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Word Formation Processes in English Translation of Surah Ar-Rahman by Abdullah Yusuf Ali

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the different types of word formation from the English translated version of the Surah Ar-Rahman by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. By using O'Grady and Archibald (2016) theory and adopting a mixed-method approach, Surah Ar-Rahman was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. A total of five types of word formation processes were found. The researchers found 58 inflections, 14 derivations, 8 loan words, 5 compound words, and 3 instances of suppletion. Apart from that, no other word formation process was found. This indicates, the translator, while translating, used different languages to convey the actual essence of the Arabic words. This implies that the translator employed various techniques in order to accurately present the message of the source text into the intended language. In translation, the translator employed suppletion by using other words or other forms of words entirely in place of those which did not have direct counterparts in the target language. This paper will be highly beneficial to specialists and researchers whose focus is on religious texts translation as well as language specialists interested in morphology of translation.

Keywords: Word formation, Religious texts, Arabic-English translation, Surah Ar-Rahman, English translation.



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1. Introduction

The principal unit of language is a word, which is usually comprised of a letter or a mixture of letters or phonemes which convey a thought. It is the building block of the human language and conveys thoughts, expresses emotions, and describes ideas. At a sentence level, the smallest constituent is called a word. All words in all the languages across the globe must belong to a specific class. Some words are nouns, others are verbs, adjectives, or prepositions.

When new words are created in a language by using the existing words, it is known as the word formation process. In the English language, many word formation form new words, like derivation, affixation, borrowing, acronyms, clipping, compounding, suppletion, reduplication, conversion, and coinage etc (Yule, 2010; O'Grady & Archibald, 2016).

The current study emphasizes on the morphological analysis (analysis of word formation processes) of the English translation of the Holy Quran. The center of the existing study is on the English translation of the Holy Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, which is one of the most popular English translations of the Holy Quran (Huda, 2019).

Rationale of Content

The current study analyzes the English translation of Holy Quran's 55th named as Surah Ar-Rahman. It has 78 verses (ayahs). Analyzing this Surah will give a rich account of word-formation processes. The research was aimed at finding numerous word-formation processes in the data, including compounding, conversion, affixation, acronym, abbreviation, backformation, borrowing, clipping, blinding, and coinage.

Significance of the Study

The current research contributes to the research gap, both practically and theoretically. Theoretically, contributes to the overall understanding of words formation processes in English language. It will broaden the knowledge about word formation processes in English language. Moreover, linguists will be able to comprehend how different words are formed to convey the meanings in the English translation of the Holy Quran. Also, this study would provide valuable insights into the field of translation studies by showing the processes that form words in the translation of classical literature, i.e., the Holy Quran. However, the outcomes of the current research can be taught in the classrooms of linguistics, religious studies, and translation studies. Furthermore, this study will make a path for comparative studies of translations of the Holy Quran in different languages. In this way, common word formation strategies could be find in different languages and can be used for teaching to students (Masood et al., 2020; Firdous et al., 2022; Roshin et al., 2023; Shafi & Masood, 2023).

Research Objective

The research aims to conduct a detailed analysis of all word formation processes involved in English translation of Surah Ar-Rahman by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

Research Question

The current study will answer the following research question:

1. Which processes are responsible for creating words in English translation of Surah Ar-Rahman by Abdullah Yusuf Ali?

Literature Review

Savira and Futrawati (2019) applied the theory of O'Grady and Archibald (2016) in 17th chapter of "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" which was written by J. K. Rowling. They concluded that there were a total of 340 instances of word formation in the text. In the findings, inflection had the highest proportion of 64.1% and compounding had the lowest percentage of 4.5%. Other word formations found by them were suppletion, cliticization, clipping, and blending.

Another research was carried out in the same way to study the phenomenon of word formation through its different types in the movie "Incredibles 2" by Safitri (2022). He also used some articles and books, along with the script of the movie. In this study, the data was first reduced and displayed, and later the results were drawn from it. The results presented that there were a total of 9 types of word formation processes in the script of the movie Incredibles 2. They were derivation, blending, back-formation, multiple processes, acronyms, borrowing, conversion, clipping, and compounding. The most frequent word formation types were derivation (44%) and compounding (39%). On the other hand, back-formation and multiple processes were the least with only 2 Instances of each process.

Understanding the trends in the formation of new words over time gives new insights into how the new words are evolving. In an attempt, Ratih and Gusdian (2018) conducted a longitudinal study to discover the change in trends of word formation processes in the English language, over 5 years from 2012 to 2016. They obtained the data from the Oxford English Dictionary online, which contained the corpus of new English words. They found that in 2012, affixation (40%) and compounding (29%) were the most used process out of all processes for the formation of new words. In next 3 years, the trend remained the same; however, the percentage of words formed by processes of blending and clipping also increased.

Indrian (2022) conducted an interesting study to discover how words are created in the names of online applications. This research was unique in its data type. For this reason, they noted the names of different applications available in the Google Store as their data. The results revealed that a total of four types were found in the data, namely, multiple process, derivation, compounding, and blending. There were two instances of each type.

Fauziyah and Saun (2018) analyzed the phenomenon of word formation in the advertisement boards in Padang. The advertisements were about different items, including furniture, cigarettes, and jobs. They found a total of 55 data on word formation. Among them, clipping and compounding had the most words (8 each). Other processes found in the data were borrowing, initialization, and onomatopoeia.

Nowadays, we living in a globalized world. The credit goes to the internet, and to be more specific, to social media. Social media platforms are evolving day by day and millions of people are using them across the globe. Therefore, textual analysis of social media conversations and comments is common nowadays. Some studies have also discovered the varieties of word formation processes involved in the language on social media. Mustafa et al. (2015) conducted a study to explore the processes of creation of words used by the adults of Malaysia on Facebook. They explored the status updates and comments posted by these adults. They found out that the most frequent kinds of word formation processes in the data were abbreviation and blending. 73% of the found data was abbreviation. Inferences were drawn that the young adults use abbreviated words to save their time.

Research Methodology

Framework

The data was analyzed descriptively by the researchers who found and listed all the instances of word-formation in the data by reading through it closely. Data analysis was also conducted by finding the percentages of each process. The types were identified on the basis of O’Grady and Archibald (2016) theory.

Research Approach

The current study adopts mixed-method approach. It is a blend of a descriptive qualitative approach and a quantitative approach. The mixture of qualitative and quantitative approach helps the researcher to improve the validity of the research findings and contribute to the understanding of the topic (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Descriptive qualitative research is a very useful methodology for conducting exploratory research. The rationale of qualitative research is to find new insights into the data and contribute to the existing theories. Meanwhile, quantitative approach is used to determine the frequency and percentage of the findings.

In qualitative study, the researcher himself/herself acts as the fundamental instrument of collecting data, by observations or other related means. After that, the researcher himself analyzes the data to generate findings (Burns, 2009, p. 11). Furthermore, in a qualitative research strategy, the data collection and data analysis are based on words and not quantification (Bryman 2008a: 366

Data Collection

The researcher collected the data (English translation of Surah Ar-Rahman in Holy Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali) from an internet source i.e., Alim.org.

Findings & Discussion

The current study aimed at identifying the types of word formation processes in the English translation of Surah Ar-Rahman of holy Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. The analysis of the data found that there were 5 types of word formation processes. According to Table-1, there were a total of 88 instances of word formation.

Table 1.1: *Word formation processes in Surah Ar-Rahman*

Type	Sub-type	Frequency	Percentage	Data
Inflection	Plural	58	66%	Cushions, pavilions, companions, pomegranates, Dates, Springs, Rubies, Glances, Maidens, Linings, Fruits, Carpets, Delights, Gardens, Forelocks, Marks, Heavens, Affairs, Zones, Sinners Mountains, Worlds, Seas, Jinns, Ones, Ships, Bodies, Easts, Favors, Wests, Date-palms, Plants, Leaves, Courses, Herbs, Trees, Creatures, Spathes, Pearls

	Past tense			Created, Asked, Raised, Touched, Seized, Blessed, Computed, Restrained
	Progressive			Pouring, Watering, Boiling, Meeting, Flowing, Sounding, Producing, Enclosing Sailing
	3 rd person singular			Seeks, Becomes
Derivation		14	16%	Gracious, Exactly, Adoration, Transgress, Therein, Smoothly, Creature, Assembly, Authority, Sinner, Plentiful, Continuous, Goodly, Beautiful
Compounding		5	6%	Dark green, Judgment Seat, Forever, Date-palms, Sweet- smelling
Borrowing		8	9%	Quran, Allah, Jinns, Coral, Pavilions, Spathes, Brocade, Ointment
Suppletion		3	3%	Taught, These, Doth
Internal change		0	0	
Reduplication		0	0	
Cliticization		0	0	
Conversion		0	0	
Clipping		0	0	
Blending		0	0	
Backformation		0	0	
Coinage		0	0	
Acronym		0	0	

Inflection

Inflection is the type of word-formation processes in which a new word is formed by adding an affix in the existing word, without changing the class or meaning of the existing word. In the data, the most frequently occurring process of word formation was inflection. A total of 58 instances of inflection were found which makes 66% of the data. Out of those 58 instances of inflection in the data, 39 were plural markings, 9 were progressive markings and 8 were past tense markings. There were also two instances of third person singular markings. These findings align with some past researches which found that inflection had the highest proportion in the data. One such study was

that of Savira and Futrawati (2019) who analyzed chapter number sixteen of the novel “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone” written by J. K. Rowling.

The proportion of inflection in that data was 64.1%. Similarly, Rizki and Marlina (2018) found that 49% of the word formation processes in the novel Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland were inflection. Hence it can be said that inflection is very common among formal writings, such as novels and other literary texts.

Plural marking (-s)

Here are some instances of inflectional plural markings in the data.

- The plural word “cushions” is created through the addition of ‘-s’ to in the word “cushion”. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The plural word “companions” is created through the addition of ‘-s’ to in the word “companion”. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The plural word “pomegranates” is created through the addition of ‘-s’ to in the word “pomegranate”. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The plural word “pearls” is created through the addition of ‘-s’ to in the word “pearl”. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.

3rd person singular

There were only 2 instances of inflectional 3rd person singular markings in the data.

- The suffix ‘-s’ is added to the word “seek” and it becomes third person singular “seeks”. The class of the word is not changed.
- The suffix ‘-s’ is added to the word “become” and it becomes third person singular “becomes”. The class of the word is not changed.

Past tense (-ed) and Past participle (-en/-ed)

There were total 8 instances of inflectional past tense markings in the data.

- The simple (present) form of the word “create” is transformed into its past form “created” through addition of the suffix ‘-ed’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The simple (present) form of the word “ask” is transformed into its past form “asked” through addition of the suffix ‘-ed’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The simple (present) form of the word “raise” is transformed into its past form “raised” through addition of the suffix ‘-ed’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The simple (present) form of the word “touch” is transformed into its past form “touched” through addition of the suffix ‘-ed’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The simple (present) form of the word “seize” is transformed into its past form “seized” through addition of the suffix ‘-ed’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The simple (present) form of the word “bless” is transformed into its past form “blessed” through addition of the suffix ‘-ed’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The simple (present) form of the word “compute” is transformed into its past form “computed” through addition of the suffix ‘-ed’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The simple (present) form of the word “restrain” is transformed into its past form “restrained” through addition of the suffix ‘-ed’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.

There was no data available on past participle (-en/-ed).

Progressive

Here are few instances of inflectional progressive markings in the data.

- The simple (present) form of the word “pour” is transformed into its progressive form “pouring” through addition of the suffix ‘-ing’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The simple (present) form of the word “water” is transformed into its progressive form “watering” through addition of the suffix ‘-ing’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The simple (present) form of the word “boil” is transformed into its progressive form “boiling” through addition of the suffix ‘-ing’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.
- The simple (present) form of the word “meet” is transformed into its progressive form “meeting” through addition of the suffix ‘-ing’. This inflection does not affect the category of the word.

Derivation

Derivation refers to the process in which the addition of an affix to a base word results in the creation of a new word (Plag, 2003). The existing word to which an affix is added can either bear a prefix or a suffix. A prefix is attached to the root of the given word, while a suffix is appended to the root of the word. Whenever derivation takes place through the addition of prefixes and/or suffixes, the meaning and class of the modified word may change or may stay the same. In the order of frequency, derivation was the second, the most remarkable, and notable process of word formation. It was found that there are 14 cases of derivation which constitutes 16% of the total data. New words, however, can be derived in English by the use of two common types of derivation. One is the addition of a suffix to an existing word, and the other is the addition of a prefix to an existing word. However, it is noteworthy that all the 14 instances of derivation in the data were due to the addition of a suffix. There was not a single derived word which was created through the addition of a prefix. In the study conducted by Fatmawaty and Anggrain (2019) to find the types of word formation types in the novel “Beats Apart”, derivation had the highest proportion. The similarity between these studies is the analysis of formal text to identify word formation processes.

- “gracious” (adjective) is derived from “grace” (noun).
- “exactly” (adverb), is derived from “exact” (adjective).
- “adoration” (noun), is derived from “adore” (verb).
- “transgress” (verb), is derived from “trans” (adjective).
- “therein” (adverb), is derived from “there” (adverb).
- “smoothly” (adverb), is derived from “smooth” (adjective).
- “creature” (noun), is derived from “create” (verb).
- “assembly” (noun), is derived from “assemble” (verb).
- “authority” (noun), is derived from “author” (noun).
- “sinner” (noun), is derived from “sin” which (noun).
- “plentiful” (adjective), is derived from “plenty” (adverb).
- “continuous” (adjective), is derived from “continue” (verb).

- “goodly” (adverb), is derived from “good” (adjective).
- “beautiful” (adjective), is derived from “beauty” (noun).

Borrowing

In English language, there are many words which are taken from other languages as their proper translation is not possible with the existing words. This technique of making new words in a language is called borrowing. It is the process in which words are extracted from other languages and used in some other languages (Yule, 2010). These words are sometimes also called loan words. The third most occurring word formation process in the data was borrowing. The study found 8 loan words in the data which were borrowed from other languages to English language in order to convey the precise meanings. Out of those 8 instances of borrowing in the data, three words were borrowed from Arabic language to convey the precise meaning.

The reason behind this borrowing is that Holy Quran was originally revealed in Arabic language and later translated into several other languages including English language. Therefore, there are certain words which need to be borrowed from Arabic language to other languages for conveying the exact meanings. Other than that, there were also 2 instances of borrowed words from Latin and 2 instances of borrowed words from French. These words are taken from the source languages as they convey certain meanings which are not distinct in other languages. Thus, it can be said that, in religious texts, some concepts need exact same words to convey their accurate descriptions.

- The first loan word is Qur'an which is borrowed from Arabic language to describe the religious book of Muslims. This word is mentioned by this book itself. Thus, this word is borrowed from Arabic to convey exact meaning.
- Next loan word in the data which is borrowed from Arabic language is Allah. This word is used to refer to God in Arabic. The writer has used this word to convey the Muslim's perception of God.
- The third borrowed word from Arabic is “jinn”. The concept of ghosts in Islam is different from the other concepts of the same entity. Therefore, this word is borrowed from Arabic in the data.
- The first loan word in the data that is borrowed from Latin language is “coral”. This word is borrowed to convey the meaning of specific items extracted from the sea.
- The word “pavilion” Is used in this English translation of Holy Quran which is borrowed from French language. This symbolized a kind of traditional place which were built for some particular events.
- The second borrowed word from Latin language is “spathes”. This word is also borrowed by the writer as it is a widely used loan word in English language.
- The word “brocade” is borrowed in English from Italian language.
- The word “ointment” is also widely used in English language. This word reflects the meaning of a kind of medicine which is applied on the body to take relief from certain medical conditions.

Compounding

The type of word formation processes in which two or more existing words are combined to create a new word is called compounding. The new word thus formed mostly reflect the meanings of the words from which it is formed (Plag, 2003). In order to define a word as a compound word, the constituent words of the new word must be free morphemes. The study found 5 instances of compounding in the data. A total of 5 compound words were used by the writer in translating Surah Ar-Rahman into English. They were adverb + adjective, adjective + noun, preposition + adverb,

noun + noun, and adverb + adjective. Compounding is a very common process of word formation in English as almost all the studies (Fauziyah&Saun, 2018; Safira&Kurniawan, 2022; Indrian, 2022) reviewed by the researcher have found instances of compound words in the data.

- “Dark green” (adjective) is a compound word. This compound word is formed by the amalgamation of the word “dark” which is an adverb and the word “green” which is an adjective. The new word has the meaning of something which is very bright in color and is green.
- “Judgment seat” is another compound word in the data. This compound word is generated by joining the word “judgment” which is an adjective and the word “seat” which is a noun. The compound word thus formed is also a noun that means a place where judgments are made.
- The compound word “forever” is the third instance of compounding in the data. It is formed by joining the word “for” which is a preposition and the word “ever” which is an adverb. The new word thus formed is also a kind of adverb.
- The fourth instance of compounding found in the data is “date-palm” which is formed by joining a noun (date) with another noun (palms). The compound word thus formed is also a kind of noun.
- The last compound word found in the data was “sweet-smelling”. This compound word was created by joining the word “sweet” which is an adverb with the word “smelling” which is an adjective. The word thus formed (sweet-smelling) also behaves as an adjective.

Suppletion

Suppletion is another type of word formation processes in which a morpheme is replaced with a totally different morpheme. The rationale is to demonstrate a grammatical contrast between the morphemes (O’Grady and Archibald, 2016). The process that occurred the least was suppletion. There were only 3 instances of words created through suppletion in the data. They were taught, these, and doth. In the light of the current findings and the previous studies, it can be argued that the process of creating words through suppletion is not quite common in English language.

- The first example of suppletion in the data is the word “taught”. This word is the past form of the verb “teach”.
- The second example of suppletion in the data is the word “these”. This word is used to point towards plural things that are placed near. This word is the contrast of the word “this” that is used to point towards a nearly placed single thing.
- Another example of suppletion in the data is “doth” which is a grammatical contrast of “do”.

Other Word-formation Processes

There was not a single instance of the other 9 word-formation processes as listed by O’Grady and Archibald (2016), including cliticization, conversion, clipping, reduplication, backformation, acronym, blending, internal change, and coinage. It can be argued that the other processes of word formation are not common in translation of religious texts.

Conclusion

The current study aimed at finding the word formation processes in the English translation of the Surah Ar-Rahman by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. The rationale behind this research was to find out the types of word formation processes that are common in the English translation of religious texts. The data was collected from an online source and it was analyzed using a mixed-method approach. The research was descriptive, so the researcher was the primary instrument responsible for analyzing the data. The research analyzed the data by reading closely through the data. O'Grady and Archibald's (2016) theory was employed to identify the types of word formation processes in the data. After finding the types of word formation processes in the data, the researcher employed the technique of quantitative statistics to calculate the percentage of each process used in the data.

The researcher found a total of 88 instances of word formation in the data. There are 14 processes of creating new words according to the O'Grady and Archibald's (2016) theory, but the present research was able to find only five processes or creating words in the English translation of Surah Ar-Rahman of Holy Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. Those 5 processes were derivation, compounding, inflection, borrowing, and suppletion. The process which occurred the most in the data was inflection. There were a total of 58 (66%) instances of inflection in the data, out of which there were 39 instances of inflectional plural marking, 2 instances of inflectional 3rd person singular marking, 8 instances of inflectional past tense marking, and 9 instances of inflectional progressive marking. The second most frequent process in the data was derivation. There were a total of 14 (16%) instances of derivation in the data. All the derived words in the data were formed through the addition of a suffix. Not a single derived in the data was formed through the addition of a prefix. The third most abundant process was borrowing. There were a total of 8 (9%) instances of words that were borrowed from some other languages. Out of those 8 loan words, 3 were borrowed from Arabic language, 2 were borrowed from French, 2 were borrowed from Latin, and 1 word was borrowed from Italian. Moreover, 5 instances of compounding were found in the data. Those compound words had the formation adverb + adjective, adjective + noun, preposition + adverb, noun + noun, and adverb + adjective. Last but not least, there were also 3 words in the data, that were formed through suppletion.

Surprisingly, there was not a single instance of the other 9 word-formation processes in the data as listed in the theory of O'Grady and Archibald (2016), including reduplication, cliticization, clipping, blending, acronym, and coinage.

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