# A Pragmatic Analysis: Implications of Lexical Choices in Translating Quranic Rhetoric

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| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
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| | An increasing interest in the translation of the meaning of the Quran has recently been developed due to the various conflicts in the name of religion that dominate mass and social media. The Quran features amongst the most read books in the world. However, roughly all the existing translations contain flaws in terms of content, style and culture. This study addresses the challenges of achieving pragmatic equivalence of five English translations of the Quran by comparing them with their original one to determine the degree of faithfulness of the overall message, focusing on the Quranic phraseology that alludes to something or someone without directly stating it. The study is mainly concerned with assessing the degree of accuracy and fidelity in conveying the meaning of some Arabic literary devices into English. The question of whether figurative Quranic words or phrases are pragmatically mistranslated is still debatable. This article contributes to the debate of accuracy and fluency of the selected versions of the Quran in English by shedding light upon specific pragmatic features that create a special effect in the Quranic text by assessing the degree of deviation from SL message if any. Analysis revealed that the five selected English versions of the Quran have fallen short of accurately conveying the non-literal use of Quranic expressions such as Metonymy, Synecdoche, Allusion, Nonverbal signals, Euphemistic phrases, and Hyperbolic form. The findings suggested that translating the Quran requires more than acquiring linguistic skills to create the same impact and maintain the same spirit in the target language. The results also indicated that inconsistency of conveying the meaning of the Quranic rhetoric is due in parts to non-success in checking authentic exegesis as a source of elucidation, explanation or interpretation for clear understanding. This study serves as a platform for further research on translating Quranic rhetorical tools through highlighting the shortcomings and the strengths of some samples from the Quran. |

## INTRODUCTION

Language is the cornerstone of any successful interpersonal communication. It is the only means that serves complex relationships among participants in a speaking community. It reflects and builds the contexts of situations between members of the society. These situations intrinsically contain intertwined components, including non-linguistic activities. The role, the context plays in shaping our linguistic understanding, is the main contribution of pragmatics to language research (Peleg et al., 2004). Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that studies how context contributes to meaning. It is the communicative force of the utterance that goes beyond the propositional meaning. According to Chesterman (1997), unlike syntactic strategies that give attention to form (structure) and semantic strategies that deal with meaning, pragmatic strategies address the message itself.

In modern linguistics, the term pragmatics refers to the role of users in a speech community, mainly their linguistic choices in the social interactions and the resultant implications in the act of communication (Crystal, 2003). Plethora of definitions have been put forward for the term pragmatics. To mention a few examples, Levinson (1983: 27) defined it as *"the study of language in use"*. For Mey (1993: 42), it is the study of conditions of human uses, as these are determined by the contexts in which they are uttered. Fasold (1990: 01) stressed the importance of context from a pragmatic point of view. He (ibid) argued that pragmatics is concerned with the study of the use of context to make references about meaning. In other words, it explores the manner through which language users generate new or extra information that can be understood from the context. It is a creative process which used to influence the hearer. From a broad perspective, pragmatics deals with meanings arising from the context of a situation in which a spoken or written statement is used.

Since translation is a process of replacing a message in one language by an equivalent message in another language, the overall message should be considered in translating process. In this regard, Jakobson (1966:233) added that translation is a process of replacing a linguistic sign by another linguistic or non-linguistic sign. Against this background, pragmatics is considered an essential contributor in transla-

tion domain that depicts other dimensions of meaning. This paper is exploratory in nature. The significance of the current study stems from the fact that little research has been conducted on assessing the quality of English translations of Arabic rhetoric into English with reference to the Quran. It aims at knowing the extent to which translators address pragmatics in the Quranic text. The study is primarily concerned with gauging the degree of precision and fidelity in conveying the overall message of a sample of Quranic literary devices into English.

## Demarcating Pragmatics from Semantics

Much of interest of translation researchers on semantics and pragmatics drawn up by the debate of whether the priority must be given to the content or the secondary aspect of an expression. In this manner, the meaning, its reference, and its fragments in the fabric of an expression have been differently explained and made the topic of in-depth discussion. The dispute is often stemming from if the meaning to be registered in the area of semantics or pragmatics in the translation process. That is often attributed to the absorptive capacity of the target language in mirroring specific features of the source culture. It is, therefore, necessary to disconnect semantics from pragmatics in terms of the context of a situation and meaning as two sides of the same coin. From this perspective, semantics deals with the precise and direct meaning of linguistic signs. It is beyond the authority of the linguistic and cultural elements that immediately precede and follow a word or passage to clarify its meaning. In other words, it is concerned with the meaning out of context. In contrast, pragmatics gives attention to the aspects of meaning which are dependent on situational circumstances (Hansen 2006, Farkas, D. and de Swart, H 2010, Zubeldia, L 2012, McNally, L 2013, Weissman, B., 2017).

According to Salmon (2005:07), no clarification or explanation has been provided in the sense that *"the meaning of an expression is so closely bound to how that expression is used"*. An utterance is used in a specific style or manner because of its meaning, and still the utterance comes to have the meaning it does through usage. It seems that the meaning and the usage constitute a direct product of each other. The term pragmatics then refers to the study of an utterance through its situational meaning (Leech, 1983). It is probably realistic to surmise that meaning is substantial for pragmatics and rather disputable about its place to semantics or pragmatics. From this perspective, semantics differs from pragmatics in that it focuses on the meaning as a basic characteristic of the lexical item. In contrast, pragmatics considers the language in use during the process of communication among the participants.

Leech (1983) moves on to describe in more significant details that semantics deals merely with the meaning that is expressed by morpho-syntactical and phonological modes whereas pragmatics is not often easy to understand through the meaning of the linguistic sign constituents. In other words, the utterance needs a situational context and knowledge of language rules to communicate specific purposes. For Leech (1983) and Posner (1992), the pragmatic

theory does not limit language behaviour like grammar rules do. This standpoint is supported by Yule (2000) in which he stated that semantics addresses the unity of form and content while pragmatics concentrates on cooperation between the participants of the communication process - the speaker and the listener. Some scholars define semantics as what a speaker utters in his/her speech – the speaker's intention as interpreted by the listener (Salmon, 2005). Yet, this view does not interpret semantics as a concept. It confuses the adequate understanding of the boundary between semantics and pragmatics.

The literature seems fragmented to some extent and without a united front about naming the layer of meaning which comprising information that refers to the relationship between the speaker who utters a word and the object in the outside world. Along the same lines, multiplicity of names of the concept that refers to the layer of meaning, which is produced by several linguistic and non-linguistic factors. This aspect of meaning is expressed by several labels: pragmatic meaning, connotative expression, expressive meaning, stylistic effect, etc. This terminological confusion can be linked to the idea that pragmatics is relatively an aspect of meaning which is lately studied. This is attributed to the shift from studying language as a system of signs to a system of functional communication. Such information does not reflectively express what the linguistic structure means, it is rather understood in terms of the relation of the speaker to the listener and the desirable pragmatic functions wished to be fulfilled.

The distinctive feature that can describe layers of meaning according to the character of information that they carry can be reduced in denotative and significative meaning in terms of semantics and contextual meaning in terms of pragmatics (Kobozeva, 2004). Thus, denotative level provides precise and literal information while significative level gives information about the way the situation reflects the speaker's intention. Pragmatic level introduces information concerning the conditions of usage of the lexical item/s (Kobozeva, 2004). To sum up, what mentioned above establishes the distinction between semantic and pragmatic layers of meaning. The analysis, in this paper, includes samples of Quranic word combinations which are context-dependent and culturally specific.

## Non-literalism and Translation Relevance

Some scholars strictly reject literal translation method. To mention but a few, Nida and Taber (1969) argued that this type of translation is either unnatural or misleading. It is contextual consistency that is more important than verbal consistency. Baker (1992:11) points out that *"there is no one-to-one correspondence ... across languages"*. According to her (ibid), literal translation is impossible in most cases, because the choice of a suitable equivalence relies on a wide variety of factors. Some of these factors may be strictly linguistic; others may be extra-linguistic. It is, as a result, not wise to just pick up words from dictionaries and put them denotatively in the target text. She (ibid) claims that an SL word may express a concept that is entirely unknown

in the target culture. It is maybe abstract, concrete or related to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food. Both points of view – literalism and contextualism- have supporters which use persuasive evidence to prove their claims. In fact, cultural and linguistic relativity has a negative implication for a translation theory. It mainly denies the existence of exact correspondences between languages which implies that meaning loss is prevalent and inevitable in translation (Aziz and Lataiwish, (2000), Dickins, Hervey and Higgins, 2002).

Regarding loss and gain in translation, Nida (1969) suggests that the translator should have good knowledge of the SL and TL cultures. It is, however, challenging to find lexical equivalents between SL culture and TL one since they are different in terms of structure, content, style and culture. For Ghali (2008: ix), *"some of the main difficulties in a translation of the meanings of the Quran …is the fact that Arabic has a wealth of basic vocabulary and a rich morphological and syntactic strucuture"*. Thus, in the same regard, addition and omission are unavoidable to obtain the satisfactory translation quality. The ultimate purpose of translation is to make TL readers feel the text in hand is native. The current study aims to identify the degree of deviation and to show translators' consciousness of the way by which the semantic-contextual blending in the Quranic discourse.

### Pragmatic Features in the Quran

Pragmatic loss in translation has been and still a debated issue within the field of pragmatics and translation. Loss of pragmatic force deemed to be the complex aspect that forms difficulties in the translation process. According to Al-Azab and Al-Misned (2012:42), *"pragmatic losses extinguish the pleasure of the text"*. It spoils the integrity, harmony, purity of the original. It gets worse when there is a complete loss of pragmatic matching. Thus, translating of pragmatic usage of religious and/or literary texts does not, in many cases, mirror SL message. Perfect reflection of the original often falls beyond human capacity when it is between two far apart cultures which come from different linguistic roots like English and Arabic. This paper explores the features which translators sacrificed in translation process.

In the Quran, each word has its own characteristics. Insufficient knowledge of its subtle meanings may lead to inaccurate and distorted translation. The complicated relationship between Quranic lexical items and the context in which they are interacting, generates varied senses that reflect a spectrum of usage (Al-Azab, 2012). The question of creating and grasping the meaning is a dynamic process, including an attempt to reach to an agreement about meaning among the speaker, the hearer, the context of utterance and the possible meaning of an utterance (Thomas, 1995). To put it simply, meaning rests upon context and cannot be separate from it. This, in turns, releases potentiality of pragmatics where the context allows various interpretations. He (ibid) claims that to understand the meaning, it requires to negotiate it between the participants and the potential meaning of an utterance. Pragmatic effect, therefore, stems from a combination of textual and contextual elements. It contributes

to changing the focus from the code to contextual inference (Peleg et al. 2004).

### Assessment Processes

To decide if translation's quality can be fulfilled or not, it is of primary importance to compare its accuracy with the original. This can be achieved by considering both form and content to guarantee conveying SL message in the translation as a product and to determine minor deviations during the translation process (Badr and Menacere, 2019). In translation, religious texts represent a significant challenge since they are closely related to faith, and faith is an intrinsic part of the culture. All known religions have a long history, which means that language of the original text has passed through several stages of development, resulting in a substantial change in the meaning of words and expressions. The translator should be aware of these changes and be thoroughly familiar with various nuances of the words and the phrases that are intended to be translated. The samples of Quranic expressions selected for this study are assessed in terms of their accuracy and fluency, to
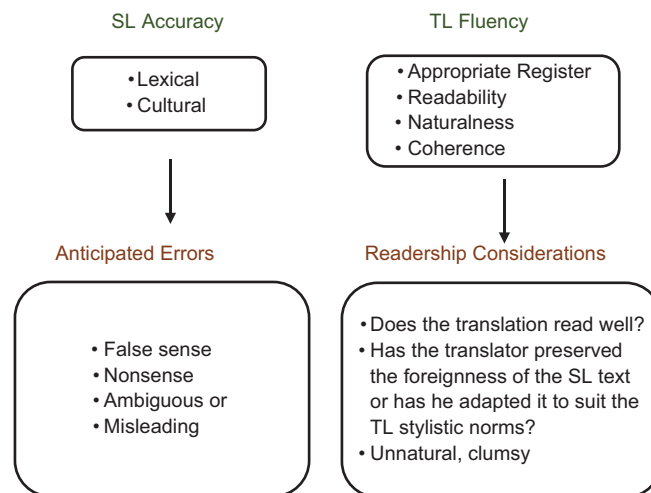
- Identify the various linguistic difficulties focusing on figurative language in some Quranic verses.
- Evaluate the quality of translation as a product by highlighting the different strengths and weaknesses of TL.
- Identify and discuss the translating processes and methods used to transfer the SL message, e.g. word for word, free, adaptation etc.
- Assess the loss incurred resulting from the deviation of the SL message during the translating process.

The researcher analyses the selected translations concerning pragmatic meaning to display the appropriate and the less suitable renderings by adopting a comparative and analytical method. The study also considers the lack of effect that each loss of meaning has on the overall message and its impact on the receptors. The following figure illustrates the translation quality assessment framework developed for this study.

This section aims at demonstrating the mechanisms underlying individual decisions taken by translators. It seeks to unfold the varying degrees of translatability through giving rise to a range of renderings along either side of the semantic or pragmatics distinction—discussing specific cases of Metonymy, Synecdoche, Body language signals, Allusive reference, Euphemistic expression, and Hyperbolic form. The assumed argument here is that these tropes generate a variety of interpretive use of language that translators need to approach with caution. Further, this analysis should have implications for lexical semantics in terms of the distinction between descriptive and interpretive use of language**.**

### *Loss of metonymy*

Traditionally, metonymy is a figure of speech that substitutes the name of a thing for the name of something else with which it is closely associated. The definition of metonymy has changed over time to refer to a cognitive phenomenon with a considerable role in the organisation of

SL Accuracy

- Lexical
- Cultural

TL Fluency

- Appropriate Register
- Readability
- Naturalness
- Coherence

Anticipated Errors

- False sense
- Nonsense
- Ambiguous or
- Misleading

Readership Considerations

- Does the translation read well?
- Has the translator preserved the foreignness of the SL text or has he adapted it to suit the TL stylistic norms?
- Unnatural, clumsy

meaning (semantics), utterance production and interpretation (pragmatics), and even grammatical structure (Geeraerts et al., 2007). Translationally speaking, difficulties often lie in the fact that SL metonymy are translation resistant, as speakers' mindset and view of reality is not universal across cultures. Consider the following:

وَتَوَلَّىٰ عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسَفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ

*Wa tawalla 'anhum wa qa:la ya asafa 'ala yusufa wa byaddat ainahu minal huzni fahuwa kazim.*
*And he turned away from them and said: Alas, my grief for Joseph! And [Lit: <u>his eyes were whitened</u>] with the sorrow that he that he choked within him. (Q12:84)*

The Quranic combination *byaddat ainahu* ابيضّت عيناه refers to the state of blindness. In this sense, it refers to Jacob's loss of eyesight (Jacob's was in a state of grief because of his loss of his son - Joseph). The word abyadd ابيضَّ denotes *whiteness* or *blindness*. The adjacent word *Ayn* عَيْن means *an eye*. It also means *a water spring*. It can be seen that when the lexical item *byaddat* ابيضّت collocates with the lexical item *ainahu* عيناه, a specific semantic significance is produced - *to become blind,* which expresses a metonymic meaning.

In Arabic, metonymy is a rhetorical mode of discourse that is effective due to its succinctness and allusion (Abdul-Raof, 2011). The verb *byaddat* ابيضّت is employed metonymically in the Quranic expression *byaddat ainahu* ابيضّت عيناه to allude to 'blindness' without specifically referring to its identity. In this expression, the verb 'whiten' is used and collocated with the noun 'eyes' to refer to blindness. As such, the recipient is likely to understand the intended meaning.

Without adding or clarifying, Abdel Haleem, Arberry, and Ali provided a direct equivalent for the figurative image *byaddat ainahu* ابيضّت عيناه into English to be 'his eyes went white, his eyes became white, his eyes turned white'. Out of their knowledge and experience, it seems that they thought of maintaining the emotions of pity and sorrow which are represented in the imagery to the translation recipient. Yet, foreignisation of SL cultural features cannot often be assuredly understood. Besides, literal translation, in this case, may not be possible to serve the purpose due to the linguistic and extra-linguistic factors (Baker, 1992).

A blind person with white cataracts is common in English culture, as some people become blind because of a whitening of the lens over the eye - a cataract. In later stages of a cataract, the front of the eyes looks very milky. Based on this information, literal translation may be adopted. Yet, it can be argued that the intended meaning is still ambiguous, as not all readers offer to get the message across. Asad translated *byaddat ainahu* ابيضّت عيناه into 'his eyes became dim', which means 'unable to see clearly' (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005). Asad's word choice for *byaddat* ابيضّت into 'became dim' sounds an unsatisfactory equivalent, as *byaddat* ابيضّت refers to the state of 'blindness' in the Quranic context.

Khan and Hilali assumed that there is no metonymic expression embodied in this combination. They translated *byaddat ainahu* ابيضّت عيناه using avoidance as a technique. In other words, they reduced the expression *byaddat ainahu* ابيضّت عيناه to its sense rather than reflecting identical translation as other translators did. This view of transferring the meaning might be used to avoid unintelligibility in the translation body. Still, rhetorical effect of the Quranic expression *byaddat ainahu* ابيضّت عيناه is lost in the translation.

The complex nature of metonymic expressions and how laborious to find appropriate equivalent can be acknowledged from the sample above. It is worth noting that all translations encountered challenges to find an appropriate TL reflective equivalent. A further consideration that should be taken is that a metonymy is generated in varied ways across cultures. On that ground, it can be argued that the proper way to evaluate the envisaged dimension of metonymy is by testing the constraints of the two cultures. In other words, any attention on the micro-level must be complemented by shedding light on the macro-level as well. The same view can be applied to other literary devices presented below.

### Loss of synecdoche

A synecdoche is a phrase used in a non-literal sense for a rhetorical effect in which a part of something or someone refers to the whole or vice versa. It is considered a form of metonymy, which is often either pointing to a part for the whole or correspondingly the whole for one of its parts. According to Lederer (1994), a synecdoche can be identified when a part of the linguistic formulation is used to designate the whole. From translation viewpoint, as synecdoche represents a mental image which is visualised in a different way between two different languages, the translation of the synecdoche will then not be the same.

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اقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوِ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِن بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ

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*Uqtulu yusufa aw itrahuhu arday yakhlu lakum wajhu abikum wa takunu min ba'dihi qauman salihina.*
*Slay Joseph or cast him forth into some land, so that [Lit: <u>your father's face may be free for you</u>], and after that you may be righteous people. (Q 12:09)*

The lexical unit *yakhlu* يَخْلُ is a multi-layered linguistic item which may refer to any of the following meanings: to become of the past, to become alone, to become empty or to become free. The word *wajhu* وَجْهُ can either mean face, first part, initial part or presence. These two lexical items have created a new semantic signification by collocability: bring back a father's whole love. Here, the pragmatic use trespasses semantic use in the Quranic context to generate a special effect and produce aesthetic value which is reflected in a synecdochic expression form. Synecdoche is an expression in which a part indicates to its the whole and the opposite is true (Bonn, 2010). This semantic relationship applies to the use of a word that refers to a specific part of a person or a thing, but the text producer employs it to refer to the whole entity (Abdul Raof, 2001). It is common in Arabic to refer to an entity by the name of one of its parts. For example, a spy جاسوس is called 'an eye' or a worker عامل is called 'a hand'. In this Quranic phraseological unit, the part of the human body 'face' signifies the whole, which is a human individual 'Jacob'. Pragmatically speaking, the substitution is made because the phrase 'your father's face' suggests the extent to which Jacob's compassion and attention towards Joseph was evident to Jacob's other children.

Arberry rendered the synecdochic expression *yakhlu lakum wajhu abikum* يَخْلُ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ almost verbatim 'your father's face may be free for you' in a bid to maintain the rhetorical effect. Yet, the intended meaning remains unintelligible, as the literal technique without explanation cannot convey the content of the message. On the other hand, Ali paid attention to the semantic level only 'the favour of your father may be given to you alone' and tailed his translation with a brief historical overview as a footnote. Still, addition is not justified here because Ali has already restricted his translation to semantic equivalence (Newmark, 1998) and sacrificed the metaphor. Likewise, Khan and Hilali, Abdel Haleem, and Asad translated each word separately without elucidating the metaphorical image of the lexical entry 'face'. It is probably because this synecdochic Quranic expression is not familiar in English culture. Not counting

Arberry, other translators preferred not to risk by alienating their translation and confusing the reader. However, the pragmatic effect of synecdochic expression *wajhu abikum* وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ remains uncompensated loss.

### Loss of Non-verbal signals

Non-verbal communication is a communication that does not involve words. It is a transmission of a message through nonverbal platform. It sometimes generates a pragmatic effect, which expresses our attitudes to a proposition. (Al-Azab: 2012 and Wharton: 2009). The Quranic non-verbal signal *yuqallibu kaffaihi* يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ mirrors a state of concern, distress, or guilt, especially when someone is powerless to change a certain situation.

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وَأُحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَداً

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*Wa uhita bi tamarihi fa asbaha yuqallibu kaffaihi 'ala ma anfaqa fiha wa hiya kha:wiyatun 'ala 'urusyiha wa yaqulu ya laitani lam ushyrik bi rabbi <u>ahada</u>.*
*And his fruits were completely destroyed, so he began [Lit: <u>to clap his hands</u>] over what he had spent on it, and it was fallen down upon its trellises, and said, "I wish I had not associated with my Lord anyone. (Q 18: 42)*

The lexical item *yuqallibu* يُقَلِّبُ gained a new semantic significance when attached to the word *kaffaihi* كَفَّيْهِ, to mean *unhappy and upset*. This mechanism of generating more additional meanings is culturally dependent and it is often perceived from the circumstances of the situation (Hansen 2006, Farkas, D. and de Swart, H 2010, Zubeldia, L 2012, McNally, L 2013, Weissman, B., 2017).

Khan and Hilali translated the verb *yuqallibu* يُقَلِّبُ in a literal manner into 'clapping'. By the same token, they rendered the noun *kaffaihi* كَفَّيْهِ to 'his hands'. According to the Oxford Dictionary, 'clap' is defined as 'striking the palms of one's hands together repeatedly in order to applaud someone'. It, therefore, has a positive effect that neither existed nor suggested in the message above. Literal translation is not without benefit. Yet, it is a basic translation strategy which can be used at a word level (Newmark, 1991). On the other hand, Ali, Arberry, Asad and Abdel Haleem translated *yuqallibu* يُقَلِّبُ into 'wringing' and 'twisting'. These lexical choices served the purpose by providing an appropriate equivalent that maintains the same connotation. Ali, Arberry, Asad and Abdel Haleem used the functional equivalent strategy. They translated *kaffaihi* كَفَّيْهِ literally into 'his hands'. They used the couplet strategy. In this context, functional equivalent strategy seems to be an appropriate technique for conveying the meaning.

### Loss of allusive reference

Allusion is an expression in which an object or a person from unrelated context is referred to without being overtly acknowledged or displayed. The readers are often allowed to find the unmediated connection. It is a cultural bound feature that poses a challenge for both professional and early-career translators. The example below shows the translation approaches that translators used to tackle the issue.

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُن كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَىٰ وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ

*Fasbir lihukmi rabika wa la takun kasa:hibil hu:t id na:da wa huwa makddum*

*But patiently wait for your Lord's judgement, and [lit: <u>do not be like companion of the fish</u>], who cried out in despair. (Q 68:48)*

The lexical component *sa:hibi* صَاحِبِ has been used with different meanings throughout the Quran (companion, fellow man, or an epithet for Jonah). In this context, the word *sa:hibi* صَاحِبِ generated a new semantic significance when combined with the linguistic item *hu:t* حُوتَ, to refer to: *The Prophet Jonah.* To maintain both the form and the content, a word-for-word technique is used by Khan and Hilali, Arberry, and Ali. Yet, their choice of the noun phrase 'the fish' as an equivalent for the lexical item *al-hu:t* 'الْحُوتِ' seems unsuitable, as it does not reflect the allusive reference in the original. The word *al-hu:t* حُوتِ in the Quranic context is meant to refer to a very large marine mammal 'whale'. Thus, the word 'fish' cannot achieve the correct interpretation under any circumstances- in this case. It seems evident that depending on literal translation caused ambiguity and mistranslating of the message. Abdel Haleem expanded the wording in order to convey the condensed meaning of *sa:hibil hu:t* صَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ. He succeeded in translating the lexical item al-hu:t 'الْحُوتِ' into the whale; however, the reference to 'the prophet Jonah' remained absent in his translation, which made his translation insufficient. Asad communicated the intended meaning via adding the adjective 'great' to the noun 'fish'. Asad's translation is inspired from the Bible in which the story of "Jonah and the Great Fish" is narrated. In addition, he provided an explanatory footnote to justify his rendering.

According to Naeimeh (2011), when an author uses allusions, s/he expects readers to be familiar with the references made. Otherwise, the effect is lost. The translations above to some extent are partly ambiguous. Asad's translation can be referred to as the most satisfactory rendition in terms of elucidation. The indirect reference of the Quranic use of *ka-sa:hibil hu:t* صَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ can simply be translated as 'the prophet Jonah'. However, in order to preserve the peculiarity and the rhetorical image in the Quranic text, it is suggested that literal translation can be supported by a footnote so that the intended meaning is maintained.

### *Loss of euphemistic expression*

Euphemism is a mild word or phrase that is replaced for one that considered to be jarred to the senses when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing. Euphemisms are often used to soften the effect of words that can cause offence and social disapproval. Speakers of different languages use euphemistic substitutions in order to achieve certain functions in the process of interpersonal communication. As stated by Pavlenko (2006:260), euphemism is commonly used *"to protect speakers from undesired emotional arousal"*. It is a rhetoric tool that is used to *"sanitize and camouflage actions, things, or events that could appear unacceptable in light of professed values"* (Mayfield, 2009:270). In addition to the above, Lim(2012) pointed out that euphemism is a figure of speech that is utilised by speakers of a speech com-

munity to neutralise negative connotations associated with offensive concepts such as Death, war, intercourse, bodily functions and disability (Stockwell (2002), Brind & Wilkinson (2008)). Consider the following:

وَإِن كُنتُم مَّرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ

*wa in kuntum marda au 'ala safarin au ja:'a ahadum minkum minal ga'iti au la mastum 'al nisa falam tajidu ma 'an fa tayammamu sa'idan tayyiban famsahu bi wuju hikum wa aidikum*

*And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you come from the closet, or [lit: <u>you have touched women</u>], and you find not water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub with your faces and hands (04:43)*

The Quranic soften expression *la mastum 'al nisa* لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ centred on the theme of prohibiting believers of preforming prayers while they are sexually impure. The combination of the lexical item *la mastum* لَامَسْتُمُ with the word '*al nisa* النِّسَاءَ, generates an euphemistic reference in this context, which means: sexual intercourse.

This Quranic expressive style implicitly communicates the message in such a way that does not harm the public modesty. It is euphemistically expressed for as 'touching women' لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ, which shows conservativity towards sensitive topics in Arabic culture. لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ 'touched women' is a euphemised expression that implicates the part-for-whole euphemism strategy (Allan and Burridge 1991).

Ali translated *la mastum* لَامَسْتُمُ into 'have been in contact with women'. He used paraphrasing strategy, as a translation technique. Without looking at how the words are used together in a phrase, Arberry rendered each word separately to 'touched women'. He adopted literal translation technique. A functional equivalent for the word *la mastum* لَامَسْتُمُ has been assigned preference by Asad and it is translated into 'cohabited'. According to Cambridge English Dictionary and Oxford Dictionary, the verb 'cohabit' is said to refer to a man and woman who have a sexual relationship without being married. The Quranic expression above; however, made a specific reference to a case of a married couple. Thus, the message is lost in Asad's translation. Khan and Hilai employed both compensation and addition procedures (Newmark, 1988) and (Nida,1964) to clarify the content of the SL message. It is noted that by adding the phrase 'sexual relation', the mild Quranic style has been sacrificed. Like Asad, Abdel Haleem chose functional equivalent, which gave priority to content at the expense of the aesthetic merit shown in the original.

### *Loss of hyperbolic form*

Hyperbole is an overstatement or exaggeration in meaning which is used in Arabic to exaggerate the present participle formula اسم الفاعل. It is a rhetorical device used by language users to add extra meaning, or to amplify certain action or quality (El-Zawawy, 2014). In Arabic, hyperbole is a morphological process that adds additional significant pragmatic content. It is a rhetorical and communicative function that achieves certain impact on the hearer. Hyperbolic patterns are derived from the active participle based on five

meters. These five meters indicate the abundance and exaggeration of the event. They are: a) فَعَال such as أُكَالٌ 'eats a lot', b) مَفعَال such as مَنحَار 'slaughters a lot of (animals)', c) فَعُول such as غَفُور 'very forgiving', d) فَعِيل such as سَمِيع 'all-hearing', e) فَعِل such as يَقظ 'very careful' (AL-Hamlawi,1982). Consider the following:

وَلَا تُطِعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ

*Wa la tuthi kulla hallafin mahin*

*do not obey any [lit: contemptible swearer] (Q 68:10)*

In this context, the lexical item *hallafin* حَلَّافٍ combined with *maheen* مَّهِينٍ to create a specific semantic significance that denotes *a worthless habitual swearer*. This Quranic phrase contains a hyperbolic form which carries a special formulaic meaning. This hyperbolic pattern is restricted to the Arabic form فَعَّال. According to Arabic-English dictionary of Quranic usage (2008), *hallafin* حَلَّافٍ refers to a person who takes a stream of oaths that it would be perjury.

Abdel Haleem, Asad and Arberry translated *hallafin* حَلَّافٍ literally into 'swearer'. The three translations assume 'swearer' to be an equivalent for *hallafin* حَلَّافٍ. These translations would be more appropriate equivalent if they reflect the state in which someone only swears حَالِفٌ but not in the case of حَلَّافٍ. Thus, the message that is carried by the hyperbolic form حَلَّافٍ is oversimplified. Even with adding the '-er' morpheme to the verb 'swear', the pragmatic message meant in this context has not been fulfilled. Loss of meaning is inevitable in translation field; however, some techniques can to some extent achieve satisfied equivalents. An example of this would be Khan and Hilali's translation in which they added the adverb 'much' to communicate the hidden part of the original message. The choice of 'much' is acceptable to a limited degree. Still, it failed to unfold the implicit meaning, which refers to a state of a continuous repetition of that habituated behaviour embodied in the Quranic hyperbole. With an adjustment in the translation, Ali partly managed to explain *hallafin* حَلَّافٍ to 'men- ready with oaths'. This translation seems closer to the original than other renditions. The phrase 'men-ready with oaths' shows the readiness and willingness for swearing false oaths. The functional equivalent strategy used to communicate the message in Ali's. The researcher suggests 'habitual swearer of false oaths' for the Quranic expression حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ. The reason is that the word 'habitual' is added to refer to the act of doing something regularly or repeatedly.

To conclude, it has been shown from the analysis above that pragmatic dimension serves rhetoric purposes in the Quran. The Quran uses figurative expressions to influence its readers. There are two important points that have significance for a translation theory. First, different languages often use different structures to perform certain pragmatic effect. As is the case here, Quranic language obviously formulated to serve communicative purposes. In translation, this requires replacing one structure by the closest match in the recipient language. Secondly, languages differ in their use of primary and contextual meaning. If this claim is rationally acceptable, this would mean that translation would sometimes involve a shift from implicit contextual meaning to a primary explicit meaning and vice versa, relies on the direction of translation.

## Concluding Remarks

A review of the current literature on translating Arabic rhetoric into English with reference to the Quran reveals a limitation in depth and focus of existing research. What transpires from the overview of previous studies on Quranic rhetorical devices shows a fragmented area of research with limited scope. Only a handful of authors have examined the challenges of translating pragmatics with reference to Quranic text, which yielding a partial not holistic view.

In this study, the findings are in alignment with similar studies within the extensive literature about the difficulties of translating figurative language in the Quranic discourse. The results indicated that translating the Quran remains a debatable issue. The data also showed that there is inconsistent and fragmentation regarding the strategies dealt with Quranic figurative expressions, where context contributes to meaning. Also, they revealed that understanding implicit and connotative meaning of culture-bound statements is a challenging task facing translators. Some translators over-relied on word for word rather than communicative translation believing that to stay close to the original is the only safe way to be faithful to the original. Incompatible translations of Quranic literary devices are partially due to the lack of access to authentic interpretation sources of the Quran. A communicative, and accurate English translation of the Quranic figurative language is still far from being achieved. This study serves as a platform for further investigation of the pragmatics of the Quranic text, which has been and is still a controversial subject. Searching in this area may bring new insights that achieve a better understanding of pragmatics in the Quran that would facilitate the task of translators.

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