Integrative Complexity: An innovative technique for assessing the quality of English translations of the Qur’an

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ABSTRACT
This article introduces Integrative Complexity (IC), a measure of cognitive structure drawn from the discipline of social psychology, and reports on the application of this technique to the problem of Qur’anic translation quality assessment (TQA). Specifically, the IC scoring method was used to score selected Qur’anic verses relating to either one of two broad themes—“struggle” or “virtue”—from three different English translations of this text. These scores were then compared to determine whether the different translations captured the meaning of the Qur’an in terms of its cognitive complexity in the same way. The results of the exercise showed no statistically significant difference in IC scores among the three translations. In other words, they were essentially equivalent in terms of cognitive complexity. This exercise demonstrates the usefulness of the IC approach as complementary to traditional TQA methods in assessing the quality of English translations of the Qur’an.

KEYWORDS: equivalence, Integrative Complexity, Qur’an, translation quality assessment.

1 This article is an abridged version of a 2012 Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) report by the same authors entitled Measuring the “Translation Effect”: An Innovative Application of Integrative Complexity (TM 2012-114). We would like to thank Ryan W. Cross, Carson K. Logan, Brad H. Morrison, and Lisa Shiozaki for their invaluable analytical support in this study.