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Title

**A Study on Conversational Implicatures in the English Translations of
Noble Quran**

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**IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE
MERCIFUL**

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Abstract

Quran is the most famous miracle of Prophet Muhammad sent down by Allah and hence is the greatest book of muslims. Apparently, the way it is translated and interpreted affects the way muslims think and live. One of the most important aspects found in different languages (and certainly in Quran) is the use of implicature, i.e. implied meaning, which is discussed in pragmatics- a new branch of linguistics. Users of language easily apply implicatures in their conversations and Quran is not an exception in this regard, rather it offers a huge number of implicatures. In this study, conversations and dialogues of first twenty chapters of Quran are analyzed through Grice's Cooperative Principle and respective maxims. From these chapters, *one hundred* cases of implicature are derived and presented. Statistics shows that most of these implicatures are generated by violation of *Quantity* and *Relevance* maxims and a few by *Repetition*. In the next step, *ten* popular English translations of Quran are compared and contrasted with source text to see how translators rendered implicatures and which strategies have been used to achieve equivalence. In this regard, five common strategies among translators were distinguished: using *Literal Translation* to render the implicatures implicitly and using *Addition, Parenthesis/Brackets, Footnote* and *Dynamic Equivalence* strategies to render them explicitly, Then pros and cons of these strategies are discussed and *footnote* is suggested as the best strategy for rendition of implicatures. The current study further shows that although Grice's maxims are able to explain most of the Quranic conversational implicatures, however, they can not afford all of them, hence, the new maxim of *Repetition* was added to those of Grice's to explain and predict remaining implicatures.

Keywords: Translation of Conversational implicature, Cooperative principles, Gricean maxims, Quranic dialogues

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TRANSCRIPTION

In this study, Arabic words and expressions are rendered in transcription. A list of symbols is presented below:

Vowels	Arabic words	Closest English sound
/a/	/bal/ [rather]	bad
/aa/	/kitaab/ [book]	Jar
/e/	/men/ [from]	Pen
/o/	/jond/ [legion]	For
/oo/	/shakoor/ [grateful]	Do
/i/	/rahim/ [Gracious]	feet

Consonant	Arabic words	Closest English sound
/sh/	/shay?/ [thing]	shoe
/h/	/haqq/ [truth]	...
/q/	/barq/ [lightening]	...
/x/	/xalq/ [creation]	...
/?/	/?esm/ [name]	...

ABBREVIATIONS

Some abbreviations used in different chapters of this study:

SL: source language.

TL: target language.

CI: conversational implicatures.

CP: cooperative principle.

LT: literal translation.

DE: dynamic equivalence.

PB: explicitation by Parenthesis/Brackets.

AD: explicitation by addition.

FT: explicitation by footnote.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Quran is the most famous miracle of Prophet Muhammad sent down by Allah and hence is the greatest book of muslims. Since the time of revelation, a huge number of translations and interpretations have been written down concerning different aspects of it, but most of these efforts are based on traditional views toward language which have their own shortcomings and can not discharge the depth of the Quran. It is obvious that, the way Quran is translated and interpreted affects the way muslims think and live. There are two opposing views toward translation of the Quran; some scholars accept the idea of translating it while some others refuse its translation totally. The issue of translatability and legitimacy of translating the Quran is discussed in second edition of Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies (2009: 225). For example, Imam Shatby is mentioned as those who state that Quran cannot be translated with the view that the book has senses which are exclusive to the Quranic Arabic solely, on the contrary, Abu Hanifa, believes that it is legitimate to translate all the verses of the Qur'ān into a foreign language but 'it is not lawful to put the whole together in one volume unless the Arabic text is placed opposite the translation throughout' (Ibid: 227). In spite of the debates which have gone between Islamic scholars, translating the meanings of the Quran is a necessity, for it is Allah's word to all humanity. This is shown by Allah in Chapter 25 verse 1 :

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا ﴿الفرقان: ١﴾

(Blessed is He who has revealed the criteria (for discerning truth from falsehood) to His servant so that He could warn mankind)(25:1)

Almighty Allah asserts here that Quran is a criterion and also a warning for all mankind, then, it is not sent down for a particular race or nation. It should be delivered to all humanity and this is possible only through process of translation. However, it is very important to know that any translation of Quran, no matter how accurate, cannot replace the original Arabic text. When translating between two languages, there can never be an exact translation equivalence. Meaning between languages may overlap but it is unlikely to be exactly the same. This is due to the differences in the semantic, pragmatic, cultural or social features of languages. For Quran it is more complicated, because it is based on a rhetorical language and its wordings are abundant of meanings. It is an obstacle for translators. The current study then focuses on one of those problematic issues in translating Quran, that is, conversational implicatures which have root in pragmatic function of language.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Implied meaning is one of the most interesting issues of pragmatics found in every human language, at the same time, it is one of the most problematic concepts in the process of translation. Implicature occurs when someone implies or suggests one thing by saying something else. In such cases understanding the connotative meaning (non-literal sense) of the text will be of great necessity along with the denotative meaning (literal sense) for understanding the exact and intended meaning of the text. For native readers/hearers

implicature is inferred easily through linguistic, cultural or social backgrounds and presuppositions, while this is not shared for foreign reader/hearer in target languages. Connotative meaning is more likely to be problematic in process of translation than denotative meaning. It is obvious that translating the verses literally, depending on the denotative meanings of words, results in a great loss of meaning leading to non-equivalent translation. For Nida (1964: 164) the success of translation depends above all on achievement of equivalent response. Translators then should be aware of this problematic issues and compensate the loss occurred in transferring meanings. This problem led this study to focus on one of the most important pragmatic issues, i.e. conversational implicatures, and see how translators cope with them in translating the text of the Quran from Arabic into other languages.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is then, to collect Quranic dialogic verses which contain implicature and to see how implicatures are made in them, which strategies are adopted by translators to render such implied meanings and what are pros and cons of those strategies. This study tries to know whether there is a distinct approach adopted by translators for each violated maxim so that by extending them one can achieve a general principle for translation of implicatures. Maxims of Grice (which are used to define and predict implicatures) will also be examined to see whether they are enough to explain the Quranic implicatures and if not, what modifications should be made.

To deal with these matters, the present work proceeds as follows: Chapter One introduces the problem of the study, the purpose of the study, its questions, its limitations, its significance, and definition of terms. Chapter Two presents some important theoretical frameworks needed to go through this study. Chapter Three is an account of the previous studies related to the pragmatic issues in Quran, implicatures and their translations. Chapter Four deals with the methodology used to gather the corpus of the data and the way they are analysed, then the results are presented and discussed in this chapter. Finally, Chapter Five includes the conclusions based on the results given in Chapter Four.

1.4 Questions of the Research

The current research aims at answering the following questions:

1. What problems are generated as a result of ignoring explicitation of Quranic implicatures?
2. What strategies are used by translators to render the conversational implicatures and what are pros and cons of those strategies?
3. What is the relationship between adopted strategies and violated maxims? is it possible to generalize the adopted strategies for each violated maxim and find a general method for translating implicatures?

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

- a. Ignoring explicitation of implicatures in process of translation, produces a text which can not retrieve the equivalent effect.

- b. Some translators transferred the implied meaning directly while some others utilized different strategies to make explicit the implied meaning in process of translation, namely parenthesis, footnote, addition and dynamic equivalence.
- c. Adopted strategies are dependent on the violated maxims. Each translator adopted a distinct approach for each violated maxim by which one can achieve a general principle for translation of implicatures.

1.6 Limitations of the study

This thesis is a comparative and analytical study of the translations of the Quran, limited to ten popular translations carried out by muslim or non-muslim scholars. Furthermore, because of huge amount of data, just first twenty chapters of the Quran are searched and analyzed for possible implicatures. Additionally, this study aims at analyzing the conversational implicatures in Quranic dialogic verses, other sub-branches of pragmatics such as presupposition and speech acts are not part of this study's purpose.

1.7 Definition of terms

Some technical terms are used in this study which need to be defined:

1. Semantics: It is almost synonym with 'meaning'. It is defined by Nida (1964: 34) as "the relationship between signs or symbols created by human beings and their referents, corresponding roughly to what people usually think of as meaning". Lyons (1977: 1) defines semantics as "the study of meaning."

2. Pragmatics: This mainly deals with the speaker's/writer's intended meaning and the listener's/reader's interpretation of that meaning. Yule (1996:3) defines pragmatics as "meaning communicated by a speaker (writer) and interpreted by a listener (reader)".

3. Denotative Meaning: what the word refers to in the real world, or its dictionary definition in the case of abstract words.

4. Connotative Meaning: the peripheral, non-denotational meaning of a word.

5. Implicature: It is used by Grice (1975:223) as "what the speaker means or implies rather than what s/he literally says". To Grice, implicatures stand in opposition to 'what is said' and refer to 'what is meant'. It is the meaning that results from violating one of the maxims.

6. The Cooperative Principle: it is a principle of conversation that was proposed by Grice (1975:45), stating that participants expect that each will make a "conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange.

7. Grice's Maxims: The Cooperative principle is based on four maxims that need to be observed when people use language in an implied way. These are: quality, quantity, relevance and manner.

8. Explicitation: it is the technique of making explicit the target text information that is implicit in the source text. Vinay and Darbelnet(1958/1995:342), define it as 'a stylistic translation technique which consists of making explicit in the target language what remains implicit in the source language because it is apparent from either the context or the situation'.

9. Dynamic Equivalence: Nida (1964) for the first time introduces this term which means eliciting the same reader response as that of original.

1.8 Significance of the Study

- a. Quran is the holy book of Muslims and most of the translators have approached this book with care and caution. Two important points should be mentioned regarding these translations: 1) most of the translators render the Quran literally without paying enough attention to implicatures and pragmatic issues 2) in cases implicatures are observed in translations, it is an imitation of preceded translators. This study shows that adding information to the translation and making explicit what is implied, even though it does not harm the Quran, it is sometimes critical.
- b. One of the miraculous aspects of the Quran is its brevity and eloquence. The Quran gathers various layers of meaning in one simple sentence, then the glorious style of the Quran can be understood better through modern pragmatic principles and maxims.
- c. The results of this study show that to what extent implicatures are observed and rendered by translators and what the pros and cons of those adopted strategies for translation are.
- d. Translations of the Quran have serious shortcomings, this study can help translators and interpreters include pragmatic issues in their works more effectively and discharge the debt of the Quran appropriately.
- e. This study shows different strategies used by preceding translators to render the implicatures, and suggests more effective ones for the future translations.
- f. This study examines the Grice's Maxims to see if they can justify all of the implicatures properly.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Preliminaries

Quran is the last holy book sent by God to mankind through His prophet, Muhammad. Nowadays, Muslims all over the world obey this holy book, and its instructions have direct influence on their life. Those people who know the language of the Quran read and get its teachings directly, but other people with foreign languages, approach it through its translations. There are a lot of Quranic translations and interpretations done by Muslim experts, but most of them are based on literal meanings, without paying enough attention to pragmatic issues. Sharifabad and Hazbavi (2011) discuss two reasons which lead to mistranslation of the Quran: “the first reason is the sacredness of the language of revelation, which prevents the translator to render the structure and message, as s/he deems appropriate in the context of target language text (TLT). Secondly, in some cases source language (SL) and target language share the same syntactic structures with different functions. Mistranslation arises where these differences are not considered”. Pragmatic issues could be found in every text, and analysis of all text from pragmatic point of view is possible. Egging (2004:23-24) defines text as “*any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole*”, so here this important question should be asked: is Quran a text? To support this we should see if Quran is a unified whole. In Quran, at first stage, meaningful words are