

Interpretation and Translation of Figures of Speech in the Holy Qur'an: Implications and Theory

ALSHAMMARI HASAN RSHAI¹   and SHEHDA R.S. ABUISAAC² 

¹University of Hail, Hail City, Saudi Arabia

²University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, Malaysia

✉ **Corresponding Author:** ALSHAMMARI HASAN RSHAI¹, **E-mail:** Hdjdj962@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to examine how rhetorical speech acts interface at the lexicosemantic and pragma-emotive levels in the Qur'an. It examines how these acts are interpreted and translated into English despite the fact that one speech act may convey two or more figures of speech i.e., irony, exaggeration, understatement, satire, etc. The selected data samples are methodologically classified and interpreted according to Allusional Pretence Theory by Nakamura, and Nida's Theory of Equivalence. The data samples are qualitatively analysed. The findings show first that there is a vast body of multiple functions and dissociative thoughts resulting from rhetorical speech acts interface in the Qur'anic discourse. The findings show that translating interrelated rhetorical speech acts is a formidable challenging task due to fundamental differences in the syntactic, semantic, phonological and pragmatic aspects differentiating the Arabic linguistic system from its English counterpart. Componential Analysis Approach is found essential in solving the semantic ambiguities of the source language lexical items into the target language text.

1. Introduction

Translating figures of speech from one language to another is a thorny task burdening the shoulders of professional translators (Al-Azab & Al-Misned, 2012). This study attempts to investigate rhetorical speech acts interface, namely irony, hyperbole, understatement and satire, which are the most complex types of figures of speech, under which all other types and sub-types are categorized at the pragma-cognitive level. The study examines the multi-functional and interpretive dissociative thoughts of semantic and pragmatic aspects of these interrelated rhetorical speech acts in discursive texts in the Qur'an and investigates their translational equivalence in the English version by Arberry (1955). While the analysis focuses on the semantic and pragmatic aspects and interpretive transfer from the Arabic texts of the Qur'an to modern-day English, it is the prior identification of the referred rhetorical speech acts in the multiplicity of their genres that makes a solid foundation for this research paper. The translations of rhetorical speech acts are analysed and interpreted in their full context because figurativeness and rhetoricity of (meta)cognitive speech acts are conveyed at the entire discourse level (Raymond & Gibbs, 2012). The intercultural importance of rhetorical speech patterns indicates yet another overlay that will have to provide important data on the use of figures of speech as a stylistic variety of expression in the spoken Arabic language in contrast to rhetorical speech patterns used in the English language (Abdul-Ghafour, 2019). When it came to choosing an English translation of the Qur'an out of a huge scope of diachronic and synchronic texts the selection was finally narrowed down to a search for a classical translation of high quality and international reputation which pointed to the huge acclaim of Arthur Arberry's translation of the Qur'an. The major approach in comparing the equivalence between Source Translation (ST) and Target Translation (TT) will examine the likeness and difference to formal or dynamic attitudes that may reveal Arberry's attitude towards or its fluctuation between the original Arabic source text and his English readers' expectations. This study may bring aesthetic literary value of the Qur'an to the fore, and bring new insights into the technical skills of literary translation in the field of culture-specific terms and lexicographic items that are charged with semantic and pragmatic connotations.

1.1 Research Statement and Research Questions

Rhetorical speech acts in the Qur'anic discourse are inter-linguistically and culturally diverse in their potential forms and realizations. Semantic and pragmatic aspects of the Arabic language are unique in their own forms and features (Ali, 2012). Ali (ibid) states that "translating the Holy Qur'an from Arabic into other languages is accompanied by many linguistic problems, as no two languages are identical either in the meaning given to the corresponding symbols or in the ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences". This means that "lexical, syntactic and semantic problems arise when translating the meaning of the Holy Qur'an into English" (Ali, 2012:1). This study argues that translating rhetorical speech acts out of context neither retains the original interpretive meaning nor retains the multiple interpretive dissociative thoughts and functions at the pragma-emotive level. The present study tries to answer these questions 1- *How does rhetorical speech acts of the Qur'anic discourse interface at the lexicosemantic and pragma-emotive levels* and 2- *How does Arberry's (1955) translation of rhetorical speech acts interface in the Qur'an affect the English translational equivalence at the lexicosemantic and pragma-emotive levels?*

2. Literature Review

Figures of speech in the Holy Qur'an portrays a beautifully meaningful phenomenon without which the aesthetic essence is missing. Highly salient types of figures of speech such as irony, hyperbole, understatement and satire may be on the top of the figurative paradigm of rhetorical speech acts at the pragma-emotive level in the Qur'an. 'Figure of speech is defined as "termed a rhetorical figure or trope, is a word used in some derivation from the strict literal sense of the word(s), or from the more commonly used form of word order or sentence construction" (Green, 2006). Understanding figurativeness of rhetorical speech acts bridges the gap of the (meta) cognitive barrier blocking the TT readers' comprehension of the implicitly entailed meaning, the directionality and intentionality of the ST speech parameters. (Green, 2006) highlighted that "figurative modes and models lie at the heart of human consciousness and thus underlie the process of conceptualization experience. These figurative modes include, in addition to metaphors, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony". Figurative language is considered a basic stylistic property whose essence plays as a key to understanding the unique nature of all poetic discourse (Green, 2006). Intercultural interference of rhetorical speech acts at the bilingual level is a dynamic process that requires a communicative situation between the dynamic speech interlocutors (Chovanec, 2017). This dynamicity is, however, found missing in Arabic-English translation of the intercultural speech acts which in most cases convey the rhetoricity of the contextually figurative meaning of a wide set of interrelatedly pragmatic-based tropes. This intercultural interference of meaning was discussed by (Green, 2006). To many, rhetorical speech acts are cognitively separate. This claim, however, has been refuted by (abuissac et al., 2020), who emphasised that "figures of speech are interrelated and thus their conveyance is entirely based on the accurate selection of the lexical item whose semantic diagnostic features are similar to the lexicosemantic diagnostic features of the source language lexical item". This accurate bilingual selection of the shared lexicosemantic diagnostic features is essential in determining the intended rhetorical speech act since figures of speech are parasitic in nature and thus have common (meta) linguistic and pragma-emotive nuances that produce unique functions and meanings at different levels i.e. social, theological, pragma-emotive, logical etc.. (see, Abuissac et al., 2020).

Abdelaal (2018) investigated intercultural differences attributed to the translation of connotation in the Qur'an. He discussed different cultural aspects affecting the accurate rendering of connotative meanings of the Quranic connotative acts into English. However, his analysis fell short of not investigating the interplay between figures of speech conveyed by one utterance.

The rendering process of (meta)linguistic utterances resulting from the complex phenomenon of culturally-bound utterances generates a boarder range of highly salient figures/tropes of speech (see, Abuissac et al., 2020). Having examined and worked on some of the well-known translations of the Holy Qur'an, it is reported that none of these translations make use of contextually pragma-syntactic approaches of meaning realization and interpretation for rhetorical speech acts interface. This, therefore, lessens the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary forces on the TL readers/audience and may cause serious misunderstanding of the sacred Message at the pragma-emotive/communicative level.

Languages belonging to different linguistic systems usually view the world differently (Kashgary, 2011) particularly at the (meta) cognitive level. The process of rendering the essence of rhetorical speech acts from Arabic into English is challenging since there are many *untranslatable figurative speech acts*. Such untranslatability is an absolute outcome of the two different cultures that Arabic and English belong to (Kashgary, 2011). Translating rhetorical speech acts pose a thorny issue at the intercultural communication level, for instance, (Kashgary, 2011) reported that "the issue of untranslatability has been one of the major concern for many translators particularly translators dealing with religious and creative texts". (Abdelaal & Rashid, 2015) argued that "semantic losses, cultural losses or inequivalences, can result from overlooking the literariness or figurativeness of semantic losses". In other words, the authors were trying to spill out that the rhetoricity of the figurativeness of speech acts hinder the smooth transference of the ST item into the TT. This is, in line with the main claim of the current paper, for the fact that the pragma-emotive meaning that conveys the essence of the ST expressiveness and intentionality is not possible to well-render into the TT without the proper transference of the meaning of the ST item at the lexicosemantic level, which functions as a necessary condition for transferring other associated meanings. Language of the Qur'an is rich at the lexicosemantic level, and thus many

synonyms in Arabic have no equivalents in English. English lexicon, however, falls short of introducing accurate lexical items to convey the multiple meanings conveyed by the ST item. (Abdelaal & Rashid, 2015) stresses that “richness of synonymous vocabularies in the Arabic language, in general, and the Qur’anic language, in particular, poses difficulties for a translator as he may use one synonym in lieu of another that is more accurate”. Since figures of speech play at the core (meta)cognitive and pragma-emotive levels of language, their interrelated relationship is mandatory, yet, there is no holistic theory that has systematically investigated the interrelation and interface of these figures of speech. However, some scholars tried to categorize all figures of speech under one holistic framework i.e. (José & Mendoza, 2020), who argued that “if metaphor and metonymy are integrated into a general theoretical framework for figurative meaning that also takes into account the rest of figures of speech, even avowedly minor ones, specifying their nature and relations to one another so that each figure finds its place within the system. If relations are made explicit, the overall picture will be one of a unified approach to figurative language”. As claimed by (José & Mendoza, 2020) traditional approaches have fallen short of providing a systematic account of interrelations among figures of speech, since the aim of these approaches was of descriptive nature rather than explanatory or interpretive.

3. Methodology

This research is of an interpretive and comparative nature to investigate a new linguistic phenomenon at the cross-cultural level. Methodically, this study makes use of only five texts where the referred rhetorical speech acts interact and produce a board range of functions and dissociative thoughts at the (meta) cognitive and pragma-emotive levels of the Qur’anic discourse. The qualitative analysis has been done in accordance with Hancock (2009) who states that qualitative analysis is used to describe an issue or a phenomenon, to investigate what it means and to understand it. The selected texts were verified by two authorized experts in cross-cultural translation. The author adopts the criteria set by Wilson’s model (2013) of distinguishing rhetorical speech acts from non-rhetorical speech acts.

3.1 Theory Used

All data samples are categorized and analysed in two main sections: 1- *pragmatic analysis* and 2- *translational equivalence analysis*. *Allusional Pretence Theory* (APT) by Nakamura (1995) is used to analyse and interpret rhetorical speech acts of the Qur’anic discourse into English. By this theory, the study demonstrates how interrelated rhetorical speech acts i.e., irony, hyperbole, understatement and satire interface at the lexicosemantic and pragma-emotive levels. This also enables the researchers to highlight all types and functions of these interrelated figures of speech. As to the second research question, Nida’s (2003) *Theory of Equivalence* is used to examine the accuracy of translation in rendering rhetorical speech acts from the Qur’an into English at the lexicosemantic and pragma-emotive levels. To answer this question, the study analyses (meta)linguistic aspects and devices used in the SL rhetorical speech acts interface into English.

3.2 Data Analysis

The analysis follows an individual description of the respective assertive category and continues to proceed through all exemplary ironical utterances in following first the structural aspects of Arabic and Latin transcriptions into the English translation by Arberry (1955) and presenting last the pragmatic analyses of the Arabic original and the translational equivalent:

- a) Arabic version (numbered)
- b) Arabic Version in Latin Script
- c) English Translation (Arberry 1955)
- d) Pragmatic Analysis of the Arabic Original
- e) Pragmatic Analysis of the English Translational Equivalent

Exemplary Samples

Text 1

a) Arabic Version

“ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ” (Al-Qur’an, 44:49)

b) Arabic Version in Latin Script

“Dhuq 'Innaka 'Anta Al-'Azīzu Al-Karīmu”

c) English Translation (Arberry 1955)

“Taste! Surely thou art the mighty, the noble”.

d) Pragmatic Analysis of the Arabic Original

This ironic text “ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ” transliterated as {Dhuq 'Innaka 'Anta Al-'Azīzu Al-Karīmu}, and translated as “taste! Surely thou art the mighty, the noble,” consists of a *hybrid* rhetorical speech act whose locutionary force is that of directive, while the illocutionary force is that of critical assertive. According to APT, the utterance can be interpreted by two different cognitive mechanisms, the first of which is *pretence*, through which the angels of Hell echo an imaginary allusional speech act that

resembles *Abu-Jahl's*² previous actual utterance; the second of which is *echoic pretence* through which different dissociative thoughts are generated. There is a violation of a norm-based expectation that Abu-Jahl should not have said he was mighty and noble when meeting Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Such a violation of pragmatic maxim of relevance and quality generates a range of dissociative thoughts. The ironic speech act alluding to the speakers' based-norm expectation is violated; thus, the Speaker's contemptuous attitude has been conveyed to a range of various dissociative thoughts. The violation of the pragmatic principle of quality and relevance leads to the incongruity between what is literally said and reality. Such an incongruity is a key for the rhetorical interface between irony, hyperbole, understatement and satire. The utterance is ironic, hyperbolic and satiric in that it mocks the address at a larger scale where the kind utterance is totally different from what is taking place. The functions of irony presupposed by the ironic speech act are socio-aggressive presupposing *mockery* through which other dissociative thoughts are produced, such as dispraise, criticism, contempt and insult.

e) Pragmatic Analysis of the English Translation Equivalent

First, the translator translated the locutionary force of the imperative speech act "ذُقْ" {Dhuq}, into the TL as "taste". The first effective semantic technique used by the translator in retaining the ironic meaning is *expansion* where the translator explicitly added "surely" as a discourse marker, whose function is to relate the first speech act "ذُقْ" into the rest of the discourse structure. The epistemic adverb of certainty is implicitly expressed in the source language text (SLT), and the pragmatic meaning is arrived at first through the pragmatic violation of the quality and relevance maxims, and second by the sequential relation of meta-primary speech act interpretation. The rhetorical speech acts interface in Arabic "الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ" transliterated as "Al-'Azīzu Al-Karīmu" are literally conveyed into English as "the mighty the noble". Hence, the multiplicity of rhetorical meanings is missing since the ST rhetorical speech acts interrelate irony to hyperbole and satire.

Text 2

a) Arabic Version

وَعَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ (Al-Qur'an, 38:4)

b) Arabic Version in Arabic Script

Wa `Ajibū 'An Jā'ahum Munḏhirun Minhum Wa Qāla Al-Kāfirūna Hādhā Sāḥirun Kadhābun

c) English Translation (Arberry 1955)

Now they marvel that a warner has come to them from among them. And the unbelievers say: this is a lying sorcerer.

d) Pragmatic Analysis of the Arabic Version

This Qur'anic text (2) consists of complex primary assertive speech acts presupposing a range of illocutionary forces. The historical background of this text reveals that the unbelievers called Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) as a sorcerer and liar. This is due to prophet Mohammed's preaching to his people to believe in Allah and to give up worshipping idols. However, they refused and started accusing him of being a sorcerer and liar. According to APT, the type of irony conveyed through the ironic speech act is severe satiric echoed by intense hyperbole, which functions as a discourse marker and a discourse strategy for irony recognition. The unbelievers used the hyperbolic adjectival form of the lexical items "سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ" { Sāḥirun Kadhābun } translated, as "this is a lying sorcerer" to mock and criticise the prophet. To conclude, the ST utterance entails different types of rhetorical speech acts such as irony which is echoed by hyperbole and satire as well as understatement. This rhetorical interface conveys a range of dissociative thoughts generating various functions and dissociative thoughts. The first function is *theological* presupposing the unbelievers' denial and disbelief of Prophet Mohammed's being a Messenger of Allah. The second function is *psycho-aggressive* that presupposes the unbelievers' false accusation that Prophet Mohammed is a sorcerer. The unbelievers' accusation shows their psychological state of first being frustrated of trying to hinder Prophet Mohammed from preaching Allah's Message, and second of being angry at Prophet Mohammed to stop inviting people to embrace Allah's Religion. The third function is *psychological* presupposing the unbelievers' dissatisfaction with the prophet due to his preaching of the Message. The fourth function is *socio-psychological* presupposing first the unbeliever's hatred of the Prophet. Another socio-psychological function is *envy*, which is highly affected by social hierarchical factors. In other words, the unbelievers are envious that the revelation has been sent to Prophet Mohammed, but not to any of them.

e) Pragmatic Analysis of the English Translation Equivalent

The translator translated "وَعَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ" {Wa `Ajibū 'An Jā'ahum Munḏhirun Minhum} literally as "Now they marvel that a warner has come to them from among them". In the SLT, the noun phrase "مُنْذِرٌ" { Munḏhirun } means that "prophet Mohammed", whose task is *informing and warning* people about the Hereafter, Paradise and Hellfire. The translator, however, shifted the noun phrase "مُنْذِرٌ" literally as "warner", which may have many functions depending on situational context. The translator used a semantic translation strategy using a synonymic noun phrase to convey the meaning of the SL noun phrase.

² Amr ibn Hishām Maghzoomi, also called Abu al-Hakam or Abū Jahl, was one of the Meccan polytheist pagan Qurayshi leaders known for his opposition towards the Islamic prophet Muhammad and the early Muslims in Mecca.

The translator literally shifted the noun phrase “سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ” {Sāhīrun Kadhābun}, consisting of “سَاحِرٌ” {Sāhīrun} as a noun, and “كَذَّابٌ” {Kadhābun} functioning as an adjective whose function entails hyperbole, to an adjectival phrase consisting of an adjective “lying”, and noun “sorcerer”. Thus, the translator used a syntactic translation technique in shifting the post modifier adjective from the ST to the TL. Since the adjectival phrase “كَذَّابٌ” has a hyperbolic form, the translator could have replaced the adjectival phrase “a lying sorcerer”, with a post modifier adjectival clause such as “a sorcerer who continuously and deliberately lies”. The use of simple present tense along with adverbs of certainty within the adjectival clause may help emphasize the ironic meaning of the SL speech act into the target language text (TLT). This may therefore retain the meaning of the hyperbolic adjectival form. This is because the emphasis that is syntactically conveyed by post modifier adjectives is more effective than the emphasis conveyed by the pre-modifier adjectives. To conclude, the translation is formal-based and the full sense of the original is not retained in the TT.

Text 3

a) Arabic Version

مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْآخِرَةِ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَافٌ (Al-Qur’an, 38:7)

b) Arabic Version in Latin Script

Mā Sami`nā Bihadhā Fī Al-Millati Al-`Ākhirati 'In Hādhā 'Illā Akhtilāqun

b) English Translation (Arberry 1955)

We have not heard of this in the last religion; this is surely an invention.

d) Pragmatic Analysis of the Arabic Original

According to Al-Zamakhshari, there are three possible interpretations of this meta Qur’anic text “مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْآخِرَةِ” transliterated as {Mā Sami`nā Bihadhā Fī Al-Millati Al-`Ākhirati 'In Hādhā 'Illā Akhtilāqun}, and translated as “We have not heard of this in the last religion”. The first interpretation is about the unbelievers’ denial of the Message of Islam, claiming that they neither heard of it in their old religion, nor did they hear of it in the last religion (Christianity). They even claimed that they did not hear of Islam from monks and priests. Hence, they refused to believe in it. The interpretation of this meta Qur’anic text “إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَافٌ” {‘In Hādhā 'Illā Akhtilāqun} translated as “this is surely an invention” is that the unbelievers accused the Prophet’s Message of being fabricated for it is different from what they believed in. According to APT, there is a rhetorical interface between figures of speech conveyed by Qur’anic utterance. This interface is conveyed by lexicosemantic and paralinguistic devices. This demonstrates that irony and hyperbole as well as understatement are interrelated. This is conveyed by the unbelievers’ violation of a norm-based expectation about their denial of any other religion that is not theirs. The first function produced by this rhetorical interface is *theological* presupposing the polytheistic leaders’ disbelief, denial and refutation of Prophet Mohammed’s Religion. The second function is *socio-psychological* presupposing first the polytheistic leaders’ mockery of the Prophet in order to *underestimate* him and convince their society that the Prophet is nothing but a liar. Second, the socio-psychological function also presupposes the polytheistic leaders’ psychological concern and fear that Islam would be prevailing in the society, and so be socially accepted. Third, the socio-psychological function also shows the leaders’ anger at the prophet. This is due to first their fear that the religion would be spreading fast in the society, and second due to their frustration that they could not refrain the Prophet from preaching his Religion. Fourth, the socio-psychological function shows the leaders’ disrespect and dissatisfaction with the prophet.

e) Pragmatic Analysis of the English Translation Equivalent

The Qur’anic utterance “مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْآخِرَةِ” transliterated as {Mā Sami`nā Bihadhā Fī Al-Millati Al-`Ākhirati}, was translated as “we have not heard of this in the last religion”. In the SLT, “الْمِلَّةِ الْآخِرَةِ” {Al-Millati Al-`Ākhirati} translated as “the translated religion” is a metonymic compound noun referring either to the last Religion (Christianity) revealed to Prophet Jesus (PBUH), or Quraish’s religion. According to the exegeses of the Qur’an, the former interpretation is the intended one. The translator literally translated “إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَافٌ” {‘In Hādhā 'Illā Akhtilāqun} as “this is surely an invention”. The translator used “surely” as a syntactic device functioning as an epistemic adverb stressing certainty and emphasis. There is a semantic void in the synonymic metonymic replacement of the lexical items of the SLT into the TLT. Thus, the translation has failed to render the meaning of rhetorical speech acts interface into English.

Text 4

a) Arabic Version

(Al-Qur’an, 50:3)

إِذَا مَثَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ذَلِكَ رُجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ

a) Arabic Version in Latin Script

'A'idhā Mitnā Wa Kunnā Turābāan Dhālika Raj`un Ba'idun

c) English Translation (Arberry 1955)

What, when we are dead and become dust? That is a far returning!

d) Pragmatic Analysis of the Arabic Original

This Qur'anic text consists of a simple meta performative speech act. This Qur'anic text manifests the unbelievers' denial of the Day of Judgement that they believe it is impossible for them to be resurrected after death. This presupposes the unbelievers' disbelief and denial of being alive again. According to APT, the type of irony is parody where the unbelievers utter an imaginary act through which echoic mechanism is arrived at. Echoic mechanism presupposes sarcasm through which the unbelievers convey a range of dissociative thoughts. It is obvious through the sarcastic irony that the unbelievers mock the prophet's Message and preaching, claiming that there is no resurrection after death. Another type of irony is hyperbole, which is conveyed through the adjectival hyperbolic form "بَعِيدٌ" {Ba`idun}, which refers to the unbelievers' absolute denial of the Last Day. There is a violation of the unbelievers' expectation that they be resurrected again on the Day of Judgment. Such a violation of the unbelievers' norm-based expectation made the unbelievers echo a range of dissociative thoughts and attitudes. To conclude, there are three types of irony. The first type is *parody* conveying an imaginary insincere speech act; the second is *sarcasm* conveyed by hyper-verbal irony, which conveys the conceptual content of the speaker's intention; and the third *hyperbole*. The first function of irony is *theological* presupposing the unbelievers' disbelief, denial, doubt and refutation of the fact that they be resurrected on the Day of Judgment. The second function is *socio-psychological* presupposing the unbelievers' anger, hatred and mockery of the fact that they be resurrected on the Day of Judgment.

e) Pragmatic Analysis of the English Translation Equivalent

The translator translated the rhetorical question "إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا" {A'idhā Mitnā Wa Kunnā Turābān}, as "what, when we are dead and become dust?". To retain the pragmatic meaning of the SL ironic speech act into the TL, the translator used explicitness translation strategy playing at the pragmatic level. This has been done by the addition of the syntactic particle "what", which would help retain the possible pragmatic interpretations of the ironic speech acts. This is because the insertion of "what" into a full-made rhetorical question first adds many cognitive inferences arrived at by reader, and second draws reader's attention to the fact that there are implicit meanings presupposed beyond the literal meaning of the question. "ذَلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ" {Dhālika Raj'un Ba'idun} is translated into "that is a far returning!" The translator literally shifted the entire clause, starting with a demonstrative particle. Thus, the noun phrase "رَجْعٌ" {Raj'un}, which means according to the exegeses the Qur'an "resurrection or returning to life after death", as "returning". Similarly, he translated "بَعِيدٌ" meaning "impossible" as "far". To conclude, there is a formal-dynamic equivalence interface where the translator used a syntactic device to convey the implicit meaning of "إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا" {A'idhā Mitnā Wa Kunnā Turābān} explicitly into the TL. The translator, however, used synonyms playing at the semantic level as well as an exclamatory mark "!" functioning as a stylistic device in order to convey "ذَلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ" into the TL. Despite that there is still semantic void that the TL lexical items do not semantically share the semantic properties and features of the SL lexical items. This thus distorts the rhetorical speech acts interface at the pragma-emotive level.

Text 5

a) Arabic Version

" قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصَلَاتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ نَتْرَكَ مَا يَعْْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا أَوْ أَنْ نَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ " (Al-Qur'an, 11:87)

b) Arabic Version in Latin Script

Qālū Yā Shu'aybu 'Aṣalātuka Ta'muruḳa 'An Natruka Mā Ya'budu 'Ābā'uunā 'Aw 'An Naf'ala Fi 'Amwālīnā Mā Nashā'u 'Innaka La'anta Al-Ḥalīmu Ar-Rashīdu

c) English Translation (Arberry 1955)

11:87 "They said, 'Shuaib, does thy prayer command thee that we should leave that our fathers served, or to do as we will with our goods? "Thou art the clement one, the right-minded".

d) Pragmatic Analysis of the Arabic Original

This Qur'anic text consists of complex meta speech acts implying a range of illocutionary forces. The ironic utterances are conveyed through the vocative structure and through stylistic devices. Rhetorical question is used first as a strategy for irony recognition and second as an illocutionary force-indicating device. According to Al-Zamakhshari, prophet Shuaib³ was mocked by his people for he was worshipping Allah. His people sarcastically mocked him telling him that "أَصَلَاتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ" {Aṣalātuka Ta'muruḳa} translated as "does thy prayer command you?". The communicative rhetorical function of the unbelievers' question presupposes ironic mockery of Shuaib. This presupposition results from the situational context where the unbelievers think it's prayer that gives Shuaib commandments that they should first believe in Allah as one God and that they should not cheat people when they weigh them goods. According to APT, this Qur'anic text "قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصَلَاتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ نَتْرَكَ مَا يَعْْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا" {Qālū Yā Shu'aybu 'Aṣalātuka Ta'muruḳa 'An Natruka Mā Ya'budu 'Ābā'uunā 'Aw 'An Naf'ala Fi

³ Shuaib, Shoaib or Shu'ayb, was an ancient Midianite Nabi, sometimes identified with the Biblical Jethro. He is mentioned in the Quran a total of 11 times.

{Amwālinā Mā Nashā'u } translated as “they said, 'Shuaib, does thy prayer command thee that we should leave that our fathers served, or to do as we will with our goods?”, implies various illocutionary forces. The type of irony is satire, because people of Shuaib apparently praise him as being *the clement one and the right-minded*. The implicit intended meaning of the unbelievers’ utterance, however, is dispraising and echoing a range of dissociative thoughts such as contempt, disrespect, disbelief, doubt and accusation of the prophet’s being fool and not aware of what he is saying. The satiric meaning of ironic speech acts is transmitted through the adjectival hyperbolic form, functioning as a stylistic device “الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ” {Al-Ĥalīmu Ar-Rashīdu} translated as “**the clement one, the right-minded**”. This meta speech act belongs to *the expressives category*, because it conveys an ironically insincere compliment. This is because there is a violation of the pragmatic maxim of quality. The conversational implicature thus is generated. The function of the adjectival hyperbolic form is to stress the ironic meaning of the speech act. In other words, Shuaib is known as the *clement one, the right-minded* among his people, however, his new preaching makes his people perceive him differently. To conclude, there is a conversational interface between two main categories of speech acts in this Qur’anic text. It is obvious that a critical assertive speech act conveyed by the rhetorical question intersects with an expressive speech act conveyed by a hyperbolic compound noun. Both categories interface at the pragmatic level and produce satiric irony that is conveyed by hyperbolic irony functioning as a pragmatic strategy for irony recognition. There is a range of dissociative thoughts implied and presupposed by ironic speech acts. The first function is theological presupposing the unbelievers’ disbelief, denial and refutation of Allah’s religion. The second function is elevation presupposing the unbeliever’s understatement of their prophet Shuaib. The third function is aggressive presupposing the unbelievers’ sarcasm and ridicule of their prophet. The fourth function is social presupposing the unbelievers’ trial to persuade prophet Shuaib to stop preaching them about Allah’s religion and asking them to give up worshipping their idols.

e) Pragmatic Analysis of the English Translation Equivalent

The translator *literally* translated “قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصَلَّاتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ تَتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا أَوْ أَنْ تَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ” {Qālū Yā Shu`aybu 'Aṣalātuka Ta'muruḳa 'An Natruḳa Mā Ya'budu 'Ābā'uunā 'Aw 'An Naf'ala Fī 'Amwālinā Mā Nashā'u } into English as “they said, Shuaib, does thy prayer command thee that we should leave that our fathers served, or to do as we will with our goods?”. First, in the SLT, the vocative particle “يَا” {Yā } is a rhetorical device having a social pragmatic function used by the unbelievers to get the attention of Shuaib, and used to express the unbelievers’ surprise, annoyance and dissatisfaction with Shuaib. Despite the importance of the vocative particle, it is not translated in the TLT. The translator used *semantic shift* translation technique in translating the verb phrase “يَعْبُدُ” {Ya'budu} meaning “worship” in the SLT, into “serve” in the TLT. The translator literally rendered the intended meaning of “أَوْ أَنْ تَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ” {Aw 'An Naf'ala Fī 'Amwālinā Mā Nashā'u } as “or to do as we will with our goods”. The translator used *synonym translation technique* in rendering the multi-semantic aspects of the SL noun phrase “أَمْوَالِنَا” {Amwālinā}, meaning “our money”, into the TL as “our goods”. The translator retained the semantic properties and features of the SL, translating it into *subordinate* into the TLT. The translator used *expansion translation technique* to translate “إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ” {Innaka La'anta Al-Ĥalīmu Ar-Rashīdu} “thou art the clement one, the right-minded”. This is done by the translator’s shift of the SL adjectival phrase “الْحَلِيمُ”, consisting of one lexical lexeme into a noun phrase as “the clement one”. This adjectival phrase consists of two lexical lexemes, functioning as an adjectival phrase “clement”, and a demonstrative noun phrase “one”, which refers to the proper noun “Shuaib”. In the SLT, “الْحَلِيمُ” {Al-Ĥalīmu} means “someone being patient, reasonable and forgiving”; it is, however, translated into the TLT as “clement”, meaning “showing kindness and mercy to somebody who is being punished”. The translator, on the other hand, translated “الرَّشِيدُ” {Ar-Rashīdu} as “the right-minded”, which semantically entails the loaded meaning and pragmatically entail the forceful intended meaning of the SL adjectival phrase into the TLT. To conclude, the translation is formal-based. Four translation techniques functioning on the semantic level are used: 1-*literal* translation, 2- *semantic shift*, 3- *expansion* and 4- *synonym*. Meaning is partially retained as there are lexical items suffering from semantic void in the TLT. This is because the TL lexical items used in conveying ironic meaning of the SL speech act do not share and convey the semantic properties and features of the SL ironic speech acts. Thus, the rhetorical speech acts interface is distorted.

4. Findings and Discussion

In line with data analysis, rhetorical speech acts are found to interplay with one another, for instance, irony is found to interface with hyperbole, satire, understatement, sarcasm, and parody. There are many functions resulting from rhetorical speech acts interface, for instance, theological function is found to interface with socio-psychological and aggressive, social and aggressive as well as socio-aggressive and elevative status. Many dissociative thoughts are generated and thus interfaced out of the relationship between these rhetorical speech acts, for instance, all these dissociative thoughts interface with each other: *denial, disbelief, refutation, dissatisfaction, fear, anger* and *hatred*. It is found that semantic, pragmatic, cultural and emotive aspects of interrelated rhetorical speech acts pose a major problem and challenge in interpreting and translating these interrelated speech acts from the Holy Qur’an into English. Differences in semantic and morpho-phonological aspects between Arabic and English pose the second major challenge in interpreting and translating the multiple meanings of these interrelated rhetorical speech acts into English. Differences in syntactic and cultural aspects between Arabic and English pose the third major challenge in interpreting and translating the multiple meanings of these interrelated rhetorical speech acts into English.

5. Conclusion

The findings of the study show first that there is lack of semantic and pragmatic equivalence in Arabic-English interpretation and translation of hyper-ironic speech acts of the Qur'an into English. This is because emotive meanings of the overall situational context of speech acts in the Qur'anic discourse is bound to a strictly specific range of semantic constraints open to various interpretations. Second, the study concludes that Arabic and English are, to some extent, similar at the denotative level, that is, many lexical items in Arabic have approximate equivalents in English. Both languages, however, are dramatically different in the pragma-emotive aspects immersed and rooted in the cultural context and social norms i.e. register, field and tenor. Third, the study concludes that Arabic has its unique phonological system presenting hyperbolic irony, which is never easy to render to another language. Fourth, formal equivalence, at the denotative level, has the merit of conveying the meaning of ironic speech acts of the Qur'anic discourse into English. This capacity, however, is blocked by different linguistic and cultural realizations. Linguistic differences, in many cases, lead to unintelligibility, while cultural differences affect the degree of accuracy of the rendering process of rhetorical speech acts interface from the Qur'an into English. Unintelligibility and inaccuracy occur due to the fact that rhetorical speech acts entail and presuppose a range of figures of speech that either interface or are included within the cognitive structure of the rhetorical speech acts. Fifth, the study concludes that while formal equivalence is dominant in the translation, dynamic equivalence interfaces with formal equivalence in some texts. The findings show that ironic speech acts have a prominently assertive nature in all texts except in one text ironic speech acts have expressive nature at the locutionary force level and assertive nature at the illocutionary force level.

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