa*, *asra*, *salla*, *zakka*. We may look at the sentences (7–13) below:



### D-structure

7a.

sabbaha		zaidun
sanctified [N" God]	[P" out of every fault]	Zaid
goal	theme	agent

سَبَّحَ زَيْدُ اللَّهِ مِنْ كُلِّ سُوءٍ.

'Zaid sanctified God out of every fault.'

The sentence (7a) is grammatical because the verb is transitive, and it projects the internal theta roles of goal 'God' and theme 'out of every fault' at D-structure. This is the correct version of translation. The verb can be used without the goal and the theme in (7b).

### LF/PF

7b.

sabbaha	zaidun
sanctified	Zaid
	agent

سَبَّحَ زَيْدٌ.

'Zaid sanctified.'

### D-structure

8a.

itaqa		zaidun
feared [N" God]	[P" out of every fault]	Zaid
goal	theme	agent

اتَّقَى زَيْدٌ رَبَّهُ.

'Zaid feared God.'

The sentence (8a) is grammatical because the verb is transitive, and it projects the internal theta roles of goal 'God' at D-structure. (8a) is the correct form in translation. The verb can be used without the goal in (8b).

### LF/PF

8b.

itaqa	zaidun
feared	Zaid
	agent

اتَّقَى زَيْدٌ.

'Zaid feared'

### D-structure

9a.

zakka		
gave [P" with good intention]		[N" wealth honestly acquired]
theme		theme

The sentence (7b) is grammatical though the agent *zaidun* 'Zaid' is the only overt argument. The verb *sabbaha* 'sanctified' absorbs the specific theta roles of goal 'God' and the theme 'out of every fault'. The theta role of agent is sufficient to build up a grammatical sentence in Arabic syntax with full religious meaning. The absorbed entities have specific kinds of references but not generic. In short, the verb *sabbaha* 'sanctify' is transitive; it can absorb both the goal and theme or any one of them separately after being translated at LF. The verb is used in Islam only to worship one God and no one else in this universe.

We may look at (8) to check the verb *?itaqa* 'feared' is used.

The sentence (8b) is grammatical though the agent *zaidun* 'Zaid' is the only overt argument. The verb *itaqa* 'feared' can absorb the specific theta role of goal 'God'. The theta role of agent is sufficient to build up a grammatical sentence in Arabic syntax with full religious meaning. The absorbed entity has a specific kind of reference. In short, the verb *itaqa* 'feared' is transitive; thus, it can absorb the goal after being translated at LF. The verb is used in Islam only to fear God and no one else in this universe.

We may look at (9) to check the ditransitive verb *zakka* 'gave'.

[P” reached a minimum threshold]  
goal  
[P” to poor people].  
benefactive  
zaidun  
Zaid  
agent

[P” for a full lunatic year]  
location

أعطى زيدُ الزكاة للمحتاجين.

‘Zaid gave, with good intention, wealth honestly acquired and reached a minimum threshold for a full lunatic year to poor people.’

In (9a), the verb *zakka* ‘gave’ projects the internal arguments theme ‘with good intention’, theme ‘wealth honestly acquired’, goal ‘reached a minimum threshold’, location ‘for a full lunatic year’ and benefactive ‘to poor people’. (9a) is the correct form in translation.

#### LF/PF

9b.  
zakka                      zaidun  
gave                      Zaid  
                                 agent

زكى زيدُ.

‘Zaid gave’

#### D-structure

10a. ?asra

?asra

ordered	[N”2 Gabriel],	[T” to accompany Prophet Mohammad	[on Buraaq]
	goal	theme	instrument
[P” at night],	[P” from al- masjidi al-haraami],	[P” to al-?aqsa mosque],	[in Jerusalem]
location	source	goal	location
[P” to travel to sky]			
goal			
[N”1 allaahu]			
God			
agent			

أمر الله سيدنا جبريل أن يصطحب سيدنا محمد على البُراق في الليل من المسجد الحرام الى المسجد الأقصى في القدس ليخرج للسماء.

‘God ordered Gabriel to accompany prophet Mohammad on Buraq at night from al- masjidi al-haraami to al-?aqsa mosque in Jerusalem to travel to the sky.’

(10a) is grammatical because the verb *?asra* ‘ordered’ is a transitive verb; thus, it projects the internal arguments [N”2 Gabriel], [T” to accompany prophet Mohammad], [on Buraaq], [P” at night], [P” from al- masjidi al-haraami],

The sentence (9b) is grammatical though the agent *zaidun* ‘Zaid’ is the only overt argument. The verb *zakka* ‘gave’ can absorb the specific theta roles of themes, goal, location and benefactive. The theta role of agent is sufficient to build up a grammatical sentence in Arabic syntax with full religious meaning. In short, the verb *zakka* ‘gave’, in Islam, is used to give alms but not any other kind of charity.

We may look at (10) to check the verb *?asra* ‘God ordered Gabriel to accompany prophet Mohammad at night’.

[P” to al-?aqsa mosque], [in Jerusalem] and [P” to travel to sky]. None of the internal arguments can be absorbed in (10b). Even, if the agent is overt at **PF**, the sentence remains ungrammatical in (10c) respectively.

**PF**

10b.

\*ʔasra  
ordered

\*أمر.

‘\*ordered.’

(10b) is ungrammatical because the verb *ʔasra* cannot construct a sentence with deleted arguments.

10c.

*ʔasra	al	aahu.
ordered	det	God

**D-structure**

11a.

<u>salla</u>		al-	allaahu
granted [N” his blessing]		det	God
theme		goal	agent

وهب الله رحمته للنبي.

‘God granted his blessing to the prophet’

The sentence (11a) is grammatical because the verb *salla* ‘granted’ projects the theme ‘his blessing’ and goal ‘to the prophet’ at D-structure. However, if they are deleted, the sentence is ungrammatical in (11b).

**LF/PF**

11b.

* <u>salla</u>	al-	allaahu
Granted	det	God
		agent

**D-structure**

12a.

<u>sallat</u>		al-	malaaʔikatu
asked [N” salvation]	[from God]	[P” for the prophet]	det
theme	source	benefactive	agent

سألت الملائكة الله الشفاعة للنبي.

‘The angels asked salvation from God for the prophet.’

The sentence (12a) is grammatical because the verb *sallat* ‘asked’ projects the theme ‘salvation’, source ‘from God’ and benefactive ‘for the prophet’ at D-structure. These internal entities cannot be absorbed since they lead to an ungrammatical sentence in (12b).

\*أمر الله.

‘\*God ordered.’

(10c) is ungrammatical because the verb *ʔasra* cannot construct a sentence with only the agent *allaahu* ‘God’.

In short, the verb *ʔasra* neither absorbs the internal arguments nor is satisfied by the agent. Thus, the correct form of translation is (10a). The verb is used in Islam only to show the unique journey of the prophet Mohammad peace be upon him from Makka to Jerusalem and not to any place in this universe.

We may look at the verb *salla* in (11, 12, 13) with different theta grids.

\*وهب الله.

‘\*God granted.’

(11b) is ungrammatical because the verb cannot absorb the internal arguments. The verb *salla* ‘granted’ is used, in Islam, only to show that God can send his blessings to the prophet and no one else can do this act in this universe. Thus, (11a) is the correct form of translation.

We may look at (12), in which the verb *salla* ‘asked’ with a different theta grid.

**LF/PF**

12b.

* <u>sallat</u>	al-	malaaʔikatu.
asked	det	angels
		agent

\*سألت الملائكة

‘The angels asked.’

(12b) is wrong because the internal entities are omitted theta grid.

### D-structure

13a.

salla			al-	mu?minuuna
asked [N” salvation]	[P” from God]	[P” for the prophet]	det	believers
theme	source	benefactive		agent

سأل المؤمنين الله الشفاعة للنبي.

‘The believers asked salvation from God for the prophet.’

The sentence (13a) is grammatical because the verb *salla* ‘asked’ syntactically projects the theme ‘salvation’, source ‘from God’ and benefactive ‘for the prophet’ at D-structure. This form of translation of (13a) is final in this work. However, if all the arguments are absorbed, the sentence is ungrammatical in (13b) below:

### LF/PF

13b.

*salla	al-	mu?minuuna
asked	det	believers
		agent

\*سأل المؤمنين.

‘\*The believers asked.’

However, if the agent is of a generic reference and has no religious connotation in (14), the verb *salla* ‘perform prayer’ will become intransitive, and it is satisfied with the subject *zaidun* ‘Zaid’.

### LF/PF

14.

salla	zaidun
chanted	Zaid

صلى زيد

‘Zaid chanted’

In short, the verb *salla* in the Quranic senses has various meanings as in (11a, 12a, 13a), it cannot absorb the internal arguments in (11b, 12b, 13b). However, if the agent is of a generic reference, its meaning is not related to the verbal action in the Islamic religion as in (14).

but not absorbed. Thus, (12a) is the correct form of translation

We may look at (13) for the same verb in a different

## 4. Discussions

### 4.1. Discussion of Intransitive Verbs that Fuse Non-Essential Arguments at D- Structure

The intransitive religious verbs *?i?tamara*, *hajja*, *saama* and *?aamana* were given the correct equivalents from English; for instance, the verbs *?i?tamara* and *hajja* have one meaning, namely, ‘travelled’ in (3a) and (4a). The new version raised the fused arguments at D-structure to be ready for translation at LF. Likewise, the verbs *saama* ‘fasted’, in (5a), and *aamana* ‘believed’, in (6a) are also intransitive in English. They were treated in the same way as *?i?tamara*, *hajja* in the analysis. The new version of translation could not be achieved in (3a), (4a), (5a) and (6a) without the help of the mechanism of argument fusion (Jackendoff <sup>[6]</sup>) and theory of Argument Structure (Grimshaw <sup>[7]</sup>). Thus, this work patched the gap between Arabic and English in translating the Islamic religious intransitive verbs because they maintained both the semantic and syntactic properties of the religious verbs in both languages. Thus, in (3a), (4a), (5a) and (6a), the verbs have idiosyncratic kind of specific nature in the Islamic religion. They include essential semantic roles at the D-structure to construct the exact religious meaning to be ready for translation at LF. These Arabic verbs cannot be replaced by any other verbs from English because they do not include the same C-selection and S- selection.

If this work is contrasted with the relevant literature, we disagree with the translated versions found in Holy Quran because the intransitive verbs *?i?tamara* ‘perform Umra’, *hajja* ‘perform pilgrimage’, *saama* ‘fast’, *?itaqa* ‘be

pious' and *aamana* 'believed' do not convey the actual meanings (Abdulaziz <sup>[2]</sup>, p. 63, 76, 79, 846). Such versions show LF meanings but nothing else. However, our versions were more accurate as they construct the meanings which were built on the valuation of theta roles at D-structure. We disagree with Abdulkarim & Alhaj <sup>[8]</sup> who found that translators have common sense but with certain comparative difficulties. We argued that translators must rely on solid theoretical background to avoid difficulties. We disagree with Alhaj & Alwadai <sup>[9]</sup> who confirmed that the result of translation gain or loss of meaning in translation is an issue that cannot be avoided. Such logic is unacceptable because translation remains loose and cannot be controlled by theories. We disagree with Shan et al <sup>[10]</sup> who emphasized the importance of consulting exegesis books to ensure translations align with scholarly interpretations; instead, we confirm that this kind of analysis is descriptive and finally face shortcomings. Translators have to rely on an authentic approach to ensure the accuracy of the new texts. This work is not in alignment with Almjlad <sup>[11]</sup> who confirmed that translating religious texts posed exceptional semantic challenges that transcend ordinary linguistic barriers. Our logic confirmed that meaning cannot be derived without syntax. C-selection and S-selection mechanisms are necessary to build grammatical structures at all levels of syntax to ensure accuracy of translation. We disagree with Ali et al. <sup>[14]</sup> who confirmed that the linguistic difficulties in translating religious verbs are inevitable. Such claim is incorrect because our work was based on authenticated theories. This logic is visible in Al-Abdullatif <sup>[15]</sup>, Hidayat & Solehan <sup>[16]</sup> who confirmed that accuracy and faithfulness are essential in translation. We also disagree with Alhaj & Alwadai <sup>[9]</sup> and Alhaj <sup>[18]</sup> logic in which Holy Quran religious texts are incomparable in both form and content; therefore, they cannot be rendered into the English language with complete faithfulness to the original. The question of faithfulness is not supposed to be in the translators' minds; instead, objectivity is the only mechanism that must be followed by all translators. We agree with Al-Trawneh <sup>[12]</sup> who claimed that to achieve accuracy in translations, translators should not adhere to strict standard translations but should use alternative methods to retain the essence of the Quran. We agree with Jalaluddin & Abdelkarim <sup>[19]</sup>, Abdelkarim (Alhaj <sup>[20]</sup>) and Mounadil <sup>[21]</sup> logic in which they claimed that, in any language, there are trans-

lated versions, which are commonly related to the linguistic characteristics of that language. However, they must be known by translators by giving correct translated versions. In short, it is a fact that none of the above views, in the relevant literature, have gone beyond the surface meanings of the holy texts. However, our new perspectives of theta absorption, argument fusion and the argument structure theory figured out the fused meanings available at D-structure to be translated at LF. Though theta roles are not translated, they are essential parts of the structures that lead to correct semantic versions of religious verbs.

## 4.2. Discussion of Transitive Verbs That Absorb Essential Arguments at LF

The transitive religious verbs of *sabbaha* 'sanctified', in (7a), *itaqa* 'feared' in (8a), *zakka* 'gave' in (9a), *?asra* 'ordered' in (10a), *salla* 'granted' in (11a), *sallat* 'asked' in (12a) and *salla* 'asked' in (13a) conveyed the exact English counterparts. This is because the verbs projected the remote arguments at D-structure to be ready for translation at LF. Thus, the mechanism of theta absorption (Chomsky <sup>[3-5]</sup>) and theory of argument structure (Grimshaw <sup>[7]</sup>) fitted to translate the transitive verbs; for instance, *sabbaha* 'sanctify' in (7b), *itaqa* 'feared', (8b) and *zakka* 'gave' in (9b) absorbed the internal arguments. However, the verbs *?asra* 'ordered' in (10b) and *salla(t)* 'prayed', in (11b, 12b, 13b) did not absorb the internal arguments.

If these results were contrasted with the relevant literature, we disagree with Jalaluddin & Abdelkarim <sup>[19]</sup>, Alhaj <sup>[18]</sup>, and Mounadil <sup>[21]</sup> who said that in any language, there are Quranic language verses in which there are lexical items that commonly appertain to the linguistic characteristics of Arabic language and not shared by other languages. However, theta absorption, argument fusion and the theory of argument structure could with certainty transgress the boundaries of surface level to the D-structure by giving the actual religious meanings that must be translated into English to be understood by nonnative speakers of Arabic. These theoretical views combined syntax with semantics in translation without using even footnotes to support the translated text. These religious verbs in Arabic are not vague, but they need acceptable techniques to reduce their ambiguity in translations. Since non-Muslims, in search of the truth of Islam, they should know the meanings of these religious verbs whether used in simple sentences or in Holy Quran;



they must be rendered into other languages with accuracy and faithfulness to both syntax and semantics. Ultimately, we bring to the researchers' best knowledge that this study has been conducted from new linguistic perspectives on the translatability of these Arabic religious verbs to make the process of translation simple and lead to least faults.

## 5. Conclusions

The study, based on the theta absorption (Chomsky [3–5]) and argument fusion (Jackendoff [4]) and Argument Structure Theory (Grimshaw [7]), explored the significance of the fused constituents of the Arabic intransitive/transitive verbs with religious background to provide the non-Arabic readers with correct meaning in the translation process of Arabic contexts. Therefore, it can, safely, be argued that the study is a new addition to the field of translation by highlighting the values of theta roles to discover new facts in Islamic religion. The study is also significant because it opens the field of translation for other scholars to apply these new theoretical perspectives to other similar or different verbs in Holy Quran. Therefore, we encourage translators to follow these new views to patched the loopholes in translation; thus, they are reliable and valid to be applied into translation because they take care of all semantic as well syntactic properties of the source and target languages at all levels of syntax; they fit to translate any text whether it is cultural, religious, literary, economic, political, social and technical in any language; however, the relevant literature did not care about the remote semantic roles that build up the meaning of their predicates at the logical form. The new perspectives were valid and could be applied in translation since they bring to reality the hidden meanings at D-structure to be translated into other languages by taking care of both source and target languages contents. The researchers recommended that theta roles guided translation strategies and prevent semantic deviation. Thus, using theta roles guarantees prevent over- or under-translation of religious verbs meanings and ensure the translated text to maintain the semantic accuracy of the translated text in Holy Quran. This study enhanced textual cohesion. The multifaceted realization of thematic roles contributes to overall text organization and cohesion. Recognizing these thematic structures improves the quality of translation by ensuring that the logical flow of the source text is maintained. This study bridged language gaps by comparing theta role assignments in the source (Ar-

abic) and target (English) languages; translators can identify areas where structural shifts are necessary to accurately transferred meanings. This study ensured that the Quranic signs remain grammatical by satisfying the one-to-one correspondence between theta roles and arguments, even when an argument is not explicitly present in the sentence. It demonstrated how morphosyntactic elements (e.g. at/feminine marker) are not just grammatical markers but also have a role in processing semantic relationships between verbs and their arguments in the structure.

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Conceptualization, A.J., and A.H.A.; methodology, A.J.; validation, A.J., and A.H.A.; formal analysis, A.J.; investigation, A.J.; resources, A.J., and A.H.A.; data curation, A.J., and A.H.A.; writing—original draft preparation, A.J.; writing—review and editing, A.J., and A.H.A.; visualization, A.H.A.; supervision, A.H.A.; funding acquisition, A.H.A. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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