Translation of Power and Solidarity Pronouns in Qur'anic Rhetoric

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Abstract

Translation of the Holy Quran can be difficult for translators in terms of accuracy and translatability. Sometimes translators fail to render the Quranic thoughts because of the lack of language features in target languages. This results in an unfavorable interpretation. One of the challenging aspects of translating Quran is reference switching as rhetorical devices, which are widespread in the book due to the aesthetic aspects of the Arabic language. Rendering rhetorical devices may lead to misinterpreting the Quran as the target languages might not have the same context as Arabic. The ongoing research discovers several rhetorical problems in the English translation of the Quran by Abdel-Haleem in terms of power and solidarity relations on the basis of Brown and Gilman personal pronoun description. This study provided a brief introduction and review about "tenor" - interpersonal relationship among the text - that is a part of Hallidayan functional linguistics, which was the framework for data analysis in this study and the pronouns of power and solidarity as rhetorical devices. This study also investigated the analysis of the six selected and randomly chosen samples and their English translations regarding reference switching as a rhetorical device in the tenor of the target texts. The results of the study revealed that the translator was not successful in switching the references amongst the pronouns in English translation and the tenor in target text was also different from the source one.

Keywords: Power and solidarity pronouns, Reference switching, Rhetorical devices, Systemic functional linguistics, Translation of Quran

INTRODUCTION

Translation of Quran is an important issue among Muslims to develop and spread Islam among the other nations. Abdel-Haleem (2004), at the beginning of his book titled "The Quran, A New Translation", states that "The Quran is the supreme authority in Islam. It is the fundamental

and laws of the Islamic religion" (p. ix). He asserts that the Quran is the God's word, sent down to the Prophet Muhammad via the angel Gabriel and projected for all the places at any time. One of the fundamental and interesting aspects of the Quran is linguistics and especially the rhetorical issues in it. In some cases, translating these rhetorical issues into western languages seems to

and paramount source of the creed, rituals, ethics,

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create problems and misunderstandings among readers and non-Arab Muslims. One of the problems in translation of these rhetorical devices is reference switching among personal pronouns in the Quran. Reference switching in Arabic mostly happens because of the aesthetic purposes and translating these issues seems to be a difficult task because the form is hard to render. "Iltifat/Reference Switching" is one of those interesting Arabic rhetorical devices, which cause the translators concerns about the ability to rendering. "Iltifat/Reference Switching" mostly happens in the tenor of the texts, which concerns the interpersonal relations and in Arabic, it is almost because of emphasizing, giving a reason or justify, and/or to resolve a doubt about an issue. As "Iltifat/Reference Switching" refers to the interpersonal relationships inside the texts, translation of power and solidarity pronouns is a point of interest to survey in these rhetorical texts. In this paper, the research encountered samples of such issues in Quran and English translation of those in which the Target texts (TT) in some cases failed to represent the Source text's (ST) reference switching according to power and solidarity relationship among the pronouns.

As stated above, the translation of "Iltifat/Reference Switching" rhetoric from Arabic into English is a problematic issue due to the lack of reference switching in TL. A good example for reference switching in the Quran is the beginning Ayahs (verses) of the Surah (chapter) "Al-Fatiha" (The Opening) which the third person pronoun suddenly changes into the first person and adds power into the context as it is seen below:

Transliteration:

Al-Ĥamdu / Lillāhi / Rabbi / Al-ʿĀlamīna /, Ar-Raĥmāni / Ar-Raĥīmi /, Māliki / Yawmi / Ad-Dīni /, 'Īyāka / Naʿbudu / Wa / 'Īyāka / Nastaʾīnu

Translation by Abdel-Haleem (2004, p. 3):

Praise belongs to God (2), the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy (3), Master of the Day of Judgement (4), It is You we worship; it is You we ask for help (5)

Here, in second to fourth Ayahs, the God/Lord (ﷺ) is absent and brought by third person pronoun and contributes that the praise can be for everyone. But in the fifth Ayah, the God is present and brought by second person pronoun (ﷺ [it is you]) and added power into it because worship is only for God. These shifts from a certain personal pronoun into another one change the power relations in the texts and sometimes cause a loss in translations.

With this prospect, the current research analyzed the shifts of personal pronouns at tenor (interpersonal) level through the English translation of randomly selected samples from the Quran regarding power and solidarity concepts (Brown & Gilman, 1960).

What Relationship Status Is Established in Text

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) introduced by M.A.K Halliday in 1960 is a study of language as a resource of meaning with using discourse analysis. It observes language mainly as a resource for discovering and understanding the meaning in discourse (Halliday Matthiessen, 2014). SFL as Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) states, has both systematic and functional characteristics. Systemic characteristic observes meaning as a choice, by which languages and/or any other semiotic systems are understood as interlocking-option networks. It has also a functional character since it is based on a functional conceptual rather than a formal framework (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The functional variables of a language, which is responsible for the configuration of textual features of that language, constitute the "register" of a text. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) define register as a "variety of language, corresponding to a variety of situation, which the situation requires a theoretical framework using the terms field, tenor and mode" (p. 29).

Register analysis considers the field as ideational meaning, which investigates experiential/logical meta-function of the text and focuses on lexico-grammar and the logical relationships



in text. The tenor is considered as interpersonal metafunction, which identifies the process of constructing relationship based on power and solidarity between the writer and reader, which, the ongoing study is based on, and the evaluation signaled by the author. Mode as the last part is considered as a textual metafunction, which looks at the micro level (Theme and Rheme) to the text. It also measures the text with a series of larger units of meaning like discourse.

The tenor of a text, which identifies the author's role, expected audience and the relationship between author and reader. In oral conversation, when all the speakers are present and participating, the tenor analysis is an easy task; while in written texts, when the author/s and recipient/s are anonymous, it gets more difficult. As stated earlier, the tenor is considered as a component of interpersonal metafunction in a text, analyzed in two different levels of interactive (oral), and noninteractive (written) texts. In this article, the noninteractive tenor is analyzed within six different and randomly chosen samples from the Quran; and compared to their English translations by Abdel-Haleem (2004) in accordance with the power and solidarity relationship (Brown & Gilman, 1960) among the personal pronouns.

Interactive Texts

Usually, interactive texts are oral and include a face-to-face conversation, a telephone conversation, internet chat in a real-time, etc. To cut a long story short, the texts both written and spoken, which are directed at an individual participant known to the author (as different than those directed at the public), are interactive.

Non-Interactive Texts

Mostly non-interactive texts are written which directed at the public while special kind of oral texts such as lectures and rehearsed speeches can be included. Persona as a projection of the personality of the author or the institution which the author belongs to is a method to tenor analysis in non-interactive texts. Generally, in non-interactive (written) text analysis, the tenor is

analyzed into four main categories:

personalization

This feature is identified through attention, which is drawn into the author or to the audience as well as the related techniques of deliberate impersonalization. Commonly personalization is identified by the techniques such as personal pronouns, directives, rhetorical questions and questions, which are seemingly drawn from the audience or imagined audience. Positing audience as agreeing and making, it difficult for them to disagree may be one of the purposes to use personality. An author may use the pronoun "WE" to create a solidarity between the text and the reader. Another purpose of personality may be the creation of intimacy feeling among writer and reader and/or pseudo-interactivity (creating an impression of the interactivity in a one to one conversation). Mostly in literary texts, it may be used to make the audience feel physically present in a situation.

im-personalization

Across from personalization, im-personalization attempts to make a personal-biases free feeling, which creates a feeling of objectivity in the audience. The im-personalization is a widespread method in scientific texts which often can be identified by the presence of the "anticipatory it".

standing

This feature identifies the author-reader relationship in terms of power i.e. the level of possession of expertise and authority on the subject by the author. Standing tends to identify the level of a claim which the author lays to expertise and authority.

stance

Stance defines the relation of the author with the audience in terms of solidarity i.e. the level which author allows the audience to disagree with the content. The encoded stance in a text describes the writer's commitment to the empirical subject. Stance is further divided into two



categories:

a. Attitude: it reveals the communicated meaning as negative, positive and/or neutral. Also, this feature is considered as a technique to generate attitudes toward the topic and affectedness. Attitude is generally realized in a text by lexical choices and evaluative expressions.

b. Modality: Modality in a text is a combination of different meanings related to permission, ability, obligation, necessity, volition, and prediction. Generally speaking, modality can be expressed by "modal verbs", "semi-modal verbs" and various lexical word classes which express modality. Modality can be studied in terms of "Epistemic Modality" which identifies to what extent the content is true and can be indicated by modal verbs, adverbs, and adjectives, and "Deontic Modality" that defines the level of obligation seen in the text toward audience and can be determined by modal verbs which reflect the meanings of obligation, permission or necessity.

In this research, the tenor of the samples seems to be observed based on *personalized* and *standing* ones where the references of pronouns are switching from power into solidarity and vice versa.

Power and Solidarity Pronouns

Typically, pronouns of address are discussed according to a binary system of alternatives proposed by Brown and Gilman (1960), which "T" is symbolized for informal/familiar approach and "V" for formal/polite attitudes. They describe the semantic content of those dichotomy alternatives as being governed by aspects of power and solidarity. Braun (1988) believes power semantic is playing an important role in the development of interaction between the addresser and addressee regarding asymmetrical and non-reciprocal. Moreover, she thinks about solidarity semantic which may act among addresser and addressee in terms of reciprocal and symmetrical relationships. According to Braun (1988) "terms of address are words and phrases used for addressing" (p. 5). She also believes, in a verbal communication, norms, ideologies, power relations and cultural values are reflected in the lexical choices of the addresser to address the addressees or someone spoken about.

The dichotomy of power and solidarity has been a fundamental issue in sociolinguistics since Brown and Gilman (1960) introduced the concept in accordance with the pronoun system. Below are abridged descriptions of these dimensions.

Power and solidarity, as Brown and Gilman (1960) addressed, are related to levels of social distance, familiarity, politeness, powerfulness, etc., which can be detected in interpersonal relations through texts. Shifting from a personal pronoun into another may be a good instance for this matter. In sociolinguistic view, T/V dichotomy outlines a circumstance, which in a certain language various levels of social distance, familiarity, politeness, courtesy, or insult about the addressee is distinguished by second person pronouns. Brown and Gilman (1960) believe power and solidarity relations is governing the use of T/V in European languages. They argue that power is conveyed in the nonreciprocal use of pronouns among the more or less powerful through communication, while solidarity is frequently stated in the reciprocal use of T/V pronouns. To express social distance, formality or respect, using plural form is a common way, therefore; solidarity indicates familiarity and is reciprocal. According to this hypothesis, T will be mutually exchanged if the interlocutors are intimate and close with each other. A framework for power and solidarity introduced by Brown and Gilman (1960) in accordance with a reference to the linguistic choices which have to be made in languages with polite and intimate forms of second-person pronouns. Hudson (1996) believes languages have various types of power and solidarity signaling relationships according to their nature and structure, and the languages which have no sign to show T/V distinctions may have other strategies to show the relationships, as in English, where speakers can make choice between title plus family name and first name only. In Arabic, turning from one pronoun into another in personal pronouns is one of the ways to signal



the T/V relations. Presence and absence, which can be signaled by using personal pronouns, is another way to express power and solidarity relationship in Arabic. The current research is going to investigate these shifts and choices in the holy Quran, which is in Arabic and their English translations in terms of interpersonal meaning according to power and solidarity.

Reference Switching Rhetoric (Iltifat/Reference Switching) in Quran

Reference switching rhetoric (Iltifat/Reference Switching) in the Quranic text is a unique feature, which is responsible for its dynamic style. It is considered a problematic issue in the translation of the Quran due to the differences between Arabic and other languages. Hatim and Mason (1997) state that in the rhetorical devices of several languages as well as Arabic, change of a particular form (a tense or pronominal reference) to another within the same set involves an unexpected and sudden shift. Abdel-Haleem (1992) categorizes the typology of this rhetoric as below:

- "a. Change in person, between 1st, 2nd and 3rd person, which is the most common and is usually divided into six kinds,
- b. Change in number, between singular, dual and plural,
- c. Change in addressee,
- d. Change in the tense of the verb,
- e. Change in case marker,
- f. Using noun in place of the pronoun" (p. 411).

Abdel Haleem (1992) believes that the first type is the most commonly known and prior to the rest. Abdel-Haleem also opines a departure in all these types, from the usually expected use of language in a certain context for a definite rhetoric:

- "1. The transition from 3rd to 1st person. This is the most common type, with over 140 instances in the Ouran.
- 2. From 1st to 3rd person is second with nearly 100 instances.
- 3. From 3rd to 2nd person-nearly 60

instances.

- 4. From 2nd to 3rd person-under 30 instances.
- 5. From 1st to 2nd person of which there is only one example which is quoted by every author, but which one could argue is not "Iltifat/Reference Switching".
- 6. From 2nd to 3rd person, of which there is no example in the Quran" (pp. 411-412).

"Iltifat/Reference Switching" which is also known as grammatical shift, acts as a rhetorical device since the sudden shifts are superlatively coherent and used to intensify expressions. "For Arab rhetoricians, reference switching (Iltifat) in Ouranic discourse is a linguistic ornament whose pragmatic function is to achieve vividness and avoid the monotony of style" (Al-Badani, Awal, & Zainudin, 2015, p. 141). This is used to color the Quranic discourse and consequently, it is an exceptional rhetorical element in the Arabic language. "Iltifat/Reference Switching" creates a popular style of the Quranic discourse But, English, since Abdul-Raof (2005) states, does not bear this Arabic norm. Abdel-Haleem (1992) also believes that the advanced themes of specific forms of "Iltifat/Reference Switching" may be hidden in European translations (like English) of the Quran which is different from Arabic in stylistics and; this will face the target readers especially those who are unfamiliar with Arabic, with difficulties in comprehending the message of the holy Quran. The significance of "Iltifat/Reference Switching" is the result of a fact that it is a textual matter and considered as a famous rhetoric in a number of languages (Hatim & Mason, 1997). "Iltifat/Reference Switching" also is the most popular aspect of the Quranic discourse as Abdul-Raof (2005) believes.

METHODS

In this study, six random samples were selected non-purposefully from the Quran (ST) and contrasted with the English translation of Abdel-Haleem (2004) regarding interpersonal relations (tenor) in terms of power and solidarity based on



what Brown and Gilman (1960) introduced. The way, which the data is represented, is to present the ST with transliteration. Then, the English translation is presented and a detailed analysis of ST itself along with the TT's is brought afterward. In discussion part, the research is going to first monitor the power and solidarity relations inside the ST regarding Brown and Gilman. Then, it will be a comparison of the ST findings with the English translation at the tenor (interpersonal) level based on register analysis proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The English translation of the Quran by Muhammad Abdel-Haleem is selected purposefully since he has worked both as a theorist of Quranic rhetoric (1992) and a translator of the holy Ouran (2004). He is a Muslim Egyptian Islamic scholar living in the UK. His book is published on 2004 by Oxford University Press. He is now a professor of Islamic studies at SOAS, University of London. Here, the power related parts both in ST and TT are underlined and the solidarity related parts are simply presented to show the difference.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, six random samples were presented, transliterated, analyzed theoretically, and at the end of each discussion, a proposed translation of that certain Ayahs (verses) is given to help the readers/audiences understand it well.

Sample 1

Source Text:

وَمَا لِيَ لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي <u>وَ إِلَيْهِ ثُرْجَعُونَ</u> (يس 22) Transliteration:

Wa / Mā / Liya / Lā / 'A`budu / Al-La<u>dh</u>ī / Faṭaranī / Wa / 'Ilayhi / Turja`ūna/

Target Text (Abdel-Haleem, 2004, p. 282):

Why should I not worship the One who created me? It is to Him that you will be returned.

As it is seen from this Ayah, the first-person statement ($\tilde{\mathcal{L}}$) is shifted into third person address ($\dot{\mathcal{L}}$). The first part has solidarity because it is describing a situation that a person is talking to himself about the possibility of worshiping the one who created that person (Absence factor =

Solidarity) but the second part is addressing that power which created him/herself (Presence factor = Power). The reference switching is in "ثُرْجَعُونَ" which could be "أرجعُ" to have characteristics of a statement. Here, the field is about a person whose name seems to be "Habib bin Israel" whom his relatives asked about his religion and he replied with this Ayah. Abdel-Haleem (2004) translated both parts with power as you see. Using "why" and "should" urges to worship that one creator and "will" shows definite return to that creator. The suggested translation for this Ayah could be "Would it be unreasonable if I did serve Him Who created me, and it is to Him that you shall all be brought back?" or "Surely it is not unreasonable that I should worship Him, who created us all, and it is to whom we shall all be brought back".

Sample 2

Source Text:

Transliteration:

'Innā / 'A`ṭaynāka / Al-Kaw<u>th</u>ara /, Faşalli / Lirabbika / Wa / <u>A</u>nĥar/

Target Text (Abdel-Haleem, 2004, p. 440):

We have truly given abundance to you [Prophet] – so pray to your Lord and make your sacrifice to Him alone.

As it is apparent, in the first Ayah, there is power because of the first person (4) is talking there but in the second Ayah, Prophet is advised to pray and sacrifice for his creator which is brought unknown here, and it is related to the issue of Godhead in Islamic tradition. The reference switching is in "لَوَبُكَ" which could be "لَوَبُكَ" because the order of pronouns is in the firstperson plural. The field of these Ayahs, as Abdel-Haleem (2004) believes, is the time "when the Prophet lost his last son, an opponent who hated him taunted him with being 'cut off' without posterity. This Meccan Surah comes to reassure the Prophet and as a retort to his enemy" (Abdel-Haleem, 2004, p. 440). Abdel-Haleem (2004) translated both of the Ayahs power oriented. First

Ayah as its nature have to be power driven, but it seems he (2004) failed to render the second Ayah based on solidarity. The word "him alone" is the definite criteria for powerfulness. Another point in the criticism of TT is the meaning of the word "" in Arabic which has the meaning of reason and it seems problematic to render it into English. The suggested translation for these Ayahs could be "We surely have given you Abundance. Therefore (for this reason), they shall pray their Lord and sacrifice."

Sample 3

قُلِ اللَّهُ أَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا اللَّهِ أَنْ رُسُلَنَا يَكُنْبُونَ مَا تَمْكُرُونَ (يونس 21) Transliteration:

Quli / Allāhu / 'Asra`u / Makrāan / 'Inna / Rusulanā / Yaktubūna / Mā / Tamkurūn/

Target Text (Abdel-Haleem, 2004, p. 130):

<u>Say "God schemes even faster"</u>; Our messengers record all your scheming

This Ayah has solidarity at first part as the third person is always solidarity but it has power in the second part as it is first person plural. Basically, the discussion here is between God and his prophet and the speaker is God himself. This is indicated by using the word "فُك [say]". At the same time, it is noted that the address is changed into solidarity due to using the third person pronoun in the first part of ayah which is represented by "قُل اللَّهُ". So, it is power due to the difference in their social distance. The reference switching is also in "رُسُلَه" which could be "رُسُلَنًا" to be نَحِنُ أَسْرَعُ " solidarity, or the first part could be to be power oriented. As Abdel-Haleem 'هُكُرًا (2004) points out, this Ayah stresses Allah's power, the Quran authenticity, and the fate of sinners (Abdel-Haleem, 2004, p. 128). Abdel-Haleem (2004) translated the first part based on power by using "even" which emphasizes the rapidity of the scheme by God. He (2004) rendered the second part based on solidarity as the tense of the verb "record" is in a simple form and contributes solidarity. The suggested translation for this Ayah could be "Say: Allah is a quick schemer; indeed, our prophets are recording what you are

scheming".

Sample 4

Transliteration:

Ad<u>kh</u>ulū / Al-Jannata / 'Antum / Wa / 'Azwājukum / Tuĥbarūna /, Yuţāfu / `Alayhim / Bişiĥāfin / Min / <u>Dh</u>ahabin / Wa / 'Akwābin /

Target Text (Abdel-Haleem, 2004, p. 319):

"Enter Paradise, you and your spouses: you will be filled with joy." Dishes and goblets of gold will be passed around them.

Here in these Ayahs, at first part, Allah orders to the right people to enter into paradise happily and it contributes to power, but in second (النُخُلُوا) part although (يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ) is a law of Allah, he changed the role of pronoun from the first person into the third person by bringing (عَلَيْهِمُ = to them) and made it solidarity. The reference switching took place here and instead of (عَلَيْكُم for you), the pronoun is changed into (عَلَيْهِمْ = to them). In these Ayahs, God wants to show the power of himself as the only Lord of the paradise in which he will only let the Prophet and true obedient believers to enter there and awards them with valuable stuff as the name of the Surah refers to ornaments of gold (Al-Zukhruf). Abdel-Haleem (2004) translated both the Ayahs in power condition. He (2004) added power by using an imperative verb "enter" in the first part and "will be" in both parts. The suggested translation for these Ayahs could be "Enter the Paradise, you and your wives enjoy there. Golden dishes and goblets shall be passed around them".

Sample 5

Transliteration:

Faqađāhunna / Sab`a / Samāwātin / Fī / Yawmayni / Wa / 'Awĥá / Fī / Kulli / Samā'in / 'Amrahā / Wa / Zayyannā / As-Samā'a / Ad-Dunyā / Bimaṣābīĥa /



Target Text (Abdel-Haleem, 2004, pp. 307-308):

And in two days He formed the seven heavens, and assigned order to each. We have made the nearest one beautifully illuminated and secure. Such is the design of the Almighty the All Known.

In this Ayah, Allah talks about creating the seven heavens in two days and putting an order in each. The crucial point is there which Allah changed his pronoun from the third person (هُنَّ) into the first person (زَيَّتُا) in beautifying the skies that made the middle part power oriented. The reference switching took place in "زَيَّنَّا" where the pronoun "نا" came instead of "هُنَّ". Abdel-Haleem (2004) succeeded to translate the Ayah to its power and solidarity relations. He (2004) used third person (He) and past tense (formed) for the first part, as the signals of solidarity. Then he (2004) changed the pronoun into first person plural (We) and made it powerful. The omitted part in his translation is the equivalent of "وَ [and/however]" which is brought in the proposed rendering as "And in two days He formed the seven heavens and assigned an order to each. However, it was how the nearest one was illuminated and made secure that is the marvel. Such is the design of the Almighty, the All-Knowing".

Sample 6

Transliteration:

Wa / Saqāhum / Rabbuhum / <u>Sh</u>arābāan / Ţahūrāan /, 'Inna / Hā<u>dh</u>ā / Kāna / Lakum / Jazā'an / Wa / Kāna / Sa`yukum / Ma<u>sh</u>kūrāan /

Target Text (Abdel-Haleem, 2004, pp. 401-402):

Their Lord will give them a pure drink. [it will be said], <u>This is your reward. Your endeavors are appreciated.</u>

As it is seen from these Ayahs, at first Ayah it is the third person (هُمْ) who gave the right people a pure drink (solidarity), but at second Ayah the first-person narrator (God) is one who will give rewards and privileges to them (power). The field

in these Ayahs seems to be a test from God and how man is evaluated and what the results will be for the right believers. Abdel-Haleem (2004) could keep the harmony of solidarity and power in these Ayahs but failed to render the tense of first Ayah correctly. Abdel-Haleem (2004) translated both Ayahs based on ST's harmony of solidarity and power. He (2004) changed the tense into future with "will" in the first Ayah and changed the narrator into the first person as the same as the ST in second Ayah. The correct translation of these Ayahs according to the tense of the verb may seem as: "... their creator gave them a pure drink. Indeed, consider yourself privileged and rewarded".

CONCLUSION

As discussed earlier, rhetorical devices are one of the aesthetic factors of the Arabic language which sometimes cause to misinterpreting the source text in target language due to the lack of such contexts, structures and language rules. In the data analysis section, six different and randomly chosen samples is brought, representing reference switching rhetorical devices among power and solidarity pronouns and analyzed regarding interpersonal relations i.e. tenor between Arabic and English. Abdel-Haleem (2004) mostly failed to render the power and solidarity relationships of the pronouns and sometimes the tenses of the verbs in Arabic were changed in English translation. This defect in translation may lead to misinterpretation of the holy Quran. Reference switching in Arabic has a certain reason to show the power relations especially in the Quran, which has the divine source in Islamic thought. Failure to render the holy Quran into other languages may harm the view towards Islam and lack of such contexts in target languages may harden the way. It seems there is a need to look more rhetorically into this translation of the holy Quran and such theoretical contrastive articles is a pass way to help to understand the aesthetic features of the holy Quran and to be more faithful in translation in order to save both form and content.



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