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THE TRANSLATION OF REFERENCE SWITCHING (*ILTIFAT*) IN SURAT AL-BAQARAH

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ABSTRACT

Reference switching(*Iltifat)* is a unique style found in the holy Qur‟an. It is a rhetorical device that has a tremendous impact as a means of communication. It is considered as one of the remarkable aspects found in the Glorious Qur‟an. The Qur'an is the only form of Arabic prose to use this rhetorical device *iltifat* in an extensive and complex manner. However, reference switching may constitute a problem for translators in transferring reference switches from one language environment to another, particularly when working with a sacred text such as the holy Qur‟an. Moreover, reference switching is used in the Qur'an to serve various pragmatic functions. Reference switching in the holy Qur‟an does not occur haphazardly or randomly, but instead it creates some special effects that would encourage the reader to search for some kind of implicature. This study looks at the translation of reference-switching (*iltifat)* in Surat Al-Baqarah and focuses on three aspects: firstly, it identifies the reference switching in Qur‟anic discourse especially in surat Al-Baqarah and its translation into English; secondly, it looks at the pragmatic functions of *iltifat* (reference-switching) and finally, the study will look at the strategies employed by the translator to transfer reference switching that is obvious in the Qur‟an to the target language (English).

Keywords: reference switching, *Iltifat*, translation, pragmatic functions, strategies, textuality, intertextuality.

INTRODUCTION

There are many challenges in translating the Qura'nic text from Arabic into other languages; hence it is impossible to get a perfect translation of the Qur'an. The text of the Qur‟an has some very unique characteristics that its translation is bound to lose. The Qur‟an has its own style and rhythm that is neither poetry nor prose. It has a rare beauty and it is sublime. Furthermore, the Arabic of the Qur‟an is a very rich language, and many of its words have numerous shades of meaning that often cannot be easily found in other languages including English. While the classical Arabic of the Qur‟an which is a living language requires more study in order to fully appreciate and understand the depths of meanings. English and Arabic belong to different language families. Arabic language originates from the Semitic language family in contrast to the Germanic language family for English. Consequently, it is natural for the two language systems to differ. This could cause problems in translation as Baker (1992:86) claims that the differences in the grammatical structures of the source and target languages often result in some changes in the information content of the message during the process of translation. These changes may take the form of adding to the target text information which is not expressed in the source text.

Reference switching is considered to be problematic in translation due to the differences between the two languages. It is more problematic when it takes place in a sensitive text such as the Holy Qur'an. Hatim and Mason (1997) indicate that in the rhetoric of a number of languages, including Arabic, reference switching involves a sudden and unexpected shift from the use of one form (a particular tense or pronominal reference) to another form within the same set. In the area of pronominal reference, this may be illustrated by the switch from the first person, which may be the norm and therefore the expected option in a given co-text, to the second person, which in that co-text constitutes a departure from the norm. Shifts of reference can occur also in the area of tenses (e.g. from an unexpected past tense to an unexpected present tense or vice-versa), in number (e.g. singular instead of plural), and /or gender (e.g. masculine to feminine). In addition to shifts in the addressee, shifts in the case marker are mentioned by Abdul-Halim (1992). The translation of reference switches especially in the area of pronominal reference will be particularly elaborated upon this paper.

It is worth noting that reference switching (*Iltifat)* is a unique feature of the holy Qur"an which is responsible for its dynamic style. This feature, also known as grammatical shift, plays a rhetorical role as the sudden changes are perfectly logical and are used to enhance expression. For Arab rhetoricians, reference switching *(iltifat)* in Qur"anic discourse is a linguistic ornament whose pragmatic function is to achieve vividness and avoid monotony of style. For Arabic linguists, shift is employed to color the Qura"nic discourse (Abdul-Salam 1982); it is therefore, a unique rhetorical feature in Arabic. English, however, does not tolerate this Arabic pragmalinguistic norm (Abdul-Raof 2005). So this study will not only investigate the translation of reference switching in Surat Al-Baqarah but also its pragmatic functions

We will be adopting the framework of text-linguistics in this paper in order to attain a comprehensive analysis of reference switching in the translation of Surat Al-Baqarah by Yusuf Ali based on the instances marked by Abdul-Halim"s (1999) .Beyond diverging models which operate in different fields and modes of translating, the textual model, focuses on the source and target text. The text is a set of mutually relevant communicative functions that hang together and are constructed in such away to respond to a particular context and achieve the overall rhetorical purpose(Hatim and Mason 1997) and the translator (communicator) is the one who tries to communicate concepts of the source to the target. The inclusion of textual, pragmatic and communicative models of translation would pave the way for a more open and realistic approach to equivalence (Hatim and Mason 1997;Neubert and Shreve 1992).

In relation to reference switching, it constitutes a popular style of the Qur'an. This stylistic feature poses certain problems for the translator and the receptor of the message(Ahmed 2004). There are many challenges translators find while translating Qur'anic texts from Arabic to English. One of these challenges is translating reference switching *(iltifat)* (Hassan 2011). Abdul-Haleem (1999) also states that the finer points of certain types of *iltifat* may not appear in the translation of the Qur"an into a European language (like English) which differs from Arabic in certain aspects of styles. The target readers especially those who are not familiar with the Arabic language will have problems comprehending the Message of the holy Qur"an . Nevertheless, for the most part of literature written on reference switching, there is

a gap in the analysis of reference switching and describing its pragmatic functions and the strategies used by Yusuf Ali in translating reference switching.

The significance of reference switching results from the fact it is a textual phenomenon which is well- known in the rhetoric of a number of languages(Hatim and Mason 1997). According to Abdul-Raof (2001)shift or reference switching is defined as the most common feature of Qur'anic discourse. This makes reference switching worth investigating in this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite of the number of studies in which Arab linguists discussed *Iltifat* or reference switching, these works looked at reference switching or *iltifat* as a rhetorical device in Arabic rhetoric and one of the unique styles that is extensively used in the holy Qur"an in comparison with prose and poetry. Further, these studies did not focus on the translation of reference switching nor attempted to provide the target readers with thorough illustration of pragmatic functions of reference switching especially in Surat Al- Baqarah, the first chapter of the holy Qur"an and the second Surat after Al-Fatihah.

There have been a number of studies that dealt with *iltifat* in the holy Qur"an and it is related to translation. One of these studies is Hatim and Mason (1997) whose concept of reference switching is adopted for this study. Hence, *iltifat* has different names by different contemporary scholars. Ahmed (2004) calls it digression. Abdul-Raof (2001) refers to it as a shift. Hatim and Mason(1997) slightly touched upon the problems of comprehension of the Qur"ānic translation, particularly with reference to the „style of the original text of the Qur"ān" which causes confusion for the receptor of the Message. They refer to reference switching in a number of languages like Arabic comparing to other languages where reference switching does not exist like English. In this study, Hatim and Mason commented on a few translated examples taken from sacred books like the holy Qura"n and the bible. Other studies like Al-Quran and Al-Azzam(2009)"s study which seems close to the current study. However, this study differs in the following points: First, the adopted name of *iltifat* is Hatim and Mason"s term of reference switching and not apostrophe used by Al-Qur"an and Azzam. Second, this study is proposing the model of textuality by Neubert and Shreve in identifying reference switching. Thirdly, this study focuses on the pragmatic function of *iltifat* using Baker"s approach of implicature which is not touched upon in Al-Qur"an and Al-Azzam"s study of apostrophe. Fourthly, this study focuses only on Chapter Al-Baqarah. However, in Al-Qur"an and Al-Azam"s study, the data consists of 9 examples taken from the whole holy Qu"ran and they are randomly selected. Fifthly, in this study one translation namely Yusuf Ali"s translation(1983) is selected to be a target text to be compared with the source text. Sixth, regarding the exegesis, in this study only two exegesis selected which are Al-Qurtubi(1997), and Az-Zamakhshari(2005).

On the other hand, Durakovic (2008) conducted a study on *iltifat* . This study aims at analyzing the concept of *iltifat* "twist" and its main function in the Qur"an especially in the verses of *Al-Fatiha* , the first Sura of the Qur"an. The researcher made two conclusions. First, there are significant differences between this trope in the sacral

text and its equivalents that are offered in the European literature: European terms rhetorical deixis, apostrophe, phantasm, etc. do not entirely cover the meaning and function of *iltifāt* in the text of the Qur"an, in which this figure of speech has considerably more nuances. The second conclusion he comes out with is that the sacral text gives grounds for extending the interpretation of *iltifāt* in the traditional Arabic stylistics itself. In other words, this figure of speech does not remain only on the level of the sudden change of persons and rhetorical perspective, but the Qur"an develops and grades it in such richness that can be concluded that *iltifāt*, beside denoting a sudden change of persons, also includes a sudden change of tenses as well as active and passive forms.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this paper, there are two models and one approach that will be used for this study. We will adopt the framework of texuality. Neubert and Shreve"s model textuality is used to investigate the translation of reference switching in Yusuf Ali"s translation.

Textuality, a linguistically oriented work on translation was primarily initiated by scholars like Beaugrand (1981), Neubert and Shreve(1992), and Hatim and Mason(1997) who made valuable contribution to both textual approach and translation. Neubert and Shreve"s model of textuality is selected to be adopted for this study.

According to Neubert and Shreve, textuality in modern text linguistic integrates translation procedure, world knowledge with the text as a product. Textuality as described by Neubert and Shreve as the most promising candidate to date refers to the complex set of features that texts must have to be considered texts. In the context of translation studies, the principle of textuality can be used to define the conditions under which an L1 text and its L2 counterpart can be said to be textually equivalent. The effective translator must understand the conditions that combine to create textuality if he or she is to manipulate them in the interests of the target text reader. The textuality of the text cannot be revealed fully by a linguistic surface of the text nor by the linguistic surface of a text. Textuality is induced by the linguistic surface but is not confined to it. So there are seven broad characteristics of texts which combine to produce the complex property of textuality. The seven features mentioned by Neubert and Shreve(1992) are intentionality, acceptability, situationality, informativity, coherence, cohesion, and intertextuality. Linguistically speaking, text is a communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality. If a text fulfils all textuality conditions, then it will be a text that will logically follow the seven standards. It will also follow the cooperative principles amongst them the maxim of quantity, and will try to make the contribution as informative as is required and not more informative than is required. (Leech 1985& Levinson 1983).

The focus of this study will be on the seven features mentioned above. These seven characteristics of texts will form the basis of our examination for the English translation of reference switching (*iltifat*) in surah Al-Baqarah. Since reference switching is a style and one of the rhetorical devices of the holy Qur"an so the

translation of this style by Yusuf Ali from Arabic to English can be judged based on the seven characteristics of textuality mentioned by Neubert and Shreve.

Furthermore, Halliday and Hassan"s model of cohesion(1976) to identify reference switches in the target text based on the source text. In addition, Baker"s (2011) approach of implicature will be used to detect the pragmatic meaning of reference switching and finally Newmark"s methods will be used to be compared with the strategies Yusuf Ali uses in his translation of reference switching.

Adopting such models, we will analyze Yusuf Ali"s translation of reference switching. This paper will come out with the strategies Yusuf Ali uses in his translation for reference switching. Furthermore, the implied meaning of reference switching will be thoroughly studied based on Baker"s pragmatic approach of implicature.

Method and Data collection

The data under analysis in this paper consists of the source text and the target text. For the source text, Surat Al-Baqarah is chosen to be the corpus of this study because searching the whole Qur"an is a formidable task. Besides this surah has the highest number of reference switching compared to other Surahs of the holy Qur'an. Based on Abdul-Haleem (1999), comparing the total number of all the surahs of the whole holy Qur"an, it is shown that chapter Al-Baqarah has the highest number of reference switches which is 55. Therefore, this chapter has been selected as the source text of this study. From the 55 examples, only 30 examples will be used in the analysis of the data of this study as it is hard to consider all the types of reference switching due to their inconsistency. Reference switching in personal pronouns are chosen based on the following:

- Comparing all the types of reference switching in chapter Al-Baqarah, it is noted that the highest number of reference switching is in personal pronouns and the number is approximately 30 reference switches.

- It is more consistent and it is the most interesting as far as translation is concerned.

- It is the most commonly known and was called *iltifat* before other types were labelled as such or as related to *iltifat*.

For the target text, the selected translation is Yusuf Ali"s translation. In terms of the choice of translation, Yusuf Ali"s translation(1983) is chosen. There are other well-known English translations of the Qur"an, but Yusuf Ali"s translation is the most widely read translation of the Qur'an in English. Yusuf Ali"s translation has been selected because of a number of considerations: Firstly, his translation has been selected by a committee of scholars and specialists formed by Amana Corporation USA, in cooperation with the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), to represent the most recognized and authentic available English translation of the Qur"an. The committee"s decision was in favor of Abdullah Yusuf Ali"s translation

(Khan 1997). Secondly, it is the most translation known to scholars for its relative accuracy (Kidwai, 1998; Saab, 2002). Thirdly, Kidwai (1998) reviewed Yusuf Ali‟s translation and concluded that it represents the sense of the original. Finally, regarding the English translation, Pickthall commented that Yusuf Ali‟s translation was in better English than any previous English translations by an Indian (Khan 1997).

There are other references that are also used for this study. In this study, there is a need to use exegesis or Tafasir in order to comprehend the context and the meaning of the verses containing reference switching in order to detect their implied meaning. There are two exegesis of the Qur‟an that will be consulted in this study namely, Tafsir Al-Qurtubi (1997) and Tafsir Az-Zamakhashari (2005). The two selected exegeses (tafasīr) are among the most widely used and highly esteemed treatises of tafsīr among the Muslims. Al-Qurtubi (1997) is one of the most unanimously agreed upon and appreciated treatise of tafasir. This tafsir is very comprehensive. It has also commented on the meanings of verses, scrutiny of difficult words, composition and rhetoric and relevant narrations in the exegesis. Az- Zamakhashari is introduced by Abdul-Roaf (2001) as a well-known linguist, syntactician and a man of literature. He provides interesting rhetorical and semantic analysis of the Qur‟an.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

There are three major phases that are followed to analyze the data of this study. In the first phase, we will read the source text and identifies reference switches by referring to the exegesis and rhetoric books on holy Qur'an. This study will depend on Abdul-Halim(1999) in eliciting the number of reference switches. Abdul-Halim has indicated the positions of reference switching in the holy Qur‟an based on books on balagha in Arabic like Ibn al-Athir(637/1239), Suyuti (911/ 1505), Badr al-Din al- zarkashi (794/ 1391). In addition, to these books, he shows his own treatment which illustrates that reference switching occurs much more extensively in the Qur‟an than even these figures suggest. Then we will read in depth the two main Tafsirs (exegesis) to comprehend the verses containing reference switching and the context of situation. The   verse   explanation   and   any   contextual   information   is necessary for understanding will be given. There will be heavy dependence on Tafsirs(exegesis) for explanations and background information. The exegesis used will basically include Al-Qurtubi(1997) and Al-Zamakshari (2005).

In the Second phase, based on Halliday and Hassan‟s (1976) model of cohesion, we will identify reference switching in Yusuf Ali‟s translation. Then, the reference switches that have been identified in the source text in the first phase will be compared with their renditions in the translation of Yusuf Ali (1983) to show how reference switching is translated by Yusuf Ali (1983).This step of analysis required us to show the references in the target text and how the switch from one pronoun into another is reflected and conveyed in the translation of Yusuf Ali. This can be done by examining the linguistic structures and the signals since the logical relations are often embodied in these structures. Then, this step is followed by an examination of the translation based on Neubert and Shreve‟s seven variables of translation. It will be shown how has the translator Yusuf Ali achieves the intentionality, acceptability,

situationality, informativity, cohesion, coherence, intertextuality in his translation for reference switching.

In the third and last phase of this study, we will investigate the pragmatic functions and the implied meaning of reference switches in the texts and find out whether the transferred meaning in the target language reflects the source language meaning. Next, we will point out the methods and strategies used by Yusuf Ali to compensate any loss of meaning with reference to Newmark"s methods (1988). It is important here to point out that this study does not aim to criticize Yusuf Ali"s translation, but to investigate the extent to which the translator succeeds in transferring reference-switching that is obvious in the Qur"an to the target language and to relate that outcome to the translation methods used.

SAMPLE OF THE ANALYSIS

قال تعالى:
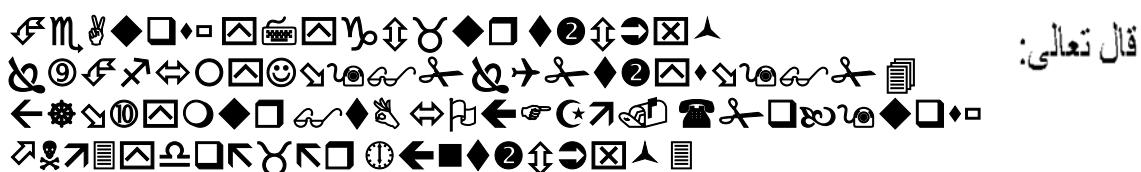
Transliteration: Fawali / wajhaka / shatr /Al-masjid /Al-haram / wahathu /ma/ kuntum / fawalu / wujuhakum / shatrah/

Gloss: turn/ your face(O prophet) /towards / mosque / holy /and / whenever / you(plural)(O muslims) are / turn(pl) / your faces / towards it/

Ali's translation (1983): then turn Thy face in the direction of the sacred Mosque: Wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction.(Al-Baqarah,2:144)

Phase 1: Reference Switching

Iltifat (reference switching) in this verse is shown that the first addressee is addressed again, he is addressed with others. The reference switches from addressing the prophet(peace be upon him) to addressing other people including the prophet peace be upon him. This shouldn"t be understood as a source of a Qur"anic shortcoming, but rather as a source of rhetoric and inimitability.

Phase 2: Ali's Translation

In Ali"s translation, this switch is not apparent. It is not clear whether the address is for the prophet or for people. In the first part (turn thy face in the direction), Allah, the almighty God is addressing the prophet but it is not obvious in the translation. Then the switch starts with (wherever you are) which refers to others including the prophet but in Ali"s translation it is ambiguous to understand. The only word that shows the switch is " your faces", though the switch exists also in the prono uns such as " you" in " whenever you" .The translation of this verse under discussion show lack of cohesion in the view of the receptive language readers. They may perceive the pronoun shift as a

shortcoming of the translated version as the translator has not provided his translation with illuminating information that can explain reference switching as a rhetorical feature of the Qur"an. Thus, readers of the translated version may think and they have the right to think that the address is to people from the beginning of the verse; however it starts with addressing the prophet and then switches to address people including the prophet. The switch is clear and Ali is trying to make pronoun consistency but this changes the meaning of the verse from " Fawli wajhakah " at the beginning of the verse to " Fawalu Wujuhakum" and it continues with a plural pronoun until the end of the verse and the switch is ignored totally.

Phase 3: Pragmatic Function

In the verse above, the prophet(peace be upon him) in answer to his prayer to be directed to a new Qibla- is told to turn his face to the holy mosque in Mecca. Thereafter, he and all the Muslims are requested to do so for their prayer, from whatever location they may be. This kind of structure has a rhetorical effect and an implied meaning because the second addressees realize that they are also connected to the message.

Translation Strategy

In Yusuf Ali"s translation, reference switching of the original text is not preserved. Reference switching was completely ignored in the translation. This translation doesn"t convey the real intended meaning of reference switching as a rhetorical style of the Qur"an. The strategy that Yusuf Ali uses in translating reference switching in the verse mentioned above is literal translation. According to Newmark (1988), literal translation at the lexical level, it is similar to word-for-word translation while at the grammatical level the nearest TL equivalent is to be found. Yusuf Ali translated the verse literally , he translated " your faces" as plural as it is in the original but in the grammatical level, he tries to be closer to the structure of TL ignoring that the pronouns such as " you" in Arabic can be for singular and plural. So when he translates " wherever you are" from where the switch starts, he does not pay attention that in the source you is addressing people including the prophet but in his translation it is not clear whether it refers to people or to the prophet. So the verse is translated literally ignoring the loss of meaning it causes. Reading the translation will not reflect the meaning of the source text. Explanatory notes is urgently needed to explain about *iltifat* in the verse, and its implied meaning so it will be easier for the target language readers to comprehend.

CONCLUSION

This paper comes out with a certain number of conclusions from the data analyzed above. It has been found out that understanding reference switching or *Iltifat* is a complicated task and its translation seems more complicated not just for the target readers but also for translators. Based on the example discussed in this paper, Yusuf Ali"s translation didn"t provide enough attention *to iltifat*. The paper has shown that reference switching has various pragmatic functions and implicature that cannot be easily understood by ordinary readers of the Qur"an. In addition, this paper in hand has

demonstrated that the holy Qur"an as a sacred book is rhetorical and needs deep understanding of the various textual implications and any misunderstanding of the rhetorical features of the Qur"anic text may lead the readers to consider it as poorly structured, and lacking coherence and unity. Finally, the data and analysis presented in this paper have demonstrated that translating reference switching is not an easy task and the meaning cannot be conveyed to the target readers appropriately without referring to the exegesis for its understanding and exerting different efforts to communicate its meaning to the target readers.

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