

Rhetorical Devices of the Qur'an and their Translation into English and Russian: Patterns of Social Behavior in the Focus

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Abstract

This research paper focuses on analyzing the prominent use of rhetorical devices in the primary book of Muslims, particularly in its English and Russian translations. The relevance of this study is underscored by the contemporary context, characterized by the emergence of Islamic states, the significant influence of religion in political and other spheres in the Middle East, as well as the rapid global spread of Islam. The Holy Qur'an and the Hadiths of the Prophet Mohammed, recognized as the guiding principles for millions of Muslims worldwide, offer rich material for linguistic examination. The paper proposes classification of rhetorical tools into categories such as decorative, cognitive, instructive, argumentative, and convenience. These linguistic devices serve to influence the reader, enhance their impact, add aesthetic aspects and persuasive language, as well as prompt the reader to think, recall, compare, and discover new meanings within the text. Emphasizing the aspect of translation, the paper delves into the specifics of translating religious texts and highlights the challenges faced by translator. The analysis involves scrutinizing the original texts of the Holy Qur'an and the Hadiths, along with their translations with a particular focus on figurative elements. The intended impact is achieved through rhetorical tools that serve diverse functions, ranging from cognitive devices that prompt specific mental analysis in creating images, to psychological and emotional elements that, when combined with distinct syntactical patterns, form a unique masterpiece intended for veneration and adherence in the Muslim world. The methodology employed in this study encompasses various tools, including historical analysis, methods of comparative studies, analytical examination, translation theory, as well as methods of interpretation and evaluation, which contribute to the logical progression of the investigation.

Keywords: *Qur'an; Rhetorical tools; Figurative language; Norms of behavior; Translation strategies*

1. Introduction

Early attempts at translation can be traced back to ancient times with the translation of the Bible from Hebrew. The study, worship, and adherence to three holy books (Torah, Bible, and Qur'an) have guided millions of people across different regions. These texts have functioned as constitution and laws, mandating strict adherence and obedience.

The Holy Qur'an encouraged Muslim civilizations to seek knowledge across various domains as revealed in the text. It serves as a primary source of law for Muslim countries and the collection of truths that every Muslim is expected to study and follow. These texts establish

norms of behavior in both public and private life, underscoring their utmost importance. Religious and legal texts are regarded as the most sensitive in the realm of translation, posing challenges due to the potential consequences of translation errors. Scholars throughout history have developed translation methodologies, compiled dictionaries, and provided interpretations of the scriptures with the focus on accuracy.

2. Theoretical foundations and discussion

Figurative language involves using language with hidden and effective meanings that should not be taken literally. It includes various forms, patterns, and linguistic devices. Writers and poets often utilize figurative language, such as exaggeration or alliteration, in place of literal language to create specific effects. This literary device is commonly found in poetry and other genres, including prose, political writings, everyday speech, and writing (Frederik 2011: 37) as well as various media like advertising and cartoons.

Figurative language originates from literal language but is more intricate, with certain expressions losing their figurative quality due to extensive usage (Glucksberg 2001: 2). It can be seen as a specific, poetic, and aesthetically valuable feature of language that enhances communication and is present across all human languages (Dancygier & Sweetser 2014: 1).

The essence of figurative language lies in comparing or associating one thing with another to make explanations more vivid, lively, and unique. It goes beyond or even against the traditional meanings of words, encouraging exploration of different connotations and filling gaps in semantic structure through new contexts. Translating figurative language word-for-word can lead to misinterpretations due to cultural differences, highlighting the importance of pre-translation analysis to capture the intended meaning in different languages.

In an Arabic context, figurative language encompasses word meaning, references, and connotations, forming an integral part of rhetorical studies that include syntax (علم المعاني), figures of speech (علم البيان), and embellishments (علم البديع) (Abdul-Raof 2005: 15). These three disciplines have been used alternately. Figures like puns, exaggeration, antithesis, and comparisons play a significant role in organizing Arabic figurative language, influencing social interactions and conveying praise, criticism, or persuasive arguments. Figurative language is advantageous in refuting or deterring claims or substantiating arguments. As an influential and crucial technique, this linguistic device is vital in eulogies, elegies, diatribes (a kind of strong criticizing speeches), and harangues (speaking in a forceful and/or angry way, especially when trying to persuade someone in a speech, lecture, or debate).

From an English perspective, figurative language employs words in a non-literal, metaphoric manner to convey implicit meanings distinct from the literal statement. It is not initially obvious to the untrained, non-native ear. It utilizes various styles and patterns to imbue words with meanings that go beyond the surface, often becoming less figurative with frequent use.

2.1. Figures of speech allegedly used in Quar'an

Simile (Latin *similis* meaning 'like') is a comparison of one thing to another, expressing resemblance or similarity of objects, actions, or relations. It is used to compare things that are essentially unlike (Perrine 2011: 61; Kearns 1984: 187), emphasizing their common features (Wren & Martin 1981). It is always termed as *similarity in dissimilarity* and accompanied with

the words *like, such, as*, or communicated through *appear, than, similar to, resembles, more/less than, or seems* (Scott 1980: 268).

The Holy Qur'an is rich with instances of similes found in various verses, as in:

(أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ) (إبراهيم: 24)

See you not how Allah sets forth a parable example? – A goodly word as a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches [reach] to the sky. (Surah: Ibrahim, Chapter 14, verse 24) (Al-Hilali & Khan 1996: 331)

Metaphor (from the Greek *metapherein*, meaning 'to transfer') has evolved from its seemingly straightforward root to encompass various interpretations, often leading to temporary confusion among specialists when asked to define it (Glucksberg 2001: 3). Metaphor serves as an imaginative means of describing a person, object, or idea by referring to something else perceived to share similar qualities with the subject being described (Lazar 2003: 5). It relies on implicit comparison as exemplified by the phrase *He was a lion in the fight* (Richard Webber). In this instance, multiple figures of speech are employed, including metaphor, simile, and personification.

Metaphor is regarded as a significant component in the science of Arabic eloquence, often described through the term *rhetoric* and frequently employed to impart a literary character, known in Arabic as *majāz* (المجاز). Arabic scholars view metaphor as a form of imagination utilized in the Holy Qur'an to convey mental states, psychological conditions, and specific senses. Metaphors connect familiar objects or images with unfamiliar ones to achieve a particular literal effect. Common examples of Quranic metaphor include references to *unbelievers* as being unable to hear or see, signifying their incapacity to recognize truth and/or guidance. They are veiled from the straight path, unable to comprehend the Holy Book, and are led by their passions. Their disobedience is met with punishment, of which they remain unaware.

(وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ ۚ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ۚ وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِلَّا أَبَدًا) (الكهف: 57)

...Truly, we have set veils over their hearts lest they should understand this (the Holy Qur'an) and in their ears, deafness. And if you [O Muhammad peace be upon him] call them to guidance, even then they will never be guided. (Surah Al-Kahf, Chapter 18, Verse 57) (Ali 2021: 421)

Leech (1969: 156) explains that a metaphor is subtle, unlike a simile, which is more direct. Palmer (1976: 66) identifies metaphor as a common form of meaning relationship where words have both literal and symbolic meanings, for example, *the leg of a chair* or *table* or *the eye of a needle* or *a potato*. Aitchison (1992: 9–10) defines metaphor as using one word or phrase to imply similarities with another. Crystal (1992: 249) describes metaphor as a transfer of meaning between different conceptual domains using unique language, for example, *to lose the thread of an argument*. Baranov and Dobrovolsky view metaphor more as a conceptual rather than linguistic phenomenon resulting from the interplay of diverse knowledge structures (Baranov & Dobrovolsky 2008).

Personification (Latin *persona* meaning 'person', and *facere* meaning 'to make') treats an inanimate object as if it were animate and is often considered the most beautiful and effective of literary devices. Perrine (2011: 64) defines personification as attributing human traits to

animals, objects, or concepts. It is a subtype of metaphor with the implicit comparison always being a human being, for example, *The stars danced around the night sky* (Kennedy & Gioia 1983: 487). As a literary device, personification brings the text to life, adding vividness, color, and linguistic flourish to create the desired impact.

Metonymy, derived from Greek *metōnumía* (‘change of name’), is a literary device widely utilized across different genres of writing. It involves the substitution of one word for another with a related meaning, serving specific stylistic purposes. Substitution extends or narrows the semantic scope of the concept as seen in the example *We called American government as the White House*. This figure of speech is based on the lexical phenomenon of polysemy (Dirven & Pörings 2002) and is closely related to metaphor in terms of linguistic nature. Metaphor involves substitution based on an analogy between two things, while metonymy is rooted in association or contiguity, as depicted in *All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players* (Shakespeare). *Her voice is full of money* (Fitzgerald). Sometimes a trope can be classified as both metaphor and metonymy, as, for example, in *The pen is mightier than the sword* (Edward Bulwer-Lytton), based on different cognitive mappings.

Scholars assert that metonymy is a term used in semantics and syntax where the name of an attribute of entity is used in place of the entity itself (Crystal 1992: 291; Perrine 2011: 65; Frederik 2011: 48). Hurford (2007: 338) confirms that metonymy is non-literal language in which an object is used to refer to another associated with it in some way: bottle / water; can / juice; car / wheels; house / roof; king / crown; President / White House. There is a well-developed classification of relations that may be expressed with metonymy such as containment (dish – food), tools/instruments indicating profession, body parts related to a person (head – intelligence), product for process (case – court trial), toponyms for countries, governments, and institutions (Vegas – gambling; the Hague – the International Court of Justice), among others.

Ameen (1994: 207) notes that metonymy is often used to avoid explicit clarification by using an attribute of an object instead of its name. Consider the following verse:

(نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ) (آل عمران: 3)

It is He Who has sent down the Book (the Qur’an) to you [Muhammad peace be upon him] with truth, confirming what came before it. And he sent down the Taurat “Torah” and the Injeel “Gospel”. (Surah Aal-Imran, Chapter 3, verse 3) (Al-Hilali & Khan 1996: 67)

While metonymies are commonly used in everyday speech, there are fewer literature references compared to metaphor, leading to some ambiguity about its status, as noted by Ibanez (2003). Traditionally viewed as a mere embellishment, metonymy is considered referential and focuses on substitution between contiguous entities (Peters 2003; Wendland 2003).

However, cognitive linguistics has shifted the perception of metonymy from merely a linguistic device to a fundamental aspect of cognition. Cognitive linguists argue that metonymy is not just about language but also about a way of thinking and conceptualizing as it involves understanding and accessing different conceptual entities within the same cognitive model (Radden & Kövecses 1999; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Papafragou 1996) in contrast to metaphor which embraces two different cognitive models.

While the cognitive theory of metonymy has faced criticism for its limitations in fully explaining the phenomenon, particularly in terms of overlooking innate cognitive patterns and the impact of metonymies, it provides valuable insights into how conceptual frameworks operate. For instance, while metonymy relies on associations from experience and culture, it does not always account for the full implications of novel or unconventional metonymies like *You should avoid marrying a sheep at all costs* (Sheep is a horoscope) or *The ham sandwich is getting restless* (Here, a person is referred to by the kind of food he has ordered.)

Synecdoche, a type of metonymy, involves using a term denoting one thing to refer to a related thing (Leech 1969: 148; Matthews 2007: 396), whereby a part represents the whole or vice versa. This type of figurative speech is favored by politicians for succinct description, such as using the official title of a country or institution to refer to its government or headquarter (e.g. the Russian Federation for the Kremlin). While metonymy provides a new name related to the original thing or concept, synecdoche uses a part to represent the whole or vice versa. Synecdoche is often employed to attribute human traits to nonhuman entities, as illustrated by Perrine (2011: 65) with examples like *Twenty hands are employed in the factory* or *I am asking for your daughter's hand*.

The Holy Qur'an also utilizes this trope in its text:

(إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ) (البقرة: 158)

Verily! As-Safa and Al-Marwah (two mountains in Makkah) are of the Symbols of Allah. So, it is not a sin on him who perform Hajj or Umrah [pilgrimage] of the House [the sacred Ka'bah at Makkah]. (Surah: Al-Bqara, Chapter 2, verse 158) (Al-Hilali & Khan 1996: 32)

Hyperbole, derived from Greek word meaning 'overshooting,' is a figure of speech involving deliberate exaggeration for humorous or serious effect often conveying irony. It is characterized by an unbelievable exaggeration in everyday conversations (Leech 1969: 167). Similarly, Palmer (1976: 11) and Leech (1983: 145) note that a hyperbole is used to express a stronger meaning than the literal statement, such as *it made my blood boil*.

While hyperbole and overstatement both involve exaggeration, they differ in the degree of exaggeration and the effect they produce (Perrine 2011: 101). Hyperbole is a clear overstatement, while overstatement may be taken literally or indirectly, emphasizing the importance of something. Hyperboles can produce a wide range of effects, from humorous to serious, fictional to restricted, and convincing to unconvincing, as evident in statements like *They've got watermelons twice the size of a cow's head and sweeter than syrup*.

According to Leech (1983: 145), overstatement is a rhetorical device aimed at achieving maximum impact, such as *I will die if you do not marry me*. In politics, advertising and entertainment, these tropes are commonly used to evoke strong emotions and create a dramatic effect on the audience.

Allegory, as a literary genre, conveys meaning in a concealed manner, often hiding under the surface of another narrative, such as in *The beauty has her own to love her lover, the beast* (Reaske 1996: 23). It involves narrating events, characters, or actions through abstract ideas, presenting a dual layer of literal and allegorical meaning. The emphasis lies on abstract ideas represented by symbols, ethical or religious themes. Fables with anthropomorphic characters are classic examples of allegory, offering instructive lessons on behavior and values.

Perrine describes allegory as an extended metaphor with vague and ambiguous indications, using a series of symbols to convey abstract meanings (2011: 88). Unlike symbolism, allegory does not illuminate images for their own sake but utilizes symbols to convey broader meanings. Biblical allegory includes interpretations of the Bible, parables, and themes of good and evil.

Through allegory, authors can explore controversial topics like religion, war, and human nature symbolically rather than explicitly. This literal device allows for deeper exploration of philosophical theories and complex ideas, as seen in works like *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. While allegory can enhance reader interest and value by unveiling hidden meanings, its effectiveness may diminish if its symbols are unclear, or the surface narrative is lacking.

Euphemism, derived from the Greek *euphemia* meaning ‘good’ or ‘well,’ is a literary device that obscures the true meaning of a word or phrase. It is often employed to replace negative or offensive language with more gentle terms to avoid causing discomfort or offense to the audience. Euphemisms are used to soften the impact of sensitive or taboo topics without altering the overall meaning of the text. This indirect approach adds ambiguity, maintains decorum, and aligns with the audience’s expectations.

Crystal (1992: 128) defines euphemism as a subtle and deceptive expression used in place of impolite, harsh, or unpleasant language. People resort to euphemisms in everyday communication to be considerate of others’ feelings when using phrases like *pass away* instead of *die* to convey the same meaning with more sensitivity (Fromkin et al. 2003: 479). Euphemisms are common in discussing aging, sex, death, bodily functions, and other delicate subjects, providing more acceptable alternatives like *porcelain throne* for *toilet* or *between jobs* for *unemployed*.

Euphemisms offer a way to indirectly convey swear words or taboo language using various linguistic techniques like abbreviation, omission, substitution, or clear descriptions. The Holy Qur’an also utilizes euphemisms as practical examples of moral teachings and virtues.

(قالت أئى يكون لى غلام ولم ىمسسنى بشر) (مرىم: 20)

She (Saint Mary) said: “How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste?” (Surah: Maryam, Chapter 19, verse 20) (Al-Hilali & Khan 1996: 404)

Irony is the contrast between what is said and what is meant, such as calling a *stormy* day *sunny* (Xiang 2008: 5). Attardo (2001: 165) views irony as a complex strategy that creates a contradictory effect in communication by aligning the speaker and the listener at different levels.

Irony, often accompanied by sarcasm, involves using words to convey a meaning opposite to the intended goal (Perrine 2011: 104). It can be mistaken for mockery or satire, which may be bitter or pleasant forms of criticism. Sarcasm is hurtful speech designed to offend, while satire serves as a warning, often found in literature.

Verbal irony, dramatic irony, and situational irony are the three main types used in literature and communication. Skilled analysis is needed to identify irony and its various layers of meaning, which can involve absurdity, abuse, and complexity. Parington (2007) defines irony as a speech that contradicts its literal meaning, while Kennedy & Gioia (1983) describes it as a form of figurative language characterized by a connection between words and their

ridiculous opposite meanings, for example, *How fast did you do the work, until I waited for a long time.*

Antithesis is a figure of speech that is used to create a contrasting effect with words of opposite meaning, even though they may semantically overlap, thus causing certain confusion. Antithesis strengthens the contrast through parallel structures or clauses and often sounds provocative. For example: *better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven; man proposes, God disposes.*

The Holy Qur'an employs multiple antitheses known as *muqabala* (المقابلة). Examples from the Holy Qur'an include:

(فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا) (التوبة: 82)

'Let them laugh a little and then weep much.' (Surah: At-Tawba, Chapter 9, verse 82)

(وَيُجِزُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ) (الأعراف: 157)

'He permits them what is good and forbids them what is filthy.' (Surah: Al-Araaf, Chapter 7, verse 157) (Ali 2021: 232)

2.2. Findings

Figurative language is a powerful tool designed by writers to captivate their audience and enhance the perceived quality of their work. It employs specific linguistic techniques to capture attention and influence readers' perceptions and decisions through both argumentative appeals and rhetorical figures of speech (Lakhani 2008: 2).

Based on this understanding and theoretical and practical investigation of figurative devices, we can formally categorize them into several groups: decorative, argumentative, cognitive, instructive, convenience and functional.

1. Decorative figurative devices: These are most numerous and aim to add color and evoke stronger emotions. Examples include personification, apostrophe, overstatement, irony, understatement, sarcasm, and pleonasm. These devices enrich the text by enhancing its emotional and aesthetic appeal.
2. Argumentative instruments: While primarily decorative, hyperbole and antithesis serve as argumentative instruments when used to support reasoning and persuasion.
3. Cognitive literary tools: These require mental engagement, often involving comparison to convey the author's intended message. This category encompasses simile, metaphor, metonymy, symbol, and allegory. They encourage readers to think deeply and draw connections between concepts.
4. Instructive figurative speech: This is exemplified by the parable, a self-contained narrative that imparts a moral lesson or principle to be learnt and followed.
5. Convenience figurative means: These devices simplify descriptions by invoking familiar senses or concepts. Synecdoche and allusion fall into this category, allowing writers to convey complex ideas succinctly.

6. Functional devices: These do not fit neatly into the previous categories and serve specific purposes. Euphemism, for example, is used to soften language and avoid socially inappropriate or offensive terms thus helping to avoid negative social consequences.

Overall, figurative language is employed to engage readers, achieve a greater impact, add aesthetic appeal and rhetoric, and prompt readers to reflect, recall, draw, compare, and explore new meanings. The selection of literary tools for further exploration was based on the potential relevance to the Holy Qur'an. Further analysis will seek to confirm, refine, or challenge our initial hypothesis regarding their use.

3. Challenges in translating the Holy Qur'an

Translating the Holy Qur'an poses multiple challenges. As a revered religious text with a global following, even the slightest inaccuracies in meaning, style or impact can evoke strong reactions within the Muslim world. The specific nuances of its language, cultural disparities, linguistic complexities, and the array of literary devices make this task particularly formidable. This list can be expanded to include archaic forms, unique Arabic phonetics and textual rhythms, as well as the specific diction, rendering the search for equivalence nearly unattainable.

3.1. Interpretation approaches to translation

The term *interpretation* is multifaceted in meaning and origin. Some scholars assert that it originated from the verb *fasara* and encompasses acts of *al-tabyin* ('explaining'), *al-ibanah* ('enlightening'), *al-idah* ('clarifying'), *al-kasyf* ('unveiling'), among other connotations (Embong & Hanapi 2017: 523).

Like laws, interpreting the Holy Book requires caution. Since the Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, interpretation has been a key method of conveying its messages. Muhammad explained unclear messages and words to his Companions. Since then, various interpretative methods have been employed, resulting in numerous interpretations of the Holy Qur'an from ancient times to the present.

3.2. Pragmatic challenges in translating the Holy Qur'an

Pragmatics studies language communication as influenced by society (Mey 2001). The Speech Acts Theory, developed by John Austin (1962) and expanded by John Searle (1965), significantly contributes to linguistic studies. This theory posits that when speakers communicate, they perform actions like complaining, apologizing, or promising, alongside their utterances. The speaker conveys a message that the listener must understand despite the personal, cultural, and contextual factors (Mey 2001). This challenge extends to translation, where greater structural and cultural differences between languages make conveying the message more difficult.

In translating the Holy Qur'an, translators face challenges due to language specifics, literary tools like allegory, archaic forms, and unique diction from historical and cultural evolution. The Holy Qur'an encompasses past and future states of nations, presenting stories, lessons, laws, values, and morals, characterized by distinct cultural, semantic, grammatical,

and rhetorical features (Abdul-Raof 2010). Thus, translating it involves bridging significant linguistic and cultural gaps, a task achievable only by highly skilled linguists striving for semantic equivalence and similar psychological effects in the target texts.

The Creator, may He be glorified and exalted, said in the Holy Qur'an:

(وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ) (النحل: 113)

This is Arabic, Pure and Clear. (Surah: An-Nahl, Chapter 16, verse 113) (Ali 2021: 392)

Translating the Holy Qur'an is challenging not only because it is a divine book containing the words of the Creator, Almighty and Sublime, but also due to its special effects and indications. Many Muslim scholars advocate for translating the interpretation rather than the text itself. The Holy Qur'an is highly rhetorical, employing unique figurative, artistic and literary tools, and is considered a linguistic marvel that challenges Arabic and foreign linguists. Inaccurate translations can hinder readers from grasping the original text's impact.

The need for translation has grown with Islam's spread in non-Arab societies and increased scientific and academic interest in the religion. Numerous attempts have been made to achieve accurate translations, which are essentially interpretations rather than direct translations, such as Arthur Arberry's *The Koran Interpreted* which is considered one of the best efforts to convey the implicit meaning of Arabic (Kidwai 1987).

Scientific studies have explored the role of pragmatism in translation, such as Sharifabad & Hazbavi's (2011) investigation of translation methods in Surat Yusuf. Their study focused on quantity, quality, style, and relationships, examining source and target languages. They found that English translators often use strategies like footnotes and brackets for their comments to make translations more accessible to foreign audiences in terms of language, culture, and diction.

3.3. Linguistic and cultural challenges in translating the Holy Qur'an

According to Muslim scholars, the Holy Qur'an is considered the final holy book of Islam from Adam to Mohammed. Mustapha (2009: 225) argues that strictness in translation is rooted in the words of the Creator, as it is seen as a linguistic miracle that can lose meaning through translation. The Book was revealed to Prophet Muhammad over a span of twenty-two years through Angel Gabriel. Since the Prophet was illiterate, the Holy Qur'an was meant to be recited orally (Naudé 2010: 290). The true value of the Holy Book is believed to be in the language of revelation, Arabic, and many ancient scholars considered translations as mere aids for understanding the teachings, not possessing the sanctity of the original text.

The transfer of the Qur'anic discourse from its unique Arabic and cultural context has been controversial. Many translators have attempted literal translations to preserve its sanctity, while others argue that archaization such as *thee*, *hath*, etc. and word-for-word translation leads to ambiguities at the lexical and structural levels. Some scholars assert that the best way to preserve integrity of the text and to avoid challenges for foreign readers is to use the theory of foreignizing and the strategy of resistance proposed by Venuti (2008: 18–19). Additionally, there are challenges related to cultural gaps (such as animals and plants) and linguistic phenomena (such as word order and verbal sentence structure) that translators must bridge (Abdul-Raof 2005). Translators suggest some solutions and methods to overcome them.

Most often translators face difficulties with cultural terms, such as names of the prophets, clothes and food, and social habits. The translation of material culture generally poses fewer challenges, but certain words like *hijab* (خمار), meaning ‘head covering,’ have been inaccurately translated as ‘veil’ (Abdul-Raof 2005: 169–170). Additionally, certain terms hold significant value in the source language but may not carry the same importance in the target language as a result of difference in cultures and ideologies. For instance, the concept of *God Almighty* in Islam, referring to a single creator who, without a father, mother, or assistant, contrasts with Christian notion of the Trinity. Similarly, the term *Hajj* in Islam signifies a pilgrimage to Makkah Al-Mukarramah, the holy place built by Abraham, while in other religions it refers to visiting any holy sites globally. Translating these cultural features requires maintaining a similar impact through functional equivalence. Another cultural challenge in translation is the acceptance of polygamy in Islam, which poses difficulties due to its prohibition in European societies.

In summary, the Holy Qur’an includes distinct features such as emotionally charged expressions related to social and political matters, battles, and Muslim leaders. It also incorporates religious elements unique to Islamic culture such as *Sala* (صلاة) meaning ‘prayer’ or ‘supplication’ as well as extensive semantic and structural repetitions, rhetorical devices like similes and metaphors, linguistic techniques encompassing morphology, phonetics, grammar, syntax, and pragmatics.

Therefore, Arabic style, characterized by unique word choices, sentence structures, repetition, ellipses, conjugation, coordination and more, cannot be replicated in other languages. Metaphor, simile, assonance, euphemism, synecdoche and other rhetorical devices are at risk of being compromised when translated into a foreign language with distinct cultural nuances (Abdul-Raof 2004: 102–105).

3.4. Findings

Translation of religious texts like the Holy Qur’an is a complex task that demands a deep understanding of linguistic and cultural nuances. The Holy Qur’an and the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad are revered in the Muslim world, serving as guides for daily life and artistic inspiration.

Translating the Holy Qur’an presents significant challenges due to language and linguistic nuances, and literary devices like metaphor and simile. Archaic forms, unique Arabic phonetics, textual rhythms, and historical diction further complicate interpretation. Achieving linguistic and cultural equivalence between texts has proven difficult, leading to loss of meaning in many translations. Various translation techniques, such as literal translation, and functional equivalence, have been tested but none have fully captured the essence of the original texts.

Arabic terms often lose depth when borrowed into other cultures and are replaced by local synonyms that diminish the text’s diction, while structural, semantic, and grammatical differences across languages add further complexity. Conceptual structures may seem alien and are adjusted to meet the target audience’s expectations. Different systems of letters, writing direction, sentence order, presence of singular, double and plural cases in the Arabic language pose another type of challenge. Literary devices linked to phonetics (assonance, alliteration, etc.) are often lost in translations, contributing to the view that translations of the Holy Qur’an are interpretations rather than authentic representations.

4. Analysis of Qur'anic rhetorical tools

The practical aspect of this research centers on the linguistic analysis of figurative language tools found in selected verses of the Holy Qur'an, particularly those related to behavioral norms in Muslim countries. The text of the Holy Qur'an is accessible online in its original Arabic as well as in English and Russian translations. Our objective was to compare the original Arabic verses with their English and Russian translations, focusing on figurative language employed in both the original text and its translations.

Given the Holy Qur'an's extensive content comprising 114 suras (or *surahs*, 'chapters') and 6,236 verses excluding Bismillah and 6,348 verses including Bismillah, a comprehensive examination of the entire text was not feasible. Therefore, our selection process was guided by two primary criteria: the presence of literary devices and the relevance of the verses to social norms of behavior. We initially reviewed approximately 400 verses and hadiths, ultimately selecting 27 for detailed analysis. It is important to note that our analysis is not exhaustive but rather illustrative of broader trends.

The research also aims to test our initial hypothesis concerning the diversity and prevalence of figurative devices, as outlined in the theoretical framework. Through statistical analysis, we seek to identify the most common linguistic devices inherent to the original text and assess their presence or absence in the translated versions. This analysis will provide insights into how figurative language is adapted or lost in translation, which can have significant implications for understanding cultural and behavioral norms as conveyed through the Holy Qur'an.

4.1. Figurative language examples from the Qur'an

Due to space constraints, we are unable to present the full scope of practical findings in this article. However, to illustrate our methodology and findings, we have included a few representative examples below. These examples highlight the intricate use of figurative language in the Holy Qur'an and the challenges and nuances involved in translating such language across different cultures and languages. Through this study, we aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between language, culture, and religious texts.

(وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ) (الرحمن: 6)

And the stemless plants and the trees humbly submit to His will. (Surah: Ar-Rahmān, Chapter 55, verse 6) (Ali 2021: 793)

Травы (или звезды) и деревья совершают поклоны (Творцу).

The most beautiful figure of speech creates the attractive image through vesting human characteristics to inanimate objects. Personification used in this verse is of a metaphorical nature, implicitly suggesting a comparison. It is difficult to discern any legal meaning in a standalone sentence, however, it can be interpreted as an exemplary model to follow. Both translations follow the suggested trope and sentence structure.

(وَيَأْتِيهِمْ مَا لِي أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجَاةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ) (غافر: 41)

And, O my people! How is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to the Fire. (Surah: Ghāfir, Chapter 40, verse 41) (Ali 2021: 692)

О мой народ! Почему я зову вас к спасению, а вы зовете меня в Ад?

Antithesis is applied to describe the situation when the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, calls His people to follow the right path, and they call Him to the path of destruction. The path of sins, wrongdoing, corruption and disobedience. They will face trial on the Day of Resurrection, which takes into account all matters, big and small. Both translations have adhered to the original text and effectively employed the same rhetorical device to achieve equivalence and similar effect.

The Book of Good Manners. Book 1, Hadith 14:

وعن أبي هريرة أن النبي (صلى الله عليه وسلم) قال: "والكلمة الطيبة صدقة"

The Prophet (Peace Be upon Him) said: "It is also charity to utter a good word."

Пророк (ﷺ) сказал: "Сказать доброе слово – тоже милосердие."

This hadith pertains to a *metaphor* stating that a kind word is akin to charity. A comparison of the texts reveals that the original text is more stringent in terms of similarity, but due to structural and cultural variances between languages, translators domesticated the idea to communicate it in a manner conformed for the target reader. Although the wording was entirely modified, the message was effectively conveyed.

Hadith on *wdouh* (face, hands and feet washing before prayer):

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ (رضي الله عنهما) أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَرَّ بِسَعْدٍ وَهُوَ يَتَوَضَّأُ فَقَالَ: "مَا هَذَا السَّرَفُ يَا سَعْدُ؟" قَالَ: "أَفِي الْوُضُوءِ سَرَفٌ؟" قَالَ: "نَعَمْ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ عَلَى نَهْرٍ جَارٍ".

The Prophet (Peace Be upon Him) said: "Do not waste water even if you were at a running stream."

Не тратьте воду впустую, даже если вы были у ручья.

There is an implicit metaphor in this hadith, wherein the meaning clearly signifies a fundamental objective: not to waste water. The deeper meaning is that temperance is the golden rule. In all three texts, the imperative is used, which can be perceived as a command in Arabic, and instruction in English and Russian, reflecting norms of behavior.

(إن يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ) (الطور: 44)

And if they were to see a fragment from the sky falling, they would say: "[It is merely] clouds heaped up." (Surah: At-toor, Chapter 52, verse 44) (Ali 2021:781)

Даже если они увидят, как упадет кусок неба, то скажут: "Это — (всего лишь) скопление облаков!"

This verse employs hyperbole or deliberate exaggeration, as a powerful rhetorical device to enhance communication. The use of hyperbole here serves to create a dramatic stylistic effect

and implies irony, highlighting skepticism or denial of those who witness extraordinary events yet dismiss them as ordinary. From a legal perspective, this phrase can be seen as part of an argumentative strategy in the pursuit of truth, illustrating how individuals might dismiss evidence that challenges their preconceived notions. Both the English and Russian translations effectively capture the original meaning, enhancing the verse's dramatic impact.

(مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَأَهْدُوهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ) (الصافات: 23)

Beside Allah, and lead them on to the path of Fire. (Surah: As-Sāffāt, Chapter: 37, verse 23) (Ali 2021: 654)

Вместо Аллаха, и укажите им путь в Ад.

In the given context, the Arabic verb *Huda* (هدى), typically translated as ‘to lead,’ usually implies leading someone towards something beneficial or positive. However, in this particular instance, it is used in an ironic sense, indicating guidance towards a negative outcome—specifically, the way to Fire (Hell). This use of irony highlights the concept of just and fair punishment. The duality in the meaning of *Huda* in this manner enriches the narrative, adding a layer of complexity to the concept of guidance. It reflects the broader theme of accountability and the moral implications of one's actions, reminding readers of the importance of making righteous choices. Both the English and Russian translations effectively convey the concept of punishment and capture the ironic twist of the verse.

(وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لَبِئُوا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يُؤْفَكُونَ) (الروم: 56)

And on the day when the *Hour* shall arrive the guilty will swear that they tarried not save an *hour* thus were they turned away from the right path. (Surah: Ar-Rūm, Chapter 30, verse 56) (Ali 2021: 593)

И в День, когда настанет час [Судный], поклянутся грешники, что не оставались они [в могилах и] часа. Так были отвращены они [от истины].

This verse employs a clever play on words, known as pun, by using the word *Hour* (*hour*) in two different senses: the Day of Resurrection and an hour in time. This duality implies irony and regret concerning a sinful life. Initially, we did not include pun in our hypothesis, which was an oversight. The use of such linguistic devices is consistent with the general tone and diction of the Holy Book, adding depth and layers of meaning to the text.

In terms of translation, the English version seems to capture the broader semantic range of the Arabic term ‘guilty’ *Mujrimûn* (مجرمون), which encompasses disbelievers, polytheists and sinners. This is more accurate than the Russian translation, which uses *грешники* (‘sinners’).

In conclusion, we propose a qualitative analysis of the rhetoric devices employed in the Holy Book. Below is their distribution according to categories identified during the study.

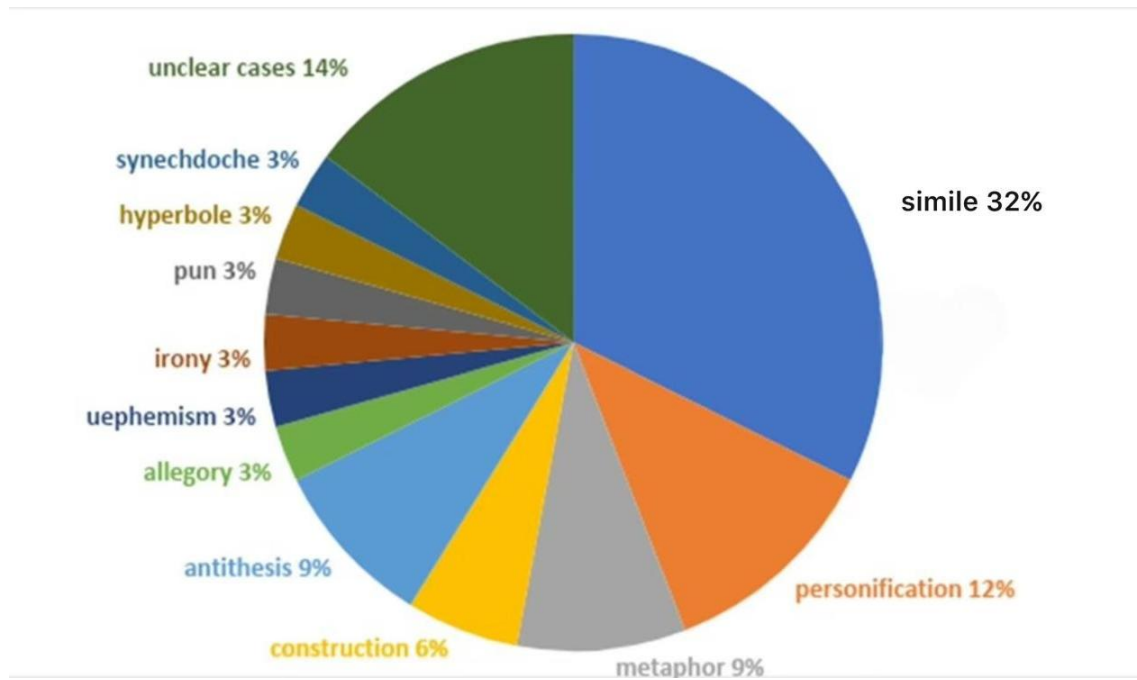


Figure 1: Literary devices in the Qur'an: Frequency and Focused Study

4.2. Findings

The analysis of the literary devices reveals that the language of the Holy Book is easy to read but challenging to comprehend, as the text encourages deep reflection and derivation of wisdom. It serves as substantial nourishment for the intellect and stands as an authoritative text to be adhered to. The issues addressed within the verses span various aspects of the legal domain, including behavioral norms, morality, philosophical considerations of good and evil, justice, punishment, and the dichotomy of right and wrong.

The text employs a range of literary devices to convey its messages and engage the reader emotionally. Among these, simile and personification are particularly effective and frequently used. Metaphor functions as a cognitive tool for mapping the world but is often amplified by simile, another device that prompts a particular mental analysis. Together they create a sense that is both verbal and visual, thus enriching the emotional and cultural dimensions of communication. Less frequent but equally significant are hyperbole and antithesis, which belong to the realm of argumentative instruments. Allegory and euphemism significantly contribute to the psychological appeal of the text, inviting readers to extract wisdom according to their capacities. Irony is employed as a standalone device and in conjunction with other literary techniques to add an emotional dimension to the message. Synecdoche, though relatively rare, contributes to character development, whereas personification enhances the emotional resonance of the text. Some cases present difficulties in identification, such as ambiguous uses of metaphor/simile, simile/parable, and personification/metaphor/comparison, which point to the intricate implied semantics within the verses. Despite differences in sense and organization, the verses collectively form a cohesive whole, resembling a picturesque design. Each narrative compliments the others in terms of wisdom, teachings, reasoning, admonition and instruction, thereby forming a unified conceptual structure. Various linguistic techniques employed in the text enhance its

psychological and emotional dimensions, contributing to dramatic intended effect of complete submission.

Regarding the hypothesis, it is evident that not all anticipated figurative tools were identified in the text under study. Surprisingly, apostrophe, symbol, allusion, pleonasm, and parable did not feature in the verses of the Holy Book being studied. This may be attributed to the unique choice of language, focus, and a desire to avoid undue mental pressure. Conversely, overlooked devices such as puns extend the perception of the message through wordplay.

The translation into English and Russian can be described as exceptionally loyal and respectful. In instances where lexical equivalence was challenging to achieve, translators implemented techniques that ensure semantic and emotional equivalence in a manner comfortable for the reader. Cultural disparities were carefully addressed through strategies tailored to the target audience, achieving an effect equal to that of the original text. Syntactical equivalence was attained through the use of parallel constructions and clauses that faithfully adhered to the original text.

5. Conclusion

The Holy Qur'an and the Hadiths of the Prophet have significantly influenced the development of ancient civilizations and the emergence of numerous countries throughout history. These texts are recognized as the primary sources of Islamic legislation and continue to garner interest as Islam spreads globally, including its more radical interpretations.

The Holy Qur'an and Hadiths are rich in rhetorical tools and linguistic features, representing the pinnacle of Arabic language norms and artistic expression. Our research focused on the theory of rhetorical instruments, leading to the classification of literary devices into five functional groups: *decorative*, *argumentative*, *cognitive*, *instructive*, and *convenience*. These devices serve various purposes, from enhancing emotional impact and creating imagery to providing instructive narratives and referencing familiar concepts. Euphemism, among others, exemplifies *functional* devices that do not fit neatly into these categories.

Translating highly rhetorical texts, particularly divine books like the Holy Qur'an, poses significant challenges. The Holy Qur'an is a foundational book in the political, cultural, social and legal spheres of many Muslim countries, with some Islamic states aligning their constitutions with its principles. The necessity of disseminating Allah's word to non-Arabic has driven translation efforts, yet these often fall short due to linguistic, cultural, and content-related challenges. Consequently, translations are typically seen as interpretations rather than authentic renditions of the original text.

The Arabic language's unique features, such as its literary devices, grammar forms, phonetics, and textual rhyme, pose additional translation difficulties. The distinct letter system, writing direction, sentence structure and grammatical nuances further complicate the process. Various translation techniques, including literal translation, functional equivalence, and foreignization, have been tested, but achieving semantic and lexical equivalence remains challenging. Cultural elements often become diluted whereas conceptual, structural, semantic and grammatical features sometimes seem alien, affecting the text's authenticity.

Our study revealed that, while the Holy Book is accessible in terms of readability, its comprehension is complex due to its unique portrayal of the world and the intricacies of human relationships. The text aims not only to convey messages across but also to profoundly impact the reader. Cognitive tools like simile and metaphor, often layered with additional

complexities, create both verbal and visual senses, enhancing emotional and cultural aspects of communication. Their frequent use underscores their importance in the conceptual structure of the revelation. The emotional tools such as irony, synecdoche, and personification amplify the text's impact, contributing to a masterpiece of wisdom, reasoning, discipline, and guidance. Together these rhetorical elements form a cohesive conceptual framework that demands adherence. For academic purposes, it is crucial to explore these literary devices not only in isolation but also in their interplay, as they collectively enrich the text's interpretative depth and emotional impact.

The comparative analysis of English and Russian translations reveals a high degree of loyalty and respect. When complete semantic or lexical equivalence is unattainable, translators employ strategies to achieve comfortable reading experience. Cultural challenges are addressed through domestication techniques, ensuring an effect comparable to the original. Parallel constructions were faithfully maintained in both translations, underscoring the text's structural integrity.

The study can provide insights into the multifaceted nature of the Holly Book, offering a deeper appreciation of its literary, philosophical and cultural dimensions. Understanding these elements is significant for comprehending the text's enduring influence and its ability to convey profound wisdom across different languages and cultures.

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