

Groundwork and Preparation for Using Quranic Imagery

ABSTRACT

This paper is essentially a discussion of the language and literary aspects of the English Language translations of the meaning of the Quran in relation to the original Arabic text. It also seeks to establish the suitability of the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran as literary texts in the teaching of imagery as well as analyzing and interpreting imagery. Extensive research work from books as well as consultations with experts in the field of Islamic Studies, have lent sufficient grounds for hope that it will be successful enough to open doors to include or incorporate the Quran in the English language and Literature curriculum.

BACKGROUND

It is important for Muslim students to have many opportunities to read and study the Quran along with their regular academic coursework. If this is not possible in the language of the Quran, which is Arabic, then these opportunities should be made available through the translations of the meaning of the Quran in other languages. The Quran contains an abundance of imagery. Imagery as a general term covers the use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or extra –sensory experience. Many Quranic images are conveyed literally. These constitute descriptive imagery whereby they clarify or give a vivid picture of something. Then, there are images which are conveyed by figurative language, such as in metaphors, similes, symbols, etc. These images when projected, appeal to one's senses. A Quranic image, like other images, may be visual (pertaining to the eye) olfactory (smell), tactile (touch), auditory (hearing), or gustatory (taste). As mentioned above, there are images which are conveyed through the use of figurative language usually using these literary devices – similes, metaphors and symbols. These constitute figurative imagery. As readers of the Quran, whether in Arabic or in any other language, one needs to identify and be able to interpret figurative language so as to achieve understanding and be able to extract the deepest meaning of the message of the Quran.

IMAGERY

Imagery can be defined as the representation through language of sense experience. Anyone for instance, who wishes or is seeking to express his/her experience of a spring

day must, therefore, provide a selection of the personal sense impressions he/she has. According to Laurence Perrine, a spring day can be represented by (Perrine, 1983: 560):

1. Seeing blue sky and white clouds, budding leaves and daffodils.
2. Hearing robins and bluebirds singing in the early morning.
3. Smelling damp earth and blossoming hyacinths.
4. Feeling a fresh wind against the cheek.

According to The Harper Handbook to Literature, there are two types of imagery (Frye, Baker and Perkins, 1985:235):

1) Descriptive imagery occurs when images are conveyed literally. These images help to give the reader a vivid picture of something. The above descriptions of a spring day are examples of descriptive imagery.

2) Figurative imagery occurs when images are conveyed through figurative language, that is, language that indicates the resemblance between two dissimilar images. Three literary devices are usually used in figurative imagery:

a) Simile

Example: A pretty girl is like a melody.
Her skin is as smooth as silk.

A simile is created when two unlike things are compared with the use of “like” or “as”.

“A pretty girl” in the above sentence, is like “a melody” perhaps because she is lively, has a lyrical personality, is in tune with life, etc.

“Her skin” is similar to “silk” perhaps because it feels cool, smooth, looks radiant, shiny, etc.

b) Metaphor

Example: My wife is a rose.

A metaphor is created when two unlike things are compared without the use of “like” or “as”. The metaphor shows in what way the two things are similar. In simpler terms, a metaphor can also be defined as something other than what it is.

“A rose” in the above sentence means the lady and she resembles “a rose” perhaps because her beauty, sweetness, bright, fresh appearance, etc.

c) Symbol

Example: She saw the light of dawn and knew that there was still hope.

A symbol is a sign or object accepted as recalling, typifying or representing a thing, quality or idea. In simpler terms, a symbol is created when something means more than what it is. In the above sentence, “the light of dawn” is what she really saw and the same “light of dawn” also signifies hope.

The word “literature” is a broad term. Literature can be said to be “showing” human experience. It uses images to convey the very quality of lived experience. The Quran is a book that appeals to the understanding through our imagination. It appeals also to our emotions, reasons and intellect. The writers of the English language translations of the

meaning of the Quran strive to produce as close an approximation of the Quran as possible.

Literature reveals and exploits literary devices such as similes, metaphors, symbols, etc. These literary devices are the very essence of poetry. These literary devices are found in abundance in the Quran and they are also apparent in the translations of the meaning of the Quran in other languages although it is realized by all translators, scholars and authors that no one has yet been able to convey or translate the exact meaning of the Quran.

QURANIC IMAGERY

According to Islam, it is an important duty for every man, woman and child to read and understand the Quran according to his or her own capacity. Muslims regard the Quran as a living miracle, an open book challenging all humanity to see and prove for themselves. They see in the Quran an invitation from God to all human beings to use their intellect to reason out this truth, having been created and endowed with adequate intellectual faculties to do this.

The Quran contains messages that are directly stated and accessible to the reader's thought processes as well as messages which are conveyed by means of images which can appeal to the reader's senses and stimulate his/her imagination of certain sensory experiences. Humanity is invited to "think" and "experience" as they try to understand the messages in the Quran. Muslim students, in particular, should be exposed to the study of imagery as early in their academic life as possible due to the abundance of images presented in the Quran. In this way, they will have a reasonable framework within which to grasp and understand at the time or at a later date the varied images in the Quran with ease which can help to elucidate the messages in the Quran.

In the case of Descriptive Imagery where images are conveyed literally, giving the reader a more vivid and described picture, the direct alternative of Descriptive Quranic Imagery can be illustrated by the following example extracted from XXXVIII Surah Sad, verse 57 from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English language translation of the meaning of the Quran:

Verse 57, line 4 & 5: **A boiling fluid, and a fluid**

Dark, murky, intensely cold.

What type of imagery? Descriptive imagery.

A vivid description is given about a torturous drink in Hell.

Senses: visual, tactile, gustatory.

One can picture tasting this drink and feeling its high degree of heat and coldness alternately burning and freezing one into extreme discomfort.

In the case of Figurative Imagery where images are conveyed through figurative language usually using the three literary devices-simile, metaphor or symbol-the direct alternative of Figurative Quranic Imagery can be explained by some illustrated examples below.

Figurative Quranic Imagery using the literary device simile where a simile is created when two unlike things are compared with the use of "like" or "as", can be illustrated by

the following example extracted from XVIII Surah Al-Kahf (The Cave), verse 29 from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English language translation of the meaning of the Quran:

Verse 29, lines 3-6: **Whose (smoke and flames),**

Like the walls and roof

Of a tent, will hem

Them in

What type of imagery? Figurative imagery using a literary device: simile.

Because of the word "like", the phrase is a simile.

Senses: visual, tactile, olfactory.

Through this simile, the smoke and flames of the fire of Hell are visualized as an enclosed tent. One can picture, smell and feel the suffocating heat of the smoke and flames.

Figurative Quranic Imagery using the literary device metaphor where a metaphor is created when two unlike things are shown in what way the two things are similar without the use of "like" or "as", can be illustrated by the following example extracted from XVIII Surah Al-Kahf (The Cave), verse 29 from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English language translation of the meaning of the Quran:

Verse 29, lines 11-12: **How uncomfortable a couch**

To recline on!

What type of imagery? Figurative imagery using a literary device: metaphor.

This is hardly a couch; it is indeed a torture chamber for sinners.

Senses: visual.

The image metaphorically compares the scorching premises or ground to an extremely uncomfortable couch; the reader can imagine the sinner lying on this burning seat.

Figurative Quranic Imagery using the literary device symbol where a symbol is a sign or object accepted as recalling, typifying or representing a thing, quality or idea or when something means more than what it is, can be illustrated by the following example extracted from XXXVIII Surah Sad, verse 50 from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English language translation of the meaning of the Quran:

Verse 50, line 1 : Gardens of Eternity

What type of imagery? Figurative imagery using a literary device: symbol.

"Gardens of Eternity" are the beautiful gardens which will be in unchanging existence forever for the righteous to enjoy in Heaven. The term also symbolizes the supreme or sublime Beauty of Heaven in a spiritual sense.

Senses : visual.

The image gives one a beautiful (mental) picture of gardens that are always in bloom while symbolizing that timeless heavenly world one can only truly know after life.

The basic justifications for extracting Quranic imagery from the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran are the following:

1)The English language translations of the meaning of the Quran can be used most productively when teaching its content while exploiting its language.



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- 2) The English language translations of the meaning of the Quran can be a source of encouragement for students, especially at Islamic institutions, to learn imagery because the majority of the students are Muslims themselves and thus are aware of the sacredness of the Quran. Because of their religious background, the students are motivated to relate to or imagine what is mentioned in the Quran. As Muslims, it is indeed beneficial for them to have Quranic images in their minds for them to grow and develop spiritually.
- 3) Quran-based instruction would be a sure way of inculcating Islamic moral values and they can use these values as a yardstick for critiquing other texts.
- 4) The possibility of introducing the literary aspects of the Quran to Muslim as well as non-Muslim students who may be attending Islamic institutions.
- 5) This is an effective way of making students more familiar with the Quran which will enable them to use Quranic quotations, especially imagery, effectively. This ability will be a great asset for anyone academically to prove and highlight his/her points in other coursework and socially, especially in Islamic gatherings where topics of discussions which are related to the Quran are brought forth. Quranic imagery can make an impressive addition to one's rhetorical style.
- 6) It is suitable to teach Quranic imagery to undergraduate students, in particular, because their maturity will allow for easier understanding and grasping of Quranic concepts and this would play an important role in enabling them to relate Quranic concepts to practical situations in their lives.
- 7) Quranic imagery can be used in other relevant coursework as well. This is important because they are expected to be able to express their viewpoints constructively in the near future in the real world and this may be their last chance to study Quranic imagery in an academic setting.

There is no general consensus on which translations of the meaning of the Quran are the "closest" or best. Each scholar may have his or her own reasons for preferring or rejecting a particular translated version of the Quran.

There are many types of figures of speech and each researcher can concentrate on any type of figure of speech because they can all be found in the original Quran as well as the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran.

USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

There are alternative ways to retrieve relevant information if one were to access or look into some useful websites.

1. English Index Categorization Alphabetical List of Topics in the Quran:

http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/quran/quran_index.html

2. Quranic Recitation with Translation in English:

On this website, if you scroll to the bottom, you will see a section for “Recitations with translations”. They have very comprehensive collection.

<http://quranicaudio.com/>

If you want to have more control, for example be able to listen from anywhere in the surah by selecting verse by verse, go to the site, launch quran explorer and in the translation drop down (on the right side) select the “Eng-Picktall-Audio”.

<http://quranexplorer.com/>

Like the previous one, this one lets you select the surah and the verse but what's different here is that it will only play the english translation and not the arabic one with it. Go to options and select “Ibrahim Walk” as the recitation.

<http://lightuponlight.com/QuranReader/>

3. Word for Word Quran Translation:

Non pdf version. Lets you play the audio as well as click on each word and hear its pronunciation. Also lets you navigate so you can jump to any verse of any specified surah.

<http://www.allahsquran.com/learn/#>

(New) You can listen to the word by word translation from Uztazah Farhat Hashmi course. The best thing is that you can now listen to the word by word translation of a single verse or verses.

http://www.alhudapk.com/tqaudio_db/default.asp

4. Read the Quran with Translation:

This website has shaheeh international translation which I consider to be the best one available. It also lets you search the quran as well as play the audio by select the verse.

<http://quranonline.net>

These websites have good look and feel and simulate a real reading experience such as the ability to “flip” the pages and zoom. The last one has color coded tajweed as well as madina mushaf.

<http://flashquran.com>

<http://quranflash.com>

This one claims to have verified the actual verses and has the right harakahs (diacritics) and symbols. It also lets you search by root words and play the audio.

<http://www.tanzil.info/>

This one has translation in many languages.

<http://quran.nu>

This one has translations in many languages and recitations from various reciters, especially in Urdu.

<http://quranexplorer.com/>

5. Word for Word Quran translation

http://www.studyquran.co.uk/Quran_ArabicEnglish_WordforWord_Translation.html

Quran in PDF are ideal for offline use i.e. without internet connection.

6. Entire Quran in Arabic without translation

http://www.quranpda.com/Quran_Arabic_InPak_PDF.zip

7. Quran with English Translation

http://www.quranpda.com/Quran_Arabic_Eng_PDF.zip

You can read the Quran in many languages all at once side by side. This website also has shaheeh international translation. The website is very simple and easy to use.

<http://quran.com/>

Quran translation from the printing press in Medina. You can read the translation in English, Urdu and in other languages.

<http://www.qurancomplex.com/Quran/Targama/Targama.asp?>

On the website, www.DeenResearchCenter.com, there are packages of translations by many different translators for the Quranviewer Program software available for download: Quranviewer Translations 1 has 3 translators' work: Asad, Bewley and Daryabadi.

<http://deenresearchusacom>.



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web26.winsvr.net/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=HIzXyffig0s%3d&tabid=58&mid=436&language=nl-NL

Quranviewer Translations 2 has 3 translators' work: Hilali Khan, Pickthall and Sarwar.
<http://deenresearchusacom>.

web26.winsvr.net/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=crxtNCslf%2b8%3d&tabid=58&mid=436&language=nl-NL

Quranviewer Translations 3 has 2 translators' work: Munthaqab and Qaribullah.
<http://deenresearchusacom>.

web26.winsvr.net/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=YXMQGP6YvfU%3d&tabid=58&mid=436&language=nl-NL

The authors of the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran try to capture this special feature of the Quran- the exact expressions and meaning in the Arabic language. Although not entirely possible, as mentioned by all translators, with extra reading and guidance, a reader will be able to understand most, if not all, of what is being said in the Quran.

For the purpose of comparative studies by different translators, the website below is the best I have come across so far. Not only in the way each verse is dealt with by each translator or group of translators but also after the translation of each verse, a thorough endnote presentation capturing the essence of the surah by each translator is laid out. This website is especially useful for researchers and students in the field of translations and comparative literary studies.

<http://www.quranix.net/#?RTQ=1&TMG=1&MA=1&RK=1&SH=1&TE=1&A=1&L=en&NA=10&S=1>

For language and linguistic studies, the websites below are amazing. A linguistic resource showing the theoretical aspects of linguistics: Arabic grammar, semantics, pragmatics, lexicology, phonology, morphology and syntax of each word in the Quran, the descriptive aspects of linguistics: comparative linguistics, etymology, phonetics and sociolinguistics of words and phrases in the Quran, and the applied linguistics aspects: language and vocabulary development, psycholinguistics and stylistics of the words and phrases in the Quran. At the end of each surah, there is an audio Quran recitation of the surah by the recitor, Saad AlGhamadi.

<http://corpus.quran.com/wordbyword.jsp>

<http://deenresearchusacom>.

web26.winsvr.net/LinkClick.aspx?link=http%3a%2f%2ftextinmotion.org%2fchapters.php&tabid=58&mid=436&language=nl-NL

<http://www.ghazali.org/arabic/WrightArabicGrammarVol1.pdf>

<http://www.ghazali.org/arabic/WrightArabicGrammarVol2.pdf>

<http://www.ghazali.org/books/haywood-65.pdf>

For the meaning of verses in the Quran, the websites below provide a clear translation in presentation, interpretation and explanation of the message of the Quran for easier understanding.

<http://deenresearchusacom>.

web26.winsvr.net/LinkClick.aspx?link=http%3a%2f%2fourbeacon.com%2fwpcontent%2fuploads%2fadmin%2f2007%2f08%2fqxpiv.pdf&tabid=58&mid=693&language=nl-NL



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[http://deenresearchusacom.](http://deenresearchusacom)

web26.winsvr.net/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=JichdZQGEuE%3d&tabid=58&mid=590&language=nl-NL

<http://ourbeacon.com/wp-content/uploads/admin2/2007/08/qxp-iv.pdf>

SUGGESTED PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES

Teachers are aware that having a classroom with mixed or differing abilities is a challenging task on the teacher's shoulders. A good teacher rarely follows a textbook step by step as many aspects of teaching and learning need to be taken into consideration. With mixed abilities or all with the same level of ability, a teacher must create opportunities for students to demonstrate each one's level of knowledge and to create opportunities for students to express the way each one thinks. Differentiation practice in classroom strategy and in assessment strategy is always a useful tool for teachers to equip themselves with for more effective teaching and learning.

As an illustrative example, the original text used for a technique used to teach imagery was replaced with Quranic images of Heaven and Hell selected from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English language translation of the meaning of the Quran: Verses 43-46 of Surah Al-Hijr.

The teacher begins the lesson by dividing the class into two and reads two sets of verses, one set to each group. The teacher informs the students that the verses that the first group is about to study are verses from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English language translation of the meaning of the Quran, specifically, Verses 43-44 of Surah Al-Hijr. The teacher tells this group that these verses are about Hell.

Set 1 (Hell)

43. And verily, Hell

Is the promised abode

For them all!

44. To it are seven Gates

For each of those Gates

Is a (special) class

(Of sinners) assigned.

The teacher will now ask the students to focus on the several images that are projected in these verses. The teacher will discuss while the students take notes.

Verse 43, line 1-2: **And verily, Hell**

Is the promised abode

What type of imagery? Figurative imagery using a literary device: metaphor.

The "promised abode" means a warning for the sinners that they will surely end up in Hell.

Senses: visual.

This image suggests a mental picture of Hell as a type of dwelling place.

Verse 44, line 1: **To it are seven Gates**

What type of imagery? Descriptive imagery.

One is told explicitly that Hell has 7 gates.

Senses: visual.

This image gives a vivid and specific picture or description of Hell which has 7 gates.

Verses 44, lines 2-4: **For each of those Gates**

Is a (special) class

(Of sinners) assigned.

What type of imagery? Descriptive imagery.

One is told that Hell has levels or classes and that each class or level has different types of sinners in it according to the weight or intensity of the sin committed by the sinners.

Senses: visual.

One can picture Hell with its 7 gates and the sinners inside each of those gates.

After this discussion with the group, the teacher moves on to the group with another set of verses. The teacher tells the group to prepare to discuss their verses with the group with another set of verses.

The teacher can then give a written assignment:

Write your own images of eating your favourite food thereby affecting the gustatory sense (and other senses) and give this collection of images a title.

Example: Ripe strawberries

Luscious, red, plump strawberries with leaves still stuck on them. They are sweet and yet they have a tinge of sourness.

Senses: gustatory, visual.

If the students are able to complete the written assignment within the remainder of the class time, these assignments can be collected at the end of the period. If not, these assignments will be collected at the beginning of the next lesson. The written assignment will be the basis for gauging whether or not the students have understood the lesson.

As another illustrative example, the text of the seventy-seventh surah, Al-Mursalat from The Holy Quran-the English translated version of the Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, a teacher can decide to take the most suitable portions of the 50 verses upon knowing the general level of class. The choices would obviously differ from class to class. A teacher who has a class of low to moderate level ability may choose to take the first 6 verses of the whole surah or chapter. A teacher who wishes to take larger portions for perhaps a more capable group of students may choose to take verses 1- 40 or the whole of section 1 of the surah. This surah appears to be divided into 2 sections.

For the teacher with a more capable group, more independent work is possible. Students can be left to interpret and analyse in groups. But the less capable groups would need more guidance from the teacher. The teacher may well decide that the first six verses as

the text would suffice for one teaching session. Much can be done with these six verses and these verses can be exploited effectively.

1. **By the (Winds) Sent Forth
One after another
(To man's profit);**
2. **Which then blow violently
In tempestuous Gusts,**
3. **And scatter (things)
Far and wide ;**
4. **Then separate them,
One from another,**
5. **Then spread abroad
A reminder,**
6. **Whether of Justification
Or of Warning ; -**

First, a teacher can give an introductory background of verses which are going to be looked at stylistically. The main theme of this whole surah of 50 verses can be simplified to basically be the warning for all of us to do good on earth and to stop doing any evil deeds. Each student can be given a handout of the six verses where they should be encouraged to jot down notes on. The teacher reads the six verses.

The teacher hears what the students feel about the verses after the reading. They may not have understood much from the reading. The teacher repeats the task again by telling them the verses will be looked at closely and for them to jot down notes which they will use later for their written assignment. The next activity is brainstorming with the teacher as a facilitator. The teacher continues to lead the students into the first verse by rereading it and stopping after it.

1. **By the (Winds) Sent Forth
One after another
(To man's profit);**

The teacher can go into a brief historical background to inform the students of the hidden meaning behind the first line. These words basically refer to the revelations sent through the Prophets. At this point, the teacher may want to mention one or two prophets, eliciting from the students, thus tapping from prior knowledge. The teacher then moves on to the second line, again eliciting from students about the meaning of the idiom, one after another. The teacher can ask students to make sentences with the idiom to confirm

understanding. The third line can invite many interpretations or ideas from students. Nevertheless, there should be no wrong answers and teachers should not be evaluating their responses at this stage. To further encourage and to eliminate the fear or risk being wrong, teachers can record all answers or ideas on the board or in the teacher's own notes to make the students feel that their responses and contributions are of importance. At the same time, encourage students to jot down notes themselves. Repetitions of tasks are useful for continued focus and attention. The teacher then moves on to verse two.

Where assessment is concerned, evaluation is then called for but still heeding the differentiation approach. The written assignment can be:

Choose 1, 2 or 3 of the following:

1. Explain any two of the six verses.
2. Show or make connections of any two of the six verses.
3. Predict what will be said after the six verses.

The assessments should reflect both social and academic performance. Therefore, the evaluation of assessment should involve all of the following:

1. Completion of task
2. Ability to understanding through listening to teacher and peers
3. Ability to participate in brainstorming
4. Ability to explain or make connections or predict in material and content
5. Ability to demonstrate their new knowledge
6. Ability to express prior knowledge
7. Ability to demonstrate individuality and creativity
8. Availability and ability to make choices in tasks which consider flexibility for different strengths and needs.

SPIRITUAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF MUSLIM TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

While Muslims are encouraged to make the Quran as much a part of their lives as possible, they must also consider what state they should be in spiritually when teaching and studying the Quran. This matter will be discussed in the context of its relevance to teachers and students using the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran as a text.

According to Von Denffer (165-179), some of the important spiritual responsibilities of Muslim teachers and students that should be observed when reading and studying the Quran include:

1. Being aware that one is always in the presence of Allah.
2. Knowing that the Quran addresses one directly.
3. Having the intention of seeking Allah's pleasure.
4. Being aware that just as it was at the time of revelation, the Quran today is relevant and not an artifact of the past.



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5. Reflecting deeply upon what one reads and striving to understand it.

6. Reading with a mind free from bias and preconceived ideas; otherwise one will read one's own notions into the verses.

7. Remembering that the real key to understanding what one reads is the practical application of its meaning in one's life.

Muslims are generally quite clear about what is to be observed (as mentioned above) when teaching and studying the Quran. But do these same observances also apply when teaching and studying the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran? Is it expected for non-Muslim students and teachers at Islamic institutions to follow suit? Although it should not need much persuasion for Muslim students and teachers to observe Quranic-based rules and spiritual responsibilities when reading and studying the Quran, an issue may arise concerning the expectations of non-Muslim teachers and students when teaching and studying the Quran.

Three lecturers in the field of Islamic Studies from an Islamic institution contributed their viewpoints on the above topics. Their responses to questions which were posed to them were as follows:

A distinction is made between the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran and the original Quran as revealed in Arabic. Muslims know that before the original Quran can be touched, they need to be in a state of ritual purity (tahara) to be obtained through ablution (wudhu). Does this apply also before touching the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran? The three lecturers concurred on this and said that when the Quranic language is present beside the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran, the same rule is to be adhered to. But if the book contains only the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran without the Quranic language beside it, then the Muslim does not need to be in a state of ritual purity (tahara) when touching, reading or studying it.

A point was brought up regarding women who are menstruating. Muslim women know that while they are menstruating, they are not allowed to touch the original Quran. The three lecturers concur that the same rule applies for the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran if the Quranic language is present beside it. But if the book contains only the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran without the Quranic language beside it, then the Muslim woman is allowed to touch, read and study it while she is menstruating.

One lecturer brought up an interesting point whereby in his opinion it is all right for the Muslim menstruating woman to touch, read and study even the original Quran if it is done for educational purposes and not for ibadah or worship alone. The lecturer gave an example to support his point: if a Muslim menstruating woman who happens to be a student is required to read the original Quran for her examination, she can do so instead of getting a low mark or even no marks thereby jeopardizing her educational record. The same goes for the touching, reading and studying of the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran. The three lecturers were also asked to comment on the fact that, for the purposes of this study, copies of relevant verses from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English language translations of the meaning of the Quran would be distributed to the students as their text. All agreed that this text should be used as any other text. The

teachers whether Muslims or non-Muslims are expected to tell the students where the text originated from (as with any other text) and at this point, all students, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, will be aware that these verses are from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English language translation of the meaning of the Quran. The lecturers felt that it should be added that the right niyya or intention is an important issue to Muslims. Muslims know that the reading, studying and reflecting upon the Quran must be done with the intention of seeking Allah's pleasure. Intentions are something within the individual and it is certainly up to each individual alone to know what exactly is felt within him or herself and according to Islam, it is not for anyone to judge the intentions of others. As for non-Muslim teachers and students, they are not expected to believe in Islam when using the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran as a text but perhaps after doing so, they would be motivated to want to read and know more about Islam. The above comments made by the lecturers provide sensible guidelines for the use of English language translations of the meaning of the Quran.

CONCLUSION

Both descriptive and figurative imagery, in particular, similes, metaphors and symbols, can be taught through the use of the English language translations of the meaning of the Quran as is the case with literacy as well as interpreting and analyzing the verses using literary descriptions. At the same time, new vocabulary and examples of correct grammar usage can also be pointed out.

Work has thus begun. The texts originally used in the techniques of teaching imagery are poems. Suitable techniques for teaching imagery can be modified and the texts (originally poems) are replaced with Quranic images selected from the English language translated versions of the Quran. With this substitution, it is possible to generate a conversation or discussion on an aspect of Islam. This is an added advantage, especially at Islamic institutions.

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