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The rhetorical feature of chiasmus in the Quran and its translation into English

أسلوب المقابلة البلاغي في القرآن الكريم وترجمته الى اللغة الانجليزية

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the linguistic functions, patterns and translation of chiasmus in the Quran. The sample of the study consisted of 32 different verses from the Quran accompanied with four reliable translations of the Quran, namely Palmer, Arberry, Pickthall and Yusuf Ali to examine how these chiasms translated into English. The study relied on Nida's (1964) formal approach to translation as a theoretical framework. The study concludes that there are five chiasmic patterns in Arabic in the Quran: double-chiasm (AB- BA), tripartite-chiasm (ABC-CBA), quad-chiasm (ABCD-DCBA), quintuple-chiasm (ABCDE-EDCBA) and hexa-chiasm (ABCDEF-FEDCBA). These chiasms are contrasted in the same verse or in the following verse. In addition, all the translators rendered chiasms literally in the Quran to maintain the form and the content of the message in English.

Keywords: Chiasmus, Translation, Holy Quran, Arabic and Rhetorical Features.

ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة الوظائف اللغوية وأنواع أسلوب المقابلة في القرآن الكريم وترجمتها للإنجليزية. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من اثنتين وثلاثين آية من القرآن الكريم مشفوعة بأربع

ترجمات موثوقة للقرآن الكريم وهي: بالمر، و آربري وبيكتال ويوسف علي من أجل التأكد من كيفية ترجمة أسلوب المقابلة اللغوية الى اللغة الانجليزية في القراءان الكريم. واعتمدت الدراسة على نظرية التكافؤ الشكلي التي اقترحها نايدا عام 1964، وخلصت الدراسة الى ان هناك خمسة أنواع من المقابلات اللغوية في اللغة العربية وتصنف حسب العدد مثلا ثنائية، وثلاثية، ورباعية، وخماسية، وسداسية، وهذه المقابلات اللغوية قد تكون في نفس الآية او قد تمتد الى آيات أخرى. أضف الى ذلك ان جميع المترجمين استخدموا الترجمة الحرفية للمقابلات اللغوية من أجل المحافظة على نفس الشكل والمضمون في اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المقابلة اللغوية، الترجمة، القراءان الكريم، اللغة العربية وأساليب بلاغية.

Introduction

Chiasmus is “a rhetorical or literary figure in which words, grammatical constructions, or concepts are repeated in reverse order” (Oxford Dictionary). It is a rhetorical device where “words or expressions are repeated in the reverse order” (Alm-arvius, 2003, p.180), and it can be considered as a type of Parallelism. For example, Fair is foul, and foul is fair. Another example of chiasmus from the Quran is (9:82) فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلًا (So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn). This is a double- chiasm (AB-BA); the phrase فليضحكوا “let them laugh” is contrasted with “فليبكوا” let them weep” and the quantifier “a little” with “much” . In common, chiasm can be defined as the employment “a balance of words, phrases, or themes around a pivotal center idea, provided that the order of these words, phrases, or themes is inverted in the second half over against the ordering of the first half” (Brouwer, 1999, p.6).

At the first glance, chiasmus seems as a kind of repetition or play with words; Johnstone (1991) claims that Arabic discourse is extremely repetitious. She based her conclusion on Arab learners of English. This claim seems inaccurate since repetition in Arabic is often functional. Chiasmus in the Quran usually contrasts two antonyms; one is positive and the other is negative to stress the notion that Almighty God exerts his unlimited power in the universe. Chiasmus or “*almuqabala alughawiyah*” is common in Arab poetry and in the Quran. It is a rhetorical device used functionally for adding aesthetic flavor to discourse. In addition, this usage

reflects the author's ability to make language flexible to achieve certain persuasive functions in discourse. In addition, it expresses the linguistic flexibility of the language, because not all languages can have this merit in their syntactic and grammatical systems.

Jawad (2007, p.209) states that chiasmus can be used to achieve two textual purposes: "(i) text-building, by the juxtaposition of two items in the text in order to show a contrast or a relationship between them; and (ii) rhetorical, where the juxtaposition is intended to relay a meaning that goes beyond the denotative and connotative meaning of the chiasmic items". Jawad (2007, p.210) suggests three strategies for translating chiasmus: literal translation of the chiasmus expression when the translator believes that the meaning in the SL is 'inextricably interwoven,' opting for synonymy in the TT, and "lexicalization of chiasmus whereby translators lexicalize the ST chiasmic structure by replacing the reverse part of the chiasmus with the adverb vice versa. "The present study tackles the structure and patterns of chiasmic expressions in Arabic and their translation into English.

The present study

Some English studies have focused on chiasmic devices in literature while in Arabic few studies tackle chiasmus, especially in the translation of the Quran. Therefore, this study investigates chiasmus structures, patterns, linguistic functions and the adequacy of its translation by some popular interpretations of the Quran, such as Palmer, Arberry, Pickthall and Yusuf Ali. The study also suggests adequate strategies that can be used to overcome the challenges of understanding chiasmus in the Quran. The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- a. What are the patterns of chiasmic expressions in the Quran?
- b. What are the linguistic functions of chiasmic expressions?
- c. How are Quranic chiasmic expressions translated into English?

Methodology

For the purpose of the study, 32 chiasmic verses were selected from different surahs of the Quran with their English translations' of Arberry, Yousef Ali, Palmer, and Pickthall. The reason behind using these

translators is that they are popular, especially Pickthall who provided the translation of the Quran in classical English. In addition, these translations were examined and analyzed to get a clearer picture of how translators rendered chiasmic expressions in the Quran. These qur'anic expressions were classified and analyzed based on their syntactic patterns. The analysis of the data focused on the importance of these chiasmic expressions in the Quran and their function in emphasizing what has been addressed in the verse.

Theoretical framework

The present study relies on Nida's (1964) formal approach to translation. Formal equivalence, '*gloss translation*', focuses on rendering the content and form of the message literally and semantically. The content and the form cannot be abstracted from each others, "but in some messages the content is of primary consideration, and in others the form must be given a higher priority" (p.156). In the translation of chiasms into English, the form should given higher priority as chiasmus is an aesthetical and formal linguistic feature, '*straight jacket*', in the Quran. The translator should be "concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language (p.159). That is, "the message in the receptor culture is constantly compared with the message in the source culture to determine standards of accuracy and correctness" (p.159). Nida (1964, p.164) states four essential necessities of a translation which are 'making sense, conveying the spirit and manner of the original, having a natural and easy form of expression and producing a similar response.'" These requirements are essential in translating chiasmic expressions in the Quran in order to render the meaning adequately and to have the same rhetorical and semantic effect in English.

Review of related literature

Chiasmus in Arabic

Chiasmus is purposively used in Arabic, especially in pre-Islamic poetry and the Quran; it aims to contrast words, expressions of sentences to achieve rhetorical and intellectual values in discourse. Chiasmus is psychologically used in the Quran to express fear, security, obedience,

disobedience, and excitement and intimidation (al-jwini, 1985). Chiasmus in the Quran makes the aesthetic linguistic feature as a deliberate tool for emotional effect, especially the religious emotions (Qutub, 1966). Some Arab linguists could not differentiate between chiasmus and antithesis. Antithesis is the exact opposite of two meanings. In contrast, chiasmus is the contrast between more than two meanings. Antithesis is between opposites only, while chiasmus is between opposites and others, antithesis is a part of chiasmus (Az-zarkashi, 1957).

Az-zarkashi (1957) classifies chiasmus into three patterns: first, synonym, i.e. stating the word and its synonym. For example, (1:255) لا تأخذه سنة ولا نوم [Neither *drowsiness* overtakes Him nor *sleep*]. In this example, /*sinatun*/ 'drowsiness' and /*nawm*/ 'sleep' are synonyms. Second, the chiasmus of oppositeness, i.e. stating the word and its opposite. For example, (17:18) وتحسبهم أيقاظا وهم رقود [And you would think them **awake**, while they were **asleep**], awake and asleep are antonyms. This verse explains the condition of the people of the cave who slept for more than three hundred years. It was the willing of Allah to keep their eyes open in order to protect them. When someone looked at them, s/he would think that they were awake. However, they were asleep. The function of chiasmus here is to exhibit the almighty of Allah. Third, chiasmus of differences which means stating the word and its difference. For example, (72:10) وَأَنَا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدُ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا [And we do not know [therefore] whether **evil** is intended for those on earth or whether their Lord intends for them a **right** course]. In this verse, the two words /*shar*/ 'evil' and /*rashada*/ 'right' are completely different words. This type is like the second one, as the two words can be antonyms. This verse was uttered by the Jins who were politely attributed the evil thing for an unknown actor while they attributed the good thing for Allah Almighty. This chiasm conveys politeness when referring to Allah Almighty. Fayud (1998) and al-Qizwini (2003) define chiasmus as having two or more compatible meanings and then writing what corresponds to them respectively; these compatible meanings should not be antonyms.

Chiasmus occurs according to meanings. That is, both meanings are parallel and equal. For example, وَمَكْرُؤًا مَكَرًا وَمَكْرُؤًا مَكَرًا وَهُمْ لَا يَتَشْعُرُونَ (27:50)

[And they planned a plan, and we planned a plan, while they perceived not]. The term مَكْرُوا (they planned) means they planned for hurting Allah's prophets and the believers, so Allah planned a punishment for that. This verse describes the conspiracy made by the people of the prophet Saleh. They planned to kill him, but the monster turned against its creators. They were killed instead of the prophet and upon them is a misfortune of evil nature. The function of this chiasm is to express the notion that what goes around comes around. Therefore, their dwellings are empty and ruined because of their wrong doings.

Also, chiasmus occurs according to sense relations; chiasmus here can be synonyms and antonyms (Ibrahim, 2010). For example,

فقلد تبيت يد الفتاة وسادة لي جاعلا يسرى يدي وسادها

[A woman whom makes her hand a cushion for me and I will make my left hand a cushion for for].

In this example, the woman's hand will be the man's cushion and vice versa; the two meanings are synonymous. The second type of chiasmus is antonym (Ibrahim, 2010).

فتى كان فيه ما يسر صديقه على أن فيه ما يسوء الأعدايا

[A man's merits please his friend, and displease his enemies].

In this example, there are two antonyms [please/ displease] and [friend/ enemies]. Chiasmus in the Quran also occurs at the discourse level, i.e. it can be at the level of the whole surah or different surahs. Chiasmus helps in clarifying the intended meaning of the verse. Chiasmus in Arabic is not repetitious; it is functional, meaningful and rhetorical. In addition, it reflects the aesthetic style of language which is usually used by professionals.

Chiasmus in English

Chiasmus is found in ancient literature and oratory; it was found in the writings of Greek rhetorician Isocrates in the fourth century (McCoy, 2003). Chiasmus is a Latin word and denotes "two-part structure, of which the second half repeats the two main elements of the first half and inverts their order - thus: ab-ba" (Norrman, 1986, p.1). The structures of chiasmus

can occur at the sound, word, phrase, sentence, paragraph or text levels. Chiastic structures exist in literature i.e. two characters exchange their roles and positions in the plot, so the one who is the hero at the beginning will be the villain at the end and vice versa (Norrman, 1986). Several studies explore the micro- structures and macro-structures of chiasm in Hebrews and the Bible (cf. Rhee,1998; Brouwer,1999; Heath,2011; Schotlz,2015) Chiasmus involves parallelism of synonyms and antonyms; it “always involves a balanced multi-unit inverted parallelism which leads to and then moves away from a distinct central component (which itself can be either in the form of a single unit [as in ABCB’A’] or in the form of two parallel subunits [as in ABCC’B’A’])” (McCoy, 2003, p.2). It can be inferred that chiasmus helps in elucidating the semantic meaning or the thought conveyed in the text. Another prominent type of chiasmus mentioned by McCoy (2003:3) is that AB X BA. He provides the following example quoted from John (3:9:1):

A whoever has been born of God
B does not sin
X for His seed remains in him
B and he cannot sin
A because he has been born of God

Chiasm helps interpreters to understand the thoughts in discourse and helps them to recognize the ‘emphatic importance’ of that thought (McCoy, 2003). That is, chiasms are used intentionally by writers to emphasize a certain idea or thought, the meaning of one part of the chiasm complements the meaning of others and so on. McCoy (2003) indicates that inflectional languages such as Hebrew and Greek have more flexible semantic, morphological and syntactic structures than English. This is also applicable to Arabic as an inflectional language with flexible morphological, semantic and syntactic structures. This supports the notion that Arabic is more flexible than English in terms of the use of chiasm. Obviously, the structures of chiastic expressions are different in Arabic and English. Chiasmus in Arabic has more patterns.

Discussion and analysis

This section presents the patterns of chiasms in the Quran and their translation in English. Data is discussed under four categories of chiasmus four reliable translations of the Quran were selected; namely, Arberry, Palmer, Pickthall and Yusuf Ali. The data is analyzed based on five patterns of numbers, namely chiasms of two meanings, three meanings, four meanings, five meanings and six meanings

Chiasmus of two meanings

In this type, two meanings are contrasted respectively; its structure will be AB→BA. Noticeably, in this type, the word or expression and its antonyms are mentioned consequently. In verse (1) in the table below, the chiasm is between 'intending ease' and 'hardship.' This verse gives a license for those who cannot fast during Ramadan because of sickness or travelling to break their fast and to fast these days after Ramadan. The four translations succeed in rendering the literal meaning of the verse. These translations maintain the content and the form of the ST. The function of chiasm is to show the mercy of Allah towards people. In verse (2), chiasmus is between 'laugh little' and 'weep much.' This verse rebukes the hypocrites who beseeched false excuses to avoid participating in Tabuk battle with Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). It indicates the punishment that waits for them in the Hereafter. Again, the four translations follow Nida's formal approach. In verse (3), chiasmus is between 'night for a garment' and 'day for a livelihood.' The day is created for humans to work and to earn livings while the night is for rest. In verse (4), it is between 'bidding them to honor', and 'forbidding them dishonor.' Muslims are ordered to have faith in Allah and not to disobey Him. Stating the word and its antonyms strengthens and clarifies the meaning by offering a comprehensive denotative meaning of the verse. Clearly, the four translators provide literal translation for these chiasms, where they maintain the content and the form of the message in the in the TT. In addition, they convey the sense and achieve the same effect in TT.

Table (1): Chiasmus of two meanings.

| | Verse | Arberry | Palmer | Pickthall | Yusuf Ali |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| 1 | يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ (2:185) | God desires ease for you, and desires not hardship for you | God desires for you what is easy, and desires not for you what is difficult | Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you | God intends every facilityFor you; He does not want To put you to difficulties. |
| 2 | فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (9:82) | Therefore, let them laugh little, and weep much, | Let them then laugh little, and let them weep much | Then let them laugh a little: they will weep much, as the reward of what they used to earn | Let them laugh a little: Much will they weep |
| 3 | وَجَعَلْنَا لَيْسًا , وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا (78:10-11) | We appointed night for a garment, and We appointed day for a livelihood | and made the night a garment, and made the day for livelihood | And have appointed the night as a cloak, And have appointed the day for livelihood | And made the nightAs a covering,And made the day As a means of subsistence? |
| 4 | يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ (7:157) | bidding them to honour, and forbidding them dishonour, | bidding them what is reasonable and forbidding them what is wrong, | He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. | For he commands themWhat is just and forbids them What is evil; |

Chiasmus of three meanings

In this type, three meanings are contrasted respectively; its structure is ABC → CBA. Again, the word and its antonyms are contrasted in the same verse. Inverse (1) below, the chiasm is between 'makes lawful' and 'prohibits', 'good things' and 'evil things' and 'for them'. The context of this verse is to call believers to obey Prophet Mohammad who made things lawful for them, i.e. in pre-Islamic period, Arabs used to release some camels in the desert and prevent themselves and others to make use of them as a kind of worship. The Prophet made this lawful for them and prevented them from eating pork and dealing with usury and other bad things. In verse (2), the chiasm is (1) 'may not grieve' and 'nor rejoice'; (2) 'what escapes you' and 'what has come to you'; (3) 'for you' and 'to you'. The verse indicates that the believers should not grieve for the sake of anything bad happens to them in the hereafter. Also, the believers should not be proud of themselves about the bounties that Allah has bestowed upon them because these bounties were given to them by Allah not because of their hard work (Ibn Khathir, 2006). In (3), three verses were contrasted, the chiasms are (1) 'him who is given his book in his right hand' and 'who is given his book behind his back'; (2) 'he shall surely receive an easy reckoning' and 'he shall call for destruction'; (3) 'he will return to his family joyfully' and 'he shall roast at a Blaze'. The verse tells the status of people in the Judgement Day; they will be rewarded the Heaven or the Hell Fire. Those who has their book in their right hand, they will be rewarded the Heaven, while those who have it behind their back, they will go the Hell fire. Yusuf Ali provide the most adequate translation as (فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو) (تُبُورًا) means he will cry for perdition, "a punishment that lasts forever after death" (Oxford Dictionary). The function of chiasms is to contrast the reward of the believers and disbelievers in the Judgment Day.

Table (2): Chiasmus of three meanings.

| | Verse | Arberry | Palmer | Pickthall | Yusuf Ali |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | وَيُجِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ (7:157) | making lawful for them the good things and making unlawful for them the corrupt things, | and making lawful for them what is good, and making unlawful evil things | He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them only the foul | he allows Them as lawful what is good (And pure) and prohibits them From what is bad (and impure); |
| 2 | لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ ﴿٥٧﴾ (23) | that you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor rejoice in what has come to you; | That ye may not vex yourself s for what ye miss, nor be overjoyed at what He gives you | That ye grieve not for the sake of that which hath escaped you, nor yet exult because of that which hath been given. | In order that ye may Not despair over matters That pass you by, nor exult over favours Bestowed upon you. |

... continue table (2)

| | Verse | Arberry | Palmer | Pickthall | Yusuf Ali |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| 3 | <p>فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ (7) بِيَمِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسِبُ حِسَابًا (8) يَسِيرًا وَيَقْلِبُ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا (9) وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ (10) فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو نُبُورًا (11) وَيَصْلَى سَعِيرًا (84): (12-7)</p> | <p>Then as for him who is given his book in his right hand, he shall surely receive an easy reckoning and he will return to his family joyfully. But as for him who is given his book behind his back, he shall call for destruction and he shall roast at a Blaze</p> | <p>And as for him who is given his book in his right hand, he shall be reckoned with by an easy reckoning ; and he shall go back to his family joyfully. But as for him who is given his book behind his back, he shall call out for destructio n, but he shall broil in a blaze!</p> | <p>Then whoso is given his account in his right hand 8 He truly will receive an easy reckoning 9 And will return unto his folk in joy. 10 But whoso is given his account behind his back, 11 He surely will invoke destruction 12 And be thrown to scorching fire.</p> | <p>Then he who is given His Record in his Right hand, 8. Soon will his account Be taken by an easy reckoning, 9. And he will turn to his people, rejoicing! 10. But he who is given His Record behind his back, — 11. Soon will he cry for Perdition, 12. And he will enter A Blazing Fire.</p> |

Chiasmus of four meanings

In this type, four meanings are contrasted respectively; its structure will be ABCD → DCBA. In verse (1), the contrast is between (1) 'gives' and 'withholds' (2) 'Godfearing' and 'thinks himself Self-sufficient' (3) 'believes in the best' and 'denies the best' (4) 'ease him toward ease' and 'ease him toward difficulty.' This verse describes the status of those who give charities and believe in Allah; they will go to the Heaven, and those who do not, will go to the Hell Fire. The chiasms here function as a warning for believers in general. Regarding the provided translations, the most adequate ones are those provided by Palmer and Yusuf, since they convey both the form and the intended meaning of the verse adequately. That is, Arberry and Pickthall translated (فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُعْطِيَ) as "As for him who gives," this is incomplete thought as the verb *give* is a ditransitive verb and it must be followed by an object. Palmer and Yusuf Ali provide the object to avoid ambiguity in the translation of this verse.

Table (3): Chiasmus of four meanings.

| | Verse | Arberry | Palmer | Pickthall | Yusuf Ali |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| 1 | فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَأَتَّقَى وَاصْدَقْ بِالْحُسْنَى فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَعْتَبَ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى (92:5- 10) | As for him who gives and is godfearing and confirms the reward most fair, We shall surely ease him to the Easing. But as for him who is a miser, and self- sufficient, and cries lies to the reward most fair, We shall surely ease him to the Hardship | But as for him who gives alms and fears God, And believes in the best, we will send him easily to ease! But as for him who is niggardly, And longs for wealth, And calls the good a lie, [10] We will send him easily to difficulty! | As for him who giveth and is dutiful (toward Allah) 6 And believeth in goodness; 7 Surely We will ease his way unto the state of ease. 8 But as for him who hoardeth and deemeth himself independent, 9And is believeth in goodness; 10 Surely We will ease his way unto adversity. | So he who gives (In charity) and fears (God),6. And (in all sincerity) Testifies to the Best, — 7. We will indeed Make smooth for him .The path to Bliss, 8. But he who is A greedy miser And thinks himself Self- sufficient, 9. And gives the lie to the Best, — 10. We will indeed Make smooth for him.The Path to Misery; |

Chiasmus of five meanings

In this type, five meanings are contrasted respectively. In verse (1), the chiastic expressions are (1) 'a gnat' and 'aught above it';(2) 'As for the believers' and 'as for unbelievers'; (3) 'it is the truth from their Lord' and 'What did God desire by this for a similitude'; (4) 'He leads many astray' and 'He guides many'; (5) 'break the covenant of Godits solemn binding'

and ‘such as cut what God has commanded should be joined.’ In this verse, Allah gives a simple example that shows his almighty power. Also, Allah is not ashamed to draw comparisons even with a small creation such as a gnat to show His almighty power to the disbeliever. These chiasms confirm that chiastic expressions may extend to more than one verse in the Quran. All the provided renditions were adequate as they maintain the content and the form of these chiasms in the ST.

Table (4): Chiasmus of five meanings.

| | Verse | Arberry | Palmer | Pickthall | Yusuf Ali |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | <p>إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَنْجِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ (2:26-27)</p> | <p>God is not ashamed to strike a similitude even of a gnat, or aught above it. As for the believers, they know it is the truth from their Lord; but as for unbelievers, they say, 'What did God desire by this for a similitude?' Thereby He leads many astray, and thereby He guides</p> | <p>Why, God is not ashamed to set forth a parable of a gnat, or anything beyond; and as for those who believe, they know that it is truth from the Lord; but as for those who disbelieve, they say, 'What is it that God means by this as a parable? He leads astray</p> | <p>Lo! Allah disdaineth not to coin the similitude even of a gnat. Those who believe know that it is the truth from their Lord; but those who disbelieve say: What doth Allah wish (to teach) by such a similitude? He misleadeth many thereby, and He</p> | <p>God disdains not to use The similitude of things, Lowest as well as highest. Those who believe know That it is truth from their Lord; But those who reject Faith say":What means God by this similitude? " By it He causes many to stray, And many He leads</p> |

... continue table (4)

| Verse | Arberry | Palmer | Pickthall | Yusuf Ali |
|-------|---|--|---|---|
| | many; and thereby He leads none astray save the ungodly [27] such as break the covenant of God after its solemn binding, and such as cut what God has commanded should be joined, and such as do corruption in the land - - they shall be the losers. | many and He guides many; '-- but He leads astray only the evildoers; [27] who break God's covenant after the fixing thereof, and cut asunder what God has ordered to be joined, and do evil in the earth; -- these it is who lose. | guideth many thereby; and He misleadeth thereby only miscreants; [27] Those who break the covenant of Allah after ratifying it, and sever that which Allah ordered to be joined, and (who) make mischief in the earth: Those are they who are the losers. | into the right path; But He causes not to stray, Except those who forsake (the path)—, [27] Those who break God's Covenant After it is ratified, And who sunder what God Has ordered to be joined, And do mischief on earth: These cause loss (only) to themselves. |

Chiasmus of six meanings

In this type, six meanings are contrasted respectively; it takes the form of ABDCEF → FECDBA. An example from classical Arabic poetry is

على رأس عبد تاج عز يزينه وفي رجل خُر قيد ذل يشينه

[An almighty crown adorns a slave's head and a shackle in a nobleman's leg blemishes him].

The poet contrasts the following meanings: (1) ‘on’ – ‘in’, (2) ‘head’- ‘leg’, (3) ‘slave’- ‘freeman’, (4) ‘crown’- ‘shackle’, (5) ‘proud’- ‘humble’, (6) ‘embellish’- ‘blemish’. Askaki adopts an approach in chiasmus, which mentions the words and their antonyms (Fayud, 1998). This type is more favorable for the aesthetic of structure and meaning. Example (1) below is not common in the Quran; the chiasms here are (1) ‘Faces on that day humbled’ and ‘Faces on that day jocund’; (2) ‘laboring’ and ‘comfortable’; (3) ‘shall broil upon a burning fire’ and ‘in a sublime Garden’; (4) ‘watered at a boiling fountain’ and ‘wherein is a flowing fountain’; (5) ‘No food for them’ and ‘in a lofty garden’; (6) ‘save bitter thorn-fruit’ and ‘wherein they shall hear no foolish word’. These verses describe the reward of believers and disbelievers in the thereafter. They also describe the Heaven and its bounties and the Hell Fire and the type of punishments that wait the disbelievers. The function of chiasms here is to warn the disbelievers and to reassure the believers. The most adequate renditions were Pickthall and Yusuf Ali as they keep the form of the ST. Also, the word ضريع/ Dhari:9/ was inadequately translated by Arberry as cactus thorn and by Palmer as foul thorn. This word means a bitter dry thorn, so Picthall and Yusuf Ali provide an adequate rendition.

Table (5): Chiasmus of six meanings.

| | Verse | Arberry | Palmer | Pickthall | Yusuf Ali |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | وَجْهٌ يُرْمَىٰ خَاشِعَةً (2) عَامِلَةٌ تَأْتِيهِ (3) نَارًا تَصْلِي نَارًا حَامِيَةً (4) تَسْقَىٰ مِنْ عَيْنٍ (5) أَيْتَةٍ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيْعٍ (6) لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا | Faces on that day humbled, laboring, toil worn, roasting at a scorching fire, 88:5 watered at a boiling fountain, no food for them but cactus thorn unfattening, | Faces on that day shall: be humble, laboring, toiling, -shall broil upon a burning fire; [5] shall be given to drink from a boiling spring! no food shall they have save from the foul | In that day (many) faces will be downcast, 3 Toiling, weary, 4 Scorched by burning fire,5 Drinking from a boiling spring,6 No food f | Some faces, that Day, Will be humiliated, 3. Labouring (hard), weary,4. The while they enter. The Blazing Fire, —5. The while they are given to drink, of a bailing hot |

... continue table (5)

| Verse | Arberry | Palmer | Pickthall | Yusuf Ali |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| بَغْيٍ مِنْ (7) جَوْعٍ وَجُوعٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ (8) تَأَعَّمَةٌ لَسَعِيهَا رَاضِيَةٌ (9) فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ (10) لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَا غِيَةً (11) فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ (12) فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَرْفُوعَةٌ (13) وَأَكْوَابٌ مَوْضُوعَةٌ (14) وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ (15) وَزُرَابِي مَثْبُوتَةٌ -2-:88 (15) | unappeasing hunger. Faces on that day jocund, with their striving well- pleased, in a sublime Garden, hearing there no babble; therein a running fountain, therein uplifted couches and goblets set forth. | thorn, which shall not fatten nor avail against hunger! Faces on that day shall be comfortable, content with their past endeavours,- -[10] in a lofty garden wherein they shall hear no foolish word; wherein is a flowing fountain; wherein are couches raised on high, and goblets set down, [15] and cushions arranged, and carpets spread! | or them save bitter thorn-fruit 7 Which doth not nourish nor release from hunger.8 In that day other faces will be calm,9 Glad for their effort past,10 In a high Garden11 Where they hear no idle speech, 12 Wherein is a gushing spring,13 Wherein are couches raised 14 And goblets set at hand 15 And cushions ranged 16 And silken carpets spread | spring.6. No food will there be for them but a bitter Dhari'7. Which will neither nourish Nor satisfy hunger. 8. (Other) faces that Day Will be joyful,9. Pleased with their striving,10. In a Garden on high,11. Where they shall hear No (word) of vanity:12. Therein will be bubbling spring:13. Therein will be Thrones(Of dignity), raised on high,14. Goblets placed (ready),15. And Cushions set in rows |

Conclusions

Chiasmus is an intriguing rhetorical feature in the Quran; it aims to emphasize certain notions and it helps the interpreters of the Quran to understand the meaning conveyed in the Quranic discourse. Chiasmus has psycholinguistic meanings in the Quran such as expressing fear, security, obedience, disobedience, and excitement and intimidation. Chiasms in the Quran usually contrast a word or an idea with its antonym. Chiasms can be classified according to number; the most common type of chiasm in the Quran is the chiasm of two meanings. All translators of the Quran rendered these chiasms literally and maintained their order as literal translation and Nida's (1964) formal approach provide an adequate translation of such magnificent rhetorical figure of speech, because they maintain the meaning, the form and effect of chiasms in English. The study recommends that the rendition of chiastic expressions should maintain the form, word order and the meaning conveyed by these expressions. Further studies are recommended to explore the psycholinguistic effects of these expressions in the Quran. Other studies may consider the structures of chiastic expressions at the morphological, syntactic and discourse levels.

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