

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF SURAH REHMAN: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MULTIPLE SOURCES

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to present stylistic analysis of English translations of Surah Rehman. Translation of the Holy Qur'an is a difficult task since the Qur'an is no ordinary text. This divine book is loaded with pragma-linguistic and cross-cultural limitations. The translation from Arabic to English involves careful understanding and interpretation of the message contained in Arabic and its transference to English language. For the current study, translations of the Qur'an by five translators (both Muslims and non-Muslims) were used for analysis. The first six verses of the Surah Rehman were analyzed for the current study. Every word was coded in terms of grammatical category like Object, Event, Abstract and Relational. The findings of the study show that the Muslim translators like Abdullah Yousaf Ali and Dr. Tahir ul Qadri were subjective according to believes and culture of Muslims. They not only followed the sense for sense approach in translation but also provided explanations in parenthesis. On the other hand, the Non-Muslim translators relied on content, style and choice of words whereas machine translation adopted word to word approach.

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INTRODUCTION

Islam is a worldwide religion which was sent to earth for all the human beings. The teachings of Islam, its orders, prohibitions and laws are all found in its Holy book, the Qur'an. This book stands as the proof for the truthfulness of Prophet Mohammad's message (peace be upon him) and was revealed to the Prophet in the Arabic language carrying within its verses all the rhetorical devices and features of eloquence of Arabic. With the rapid growth of Islam around the world, the need for the translation of the Qur'an into other languages has become a necessity and an important contribution to all humanity. The translation of the Qur'an is a very difficult task since the Qur'an is not an ordinary text; it is loaded with "pragma-linguistic and cross-cultural limitations" (Abdul-Raof:2001). These stand as obstacles in the way of the translator, making his/her task very difficult. When translating between two languages that are different in various aspects, there can never be exact translation equivalence. The meanings between languages may overlap but unlikely to be exactly the same. Differences which appear in the language, the culture and the pragmatics of the language cause variations in translation to always be present when working with different languages.

Many orientalists and linguists have highlighted the uniqueness and sensitiveness of the Qur'an as a text, making it a genre of literary beauty (Tzortzis:2008). The Holy Qur'an carries within its verses many features which are problematic for translators when dealing with them. These features are present in word order, words with wide semantic ranges, tense, gender, definiteness, shifts, metonymy and others. These features may not all be present in the target language, and as a result dealing with them becomes problematic. The correct understanding of the verses of the Qur'an and their intended meanings can only happen if the translator refers to the most important books of exegeses which discuss all that is related to the Qur'anic verse stylistically. This keeps the translator away as much as possible from committing mistakes whilst going through the translation process. In such a scenario, the analysis of stylistic features of the translations of Holy Quraan becomes an important area of research in Islamic as well as linguistics and translation perspective. The purpose of the current study is to present stylistic analysis of the translations of Surah Rehman into English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The process of translation between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL) according to Munday (2008). Hatim and Munday (2004) define translation from two different perspectives; first as a process - translation is an act of taking a text from one language and transforming it into another and Second as a product - translation focuses on the results achieved by the translator, the concrete product of translation. Hasan Ghazala (2008) considers translation as all the processes and methods used to render and/or transfer the meaning of the source language text into the target language as closely, completely and accurately as possible, using: 1) Words/phrases which already have a direct equivalent in Arabic language; 2) New words or terms for which no ready-made equivalents are available in Arabic; 3) Foreign words or terms written in Arabic letters as pronounced in their native origin; and 4) Foreign words or terms made to fit Arabic pronunciation spelling and grammar. Moreover, according to Nida and Taber (2003), translation is also the reproduction in the target language of the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning, and second in terms of style.

What actually makes the Holy Qur'an so special is the fact that it is the word of Allah, and this by itself raises questions of the translatability of its words, styles, structure, and of course the meaning. In addition, the permissibility of transforming the Word of Allah into a human book that could claim any equivalency to the Qur'an is a major element that makes translators hesitate when it comes to translating the Holy Qur'an. Despite all these important dimensions of difficulty of translation, the need to translate Qur'an arose even in the early days of Islam when many non-Arabic speaking people embraced Islam. According to Faiq (2004), translating the Qur'an was not only a need for the non-Arabic speaking communities, but it was also a necessity to make the message of the Qur'an accessible to all other people of the world. The Arabic language is unique and superior to all the languages as it is a rich language with metaphors,

rhymes and rhythms etc. So, it was and still is virtually impossible to translate Arabic into any language while rendering the translation of the Holy Qur'an as almost impossible.

Hussein Abdul-Raof(2001) in his book "Qur'an Translation" stresses the untranslatability of the Qur'an for numerous reasons. He states that Qur'anic discourse involves a syntactic, semantic, rhetorical, and cultural feature that differs from other types of Arabic discourse. He gives a Qur'an-specific syntactic feature as an example. He says that some verses of the Qur'an use a feminine noun rather than a masculine noun. He gives the following verse as an example: *The Roman Empire has been defeated*. Abdul-Raof(2001) also claims that Qur'anic discourse is linguistic scenery characterized by a rainbow of syntactic, semantic, rhetorical, phonetic and cultural features that are distinct from other types of Arabic discourse. The theorists like Faiq (2004) and Baker (2001) also argue that the translation of Holy Qur'an is almost impossible.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is qualitative and descriptive in nature and presents linguistic stylistic analysis of the translations of the Surah Rehman (Holy Qura'an) into English. The first six verses of the Surah were used as sample of analysis for the current research. The researchers have carried out this study to analyze the differences in style in the translations of five translators. Among the five translators; Edward Henry Palmer and J.M. Rodwel are two Non-Muslim translators, Abdullah Yousaf Ali, Talal Itani and Dr. Tahir are Muslim translators. Translation of Talal Itani is regarded as machine translation. The framework that has been used to analyze the translations of Surah Rehman is given below:.

Object: It refers to those semantic classes which designate things or entities that participate in events, e.g. teacher, cow, bridge, water, the moon, etc.

Event: This semantic category includes actions, processes, happenings, e.g. observe, think, write, sleep, pray, speak, fly, and die, and so on.

Abstract: The term denotes the semantic class which includes (a) referents: qualities, quantities, and (b) degrees of objects, events and other abstracts. For example, white, quickly, always, a few, more, zero, etc.

Relational: This encompasses a range of meaningful relations/connections between the above mentioned semantic terms. In English the most common are prepositions, conjunctions, articles, auxiliaries/modals and punctuations.

RESULTS

In this section, a detailed analysis on the linguistic stylistic patterns of the translations of first six verses of Surah Rehman into English has been carried out by the researcher.

Translations of Verse 1

Reference	Translator	Syntactic structure in the translated text of Surah Rehman into English
55:1	Abdullah Yousaf Ali (1987)	<u>(Allah) Most Gracious!</u> O A A
	E. H. Palmer 1883	<u>The Merciful</u> R A
	J.M. Rodwell 1876	<u>The God of MERCY</u> R O R O
	Talal Itani (2012)	<u>The Compassionate</u> R A
	Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul Qadiri	<u>The Most Compassionate (is He).</u> R A O E O

Abdullah Yousaf Ali's translation is tagged "A" twice; first for "Most" and second for "Gracious" which qualify for the object "O" a quality of Almighty Allah. E. H. Palmer's translation is tagged as "R" for definite article and "A" for "Merciful" which is the quality of the almighty. Rodwell's style is different of all. Instead, he used God of mercy. Stylistically it's unique but semantically it has violated the original meaning. Itani's translation is similar to Palmer but different in choice of words, meaning is at least same. Dr. Tahir ul Qadiri's translation is subjective to Muslim beliefs and has little variation in choice of words.

Translations of Verse 2

Reference	Translator	Syntactic structure in the translated text of Surah Rehman into English
55:2	Abdullah Yousaf Ali (1987)	<u>It is He Who has taught the Qur'an.</u> O R O R R E R O
	E. H. Palmer 1883	<u>taught the Qur'an;</u> E R O
	J.M. Rodwell 1876	<u>hath taught the Koran.</u> R E R O
	Talal Itani (2012)	<u>Has taught the Quran.</u> R E R O
	Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul Qadiri	<u>Who (Himself) taught the Qur'an to (the Arab Messenger</u> R O E A O R A A O <u>[blessings and peace be upon him].</u> O R O E R O

Abdullah Yousaf Ali's translation is tagged multiple relational words. He also used subject in the sentence. Construction is in present perfective aspect. E. H. Palmer has used past simple past aspect but let the reader to make its connection with the transition of verse 55:1. Rodwell has used present perfective aspect. As like Palmer, he contextualized the translation. Choice of hath instead of has is one of the key feature of the works of late 19th century. Itani's translation is similar to Rodwell but he chose modern word 'has' instead of hath. Both are the same words. 'Has' is the modern use of 'hath'. Dr. Tahir ul Qadiri's translation provides extra information in parenthesis and has little variation in choice of words.

Translations of Verse 3

Reference	Translator	Syntactic structure in the translated text of Surah Rehman into English
55:3	Abdullah Yousaf Ali (1987)	<u>He has created man.</u> O R E O
	E. H. Palmer 1883	<u>He created man</u> O E O
	J.M. Rodwell 1876	<u>Hath created man.</u> R E O
	Talal Itani (2012)	<u>He created man.</u> O E O
	Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul Qadiri	<u>He is the One Who created (this Absolutely Perfect) man.</u> O E A O R E A AA O

Abdullah Yousaf Ali's translation is started with object word which represents a noun. He started the sentence with subject. Construction is in present perfective aspect. The main concern 'Event' word is 'treated'. E. H. Palmer has used past simple past aspect. He also started with 'Object' word to start the sentence functioning as subject. The main concern 'Event' word is 'treated'. Rodwell has used present perfective aspect. Unlike Palmer, he contextualized the translation instead of using subject in the sentence. Choice of hath instead of has is one of the key feature of the works of late 19th century. The main concern 'Event' word is 'treated'. Itani's translation is similar to Abdullah Yousaf Ali. Dr. Tahir ul Qadiri's translation is subjective to Muslim beliefs and has little variation in choice of words.

Translations of Verse 4

Reference	Translator	Syntactic structure in the translated text of Surah Rehman into English
55:4	Abdullah Yousaf Ali (1987)	<u>He has taught him speech (and intelligence).</u> O R E O O R O
	E. H. Palmer 1883	<u>taught him plain speech.</u> E O A O
	J.M. Rodwell 1876	<u>Hath taught him articulate speech.</u> R E O E O
	Talal Itani (2012)	<u>And taught him clear expression.</u> R E O A O
	Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul Qadiri	<u>He alone taught him the art of expression and</u> O A E O R A R O R <u>communication (i.e., taught the True Messenger ma kana</u> O R E R A O <u>wa ma yakun).</u>

Abdullah Yousaf Ali's translation is tagged with multiple 'O' words. He started the sentence with subject. Construction is in present perfective aspect. The main concern 'Event' word is 'taught'. He also used explanatory expression in parenthesis. E. H. Palmer has used past simple past aspect. Unlike A. Y. Ali, he used 'E' word 'taught' to start the sentence which is the main concern of the analysis. He let the reader to guess the subject. Choice of final 'O' speech is different as it is used after adjective 'plain'. Rodwell has used present perfective aspect. Like Palmer, he contextualized the translation instead of using subject in the sentence. Choice of 'hath' as auxiliary "R" before "E" instead of has is one of the key feature of the works of late 19th century. Choice of final 'O' word 'speech' is different as it is used after adjective 'articulate'. Itani's translation is different in construction this time. He started with 'R' word 'and' and then followed translation of Palmer in construction but choice of word is different. He

used ‘clear expression’ instead of ‘plain speech. Dr. Tahir ul Qadiri’s translation is subjective to Muslim beliefs and has little variation in choice of words.

Translations of Verse 5

Reference	Translator	Syntactic structure in the translated text of Surah Rehman into English
55:5	Abdullah Yousaf Ali (1987)	<u>The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) computed;</u> R O R R O E O A A
	E. H. Palmer 1883	<u>The sun and the moon have their appointed time;</u> R O R R O E O A O
	J.M. Rodwell 1876	<u>The Sun and the Moon have each their times.</u> R O R R O E A O O
	Talal Itani (2012)	<u>The sun and the moon move according to plan.</u> R O R R O E R O
	Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul Qadiri	<u>The sun and the moon are rotating according to the</u> R O R A O R E R A <u>configuration determined (by Him)</u> O E R A

Abdullah Yousaf Ali’s translation has its construction past aspect. The main concern in this translation of this verse is ‘predicate’ of this sentence. He used ‘follow their courses (exactly) computed’. Here ‘follow’ functions as ‘E’ word. Beautiful use of word ‘computed’ is functioning as adjective. E. H. Palmer has used present in perfective aspect. The main concern in this translation of this verse is ‘predicate’ of this sentence. He used ‘have their appointed time’. Here ‘have’ functions as ‘E’ word. Beautiful use of word ‘appointed’ is functioning as adjective. Rodwell has used present perfective aspect. The main concern in this translation of this verse is ‘predicate’ of this sentence. He used ‘have each their times’. Here ‘have’ functions as ‘E’ word. Itani’s translation has its construction in present aspect. The main concern in this translation of this verse is ‘predicate’ of this sentence. He used ‘move according to plan’. Here ‘move’ functions as ‘E’ word. Dr. Tahir ul Qadiri’s translation is subjective to Muslim beliefs and has little variation in choice of words.

Translations of Verse 6

Reference	Translator	Syntactic structure in the translated text of Surah Rehman into English
55:6	Abdullah Yousaf Ali (1987)	<u>And the herbs and the trees - both (alike) bow in adoration.</u> R R O R R O A A E R O
	E. H. Palmer 1883	<u>The herbs and the trees adore;</u> R O R R O E
	J.M. Rodwell 1876	<u>And the plants and the trees bend in adoration.</u> R R O R R O E R O
	Talal Itani (2012)	<u>And the stars and the trees prostrate themselves.</u> R R O R R O E O
	Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul Qadiri	<u>And the herbs spread over the earth, and all (species of) the trees prostrate themselves (to Him alone)</u> R R O E A O R A O R R O E O R O A

Abdullah Yousaf Ali's translation has its construction in present aspect. The main concern in this translation of this verse is 'predicate' of this sentence. He used 'bow in adoration'. Here 'bow' functions as 'E' word. Beautiful use of word 'adoration' is functioning as noun. E. H. Palmer has used present aspect. The main concern in this translation of this verse is 'predicate' of this sentence. He used 'adore'. Here 'adore' functions as 'E' word. Rodwell has used present aspect. The main concern in this translation of this verse is 'predicate' of this sentence. He used 'bend in adoration'. Here 'bend' functions as 'E' word. Beautiful use of word 'adoration' is functioning as noun. Itani's translation has its construction in present aspect. The main concern in this translation of this verse is 'predicate' of this sentence. He used 'prostrate themselves'. Here 'prostrate' functions as 'E' word. Dr. Tahir ul Qadiri's translation is subjective to Muslim beliefs and has little variation in choice of words.

CONCLUSION

The results show that all five selected translations are unique in themselves in terms of style and choice of words. It was found that the Muslim translators were subjective according to their beliefs and culture of Muslims. They not only went for sense for sense approach but also gave explanations in parenthesis wherever appropriate. The sense for sense approach was clearly reflected in their style, choice of words, and explanations. On the other hand, the Non-Muslim translators relied on content, style and choice of words and followed word for word approach.

This approach sometimes showed loss of sense and context and also their translations were archaic in terms of choice of vocabulary. Itani's translation which is regarded as machine translation was completely different from the other four. This machine translation was found with expression of word of word translation in order to retain the sense. It is concluded on the basis of the presented results and discussion that style and content of the translation is reflective of translators' beliefs and culture.

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