

## PRAGMALINGUISTIC FORMS IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM QUR`AN TRANSLATION

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### Preliminaries

The universal fact that language behaves under the influence of its own culture is best demonstrated through translation studies and applied semantics. To this effect, verbatim rendering should be avoided and cultural transplantation, i.e., domestication and cultural transposition, of the source text needs to be applied. Our claim can be brought into line with Nida's (1945: 194) argument that almost all would recognize that language is best described as a part of culture when dealing with many types of semantic problems particularly those in which the culture under consideration is quite different from his or her own. For instance, the English expressions *P45* and the *Whip* (in the House of Commons) are culture-bound. Similarly, the expression *brother-in-law* loses its signification when translated literally into Arabic (*akh fi al-qaanun* – a brother in the law). While English applies this expression to the brother of your husband, the brother of your wife, the husband of your sister, the husband of your husband's sister, and the husband of your wife's sister, Arabic expresses itself differently:

akhu zawji – brother of my husband  
akhu zawjati – brother of my wife  
zawj ukhti – husband of my sister  
zawj ukht zawji – husband of my husband's sister  
zawj ukht zawjati – husband of my wife's sister.

Cultural transplantation continues to be a useful translation technique in the translation of proverbial expressions such as *la naqata li fiha wala*

*jamal* (I have nothing to do with this) while its verbatim counterpart is (neither a female camel do I have in this matter nor a male camel), which is misleading to the target text audience. Cultural transplantation can be of value to sensitive texts as in *ma yaf'alu allahu bi-<sup>c</sup>adhabikum in shakartum wa amantum?* (Q4:147), which can be domesticated to New Guinea readers, for instance, with luxuriant imagery *God does not hang up jaw bones* since this relates to their custom of hanging jaw bones of the enemies. However, in Qur'an translation, we get [What would Allah do with your punishment if you are grateful and believe?] (Saheeh International, 1997:128).

Cultural transplantation in Qur'an translation has been ruled out entirely due to the objection by Muslim scholars. Their opposition resonates with Venuti's (1995; cf. Hatim, 1998:97) claim that domestication invariably inflicts loss on source texts and cultures. Loss in translation due to the distinct pragmatic and semiotic norms of the source and target languages has also featured in Mason's (1998:181) argument. Most importantly, in Qur'an translation, schools of exegesis have to be taken into consideration. Thus, intra-language translation plays a significant role in the target text. Translating the Qur'anic text is no ordinary task due to the fact that the translation process is fraught with pragmatolinguistic and cross-cultural limitations. The Qur'an translator, for instance, ought to be aware of the cultural Muslim tradition that draws a distinction between exegesis (*tafsiir*) and hypothetical opinion (*ta'wiil*). The latter is sub-divided into commended and non-commended hypothetical opinion. According to Muslim tradition, there are 7 different modes of reading Qur'an (*al-qiraa'aat*). These different phonetic modes of reading also have a significant impact on the translation of the Qur'an. These modes are related to the articulatory phonetics of a given Qur'anic expression. Different modes of reading most likely lead to different significations. Most importantly, Arab rhetorical tradition needs to be accounted for. Culturally, Qur'anic discourse has been revered by classical and modern rhetoricians. Since the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the notion of word order and word order variations in Qur'anic genre has featured in rhetorical and linguistic research such as that by al-Jahiz who made the first allusion to this stylistic aspect of the Qur'anic text. This interest has culminated in the introduction of the fully-fledged theory of word order in the 10<sup>th</sup> century by <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani. This theory addresses the universal linguistic fact that one can generate an infinite set of sentences, with distinct pragmatic functions, from a finite set of grammatical rules (very much similar to Noam Chomsky's theory of transformational generative grammar). But, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani's theory

was exclusively for Qur'anic Arabic and attempted to unravel its unique linguistic features.

Words, for Nida (1945:196), are fundamentally symbols for features of the culture and, therefore, the words which designate the closest equivalence must be employed. More often than not, culture-specific advertisement discourse defies this thesis. In the 1990s an advert appeared in the UK with the picture of Ian Wright sitting comfortably holding a cup of Nescafe. On the right hand side of the advert, the expression 'No Substitute' appeared. How can this culturally-coded advert be rendered into Arabic for Arab consumers? The translator will be able to transfer the underlying semiotic signification of the picture of Ian Wright if she or he knows that Ian Wright is the well-known Arsenal football player who has never got substituted in any match due to his excellent skills. Having known this culture-specific fact, the intertextual jigsaw between the expression 'No Substitute' and the cup of Nescafe held by the player will be easily decoded. Thus, one would immediately understand the message the advert attempts to drive home to the audience, namely 'No Substitute for Nescafe' meaning (*la badila liqahwat al-naskafe*). Thus, familiarity with the source language (SL) culture is vital in deciphering the coded language of the source text and enable the text processor, i.e., the reader, to establish intertextuality accurately.

However, this article demonstrates that some features of culture are not represented by individual words or pictures only but rather by linguistic and phonetic features. Thus, research in cross-cultural rhetoric such as that by Hatim (1997) ought to consider the built-in cultural aspects of syntax and phonology in sensitive discourse, like the Qur'an. Qur'anic discourse is highly controversial due to its variegated pragmatolinguistic aspects. Variations in the linguistic and phonetic forms in the Qur'anic genre and their subsequent meaning change with regards to exegesis have led to serious theological differences among different Islamic schools of thought and subsequently have led to political differences among the relevant communities of these schools of law. But, this falls outside the scope of this article, and the purpose here is to focus on a sample of cases that has a serious knock-on effect on translation outcome and cross-cultural pragmatic failure that impact on intercultural communication in a world where religion is still held in high esteem by different cultures. Our discussion hinges on the thesis that different languages exhibit distinct cultures and speech acts and that Qur'anic discourse is characterised by culturally acceptable multifarious prototypical grammatical and prosodic features that are alien to the target language, English in our case. Qur'anic discourse is also characterised by linguistically similar but

stylistically distinct sentences. Thus, limits of translatability set in during the process of translating Arab culture-bound linguistic aspects to a different language and culture like English.

Our investigation lends further support to Larson's (1984:57) claim that there is seldom a complete match between languages. Because of this, it is often necessary to translate one word of the source language by several words in the receptor language in order to give the same meaning. The fact that the target language is spoken by people of a culture which is often very different from the culture of those who speak the source language will automatically make it difficult to find lexical equivalents. The lexical mismatch will make it necessary for the translator to make many adjustments in the process of translation (ibid.:153). This indicates that, in translation, we often encounter source language lexical items that do not correspond semantically and grammatically to target language expressions.

The semantic relations between the words of different languages have no one-to-one sets of correspondences or even one-to-many sets. The relations are always many-to-many, with plenty of scope for ambiguities, obscurities, and 'fuzzy' boundaries. (Nida, 1994:147)

Although the gist of the sentences that involve one of the pragma-linguistic aspects of Qur'anic Arabic is possible to render into the target language, the target text is far from accurate in terms of empathy with the source text, and most importantly the intentionality of the source text producer whose pragmatic purpose is undermined. Hence, the source text goal has not been delivered and cross-cultural failure occurs. The translation between two linguistically and culturally incongruous languages such Arabic and English has a considerable amount of limitations pertaining the underlying meaning of the source text, the Qur'an. Qur'anic Arabic is a genre in its own right whose culture-bound rhetorico-linguistic norms may be alien to other European languages. So, how much room do translators have to manoeuvre and negotiate their culture-bound pragmalinguistic problems in such a sensitive and culturally unique genre?

### **Culture-specific linguistic features in the Translation of the Qur`an.**

There are prototypical grammatical shifts forced on the translation between Arabic and other languages, such as English. According to House (1973:166), translation of intra-linguistic variation is severely curbed because

each language is unique in its diversification. It is usually quite impossible to render these variations in a satisfactory manner. On the level of inter-lingual translation, Jakobson (1966:233) claims that there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code-units, while messages may serve as adequate interpretations of alien code-units or messages. Cross-cultural translation problems are manifest in the following pragmalinguistic aspects of translating Qur'anic genre.

### ***Grammatical Shift***

Qur'anic Arabic is characterised by shift in person, number, tense, and voice. Culturally, for Arab rhetoricians, shift in Qur'anic discourse is a linguistic ornament whose pragmatic function is to achieve vividness and avoid monotony in style. For Arab linguists, shift is employed to colour Qur'anic discourse (ʿAbd al-Salam, 1982:158); it is, therefore, a culturally unique rhetorical feature in Arabic. English, however, does not tolerate this Arabic pragmalinguistic norm, as in:

man yaʿsi allaha warasulahu faʿinna lahu nara jahannama khalidina  
fiha abadan)

[Whoever disobeys God and His Messenger, then indeed, for him is the fire of hell, and they will abide therein forever. Q72:23] (Saheeh International, 1997:834)

Here we have a shift from the third person singular pronoun (*-hu* - him) in (*lahu* – to him) to the third person plural pronoun (*hum* - they), which is implicit in the word (*khalidina* – [they] to abide forever).

Shift in person also occurs in a series of consecutive sentences, as in:

alam tara ila rabbika kaifa madda al-zilla walaw sha'a lajaʿalahu  
sakinan thumma jaʿalna al-shamsa ʿalaihi dalilan. thumma qabadnahu  
ilaina . . . wa huwa alldhi jaʿala . . . wa huwa alladhi arsala al-riyaha . . .  
wa anzalna min al-sama'i ma'an taturan linuhyi bihi baldatan maitan  
wa nusqihi . . . wa laqad sarrafnahu bainahum . . . wa law shi'na  
labaʿthna . . . wa huwa alldhi maraja al-bahraini . . . wa jaʿala  
bainahuma . . . wa huwa alldhi khalaqa . . . fajaʿalahu . . . wakana  
rabbuka qadiran)

[Have you not considered your Lord – how He extends the shadow, and if He willed, He could have made it stationary? Then We made the sun for it an indication. Then We hold it in hand . . . and it is He who made . . . and it is he who sends the winds . . . and We send down from the sky pure water . . . that We may bring to life thereby a dead land and give it as a drink to . . . and We have certainly distributed it among them . . . and if We had willed, We could have sent . . . and it is He who has release the two seas . . . and He placed between them . . . and it is He who has created . . . and (He) made him . . . and your Lord is ever competent. Q25: 45-54] (ibid.:497-498)

In this running text, the cultural rhetorical feature of shift is vividly demonstrated where we have a series of shifts: from the singular addressee person (*rabbuka* – your (sing.) Lord), to a third person singular pronoun (*-hu* – he), to third person plural (*-na* – we), to third person plural (*-na* – we), to third person singular (*huwa* – he), to implicit third person singular (*-huwa* – he), to third person plural (*-na* – we), to third person singular (*huwa* – he), back to the singular addressee person (*rabbuka* – your Lord).

Shift also occurs in tense, as in:

allahu alldhi arsala al-riyaha fatuthiru sahaban fasuqnahu ila baldin  
maiyyitin)

[It is God who sends the winds, and they stir the clouds, and We drive them to a dead land. Q35:9] (ibid.:604)

Here we have a shift from the past tense (*arsala* - sent) to the present tense (*tuthiru* - to stir) and then to past tense (*suqna* - drove). The past tense signifies the pragmatic function of highlighting the prompt execution of an action, i.e., the immediate completion of the actions of sending the winds and driving them. The pragmatic function of shift to the present tense, however, is to signify God's omnipotence, and to create an imagery of how the clouds are formed by the winds in order to enable people to ponder this natural phenomenon (cf. al-Darwish, 1992, 8:132; al-Zamakhshari, 1995, 3:583). There is also a person shift in the same sentence (Q35:9) where we have a shift from the third person singular relative pronoun (*alldhi* – who (3<sup>rd</sup> person singular masculine) to first person plural (*nahnu* – We, the majestic plural used for *allahu* – God).

***Category Shifts.***

These shifts (cf. Catford, 1965; Munday, 2001:60) constitute a translation non-equivalence *raison d'être*. There are various category shifts in Qur'anic discourse.

***Intra-system shift:***

This takes place when we have a singular/plural lexical item in the source language that needs to be rendered to a plural/singular form so that it meets the TL norms, as in:

wamin aswafiha wa'awbariha wa'ash<sup>c</sup>ariha . . .

[ . . and out of their (rough) wool, and their soft, fury wool and their hair. . . Q16:80] (Asad, 1980:407)

Here the source language words (*aswaf* – wool, *awbar* – fury wool, *ash<sup>c</sup>ar* - hair) occur in the plural form but the target language linguistic system forces the translator to render them in the singular form.

***Class shift:***

This kind of shift takes place when a source language item, which belongs to a particular grammatical class, adopts a different grammatical class in the target text, as in:

kana aktharuhum mushrikun

[Most of them worshipped others besides God. Q30:42] (Ali, 1983:1063)

Here the noun (*mushrikun* - worshipped others besides God) has been changed in the target language to a verb plus a complement (*worshipped others besides God*) to better suit the requirements of the target language.

***Structure shift:***

This involves a change in the grammatical structure, i.e., word order, between the source language and the target language, as in:

lilladhina la yu'minuna bil-akhirati mathalu al-saw'i

[The attribute of evil applies to all who do not believe in the life to come. Q16:60] (Asad, 1980:403)

Arabic favours the foregrounding of the rhetorical element *al-musnad* (*khabar muqaddam*) represented by the preposition (*li* – to) and the relative pronoun (*alladhina* – who (plural)) to signify the pragmatic function of specification (*takhsiis*). The structure shift involves a change from the source language word order in which the subject noun phrase (*mathalu al-saw'i* - the attribute of evil) is placed sentence-finally, i.e., backgrounded. In the target language, however, this subject noun phrase is placed sentence-initially.

### *Unit shift*

These are referred to as semantic voids by Dagut (1978) where a single source language item is rendered into a phrase in the target language, which means lack of a one-item equivalent in the target language, as in (al-mawqudhah - any animal that receives a violent blow, is left to die, and then eaten without being slaughtered according to Islamic law, as in Q5:3). Arabic linguistic tradition allows the use of a feminine noun rather than a masculine or a noun in the plural form rather than the singular. Thus, it is a culture-bound feature. For instance, the employment of the feminine form for the masculine noun, such as (al-<sup>c</sup>ankabut – spider) in Q29:41, signifies weakness and pragmatically alludes to sarcasm through the employment of the masculine subject noun (al-<sup>c</sup>ankabut - spider) which is given a feminine pronoun (al-ta') which is cliticised onto the verb (ittakhadhat - (she) builds).

### *Stylistic Shift*

Culturally, stylistic shift in Qur'anic discourse is referred to by Muslim tradition as a major feature of what is known as the linguistic inimitability of Qur'anic genre. Stylistic shift is a Qur'an-specific variation that occurs at different levels of Qur'anic Arabic. These are:

#### *Stylistic shift in morphological form*

On the morphological level, a given lexical item may occur in one form but its morphologically related counterpart occurs in another sentence signalling a different signification. This is a Qur'an-specific variation on the morphological level of a given lexical item, as in:

tatanazzalu <sup>c</sup>alaihim al-mala'ikatu

[The angels will descend upon them. Q41:30]

and its counter part:

tanazzalu al-mala'ikatu

[The angels descend. Q97:4]

in which the two verbs (tatanazzalu / tanazzalu ) are given the same meaning as (to descend). This is not an accurate rendering of the intentionality of the Qur'anic text. Semantically, the verb (tatanazzalu) in Q41:30 denotes the componential feature [+ Repeated Action], i.e., an action that takes place more than once. However, the other verb (tanazzalu) in Q97:4 has the componential feature [- Repeated Action], i.e., an action takes place only once (al-Razi, 1990, 27:105).

The cultural distinctiveness of Qur'anic stylistic shift in morphological form also applies to words which are employed in one form but is de-lexicalised in the target language, i.e., the receptor language lacks the linguistic means to represent them lexically. Thus a near synonym is provided by the translator. For instance, the Qur'anic expression (yumassik) in Q7:170 is rendered through the meaning of a different lexical item (yamsuk) that is morphologically related to the first one. In fact, the verb (yumassik) has a specific semantic componential feature [+ Repetition of Action] as well as the pragmatic function of hyperbole while the target text provides the meaning (to hold fast) which lacks the underlying overtone since it neither signifies repetition nor the pragmatic feature of hyperbole. The expression (yamsuk) is a near synonym of (yumassik). Therefore, the semantic distinction shines out.

#### *Stylistic shift in function-words*

Conjunctions are language-specific and culture-bound. They signify different meanings in their linguistic contexts that cannot be captured by a linguistically and culturally incongruous target language. Function words in Qur'anic genre are not independent of cultural context. Our claim is counter to that of Newmark (1993:89), as in:

bala man aslama wajhahu lillahi wahuwa muhsinun . .  
waman yuslimu wajhahu ila allahi wahu muhsinun . .

[Yes, whoever submits his whole self to God and is a doer of good . . . Q2:112]  
 [Yes, whoever submits his whole self to God and is a doer of good . . . Q31:22]  
 (Ali, 1983:1086)

Here we have a shift from (li - to) cliticised onto the noun (lillahi - to God) in Q2:112 to the preposition (ila - to) in Q31:22. This language-specific variation is not without a good pragmatic reason since it is context-sensitive. The use of the preposition (li) in Q2:112 is dependent on the context of situation represented by the previous sentence Q2:111 in which some people have made a false claim. To rebut the opponents' claim and substantiate the text producer's thesis, the preposition (li) is employed. Semantically, this preposition designates [+ Total Surrender]. Thus, it is a semantic requirement to highlight a higher spiritual status than the other preposition (ila) which does not reflect the same signification. However, the context of situation is different for Q31:22. This speech act refers to people who claim that they follow what their fathers and forefathers had been worshipping of idols; thus, the preposition (ila) is employed. The other semantic distinction between these two prepositions is that (li) is used for specificity while (ila) is employed to designate an end, i.e., to gain something which has not been achieved.

Qur'an-bound cohesive devices represent an interesting case for cross-cultural failure in translation studies. They are culture-specific, semantically oriented, and illusive for the target language, as in:

waman azlamu mimman dhukkira bi'ayati rabbihi fa'a<sup>c</sup>rada <sup>c</sup>anha

[Who is more unjust than one who is reminded of the verses of his Lord but turns away from them? Q18:57]

waman azlamu mimman dhukkira bi'ayati rabbihi thumma a<sup>c</sup>rada  
<sup>c</sup>anha

[Who is more unjust than one who is reminded of the verses of his Lord; then he turns away from them? Q32:22] (Saheeh International, 1997:400, 576)

The stylistic variation lies in the shift from the conjunctive element (fa) which is rendered as (but) in Q18:57 to (thumma) which is rendered as (then) in Q32:22. These two conjunctions have different semantic significations. The context of situation in Q18:57 refers to people who are still living. Although

they are frequently reminded about the signs of God, they have immediately forgotten about the admonition and persist with their arrogance. Thus, the particle (fa) is required since it signifies an immediate action and a short span of time. However, the context of situation of Q32:22 refers to the dead as we are told by Q32:12. Because those people died a long time ago, the span of time is, therefore, longer. Those people were also reminded about God's signs but ignored them and now it is too late for them. Thus, the conjunctive element (thumma) is employed.

*Stylistic shift in affirmation tools*

Qur'anic discourse effectively employs stress particles (single or double particles) as a stylistic mechanism. This is a deeply-rooted stylistic technique and a prototypical feature of Arabic rhetoric encountered in argumentative Qur'anic discourse. The major pragmatic functions of Arabic affirmation particles are rebuttal of opponent's thesis and substantiation of own argument. An interesting example of Qur'anic double-barrel affirmation which is relinquished in the target language is:

inna kathiran minhum ba<sup>ʿ</sup>da dhalika fi al-ardi lamusrifun

[Then indeed many of them, after that, throughout the land, were transgressors. Q5:32] (Saheeh International, 1997:142)

Here the two stylistic particles (inna) and (la, which is cliticised onto the active participle (musrifun - transgressors)) which are effectively employed for the communicative purpose of affirmation have been relinquished in the target text because they do not constitute as part of its stylistic norms. The source language stylistic means as well as its semantic associations cannot be captured by the target language. Culturally, Arabic draws on its stylistic mechanism of stress to highlight, affirm a given proposition, and achieve the text producer's intended goal. Single-particle stress, such as the use of emphatic (inna) or double-particle stress, such as (inna) plus the (la, which is referred to as 'lam al-tawkid' – the 'la' of affirmation), is used in the predicate part of the sentence. To defend or counter an argument, Qur'anic discourse uniquely employs the stylistic means of double-particle stress. Traditionally, Arab rhetoricians believe that the employment of double-particle stress in a statement equals saying the same statement three times (cf. al-Jurjani, 1984:304; al-Hilali, 1986:37). Therefore, the signification of a single-particle stress is culturally distinct from that of a double-particle stress. The

employment of Arabic affirmation tools is an interesting case of cross-cultural rhetoric. In Arabic, the text producer takes into consideration the psychological state of mind of his or her text receiver. If we, as text producers, know that our reader is a denier (*munkir*) and disbelieves our argument outright, rhetorically we ought to employ more than one affirmation particles. Culturally, Arabic adopts this stylistic technique when there is a yawning ideological gap between the text producer and the text receiver. This cross-cultural rhetorical distinction is vividly demonstrated by:

inna ilaikum lamursalun

[We are messengers to you, Q36:16] (Saheeh International, 1997:612)

Here we have two affirmation particles (*inna*) and the (*la*) which are not captured by the target language. One may wonder why Q36:14 (*inna ilaikum mursalun* - we are messengers to you) employs one affirmation tool (*inna*) only. The reason lies in the fact that there was a debate in the first century of the Christian era between the people of Antioch (*antakiya*) in North Syria who were worshipping idols and their three Prophets, *Sadiq*, *Saduq*, and *Shlom*, who had a divine message admonishing people to abandon the practice of idol worshipping and replace by worshipping God alone. However, the people of Antioch were in doubt about the credentials of these three Prophets and denied their message (Ibn Kathir, 1993, 3:544, Ali, 1983:1172). Thus, to register their opposition firmly, the people of Antioch employ (*ma . . . illa* – nothing . . . but) which are restriction particles (*adawat qasr*) used as argumentative stylistic tools of denial. Thus, we read their proposition: (*ma antum illa basharun mithluna wa ma anzala al-rahmanu min shai'in in antum illa takdhibun* – you are not but human beings like us, and the Most Merciful has not revealed a thing. You are only telling lies, Q36:15). It is interesting to note the loss of the restriction particles of denial in the last part of the statement. Since Q36:14 is the first encounter in the debate between the three Prophets and their people, the speaker, i.e., the three Prophets, employ one affirmation particle (*inna*). However, when the people of Antioch reject the Prophets' argument outright, the Prophets employ double-barrel affirmation in Q36:16 as a means to rebut their opponents' thesis.

## Conclusion

The constraints involved in cross-cultural communication involve not only diverse linguistic and contextual norms but also acquaintance with the cultural context enveloping the source language genre. The Qur'anic examples investigated above have proved that translation is simulation (pretending to be what one isn't), and in interference the disguise shines through (Newmark, 1993:80). The grammatical norms and prosodic features are language as well as culture-specific. These examples also represent voids that cannot be captured by the target language linguistic or phonetic systems. Although the sensitive source text can be satisfactorily rendered into the target language by grammatical transposition (Dickins *et al*, 2002), this translation approach is more appropriate for other genres of modern standard Arabic than the classical Arabic of the Qur'an. Newmark (1988:129) refers to grammatical gaps (*ibid.*:129). His approach, however, may be of little assistance to the translation of a sensitive text from classical Arabic into modern English. Newmark claims that there is a syntactic compulsion to fill in the grammatical gap and that the translator would have to supply some details if they are lacking in the source language text. (*ibid.*:130). This may be a successful translation approach between Indo-European languages but cannot be applied to linguistically and culturally incongruous languages such as Arabic and English. An effective translation of sensitive or non-sensitive texts should meet 5 criteria:

- i) fidelity to the source text meaning in order to preserve source text intentionality, text goal and communicative function,
- ii) intelligibility in order to achieve acceptability of the target text by the target language readers,
- iii) naturalness of the target text, i.e., to rid the target text of any smell of foreignness,
- iv) conformity to target language grammatical norms to achieve cohesion and structural harmony, and
- v) conformity to source text type to preserve source language genre.

According to Nida (1945:194), the person who is engaged in translating from one language into another ought to be constantly aware of the contrast in the entire range of culture represented by the two languages. However, the 'entire range of culture,' which Nida is referring to, has missed out the culture of sensitive texts whose pragmalinguistic conventions are also culture-specific and often the most perplexing. Pragmalinguistic norms are usually shaped by

those of the target culture. Equivalence, therefore, should not be looked at as an uncomfortable straitjacket. Non-equivalence in Qur'an translation stems mainly from the yawning pragmatic and contextual divides between the source language and the target language. The translation of culture-specific pragmalinguistic forms may not produce the desired illocutionary (to use Hickey's term 1998) equivalence.

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