Translational Aspects of Iltifât in the Glorious Qurân

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Introduction

To translate the Holy Books is not an easy task. Crystal and Davy (1969:147) attribute this to the fact that the kind of language used for expressing the religious beliefs in any speech community is usually one of the most distinctive varieties it possesses. They maintain that "very often, it is removed from the language of everyday conversation as to be almost unintelligible, save to an initiated minority" (ibid.). The translator is required to possess a religious background knowledge in the religious domain into which he is translating; otherwise he will misunderstand the intended meaning of the religious discourse.

This paper tries to study Iltifât, one of the rhetorical genres used generally in Arabic Language and specifically in the Glorious

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Qurân. We will try to examine all aspects related to Iltifât with their translations from Arabic into English.

The problems tackled in this study are related to the way whereby the meanings of the verses containing Iltifât are rendered into English. Unawareness on the part of the translator of the significance of Iltifât markers may lead to inappropriate understanding of the verse which consequently leads to inaccurate translation that needs to be solved satisfactorily.

The present paper aims at (1) showing the way whereby the meanings of the verses containing types of Iltifât are rendered into English, (2) specifying the method of translation of the types of Iltifât, (3) pointing out some problems that may arise from translating these types,(4) proposing some remedies that coincide with the religious interpretation adopted.

In order to achieve the above mentioned aims, the study hypothesizes that the difficulty of translating Iltifât into English arises from the fact that the Qurân is a unique style in Arabic and thus some types of Iltifât may be not noticed in the process of translation into English. To put it more precisely, some explicit markers of Iltifât may be changed to implicit ones in the target language (English in our case) which may result in understating the impressive force of the message.

Definition of Iltifât

A number of definitions of Iltifât have been proposed by Arab scholars and rhetoricians. Al-QurTâjni (1966:315) defines it as a combination of two pieces of speech with different purposes in a smooth way without mediation. This may lead to becoming of one form of speech to another. Wahba and Al- Muhandis (1984:58) point out that Iltifât is a sudden shift through speech to address a second or third person. Abdul MuTalib (1987:392) defines it as a departure between the expressions (including pronouns, numbers and tense) which turn from and that which turned to in a given contexts. This shift depends upon surface contradiction and deep coordination between the expressions involved. Al-Kafawai (1998:170) says that Iltifât is a shift of both meaning and form.

Some other scholars and rhetoricians have unanimously agree with the above definition to mention but few Al-Bâqlâni (n.d: 99); Al-SuyuTi (1951:85); Ibn Al-Atheer (1961:170-171); Al-'Umari (1985:50); and Abdul Haleem (2005:188). They all define Iltifât as "shift or departure from one of the normal language usage to another one in a given context for rhetorical purposes".

Purposes of Iltifât

Although most of the scholars affirm that the aim of employing Iltifât is for the sake of rhetorical purposes to maximize the stylistic effectiveness, yet some other scholars like Al-Zamakhshari (1948:63) and Al-Zarkashi (1958:314) maintain that there are general and specific purposes. The former ones are to contrive the beauty of speech, refreshing the mind of the listener and avoiding the boring speech and to ease rhyme. While the specific purposes vary according to the speech situation intended by the speaker. Classifying the various types of Iltifât, Abdul Haleem (2005:190-204) mentions some aesthetic purposes such as beauty of diction, drawing attention of the addressee as well as expressing power and might, since in most of its examples in the Qurân Allah is involved in speech. Similarly he assures that it is used for the purpose of honouring, blaming, threat, wonder, warning, causing surprise...etc. Al-Kheero (2006:23-26) says that Iltifât used to honour Allah almighty and to instigate the imagination and the feeling of the addressee.

Characteristics of Iltifât

Iltifât is a well-known feature in Arabic; it was especially used in pre-Islamic poetry (Al-Zamakhshari, 1948: 60). Ibn Al-Atheer calls it Shajâ'at Al-Arabiya because it is a daring type which

undertakes what others do not. Abdul Haleem (2005:205-206) mentions some of its features such as using of direct speech, conciseness and loading arrangement of sentences as well as the using of the independent quotable statements together which influence on the grammatical form. Larson (1984:413) points out that this rhetorical quotation is a type of direct address used to highlight necessary events.

Conditions of Iltifât

Al-SuyuTi (1951:86) and Al-'Umari (1985:49) refer to the overwhelming condition of Iltifât which is that the second mentioning of a person or a thing which turns to and that which turned from are the same. Tabil (1998:38) points out that the reason behind depending on this condition by rhetoricians is their thinking that Iltifât cannot be realised without a hypothetical substitute for it in the language system. He adds that Iltifât as a whole is an order depends on comparison to resolve its semi- contradictory form by its the hypothetical substitute in a given context. Another condition is stressed by Al-Zamakhshari (1948:80) is that the shift in Iltifât should be between two separate sentences.

Classification of Iltifât

Iltifât has been classified variously by different scholars as the following:

- 1. Al-SuyuTi (1951:86) mentions some types of shift uch as the shift in person between first, second and third person, another kind is the shift in number and shift in tense of the verb.
- 2. Ibn Al-Atheer (1960:171-191) recognises three types as the follows:
 - a. Shift from third to second person and from second to third e.g:

<u>Praise be to Allah</u>, Lord of the Worlds, The Beneficent, the Merciful. Owner of the Day of Judgment, <u>Thee (alone) we worship</u>; Thee alone we ask for help. Show us the straight path, The path of those whom Thou hast favoured; Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who astray (Pickthall, 1956:13).

b. Shift from future to imperative form of the verb and from past to imperative form such as:

(قَالُواْ يَا هُودُ مَا جِنْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِي آلِهَتِنَا عَن قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ إِن تَقُولُ إِلاَّ اعْتَرَاكَ بَعْضُ آلِهَتِنَا بِسُوءٍ قَالَ إِنِّي أَشْهِدُ اللّهِ وَمُؤْمِنِينَ إِن تَقُولُ إِلاَّ اعْتَرَاكَ بَعْضُ آلِهَتِنَا بِسُوءٍ قَالَ إِنِّي أَشْهِدُ اللّهِ وَمُؤْمِنِينَ إِن تَقُولُ إِلاَّ اعْتَرَاكَ بَعْضُ آلِهَتِنَا بِسُوءٍ قَالَ إِنِّي أَشْهِدُ اللّهِ وَاللّهِ وَاللّهُ وَاللّهُ وَاللّهُ عَلَيْ اللّهُ عَلَيْ اللّهُ عَلَيْ اللّهُ عَلَيْ اللّهُ عَلَيْ مُن اللّهُ اللّهُ وَلَيْ وَمَا نُشْرِكُونَ) هود: ٥٤-٥٤

They said: O Hud! Thou hast brought us no clear proof and we are not going to forsake our gods on thy (mere) saying, and we are not believers in thee. We say naught save that one of our gods hath possessed thee in an evil way. He said: I call Allah to witness, and do ye (too) bear witness, that I am innocent of (all) that ye ascribe as partners (to Allah) (Pickthall, 1956:133).

(قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ) الأعراف: ٢٩

Say: My Lord enjoineth justice. And set your faces upright (toward Him) at every place of worship and call upon Him, making religion pure for Him (only). As He brought you into being, so return ye (unto Him) (Pickthall, 1956: 95).

c. Shift from past to future and from future to past like:

(وَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيَاحَ فَثَثِينُ سَحَابًا فَسُقْنَاهُ إلَى بَلَدٍ مَيِّتٍ فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا كَذَٰلِكَ النُّشُورُ) فاطر: ٩

And Allah it is <u>Who sendeth</u> the winds and <u>they raise</u> a cloud; then <u>We lead</u> it unto a dead land and <u>revive therewith</u> the earth after its death. Such is the Resurrection (Pickthall, 1956: 233).

And (bethink you of) the Day when <u>We remove</u> the hills and ye see the earth emerging, and <u>We gather them together</u> so as to leave not one of them behind. (Pickthall, 1956: 420).

- 3. Abdul Haleem (2005:188-204) provides a number of classifications as follows:
- a. Change in person, between first ,second and third person.He subdivides this type into the following:
 - 1. Shift from third to first person.
 - 2. Shift from first to third person.
 - 3. Shift from third to second person.
 - 4. Shift from second to third person.
 - 5. Shift from first to second person.
 - 6. Shift from second to third person.

- b. Change in number, between singular, dual and plural.
- c. Change in addressee.
- d. Change in the tense of the verb, which Abdul Haleem subdivides into the following:
 - 1. A shift from perfect to the imperfect.
 - 2. A shift from imperfect to the perfect tense.
 - 3. A shift from the indicative to the imperative mood.
- e. Change in case marker.
- f. Putting a noun in place of pronoun.
 - 4. Al-Kheero (2006:27-114-173) mentions three types of change as follows:
 - 1. Change in addressee.
 - 2. Change in the tense of the verb.
 - 3. Change in number, between singular, dual and plural.

Translation of Iltifât

The language of the glorious Qurân is a very miraculous and extraordinary one, since it is the actual speech of Allah Almighty revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This language is adorned with Iltifât, one of the rhetorical genres. It is indispensable

as other styles employed in the Glorious Qurân. Any translation that exists today, however accurate it may be, cannot reach the sublimity style of the Qurân even for those enriched by understanding of Arabic, the language of Qurân. Moreover, the meaning of the Qurân has been transferred into different languages. All of these attempts in which they try to do their best to reach the meaning of the Qurân, are regarded as less powerful in effect than that of the Qurân.

Al-BûTi (2003:231) affirms the impossibility of translating the Qurân since it approaches a unique order in expressing the multiplicity of the intended meaning by employing one word regardless of its abstract semantic sense.

Abdul Haleem (2005:207) points out that the certain types of Iltifât may not appear through the process of translating the Qurân into English since the European languages like English differ from Arabic in some features of style.

Furthermore, translating shifts employed specially in the religious books need specific care, because the translator should select words which have extremely the same influence as that in the original ones.

Text Analysis and Translation

Regarding the distribution of our data, five Quranic verses along with four translations of each have been chosen. The analysis of the data is carried out by utilizing comprehensive tables (they are designed by the scholars) which include: SL text, TL text, type and purpose of the shift or change, type of translation, degrees of explicitness of Iltifât markers and degrees of translational coincidence with the religious interpretation. A new rendering will be suggested, if no effective translation is found. Moreover, in this study we adopt Newmark's (1988) semantic approach since this method more accurate than others as far as the content is concerned. As far as we know the most problematic area in Iltifât is the change of addressee, most our example will be confined to this type.

SL Text: (1)

- 1. Pickthall (1956:178) And follow that which is inspired in thee from thy Lord. Lo! Allah is Aware of what ye do.
- 2. Sarwar (1981:244) Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord. God is All-aware of what you do.

- Sher Ali (1955:343) <u>And follow</u> that which is revealed to thee from thy Lord. Verily, ALLAH is Well-Aware of <u>what</u> <u>you do</u>.
- 4. Yusuf Ali (1937:232) But <u>follow that which comes to</u> <u>thee</u> by inspiration from thy Lord: for Allah is <u>well acquainted with (all) that ye do.</u>

Interpretation: In this verse Allah orders His Prophets to follow a piece of revelation as an emphasis to follow the whole revelation. This order is, however, for all humans whether they are believers, unbelievers or hypocrites (Ibn 'Aashuur, n. d: 252/10).

SL Text:(1)

SL Text Arabic	No. of text	TL text English	Type of Shift	Function of Shift
يُوحَى إليك	1 2	Theeye do Youyou do	From single addressee to	Showing Greatness
0,5	3	Theeyou do	plural addressees	& Honour
	4	Theeye do		

Table (1): The Translations of SL text (1)

Title	Semantic Method			Semantic Method Communicative		ive	Degrees of Explicitnes		
					Method			of Iltifât	
No. of	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
text									
1		+							+
2		+							+
3		+							+
4		+							+

Table (2): Degrees of Translational coincidence with the interpretation

The Proposed Rendering: And follow (O Muhammad) that which is inspired to thee from thy Lord. Lo! Allah is Aware of what you and all humans do.

SL Text:(2)

<u>TL Text:(2)</u>

1. Pickthall (1956:343) O company of jinn and men, if ye have power to penetrate (all) regions of the heavens and the earth, then

penetrate (them)! Ye will never penetrate them save with (Our) sanction. Which is it, of the favours of your Lord, that ye deny?

- 2. Sarwar (1981:442 (Jinn and mankind, if you can penetrate the diameters of the heavens and the earth, do so, but you cannot do so without power and authority. (Jinn and mankind) which of the favors of your Lord would you then deny?.
- 3. Sher Ali (1955:233) O company of jinn and men! if you have power to break through the confines of the heavens and the earth, then break through them. But you cannot break through save with authority Which, then, of the favours of your Lord will ye twain, deny?
- 4. Yusuf Ali (1937:345) O ye assembly of Jinns and men! If it be ye can pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth, pass ye! not without authority shall ye be able to pass! Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny?

<u>Interpretation:</u> This verse is a general threat for each individual of Jinn and mankind informing them that they are fully under Allah's authority. Therefore, no one of them can pass the heavens without His permission (Ibn 'Aashuur, n.d: 259/13).

SL Text:(2)

SL Text Arabic	No. of text	TL text English	Type of Shift	Function of Shift
٠	1	O company of jinn and menyour Lord	to	
يا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنَّ وَالأنس فبأيِّ آلاء ربِّكُمَا تُكَدِّبَان	2	Jinn and mankind (Jinn and mankind) - which of the favors of your Lord would you then deny?.	From plural addressee to dual one	Threatening
	3	O company of jinn and men!your Lord	From I	L
	4	O ye assembly of Jinns and men!your Lord		

Table (1): The Translations of SL text (1)

Title	Semantic Method			Co	mmunicat	ive	Degrees of Explicitn			
					Method			of Iltifât		
No. of	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	
text										
1		+						+		
2		+						+		

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3			+		+
4			+		+

Table|(2): Degrees of Translational coincidence with the interpretation

The Proposed Rendering: O each Individual of Jinn and mankind...... (both Jinn and mankind) - which of the favors of your Lord would you then deny?

SL Text:(3)

- 1. **Pickthall (1956:454)** And when they appeal unto <u>Allah</u> and <u>His messenger to judge between them</u>, lo! a faction of them are averse.
- Sarwar (1981:554) When they are called to God and
 His Messenger so that they will judge among them,
 suddenly, some of them turn away.
- 3. Sher Ali (1955:231) And when they are called to ALLAH and HIS Messenger that he may judge between them, lo! a party of them turn away.
- 4. Yusuf Ali (1937:364) When they are summoned to <u>Allah</u> and His messenger, in order that He may judge between them, behold some of them decline (to come).

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Interpretation: This verse explains that Allah's legislation is the same as the Prophet's because he cannot legislate without revelation form Allah. This makes clear the reason behind making the subject of the verb (– يحكم judge) in single form (Ibn 'Aashuur,n.d:270/9).

SL Text: (3)

SL Text	No. of	TL text	Type	Function
Arabic	text	English	of	of Shift
			Shift	
وَإِذَا دُعواً إِلَى	1	Allah and His messenger		_
وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ		to judge between them	one	ımaç
لِيَحْكُمَ	2	to God and His	From dual subject to single one	Honouring the prophet Muhammad
		Messenger so that they	to sir	et Mı
		will judge among them	ect 1	ophe
	3	ALLAH and HIS	subj	ie pr
		Messenger that he may	dual	ng tk
		judge between them	.ош (ouri
	4	Allah and His messenger,	Ē	Hon
		in order that He may		
		judge		

Table (1): The Translations of SL text (1)

Title	Semantic Method			Co	mmunicat	ive	Degrees of Explicitn		
					Method		of Iltifât		
No. of	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
text									
1		+						+	
2			+						+
3	+						+		
4	+						+		

Table (2): Degrees of Translational coincidence with the interpretation

The Proposed Rendering: The same as translations no. 3 and 4.

SL Text: (4)

TL Text: (4)

1. **Pickthall (1956:334)** And We inspired <u>Moses and his</u> <u>brother</u>, (saying): Appoint houses for your people in Egypt <u>and make your houses oratories</u>, and establish worship. And give good news to the believers.

- 2. **Sarwar (1981:241)** We sent a revelation to <u>Moses and his brother</u> to <u>build houses for their people</u> in the Pharaoh's town <u>and to build them</u> facing one another. (We told him) that therein they should pray and that Moses should give the glad news (of God's mercy) to the faithful ones.
- 3. **Sher Ali (1955:254)** And WE revealed to <u>Moses and his</u> <u>brother</u>, saying, 'Take for your people some houses in the town, and <u>construct your houses</u> so that they face each other and observe Prayer. And give glad tidings to the believers.
- 4. Yusuf Ali (1937: 344) We inspired Moses and his brother with this Message: "Provide dwellings for your people in Egypt, make your dwellings into places of worship, and establish regular prayers: and give glad tidings to those who believe!"

Interpretation: Allah the Almighty reveals to his prophet Moses and his brother to order their nation to turn their dwellings into places of worship. The subject of the verb (- اجعلوا make) is plural because every one of the children of Israel as well as Moses and his brother are requested to make their dwellings as such and to establish regular prayers (Ibn 'Aashuur, n.d:267/6).

<u>SL Text:(4)</u>

SL Text	No. of	TL text	Type	Function
Arabic	text	English	of	of Shift
			Shift	
<u>تَبَوَّءَا</u> وَاجْعَلُواْ	1	Moses and his brother	ıl one	other
<u>وَاجْعَلُواْ</u>		make your houses	ura	bre
	2	Moses and his brother to build houses	ee to pl	and his
	3	Moses and his brother	From dual addressee to plural one	Honouring Moses and his brother
		construct your houses	ual	ing
	4	Moses and his brother	rom d	onour
		make your dwellings	Fì	Н

Table (1): The Translations of SL text (1)

Title	Semantic Method			Co	mmunicat	ive	Degree	citnes	
					Method		of Iltifât		
No. of	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
text									
1					+				+
2			+						+
3		+							+
4		+							+

Table (2): Degrees of Translational coincidence with the interpretation

TL Text:(5)

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَقَيْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلُ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلُمَا جَاءِكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لاَ تَهْوَى أَنفُسُكُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدُنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلُمَا جَاءِكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لاَ تَهْوَى أَنفُسُكُمُ النَّيِّنَاتِ وَأَيْتُلُونَ البقرة: ٨٧

- 1. **Pickthall (1956:40)** And verily We gave unto Moses the Scripture and We caused a train of messengers to follow after him, and We gave unto Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), and We supported him with the Holy spirit. Is it ever so, that, when there cometh unto you a messenger (from Allah) with that which ye yourselves desire not, ye grow arrogant, and **some ye disbelieve and some ye slay?**
- 2. Sarwar (1981:24) We gave the Book to Moses and made the Messengers follow in his path. To Jesus, the son of Mary, We gave the miracles and supported him by the Holy Spirit. Why do you arrogantly <u>belie some Messengers and</u> <u>murder others whenever they have brought you</u> <u>messages that you dislike?</u>

- 3. **Sher Ali** (1955:54) And verily WE gave Moses the Book and caused Messengers to follow in his footsteps after him; and to Jesus, son of Mary, WE gave manifest Signs, and strengthened him with the Spirit of Holiness. Will you, then, every time a Messenger comes to you with what you yourselves desire not, behave arrogantly and treat some as liars and slay others?
- 4. Yusuf Ali (1937:34) We gave Moses the Book and followed him up with a succession of messengers; We gave Jesus the son of Mary Clear (Signs) and strengthened him with the holy spirit. Is it that whenever there comes to you a messenger with what ye yourselves desire not, ye are puffed up with pride?- Some ye called impostors, and others ye slay!

Interpretation: In this verse Allah the Almighty shows how the children of Israel encounter and deal with their Messengers. They belied some of them like Jesus and Killed some other Messenger like Zakaria. This act was done recurrently (Ibn 'Aashuur, n.d:598/6).

<u>SL Text:(5)</u>

SL Text	No. of	TL text	Type	Function
Arabic	text	English	of	of Shift
			Shift	
فقريقاً كَدَّبْتُمْ وَفُريقاً تَقْتُلُونَ	1	some ye disbelieve and some ye slay?		ets).
وقريف نفقون	2	belie some Messengers and murder others whenever they have brought you messages that you dislike?	to present	he killing of the Proph
	3	Messenger comes to you with what you yourselves desire not, behave arrogantly and treat some as liars and slay others?	From past tense to present	To highlight the awful act (i.e. the killing of the Prophets).
	4	Some ye called impostors, and others ye slay!		To higl

Table (1): The Translations of SL text (1)

Title	Semantic Method			Communicative			Degrees of Explicitnes		
				Method			of Iltifât		
No. of	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
text									
1		+							+
2					+				+
3					+				+
4					+			+	

Table (2): Degrees of Translational coincidence with the interpretation

The Proposed Rendering: Some you disbelieved, and others you slay and will!

Conclusions:

The study has come up with the following conclusions:

1. The translator have failed in a way or another to provide explicit markers of Iltifât (i.e. change of tense and address in our case) as it is in the original text. This being the case, one cannot tell whether the pronoun 'you', for example, is used for singularity, duality or plurality in the renderings. Similarly, some translators have opted for use in-text techniques like explanatory sentences to set for the difference of pronoun between English and Arabic.

- 2. Iltifât as a rhetorical device which belongs specifically to Arabic. Consequently, it will be difficult to understand the quiddity of the transmission from one case to another one by those who are non-Arabic speakers. With this in mind, its translation into another language (English in our case) is very difficult task.
- All kinds of Iltifât play a vital role in adding aesthetic and rhetorical meaning to the Qurânic discourse and communicating the religious purposes behind the Qurânic text.
- 4. The shift of number has very important functions. In the first place, it treats the singular as if it were plural and vice versa, conveying rhetoric witticisms in the Qurânic contexts.
- 5. Most of the translators have used the semantic method of translation rather than the communicative one.

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ملخص

المظاهر الترجمية للالتفات في القران الكريم

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تتناول هذه الدراسة أسلوبا مهما من أساليب البلاغة العربية آلا وهو ظاهرة الالتفات في القران الكريم. وتهدف الدراسة بشكل عام إلى دراسة ماهية الالتفات في الأسلوب القرآني وأنواعه وأغراضه البلاغية ومن ثم تقويم ترجمة هذه الظاهرة من خلال عدد من الترجمات. ومن اجل تحقيق الأهداف المذكورة تفترض الدراسة بان هذه الظاهرة قد لا تظهر بشكل بارز في لغة الهدف أي الإنكليزية كما هي في لغة الأصل أي العربية مما يترتب عليه تغير في المعنى. وقد أثبتت الدراسة الفرضية المذكورة.

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