Inflectional Deviation of Gender in the Qur'an

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Abstract

Inflection, part of morphology, has its own rules that govern the combinations of morphemes in words and the relationships between parts of speech within a text. Yet, inflection including that of gender can vary across different linguistic systems. Arabic and English notably contrast in gender-based relations. More specifically and within Arabic itself, the Qur'an displays striking cases of gender disagreement between grammatical categories within a text. Such deviating forms, as using a masculine verb with a feminine subject, a masculine subject with a feminine predicate or a masculine adjective to modify a feminine noun, are very unlikely to appear in other Arabic text genres. These are utilized in the divine text as rhetorical devices to create certain effects or achieve a linguistic power on the audience, in addition to other functions. This special use of gender deviation and the functions it purports to perform in the source text are likely to be lost in translation. Of course, this is attributed to the fact that the target language system neither accommodates the same inflectional rules governing gender relations in Arabic, on the one hand, nor can it provide equal deviating or gender-based disagreements, on the other.

Key words: Gender; Deviation; Linguistic; Qur'an

INTRODUCTION

The grammar of a language includes the knowledge its speakers have about its units and rules. Language rules include phonological ones for combining sounds into words, morphological rules of word formation, syntactic rules for combining words into phrases and sentences, in addition to the semantic ones for assigning meaning. Inflection is part of morphology as it has its own rules, of course varying across different linguistic systems, which affect or govern the combinations of morphemes in words. Yet, inflection cannot be handled in isolation from syntax, which is the arrangement of words as elements in a sentence to show their relationship, which in its turn is affected by gender. In this respect, and as related to the meanings of grammar, Greenbaum and Quirk (2004, pp.1-2) use grammar to include both syntax and the aspect of morphology that deals with inflections or accidence. For example, the fact that the past tense of *break* is *broke* (inflection) and the fact that the interrogative form of *She broke it* is *Did she break it?* (syntax), fall therefore both equally within grammar. Morphology, being the study of the internal structure of words and rules of word formation, comprises two main branches: inflectional morphology and lexical morphology, i.e., word-formation (Bauer, 1983). While inflectional morphology deals with the various forms of lexemes, word-formation addresses the formation of new lexemes from given bases. Hall (1968) in this vein explains that morphology consists of two layers: an outer one involving inflectionally bound forms and an inner one as the layer of derivation.

Many languages, including Arabic and English, have bound morphemes that carry out a strictly grammatical function. They mark properties or categories such as tense, number, gender, tense, mood, voice, comparison and case. Thus, inflectional morphology, as Lehmann (1972) puts it, is the body of rules describing the manner in which a lexical item has a grammatical morpheme

joined to its beginning or end. These joined or bound morphemes, called inflectional morphemes, never change the grammatical class or syntactic category of the words or morphemes to which they are attached. Moreover, as Lehmann (ibid) and Covell (1989) explain, inflectional categories may not be consistently indicated by the same inflectional morpheme. Some inflectional categories may have homonymous inflections, and inflectional morphemes can duplicate other syntactic information in the sentence. While classes of inflection for nouns, pronouns and adjectives are referred to as declensions, those for verbs are conjugations. In short, inflectional morphemes are the prefixes and suffixes that perform a grammatical function.

As is the case in phonology where sounds form different patterns in different languages, parts of speech are also inflected differently cross-linguistically. Arabic, for example has a large space of morphological variation since its inflectional morphology requires infixation, prefixation and suffixation. Morphologically, Arabic is described as a con-catenative language and one basic problem with generating its verbal morphology is the large number of forms to be generated. Verbal stems in Arabic are based on mainly trilateral roots and thus formed by a derivational combination of a root morpheme and a vowel melody, and the two are arranged according to canonical patterns. In verb conjugation, the stem differs depending on the person, gender, number, mood, in addition to the presence of certain root consonants. For example, combined with suffixes, stem changes in the perfect indicative 'rasamnā', 'we drew', rusima, 'it was drawn' and the imperative 'ursumū', ('draw', plural), and with both prefixes and suffixes for the imperfect tense as in the indicative 'yarsumnā', ('they draw', feminine plural).

Gender inflection cross-linguistically, like all other morphological aspects, is rule-governed, though may reflect variations within different linguistic systems. In Arabic, however, the Qur'anic treatment of gender manifests exceptional cases of deviation from the rules that govern the gender-based relations or agreements between parts of speech in discourse. The resulting disagreement representations are purposefully constructed as rhetorical devices to draw the reader's attention to certain functions the text lends itself to. Employing various types of gender-based disagreement, as will be shown in the discussion below, like those of noun-adjective, subject-predicate, verb-subject, etc. are meant to perform different functions that can not be grasped by all readers alike and to achieve a certain linguistic power on the readership that may not be felt similarly, either. Because this linguistic phenomenon of gender-related deviation is Qur'anic discourse specific since rhetorically utilized, and is not enjoyed by the English inflectional morphology, translation loss at the rhetorical level is very likely. In the parts to follow, a brief account of gender

in both Arabic and English morphology is provided to highlight the differences that can constitute problems in translation, to say nothing of the Qur'anic deviating uses within Arabic inflectional morphology itself.

1. STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

Many languages, including Arabic, exhibit different morphological systems wherein grammatical classes are also inflected differently. In fact, Arabic has a large space of morphological variation since its inflectional morphology requires infixation, prefixation and suffixation. For example, the large number of forms to be generated constitutes a problem in generating its verbal morphology, and thus morphologically, Arabic is characterized as a concatenative language. Verb conjugations as well as noun and adjective declensions are gender sensitive in addition to person, number and mood. Of course, gender inflection, like other types of inflection, is rule-governed. Yet, the Qur'anic discourse depicts a variety of deviations from those rules governing Arabic inflectional morphology including those of gender. For example, a masculine verb is likely to be used with a feminine subject or a masculine adjective is used to modify a feminine noun, and thus breaking the gender-based agreement between parts of speech within a sentence.

Establishing such types of disagreement relations in terms of gender like noun-adjective or verb-subject ones is only one facet of the Qur'anic multifarious utilization of rhetoric to convey or elucidate a particular message. The various rhetorical features employed to carry out a host of functions in this divine text are very unlikely in other texts of Arabic. Translationally, moreover, the functions achieved through this linguistic phenomenon of deviation can constitute a problem not easy to overcome. Thus, the present endeavor addresses itself to investigating this rhetorical device of gender-based deviation linguistically and translationally as well as the functions it purports to perform. To do so, some examples from the Qur'an are selected, analyzed and discussed; some Qur'anic exegeses are consulted and three authentic interpretations of the Qur'an are exemplified, on which the analysis is based.

2. GENDER IN ARABIC MORPHOLOGY

The term gender is used in sociolinguistics for distinguishing people on the basis of their socio-cultural behavior including speech; whereas sex refers to categories distinguished on the basis of biological characteristics, as Holmes (2001, p.150) argues. Morphologically, gender is a set of classes that governs the forms of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and articles. As stated earlier, since gender terms and forms do not always refer to biological differences, the terms used to indicate gender might vary cross-linguistically. Therefore,

they can be used to indicate the masculine and feminine or the animate and inanimate. In English, for example, gender is indicated in the third person singular personal pronouns, *'she'* for the feminine, 'he' for the masculine and 'it' for the neuter. Yet, the third person singular may or may not match sexual gender, as 'she' could be used to refer to a cat and 'he' to an indefinite person.

As for Arabic morphology, gender distinctions are made in nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, including relative and demonstrative pronouns. Like English, Arabic has the genders of masculine and feminine. Yet, not only persons but also things and animals can be masculine or feminine. Nouns in Arabic have inherent grammatical gender with grammatical consequences, and those referring to persons and animals have physical sex with the grammatical gender. The grammatical consequences appearing in the rest of the sentence are represented in the gender agreement of noun-verb, noun-adjective, noun-relative pronoun and noun-demonstrative.

Adjectives, moreover, are either masculine or feminine and thus are morphologically marked for gender. To change the singular masculine base form of the noun or adjective into feminine, the suffix '-āt' is added to it. However, this singular feminine suffix has the allomorphs of 'ah' as in طالبة 'ṭālibah' 'female student', 'ā' as in صفراء 'ṣafrā', 'yellow' for female) and 'ā' as in كبرى 'kubrā' 'biggest' for female. As is clear, the addition of the two female suffixes 'ā' and 'āā' requires the deletion of the initial segment 'ā' from the masculine adjectives أصفر 'aṣfar', 'yellow' for male, and أكبر 'akbar' biggest for male). As for dual nouns and adjectives, they are either masculine or feminine, too. The dual suffixes 'ānī' and 'aynī are affixed to the masculine as well as the feminine base forms of the noun as in ولدان 'waladānī' (two boys, agentive subject) and ولدين 'waladaynī' (two boys, accusative & dative noun). In addition, to convert the feminine singular base form of the noun or adjective into sound feminine plural, the morpheme '-āt' is added to it as in طالبات 'ṭalibāt, female students' and ماهرات 'mahirāt', 'skilled, feminine plural', where the '-ah' is deleted from the singular 'ṭālibah' 'female student' and 'māhirah' skilled, feminine singular'. However, while some adjectives have no gender suffix such as رضا 'riḍā' 'satisfaction', a few others have no feminine suffix, thus have only a masculine form ' عقيم ', 'sterile' and another set have no masculine suffix, and thus having only a feminine form such as ' طالق ', 'divorced'.

The verb in Arabic, furthermore, consists of a verb part and a pronominal prefix or suffix. The pronominal prefix or suffix can be a marker of person, tense, aspect, number, gender, voice or mood. The base form of the Arabic verb is third person masculine singular as in 'rasama' 'draw'. Yet, the masculine and feminine genders are marked by a pronominal suffix in the perfect tense, whereas it is denoted by a combination of a pronominal prefix and suffix marking a number of variants such as person, tense and aspect.

As for the feminine pronominal suffix and its variants, it includes the /-at/ which is used with the third person feminine singular as in 'hiya rasamat', she drew', 'ā' used with the dual as in 'huma rasam-atā' they (two) drew' and 'tī' used with the second person feminine singular as in ''anti rasam-tī' 'you drew'. It further includes the suffix 'tunna' used with the second person feminine plural as in ''antunna rasam-tunnā' you drew', and the third person feminine plural suffix 'nā' as in 'hunna rasm-nā,' they drew'. In contrast, the masculine pronominal suffix and its variants have a different distribution in the perfect tense. For example, the suffix /-ta/ is used with the second person masculine singular as in 'anta rasam-ta', 'you drew', while the suffix 'tum' goes with the second person masculine plural as in ''antum rasam-tum' you drew' and finally, the masculine verb suffix '-ū' is affixed to the third person masculine plural as in 'hum rasamū' they drew' (cf. Al-Jurf, 1995).

Moreover, the masculine and feminine prefixes and suffixes and their variants are distributed differently in the case of imperfect verbs. For example, the feminine prefix and pronominal suffix 'tā', zero go with the third person feminine singular pronoun 'hiya' she' and the third person feminine dual 'humā' they (two)'as in 'hiya ta-rsumu' she draws' and 'humma tar-sumān' they (two) draw'. But the 'ī' and zero go with the second person feminine singular ''antī' (you) as in ''antī tar-sumīn' you draw'. The second person feminine plural pronoun 'antunna' and the third person feminine plural 'hunna' take 'na' and zero as in ''antunna tar-sum-nā' and 'hunna yar-sum-nā'. The masculine prefix and pronominal suffix 'ta' and 'zero' are used with the masculine singular pronoun 'anta' and the second person masculine plural ''antum' as in ''anta ta-rsum' you draw' and ''antum tar-sumūn' you draw'. The prefix 'ya'and suffix zero go with the third person masculine singular pronoun 'huwa', and dual 'hum' as in 'huwa ya-rsumu' and 'humā yar-sumān', while 'yā' and 'ū' are used with the third person masculine plural pronoun *hum* as in 'hum yar-sumūn'. As for the imperative mood, the feminine suffix 'ī' is used with the second person feminine singular pronoun 'anti' as in 'ursumī', whereas' na' goes with the second person feminine plural pronoun ''antunna' as in 'ursum-na' and the suffix 'ū' is used with the second person masculine plural ''antum' as in 'ur-sumū'. Yet, a zero suffix goes with the second person masculine singular pronoun 'anta' as in 'ursum', but the suffix 'ā' is used with the dual ''antumā' as in 'ur-sumā' (cf. Al-Jurf).

Finally, personal pronouns, relative pronouns and demonstratives are gender sensitive in Arabic morphology. For example, gender distinctions manifest themselves in the independent and pronominal suffixes and prefixes, as well as the nominative, accusative and genitive cases. Besides, gender differences are also made in the second and the third person singular and plural forms.

Likewise, gender distinctions in relative pronouns occur in the singular, dual and plural forms. For instance, the feminine plural relative pronoun has the four variants of اللتان, أللتين, أللاتي, أللواتي, and the masculine plural has the variants of اللذان, أللذين, الذين, اللائي.Arabic demonstratives show gender distinctions in the singular, dual and plural forms. For example, the masculine singular forms include هذا, ذلك, ذاك, and the dual has the forms of هذان, هذين, while the feminine singular includes تلك, هذه. The dual feminine forms are هاتين, هاتان, but the second personal masculine and feminine plural is the same هؤلاء as well as the third person masculine and feminine plural أولئك.

3. GENDER IN ENGLISH MORPHOLOGY

Although English morphology shows gender distinctions, its scope is much narrower than that exhibited by Arabic gender inflection. The English inflectional system of gender is logical and physical in that it primarily depends on sex, and thus in gender distinctions there is a close connection between the biological category, sex, and the grammatical one, gender, as put by Quirk and Greenbaum (1973, p.89). Therefore, male persons are masculine and female ones are feminine. Yet, while some animals like cat, hen and cow are included in this gender system, some persons like baby are not. There is a third category, neuter, under which things and some animals are included.

Unlike Arabic, the English grammatical classes of verb, adjective and article are not subject to gender distinctions. However, some pronouns like the personal ones (he, she, it) are gender sensitive. Likewise, the two relative pronouns (who, which) are gender distinctive. Other pronouns like the third person plural *they*, the second person singular and plural *you*, and the demonstratives *this*, *that*, *these* and *those* are not subject to gender distinctions, either. As is clear, gender distinctions are made only in the third person singular forms (he, she, and it). Yet, the neuter form of *it* is used to refer to certain entities of either sex like *cow* and *baby*, in addition to sexless things like *house*, *freedom*, etc..

Although common gender nouns are intermediate between personal and non-personal, the selection of pronouns like (he, she, it, who) may not be possible for all nouns in all contexts. For example, a mother is very unlikely to refer to her baby as *it* while it is possible for somebody else who is either not emotionally attached to the child or indifferent to its sex to use the neuter pronoun to refer to it. Similarly, collective nouns can reflect a difference in attitude as the singular *it* used to refer to a team highlights the non-personal collectivity of the group while the plural *they* stress the personal individuality within the team, as explained by Quirk and Greenbaum (p.92).

Furthermore, the personal masculine/feminine nouns are of two types. The first type has no explicit marking that depicts morphological connection between masculine and feminine, i.e. these nouns such as *father/mother*, *bachelor/spinster* are morphologically unmarked for gender. In the second type, however, the two gender forms, like *emperor/empress*, *hero/heroine*, reflect a derivational relationship; that is, they are morphologically marked for gender. As for the personal dual gender, some masculine/feminine pairs show kinship and thus have common dual generic terms such as *parent* for both father and mother, and *child* for son and daughter, Quirk and Greenbaum (ibid, p.91). For more clarity in this respect, a gender marker is sometimes used as in *boyfriend* and *girlfriend*. Yet, when such nouns like *student* that have common dual generic terms are used with specific reference, they are either masculine or feminine, and the gender of which is clearly implied in the context as in '*I saw the beautiful guest*' wherein the adjective *beautiful* suggests that the guest referred to in a given case is a female.

4. DISCUSSION

What makes Qur'anic Arabic challenging and inimitable is the multifarious rhetorical features and linguistic phenomena that this religious discourse is bounding with. Ordinary readers who do not enjoy enough rhetorical sense and who are not acquainted with the way they are addressed, would not have a handle on the functions of the religious text. As rhetorical deviation is clear in this divine setting, an issue that does not exist similarly elsewhere, the study is addressing this phenomenon linguistically, religiously and translationally. In order for the authors to discuss the issue sufficiently, some examples from the Qur'an are selected, discussed, and analyzed. For grounded discussion and analysis, a number of Qur'anic exegeses are consulted and three authentic interpretations of the Qur'an are exemplified, on which the analysis is based.

5. EXAMPLES

56:7 (وادعوه خوفاً وطمعاً إنّ رحمة الله قريب من المحسنين
(ولا تفسدوا في الأرض بعد إصلاحها

Ali (2003, p.360) "*Do not mischief on the earth, after it hath been set in order, but call on Him with fear and longing (in your hearts): for the Mercy of Allah is (always) near to those who do good*".

Al-Hilali and Khan (1995, p.389) "*Surely, Allah's mercy is (ever) near unto the good-doers*".

Pickthall (2002, p.135) "*Work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering (thereof), and call on Him in fear and hope. Lo! The mercy of Allah is near into the good*".

Doers of good deeds and those who spend most of their time in Allah's remembrance have the right to be awarded the near position to Allah. The position of such people is effective and valid as long as they are invoking

Him for fear of torment in hellfire and hope in paradise in the hereafter. What makes Allah's mercy demanding and worth working for is adding or attaching it to Allah in the verse; in other words, Allah attributes mercy to Him in order to promote the paradise, and encourage believers to strive for it.

In Arabic, the noun 'raḥma' is feminine, a fact that is manifest in the above verse in being ended by 'tā' marbūṭa', 'ة' 'lit. bound 't', which mostly exists in grammatically feminine words. Therefore, its adjective should be feminine, thus creating agreement between the feminine noun and the feminine modifying adjective. Thus, in an ordinary text, the Arabic feminine adjective 'qarība' 'close' and not the masculine adjective 'qarīb' should be used to modify the feminine noun 'raḥma' 'mercy'. Commentaries of the Qur'an have given different interpretations to this unusual phenomenon, in order to find an outlet for the Arabic noun-adjective disagreement. Some maintain that its feminism does not necessarily mean that all its associations should be feminine, as a masculine connotation may incur some gender change. As the meaning of 'raḥma' in this context entails 'thawāb', 'reward', which is masculine in Arabic, it is connoted by the masculine adjective 'qarīb', (cf. Ibn Kathīr, 2004, p.214), a rhetorical function that cannot be grasped by all readers alike. Other commentators, moreover, maintain that 'raḥma', 'mercy' is not a real feminine (cf. Ash-Sha'rāwī, 1991). This is put clearly in the following verse, where the feminine 'raḥma', 'mercy' means the masculine 'maṭar', 'rain' (وهو الَّذِي يرسل الرياح بشراً بين يدي رحمته), which Ali (2003, p.360) translates as "It is He Who sendeth the winds like heralds of glad tidings". This gender disagreement between the modifier 'qarīb' and the modified 'raḥma' can also be resorted to the fact that Allah and mercy always come together, and 'raḥma' is derived from the masculine 'raḥm', 'womb' (cf. Az-Zamakhsharī, 2005, p.366), though as the Merciful He is closer to believers than mercy. Deviation from the feminine to the masculine aims at urging the believers to be closer to Allah in all their doings (Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, n.d., p.17). This inflectional deviation is thus functional as it aims at achieving certain linguistic power on the readership, a power that cannot be felt similarly even by native speakers of Arabic.

As English does not enjoy this morphological phenomenon of gender-based disagreement to perform a rhetorical function, translation loss at the rhetorical level is inevitable. Whereas gender deviation in the verse aims at urging believers to be close to Allah at all times, which is a rhetorical function of the verse, this source-language deviating form cannot be represented in a target-language equivalent structure, and thus is lost in translation. However, rhetorically well-equipped translators of the Qur'an, who are aware of the fact, can support their translation with enough footnotes that

can illuminate this source-text unprecedented feature. The three translators, namely Ali, Al-Hilali and Khan, and Pickthall have not made reference to this linguistic feature, nor have they referred to its function. This can be attributed to the fact that they are either unaware of the linguistic unparalleled fact, or could have consulted Qur'an exegeses that have not made it clear (Aṣ-Ṣābūnī, 1981, p.451). Gender deviation of the source text, which functions as a rhetorical aspect, is lost in translation, and this is attributed to the target language system which does not have the same language system of Arabic.

مما في بطونه من بين فرثٍ ودمٍ لبناً خالصاً سائغاً للشاربين (66:16
(وإن لكم في الأنعام لعبرةً نسقيكم

Ali (2003, p.655) "*And verily in the cattle (too) will ye find an instructive sign from what within their bodies, between their excretions and blood, We produce, for your drink, milk pure and agreeable to those who drink it*".

Al-Hilali and Khan (1995, p.389) "*And verily! In the cattle, there is a lesson for you. We give you of that which in their bellies from between excretions and blood, pure milk; palatable to the drinkers*".

Pickthall (2002, p.243) "*And lo! In the cattle there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, from between the digested food and the blood, pure milk palatable to the drinkers*".

Allah has given enough care to his creatures by the provision of sustenance and the transformation of the raw products from one form to another. For example, milk is processed to produce various dairy products; bees target different hues for pure honey that is palatable to drinkers; and other products are taken from dates and vines, all for the service of humankind. Producing these different types of food are not exclusive to an animal or insect gender, as males and females alike can be producing sources. However, focusing on a certain gender is functional in the Qur'anic discourse, and can be scientifically justified, where reference is made to female bees, ants and spiders as they are the labor force in the insect community, as shown in 29: 41 the verse:

لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاء كَمَثَلِ

الْعَنكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنكَبُوتِ

which is translated as "The parable of those who seek protectors from other than Allah is that of a spider who builds a house; but indeed, the weakest of houses is the spider's house -- if they but knew".

In Arabic, there are two types of noun and adjective plural forms: 'jam'i' mathakkar sālem', 'sound (regular) plurals, and 'jam'i' taksīr', 'broken (irregular) plurals, on which the noun verb agreement is accordingly structured. Gender deviation in the above verse is functional, as other extremely similar Qur'anic examples, enjoying the same reference and modifier, do not experience the same linguistic treatment. To exemplify,

(وإن لكم في الأنعام لعبرة نسقيكم مما في بطونها), which Ali (2003, p.847) translates as "And in the cattle (too) ye have an instructive example: from within their bodies We produce (milk) for you", shows an agreement between the female plural 'an'ām', 'the cattle', and the modifier 'buṭūnihā', 'their bodies'. Sharply contradictory is what illustrated in the example under discussion, which strongly pinpoints the fact that gender deviation is functionally implemented. Some exegetes tried to find justifications for the deviation (cf. Az-Zamakhsharī, 2005, p.576; Ibn Kathīr, 2004, p.545), who consider 'an'ām' as singular, holding the meaning and function of the plural; according to this view, this implicit and layered meaning establishes the gender relationship between the allegedly considered singular 'an'ām', and the 'bodies'. The function of the gender deviation in this example is that power is associated with masculinity, and not femininity, a fact that is noticed in 'buṭūnihi', in the illustrative example, where the male gender 'buṭūnihi', is employed and not 'buṭūniha', the female one. Moreover, males are the main cause of female milking (cf. Ṭāfish, 1995, p.28), without which females would not produce milk.

Translating the above verse into English is not challenging at the linguistic level, though it is too exigent at the rhetorical one. As the pronoun 'their' in the target language goes with females and males alike, readers would grasp the linguistic meaning fully. In addition, since translators themselves might be unaware of this linguistic phenomenon, thus overlooking it in translation, readers of the translated text would be expected to have lost this important part of the religious discourse. The three selected translations have not made reference to this integral element of the source text, which holds a rhetorical value that is pertinent to the source text. Though the target language is helpless in this gender domain, translators should have made illumination of the fact in a footnote in order to inform the receptive language reader of the function of this gender deviation, especially to readers who are aware of the linguistic feature in Arabic.

(إن نشأ ننزل عليهم من السماء آيةً فظلت أعناقهم لها خاضعين) 4:26

Ali (2003, p.908) "*If (such) were Our Will, we could send down to them from the sky a sign, to which they would bend their necks in humility*".

Al-Hilali and Khan (1995, p.521) "*If We will, we could send down to them from the heaven a sign, to which they would bend their necks in humility*".

Pickthall (2002, p.341) "*If We will, we can send down on them from the sky a portent so that their necks would remain bowed before it*".

The fact that the Pagans of Mecca were denying the truth of Islam requires that Allah send them a sign from the sky to which they humble down and respond to the rules of the new religion. It is God's will to show the unbelievers a sign that can divert their belief as polytheists.

Bowing down is cross-culturally a symbol of humiliation and full obedience, as one shows pride as long as s/he is rising up head. The verse under discussion is illustrating the point that 'a'nāq', the plural of 'unq', 'neck', stands for leaders (cf. Az-Zamakhsharī, 2005, p.754), and once such leaders declare obedience, all other laymen will follow. Gender deviation in the verse is clear in the absence of agreement between the broken feminine plural 'a'nāq', 'necks' and the sound masculine plural 'khāḍi'īn', 'bowed'. Qur'an exegetes have tried to find a way out for this deviation. Some have maintained that the top leaders of the people are those meant in the verse; such top people are mostly men, hence the agreement between the genders of the broader intended meaning 'top male leaders', and the way they are described, being masculine in the adjective. Other commentaries of the Qur'an have gone further when they explained the deviation by saying that 'a'nāquhum' 'their necks' in the verse means their groups, a point that requires the masculinity of 'khāḍi'īn', 'bowing down'. The noun 'neck' and 'bowing' go side by side, and since Allah wanted to show that 'bowing down' is not partial, but extreme, He has told about the 'necks' by the use of the plural animate masculine, which consequently points out the total obedience of persons; this reflects the great sign that causes recourse to belief (cf. Ṭāfish, 1995, p.31).

Preserving gender deviation and function in the target language is hard due to the contrasting linguistic systems between the source language and the target language. While there is an agreement between the genders and adjectives in the target language, there is no agreement in the source language; any gender deviation cannot pass unnoticed. In order to resolve this linguistic problematic issue in translation, translators should provide their rendition with supporting details that can express and show the functions of the language system insolence. Compliance between the modified entity and the modifying one does not attract the readers' attention in the target language, as it does in the source language. Therefore, the function of the source language gender deviation will not be grasped, a fact that results in an inevitable translation loss. The three selected translations should have supported the receptive language version with explanatory details that can reflect the source language unique phenomenon.

(فريقاً هدى الله وفريقاً حقّ عليهم الضّلالة) 30:7

Ali (2003, p.351) "*Some He hath guided: Others have (by their choice) deserved the loss of their way*".

Al-Hilali and Khan (1995, p.238) "*A group He guided, and a group deserved to be in error*".

Pickthall (2002, p.132) "*A party has He led aright, while error has just held over (another) party, for lo!*"

Allah has shown the right path that people should follow and take as a way of life and guidance. Followers of this path are worth being forgiven and permitted paradise from the widest gates; deniers of this path are, however, self-misguided and thus deserve the torment in this life and the hereafter. Arrogance and denial of Allah's commandments cause this miserable end of those people, who will wrong nobody but themselves. Allah has described the destination of the evildoers in a linguistically unprecedented manner that witnesses a disagreement in gender-verb equation.

The gender deviation in the verse is illustrated in the masculinity of the verb 'ḥaqa', 'deserved' and the femininity of the noun 'ḍalāla', 'loss'. Whereas linguistic agreement is used to show the relationship between different types of speech: verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, deviation of gender in the Qur'anic discourse aims at incurring a certain power on the setting, weakness or power of a certain action, or firm of promise, for example. Had the example under discussion been ordinary, an agreement would have been established in feminizing the verb 'ḥaqat', instead of the masculine 'ḥaqa' in order to create a noun-verb agreement, 'ḥaqat aḍ-ḍalāla'. The intended message to be conveyed in the gender deviation is the confirmation of punishment from Allah on those who have lost the right path. This firm promise of punishment from Allah is a sequence of the fact that followers of the wrong path have chosen such a path willingly, and were not born misguided to be exempted from the retribution. Masculinity in the verse, then, indicates the power of the punishment befalling on the wrongdoers, and confirms their willingness of adopting the wrong path.

Translating the verse into English poses a real translation problem, due to the fact that English has an agreement between verbs and nouns, mainly the past simple, a case that does not subsist in Arabic. Deviation of the standard rule at the gender-verb level is functional in Arabic, and aims at stressing a certain rhetorical value of committing the sin and deserving the punishment. The three translations of the study, Ali, Pickthall, and Al-Hilali and Khan have successfully conveyed the verse in the target language, but have, however, failed to elucidate the rhetoric of the verse, which is represented in illuminating the power and forcefulness of befalling the transgressors with loss and torment. This gender deviation is not also explained by some Qur'an commentators, either (cf. Ibn Kathīr, 2004, p.202; Ash-Sha'rāwī, 1991, p.4111; Aṣ-Ṣābūnī, 1981). Though the translators are not excused for ignoring this fact, they are called for explaining this rhetorical fact, which forms a large part of the total meaning.

(زُيِّنَ للذين كفروا الحياة الدّنيا) 212:2

Ali (2003, p.84) "*The life of the world is alluring to those who reject faith*".

Al-Hilali and Khan (1995, p.76) "*beautiful is the life of those who disbelieve*".

Pickthall (2002, p.31) "*Beautiful is the life of the world for those who disbelieve*".

Life is full of alluring elements that may take the utmost interest of the unbelievers. Such people are sometimes tempted by this worldly life that they intentionally tend to scoff at the believers, though the latter rank a higher position in the view of Allah. Being deeply dipped in this life and giving less or no attention to the other life is rhetorically expressed in the verse through the gender and verb asymmetry, where the modified feminine noun 'al-ḥayāt' is described by the masculine verb 'zuyyina', 'allured', or 'made beautiful'.

Gender deviation in the verse under discussion has been interpreted differently, in order to find an outlet for the extraordinary linguistic phenomenon. For example, some interpreters have argued that the meaning of the feminine noun 'ḥayāt', 'life' is living (a'ysh), which is masculine, a case that necessitates the masculinity of the verb 'zuyyina', 'made beautiful', though the femininity of the same verb 'zuyyinat' can be acceptable (Az-Zajjāj, 1988). What might be more convincing and illustrative to the deviation is that the masculine verb 'zuyyina' designates power and firmness, connotations that demonstrate the forcefulness of beautifying the worldly life in the hearts of the disobedient people. In addition, the Qur'anic context of the verse has also an influence in the cause of this deviation, where the prepositional phrase precedes the subject 'hayat' 'life'; and as the prepositional phrase modifies a masculine, the verb 'zuyyina' has agreed with the prepositional phrase with regard to gender (cf. Ṭāfish, 1995, p.39).

Rendering the verse into English brings about a rhetorical translation problem, where the function of gender deviation cannot be grasped by target language readers and linguists either. What makes the issue more complicated is that the target language does not have the same rhetorical power, due to the linguistic system where agreement between the parts of speech such as the subject and past simple verb is remarkably clear. Thus, the three translations, though they have rendered the text linguistically, have not clarified the rhetorical function of this gender deviation. The translators should have supported their translation with explanatory details that can help in uncovering the implications of this kind of breaking the normal language rules. Taking into consideration the present translations, readers would not be able to figure out the rhetoric of the source text manifested in noun-verb gender incongruence.

(لئلاّ يكون للنّاس عليكم حجّةٌ) 150:2

Ali (2003, p.61) "*That there be no ground of dispute against you*".

Al-Hilali and Khan (1995, p.63) "*So that men may have no argument against you*".

Pickthall (2002, p.23) "*so that men may have no argument against you*".

This verse, from which this part is taken, talks about the Qibla in Mecca which Muslims should take as a direction when observing their prayer. The direction unites the Muslims from all races, as it is a symbol of uniformity that can be taken as a discipline. The issue that the verse focuses on is that Muslims should direct themselves in prayer to this particular place under whatever circumstances, time or place they are. Stressing this fact and challenging the disbelievers of arguing that there should be more than one Qibla is manipulated in gender deviation between the masculine verb 'yakun', 'to be', and the feminine noun 'ḥujja', 'argument'.

Gender deviation in the verse has been justified by many Muslim scholars. For example, Abu Ḥayyān (1992) argues that 'ḥujja' in Arabic is not a real masculine, that is separated by two prepositional phrases in the verse, hence making the masculinity of the verb 'yakun', 'to be' possible. This explanation validates the syntactic rule, which was set by grammarians and licenses the masculinity of the verb with the unreal or supposed feminine. However, there is a strong relationship between the source of 'ḥujja', 'dispute' in the verse, which is 'an-nās', 'men' and the masculine deviation of the verb 'yakun', 'to be'. The function of the deviation is attracting the reader's attention to the source of the argument, which is 'men'. This argument can be supported by another example from the Qur'an, where the source of admonishment or direction is Allah (فمن جاءه موعظة من ربه), which Ali (2003, p.115) translates as "Those who after receiving direction from their Lord", where the verb is masculine 'jā'a', 'lit. came to him', and the modified noun is feminine 'maw'ḍa', 'admonishment'. The deviation is again to call or invite the reader to be attentive to the source of this great direction or admonishment, which is Allah, Almighty (cf. Ṭāfish, 1995, pp.35-36), so that the reader can be at ease.

Due to the misconception of the gender deviation of Arabic in the verse and the linguistic system of the target language, translating the verse brings about a translation loss that can only be palliated in the provision of footnotes. The three translations have managed to convey the linguistic structure of the verse, but have fallen short in preserving the gender deviation which has been functionally employed in the source text. The translators should have supported their translations with the point that the disagreement between the masculine verb 'yakun', 'to be', and the feminine noun 'ḥujja', 'argument' is to attract the reader to the power and forcefulness of the source of this argument which is man (Ṭāfish, 1995, p.35).

(وقال نسوةٌ في المدينة امرأة العزيز تراود فتاها) 12:30

Ali (2003, p.555) "*Ladies said in the City: the wife of the (great) 'Azīz is seeking to seduce her slave*".

Al-Hilali and Khan (1995, p.341) "*And women in the city said: "the wife of Al-'Aziz is seeking to seduce her (slave) young man*".

Pickthall (2002, p.207) "*And women in the city said: the chief's wife is asking of her slave boy an ill deed*".

Women in the town spread Al-'Azīz's wife's attempt to seduce the Prophet Joseph. The reputation of the wife began to break by Mrs. Grundy, who was full of venom, in a feminine community where wicked news can be easily transmitted from one tongue to another. Fearing to be defamed, and being the wife of a nobleman who tried to reprove her because of authority and status, Zulaykha called for the ladies of the town, prepared a banquet and gave each of them a knife, and then asked Joseph to come out before them. Conveying the determination of the ladies to deprecate Zulaykha, and their innuendo to do so, gender deviation is clear in the verse in the masculinity of the modifying verb 'qala' 'said' and the broken plural feminine 'niswa', 'ladies'.

The inflection deviation in the verse has been interpreted and explained differently. For Example (Az-Zamaksharī, 2005, p.512) maintained that 'niswa' is a singular noun of woman 'plural', and its feminine is unreal, and therefore its verb 'qāla' is not ended with the feminine 'tā'; Abu Hayyan (1989) has given a similar explanation when he maintains that as 'niswa' is feminine broken plural, and thus can have the two cases, the masculine and feminine verb. These two outlets might not be enough to explicate the unusual fact of gender deviation. It can be added that there is a linguistic function in this deviation, as what happened is that the wife of Al-'Azīz seduced the Prophet, and the news was spread all over the town. Adding 'imr'ah', 'woman' to 'Al-'Azīz serves as an exaggeration, and to provide distortion and malicious implication of the information, as people are too willing to hear about the others' troubles (Al-Andalusī 1992); and because of this, the verb 'qāla' is masculine in order to agree with the person on whom the bad reputation was made, who is Al-'Azīz. Moreover, the masculinity of the verb 'qāla' is an implication of the firmness and forcefulness of the ladies' accusation of Zulaykha, in having that relationship with Joseph (Ṭāfish, 1995, p.40).

As there is a linguistic agreement between the subject and the past simple tense in English, translating the above verse into English does not pose translation problems. What is problematic, however, is the source text, where gender deviation which functionally oriented is lost in translation. Target language readers would not beware the fact that the gender deviation of the masculine verb 'qāla' 'said', and the broken feminine plural 'niswatun', 'women' aims at creating confirmation, firmness, and forcefulness of the news on the audience. Therefore, the translators should have provided their renditions with enough footnotes and explanatory details in order to make this fact clear in the receptive language, on the one

hand, and preserve a large part of the meaning which lies in this deviation.

(يا أيها النبي إذا جاءك المؤمنات يبايعنك على أن لا يشركن بالله شيئاً)12:60

Ali (2003, p.1457) "*O Prophet! When believing women come to thee to take the oath of fealty to thee, that they will not associate in worship any other thing whatever with Allah*".

Al-Hilali and Khan (1995, p.789) "*O prophet! When believing women come to you to give you the pledge, that they will not associate anything in worship with Allah*".

Pickthall (2002, p.557) "*O Prophet! If believing women come unto you, taking oath of allegiance unto you that will ascribe nothing as partner unto Allah*".

Converts to a new religion, like Islam, should hold in mind that they should pledge themselves to comply with its rules and regulations. This requires that real motives should be behind entering the religion, such as worshiping none besides Allah, not stealing, not indulging in sex outside the marriage tie, not committing infanticide, not indulging themselves in slander or scandal, and obeying loyally the law and the principles of Islam (Ali, 2003, p.1457).

Gender deviation in the verse is clear in the masculinity of the verb 'ja'a', 'came', used with the sound feminine plural noun as its subject 'mu'mināt', 'female believers'. The function of the deviation is that the female believers were among the first Muslims who were steadfast and resolute in their intention when they came to take oath before the Prophet. What is known about women is that they are physically weak, intolerant, do not bear hardships, and do not expose themselves to risks like men. Allah has eliminated the low features of women, which are stuck to them such as intolerance and weakness from those female believers through the masculinity of the verb. This masculine verb, feminine noun divergence is functional in the verse and can be easily noticed by readers of the Qur'an, especially the native speakers of Arabic, and the well-versed of the Qur'an.

Translation of this verse into English results in a deviation matchlessness, where the target language does not show such a disagreement between the masculine verb and the feminine noun. The three translations of the above verse have not made reference to this fact; this might be due to the fact that they are unaware of it as they are not native speakers of Arabic, where the deviation might be clear, or may have consulted some Qur'anic exegeses that have not pointed out this unfamiliar linguistic phenomenon. This translation defect can be compensated by supporting the translation with explanatory details that illustrate the gender deviation in the target language, on the one hand, and demonstrate its function, on the other.

CONCLUSION

As has been shown earlier, Arabic and English inflectional morphologies notably contrast, especially in gender-based relations between parts of speech within a sentence. Although such relations are established according to specific rules, exceptional cases do exist in both linguistic systems. Moreover, the Qur'an displays striking cases of gender disagreement between grammatical categories or participants in a text. The deviating forms or relations are Qur'anic Arabic specific, and thus are very unlikely to appear in other Arabic text genres. The Qur'an is uniquely utilizing inflectional deviation of gender, such as using a masculine modifier with a feminine noun or a masculine verb with a feminine subject, etc., as a rhetorical device to create certain effects or achieve a linguistic power on the audience. Gender deviation of the source text, which functions as a rhetorical device, is likely to be lost in translation, a consequence attributed to the target language system, which does not have the same inflectional system of Arabic.

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