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# *Adab Al-Rafidayn Journal*

**A refereed journal concerned with the publishing of scientific researches  
in the field of arts and humanities both in Arabic and English**

Vol. Eighty- Eight / year Fifty- Second / Sha'ban - 1443 AH / March 2022 AD

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## *Problems of Translating I'na and its Sisters in the Glorious Quran into English*

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**Abdul Rahman Ahmed Abdul Rahman \***

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### **Abstract**

The nature, functions and meanings of verb-like particles are complicated in Arabic and since Arabic is flexible language, this flexibility enables it to have particles with more than one meaning. This may pose problems for translators who are not familiar with nature and function of I'na and its sisters especially that these particles are extensively used in Arabic Quranic language.

Inaccurate English renderings of some verb-like particles in the Glorious Quran result from inattention to the nature and multiple functions of these particles. Translator's unawareness of the explanation of the authentic Quranic exegetes who illustrate the intended meanings of the verse involving verb-like particles would usually give rise to inaccurate renderings.

**Key words:** Problems, Translating, Causality, Particles.

### **Introduction**

Arabic is a unique language in terms of its grammatical and idiomatic structure, and in terms of using of ways that English lacks due to the wide gap between the two languages.

When the translator understands well the intended meaning of these particles and knows well how to communicate and convey this meaning successfully in different contexts, he copes many translational problems properly. Translating the Glorious Quran is considered a very intricate matter firstly for the holiness of this Book and secondly the prodigious nature of its texts. Translators encounter a serious position for lacking such prodigious style in their renderings. The translator of the Glorious Quran is

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recommended to have specific qualifications which enable him to perform such hard task such as deep awareness in Arabic and its various sciences like syntax, rhetoric, morphology...etc., and awareness of Islamic and Quranic sciences such as Al-Qaida (العقيدة) and Ash-Shariah (الشريعة). Also he has to be very well in the language of the translation such as English,

To achieve the aims of this study, (8) different Quranic verses are chosen to point out its translational problems that would usually give rise to inaccurate renderings according to multiple meanings of I'na and its sisters.

The scope of this study is limited to discuss a number of Quranic verses containing verb-like particles and their translations into English by Khan and Al-Hilali (1996), J. M .Rodwell (1994), Rashad (1978), Ali, A. Y. (1989), and Sarwar (1981).

The above translators will be given the following shortened names respectively: Kha, Rod, Rash, Ali and Sar.

The multiple functions and rare meanings and uses of I'na and its sisters pose the important problem in translating and conveying its meaning into English.

### 1. I'na (إِنَّ)

Causality and as an answer particle which means yes (نعم) are among these rare meanings and functions of I'na (إِنَّ) (Al-Asmar, 2005: 83; Yaqub, 1995: 139).

#### A. I'na (إِنَّ) with the meaning of causality (التعليل)

##### Text 1

﴿وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ﴾ (التوبة: ١٠٣)

##### **Text Translation**

1-(Kha): and invoke Allah for them. Verily your invocations are a source of security for them.

2-(Rod): and pray for them; for thy prayers shall assure their minds.

3-(Rash): and encourage them, for your encouragement reassures them.

4-(Ali): and pray on their behalf. Verily thy prayers are a source of security for them.

5-(Sar): and pray for them, your prayers give them comfort.

##### **Text Interpretation**

One condition for repentance is to make up for what can be remedied from what has been missed. As the default to conquest includes not participating in Al-Jihad and not spending money, this verse came as a guide to remedy what was missed from the benefit of Muslims with money. So those who confessed their sins said to the Prophet "this is our money charity, spread them, purify us and ask for forgiveness (Ibn Ashoor, 1997: 22-23).

### **Discussion**

The verse (إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ) (**your prayers give them comfort**) is considered as causality for the command to pray for them because your prayers give them comfort.

It is correct to put Faa of causality (فاء السببية) instead of (إِنَّ) to indicate causality (Az-Zarkashi, 2006: 539-540). Although, this verse is used for causality, it is also used for confirmation because causality is a kind of confirmation (Al-Hilali, 1986: 45; As-Samirraei, 1987: 315). Nevertheless, it is suggested for the translator to convey the basic function of (إِنَّ) here which is causality.

Causality in English is expressed by certain conjunctions which are words or phrases that are used to introduce a reason for a specific action as (because of, due to, for... etc.) (Haddad, 2005:135).

Inna (إِنَّ) in the previous translations is rendered into (verily and for). The translations of (Kha) and (Ali) convey confirmation not causality even though causality must be asserted by confirmation. (Sar) does not convey causality nor confirmation. The intended meaning has been lost and the translation lacked accuracy criterion. The translations of (Rod and Rash) are good compared to the rest translations since they convey causality but still need confirmation.

**The suggested translation is:**

**(for indeed your prayers give them comfort). Thus, causality is asserted by confirmation.**

**B. Inna (إِنَّ) as an answer particle which means Yes**

(حرف جواب بمعنى "نعم")

This meaning is used in the Glorious Quran just one time in the verse (63) Taha.

### Text 2

﴿ قَالُوا إِن هَذَا لَسِحْرَانِ يُرِيدَانِ أَنْ يُخْرِجَاكَ مِنْ أَرْضِكَ بِسِحْرِهِمَا ﴾ (طه: ٦٣)

### *Text Translation*

- 1-(Kha): They said: "Verily, these are two magicians. Their object is to drive you out of your land with magic.
- 2-(Rod): They said, These two are surely sorcerers: fain would they drive you from your land by their sorceries.
- 3-(Rash): They said: "These two are no more than magicians who wish to take out of your land with their magic.
- 4-(Ali): They said "These two are certainly (expert) magicians: their object is to drive you out from your land with their magic.
- 5-(Sar): and said " These two people are magicians. They want to expel you from your land through their magic

### *Text Interpretation*

Allah Almighty says in this verse that the magicians among themselves said: That man (Moses) and his brother (Haroun) were magicians and experts in magic. They want to defeat you (Pharaoh) and your people. They want the common people to follow them and fight Pharaoh and his soldiers (Ibn Katheer, 1966: 152-153).

### *Discussion*

The reciters of the Glorious Quran differ in reciting this verse. Ibn Kather alone recited (إِنْ هَذَا) with light Noon of (إِنْ) and geminated Noon of (هَذَا). Hafs recited in the same way but with light Noon of (هَذَا). Abu-Amru bin Al-Alaa recited (إِنَّ هَذَيْنِ) with geminated Noon of (إِنْ) and Al-Yaa in (هَذَيْنِ). Nafi Al-Madani, Ash-Shami Shuba from Asim, Hamza Al- Zayat, Al-Kessai, Abu Jafar Al-Madani, Yaqub Al-Hadrami and Khalaf Al- Asher recited (إِنَّ) (هَذَا) with geminated Noon of (إِنْ) and Al-Alif of (هَذَا) (Al-Kadi, 1999: 262).

The translation of the clause (إِنْ هَذَا لَسَاجِرَانِ) is numerous according to the aspect of parsing (الْوَجْهَ الإِغْرَابِي) and as the following table:

Aspects	Recitation of the verse	Grammatical Analysis	Translation
1	إِنَّ هَذَانِ لساحران إِنَّ هَذَانِ لساحران	(إِنَّ) is the confirmative light (Noon) from the heavy one, but it is a neglected and has no action	Verily, These two are magicians
2	إِنَّ هَذَانِ لساحران	(إِنَّ) is a negative particle which means (ما) (not), and Al-lam which is associated with (ساحران) means (إِلَّا) (than)	These two are no more than two sorcerers
3	إِنَّ هَذَانِ لساحران	(إِنَّ) is not a verb-like particle, it is an answer particle which means (yes) (حرف جواب بمعنى نعم)	Yes, These two are magicians
4	إِنَّ هَذَانِ لساحران	Is a verb-like particle and (إِنَّ) is its noun. This (هَذَانِ) demonstrative noun comes with Al-Alif despite it is in the place of open ending (محل نصب) This is according to the language of some Arabian tribes like Kenana, Bani Hajeem...etc.	Verily, These are two magicians

(Ibn Katheer, 2013:152-153; Al-Alusi, 1999:709; Ibn Ashoor 1997: 251; Az-Zamakhshari, 2005:660; Al-Kadi 1999:262; Ash-Sharawi, 1999: 9307).

It is worth to note that most copies of the Glorious Quran have been written according to the narration of Hafs from Asim. Consequently, the verse, in question, is written as (إِنَّ هَذَانِ لساحران) with light (Noon) of (إِنَّ) and associating Al-Alif (الألف) to (هَذَانِ) with light (Noon).

By reviewing the translations of this verse, it is noticed that (Kha, Rod and Ali) render (إِنَّ) into (verily, surely and certainly) considering (إِنَّ) as a confirmative particle. (Sar) on the other hand, does not render (إِنَّ) into any of its aspects; he translates the verse as if (إِنَّ) is not exist i.e. neglecting this particle and its translation. Hence, his translation is not accurate. (Rash) renders (إِنَّ) into (no more than), considering (إِنَّ) as a negative particle.

Through checking all the above translations of this verse, one cannot find a single translation that conveys the meaning of (إِنَّ) as an answer particle to mean (Yes). It is worth mentioning here that all reliable reciters recited the demonstrative noun (هَذَانِ) with Al-Alif (الألف) except Abu-Amru and Al-Hasan Al-Basri; and the most frequent recitings read geminated (إِنَّ) (إِنَّ الْمُشَدَّدةَ النُّونِ) except Ibn-Katheer and Hafs from Asim.

Therefore, the sentence (إِنَّ هَذَانِ) is a comprehensive substitution (بَدَل) for the sentence (وَأَسْرُوا النُّجُوزِ), since keeping the discourse secret comprises many possible sayings, but this saying, namely, (إِنَّ هَذَانِ لَسَاحِرَانِ), is the most decisive saying amongst them and it is the reliable and uttermost result from their secret discourse. Conflict of their opinions resulted in an agreed upon conclusion. Then they said: "Yes, these are two magicians" after making sure that Moses and Haroun are magicians (Ibn Ashoor, 1997: 251; At-Taymi, 1962: 21).

All mentioned translations do not convey the intended meaning since this meaning is rare in English. *So, the suggested translation is:*

*(Yes, these two are sorcerers).*

2. A'na (أَنْ)

A. A'na (أَنْ) with the meaning of confirmation and certainty when combining with the verb reckon (يُظَنُّ)

Text 3

﴿ وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ ﴾ (القيامة: ٢٨)

**Text Translation**

1-(Kha): And he will conclude that it was (the time) of departing (death).

2-(Rod): And the man feeleth that the time of his departure is come.

3-(Rash): He knows it is the end.

4-(Ali): And he will conclude that it was (the Time) of Parting.

5-(Sar): then he will realize that it is time to leave this world.

**Text Interpretation**

The disbeliever person is certain now it is the time to leave this world; parting family, money, children and life. It is the last day in

this world. He is certain of what has not happened yet (At-Tabari, 1970: 231).

### **Discussion**

Anna (أَنَّ) in this verse comes after the verb (يَظُنُّ) (reckon), and it is known that if the verb-like particle (أَنَّ) combines with the verb (يَظُنُّ) in The Glorious Quran, it will indicate certainty (As-Samirraei, 1987: 323).

After reviewing the translations it is clear that (ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ) is rendered into (conclude that, feeleth, knows, will conclude and realize that) in the translations of (Kha, Rod, Rash, Ali and Sar) respectively. The verb (conclude) means (يُفَرِّرُ، يَسْتَنْتِجُ، يُنْهِي)، the verb (know) means (يُعَلِّمُ، يُمَيِّزُ)، the verb (realize) means (يُدْرِكُ، يَفْهَمُ)، and finally the verb (feeleth) is an archaic third person singular indicative form of (feel) which means (يُشْعُرُ) (Al-Baalabakki, 2009: 255,963,637). All these verbs do not convey the intended *certainty* constituted from the combination of (ظَنَّ) and (أَنَّ). This leads to inaccurate translations. **Therefore, the suggested translation is:**

**(And he is certain that it is the time of parting this world).**

### **B. Anna (أَنَّ) with the meaning of Laa'lla (العل)**

This meaning comes in the Glorious Quran just one time in the following verse:

#### **Text 4**

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ (الأنعام: ١٠٩)

#### **Text Translation**

1-(Kha): Say: signs are but with Allah and what will make you (Muslims) perceive that (even) if it came, they would not believe?

2-(Rod): Say: Signs are in the power of God alone; and He teacheth you not thereby, only because when they were wrought, ye did not believe.

3-(Rash): Say, "Miracles come only from God" For all you know, if a miracle did come to them, they would continue to disbelieve.

4-(Ali): Say, certainly, (all) signs are in the power of Allah, but what will make you (Muslims) realize that (even) if signs came, they will not believe.

5-(Sar): (Muhammad), tell them, "Only with God are all the miracles. "Even if a miracle was to take place, they still would not believe.

### ***Text Interpretation***

The infidels of Quraish asked a sign other than the Glorious Quran so that they could believe. They said: "O Muhammad make for us As-Safa mountain gold and they swear their strongest oaths if he did, all of them would believe. Allah says these signs are from Allah, and He is the One Who is able to do that. Their aim is merely obstinacy and ridicule, and they will not believe in any sign (Ar-Razi, 2009: 13/14: 117-118).

### ***Discussion***

Nafi Al-Madani, Hafis from Asim, Hamza and Al-Kessaei recited (A'na) (أَنَّ) with opened Hamza (همزة) in this verse (Ar-Rummani, 1981:124). This meaning was proved by Al-Khaleel bin Ahmad and Akhflash by stating that (A'na) (أَنَّ) is used in Arabic to indicate (لعلّ) (Seebaweih, 1988: 123; Az-Zajjaji, 1985: 148).

In the above translations we didn't find any indication of this meaning, although it has been referred to in the books of interpretation of the Quran (Ibn Al-jawzi, 1964: 104-105; As-Suyuti, 1990: 72-73). A'na (أَنَّ) in this verse is rendered into (that and only because) by (Kha, Rod, and Ali). These translations are not accurate and do not convey the meaning of (لعلّ) in this verse. (Rash and Sar) do not give any equivalent to A'na (أَنَّ) in this verse. ***The suggested translation of this verse could be:***

***(what should make you know that (perhaps), if it comes, they will not believe).***

### ***3. Laa'lla (لعلّ)***

#### ***A. Laa'lla as a particle of causality (التعليل)***

#### ***Text 5***

﴿ فَأَمَّا نَشَفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْحَرْبِ فَشَرِدَ بِهِمْ مَنْ خَلْفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَدْعُونَ ﴾ (الأنفال: ٥٧)

#### ***Text Translation***

1-(Kha): So, if you gain the mastery over them in war, punish them severely in order to disperse those who are behind them, so that they may learn lesson.

2-(Rod): If thou take them in war, then, by the example of their fate, scatter those who shall follow them-that they may be warned.

3-(Rash): Therefore, if you encounter them in war you shall set them up as a deterrent example for those who come after them, that they may take heed.

4-(Ali): If ye gain mastery over them in war, disperse, with them, those who follow them that they may remember.

5-(Sar): When you capture the (unbelievers) during a fight, teach them a lesson so that they thereafter will always be aware of the threat of your power.

### ***Text Interpretation***

Allah Almighty said to His prophet, peace be upon him, if you overtake in the war those who have broken your covenant, do against the contradicters an act that will be scaring for those behind them who were in a covenant between them and you. So, they dare not to break that covenant as those whom Allah Almighty had described in this verse (Ibn Ashoor, 1997: 46-47).

### ***Discussion***

(لَعَلَّ) in this position comes with the meaning of causality (التعليل) to indicate (كَي) (in order to). And as (لَعَلَّ) is a particle that indicates (hope) (الترجي), it cannot possibly bear the meaning of the words of Allah, since this meaning, namely, (hope) doesn't involve confirmation of occurrence of what is request by the speakers. Also, (لَعَلَّ) has on its own the meaning of uncertainty (الشك) and that doesn't agree with Allah's Knowledge of everything.

(لَعَلَّ) comes with the meaning of (causality) closer than to the (hope) of the addresses, because a person has nothing but to fear, believe or thank and other meanings contained in the predicate of (لَعَلَّ) (Gaddawi, 2003: 106), also, (may) is used to refer to an action or a thing that is possible in the future (Murphy, 1998: 58-60).

We have noticed that (لعل) is rendered into (may) by all translators except (Sar) who renders it into (so that) which conveys causality. ***The suggested translation is:***

***(If you overtake them in war, scatter by them those who are behind them in order that they be warned).***

***B. Laa'lla (لعل) as a particle indicating similitude (التشبيه)***

This meaning is mentioned just once in the Glorious Quran in the verse (129) Ash-Shuara (الشعراء).

### **Text 6**

﴿وَتَحْذِرُونَ مَصَابِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُونَ﴾ (الشعراء: ١٢٩)

***Text Translation***

- 1-(Kha): And do you get for yourselves places as if you will live therein forever.
- 2-(Rod): And raise ye structures to be your lasting abodes.
- 3-(Rash): "You set up buildings as if you last forever.
- 4-(Ali): "And do ye get for yourselves fine buildings in the hope of living therein forever.
- 5-(Sar): and raise strong mansions as if you were to live forever?

***Text Interpretation***

The people of Aad lived in Al-Ahkaf nearby Hadramout. They were people of the very strength of bodies, the extreme brutality, the excessive height and the abundant substances and crops. They worshipped other than Allah. Hud, peace be upon him, called them to worship Allah alone, but they got for themselves buildings which were towers or fortresses. Built up strong and high. Hud reprobated them for doing that since it was just waste of time and something with no benefit in this world or the next (Ibn Katheer, 2013: 330).

***Discussion***

One can notice that the translations of (Kha, Rash and Sar) convey the meaning of similitude of the particle in this verse by using (as if). The translation of (Sar) includes an interrogative analogy as a rebuke and mockery for their belief that these fortresses or towers will make them immortal and never die (Al-Alusi, 1999: 147-148). However, accuracy is achieved in the translations of (Kha, Rash and Sar).

Rod's translation doesn't give any equivalent for (لعلّ). His translation also includes an interrogative analogy, but as an expository sentence for the case mentioned in this verse. Also (Ali) doesn't give a proper equivalent to the meaning of (لعلّ) in this verse. So, accuracy is not achieved in their translations. Therefore, all translations are good except (Rod and Alis').

***C. Laa'lla (لعلّ) indicates the meaning of Layta (ليتّ)***

***Text 7***

﴿ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَنْهَمْنُنُ ابْنِ لِي صَرِّحًا لَعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ ﴾ (غافر: ٣٦)

***Text Translation***

- 1-(Kha): And Fir'aun (pharaoh) said: "O Haman! Build me a tower that I may arrive at the ways.

2-(Rod): And pharaoh said, "O Haman, Build for me a tower, that I may reach the avenues.

3-(Rash): Pharaoh said "O Haamaan, build for me a high tower, that I may reach out and discover.

4-(Ali): pharaoh said "O haman! Build me a lofty palace, that I may attain the ways and means.

5-(Sar): Pharaoh said, "Haman, build a tower of a baked bricks for me so that I shall have access.

### ***Text Interpretation***

Pharaoh in the arrogance of his materialism believes that the kingdom of Heavens is as that on earth. He doesn't believe in anything related to incorporeal; furthermore he declares frankly that Moses is a liar. Hence, he orders his minister to build a tall tower in order to reach the ways of heavens and look at the God of Moses (Ibn Katheer, 2013: 81).

### ***Discussion***

As-Suyuti( 1993: 338)states that (لَعَلَّ) in this verse has the same meaning of (لَيْتَ) and gives it the very rules. Some grammarians state that (لَعَلَّ) in this verse indicates (لَيْتَ) for the remoteness and impossibility of the desired thing (Al-Qazwini: 108).

Through reviewing the translations of this verse, most of them render (لَعَلَّ) into (may) except (Sar) who renders (لَعَلَّ) into (so that) making it a causality particle to show the reason of building a tall tower. (May) usually is used to express something which is possible to happen or not. So, (wishing) is more accurate than (may) because what Pharaoh wanted is impossible to gain or achieve. Thus, it seems that all previous translations do not convey the intended meaning. ***Therefore, the suggested translation is:***

***(Pharaoh said: "Haman, build me a tower; wishing to reach the ways of heavens").***

### ***4. Laki'nna (لَكِنَّ)***

***Laki'nna (لَكِنَّ) coming after a negation to indicate causality (التعليل)***

### **Text 8**

﴿وَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَرَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ﴾ (الحج: ٢)

### ***Text Translation***

1-(Kha): and you shall see mankind as in a drunken state, yet they will not be drunken, but severe will be the Torment of Allah.

2-(Rod): and thou shalt see men drunken, Yet are they not drunken, but it is the mighty chastisement of God.

3-(Rash): You will see the people staggering, as if they are intoxicated, even though they are not intoxicated. This is because GOD's retribution is so awesome.

4-(Ali): thou shalt see mankind as in a drunken riot, yet not drunk: but dreadful will be the Wrath of Allah.

5-(Sar): You will see the people behaving as though they were drunk, while, in fact, they are not drunk. They only will look such because of the severity of God's torment.

### ***Text Interpretation***

There is a splendid depiction of the dismay of the Day of Resurrection and the condition of the people on that day. People keep their self-possession apart from under intoxication without intoxication. Here, there is an explanation for affirming a metaphoric drunk as if it was said: "if they were not drunk from alcohol, what was the strange drunk and what caused it?". Then, it is said "it is caused by the severity of the torment of Allah" (Az-Zamakhshari, 2005: 861).

The retraction in this verse came after a negative statement to show the cause of that condition which afflicts people on the Day of Resurrection. The intensity of their fear of Allah's chastisement is the cause for losing their minds and robbing their will (Az-Zajjaji, 1988: 2/41).

(لكن) in this verse is rendered into (but) by (Kha, Rod and Ali). They convey the surface meaning of (لكن), namely, a retraction without explaining the cause of such a case. Whereas (Rash and Sar) convey the explanation about the reason of their condition to show why people seem drunken without grog. Therefore, their translations are considered the most proper ones.

### ***Conclusions***

In the light of our investigation of the translation of verb-like particles in the Glorious Quran, some significant conclusions have been arrived at:-

1- Inna (إِنَّ) and its sisters have played multiple semantic and stylistic roles in Arabic Quranic language.

2-Some of verb-like particles have rare meanings and functions that are misunderstood by translators and consequently, mistranslated into English.

3-Intention to the nature and multiple functions of some verb-like particles in the Glorious Quran are behind inaccurate English renderings.

4-Having one function only, some verb-like particles have stable English translation, while others could not have fixed translation because of their multiple functions in Arabic.

5-Inaccurate renderings also come as a result of unawareness of the explanations of the authentic Quranic exegetes who clarify the intended meaning of the verses containing verb-like particles.

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مشكلات ترجمة إن وأخواتها في القرآن الكريم الى اللغة الانكليزية

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المستخلص

إن طبيعة وظائف الأحرف المشبهة بالفعل ومعانيها مركبة في اللغة العربية فهي لغة مرنة، وهذه المرونة مكّنت هذه الأحرف من أن تكتسب أكثر من معنى واحد. وهذا بلا شك يُعدُّ مشكلةً للمترجمين الذين ليسوا على دراية بطبيعة إن وأخواتها ووظائفها ولاسيما أنها وردت بشكل كبير في لغة القرآن الكريم. وقد تنتج الترجمات غير الدقيقة لبعض الأحرف المشبهة بالفعل عن عدم الانتباه إلى طبيعة هذه الأحرف ووظائفها المتعددة، وكذلك يرجع السبب إلى عدم وعي المترجم بتفسيرات مفسري القرآن الكريم المعتمدين من الذين وضحو المعاني المقصودة للآيات التي تتضمن هذه الأحرف من شأنه عادة أن يؤدي إلى ترجمات غير دقيقة لها. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** مشكلات، ترجمة، تعليل، حروف.

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