

# Discoursal Value of Transferring Prepositions in the Holy Quran into English

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**Abstract---** *The study examines the discoursal value of interlingual transference of prepositions as rhetorical devices in the Holy Quran. It aims to investigate the adequacy and accuracy of translating selected prepositions from the Holy Quran into English identified by the culture of an Arab-Muslim translator and a non-Arab non-Muslim one. To achieve this objective, the study adopts the qualitative phase of research since the prepositions in verses selected from the Holy Quran are not the only ones but there are many other examples. The findings of the study show that the discoursal value of transferring the selected prepositions is restricted by the cultural and religious background of translator. Also the study reveals that there are different meanings of transferred selected prepositions. Palmer as a non-Arab non-Muslim translator misses some shades of meaning of prepositions when he translates them into English which are accurately and successfully translated by an Arab Muslim translator Ghali.*

**Keywords---** *Value.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The four aspects of communicative competence which are *possibility, feasibility, appropriateness, and well-formedness* are met in the religious texts. They are constituted as context accessibility of exchanging in these texts. The components of communicative competence (grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic) contribute to the construction of text and interpretability of the reader. The application of these aspects reflects the communicative values of verses having such prepositions. Translation is the process of transferring meaning that is expressed in one language or set of symbols by means of another language or set of symbols. It is an important communicative way. One of the basic principles of translation is to be faithful to the original, i.e. it should first be faithful to the content of the original, with literal translation conveying the original cultural connotation in a precise way. Newmark (1988, P7) defines translation as the transference of the content of a text from one language to another. As an instrument of communication, translation is used for bilingual notices which have appeared increasingly clearly in public place. Translation has been instrumental in posting culture, sometimes under unequal conditions responsible for distorted and biased translations, ever since countries and languages have been in contact with each other. In a narrow sense, translation theory depends on functional theory of language. Jainqing Wu (2008,P123), points out that everything is translatable because translation is are-coding or a change of surface structure in representation of the deep structure underlying translation is normally perceived as the transference of meaning from the source language(SL) to the target language (TL). The replacement process does not mean that languages are the same but it implies that the intended meaning of the source text (ST) can be found in the target text (TT) pym (2014, P6). However, this does not indicate that translation is as easy as it might appear at first glance because finding equivalents between two languages is sometime difficult. In addition to culture and linguistic gaps (1988, P51) argues that translators might

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encounter semantic gaps because the meaning expressed in any language is a network of relation .So, in translating a text, translators should be aware these of relations in both the ST and the TL so as to give as accurate translation as possible. One of the semantic relations are prepositions which are one of the main components of the part of speech in all languages of the world, and they play a very important role in making the speech understandable and clear Amamra (2015, p4). In light of this, the study is designed to identify the difficulties of translating Arabic prepositions in the Holy Quran into English. The aim is to see how the translators rendered prepositions from the Holy Quran into English, and to discuss the problems and strategies concerning translating Quranic prepositions. The selection of linguistic items of the target language for conveying the meaning of the source language is very important in the translation. This research takes a corpus based-approach to describe how the components of the original text have been adequately carried over to the target language. It aims to describe the translation by two professional Quran translators who are assumed to have done their best reach lexical adequacy and semantic equivalence in translation of Quranic preposition.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Quran was revealed in Arabic language, so any translation is an interpretation of its meaning. Some translators are more faithful to the original, while others are less faithful with translating it. In this sort, Amjad (2013,P128) pointed out that about more than eighty percent of 1-5 billion population of Muslims do not know Arabic and use translation as a means to understand the meaning and the messages of the Holy Quran, hence it is necessary to pay attention to the way these translations are done.

The idea of equivalence at different levels has been a necessary concept in translation studies and Quran translation. Abdul-Raof (2001, P7) argued that one cannot deny the importance of equivalence in the translation theory. He believes that whether at the micro-levels or at macro-levels, one cannot achieve complete harmonic equivalence for languages. On this basic, the translation of prepositions in Holy Quran is very difficult for the translators. Amamra (2015, P4) said that prepositions are one of the major problematic area that have difficulties and problems in translating from Arabic into English. When the Arab as a foreign language learners master English prepositions, they will commit mistakes in translating it for finding appropriate equivalent. The main problem does not depend only on finding the equivalent preposition, but also in understanding its use when it is transferred into English language. Thahir (1987) as cited from Akhtar, S, Waqas, S, and Muhammad, R (2017), mentioned that English prepositions cause problems and difficulties for Arab students due to the lack of knowledge of some English prepositions and their usage. While (Scott and Tucker, 1974) as cited in (Akhtar, Sohail, and Rizwan(2017,P24) claimed that English prepositions do not have fixed rule, and they are not always corresponding to Arabic language, because English and Arabic languages are different in syntax and prepositions are one of the most difficult aspects of syntax.

The previous shows that there is much literature addressing the Interlingual transference of prepositions. However, this study attempts to identify translation strategies adopted by an Arab-Muslim translator and a non-Arab non-Muslim translator so as to determine the successful translation that keeps the intended rhetoric of prepositions in the Holy Quran when they rendered into English.

### **III. TRANSLATION OF RELIGIOUS TEXTS.**

Religious texts are the structure writing which includes the belief of a religion. These texts are a guidance for the believers of the religion. Elewa (2014, p25) points out that the translation of religious texts has been a key element in spreading the divine message throughout history. It was employed also for teaching people the basics of religion and for reflecting the beauty of faith and morality around the world. As a powerful instrument for predicatory purposes, it should be as accurate and precise as possible, so the translators must understand the original source text and transfer it faithfully, accurately and completely into the other languages without adding or omitting any part of the original content. In the field of translation, translating a religious text is difficult because these texts present rules of religious beliefs which might be lost in the translation. Also religious texts reflect specific cultures and cultures vary around the world. As cited from (Elewa, 2014) there are some feature in translating a religious texts which are discussed below.

## ***The Features of Translating the Holy Quran***

### ***Phonic aspects of religious texts***

One of the special features of religious texts is the use of sound devices to make the content easy to narrate, memorize and quote, such as (alliteration, assonance and rhyme scheme).

### ***Lexical aspect of religious text.***

Religious text is characterized by its use of expert lexical items, for instance the name and attributes of God such as "Allah", "Almighty", as well as names of religious figures like prophet "Mohammad", "Abraham".

### ***Parallel structures in religious text.***

This means the use of two relative synonyms to make the utterance more emotive and impactful. This phenomenon is also called (doublets, uses ward pairs) that are syntactically equal and semantically related and this phenomenon, and it is used when the speaker's fluency is needed for cogent the addresses

### ***Syntactic features of religious text.***

Syntactic features are also important in translation such as capitalization, imperative and subjective.

- A. Capitalization: it is widely used in translated religious texts for dominant theologically significant reasons.
- B. Imperative: it is another syntactic feature that shades the religious language. This is widely used for giving instructions advice and speech as a form of "a direct address language" (Leech, 1966: 34), for example:
  1. Imperative plus subject such as "Go thou..." or "Do we sit".
  2. Imperative plus vocative, which is more frequently used in Islamic text than the first type such as "Grant O Lord..." or "pray, brethren..."
  3. Imperative addressing God. In religious discourse we often find direct address to God in the form of a

supplication. However, supplication is exclusively used to address God alone. A supplication may or may not use the name of God as a vocation in conjunction with "O" for example Bless, O lord our God, this year for us".

- C. Subjective: The subjective concept is a verb form that expresses prospective action or a possibility opinion, an emotion, it used when we have doubt, fear, obligation etc. For example" If I were you, I would have done it.

## ***Semantic feature of religious translation***

The translators should contend to transfer the intended meaning of the ST completely into the TT. Sometimes translators find a number of ST words or expressions with no direct equivalent. So the translators have little freedom to use the techniques proposed for nonequivalence. Hence, the translators should allow the signs and images of the source text to be interpreted by the reader on his/ her own.

## ***The problems of translating the Holy Quran.***

When we read the translations which translate the Holy Quran, we find that there is a set of problems that the translators faced them, one of them there is no linguistic equivalent, and the difficulty of transference the meaning with squirreling on the original text. AL-Hadary (2008, P192) defines a translation is a task performed by human beings to make human communication possible. In translating, we first understand the source text and then explain it for ourselves or someone else. The translators often say something quite different in order to get across the meaning of certain difficult source texts. Bakar (1992, P17) in her book discusses the problems of non-equivalence at word level. She pointed out that the target language has no direct equivalent for award which occurs in source text. She says that the type and level of difficulty depends on the nature of nonequivalence, the context and purpose of translation will often exclude some strategies and support others, so there are some problems as cited from Bakar (1992, P21) she talks about the effect of culture-specific concepts, and she explains the distinctions between the source language and target language from where expressive meaning and form, where the target language lacks a superordinate and specific terms.

### **IV. SYNTACTIC-SEMANTIC ISSUES OF PREPOSITIONS**

Prepositions are one of the main components of part of speech in all languages of the world, and they play a very important role in making the speech understandable and clear. Dizier (2006,p2) argues that the prepositions can first be viewed as a functional category in syntax; they are heads of preposition phrase. The preposition then hierarchically dominates the noun phrase. Prepositions can also seem as a semantic relation between structure that precedes it e.g (verb) and another one that follows it e.g (noun phrase).Quirk (1973,p14) says that" preposition expresses a relation between two entities, one being that represented by the prepositional complement, the other by another part of the sentence." It is obvious from this definition that a preposition performs the function of linking two parts of speech, such as linking a noun to a verb, a noun to an adjective, or a verb to an adjective. Building a relationship between two entities in a sentence. Now it is better to illustrate the use of prepositions in English and

Arabic.

## ***Prepositions in English and Arabic***

English and Arabic prepositions have some characteristics in common and they differ in other. Prepositions in both languages are different in number and usage, but in both languages prepositions work to show a relation between group of words in the sentence.

As cited by Amamra (2015, p4), (Dykes, 2007) the word preposition is defined as that a Latin word (praepositio) which means "placed before". Preposition is a word such as (on, in, at....) often used before a noun or pronoun to show or define its relationship with another word in the sentence. The use of preposition is one of the most crucial problems that cause problems for the translation trainees of English language. as Many scholars such as Takahashi (1969,n.d), stated that mastering the correct usage of preposition is one of the hard areas for the learners of English. English prepositions do not have fixed rules, so it is difficult to master them because they have different functions according to their usage in the English language.

According to Basra school, prepositions are defined as they are concerned with their noun. The preposition in Arabic works to link the words of the sentence. (Huruf Aljar) are made up of two parts; Huruf (حروف) which mean "particles" and (Aljar) (جر) which means preposition. Prepositions play a very important role in understanding the speech of the Arab speaker. Prepositions help to clarify the Linguistic structures specially the relationship between the noun and verb Amamr (2015, p10). While Lakkis and Abdal Malak (2000, p.26) mention that the number of prepositions in Arabic are very limited, but at the same time, each one of them can work to save a variety of purpose.

### **V. METHODOLOGY**

This section is devoted to explain the approach of this study, data collection and data analysis.

### ***Data and approach of the study.***

The study is qualitative in nature as it explores the translation behavior of an Arab Muslim translator (Ghali 2003)and non-Arab Muslim translator (plamer, n.d)when they translate the preposition in Holy Quran into English. The purpose is to examine whether the linguistic and cultural / religious backgrounds of the translator have effect on the accuracy of translation. The data collection of this study is done by reading the Holy Quran and considering other studies which handled the translation of Quranic preposition, but have not focused on the rhetorical preposition in these verses such as,"Aenun Yashrab Biha Ibad Allah "(Al Ansan.6)." Laosalebanakom fi Jotho'o Alnakla" (Taha.71). (Alm Tra ela allathi) (Albakara.258).

### ***Data analysis***

Firstly, the data analysis is based on Quranic verses and their counterparts in English that presented by two translators, An Arab Muslim translator (Ghali,2003) and non-Arab non-Muslim translators (palmer,n.d). Secondly,

the selected verses are interpreted according to Arab Muslim exegeses namely, Altabari (2000), Ibn katheer (1999), Altantawy (1998) and Alqurtubi (1964). Finally, the accuracy of each translation is determined according to the difference and meanings of preposition in Arabic and English, also the effect of the cultural and religious background of the translators.

It is devoted to present the interpretation of the selected prepositions in each verse in order to show the reason behind using these prepositions in their non-location from rhetorical aspects.

## ***A. 1 Yashrab biha***

(عينا يشرب بها عباد الله يفجرونها تفجيرا) سورة الإنسان الآية (6)

(Spring whereat drink the bondmen of Allah, making it to gush forth with plenteous gushing (i- e, abundantly). **(Ghali)**)

(Spring from which Gods servants shall drink and make it gush out as they please!). **(palmer)**

This verse is interpreted by Al-Tabari (2000), and Ibn katheer (1999) that the preposition will change the meaning of verb that preceded it because the preposition is not suitable with previous verb. The interpreters say that the verb drink (yashrab) means (irrigate). (yartawy) and the meaning of (irrigating) (Alertewaa) the scrumptiousness in the drinking, but Al-Tantawy (1998) and Alqurtubi (1964) argue that the verb drink does not change its meaning despite the change of preposition accompanying it, that means the preposition (Al baa) means adhesion because those to the intensity of their passion for drinking, they are joining by water not leaving it.

## ***Translation Issue***

In the comparison between two translators, there is a distinction between the two translators in transferring the meaning of preposition in the Quranic texts. The first translator (Ghali) keeps away from literal translation and he tries to translate the meaning but he changed the preposition (biha) into (where at) in order to investigate the suitable meaning of this preposition where (where at) refers to the place of drinking. While the second translator does not sense the difference between the verse and its meaning because he is non-Arab non-Muslim so he replaces the preposition (biha) with another preposition because he thinks that both of them have the same meaning.

## ***A.2 Laosalebanakm fi***

(لأصلبنكم في جذوع النخل) (سورة طه الآية 71)

(And indeed I will definitely crucify you upon the trunks of palm tree). **(Ghali)**

(And I will surely crucify you on the trunks of palm tree). **(palmer)**

In the interpretation of this verse, the three interpreters Al- Tabari (2000), Al-Qurtubi (1964), and Al-Ttantawi (1998) agree that the preposition in this verse does not have its original meaning, but it has the meaning of (on) (ala) i.e. Laosalebbankm ala jothoo ALnaklah, but Allah uses the preposition (Fi) because Pharaoh makes holes on the palms and he wanted to tightens them hardly till they become like they are. Whereas, Ibn katheer (1999) says that the preposition changed the meaning of the verb to be, I will anneal you placing in the palms of trunks.

## ***Translation Issues***

There is a difference between the two translators, for instance Ghali uses the preposition (upon), while palmer uses the preposition (on), but the two translators are not very close to the original text. They use compensatory preposition that is consistent with verb (anneal you).

### ***A.3 Ela Allathi***

(الم تر الى الذي حاج ابراهيم في ربه) (البقرة:258)

(Have you not regarded him who argued with Ibrahim about his Lord). (**Ghali**)

(Do you not look at him who disputed with Abraham about his Lord). (**Palmer**)

In the interpretation of this verse, Ibn Katheer has a different opinion among others interpreters. He sees that the verse does not refer to the vision with abstract eyes (visual), but it refers to the cardiacvision, because it is unnatural to use the preposition (to) (ela) with the verb (see) (yra). Speakers of the Arabic use the preposition (to) (ela) with the verb (see) (nazar), where we say (look at) not (see to). So this means that the preposition gives the verb another meaning which is mental and hearty consideration. The interpreters, on the other hand, Al Tantawi (1998), Al Qurtubi (1964), and AlTbari (2000) agree that the preposition that used in this verse points out to marveling.

## ***Translation Issue***

In the translation of this verse, there is a difference between the translations. Ghali does not translate this verse literally, but he changes the wards according to Arab's understanding, so he deletes the preposition that has been mentioned in this verse, then he replaces the verb (see) with (regarded) that means thinking or account. Ghali is interpreter more than literal translator. While Palmer replaces the preposition (to) into (at) and he changed the verb (see) into (look). Palmer is very close to literary translation more than Ghali.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

Through the interlingual transference of prepositions as rhetorical devices in the Holy Quran into English by the two translators (Ghali and Palmer), the study concludes that there are minimal differences in meaning by using the preposition, and using them interchangeable distorts the Quranic rhetoric. Also the communicative value of discourse came up by transferring such prepositions is restricted by the cultural and religious background of the translators. As revealed in the previous section, palmer as a non-Arab non-Muslim translator missed some shades of meaning of prepositions which are accurately translated by Arab Muslim translator Ghali who is also able to present the functional interpretation in the light of the discourse functionality of verses having target prepositions.

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