



Translating Iltifat in the Nobel Qur'an into English

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Abstract

This study deals with one of Arabic rhetoric devices, which named Iltifat in the Qur'anic verses and how to translate it into English . It aims to investigate the definition of Iltifat in general , and in the Nobel Qur'an in particular , its kinds , conditions , and its rhetorical purposes , as well as the analysis of this device translation in translating a number of Qur'anic verses contained Iltifat into English . Through the analysis of translation , it is noticed that this rhetoric device is rarely found in English (target language) as is the case of Arabic (source language) which may result in distorting the meaning .

Key words : rhetoric devices , verses , distorting .

ترجمة أسلوب الالتفات في القرآن الكريم إلى اللغة الانكليزية

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المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة واحدا من أساليب البلاغة العربية ألا وهو أسلوب الالتفات الوارد في الآيات القرآنية وكيفية ترجمته إلى اللغة الانكليزية . وتتطرق إلى تعريف أسلوب الالتفات بشكل عام ، وفي القرآن الكريم بشكل خاص ومعرفة أنواعه وشروطه وأغراضه البلاغية وكذلك تحليل ترجمة هذا الأسلوب في ترجمة عدد من الآيات القرآنية المتضمنة لأسلوب الالتفات إلى اللغة الانكليزية ، ومن خلال تحليل الترجمة تبين إن هذا الأسلوب قلما يرد في اللغة الانكليزية (لغة الهدف) كما هو الحال في اللغة العربية (لغة المصدر) مما يؤدي إلى تغيير في المعنى .

الكلمات المفتاحية : الأساليب البلاغية ، آيات ، تشويه

Introduction:

The style of the Nobel Qur'an is distinctive and unique . It is distinctive in its statement and unique in its miraculousness which makes the process of translating it into other languages an extremely difficult process , because of the difficulty of conveying the rhetorical and graphic devices of the Nobel Qur'an. It contains the heights levels of rhetoric , one of these rhetorical devices is " iltifat " which is used generally in Arabic language and specifically in the Nobel Qur'an , so the translator who is specialized in translating the Nobel Qur'an must understand the environment in which the Qur'an was revealed , the reasons of the verses revelation and the contexts in which they were revealed . In addition to understand the rhetorical characteristics that the Arabic language possesses and then transmit it in complete accuracy without adding , deleting or changing the meaning . As there are some translators tried to convey the meaning of every Qur'anic word and added footnotes to explain the rhetorical images contained in



the Qur'an , like what Yusuf Ali did in his translation of the Nobel Qur'an , while some translators did not give importance to this aspect , did not pay attention to the rhetorical characteristics and were only concerned with simplifying the meanings of the Qur'an so that the general public could understand . This paper attempts to clarify one of these rhetorical devices is " iltifat " which indicates the splendor of the Qur'anic verses and the diversity of meanings of a single topic . And also , sheds light on the difficulties that are faced by translators in translating the Qur'anic verses containing " iltifat " into English . Mohaghegh & Pirnajuddin (2013 : 57) state that the readers of the Nobel Qur'an , particularly in the English language, need to know the style of " iltifat " and its tremendous impact as a means of communication in the text because Islam is not only for Arabs , the need for translating the Quran as a main text into the English language is evident.

Definition of Iltifat:

Arab rhetoricians and scholars have been proposed many definitions of " iltifat " . Al-Zarkashi (1958 : 380) defines it as a transfer of speech from one style to another for the purpose of attracting the listener's mind , renewing his activity , and protecting his mind from boredom . Ibn Al-Atheer (n.d : 167-168) mentions that " iltifat " is a speech which moves from one form to another , such as moving from present speech to absent speech , or from absent speech to present , or from past verb to future , or from future to past and so on . Al-Suyuti (1951 : 731) defines it as a departure from the normal usage of expression to another to give a suitable rhetorical meaning for the context .

Abd Al-Mutalib (n.d : 296) states that " iltifat " is a speaker's shift from addressing to informing and from informing to addressing .i.e shifting from one meaning to another . He describes it as a change between the expressions that turn from and that which turn to in a particular context (including pronouns , numbers , and tense) . This change depends on the phrases' underlying coordination and apparent contradiction .

Aims of Iltifat:

Some Arab rhetoricians and scholars believe that " iltifat " has one main purpose, but the other think that it has more than one , so they divided them into two groups : general purposes and specific purposes . The first one is to create beautiful speech , to ease rhyming , to renew the listener's mind and to avoid a boring speech . Whereas the specific purpose is to change the speech according to the speaker's situation . Al-Zamakhshari (1948 : 147) sees that the purpose of " iltifat " is to relieve the boredom of the speaker or the addressee , so they move from speech to departure and from the speaker to speech or departure . It would be better to move from one to another , because consecutive speech which uses one style become undesirable , this purpose according to Al-Zarkashi (1958 : 393) is the most important , because the listeners relax and their activity will renew if the



context moves from one situation to another and the style of speech changes , but it is wrong to limit the attention to this purpose only . Because whoever interests especially in the Nobel Qur'an will find other purposes for it . Abdal Haleem (2005 : 236) adds the use of some other purposes of " iltifat " in the Qur'anic rhetorical style such as (honoring , warning , blaming , threatetc) , that make attention very important topic in the art of eloquence .

Conditions of Iltifat :

Rhetoricians have set two conditions of " iltifat " . Al-Suyuti (1951 : 73) mentions the first condition , in which the second mentioning of a thing or a person which turns to and that which turned from should be the same , i.e the second pronoun should refer to the same thing as the first pronoun which is different from it . As in :-

((حتى إذا كنتم في الفلك وجرين بهم بريح طيبة)) (يونس : 22)

"Till when you are in the ships, and they sail with them with a favorable wind "

Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 235) The two pronouns in the above Aya refer to the same thing at the same subject .The second condition was stated by Al-Zarkashi (1958 : 96) is that " iltifat " should occur within two separate independent sentences . As in :-

((يا أيها النبي إنا أحللنا لك ... وامرأة مؤمنة إن وهبت نفسها للنبي)) (الاحزاب : 50)

" O Prophet

Mohammad ! Verily , We have made lawful to you and a believing woman if she offers herself to the Prophet "

Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 473 – 474)

Here a conditional sentence appears in the Qur'anic verse above which is " and a believing woman if she offers herself to the Prophet " after Allah's Almighty says " We have made lawful to you" .

The interpretation " if a woman offers herself to the Prophet , We have made lawful to you " i.e a conditional sentence and its answer are one speech .

Types of Iltifat :

Arab scholars classify " iltifat " into three categories : addressee , number and tense . Ibn Al-Atheer (n.d : 165-169) divides " iltifat " in his book Al-Mathal Al- Sa'ir into three types : the first type in the field of pronouns (shift in addressee) the second type in the field of number (shift between singular , dual and plural) the third one in the field of tense (shift between perfect , imperfect tense etc) .

1. Shift in addressee : Al-Zarkashi (1958 : 206) subdivides " iltifat " in the field of pronouns into six types :

a. Shift from address to narration (الانتقال من الخطاب الى الغيبة) as in :



((ادخلوا الجنة انتم وأزواجكم تحبرون . يطاف عليهم بصحاف من ذهب وأكواب))
(الزخرف: ٧٠ - ٧١)

" Enter Paradise , you and your wives , in happiness . Trays of gold and cups will be passed round them " .
Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 547)

It is noticed that Allah's Almighty speech in the Glorious Qur'an transferred from address (الخطاب) " Enter Paradise , you and your wives " to narration (الغيبة) (" will be passed **round them** " and did not say ((will be passed **round you**)) .

b. Shift from speaking to address (الانتقال من التكلم الى الخطاب) as in :-

((ومالي لا اعبد الذي فطرني وإليه ترجعون)) (يس: 22)

" And why should I not worship Him (Allah Alone) Who has created me and to Whom you shall be returned " .
Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 489)

Here , the translation may be unacceptable and cause disruption to the reader who knows nothing about " iltifat " . Because , Allah's Almighty speech has moved from speaking (التكلم) " And why should I not worship Him " to address (الخطاب) " to Whom **you shall be returned** " and did not say ((**I shall be returned**)) .

c. Shift from speaking to narration (الانتقال من التكلم الى الغيبة) as in :-

((إنا أعطيناك الكوثر . فصل لربك وأنحر)) (الكوثر: ١ - ٢)

" Verily , We have granted you (O Muhammad) Al-Kauthar (a river in Paradise) . Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only)" .
Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 690 - 691)

It is shown that " iltifat " in this verse transfers from speaking (التكلم) in which Allah's Almighty says " Verily , We have granted you Al-Kauthar " to narration (الغيبة) " Therefore **turn in prayer to your Lord** " . and did not say " **turn in prayer to us** " .

d. Shift from address to speaking (الانتقال من الخطاب الى التكلم) as in :-

((قل الله أسرع مكرًا إن رسلنا يكتبون ما تمكرون)) (يونس: 21)

(Say : " Allah is Swifter in planning " . Certainly , Our Messengers (angels) record all of that which you plot).
Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 235)

The interpretation of this verse shows that Allah's Almighty speech has moved from address (الخطاب) in " **Say : Allah is Swifter in planning** " to speaking (التكلم) " **Our Messengers (angels) record ...** " .

e. Shift from narration to speaking (الانتقال من الغيبة الى التكلم) as in :-



((وأوحى في كل سماء أمرها وزينا السماء الدنيا بمصابيح وحفظا)) (فصلت : 12)

" He made in each heaven its affair . And We adorned the nearest (lowest) heaven with lamps (stars) to be an adornment as well as to guard ."

Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 529)

Here , the rhetorical device " iltifat " in the above verse , has transferred from narration (الغيبة) in " **He made** in each heaven " to speaking (التكلم) in " **We adorned** the nearest heaven " and did not say " **He adorned** " .

f. Shift from narration to address (الانتقال من الغيبة إلى الخطاب) as in :-

((وسقاهم ربهم شرابا طهورا . إن هذا كان لكم جزاء)) (الإنسان : ٢١ - ٢٢)

" And their Lord will give them a pure drink . Verily , this is a reward for you " .
Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 652)

It is shown that " iltifat " has moved from narration (الغيبة) " **give them a pure drink** " to address (الخطاب) " **a reward for you** " and did not say " **a reward for them** "

2. Shift in number between singular , dual and plural .
Al-Suyuti (1951: 175) subdivides " iltifat " in the field of numbers into many types :-

a. Shift from singular to dual (الانتقال من الأفراد إلى الثنائية) as in :-

((قالوا أجبنا لتلفتنا عما وجدنا عليه آباءنا وتكون لكما الكبرياء في الأرض)) (يونس : ٧٨)

" They said : Have **you** come to us to turn us away from that (Faith) we found our fathers following , and that **you two** may have greatness in the land ? "

Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 242)

b. Shift from singular to plural (الانتقال من الأفراد إلى الجمع) as in :-

((يا أيها النبي إذا طلقتم النساء فطلقوهن لعدتهن)) (الطلاق : ١)

" O! **Prophet** , When **you** divorce women , divorce them at their ' Iddah (prescribed periods)."

Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 622)

c. Shift from dual to singular (الانتقال من الثنائية إلى الأفراد) as in :-

((قال فمن ربكما يا موسى)) (طه : ٤٩)

" Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said ' Who then **O Musa** (Moses) , is the Lord of **you two** "

Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 355)

d. Shift from dual to plural (الانتقال من الثنائية إلى الجمع) as in :-

((هذان خصمان اختصموا في ربهم)) (الحج : ١٩)



" These **two opponents** (believers and disbelievers) **dispute** with each other about their Lord " .
Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 375)

e. Shift from plural to singular (الانتقال من الجمع إلى الإفراد) as in :-

((وأقيموا الصلاة وبشروا المؤمنين)) (يونس : 87)

" And **perform As-Salat** and **give glad** tidings to the believers " .

Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 243)

f. Shift from plural to dual (الانتقال من الجمع إلى التثنية) as in :-

((لا تنفذون إلا بسلطان . فبأي آلاء ربكما تكذبان)) (الرحمن : ٣٣ - ٣٤)

" But **you** will never be able to pass them except with authority (from Allah) . Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will **you both** deny " .

Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 594)

In the field of tense , Ibn Al-Atheer (n.d : 172) subdivided " iltifat " into many types :-

a. Shift from past tense to imperative (الانتقال من صيغة الماضي إلى الأمر) as in:-

((قل أمر ربي بالقسط وأقيموا وجوهكم عند كل مسجد)) (الأعراف : ٢٩)

" Say O! Mohammad : **My Lord has commended** justice and (said) that **you should face Him only** in every place of worship in prayers " .

Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 176-177)

b. Shift from present tense to imperative (الانتقال من المضارع إلى الأمر) as in:-

((قال إني أشهد الله وأشهدوا إني بريء مما تشركون)) (هود : ٥٤)

" He said : **I call Allah to witness** and bear **you witness** that I am free from that which you ascribe as partners in worship " .

Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 252)

c. Shift from past tense to present (الانتقال من صيغة الماضي إلى المضارع) as in:-

((ففريقا كذبتهم وفريقا تفتلون)) (البقرة : ٨٧)

" Some **you disbelieved** and some **you kill** " . Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 17)

d. Shift from present tense to past (الانتقال من صيغة المضارع إلى الماضي) as in:-

((يوم ينفخ في الصور ففزع من في السموات ومن في الأرض إلا من شاء الله)) (النمل : ٨٧)



" And (remember) the Day on which **the Trumpet will be blown** – and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth , **will be terrified** except him whom Allah will (exempt)". Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 429)

Translation of Itifat :

The Nobel Qur'an's language contains a lot of rhetorical devices that exist only in the context of Arabic language , but does not exist in English language , one of these devices is " iltifat " . This makes the translation of "iltifat " in the Nobel Qur'an from Arabic into other languages especially , English is a difficult task . Because of Arabic and English are of two different language families . Originally , Arabic language comes from Semitic language family , and English language comes from Germanic language family . So the system of these two languages will differ from each other . Baker (1992 : 139) states that the differences between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) often lead to some changes in the content of the message during the translation process .

Text Analysis and Discussion

SL Text (1)

((إنا فتحنا لك فتحا مبينا . ليغفر لك الله ما تقدم من ذنبك وما تأخر)) (الفتح : ١ - ٢)

TL Text (1)

1. " Verily , **We have given you** (O Mohammad) a manifest victory . That **Allah may forgive you** your sins of the past and the future ."
- AL-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 566)

2. " Lo ! **We have given thee** (O Muhammad) a signal victory . That **Allah may forgive thee** of thy sin that which is past and that which is to come."
Pickthall (1969 : 579)

3. " Verily , **We have granted thee** a manifest Victory . That **Allah may forgive thee** thy faults of the past and those to follow."
Yusuf Ali (1987:259)

SLT Arabic	TLT English	Position of Itifat	Type of Itifat
((إنا فتحنا لك ليغفر لك الله))	<u>We have given you.....</u>	We Allah	Shift from speaker to addressee



	<u>Allah may forgive you</u>		
	<u>We have given thee</u>		
	<u>.....Allah may forgive thee</u>		
	<u>We have granted thee.....</u>		
	<u>Allah may forgive thee</u>		

Table (1) iltifat from speaker to addressee

Discussion

It is shown that these verses were revealed to reassure the souls of Muslims and to inform them that what had occurred was a clear conquest and a prelude to a strong victory that they would achieve under the prophet Mohammad's banner , it is also a means to get Allah's forgiveness for his previous and subsequent sin . Here the style of (iltifat) has shifted from speaker to addressee, in which Allah the Almighty transferred from first person plural pronoun (speaking form) (We) to third person singular pronoun (Allah) . Allah said (**We have given you** That **Allah may forgive you**) and did not say (That we may forgive you) .

SL Text (2)

((قل يا أيها الناس إني رسول الله إليكم جميعا الذي له ملك السموات والأرض لا إله إلا هو يحيي ويميت فآمنوا بالله ورسوله)) (الأعراف : ١٥٨)

TL Text (2)

1. " Say O Mohammad : O mankind ! Verily, **I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah** , to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth . La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He) it is He Who gives life and causes death . **So believe in Allah and his Messenger (Mohammad)** ... " Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 193)

2. " Say (O Mohammad) ! Lo ! **I am the messenger of Allah to you all** – Him unto Whom belongeth the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth . There is no God save Him . He quickeneth and He giveth death . **So believe in Allah and His messenger .** " Pickthall (1969 : 188)

3. " Say : (O Men) **I am sent unto you all** , as the messenger of Allah , to Whom belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth : there is no god but He : it is He That giveth both life and death . **So believe in Allah and His Messenger .** " Yusuf Ali (1987: 77)



SLT Arabic	TLT English	Position of Iltifat	Type of Iltifat
((إني رسول الله إليكم..... فأمنوا بالله ورسوله))	<u>I am sent to you</u> <u>all as the</u> <u>Messenger of</u> <u>Allah</u> <u>So believe in</u> <u>Allah and his</u> <u>Messenger</u> <u>I am the</u> <u>messenger of</u> <u>Allah to you all –</u> <u>..... So believe</u> <u>in Allah and His</u> <u>messenger</u> <u>I am sent unto</u> <u>you all So</u> <u>believe in Allah</u> <u>and His</u> <u>Messenger</u>	I am His Messenger	Shift from speaker to absentee pronoun

Table (2) iltifat from speaker to absentee pronoun

Discussion

In this verse , the style of iltifat has moved from speaking on the tongue of the prophet Mohammad (Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) when he announced his message to the people (**I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah**) then he turned to the absentee – the apparent name – when he called them to faith (**So believe in Allah and His Messenger**). Here if the noble verse was to follow the same pattern , he would have said (So believe in Allah and me) .

SL Text (3)

((والله الذي أرسل الرياح فتثير سحابا فسقناه إلى بلد ميت فأحيينا به الأرض)) (فاطر : 9)

TL Text (3)

1. " And it is **Allah Who sends** the winds , so that they raise up the clouds , and **We drive them** to a dead land and revive therewith the earth " Al-Hilali & Khan (1984 : 484)

2. " And **Allah it is Who sendeth** the winds and they raise a cloud : then **We lead it** unto a dead land and revive therewith the earth " Pickthall (1969 : 490)



3. " **It is Allah Who sends** forth the Winds so that they raise up the Clouds . and **We drive them** to a land that is dead and revive the earth ."
Yusuf Ali (1987: 215)

SLT Arabic	TLT English	Position of Iltifat	Type of Iltifat
((الله الذي أرسل فسقناه))	<u>Allah Who sends</u>	Allah	Shift from absentee pronoun to speaker
	<u>We drive them</u>	We	
	<u>Allah it is Who sendeth</u>		
	<u>We lead it</u>		
	<u>It is Allah Who sends</u> <u>We drive them</u>		

Table (3) iltifat from absentee pronoun to speaker

Discussion

It is noticed here that , this style is intended to indicate specialization , as driving the clouds to the dead land and reviving the earth after its death indicates the divine power of Allah the Almighty , which no one else can , and he moved from absence to speaking . Because , he entered into the specialty and indicated it . Allah the Almighty moved from the style of absentee third person singular pronoun (**Allah Who sends**) to the style of speaker first person plural pronoun (**We drive them**) and did not say (He drives them) .

Findings

Rhetoricians differed in defining the term " iltifat ". Some of them defined it as a shift from one style to another , and they also differed in defining its types , in which they divided it in terms of pronouns into six categories as follows (shift from address to narration , from narration to address , from speaking to address , from address to speaking , from speaking to narration , from narration to speaking) and some of them further divided it in terms of action and number . finally this style has many benefits and rhetorical secrets , including softening speech and preserving the hearing from boredom and ennui , and it is mentioned in many verses of the Holy Qur'an .

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