

ANALYZING SYNTACTICAL TREE STRUCTURE TRANSLATION OF SURAH AL-FATIHA: THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

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Abstract

This research examines the English translation of Surah Al Fatiha, which is the first chapter of the Holy Qur'an, in terms of its syntactic structure. Employing Bornstein's phrase structure model, the research examines each verse using tree diagrams to determine various types of sentences, such as noun phrases, nominal clauses, prepositional phrases, and imperative structures. The research employs Eugene Nida's Dynamic Equivalence Theory to identify how meaning is transferred or changed while translating from Arabic to English. Because Surah Al Fatiha is pivotal to Islamic prayer and theology, knowledge of its linguistic makeup may shed light on its message for English readers. The research aims to bridge the gap between Arabic grammar and English translation by focusing on sentence structure and grammatical correctness. It also underscores the need to retain both the spiritual significance and the structural components of the initial text. It adds to the studies of syntax, translation studies, and Quranic linguistics and offers a valuable model for future linguistic examination of religious texts.

Keywords: Surah Al Fatiha, translation studies, sentence structure, syntax, Quranic linguistics, dynamic equivalence

1. Introduction

A special, loving revelation from Allah is what the Quran is likened to. This proves that Allah loved us even before we knew Him or sensed His love. Kindness and love abound in this message, which remains unchanged, regardless of our actions. The Quran is not a wall that separates us from God, but rather a window that allows us to see His love. It teaches us that God's love is evident in everything in nature and that we would not be able to survive without it.

The greatness of the Quran lies in the fact that it is a book written by Allah, and we, the readers, attempt to comprehend this love. God has delivered revelations throughout history to direct us along a holy and tranquil path. Because the Quran is more than just a set of guidelines, it is referred to as "The Criterion" (Helwa, 2020). It provides us with insight to assist us in making decisions between the routes that lead to God's love and those that do not. All souls are united in the Quran, which also serves as a reminder of God's existence. The verb "to recite, read, gather, and join" is the source of the word "Quran". The Quran emphasizes "tawhid," or uniting all things with God. We can overcome our worldly tendencies by acknowledging them and reflecting on the areas where we struggle to connect with God. Lately, more linguists have become interested in studying the Holy Quran. This is because the Quran is seen as a special and intriguing text. It is considered a literary work, and its extraordinary beauty shows that it is a one-of-a-kind masterpiece. It is pretty reasonable to look at the Quran's content and structure from either a big-picture perspective (macro) or a closer, detailed perspective (micro) in the field of linguistics (Helwa, 2020).

Syntax is a subfield of language studies that explores the relationship between the form and meaning of human language. This aids in language comprehension (Adger, 2015). Understanding the rules that specify how words should be arranged in phrases helps us to avoid grammatical mistakes that could cause miscommunication. Similarly, Aarts (2001) has outlined syntactic ideas to make the analysis easier, such as word order, the responsibilities of different sections in a phrase, and sentence structure. The first chapter of the Quran is called Al-Fatiha,

and it has seven verses. Al-Uthaymeen (1434 H, p. 14) says its main job is to cover everything about worshipping Almighty Allah. The first three verses are about having faith in the All-Powerful Allah, the next two are about how to worship Him, and the last two are about how Muslims should do religious things (Nefeily, 2005, pp. 4-5). Al-Uthaymeen (1434 H, p. 14) thinks this chapter includes all the rules, blessings, and punishments for everyone who comes from Adam.

There is a saying from Abu Huraira that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Surah Al-Fatiha is like the mother of the Book." In Arabic, they call it "Ummul Kitab," where "Umm" means mother and "Kitab" means book. This means Surah Fatiha is like the foundation of the Quran. If you understand and accept its message, it is easier to understand the rest of the Quran because all the important ideas and themes are in Surah Al-Fatiha. Surah Al-Fatiha has a different tone and style compared to the other chapters in the Quran. In the other Surahs, Allah gives instructions and warnings to His servants. In Surah Al-Fatiha, Allah guides His followers on how to pray and communicate directly with Him, without any intermediaries. It is like a direct conversation between Allah and His servants.

In this study, the researcher used a method called tree diagrams to break down sentences into their parts. This helps us understand the structure of sentences better. Just like how sentences are the building blocks of language, tree diagrams show us the different pieces, like words and phrases, within a sentence. The researcher focused on the first chapter of the Quran, Al-Fatiha, which is crucial in Islamic prayer. It is often called "The Opener" because it is the first chapter recited in every prayer, and its verses are straightforward. While there are many English translations of the Quran, the researcher chose Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy's version because it is easier to understand. The research involved examining the structure of sentences in the English translation of Al-Fatiha using tree diagrams. This is important because some translations can be challenging to read. By using tree diagrams, the researcher gets a better grasp of how the sentences are structured in this chapter. The aim is to simplify the understanding of the arrangement and connections among the verses in Al-Fatiha for everyone. The researcher is doing all of this under the title " *Analyzing Syntactical Tree Structure Translation of Surah Al-Fatiha: The First Chapter of the Holy Qur'an.* "

Statement of the Problem

Surah Al-Fatiha is also one of the most significant chapters in the Qur'an, theologically as well as linguistically. Whereas many studies have concentrated on its interpretation and meaning, few have examined the way its sentence structure is treated in English translations. This matters since the form and grammar of a sentence are pivotal in how meaning is conveyed. In translation, they are also occasionally altered or simplified, which may influence the way readers interpret the original meaning. According to Rahim and Jameel (2017), various translations of Surah Al-Fatiha tend to reveal significant differences in sentence structure and grammar. In the same vein, Zadeh et al (2015) describe that even faithful translations may not reflect the full depth and flair of the original Arabic. The current research seeks to bridge this gap by examining the sentence structure of the English translation of Surah Al-Fatiha through the use of tree diagrams. It is concerned with the impact of grammar and structure on meaning in religious texts.

Objectives

- i. To analyze the sentence structure in the English translation of Surah Al-Fatiha.
- ii. To investigate different types of sentences found in the English translation of Surah Al-Fatiha

Research Questions

1. How does the process of analyzing the sentence structure work in the English translation of Surah Al-Fatiha?

2. What are the different types of sentences found in the English translation of Surah Al-Fatiha?

Significance of the Study

As the foundation of the Quran, Surah Al-Fatiha is revealed to be extremely important and valuable by this research. The topics and organization of the chapter are examined in this chapter, along with their implications for the Quranic story and broader theological discourse. It also makes the principal ideas and teachings of the Quran easier for readers to understand, making it an invaluable tool for academics, students, and anybody else interested in this Holy Book. So, it is recommended to have a deeper relationship with and understanding of this Holy Book.

2. Literature Review

Numerous scholars have worked on projects to explore the Quran's complexity, which extends beyond its language, structure, and subjects, within the field of Quranic studies and translations. Understanding the Quran and teaching its profound truths to a larger audience depend on these investigations.

The first chapter of the Quran, Al-Fatiha Surah, has been the subject of extensive study. Scholars are interested in the idea of translation and seek to interpret its significance. Al-Uthaymeen (1434 H) succinctly summarizes this section as the foundation of monotheistic worship and Allah's commands. The translator has a different technique for handling each of these instances. The orthographic transcription by Ali (2001) and Pickthall (1996) maintains the structural and grammatical aspects of the original work. Some translators consider dynamic equivalence less important than reader comprehension and clarity.

An independent study is the linguistic part of Qur'anic exegesis. The scholars compared the Qur'anic structure to that of English using Chomsky's universal grammar. The results reveal notable variations. The English language employs implicit structure, whereas the Quran utilizes explicit elements more often. Bridging this divide has implications for language and theology in terms of how the message of the Qur'an is conveyed to an English-speaking audience. However, Azizah et al. (2021) analyzed Surah Qaf. This study primarily concentrated on Quranic grammar, syntactic patterns and structural elements, for instance, imperative, structural, interrogative, and exclamatory types of sentences. Another study was conducted to find minor errors in translation. Jaseem (2014) highlighted problems of sense transfer, rule ignorance, linguistic ambiguity and cultural transfer in translation. Religious texts are so sacred that a minor change is considered blasphemy; hence, keen attention should be paid while translating religious texts.

Some studies have been conducted on the syntax and grammar of the Holy Quran. Various translation approaches have opted for different verses of the Holy Quran, and the same was suggested by Dukes et al. (2010), Putri (2017), Rahim and Jameel (2017). These studies envisioned new prospects and dimensions of translation of the Holy Quran since it is a unique book in content and style. However, Iqbal (2020) conducted a study on Surah Al Nas through the lens of narratology, syntax, phonology, morphology and stylistics. The key finding of this study was that the Holy Quran has distinct qualities, and it addresses diversified behavioral challenges. The challenge of maintaining both the form and the spiritual complexity of the Qur'an in translation has been extensively documented. Zadeh et al. (2015) posit that even accurate translations falter in capturing the literary structure and theological subtleties of the original Arabic, which reaffirms that Qur'anic translation has to be done as interpretive as opposed to literal.

Muslims of different regions opted for different script styles to facilitate easy reading. However, these scripts presented varying challenges in terms of readability and comprehension. Ajmal and Lodhi (2018) studied the Urdu script used by Indo-Pak Muslims through Natural Language Processing. There are several dimensions to study the Holy Quran,

for instance, translation, grammar, syntax, lexicography and stylistics. When interpreting the Quran, there is only one issue with script diversity. Ajmal and Lodhi (2018) examined this intricacy and the challenges of employing Arabic NPL technology, as well as the challenges of working with the Indo-Pak script. These issues stress the need for a script-specific Quranic interpreting tool. Exploration in the active area of Quranic studies is made easier by the amalgamation of linguistics, interpretation, and philosophical depth. These studies add to our understanding of how difficult it is to translate and understand the Quran in various social and language contexts. According to Bashir et al (2022), the study examined the significance of the Quran in Islam and the increasing appeal of Islamic literature to a broad readership. The breakthroughs in computerization and natural language processing technology have brought new life to this topic.

A review of some of the databases, methods, and tools used in Quranic research was included in the paper. Not only did the study examine the current status of Quranic NLP, but it also provided guidance for future research directions in this area. This shows how the study of the Quran is dynamic and adapts to modern technological developments, making the Quran more understandable and accessible to a broader range of people.

Figure 1: Source: Comparison of Indo-Pak and Madani Qur'anic scripts (Bashir et al., 2023)



The first chapter (Surah Al-Fatiha) of the Qur'an (Hafs Reading) in South Asian style (Mushaf in Indo-Pak Nasta'liq Script) compared with the Mushaf in Madani script.

Figure 2: Source: Syntactic structure comparison in Indo-Pak and Madani Qur'anic scripts (Bashir et al., 2023)



**MUSHAF HAFS WITH
MADANI SCRIPT**

<https://quranpedia.net/ar/surah/2/1>

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

S NOUN PREP PUNC NOUN PUNC ABBREV PREP NOUN NOUN NOUN
PREP PUNC NOUN+NSUFF E

Qur'anic verse (1:2) provided to the *Farasa* tool (Far) for parts of speech tagging, resulting in inconsistent results. Poor results are shown for the Qur'an Mushaf with Nasta'liq Script. (*Legends*: S: Start; DET: determiner; NOUN: noun; PREP: preposition; NSUFF: noun suffix; PUNC: punctuation; ABBREV: abbreviation; and E: End.)

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework employed by the researcher for this study is the "Dynamic Equivalence Theory" proposed by Eugene Nida. This idea emphasizes how important it is to express the same impression on the intended audience, even if it means rearranging the original wording. Thus, it is imperative to ensure that the translation of Surah Al-Fatiha preserves the grammatical integrity of the Arabic original while simultaneously enhancing English-speaking readers' comprehension (Nida, 1964). Approaching the challenges of translating a densely religious text like the Quran with this concept in mind will help. This method strengthens the Qur'an's overall meaning while preserving its essential principles. In order to handle Surah Al-Fatiha's syntactic and structural complexity and help English readers comprehend the book's spiritual and theological perspective, translators can employ active perfectionism.

3. Research Methodology

This study used a descriptive qualitative research approach to examine the relationship between syntactic analysis and phrase recognition in the translation of Surah Al-Fatiha. Based on Creswell (1994, p. 161), a social phenomenon should explain classification, comparison, contrasts, and the issues that require more research, among other things. Ultimately, the study aims to provide a precise explanation of the grammar employed in that specific translation of Surah Al-Fatiha.

Figure 3: Surah Al Fatiha in Arabic

Surah Al Fatiha

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (١)
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢) الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (٣) مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (٤) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ
نَسْتَعِينُ (٥) اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (٦) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (٧)

Surah Fatiha has 7 verses, 25 words, 113 letters. This Surah is a supplication to Allah for guidance taught by Allah himself.

Research Tool

The study employed data sourced from Ali Muhammad Fazil Chinoy's translation of Surah Al-Fatiha, which was accessed via the following URL: <https://www.al->

islam.org/glorious-quran-translated-commentary-divine-lights-set-1-ali-muhammad-fazil-chinoy/surah-al-fatihah.

The researcher is used as a tool to gather and process data as part of the research procedure (Creswell, 1994, p. 155). Above all, actively participating in the research process itself.

Data Collection

The researcher began compiling the data by downloading the English translation of Surah Al-Fatiha from Google. Following that, a thorough reading of the translation helped to familiarize oneself with its contents. Specific data points were then discovered by underlining and highlighting relevant passages. These highlighted elements were organized into lists to facilitate the use of tree diagrams for the classification of sentence structures.

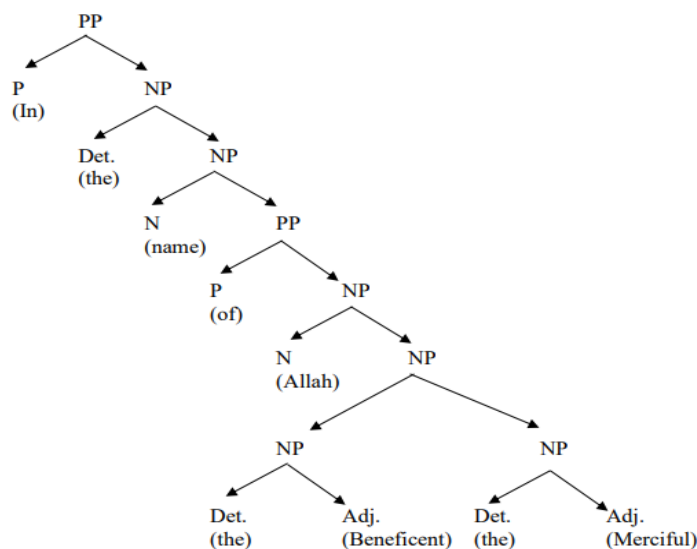
Data Analysis Process

The researcher started the analysis after finishing the identification and data collection processes. The different sentence forms discovered in the data were described in terms of the study's conclusions. Dukes (2009) Quranic Arabic Corpus was also kept in view. The researcher used Bornstein's (1997) theory of tree diagrams to analyze the phrase structures in the English translation of Surah Al-Fatiha. The syntactic analysis results and the sentence patterns in the English translation of Surah Al-Fatiha were emphasized in the conclusions.

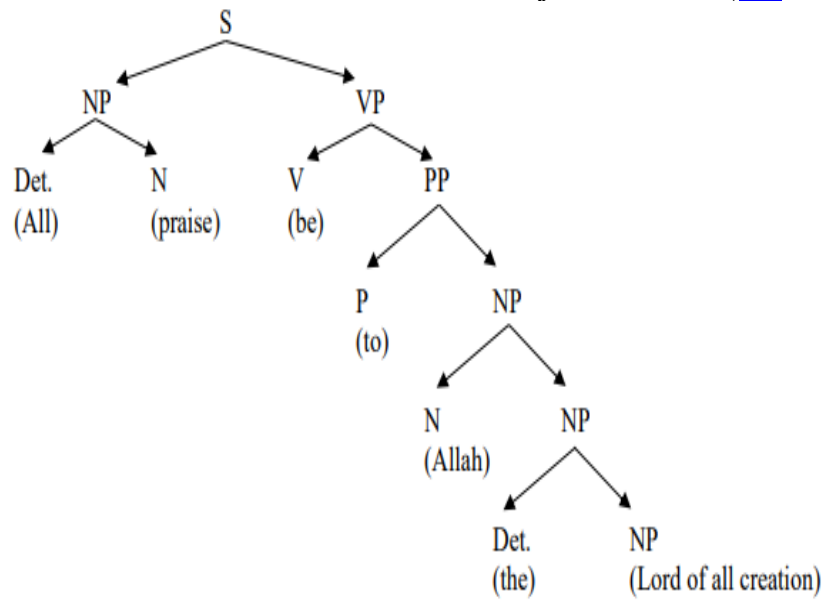
4. Data Analysis and Discussion

This part aims to address the research findings and discussions in order to address the problem statements that were previously formulated. The two main research objectives in this study were to examine the English translation of Surah Al-Fatiha's handling of syntactic analysis and to categorize various sentence forms. Surah Al-Fatiha contains seven verses, and the researcher carefully sorted and recognized all of the information based on each verse to address these problems. Then, using Bornstein's (1997) tree diagram approach, a comprehensive analysis of this data was conducted.

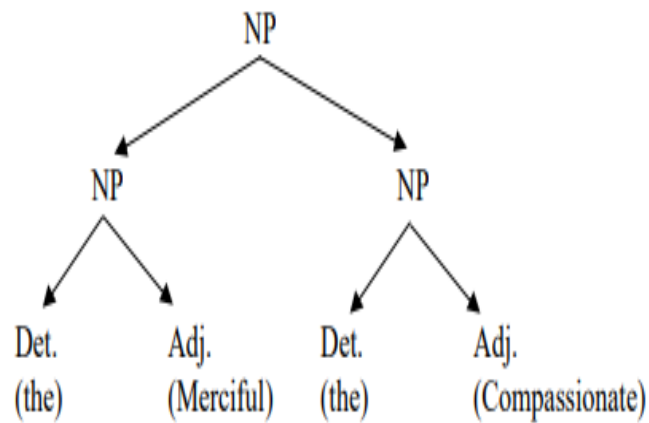
In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. (1:1).



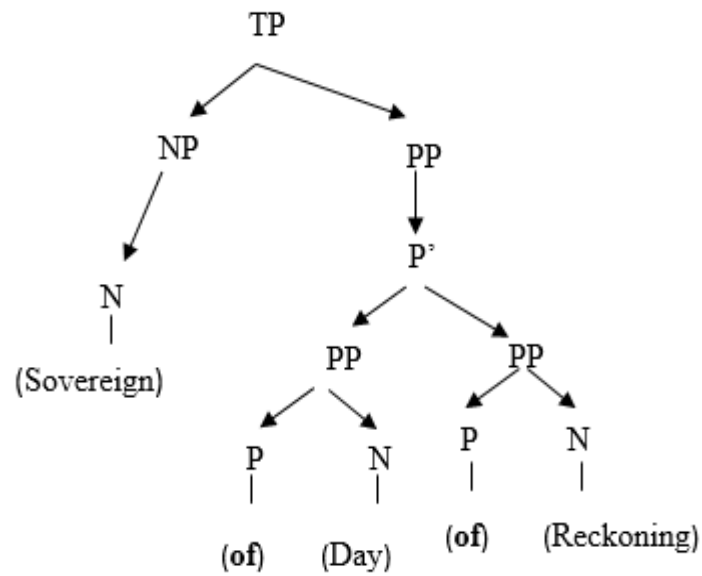
All Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all creation. (1:2).



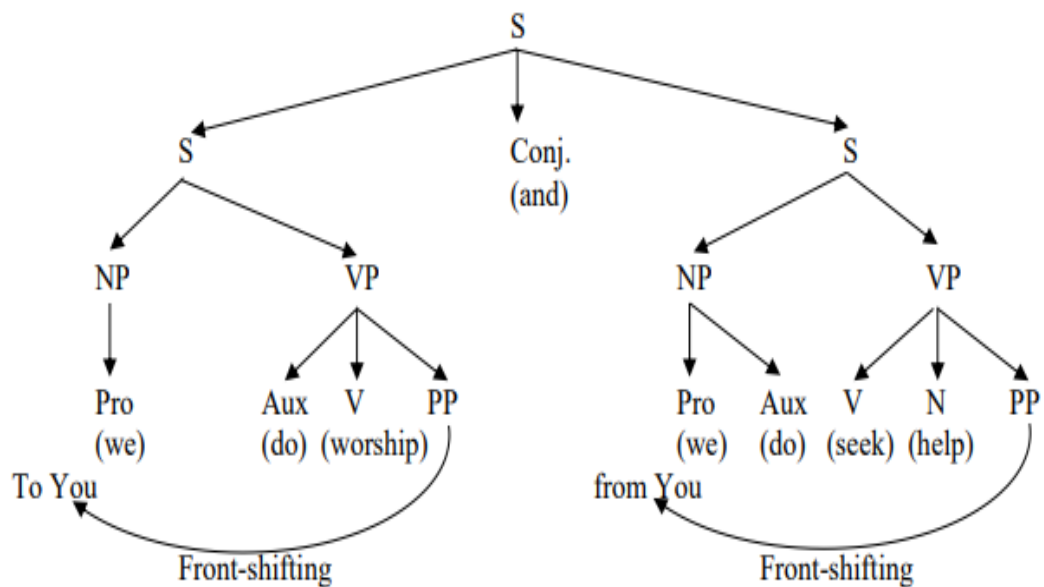
The Merciful, the Compassionate. (1:3).



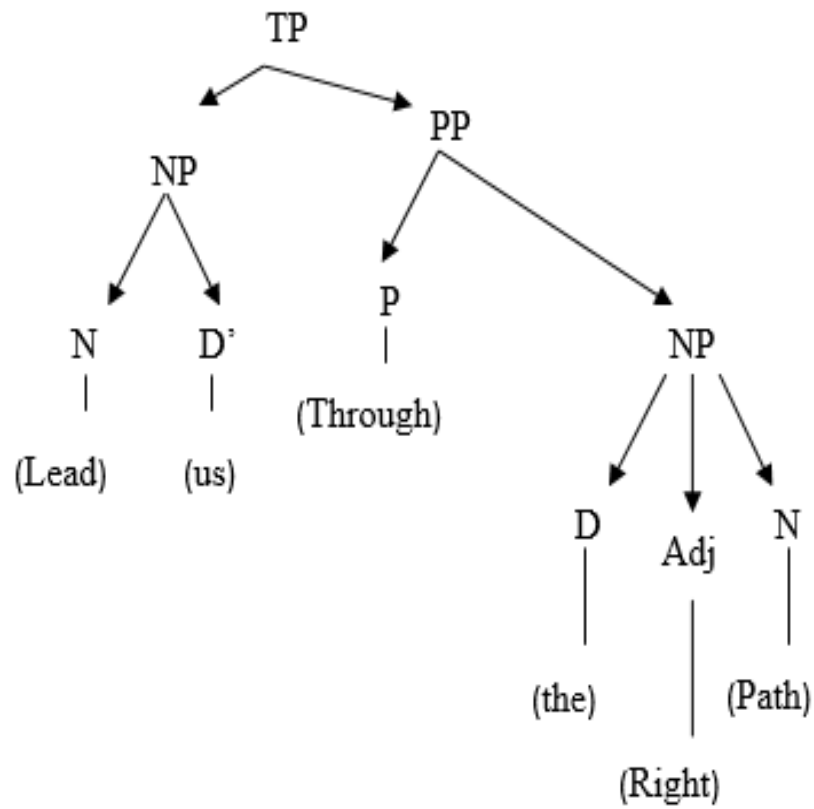
Sovereign (sole) of day of reckoning. (1:4).



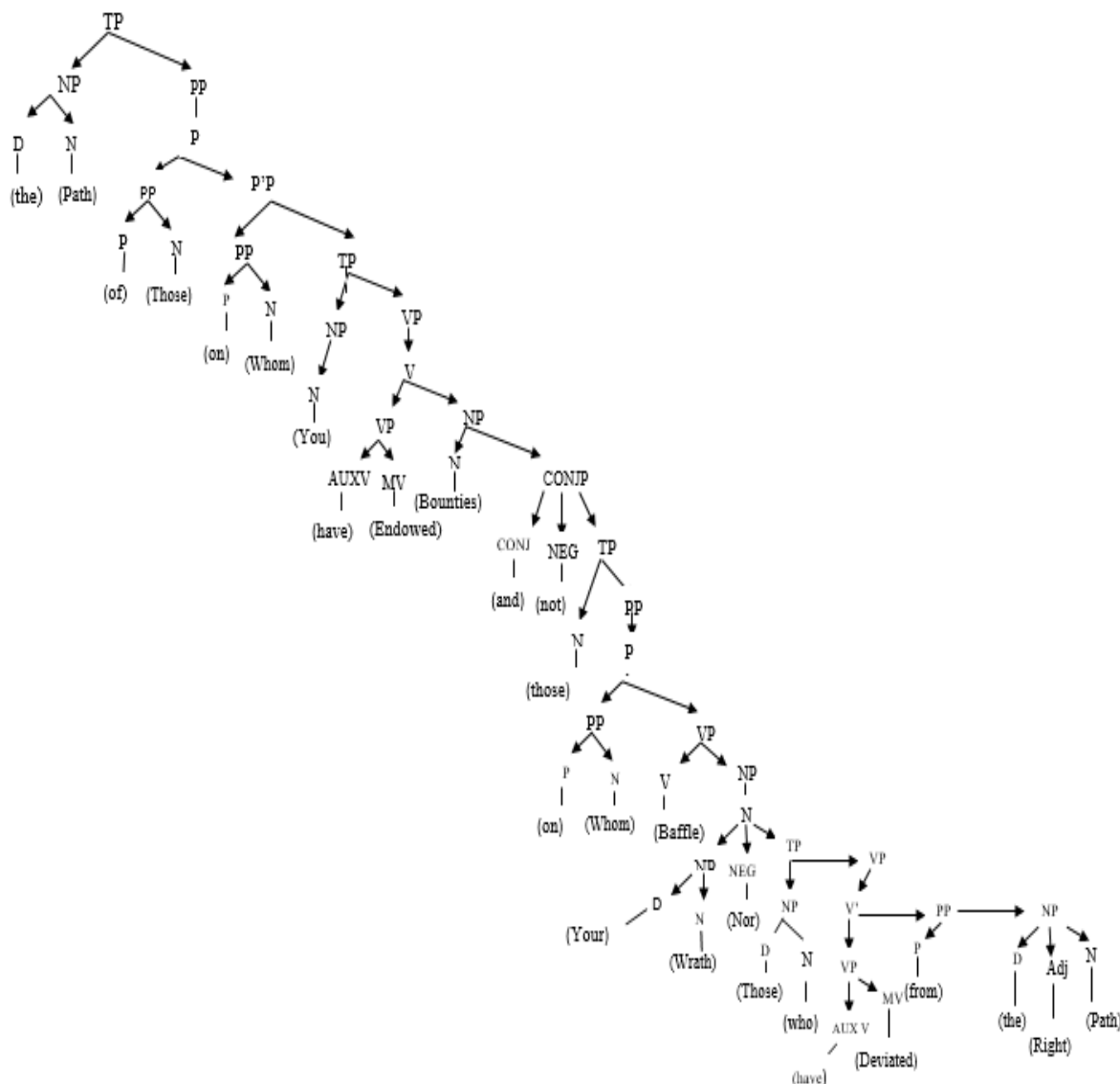
To You do we worship and from You do we seek help. (1:5)



Lead us through the right path. (1:6).



The path of those on whom You have endowed bounties and not those on whom befell Your wrath nor those who have deviated from the right path. (1:7).



Addressing the first research problem, it is evident that the process of syntax analysis for the English translation of Surah Al-Fatiha, guided by the tree diagram theory, reveals five distinct types. These include a prepositional phrase observed in the first verse, a nominal clause in the second verse characterized by its lack of a verb, and a noun phrase form found in the third, fourth, and seventh verses. Additionally, the fifth verse consists of a clause with an object, while the sixth verse presents an imperative clause.

Qur'anic translation differs significantly from other translation types, as translators often aim to preserve the surface structure of the source text (Arabic) while accommodating the differing structure of the target language (English) (Rahim & Jameel, 2017, p. 78). The syntactic structure plays a crucial role in discerning the intended meaning deeply embedded in the Quranic text.

For instance, in the first verse, the Quranic clause is rendered as a prepositional phrase in translation. In the second verse, a nominal clause is identified, characterized by its absence of a verb. This deviation from English, which typically requires a verb, highlights the unique nature of the Quranic (Arabic) nominal clause. Consequently, translators opt for different approaches, translating it as either a finite or non-finite clause by employing the non-finite verb

"be." In the subsequent analysis, the third verse is categorized as a phrase, while the fourth verse is translated into a noun phrase. Moving forward, the fifth and sixth verses are consistently translated as the same source type of clause, encompassing a clause with an object and an imperative clause, albeit with variations in parsing analysis within these primary categories. Lastly, the seventh verse presents a more intricate noun phrase, which is also translated as a noun phrase but exhibits numerous differences in phrase sub-categorization. The second problem the researcher wanted to solve was about the different kinds of sentences in the English translation of Surah Al-Fatiha. The researcher found that there are three main types of sentences: one without an action word, one that describes something, and one that gives an order.

Table 1: Structural Analysis of Surah Fatiha and its Details

Verse	Structure	Details
1:1	Prepositional Phrase	In the Name of Allah
1:2	Nominal Clause	All Praise
		Subject: Praise
		Complement: to Allah, the Lord of all creation
1:3-4	Noun Phrases	The Merciful, the Compassionate.
		Sovereign of the day of reckoning.
1:7	Noun Phrases	The path, those, You, endowed bounties, those, Your wrath, those, the right path.
1:5	Clauses with Objects	To You do we worship and from You do we seek help.
		Subject: We
		Verbs: worship, seek.
		Objects: You, You
1:6	Imperative Clauses	Lead us through the right path.
		Subject: You (implied)
		Verb: Lead
		Object: Us
		Complement: Through the right path
Types	Nominal Clauses	All Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all creation.
	Clauses with Objects	To You do we worship and from You do we seek help.
	Imperative Clauses	Lead us through the right path.

The tree diagram's in-depth structural study of Surah Al-Fatiha illuminates the complex sentence structures contained in this insightful chapter. The variety of sentence structures deepens the verse's impact and significance. A wide range of language structures is used in Surah Al-Fatiha's verses to create a profoundly spiritual and evocative effect. Prepositionally stating the verse's opening line, "In the Name of Allah," consecrates the words that follow. With a nominal sentence, the second verse pays exquisite homage to Allah, the Creator of all things, praising Him without limits. The tone of the entire Surah is established by the use of prepositional words in the first verse. *"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful"* encapsulates the idea of asking for blessings and guidance before doing anything else, placing Allah at the center of all action. Going on to the second verse, the recognition of verb-free nominal phrases highlights the praise's sincerity. The statement *"All Praise be to Allah; the Lord of all creation"* becomes a potent one that emphasizes giving praise without any restrictions. Noun phrases are used for the first time in the third, fourth, and seventh verses. The decisions taken in the structure of *"The Merciful, the Compassionate," "Sovereign (sole)*

of the day of reckoning," and "The path of those on whom You have endowed bounties" allow for a complete analysis of Allah's attributes and the best path for believers.

With its use of object-oriented words, the fifth verse creates a connection between prayer and requesting help. The phrase "To You do we worship and from You do we seek help" has a relational component that highlights the close relationship that exists between a believer and the supernatural. It has been noted that there are multiple *imperative clauses* in the sixth verse. 'Lead us through the right path' is the genuine plea that Muslims make to Allah, begging that HE directs them. This appeal becomes even more pressing and concrete. The vital format brings passion and originality to the acceptance of a plea. The subject of the study in the parameter of the existing phrase structure of the verse's second-noun *clause* reveals an instant feeling of reverence and respect. The neutral vocabulary of the fifth verse focuses on important operational gestures such as showing love and seeking for rescue. The concluding remarks of the sixth verse are striking and reflect a deep desire for direction in spiritual matters. In its simplest form, the analysis of the structure reveals the text's richness, highlighting how specific word phrases are used to convey profound feelings of devotion, plea, and gratitude in Surah Al-Fatiha. Each piece of the structure speaks volumes about the overarching appeal and strength that defines this crucial section in Islamic faith.

5. Conclusion

The outcomes of this research could prove helpful to different researchers looking into the Quran's translation, in particular concerning sentence structure that exists and the application of the tree diagram, particularly in Surah Al-Fatiha. Viewers will gain a more thorough understanding of various sentence patterns in Surah Al-Fatiha, along with English adaptation procedures, as a result of this research. Moreover, it can serve as a basis for further research in the same area. It is suggested that future academics investigate structure formation in the Quranic text to delve deeper into the subject, given the narrow scope of the study's discussion.

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