

Religious Translation between Arabic and English, with Reference to Quranic Rhetorical Questions

Najjar, Ibrahim; Amir Kadhim, Kais

Religious Translation between Arabic and English, with Reference to Quranic Rhetorical Questions

Respectus Philologicus, vol. 39, núm. 44, 2021

Vilniaus Universitetas, Lituania

Disponible en: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=694473930010>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15388/RESPECTUS.2020.39.44.82>



Esta obra está bajo una Licencia Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional.

Religious Translation between Arabic and English, with Reference to Quranic Rhetorical Questions

Ibrahim Najjar inajjar87@hotmail.com

Arab Open University, Israel

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0349-8804>

Kais Amir Kadhim kaisamir2011@hotmail.com

Sohar University, Arabia Saudita

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3081-9757>

Respectus Philologicus, vol. 39, núm. 44,
2021

Vilniaus Universitetas, Lituania

Recepción: 16 Diciembre 2020

Aprobación: 05 Marzo 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15388/RESPECTUS.2020.39.44.82>

Redalyc: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=694473930010>

Abstract: Translating rhetorical questions from one language into another is not an easy task at all. This is due to the fact that rhetorical questions are not posed to elicit information, but rather to denote something else, namely rhetorical functions or purposes. Such functions might be changed and or distorted in translation if certain issues are not considered. Of these issues is the tenor of rhetorical questions. As such, the current study is an attempt to investigate Quranic rhetorical questions that denote rhetorical functions such as negation, testing, and showing abundance to determine the extent to which the tenor of such questions is preserved in the English translation of al-Hilali and Khan (1996). Toward this end, the interpersonal metafunction of the Quranic rhetorical questions and their English translation is analysed. In this case, the study employs Halliday's (1996) tenor and its associated metafunction, i.e., interpersonal metafunction. The analysis shows that the tenor of Quranic rhetorical questions under investigation is maintained, highly distorted and partially distorted. Consequently, the functions of such rhetorical questions are mostly affected.

Keywords: interpersonal meaning, rhetorical questions, tenor, translation, Quran.

1. Introduction

The present research article focuses on the English translation of rhetorical questions in the Quran. More specifically, the current study concentrates on the tenor of Quranic rhetorical questions with the functions of negation, testing, and showing abundance to determine the extent to which it is preserved in the English translation.

As known, rhetorical questions are not used to elicit information, but rather, they are posed for specific functions. Using the qualitative approach, six Quranic rhetorical questions and their English translation are analysed based on Halliday's (1994) ideas on the tenor of discourse and its associated meaning, i.e., interpersonal metafunction. The English translation of the Quran by al-Hilali and Khan (1996) is used.

The novelty of this research stems from the fact that rhetorical questions have not received due attention, especially from the perspective of translation. Besides, the analysis of the translation of the tenor of Quranic rhetorical questions together with the interpersonal

metafunction has not been investigated before. Therefore, the current study would show how the tenor of rhetorical questions in the Quran is translated. It would display whether the translators are able to maintain this important variable, i.e., tenor, or else, since it is one important variable for the context of the situation and context of the situation is so important to consult and transfer correctly when translating the Quran.

2. About Rhetorical Questions

As claimed by Siemund (2001, p. 1015), rhetorical questions “can be found in all languages of the world, and they also appear to be functioning in a comparable manner.” Similarly, Ellingworth (2013) writes that rhetorical questions are found in all languages, with some languages using them more than the others. Moreover, Hackstein (2004) emphasises rhetorical questions as a cross-linguistic phenomenon in both written and oral discourse.

The rhetorical question has the form of a question but does not expect an answer. Rather, the rhetorical question is used to deliver or denote a rhetorical purpose or function. In this context, Larson (1984, p. 257) writes, “the label, rhetorical questions, has often been used to indicate interrogative grammatical forms which are used with a non-question meaning”. He further explains that the speaker makes use of a grammatical form, which its basic use indicates that it is a question, but the speaker’s purpose is not seeking information; however, he/she might want to command, request, emphasise, etc. Larson (1984) concludes that when such a grammatical skewing occurs, the question form is called a rhetorical question. In this respect, Ilie (1994, p. 130) explains that rhetorical questions are “heard as questions and understood as statements.” In the same way, Abioye (2011) provides that the rhetorical question is a figure of speech that comes in the form of a question used for its persuasive effect and no answer is expected.

This means that the syntactic structure of the rhetorical question is similar to that of a real question; however, their functions are different. Under this circumstance, Rudanko (1993) states that since there is no distinction between the real question and the rhetorical question with regard to their forms, the yes/no questions and wh-questions can be carried over to the analysis of rhetorical questions. Moreover, Ellingworth (2013) mentions that linguists and those working on English identify two types of questions which are the yes/no questions and wh-questions, where sometimes they require answers and other times they require not. Those which do not require answers are rhetorical questions.

Being non-seeking information, rhetorical questions are intended to provide some purposes or functions. Scholars in Arabic and English have provided lots of purposes or functions served by rhetorical questions. In English, Ilie (1994), for example, showed several functions for RQs such as warning, promising, challenging, etc. Further, Koshik (2005) explained that English language speakers use rhetorical questions to perform different actions, such as accusations, contests, and complaint.

Likewise, in Arabic rhetorical questions can be used for denial, negation, exclamation, etc.

With respect to translation, Quranic rhetorical questions, especially their tenor and interpersonal metafunction, have not enjoyed much attention from researchers or have not been studied at all. Therefore, the current study concentrates on the tenor of Quranic rhetorical questions with the functions of negation, testing, and showing abundance to determine the extent to which it is preserved in the English translation.

3. Rhetorical Questions in Arabic

Arab grammarians, e.g., Sibawayh, al-Mubarad and others, discussed rhetorical questions when they tried to clarify and explain the different faces and uses of interrogation in Arabic. Briefly, an interrogative is a sort of grammatical classification of a sentence type used to elicit an answer. Thus, grammatically, questions are usually referred to as interrogatives in form. Concerning this, the Arabic word for interrogation is “al-Istifham”. Etymologically speaking, the word “al-Istifham /interrogation” is not only a verbal noun that is derived from the verb “Istafhama/interrogated”, which means, “asking for understanding” (Bofama, 2014) but is also related to the noun “al-Fihim /understanding” that denotes “understanding things by heart” (al-Fayroz Abadi, 2001). For this reason, Arab grammarians defined interrogation as interrogating the listener about things that the interrogator does not know.

The grammarians noticed the deviation of the Arabic question, whether in the form of yes/no question or wh/ question, from its original meaning, where it gave rise to another meaning. In this context, al-Mubarad (1997, p. 277) stated, “the question in Arabic is not always real; sometimes you might notice that it carries a rhetorical purpose”. Likewise, Sibawayh acknowledged that the Arabic question might sometime skew its ordinary meaning and give another one. To explain this, he talked about the rebuke function (1998, p. 52). Furthermore, al-Fara’a (1983) mentioned that Arabic questions are sometimes rhetorically used to serve specific functions such as testing, glorification, exclamation, and rebuke. He remarked that sometimes the question particle “##” (hal) makes the Arabic question rhetorical. This contrasts with Sibawayh, who claimed that “##” (hal) is only used for real questions. However, other grammarians like al-muthana (1961) confirmed that “##” (hal) can be used for rhetorical purposes. According to him, it sometimes means “verily or certainly”, thus giving an assertive rhetorical question. al-Raba’i (H.D. 420) in al-Qazwini (2010) explained the different rhetorical meanings for some Arabic questions’ elements such as “###” (when) and “####” (where). According to him, the question element “####” (where) makes the Arabic question a means for glorification. To confirm his idea, he gave an example from the Quran “#####” (yas’luna ayan yuom I-qyama) “He asks when will be the day of resurrection?” (authors’ translation).

The Arabic term for the rhetorical question is “al-Istifham al-Balagi”. As mentioned earlier, while “al-Istifham” is a verbal noun that is derived from the verb “Istafhama”, “al-Balagi” /rhetorical/, on the other hand, is an adjective that is derived from the noun “al-balagah/ rhetoric”. In this sense, “al-Istifham al-Balagi” is not only deemed to have functioned as a noun phrase at a syntactic level but had also acted as a stylistic device with particular functions.

In the same way as Arab grammarians, Arab rhetoricians paid great attention to rhetorical questions. In fact, the rhetoricians adopted some of the grammarians' progress and studied these interrogations or questions from a rhetorical point of view. Generally, the rhetoricians defined the question as asking to get information from the hearer. However, they also noticed that it is not always used for that purpose. In relation to that, Sa'ad al-Deen al-Taftazani was the first rhetorician who noticed the deviation of Arabic questions from their original meanings, where they gave rise to other meanings. He said that “these questions are sometimes used with non-interrogative purposes” (Aida, 2012, p. 62).

Similarly, al-Subbki (1992) in his book “A'ros al-afrah” stated that interrogation is a kind of request, which might not be used for this purpose. Thus, the rhetoricians considered the question in Arabic can be real, i.e., it needs an answer, and rhetorical, i.e., it denotes rhetorical meanings. These rhetorical meanings or functions are not arbitrarily generated. There are some factors, which form the basis for them. The context of the question, the speaker's intention, the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, and the structure of the question can be good indicators to show such functions (al-Balakhi, 2007, p. 54).

3.1. Functions of Rhetorical Questions in Arabic

The functions of Arabic rhetorical questions vary from one scholar to another. While some scholars like Ibn Khalawiyh (1996) may consider rhetorical questions as having four functions like order, rebuke, equalization, and affirmation, there may be others who had believed otherwise. Therefore, this had prompted many Arab grammarians and rhetoricians to attempt distinguishing the different functions of rhetorical questions by looking at both the context and structure of the question. Arab scholars agreed on ten prominent functions for Arabic rhetorical questions (Rajdal, 2013). In the current study, three of them, such as negation, testing, and showing abundance, are studied and explained.

3.1.1. Negation

To Negate something. Linguistically, the word negation in Arabic revolves around ejection and making things go away. Ibn Manthor in Aida (2009, p. 78) says, “negating a man is expulsing him and negating a thing is denying it”. Using a question with the function of negation

influences the hearer and makes speech more elegant. Moreover, letting the hearer confess on the negation is more rhetorical and emphasizes the things negated (Aida, 2009).

3.1.2. Testing

Another function for rhetorical questions in Arabic is testing. In this context, the speaker tries not to get an answer from the hearer, but instead, he/she tries to test the hearer (Rajdal, 2013).

3.1.3. Showing Abundance

To show a number or plenty of things. Linguistically, the word “#####” (al-takthir) comes from the verb “#####” (kathara), which means made it too many. Sagir (2015) says that the event occurs more than once. Talking about this function, al-Soyoti (2015) in his book “al-Itqan fi ulum al-Quran” gave an example from the Quran as “## ### #####” /how many towns (population) have we destroyed? (authors' translation). However, it might be argued that this example is not a rhetorical question, but rather a predicative sentence as “##” /kam/ here is a predicative tool and not a question tool.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. Tenor

In systemic functional grammar, Halliday (1994) talked about the context of the situation or register and stated that it governs the meaning of the word, sentence, and text. Halliday (1994) mentioned that the context of situation is deemed to be composed of three variables: field, mode, and tenor. The tenor revolves around the participants in the situation (Tajvidi, Arjani, 2017, p. 5). It uncovers the role, nature, and status of participants. It focuses on what social relation exists between or among the participants. As the relation could have an effect on the formality of the language, it could be persistent and or temporary. The status of participants “equal or unequal”, “the affective involvement”, “low or high” and “frequent or occasional” clarifies their relation (Halliday, Hasan, 1985, 12). In systemic functional linguistics, register variables are realised by language metafunctions such as ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. The tenor is realised by the interpersonal metafunction.

4.2. The Interpersonal Metafunction

Interpersonal meaning enables people to participate in communicative acts, take roles, and express feelings, attitudes, and judgment. Thus,

interpersonal metafunction involves what is going on between a speaker and a hearer (Halliday 1985/1994 as cited in Maniati et. al., 2015). In the interpersonal metafunction, mood, modality and person system are important. To have a continuum communication, the mood is important in carrying out the interpersonal metafunction and called the clause as exchange. In general, the clause in the interpersonal metafunction consists of mood and residue. Mood is composed of a subject, which is a nominal group, and a finite which is part of a verbal group. The order of these two entities expresses different moods i.e., declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamative.

Each of the finite and the subject functions differently in the clause. About the subject, Halliday (1994, p. 67) says: it “supplies the rest of what it takes to form a proposition: namely, something by reference to which the proposition can be affirmed or denied.” Thus, it is the element, which is responsible for having the clause functioning as an interactive event. Likewise, Thompson (2014, p. 55) states that the subject is the element based on the validity of the clause rests.

The finite, according to Halliday (1994, p. 75), is a verbal operator which could be temporal or modal. Besides these two features of the finite, polarity is another feature, which means the choice between negative and positive. In this sense, Halliday (1994, p. 73) states that “in order for something to be arguable, it has to be specified for polarity: either it is so or it’s not so”. Further, Thompson (2014, p. 55) states that the finite aims at directing the listener towards the validity type claimed for the preposition. This can be done by referring to the time of speaking and the judgment of the speaker. While the time of speaking can be referred to by primary tense like was and or did, the speaker's judgment can be referred to by modality such as can, would and others (Halliday, Matthiessen, 2004, p. 115).

The remainder of the clause is called the residue. It is composed of predicator, complement and adjunct. The predicator is the rest of the verbal group other than the finite. According to Halliday (1994, p. 78), the clause can have only one predicator. Thompson (2014, pp. 62–63) further mentions that any major clause must have a predicator. Since the finite is not part of the predicator, the predicator is non-finite.

Therefore, there could be non-finite clauses, which have a predicator but not a finite one. According to Halliday (1994, p. 79), the predicator is employed to fulfil four functions in the clause. The first function is that the predicator assigns a time reference other than the reference to the time of the speech. It also appoints different phases and aspects such as seeming, trying, and hoping. Further, it allocates the process, which might be action, event, mental process, and relation. In addition, it assigns the voice as active and passive.

Complement is the second element in the residue. It is the element, which has the possibility of being a subject, but it is not (Halliday 1994, p. 80). The complement is usually realized by a nominal group. Unlike the predicator, which can only be one, the complement can occur twice. While the complement has the potential to be a subject, the adjunct does

not. The adjunct can be expressed by a prepositional phrase and/or an adverbial group. Thus, it is not a nominal group. Even though adjuncts are grouped in the residue; however, there might be adjuncts, which are not. This is related to the modal adjuncts and conjunctive adjuncts, which are important in the mood block and textual metafunction.

The person system is another important aspect in the interpersonal metafunction analysis. According to Pengsun and Fengfeng (2013, p. 81), the personal system, which includes personal and possessive pronouns, is important to understand the interpersonal meaning. In this context, Ye (2010, p. 149) mentions that personal pronouns create a relationship between the addresser and the addressee. As such, three personal pronouns are found. They are the first, second and third personal pronouns. The first personal pronoun includes the singular “I” and the plural “we”, which are related to the speaker. The second personal pronoun, “you”, is related to the addressee. The third personal pronoun is related to participants in the text also.

With respect to Arabic, a little difference in the structure of the interpersonal metafunction can be noticed. This is because Arabic has two kinds of sentences: nominal and verbal sentences (Bardi, 2008). The verbal sentence in Arabic is the sentence, which starts with a verb. On the other hand, the nominal sentence is the sentence, which starts with a noun, although there might be a verbal group after such a noun. Further, the nominal sentence can be purely nominal, thus, no verbs are found.

In relation to the above, in the verbal sentence/clause, mood and residue elements are similar to those in the English clause. As written by Bardi (2008, p. 181), the slight difference found is that the predicator is in the mood block since the finite and predicator are always fused in Arabic (see, Bardi 2008, p. 181). Moreover, in the nominal sentence/clause, there is also a difference with respect to English. The complement, for example, is part of the residue in English. However, it might be part of the mood block in Arabic, especially if it occurs in some NN or SVO/NVO clauses bound to the verbal group.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Rhetorical Questions with Negation Function

ST (1): #####
#####

Back Trans: and who better than Allah in purification?

TT (1): [Our Sibghah (religion) is] the Sibghah (Religion) of Allah (Islam) *and which Sibghah (religion) can be better than Allah's?*

In the current rhetorical questions, Allah addresses human beings and negates that anyone is better able than Him to purify people. This interaction is between two participants: Allah as the addresser and human beings/the addressees. The structure of the sentence shows how the addresser/Allah is addressing the addressees from a superior point of view. This is seen, especially from the question pronoun “##” (*man*) /

who/ which is meant to negate. This negation is made through a wh/ interrogative mood. Its interpersonal meaning and its translation are below:

Table 1
Negation Rhetorical Question ST1TT1

ST					
صِبْغَةُ Sibghah	أَحْسَنُ مِنْ الله Ahsanu min Allah		مَنْ man	و wa	
complement	Adjunct		Subject		z
Residue			Mood		
TT					
And	Which Sibghah	can	Be	Better than	Allah's
z	complement	Finite	predicator	complement	Subject
Resi		mo	due		od

This Quranic rhetorical question belongs to the nominal kind of Arabic sentence. In this situation, no verbal group or predicator is found. To start with, the ST subject pronoun “###” (man) /who/ is important. It is used by the addresser/Allah to refer to the negated human beings. However, the TT translators have created a different situation since the subject is changed into “Allah’s”. Therefore, human beings are no longer the addressees; they have no role in the TT. This change in translation affects the addresser too. He is negating human beings by means of the subject “###” (man) /who/. However, in the TT, He is negating the “Sibghah” using “which Sibghah”. In the ST, no personal pronouns are located. All in all, the tenor of the ST is highly distorted, since the role of human beings is no longer available, and the role of the addresser is changed. Accordingly, the function of negation of this Quranic rhetorical question is highly distorted.

ST (2): ##### ### ##### ##### ##### #####

Back Trans. shall remove his plan what enrages him?

TT(2): see whether his plan will remove that whereat he rages!

Allah is addressing the disbelievers indirectly when He negates the removal of their rage, whatever they try to do. As can be observed, the two participants of the ST are Allah and the disbelievers at the time of Prophet Muhammad. They have different roles and unequal statuses. Allah negates removing the rage of the disbelievers from a superior point of view since He is all-knowing. This interaction between Allah and the disbelievers is realized through a yes/no interrogative mood. Its interpersonal meaning and its translation are as follows:

Table 2
Negation Rhetorical Question ST2TT2

ST				
يَغِيظُ Yaghizu	مَا ma	كَدُّهُ kayduhu	يُذْهِبُ Yudhibna	هَلْ hal
Predicator	z	Subject	Predicator	Negotiator
Residue		Mood		
TT				

Table 2
Negation Rhetorical Question ST2TT2

whether	His plan	will	remove	That	whereat	he	rages
Adjunct	subject	finite	predicator	z	Adjunct	subject	predicator
	Mood					Mood	
Residue							

In relation to the above table, the subject “#####” (kayduhu) /his plan/ is shown as a nominal group consisting of the N /#####/ (kaydu) /plan/ and the singular possessive pronoun “#” (hu) /his/ which refers to the disbelievers/addressees. Although the possessive pronoun is singular, it refers to the whole group of disbelievers. This is a mannerism used sometimes in the Quran when addressing people. Thus, this text refers to the disbelievers and their plans and efforts. In translation, it is rendered as “his plan” to refer to the efforts of the disbelievers although the noun “plan” is a more general word than /#####/ (kaydu) /plan/. In relation to the finite, present with future relevance, the translators have managed to retain the future relevance of it by using the future modal “will”. In the ST, no modal verbs are located.

The only explicit pronoun reported is the possessive pronoun “#” (hu) /his/ affixed to the N (kaydu) /#####/; it has been rendered as “his”. One more personal pronoun, an implicit one, is understood from the verb/ predicator “#####” (Yaghizu) /enrages/. This personal pronoun refers to the disbelievers and indicates that they are enraged. Thus, this implicit pronoun is an object pronoun. Its translation as “he” catches some of its relation but not the whole meaning. Furthermore, it does not seem that the addresser, Allah is negating, but rather that He is exclaiming. Thus, the tenor of the ST is highly distorted. As such, the function of the ST rhetorical question is changed.

5.2. Rhetorical Questions with Testing Function

ST (3): ##### # # # # # # #

Back Trans: how long you remained?

TT (3): How long did you remain (dead)?

Almighty Allah is the One who causes death and gives life. In this situation, Allah caused a man/addressee to die and then revived him again and asked him about the period of time for which he remained dead. This was to test whether he was aware of how much time had passed. Thus, the interaction is between two participants who have different roles and statuses. Allah effects this test through a wh-interrogative mood. Its interpersonal meaning and translation follow:

Table 3
Testing Rhetorical Question ST3TT3

ST			
لبثت / labithta		كم / kam	
Predicator-subject (ta)		Adjunct	
Mood		Residue	
TT			
How long	did	you	remain (dead)
Adjunct	Finite	Subject	Predicator
Residue	Mood		

With the predicator “####” (labithta) /you remained/, the finite being past and the subject “#” (ta) /you/, which refers to the addressee, are found. In this situation, the fused finite of the ST is preserved as a past tense using the auxiliary “did”. Furthermore, the subject “you” used by the translator reflects its counterpart “#” (ta) /you/ of the ST, which refers back to the addressee. That is, the participant (addressee) takes his role in the TT. In addition, in the ST, the question word “####” (kam) /how long/ is important for the role of the main participant, Allah, who tests. In the TT, this role seems to be sustained since the adverb phrase “how long” can preserve the function intended by Allah. To sum up, the ST tenor seems to be sustained in the TT since the important points discussed are preserved. Then, the function of testing is sustained.

ST(4): ### ##### #### ##### ##### ##### #
#####

Back Trans: whether will she recognize or will be from who not recognize.

TT(4): He said: "Disguise her throne for her that we may see *whether she will be guided (to recognise her throne), or she will be one of those not guided.*

The ST shows that the addresser/the Prophet Solomon ordered his assistants to change some of Queen Balqees' throne decorations to test whether she would know it or would be like the ignorant people. The addressees in the ST are the assistants of the Prophet. However, the tester and the one tested, i.e., the Prophet and the Queen, are the important participants. The interaction between the participants is realized in an embedded polar active voice interrogative mood. Its interpersonal meaning and translation are as follows:

Table 4
Testing Rhetorical Question ST4TT4

ST										
لا يهتدون la yahtadun		من الذين min altheen		تكون takun		أم amm		تهدي tahtadi		أ/ a hamza
Predicator		Adjunct		Predicator		z		Predicator-sub		z
Residue								Mood		
TT										
whether	she	Will	be guided	or	she	will	be	one of those	not	guided
Adjunct	sub	Finite	Pred	z	sub	finite	Pred	comp	adjunct	Pred
		Mood					Mood		Residue	
Residue										

The ST is an embedded interrogative mood that appears in the active voice. As always, the finite is fused with the predicator “#####/ will she recognize”; it is simple present with future relevance. The subject in the ST, which is related to the Queen, is implicit and is understood from this predicator. It is a third personal subject pronoun “##” (hea) /she/.

With respect to translation, the TT also uses an embedded interrogative. However, it is in the passive voice. In this respect, the fused finite of the ST sustains its future relevance when translated into “will”. Further, the implicit subject in the ST is made explicit as “she”. However, the change of the predicator “#####” (tahtadi) /will she recognize/ from the active voice to the passive as “will be guided” resulted in a distortion of the role of the Queen. The Queen is tested in the ST as to whether she would know the throne or would be like the ignorant persons, i.e., those who do not know. In the TT, the test seems to apply to someone else due to the change of the predicator “#####” (tahtadi) / will she recognize/ from active into passive “will be guided”. Regarding the one who tests, the Prophet, using “whether” in translation, could help sustain his role.

As for the system of a person, two personal pronouns are found. One is implicit and the other is explicit. The implicit one refers to the Queen and is understood from the predicator “#####” (tahtadi) /will she recognize/. It is rendered as “she” to refer to the Queen. With respect to the explicit one, it is attached to the VP “#####” (yahtadun) /they recognize/ as a first plural masculine pronoun “#” (oo) /they/. In TT1, this pronoun is deleted. Thus, the distortion of important elements of the ST, especially the change from active to passive, has led to distort the roles of important participants. This has partially affected the tenor of the ST. In the same way, the function of testing is partially distorted.

5.3. Showing Abundance Rhetorical Questions

ST (5): #####
#####

Back Trans: and how many nations violated against the order of its Lord and His Messengers?

TT(5): And many a town (population) revolted against the Command of its Lord and His Messengers.

Allah/the Judge tells the Muslims that many nations before them violated His orders and were punished as a result. The structure of the sentence and the words chosen show that the addresser/Allah is addressing the addressees from a superior viewpoint. Moreover, his knowledge of the many nations is proof of this. Further, His punishment of those nations is also clear evidence of His superior viewpoint. In relation to the interpersonal metafunction, the mood of this text is realized through a wh-interrogative mood. This is changed to a declarative mood in translation. The interpersonal meaning of the ST and TT are shown in the table below:

Table 5
Showing Abundance rhetorical Question ST5TT5

ST				
عن أمركها ورسله an amri rabiha wa rusulihi		أتأت atat	كأين من قريته kaayyin min karyatin	و wa
Adjunct		Predicator-subject	Complement	z
		Mood		
Residue				
TT				
And	many a town	revolted		against the command of its Lord and His Commands
z	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct

As always, the finite is fused with the predicator. It is simple past with the predicator “#####/atat/violated”. Further, the subject, which refers to the nations that violated Allah's orders, is implicit and is understood from this predicator. In translation, the finite being in the simple past is sustained. In fact, the TT has a fused finite with the predicator “revolted”. Further, the subject, an implicit pronoun, refers to the nations, is rendered as “many towns” due to the mood change from interrogative into declarative.

In the residue, the adjunct “#####/an amri rabiha wa rusulihi” is significant. In this adjunct, “#####” (amri rabiha wa rusulihi) is considered a complement. This complement is important as regards the position of the addresser. The N “#####/an amri/ shows the superiority of the addresser/Allah. He talks about His orders to those nations. The position and superiority of Allah are sustained with the use of the NP “the commands of”. Further, representing the messengers of the Lord/Allah as “#####” (rabiha wa rusulihi) shows the close relationship between Allah and His messengers. This close relationship is sustained with the use of “its Lord and His messengers”. Therefore, the tenor of the ST is sustained. Towards this end, the function of showing abundance is maintained.

ST(6): #####
#####

Back Trans: how many from prophets fought with them religious people a lot?

TT(6): And many a Prophet (i.e. many from amongst the Prophets) fought (in Allah's Cause) and along with him (fought) large bands of religious learned men.

Allah, the addresser, refers to the Muslims/the addressees to the many Prophets with whom their people fought against enemies, strong in heart and faith. Thus, two more interactants are seen here: the prophets and their people. Since this ST is used by Allah, the participants are not equal in status. Amongst these participants, the role played by the addresser and the people of the Prophets are the ones which stand out. It seems that Allah gives these participants a high religious status. This interaction among the participants is realized in a wh-interrogative mood. Its interpersonal meaning and translation are below:

Table 6
Showing Abundance rhetorical Question ST6TT6

and	Many a prophet	Fought	And	Along with him	large bands of religious learned men
z	Subject	Finite	Pred z	Adjunct	Complement
	Mood		Residue		

Table 6
Showing Abundance rhetorical Question ST6TT6

and	Many a prophet	Fought	And	Along with him	large bands of religious learned men
z	Subject	Finite	Pred z	Adjunct	Complement
	Mood		Residue		

The ST is a wh-interrogative mood that is changed into a declarative mood. In this context, the subject "#####" /lots of religious learned men/, being a nominal group, is changed into "many a prophet". As in the ST, the TT finite is simple past fused with the predicator "fought". Concerning this participant, the existence of the nominal group/NP "#####" /many religious learned men/ here is important. The addresser, Allah, affords it a high religious status by "#####", which could mean "people of God". This high religious status seems to be sustained since the adjective phrase "large bands of religious learned men" can show this status.

The third person masculine singular possessive pronoun "#" (hu) /him/ in "#####" (ma'hu) /with him/ is important. It lessens the distance between the Prophets and the religious learned people. In TT, this is referred to as the object pronoun of the preposition "him". Thus, it might be argued that the ST tenor is not fully preserved since the ST subject is not maintained. This is to say that the function of this RQ is not fully maintained.

Conclusions

We aimed to determine the extent to which the tenor of Quranic rhetorical questions is preserved when translated into English. Therefore, rhetorical questions with the functions of testing, negation, and showing abundance translated by al-Hilali and Khan (1996) were investigated. For this purpose, interpersonal metafunction, as explained by Halliday (1994), was employed. Further, since Halliday's interpersonal metafunction is English specific, there could be sometimes differences between the interpersonal metafunction analysis of the Arabic and English texts. Therefore, such differences were explained according to Bardi (2008).

The analysis of interpersonal metafunction explained the tenor of the ST and TT. Thus, the relationships, statuses, and roles of the participants of the ST and TT were explained. In short, the results showed that the tenor of Quranic rhetorical questions was affected to some degree when translated into English. The tenor of discourse that concerns the relationship, statuses, and roles of participants was in fact, not preserved in case of rhetorical questions with the function of negation as it was highly distorted. This is clearly seen, for example, in the translation of Data (1), of negation rhetorical questions. As we noticed, the role and statuses of the participants, i.e., Allah and human beings, were not maintained. The translators changed the subject of the ST from “##” (*man*) /who/ which talks about the negated human beings into “Allah's” which affected the role of Allah and also the negated human beings.

Looking at testing rhetorical questions, the tenor was also affected in translation, especially in Data (2), although in Data (1) it is preserved. If we look at Data (2), we can clearly see how the tenor of the rhetorical question is partially affected. The tested person or participant, i.e., Queen Balqees in this rhetorical, was deprived of her role. This role of the Queen was made to someone else, ignorant people. Similarly, the translation of showing abundance rhetorical questions resulted in maintaining and distorting the tenor to some degree, especially for Data (2).

The distortion of the tenor of the translated rhetorical questions would not have happened if the finite, the subject, the question tool, and the predicator had not been affected in translation.

References

- Abioye, T., 2011. Preference for rhetorical questions as an index of textual message effectiveness. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1 (11), pp. 290–299. [online] Available at: www.ijhssnet.com [Accessed 20 June 2020].
- Aida, N., 2012. *Uslub al-Istifham fi al-Ahadith al-Nabwyah fi Riyadh al-Salhin: Dirasa Nahuwih Balaghya*. Master's dissertation. Muluod Mu'amari University.

- Bardi, M. A., 2008. *A Systemic Functional Description of the Grammar of Arabic*. Doctoral dissertation. Macquarie University.
- al-Balakhi, M., 2007. *Asalyib al-Istifham fi al-Bahith al-Balaghi wa Asraruha fi al-Quran al-Karim*. Doctoral dissertation. The international Islamic University.
- Bofama, S., 2014. *Uslub al-Istifham fi Qisat Ibrahim: Dirasah Nabuwih Balaghya*. Master's dissertation. Abdul Qadir University.
- Ellingworth, P., 2013. When did we See you? Translating Rhetorical Questions. *The Bible Translator*, 64 (1), pp. 64–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0260093513481149>
- al-Fara'a, Y., 1983. *Ma'ani al-Quran*. 3rd ed. Riyadh: Dar a'lam al-Kutub.
- al-Fayroz Abadi, M., 2001. *Al-Qamus al-Muhit*. Cairo: Dar ihya'a al-Turath al-Arabi.
- Hackstein, O., 2004. Rhetorical questions and the grammaticalization of interrogative pronouns as conjunctions in Indo-European. In: *Per Aspera Ad Asteriscos, Studia Indogermanica in honorem Jens Elmegård Rasmussen sexagenarii Idibus Martiis anno MMIV*. A. Hyllested, A. R. Jørgensen, J. H. Larsson, T. Olander, eds. Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, pp. 167–186.
- Halliday, M. A. K., Matthiessen, C., 2004. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 3rd ed. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K., 1994. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold Ltd.
- Halliday, M. A. K., Hasan, R., 1985. *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in Social-semiotic Perspective*. Victoria: Deakin University.
- al-Hilali, T., Khan, M. M., 1996. *The Noble Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*. Medina: King Fahad Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran.
- Ibn Khalawyh, al., 1996. *al-Hujah fi al-Qira'at al-Saba'a*. Beirut: Mu'asasat elrisalah.
- Ilie, C., 1994. *What else can I Tell you? A Pragmatic study of English rhetorical questions as discursive and argumentative acts*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.
- Koshik, I., 2005. *Beyond Rhetorical Question: Assertive Questions in Everyday Interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Larson, M., 1984. *Meaning-Based Translation: A Guide to cross-language equivalence*. Maryland: University Press of America.
- Maniati, M., Jalilifar, A., Hayati, A., 2015. Iranian Scholars' Revision of Their Submitted Manuscripts: Signaling Impersonality in Text. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 6 (1), p. 118–140. <https://doi.org/10.22055/RALS.2015.11263>
- al-Mubarak, M., 1997. *al-Kamil*. Beirut: Mu'asasat al-Risalah.
- al-Muthana, M., 1961. *Majaz al-Quran*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khangī.
- Pengsun, J., Fengfeng, L., 2013. A Contrastive Study of Political Speeches in Presidential Election of Interpersonal Meaning. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 6 (3), pp. 79–83. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/236302896.pdf> [Accessed 10 July 2020].

- al-Qazwini, G., 2010. *Al-Idah fi Ulum al-Balagha: al-Ma'ani wa Bayan wa al-Badi'*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Imya.
- Rajdal, H., 2013. *Balaghat al-Istifham wa Dalalatuhu fi al-Quran al-Karim*. Master's dissertation. Wahran University.
- Rudanko, J., 1993. On Some Aspects of Rhetorical Questions. *Studia Neophilologica*, 65 (1), pp. 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00393279308588105>
- Sagir, al-Sa., 2015. Muqaraba Dalaliya fi Ma'ani al-Istifham al-Balaghya. *Biblid*, 22, pp. 285–303.
- Sibawayh, O., 1998. *Al-Kitab*. Cairo: Al-Khang Library.
- Siemund, P., 2001. Interrogative constructions. In: *Language Typology and Language Universals*. M. Haspelmath, E. König, W. Oesterreicher, W. Raible, eds. Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 1010–1028.
- al-Soyoti, J., 2015. *al-Itqan fi ulum al-Quran*. Medina: King Fahad Complex for Printing the Quran.
- al-Subbki, B., 1992. *A'ros al-Afrab fi Sharh Talkhis al-Muftah*. Cairo: Dar al-Bayan al-Arabi.
- Tajvidi, Gh. R., Arjani, H., 2017. Appraisal Theory in Translation Studies: An Introduction and Review of Studies of Evaluation in Translation. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 8 (2), pp. 3–30. <https://doi.org/10.22055/RALS.2017.13089>
- Thompson, G., 2014. *Introducing Systemic Functional Grammar*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ye, R., 2010. The Interpersonal Metafunction Analysis of Barack Obama's Victory Speech. *English Language Teaching*, 3 (2), pp. 146–151. Available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1081615.pdf> [Accessed 27 July 2020].