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**A Turkish Qur'an Translation According to the Tartib al-Nuzul: A Feminist Perspective**

*Nuzul Sıralamasını Esas Alan Türkçe Kur'an Tercümesi: Feminist Bir Yaklaşım*

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### Abstract

The subject of this article is Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah and her translation of the Holy Qur'ān, which is translated according to tartīb al-nuzūl. Three questions were traced in the article. First, Did Ayşa Zaynap Abdullah as a women use feminist translation techniques? Second, if she used, then how did she reflect feminist translation techniques as a woman in her translation? The other one pertains to the sources that informed the arrangement of sūrahs in the translation, specifically within the context of tartīb al-nuzūl. The present study endeavours to address these inquiries through five distinct sections. In the first part, information about Abdullah's life is given by using data collection and analysis methods. In the second part, the translation's preface was examined using the text analysis method. In the third part, the formal features and methodology of translation are discussed with content/text analysis and comparison methods. The fourth chapter provides illustrative instances wherein the translator's rendition of select verses concerning women is expounded. The final phase culminates in a comparative assessment of the translator's employed translation technique vis-à-vis the strategies inherent to feminist translation paradigms. Conclusively, the findings of this investigation elucidate that the translator, through active intervention in the source text, employs a translation approach aligned with feminist principles, herein referred to as "womanhandling." Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah's translation is largely a literal translation. She does not provide any sources for the translation in any explanations or interventions made in the main text. Through research, it has been determined that the tartīb al-nuzūl followed in the translation corresponds to the order attributed to Caliph Uthman. Nevertheless, it is concluded that Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah does not inform the reader about the source of this tartīb al-nuzūl.

**Keywords:** Tafsīr, Translation of the Qur'ān, Woman, Feminism, Womanhandling.

### Öz

Bu makalenin konusunu Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah ve nüzul sırasına göre tercüme ettiği Kur'an tercümesi oluşturmaktadır. Makalede temel olarak üç sorunun izi sürülmektedir; birincisi Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah bir kadın olarak feminist tercüme tekniklerini kullanmış mıdır? İkincisi eğer kullandıysa tercümesine nasıl yansıtmıştır? Diğeri ise özellikle tertibi'n nüzüle göre yapılan bu tercümedeki sure tertibinin kaynaklarıyla ilgilidir. Bu çalışma, söz konusu soruları beş ayrı bölümde ele almaya çalışmaktadır. Birinci bölümde veri toplama ve analizi yöntemleri kullanılarak Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah'ın hayatı hakkında bilgi verilmektedir. İkinci bölümde, metin analizi yöntemiyle tercümenin önsözü incelenmektedir. Üçüncü bölümde tercümenin biçimsel özellikleri ve yöntemi, içerik/metin analizi ve mukayese yöntemleriyle ele alınmaktadır. Dördüncü bölümde ise mütercim'in özellikle kadınları konu alan bazı ayetleri nasıl tercüme ettiğine dair örneklerle yer verilmektedir. Son aşama ise mütercim'in kullandığı çeviri tekniği feminist tercüme paradigmlarına özgü stratejilerle karşılaştırmalı bir değerlendirmesiyle sonuçlanmaktadır. Bu araştırmalar sonucunda mütercim'in kaynak metne aktif müdahalede bulunarak metne kadın elinin değmesi (womanhandling) olarak isimlendirilen feminist tercüme stratejilerini kullandığı tespit edilmiştir. Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah'ın tercümesi büyük oranda literal çeviridir. Herhangi bir açıklama ya da ana metne yaptığı müdahalelerde tercümenin hiçbir yerinde kaynak belirtmemektedir. Yapılan araştırmada aynı zamanda tercümede takip edilen nüzul tertibinin Hz. Osman'a isnad edilen sıralama olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Fakat Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah'ın bu nüzul tertibinin kaynağı hususunda okuyucuyu bilgilendirmediği görülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Tefsir, Kur'an Tercümesi, Kadın, Feminizm, Kadın Eli Değmesi.

### Introduction

The main subject of this article is the Qur'ān translation of Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah, titled "İndirilme Sırasına Göre Yüce Kur-an'ı Kerim ve Meali".<sup>1</sup> The motivation for her translation is to "clarify a truth that has been covered up for centuries". It is claimed that Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah defines her translation as a challenge to gender inequality and presents her choice to change the order of the sūrahs (chapters of the Qur'ān) as an example of a *feminine perspective*

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<sup>1</sup> Eng. The Holy Qur'ān and its Translation According to the Order of Revelation.

that influenced her reading of the sacred text.<sup>2</sup> In this specific milieu, the ensuing deliberation seeks to unravel a series of inquiries. Chief among them is the appraisal of the employment of feminist translation techniques within the confines of the translation. Furthermore, a critical dissection is undertaken to discern the dominant translation technique, assessing whether it aligns with the literal or exegetical. Moreover, within the framework of her translation structured upon tartīb al-nuzūl (the chronological order of revelation), an investigation is requisite into the underpinning sources that informed her determination of the sūrah order. In this context, the questions sought to be answered in the article are as follows: How have feminist translation techniques been reflected in the translation? Is the translation method used in this Qur'ān translation literal or exegetical? In her translation by tartīb al-nuzūl (the chronological order of revelation), based on which sources did she determine the order of the sūrahs? The contemplation of these inquiries, within the context of this article, constitutes an endeavour to elucidate and analyze the nuanced dimensions intrinsic to Abdullah's translation enterprise, thereby fostering a deeper comprehension of the intricate interplay between gender, perspective, and translation strategy in the Qur'ānic text.

The article mainly aims to determine the characteristics of Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah's translation, which is considered an example of a feminist perspective in Qur'ān translation, and to delineate the specific facets through which its feminist essence manifests. The primary objective of this article is to discern and delineate the distinct attributes of the translation work of Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah, acknowledged as an example of a feminist perspective applied to Qur'ānic translation. This study endeavours to explicate the multifaceted dimensions through which Abdullah's translation encapsulates feminist traits. In pursuit of these objectives, this article is designed to fulfil a two-fold purpose. Firstly, it aims to provide general information about the identity of A. Zeynep Abdullah as well as the features of her translation endeavour. Secondly, the article endeavours to undertake meticulous scrutiny of Abdullah's translation methodology with specific emphasis on her discernment and subsequent rendering of verses that pertain to women. This is driven by the hypothesis that the translation process employed by Abdullah in these contexts is indicative of her adherence to feminist paradigms.

The article consists of five parts. The initial part is dedicated to biographical details concerning Abdullah. This part of the article is underpinned by the employment of rigorous data collection and analytical methodologies. The preface of the Qur'ān translation is within the scope of the study since it sheds light on the motivation of the translation. The subsequent section, constituting the second part, undertakes a comprehensive textual analysis of the preface featured in the Qur'ān translation. This seeks to unravel the underlying motivations and thematic underpinnings shaping the translator's approach. In the next chapter, the formal features and the method of translation are facilitated through a synthesis of content and textual analysis and comparative methodologies. In the fourth part of the article, examples of how she translated some verses will be given to determine whether the translator's paradigm is reflected or not. Concluding the article, the final section embarks on a comparative assessment between the deployed translation technique and feminist translation strategies. This evaluative juxtaposition not only contributes to a nuanced comprehension of the translator's approach but also advances a broader scholarly discourse concerning feminist translation praxes. In sum, the

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<sup>2</sup> Sema Üstün Külünk, "The uncharted experience of women translators of the Qur'an in Turkey", *Parallèles* 34/1 (2022), 146.

article endeavours to illuminate the multifaceted dimensions characterizing Abdullah's translation endeavour and its alignment with feminist translation paradigms.

### 1. Biography of Ayşâ Zeynep Abdullah

The available information about the biography of Abdullah remains constrained. There is only one interview with Ayşâ Zeynep Abdullah which was published on Medyascope on October 11, 2019.<sup>3</sup> According to the information on this website, Ayşâ Zeynep Abdullah is 45 years old and a mother of two children. Her initial education was imparted by her father, who is a theologian. The name she uses “Ayşâ Zeynep Abdullah” is not her real name but rather a pseudonym. The interview does not encompass details regarding the rationale underlying her adoption of a pseudonymous identity. However, we are informed that a woman writing a translation of the Qur’ân has been a controversial issue in the Islamic world for a long time.<sup>4</sup> The inclusion of such information implies that Abdullah preferred to use a pseudonym *only because* she was under pressure due to being a “woman”.

The interview mentions the opposition of Abdullah’s family concerning her efforts in translating and publishing the Qur’ân. About the process of writing the Qur’ân’s translation, Abdullah said that the new generation, like herself, has been asking many questions about religion, and even more questions. With the intention of teaching people her acquired knowledge, she decided to translate the Qur’ân as a woman.<sup>5</sup> Abdullah’s translation is presented as the first translation of the Qur’ân by a woman in Türkiye<sup>6</sup>, however, this assertion is factually incorrect. Paratextual elements such as book covers, titles, prefaces, introductions, and marginal notes play an important role in the packaging, marketing, and publishing process.<sup>7</sup> Just as paratextual elements play an important role in marketing, Abdullah’s Qur’ân translation was introduced as the first translation of the Qur’ân by a woman in Türkiye. Moreover, Abdullah proudly participated in the promotion of her portrait as the first female translator of the Qur’ân into Turkish. This is not to say that the two female translators before Ayşâ Zeynep Abdullah (Medine Balcı and Necla Yadsıman) were not recognized in Türkiye. The lack of recognition or rejection of the previous translations is probably due to publicity concerns. In other words, the focus on the “first female Qur’ân translator” is motivated by marketing strategies and financial gains.<sup>8</sup>

A. Zeynep Abdullah asserts, regarding the position of women in Islam, that everything goes better with women in it, but that men even determine the place of women themselves. She claims that due to the predominantly male-authored nature of translations and religious texts women and their rights remained obscured.<sup>9</sup> It may be understood from these claims that the

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<sup>3</sup> Büşra Cebeci, “Türkiye’de Kur’an Meali Hazırlayan İlk Kadın, Ayşâ Zeynep Abdullah Anlatıyor”, *Medyascope* (Accessed March 23, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Cebeci, “Türkiye’de Kur’an Meali Hazırlayan İlk Kadın, Ayşâ Zeynep Abdullah Anlatıyor” (Accessed March 23, 2023).

<sup>5</sup> Cebeci, “Türkiye’de Kur’an Meali Hazırlayan İlk Kadın, Ayşâ Zeynep Abdullah Anlatıyor” (Accessed March 23, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> Cebeci, “Türkiye’de Kur’an Meali Hazırlayan İlk Kadın, Ayşâ Zeynep Abdullah Anlatıyor” (Accessed March 23, 2023).

<sup>7</sup> Adriana Şerban - Rim Hassen, “Introduction: Women Translators of Religious Texts”, *Parallèles* 34/1 (2022), 6.

<sup>8</sup> Üstün Külünk, “The uncharted experience of women translators of the Qur’an in Turkey”, 145-146.

<sup>9</sup> Cebeci, “Türkiye’de Kur’an Meali Hazırlayan İlk Kadın, Ayşâ Zeynep Abdullah Anlatıyor” (Accessed March 23, 2023).

translations have neglected the matters pertaining to women, given that the translators of the Qur'ān preceding her were exclusively male. So, it is necessary to examine how she translates the verses related to women's rights or women in general in the Qur'ān. Therefore, the question of how Ayşā Zeynep Abdullah translated the verses with a feminist paradigm is among the questions that this article seeks to answer.

The following statements on the website where the interview took place are significant in terms of the history of the Qur'ān:

“The fact that the verses in the Qur'ān have not been canonized according to the order in which they were transmitted by the Prophet Muhammad has long been a subject of debate in the Islamic community. After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Caliph Abū Bakr (d. 13/643), and Caliph Umar (d. 23/644) adhered to the order of the verses transmitted by the Prophet Muhammad, while Caliph Uthman (d. 35/656) changed this order and copied the Qur'ān. Author Abdullah believes that this change of order has had a negative impact on the integrity of the Qur'ān's meaning.”<sup>10</sup>

These statements given above carry the claim that the order of verses in the Qur'ān was changed by Caliph Uthman. However, it is fixed by ijma that the order of the verses is tawqīfī (designated by the divine authority). In the preface of her translation, Ayşā Zeynep Abdullah states that it is not the order of the verses but the order of the suras that were changed by Caliph Uthman.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Preface of the Translation

In the preface of the translation, the translator gives information about her motive and the method she followed in the translation. The preface consists of about two and a half pages and elucidates details concerning the history of the Qur'ān. She discusses that the Qur'ān was gathered together and turned into a codified textual unity after the death of Prophet Muhammad by Abu Bakr (between 632-634 H.) to enhance readability, ensure preservation and maintain this textual composition in its current state in the era of Uthman. She explicitly asserts that the order of the Qur'ān was according to the order of the revelation until the period of Uthman. But in his caliphate, this original order was disrupted for various reasons, and rearranged, rewritten, and copied in an order that he called *the order of reading*.<sup>12</sup> The following expression of her is remarkable:

“... the Qur'āns (in different ways) that existed according to the order in which the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) recited them and the order in which they were revealed were collected and destroyed.”<sup>13</sup>

Several pivotal points within this assertion are important in terms of the history of the Qur'ān. Although there is a consensus among scholars that the order of verses is tawqīfī, it is

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<sup>10</sup> Cebeci, “Türkiye’de Kur’an Meali Hazırlayan İlk Kadın, Ayşā Zeynep Abdullah Anlatıyor” (Accessed March 23, 2023).

<sup>11</sup> Ayşā Zeynep Abdullah, *İndirilme Sırasına Göre Yüce Kur-an’ı Kerim ve Meali* (Istanbul: Hermes Yayınları, 2019), 11.

<sup>12</sup> Abdullah, *İndirilme Sırasına Göre Yüce Kur-an’ı Kerim ve Meali*, 11.

<sup>13</sup> Abdullah, *İndirilme Sırasına Göre Yüce Kur-an’ı Kerim ve Meali*, 11.

not possible to say the same thing about the order of the sūrahs. In this regard, there are those who say that the order of sūrahs is ijtimāī, as well as those who say that it is tawqīfī.<sup>14</sup> Another important issue is the expression “Qur’āns”. This expression used by A. Zeynep Abdullah in the plural form of “Qur’ān” actually corresponds to the expression “Mushafs” in Islamic terminology.

Another noteworthy statement within the preface is the translator’s declaration that this work was carried out to facilitate the reading of the Qur’ān in its true form in its integrity of meaning according to tartīb al-nuzūl and the reinstatement of each element to its original form. By including expressions such as “*everything returns to its authentic form*” in the preface, the reader is poised to anticipate a text-centered translation that takes into account the contextual parameters of the nuzūl (descent) environment. This arises from the fact that the chronological sequence, or more precisely, the order of the sūrahs in accordance with tartīb al-nuzūl serves to center the life of the Prophet Muhammad (sīrah) in perspective. Consequently, the discernible sources of Islamic history, sīrah and hadith literature, Ulūm al-Qur’ān, and the narrations of the occasion of the verse, collectively assume a paramount role in shaping the chronological arrangement of the sūrahs, warranting thorough consultation of these sources. On what basis did A. Zeynep Abdullah establish this chronological order in her translation? Did she take the chronological order in the sources or did she present a new chronology in line with her own research? These inquiries constitute among the interrogations necessitating elucidation.

### 3. Formal Characteristics and Methodology of Translation

The translation consists of a single volume. In addition, each page of the book contains the Arabic text and the Turkish translation next to it. At first glance, this situation shows that the translation is closer to literal translation rather than exegetical. As a matter of fact, it is evident that the translation is literal, but occasionally she makes additions in brackets next to the words, usually reflecting her own thoughts or making it easier to understand.

Another feature of the translation is its adherence to the tartīb al-nuzūl, as opposed to the Mushaf order. As the translator states in the preface, this is the original form of the Qur’ān according to her; the Qur’ān we have now is the Qur’ān imposed by the Umayyads.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, we have a translation of the Qur’ān that has “*returned to its authentic form*”. The translator gives any information in any part of the book about the sources on the basis of the order of suras which she made. Likewise, there is no footnote or information in the main text. Therefore, although the translation contains a few additions, it is generally a literal translation.

Another striking feature of the translation is that the verse numbers in the Arabic text are not written in Arabic. The reader can not find any information on whether the Arabic text in the book was approved by the Mushafıları İnceleme ve Kıraat Kurulu Başkanlığı<sup>16</sup> in Türkiye

<sup>14</sup> For more information please see also. Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūfī, *al-Itqān fī ulūm al-Qur’ān*, ed. Muḥammad Abu al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Al-Hay’at al-Misriyya, 1974), 1/211-220.; Muhsin Demirci, *Kur’ān Tarihi* (İstanbul: İFAV, 2015), 185-190.

<sup>15</sup> Abdullah, *İndirilme Sırasına Göre Yüce Kur-an’ı Kerim ve Meali*, 12.

<sup>16</sup> This foundation is responsible for ensuring the excellence of calligraphy in domestically published Muşhafs, sections (juz’ or ajza), Muşhafs with translation, and Qur’ānic exegeses, as well as overseeing the compliance of Qur’ānic publications, either in print or digital format, with the "Rasm Uthmānī" or " ‘Alī al-Qārī " calligraphic styles, and authorizing the examination, printing, and distribution of all kinds of audio, tape, audio-visual Qur’ānic materials is authorized and accountable in this regard.

or not. The beginnings of the suras in the translation are given in the order of sura's tartīb al-nuzūl -name- number of verses- Mushaf order, e.g. 10<sup>th</sup> *Sūrah al-Fajr* (30 verses) (89<sup>th</sup> place). Under the sūrah titles, information about the sūrah, such as the period of its revelation, the occasion of the sūrah if there is one, and the subjects covered in the sūrah are not given.

The order of the revelation in the book is as in the table below:

Chronological Order of the Sūrah	Name of the Sūrah	Order of Mushaf
1.	al- 'Alaq	96
2.	al-Qalam	68
3.	al-Muzzammil	73
4.	al-Muddaththir	74
5.	al-Fātiḥa	1
6.	al-Tabbat	111
7.	al-Takwīr	81
8.	al-A 'lā	87
9.	al-Layl	92
10.	al-Fajr	89
11.	al-Ḍuḥā	93
12.	al-Inshirāḥ	94
13.	al- 'Aşr	103
14.	al- 'Ādiyāt	100
15.	al-Kawthar	108
16.	al-Takāthur	102
17.	al-Mā 'ūn	107
18.	al-Kāfirūn	109
19.	al-Fil	105
20.	al-Falaq	113
21.	al-Nās	114
22.	al-Ikhlāş	112
23.	al-Najm	53
24.	'Abasa	80
25.	al-Qadr	97
26.	al-Shams	91
27.	al-Burūj	85
28.	al-Tin	95
29.	al-Quraysh	106
30.	al-Qāri 'ah	101
31.	al-Qiyāmah	75
32.	al-Humazah	104
33.	al-Mursalāt	77
34.	Qāf	50
35.	al-Balad	90
36.	al-Ṭāriq	86

37.	al-Qamar	54
38.	Şād	38
39.	al-A'raf	7
40.	al-Jinn	72
41.	Yāsīn	36
42.	al-Furqān	25
43.	al-Fātir	35
44.	Maryam	19
45.	Tāhā	20
46.	al-Wāqī'ah	56
47.	al-Shu'arā'	26
48.	al-Naml	27
49.	al-Qaşaş	28
50.	al-Isrā'	17
51.	Yūnus	10
52.	Hūd	11
53.	Yūsuf	12
54.	Hijr	15
55.	al-An'ām	6
56.	al-Şaffāt	37
57.	Luqmān	31
58.	Saba'	34
59.	al-Zumar	39
60.	al-Mu'min	40
61.	al-Fuṣṣilat	41
62.	al-Shūrā	42
63.	al-Zukhruf	43
64.	al-Dukhān	44
65.	al-Jāthiyah	45
66.	al-Aḥqāf	46
67.	al-Dhāriyāt	51
68.	al-Ghāshiyah	88
69.	al-Kahf	18
70.	al-Naḥl	16
71.	Nūḥ	71
72.	Ibrāhīm	14
73.	al-Anbiyā'	21
74.	al-Mu'minūn	23
75.	al-Sajdah	32
76.	al-Tūr	52
77.	al-Mulk	67
78.	al-Ḥāqqah	69
79.	al-Ma'ārij	70
80.	al-Naba'	78
81.	al-Nāzi'āt	79
82.	al-Infītār	82



83.	al-Inshiqāq	84
84.	al-Rūm	30
85.	al-‘Ankabūt	29
86.	al-Muṭaffifin	83
87.	al-Baqarah	2
88.	al-Anfāl	8
89.	Ālu ‘Imrān	3
90.	al-Aḥzāb	33
91.	al-Mumtaḥinah	60
92.	al-Nisā’	4
93.	al-Zilzāl	99
94.	al-Ḥadīd	57
95.	Muḥammad	47
96.	al-Ra‘d	13
97.	al-Raḥmān	55
98.	al-Insān (Dahr)	76
99.	al-Ṭalāq	65
100.	al-Bayyinah	98
101.	al-Ḥashr	59
102.	al-Nūr	24
103.	al-Hajj	22
104.	al-Munāfiqūn	63
105.	al-Mujādalah	58
106.	al-Ḥujurāt	49
107.	al-Taḥrīm	66
108.	al-Taghābun	64
109.	al-Şaff	61
110.	al-Jumu‘ah	62
111.	al-Faṭḥ	48
112.	al-Māidah	5
113.	al-Tawbah	9
114.	al-Naşr	110

There is no information in the book about the list according to which the above tartīb al-nuzūl was made. It does not seem possible to determine whether the translator made this list as a result of her own research or the sources she consulted. She did not give a source as a reference. This passage appears to engage in discourse concerning the chronological order of revelation pertaining to specific verses within the Qur’ān and its connection with Caliph Uthman. It is posited that this order of the Qur’ānic sūrahs (chapters) bears a remarkable resemblance to the sequence attributed to Uthman. Notably, this sequence has been methodically presented in tabular format within the work authored by Cerrahoğlu (d. 2022).<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, it warrants mention that the specific assignment of a particular Qur’ānic manuscript to Uthman, aligned with the chronological order of revelation, is initially

<sup>17</sup> İsmail Cerrahoğlu, *Tefsir Usulü* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1971), 83-84.

documented by Abd al-Mutāal al-Saīdī (d.1971) in his book “al-Nazm al-Fannī fī al-Qur’ān.” Furthermore, it is suggested that Cerrahoğlu might have been influenced by the aforementioned list.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4. Translation of Verses Related to Women

Feminist translation strategies have been applied in all types of texts, including the sacred text i.e. the Bible and the Qur’ān.<sup>19</sup> In recent years, feminist writers and translators’ concerns with patriarchal language have drawn attention to sex discrimination in and through language, making language a key battleground for regaining gender equality. Their analysis has contributed to challenging the politics and effects of grammatical and linguistic conventions utilized in numerous text categories, including sacred and religious texts.<sup>20</sup> Through the deconstruction of patriarchal language, feminist translators have worked to restore gender equality. Consequently, they have employed feminist translation techniques as a means to navigate the difficulty of conveying patriarchal linguistic features. Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah does not identify herself as a “feminist”. But she declares that since the translations and almost all religious texts are written by men, women, and their rights are obscured.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it is understood from these statements of Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah that she is sensitive to issues and verses related to women and women’s rights. This attitude resembles the feminist paradigm and approach. Hence, in this article, the examples of the verses are chosen mostly controversial ones related to feminist translations. These verses mention the issue of testimony (eyewitness) of women (al-Baqarah, 2/282), women and men’s creation (i.e., being created from the same entity, al-Nisā’, 4/1), maybe the most controversial verse mostly known as wife beating al-Nisā’, 4/34, men’s right to polygamy (al-Nisā’, 4/3). How Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah translated these verses and which techniques she used is important to see her paradigm.

It is stated in al-Baqarah, verse 228:

وَالْمُطَلَّقاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَنَّ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَبِعَوْلَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

Abdullah’s translation:

*“Boşanmış kadınlar kendi kendilerine üç âdet süresi beklerler şayet Allah'a ve sonsuz ebedi hayata iman ediyorsa Allah'ın rahimlerinde yarattığını saklamaları onlara helal olmaz bu süreç içinde kocaları barışmayı isterse onları almak hakkında önceliğe sahiptirler. Meşru olmak şartıyla erkeklerin kadınlar üzerinde nasıl hakları varsa kadınların da erkekler üzerinde*

<sup>18</sup> Muhammed Şerif Kahraman, “Hz. Osman’a (35/656) Nüzûl Sırasına Göre Mushaf Nispet Edilmesi Üzerine Bir İnceleme”, *Siirt Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 4/1 (2017), 179-180.

<sup>19</sup> Najlaa R. Aldeeb, “Feminist Strategies in Qur’ān Translations: A Comparative Study of the Sublime Quran and Saheeh International”, *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation* 6/1 (January 2023), 10.

<sup>20</sup> Rim Hassen, “English Translation of the Quran by Women: The Challenges of ‘Gender Balance’ in and through Language”, *Monografías de Traducción e Interpretación* 3 (2011), 213.

<sup>21</sup> Cebeci, “Türkiye’de Kur’an Meali Hazırlayan İlk Kadın, Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah Anlatıyor” (Accessed March 23, 2023).

*benzer hakları vardır fakat erkeklerin o kadınlar (boşandıkları kadınlar) üzerinde öncelik hakkı vardır. Allah üstün ve yüce hüküm ve hikmet sahibidir.*"<sup>22</sup>

Regarding the part of the verse that says, "*wa lil-rijāli 'alayhinna darajatun*" various narrations have been mentioned regarding the in which aspects of degree. From the exegetical analyses, it becomes apparent that the concept of degree alluded to in the verse "*Men are one degree above women*" encompasses a multifaceted understanding. This notion of degree has been exegeted to encompass intellectual prowess, financial obligations such as blood money, entitlements to inheritance, roles involving leadership and adjudication, the right to divorce, distribution of war booty, and engagement in acts of jihad. Additionally, it has been correlated with the financial maintenance of the household, as well as the associated duties and responsibilities directed toward women. Furthermore, this superiority has been linked to considerations of creation, ethical conduct, compliance with divine commands, and infaq. Lastly, it has been associated with the resilience of the familial unit and the fulfilment of familial requisites. Also this part of the verse is associated with Sūrah al-Nisā', verse 34, "*al-rijālu qawwāmūna 'alā al-nisā' bimā faḍḍala Allāhu ba ḍahum 'alā ba ḍ wa bimā anfaqu min amwālihim.*"<sup>23</sup>

Ṭabarī (d.310/ 923) mentions five different narrations regarding the intended meaning of the superiority of men over women in this context. After presenting these various narrations, Ṭabarī selects the narration that aligns most closely with the context of the verse. He favours the view of Abd Allah ibn Abbas (d. 68/687-88), which suggests that the degree of superiority signifies men being lenient and forgiving in their exercise of certain rights over their wives. Abd Allah ibn Abbas suggests that the superiority of men mentioned here is related to a husband relinquishing some of his rights over his wife and the wife voluntarily giving up all her rights in favour of her husband. He is quoted as saying, "I do not wish to claim all my rights over my wife because Allah has said, 'Men are one degree above women'". It implies a willingness to forgo some of these rights. Ṭabarī emphasizes that while this part of the verse may take the form of khabar, it carries a moral and ethical message, urging men to exercise their perceived superiority with kindness and fairness.<sup>24</sup>

Upon a careful examination of the exegeses, it becomes apparent that the term "daraja" (degree) is consistently exegeted as "superiority". Within the scholarly discourse, various narrations have surfaced concerning the specific facets of this superiority. However, a notable

<sup>22</sup> Abdullah, *İndirilme Sırasına Göre Yüce Kur-an'ı Kerim ve Meali*, 380. The original language of the book is Turkish. Hence the translations of the verses have been represented in their original form rather than their translated versions. But the English translation of Abdullah's translation of the verse could be as: "*The divorced women shall wait period three-monthly courses. If they believe in Allah and in eternal life, it is not permissible for them to hide what Allah has created in their wombs, and if their husbands wish to reconcile with them during this period, they have priority to take them. Women have the same rights over men as men have over women, provided that it is legitimate, but men have priority over those women (the women they divorced). Allah is the Superior, the Exalted in judgement and wisdom.*"

<sup>23</sup> Abū Jāfar Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi al-bayān 'an ta'wīli āyi al-Qur'an* (Cairo: Dār al-Hijr, 2001), v. 4/121-122; Abū Abd al-Allāh Muḥammad b. Umar b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥusayn al-Taymī al-Rāzī, *Mafātih al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420), v. 6/441; Abū al-Barakāt Abd al-Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmud Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn al-Nasafī, *Madārik al-tanzīl wa ḥaqāiq al-ta'wīl*, ed. Yūsuf 'Alī Badīwī (Beirut: Dār al-Kalimi al-Ṭayyib, 1998), v. 1/190; Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl b. Umar al-Qurashī al-Baṣrī Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-aẓīm*, ed. Muḥammad Husayn Shams al-dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1998), v. 1/459; Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn 'Ashūr, *al-Tahrīr wa al-tanwīr* (Beirut: Muassatu al-Tārīkh, ts.), v. 2/401-402.

<sup>24</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi al-bayān*, v. 4/121-123.

point of this part arises in Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah's translation, where the term "öncelik" (priority) is employed instead of superiority. It is crucial to underscore that this deviation from the classical terminology is not substantiated with a corresponding scholarly citation or elucidation within the translation. Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah does not provide any explanatory footnotes or contextual background to elucidate the rationale behind this linguistic choice. This linguistic nuance holds significance in the interpretation and understanding of the verse. That part is translated without using any words to express a degree of men over women. In addition, the superiority is attributed to Allah and translated as it is.

In al-Baqarah, 2/282, it is discussed mostly in terms of women's testimony. In this verse, it is stated that:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَحْسَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمْلَئَ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رَجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشَّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكَّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَىٰ وَلَا يَأْبَ الشَّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا وَلَا تَسْأَمُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَارَ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِنْ تَفَلَّحُوا فَإِنَّهُ فُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمَكُمْ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

Abdullah's translation:

“Ey iman edenler! Birbirinizden belirli bir sürede borç aldığınızda onu yazın ve bunu aranızdan adil bir kâtip yazsın ve kâtip Allah'ın kendisine öğrettiği şekilde yazsın ve borçlu olan kimse de onu kayıt altına alsın ve Rabbi olan Allah'tan sakınsın da ondan (borçtan) hiçbir şeyi eksik etmesin. Eğer borç altına giren düşük akıllı zayıf (çocuk) ya da yazmaya güç getiremeyen biri ise velisi adalet ve hak üzerine yazdırsın. Erkeklerden de iki şahit getirin! Şayet iki erkek bulamazsanız o takdirde bir erkek iki kadın şahitler getirin. Bu kadınlar biri unutursa ya da söylemeye çekinir ise cesaret verip konuşsun diyedir. Şahitler davet edildiklerinde kaçınmasınlar. Az olsun çok olsun onu süresince yazmaktan çekinmeyin bu Allah katında en adil, şahitlik konusunda en sağlam şüphelenmemeniz için de en uygun olandır. Fakat aranızda kendisini döndürüp durduğunuz peşin olarak yaptığınız ticaret müstesna. Alım satım yaptığınızda da şahit tutun. Yazana da şahitlik edene de zarar verilmesin, eğer böyle davranırsanız kendinize zarar vermiş olursunuz. Allah'tan sakının Allah size öğretiyor ve Allah her şeyi hakkıyla bilendir.”<sup>25</sup>

It is seen that she translated the verb *ḍalla* in the verse by a mitigating rendition as “forgets” or “if she abstains from saying it”. The verb *ḍalla* means deviations from the right

<sup>25</sup> Abdullah, *İndirilme Sırasına Göre Yüce Kur-an'ı Kerim ve Meali*, 390. Translation of Abdullah could be translated into English as “ O you who believe, when you borrow from one another for a fixed term, write it down, and let a just scribe from among you write it down, and let the scribe write it down as Allah has thought him, and let him who is indebted record it, and let him beware of Allah, his Lord, and let him not omit anything from it. And if the debtor is a weak child of low intelligence or one who is unable to write, let his guardian write it down in justice and truth. And bring two witnesses from men! If you cannot find two men, then bring one male and two female witnesses. These women are to give encouragement if someone forgets or abstains from speaking. Witnesses should not avoid when they are invited. And do not hesitate to write it down, whether it be a little or a great deal, for it is the fairest in the sight of Allah, and the best for the testimony, so that you may not be suspicious. Except what you trade between you in cash, which you have been turning over and over. And when you buy and sell, take witnesses. Do not harm either the writer or the witness, for if you do so, you harm yourselves. Beware of Allah, Allah teaches you, and Allah is All-Knowing.”

way. Any deviation from the right path, whether intentional or unintentional, whether more or less, is called *ḍalāl*. This concept can also be used for a person who commits any error. In this verse, it means, that if one of the women falls into *ḍalāla*, that is, if she forgets.<sup>26</sup> In many tafsīrs (exegeses) this part of the verse is interpreted as *nisyān* (forgetting).<sup>27</sup> It is possible to say that there is nothing related to abstaining from speaking. This means that Abdullah adheres faithfully to the source text in her translation of the word *ḍalla* and also she adds “*söylemeye çekinir ise (if she abstains from saying it)*” to the translation of the verse without any reference.

al-Nisā', 4/1 is important in terms of creation. It refers to the shared genesis of the human creation.<sup>28</sup>

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ أَنْفُوا رَبُّكُمْ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَأَنْفُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

Abdullah's translation:

“Ey insanlar! Sizi tek bir nefis'ten kadından oluşturan ve ondan da eşini (erkeğini) oluşturan ve ikisinden de birçok erkekler ve kadınlar türetilen yayan Rabb'inizden sakının ve kendisiyle birbirinizden dilekler dilediğiniz Allah'tan ve merhamet adına saygısızlıktan da sakının. O Allah ki şüphesiz sizin üzerinizde sürekli bir gözetleyicidir.”<sup>29</sup>

The concept of *nafs* is generally exegeted as *Ādam*.<sup>30</sup> Rāzī (d. 606/1210) discusses that Muslims agree that by "the single soul/nafs" here, it refers to *Ādam*.<sup>31</sup> Rashīd Rıdā (d.1935) mentions Rāzī's narrations. According to this three different views regarding the intended meaning of "nafs" in this context. The first view suggests that Allah symbolically expressed this event. In other words, it is intended to convey that each of you was created from a single soul, and the same kind of soul, He created its mate, someone equal to it in human essence. The

<sup>26</sup> Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qur'ān*, ed. Safwān 'Adnān al-Dāwūdī (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2009), 510.

<sup>27</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan b. Bashīr al-Azdī al-Balkhī Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīru Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, ed. Abd Allah Mahmud Shāhḥāta (Beirut: Dār al- Iḥyā al-Turāth, 2002), v. 1/229; Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. Umar Muḥammad al-Khārizmī al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqāiq al-tanzīl wa 'uyūn al-ta'wīl wujūh al-ta'wīl* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Arabī, 1986), v. 1/326; Abū Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Umar b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥusayn al-Taymī al-Rāzī, *Mafātiḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-Arabī, 1420), v. 7/95; Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl b. Umar al-Qurashī al-Baṣrī Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿaẓīm*, ed. Muhammad Husayn Shams al-dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1998), v. 1/561.

<sup>28</sup> Hatice Arpağuş, “The Position of Woman in the Creation: A Qur'anic Perspective”, *Muslima Theology: The Voices of Muslim Women Theologians*, ed. Ednan Aslan etc. (Peter Lang, 2013), 117.

<sup>29</sup> Abdullah, *İndirilme Sırasına Göre Yüce Kur'an'ı Kerim ve Meali*, 435. Translation of Abdullah could be translated into English as “O mankind! Beware of your Lord, Who formed you from a single soul from a woman, and from her, He formed her mate (man), and from them both He created and propagated many men and women, and beware of Allah, with Whom you make supplications for one another, and beware of disrespect in the name of mercy. Surely Allah is a constant watcher over you.”

<sup>30</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan b. Bashīr al-Azdī al-Balkhī Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīru Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, ed. Abdullah Mahmud Şehhate (Beirut: Dār al- Iḥyā al-Turāth, 2002), v. 1/355; Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Maṣūd b. Muḥammad al-Farrā al-Shafī' al-Baghawī, *Mā'ālīm al-tanzīl fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, ed. Al-Mahdī Abd al-Razzāq (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-Arabī, 1420), v. 1/561; Abū Sā'id Naṣīr al-Dīn Abd-Allāh b. Umar b. Muḥammad al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-ta'wīl*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Marāshalī (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-Arabī, 1418), v. 2/58.

<sup>31</sup> al-Rāzī, *Mafātiḥ al-ghayb*, v. 9/477.

second view posits that this verse addresses the Quraysh of the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, who were descendants of Quşayy. In this context, "nafs" signifies Quşayy. The third view asserts that the intended "nafs" is Ādam.<sup>32</sup> Rāzī also mentions two different narrations regarding the other part of the verse. The first view, widely accepted by scholars, suggests that when Allah created Prophet Ādam, He put him to sleep for a while and then created Eve from one of his ribs. The second view, attributed to Abū Muslim al-İşfahānī, suggests that the verse implies that Allah also created Ādam's mate from the same kind of soul as him.<sup>33</sup>

The nafs is semantically feminine, but it involves masculinity and femininity in its usage. Lexically, it means “same of something” and “thing itself”. In religious terminology, it implies soul, spirit, and essence.<sup>34</sup> There is no statement in the verse as to what the nafs is.<sup>35</sup> In tafsīr literature which is analyzed in this article, there is no narration suggesting that the term “nafs” is intended to refer to a woman. On the contrary, Ibn Kathir mentions a narration from Ibn Abbas, which says that woman was created from man.<sup>36</sup> Abdullah has included this information in her translation, but she has not provided any source for it. Considering her traditional Islamic education, it seems highly unlikely that she would be unaware of such narrations in tafsīr literature. Therefore, it is possible to assert that translating “nafs” as “woman” is a deliberate choice contrary to the narratives found in exegesis, indicating a conscious preference. Abdullah has made an addition to the source text and translated it to show that the nafs indicates a woman.

Perhaps the most striking example in Abdullah’s translation is the translation of Sūrah al-Nisā’, verse 3, which refers to men’s right to polygamy.

وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا

Abdullah’s translation:

“Şayet yetimler (kız) hususunda haklarını gözetemeyeceğinizden endişe duyarsanız bir tek (kadınla) veya sahip olduğunuz (cariyeler) ile yetinin. Bu adalet üzere olmanıza daha uygun olur.”<sup>37</sup>

The underlined part of the verse in the Arabic text has not been translated. This part of the verse, which means “marry two or three or four of the women you like”, has not been translated. The omission of the part that is actually in the text seems to be problematic in terms of faithfulness to the original text in terms of translation. The translator’s fidelity to the source text appears compromised, as evident through her deliberate intervention. She did not include

<sup>32</sup> Muḥammad Rashid Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār* (al-Hay’at al-Miṣriyya al-Āmma li’l Kitāb, 1990), v. 4/266.

<sup>33</sup> al-Rāzī, *Mafātiḥ al-ghayb*, v. 9/477-478.

<sup>34</sup> Arpağuş, “The Position of Woman in the Creation: A Qur’anic Perspective”, 117.

<sup>35</sup> For a detailed discussion of how this issue is dealt with in the exegeses, see Arpağuş, “The Position of Woman in the Creation: A Qur’anic Perspective”, *Muslima Theology: The Voices of Muslim Women Theologians*, ed. Ednan Aslan etc. (Peter Lang, 2013).

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-āzīm*, v. 2/181.

<sup>37</sup> Abdullah, *İndirilme Sırasına Göre Yüce Kur-an’ı Kerim ve Meali*, 435. The translation of Abdullah could be translated into English as “And if you fear that you will not be able to do justice to orphans (girl), then be content with one (woman) or with you have (concubines). This is more in accordance with justice.”

this part about polygamy in the target text. One might assert that this particular portion of the verse does not align with her paradigm, thus she intervened in the source text.

Due to its implications for women and gender roles in Islam, Sūrah al-Nisā', verse 34, sometimes known as the wife-beating verse, is widely acknowledged as one of the most contentious and discussed verses in the Qur'an.<sup>38</sup>

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَالتِّي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرَبُوهُنَّ فَإِنِ اطَّعْتُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيًّا كَبِيرًا

Abdullah's translation:

*“Erkekler kadınların gözetleyicisi ve koruyucusudurlar. Zira (Allah) erkeklerle kadınları farklı özelliklerde yaratmıştır. Ve kendi (erkekler) mallarından harcama yapmaktadırlar. Saliha kadınlar hem (Allah'a) itaat edenler hem de Allah'ın kendilerini (iffetlerini) muhafaza etmesi gibi görünmeyi (iffetlerini) koruyanlardır. Sadakatsizliğinden endişe duyduğunuz kadınlara ikazda bulunun öğüt verin sonra yataklarında yalnız bırakın bu da yeterli olmazsa (belli bir süre) ayırın! Bundan sonra saygılı olurlarsa aşırıya kaçarak onlar aleyhine başka bir yol aramayın! Şüphesiz Allah yüce ve büyüktür.”*<sup>39</sup>

The passage has two main themes: Gender norms and the bestowed authority of men to exercise disciplinary measures over their wives. According to traditional scholars, the first part of the verse addresses the concept of male superiority over women in relation to the first theme. The word “qawwāmūn” is interpreted by them as a divine proclamation of men's superiority over women. Traditional exegetes contend that, concerning the second theme of the verse, women should be submissive to their husbands. They interpret the word *nushūz* as a wife's malice and a purposeful, persistent violation of her marital obligations, whereas the word *qānitāt* is considered as obedience to husbands. *Nushūz*, or a wife's disobedience, is also a punishable offence. In light of this context, classical scholars exegete the word *daraba* to connote physical chastisement, thereby asserting husbands' authorization to engage in disciplinary actions involving physical punishment towards their wives.<sup>40</sup>

Amina Wadud, a notable Islamic feminist scholar, conducts semantic analyses of these terms, presenting arguments in support of her interpretation. *Qawwāmuna alā* means “to take care of”. The Qur'an points out that men should be gentle and caring towards their women. *Nushūz* is used in other verses of the Qur'an both women and men. So for Wadud, this word

<sup>38</sup> Rim Hassen, “Feminist strategies in women's translations of the Qur'an”, *The Routledge Handbook of Translation, Feminism and Gender*, ed. L. von Flotow - H. Kamal, Routledge handbooks in translation and interpreting studies (Routledge, 2020), 503.

<sup>39</sup> Abdullah, *İndirilme Sırasına Göre Yüce Kur'an'ı Kerim ve Meali*, 440. Translation of Abdullah could be translated into English as “Men are the protectors of women. For (Allah) has created men and women with different characteristics. And they (men) spend out of their wealth. The righteous women are those who obey (Allah) and protect the unseen (their chastity) as Allah protects them (their chastity). If you are worried about women whose unfaithfulness you fear, warn them, admonish them, then leave them alone in their beds, and it that is not enough, separate them (for a certain period of time). If they are respectful after that, do not seek another way against them in excess! Verily, Allah is Great and Exalted.”

<sup>40</sup> Hassen, “Feminist strategies in women's translations of the Qur'an”, 503-504.

means “family discord”, something including both partners. And *daraba* does not point out physical punishment. Because in the Qur’ān the verb is used in the sense of “setting an example”(i.e. al-Nūr, 24/35). In this verse according to her, the meaning would be an invitation to take care of women, and offering them good models of behaviour.<sup>41</sup>

Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah opted for a softened translation approach when rendering the parts related to women. She translated men’s *qawwām* towards women as *being protectors*. Also, *faḍḍala alayh* could mean literally superiority in this verse.<sup>42</sup> It is translated as *Zira (Allah) erkeklerle kadınları farklı özelliklerde yaratmıştır (for (Allah) has created men and women with different characteristics)*. There is no indication related to superiority in Abdullah’s translation. Also, *qānitāt* is exegeted as obedience to husbands. But in Abdullah’s translation, it is rendered as obedience to Allah. The translation of *nushūz* as *unfaithfulness* is in harmony with the source text. The verb *daraba* in the rest of the verse in Abdullah’s book is translated as *to separate the beds for a certain period*. Abdullah’s translation of the verse predominantly reflects the influence of feminist paradigm. While Amina Wadud uses hermeneutics of equality, Abdullah catches attention towards different characteristics and refrains from translating *daraba*, which literally means “beating”. She doesn’t translate what the source text literally includes. She reinterprets the words, makes some additions to the source text and translates with this paradigm.

### 5. Feminist Translation Techniques in Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah

This part of the article examines the techniques employed by Abdullah, which were briefly discussed by given examples in the previous section. Abdullah’s emphasis on translation and her intervention in the source text align with the translation techniques used by other feminist translators. Indeed, it is discussed that feminist translators consider translation not as conveying the same meaning but as creating more space for creativity and intervention. They also redefined the terms "fidelity," "transparency," and "faithfulness to the source text" at the same time. Meanwhile they adopted a liberal approach. Their approach inherently poses a conspicuous challenge, entailing the manipulation, intervention and feminization of both the content and language of the source text.<sup>43</sup> While the feminist translator derives satisfaction from reinterpreting and rewriting the text shows signs of her manipulation of the text, at the same time, the womanhandling of the text enables the translator to take an active role in the construction of meaning.<sup>44</sup>

According to Sherry Simon<sup>45</sup> and Luise von Flotow<sup>46</sup>, feminist translation developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s in Quebec, where women’s experiences remained obscured,

<sup>41</sup> Massimo Campanini, *The Qur’an Modern Muslim Interpretations*, trans. Caroline Higgitt (Routledge, 2011), 119-120.

<sup>42</sup> al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, 639.

<sup>43</sup> Rim Hassen, “From a Slave to a Translator: Conflicts and Mediation in Fatma-Zāidas Translation of the Quran”, *Literary Translation and Cultural Mediators in “Peripheral” Cultures Customs Officers or Smugglers?*, ed. Diana Roig-Sanz - Reine Meylaerts (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 224-225.

<sup>44</sup> Hassen, “From a Slave to a Translator: Conflicts and Mediation in Fatma-Zāidas Translation of the Quran”, 225.

<sup>45</sup> Sherry Simon, “Gender in Translation : Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission”, (1996).

<sup>46</sup> Luise von Flotow, “Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories”, *TTR : Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction* 4/2 (1991), 69-84.



largely owing to the distinct emphasis on coercive patriarchal language and traditional translation methodologies. Feminist translators engaged in the redefinition of translation, conceptualizing it as “interpretation-production” rather than a mere “repetition”, Concurrently, they reexamined the core ideas of fidelity, transparency, and faithfulness to the source text.<sup>47</sup> This liberal approach, as advocated by feminist translators such as Barbara Godard, offers feminist translators the opportunity to challenge feminist translators to assert their own identities against the “real” and openly manipulate, intervene in, and feminize the content and language of the source text, at the expense of breaking down all the walls of “authorship”.<sup>48</sup> Godard states that the feminist translator shows signs of manipulating the text by recognising her own significant difference and her taste for endless reinterpretation and rewriting. Womanhandling the text in translation means changing the modest, self-effacing translator. The translator becomes an active participant in the construction of meaning.<sup>49</sup> Godard states that:

“Womanhandling the text in the translation would involve the replacement of the modest, self-effacing translator. Taking her place would be an active participant in the creation of meaning, who advances a conditional analysis. Hers is a continuing provisionality, aware of the process, giving self-reflexive attention to practices. The feminist translator immodestly flaunts her signature in italics, in footnotes-even in a preface.”<sup>50</sup>

Generally, feminist translation theories support female subjectivity and highlight female agency while articulating critiques of masculinist paradigms. The unique partnership between feminism and translation appears in their shared dedication to the critical examination and rejection of universal standards of truth and value, their shared opposition to traditional gender constructions and hierarchical gender roles, and their focus on remaking language and discourse as historically shaped by oppressive systems of (hetero)sexism, racism, and colonialism. Feminist discourse is seen as always already double and translative, in both its recuperative thrust to reclaim women's experiences that have been misrepresented or erased in the dominant discourse and its deconstructive thrust to expose patriarchal stereotypes and images of women's lives.<sup>51</sup>

The translation of religious texts is frequently justified on grounds of accuracy, equivalence, and integrity to the original text. For instance, Katherine Barnwell identifies three fundamental characteristics of the translation of religious texts: accuracy, clarity, and naturalness. She argues that a good translation should be:

1. “Accurate: The translator should reproduce the meaning of the original message as exactly as possible in the language she/he is translating.

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<sup>47</sup> Rosemary. Arrojo, “Fidelity and the Gendered Translation.”, *Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction : Études Sur Le Texte et Ses Transformations* (Canada) 07/02 (1994), 147-163.

<sup>48</sup> Hassen, “From a Slave to a Translator: Conflicts and Mediation in Fatma-Zāidas Translation of the Quran”, 225; Melissa Wallace, “Writing the Wrongs of Literature: The Figure of the Feminist and Post-Colonialist Translator”, *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 35/2 (2002), 69.

<sup>49</sup> Hassen, “From a Slave to a Translator: Conflicts and Mediation in Fatma-Zāidas Translation of the Quran”, 225.

<sup>50</sup> Barbara Godard and others., *Translation, Semiotics, and Feminism : Selected Writings of Barbara Godard* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group Abingdon, Oxon, 2022), 26.

<sup>51</sup> Godard and others., *Translation, Semiotics, and Feminism : Selected Writings of Barbara Godard*, 2.

2. Clear: The translation should be clear and understandable. The translator aims to convey the message in a way that people can easily understand and
3. Natural: A translation should not sound “foreign”, it should never feel like a translation but like someone speaking in a natural, everyday way.”<sup>52</sup>

Barnwel’s three characteristics seem to be closely related to each other. In order for the target text to be understood and valued by the intended audience, accuracy- defined here as the restatement of the exact meaning of the original- requires that it be plain and natural. Interestingly, Barnwell does not address the style or form of the original text in her definitions of accuracy, clarity and naturalness; this shows that in her understanding of translation, accurately conveying the meaning of the original is more important than reflecting the formal features of the source text. A similar idea was supported by Eugene Nida, one of the most influential theorists in the translation of religious texts who concentrated on the idea of "equivalence," who stated that translation should “provide in the target language the closest natural equivalent of the source language’s message, first in meaning and second in style.”<sup>53</sup>

However, Hussein Abdurrauf in his book *Qur’ān Translation: Discourse, Texture and Exegesis* (2001)<sup>54</sup> argued that “equivalence” is impossible in Qur’ānic translation. He states that “a translator who wants to achieve lexical and/or textual equivalence is chasing a mirage: total equivalence at any level of language is impossible, relative equivalence at any level is possible”<sup>55</sup> Considering the nature of the Qur’ānic text and the difficulty of separating content from form, Abdurrauf advises Qur’ānic translators to “define the nature of their final work before embarking on this delicate task”. Not according to the degree of equivalence, but according to their intended reader.<sup>56</sup>

This tendency is evident in Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah’s translation, particularly considering the religious nature of the text. Her adherence to these principles is observable through her facilitation of comprehension of the original message within the framework of clarity, accuracy and naturalness. She notably opts for a straightforward vernacular and employs an accessible language, thus exemplifying her commitment to maintaining the tenets of simplicity and understandability. However, the original message is shaped within her paradigm, so it should be questioned to what extent she adheres to the principle of accuracy. Particularly within the realm of feminist strategies, a distinct shift is discernible in her redefinition of translation as “interpretation-production” rather than mere “repetition (of the same)” and that she does not fully realise the concepts of fidelity, transparency and faithfulness to the source text. Especially in the verse 3 of *al-Nisā*, she interfered with and manipulated the content and language of the source text by literally not translating it as “*hoşunuza giden kadınlardan ikişer üçer dörder nikahlayın*”<sup>57</sup>. She deliberately neglected to translate this portion of the verse. The

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<sup>52</sup> Hassen, “From a Slave to a Translator: Conflicts and Mediation in Fatma-Zāidas Translation of the Quran”, 220; Katharine G. L. Barnwell, *Bible Translation : An Introductory Course in Translation Principles* (Dallas, Tex.: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1986), 23.

<sup>53</sup> Hassen, “From a Slave to a Translator: Conflicts and Mediation in Fatma-Zāidas Translation of the Quran”, 220.

<sup>54</sup> Hussein. Abdul-Raof, *Qur’an Translation : Discourse, Texture and Exegesis* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001).

<sup>55</sup> H. Abdul-Raof, *Qur’an Translation: Discourse, Texture and Exegesis* (Curzon, 2001), 7.

<sup>56</sup> Hassen, “From a Slave to a Translator: Conflicts and Mediation in Fatma-Zāidas Translation of the Quran”, 220-221.

<sup>57</sup> It could be translated into English as “marry two, three and four of the women you like”.

emphasis on women from the *nafs* in verse 1 of al-Nisā', the translation of the verb *daraba* as "to separate" in verse 34 of the same sūrah, and the translation of the verb *ḍalla* by adding "to abstain" in al-Baqarah, 2/282 could be seen as indicators of womanhandling in feminist translation techniques. Godard's statement for feminist translators' approach in terms of taking an active role in translation could be seen also in A. Zeynep Abdullah's Qur'ān translation.

### Conclusion

The main subject of this article is Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah's translation of the Qur'ān titled "İndirilme Sırasına Göre Yüce Kur-an'ı Kerim ve Meali". In the interviews with the translator, the translator claimed that she wrote a translation against the male-dominated view and the answer to the question of whether it reflects the feminist paradigm was sought throughout the study. In the research, it was determined that Abdullah reflected the feminist paradigm in her translation both by interfering with the source text by not translating the parts of the verse into Turkish and by reinterpreting the words in the source text while transferring them to the target text. Another question that was investigated in the research was how Abdullah determined tartīb al-nuzūl that she followed in her translation. However, when the translation is analysed, it could be concluded that a source was not used since no footnote or explanation was not given. However, this is not the case. Abdullah followed tartīb al-nuzūl of Caliph Uthman and did not mention it anywhere. Also, it is important to point out that it is not right for an academic attitude to speak at random about the Qur'ān and the History of the Qur'ān, to make claims without reference to the sources, interfere with the text. It is easily seen that in this translation, the original message of the Qur'ān shaped within Abdullah's paradigm and Godard's statement for feminist translators' approach in terms of taking an active role in translation could also be seen in A. Zeynep Abdullah's Qur'ān translation. It is possible to say that Ayşa Zeynep Abdullah manipulates the meaning of the verses to reflect the feminist paradigm even if she asserts that it is the original form of the Qur'ān and the translation of the Qur'ān in which women's rights are covered up by men.

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Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur / It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.

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