

The Translation of Pronouns in the Glorious Qur'an into English

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Abstract:

This research investigates the translation of pronouns in the Glorious Qur'an into English. Based on the Qur'anic interpretations, the research tries to examine how translators of the Glorious Qur'an deal with pronouns and their antecedents by checking the accuracy of their renderings. It is found that pronouns are given little attention on the part of translators. Hence, revising translations, as far as pronouns are concerned, is strongly recommended.

ترجمة الضمائر في القرآن الكريم الى الانكليزية

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ملخص البحث:

يستقصي هذا البحث ترجمة الضمائر في القرآن الكريم الى اللغة الانكليزية، ويحاول البحث - مستنداً الى التفاسير القرآنية - دراسة كيفية تعامل مترجمي القرآن الكريم مع الضمائر والأسماء التي تشير إليها وذلك بالتحقق من مدى دقة ترجماتهم . وقد تبين بأن المترجمين لم يعيروا الضمائر الاهتمام اللازم ، ولذلك يؤكد البحث على الإيحاء بتتقيح هذه الترجمات على قدر تعلق الأمر بالضمائر.

1.1 Introduction

Pronouns are one of the parts of speech in both Arabic and English. Each language has its own pronoun system, a matter that definitely constitutes inaccuracy in translating pronouns from Arabic into English. The pronoun "you", for example, can refer to singular and plural whether masculine or feminine, whereas in Arabic we use "أَنْتَ", "أَنْتِ", "أَنْتُمْ", "أَنْتُنَّ", and "أَنْتَنَّ" to refer to singular, dual, plural, masculine, and feminine.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As far as the Qur'anic verses are concerned, pronouns are one of the problematic areas that confront the translator of the Qur'an. Since pronouns are problematic in the Source Language verses, they are unquestionably problematic in the Target Language verses, and here comes the role of the translator who should take into consideration the clever manipulation of this area of grammar when dealing correctly with pronouns and their references.

1.3 Aims of the Research

This research attempts to study how translators deal with pronouns in translating the Glorious Qur'an into English. Based on the Qur'anic interpretations this research aims at clarifying and disambiguating verses as far as pronouns and their references are concerned.

1.4 Hypothesis

The research hypothesizes that failing to accurately determine pronouns and their antecedents in the Qur'anic verses lead to serious mistakes and erroneous renderings in the TL.

1.5 Procedure and Data Collection

The following procedure in analyzing pronouns and their references will be carried out:

- 1- Selecting different verses from different suras of the Glorious Qur'an, comprising (12) samples, that appear to have some ambiguities in the pronouns and their references.
- 2- Presenting the interpretations for the selected verses in order to disambiguate them, as far as pronouns and their references are concerned.
- 3- Taking (5) translations for each of the selected verses.
- 4- Analyzing the English renderings of the selected verses, based on the interpretations mentioned in (2).
- 5- Suggesting a new translation in the light of the analyses achieved.

2. Pronouns in English:

In this section we will give some account of the definition, classification, case, and reference of pronouns in English.

2.1 Definitions of Pronouns:

Eckersley (1966:25) defines a pronoun as a word that stands for a noun. Silva (1998:12) writes that pronouns serve to replace a freestanding noun or a noun phrase, typically when the original word or phrase must be repeated in a sentence or paragraph. Eggenschwiler & Biggs (2001:27) define a pronoun as the part of speech that can be used to replace a noun; it allows flexibility in writing and without pronouns writing and speech would sound unnatural and boring. Crystal (2003:376) defines a pronoun as the term used in the grammatical classification of words, referring to the closed set of items which can be used to substitute for a noun phrase

or a single noun. Rozakis (2003:9) defines a pronoun as a word which is used in place of a noun or another pronoun; it gets its meaning from the noun it stands for. The noun is called the antecedent. He adds that pronouns help to avoid unnecessary repetition in writing and speech. Kroeger (2005:136) talks about a pronoun as a special kind of noun phrase, its syntactic distribution is (in many languages) similar to that of proper names, but semantically there is an important difference between the two. The reference (or semantic interpretation) of pronouns, however, is not fixed. It depends very much on the context of use, i.e. who is speaking to whom on what occasion, what has already been said, etc., whereas a proper name refers to a specific individual.

2.2 Classification of Pronouns:

Pronouns in English have a rather fixed classification. Different scholars have presented almost the same pronoun categories; however, we may give some of their classifications. Eckersley (1966:25) puts pronouns into nine types:

- 1- Personal Pronouns.
- 2- Possessive Pronouns.
- 3- Demonstrative Pronouns.
- 4- Relative Pronouns.
- 5- Reflexive Pronouns.
- 6- Interrogative Pronouns.
- 7- Distributive Pronouns.
- 8- Indefinite Pronouns.
- 9- Emphasizing Pronouns.

Eggenchwiler & Biggs (2001:28) divide pronouns into groups based on the purpose they serve. These groups are:

- 1- Personal Pronouns: they stand for one or more persons or things, such as: I, me, he, she, it, etc.
- 2- Reflexive or Intensive Pronouns: they combine some of the personal pronouns with –self or –selves, such as: myself, themselves, etc.
- 3- Demonstrative Pronouns: they single out what you are talking about, they include this, that, these, and those.
- 4- Relative Pronouns: they introduce clauses that describe nouns or pronouns, these are who, whom, which, and that.
- 5- Interrogative Pronouns: they introduce questions, such as: who, whom, whose, which, and what.
- 6- Indefinite Pronouns: they do not specify the persons or things they refer to. The most frequently used indefinite pronouns are all, any, anybody, anyone, both, either, everybody, everyone, few, many, neither, nobody, none, no one, several, some, somebody, and someone.

With somewhat varying terminologies among grammarians Crystal (2003:376) says that pronouns can be placed into eight categories:

- 1- Personal Pronouns: I, you, etc. in their variant forms.
- 2- Possessive Pronouns: my, mine, etc.
- 3- Demonstrative Pronouns: this, that, these, and those.
- 4- Interrogative Pronouns: certain uses of who, which, and what.
- 5- Reflexive Pronoun: myself, yourself, etc.
- 6- Indefinite Pronouns: anyone, anybody, etc.
- 7- Relative Pronouns: who, whom, that, which, and whose.
- 8- Resumptive or Shadow Pronouns: as the pronoun *him* in *John I like him*.

2.3 Pronoun Case:

Eggenchwiler & Biggs (2001:29-30) point out that there are three cases for a pronoun: nominative, objective, and possessive. A pronoun case refers to the way a pronoun is used in a sentence. The pronoun is called subjective when it comes as the subject of a verb. If the pronoun comes as an object of a verb or a preposition, then it is called an objective pronoun. When a pronoun possesses something, it is called possessive pronoun.

Rozakis (2003:79) also puts pronouns in three cases: nominative pronoun as subject, objective pronoun as object, and possessive pronoun to show ownership. This is shown in the following table:

Subjective	Objective	Possessive
I	me	my, mine
you	you	your, yours
he	him	his
she	her	her, hers
it	it	its
we	us	our, ours
They	them	their, theirs
who	whom	whose
whoever	whomever	whoever

(Pronoun Case)

2.4 Pronoun Reference:

Talking about personal pronouns Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985:347-351) say that these pronouns may have situational anaphoric or cataphoric reference. However, the latter occurs less frequently and under limited conditions. The following sentences show respectively anaphoric and cataphoric references:

[1] *We have an excellent **museum** here. Would you like to visit **it** ?*

[2] *Melville well knew that to the men who sailed in **her**, a **whaler** was anything but a pleasant boat.*

In sentence [1] the pronoun *it* refers anaphorically to the *museum*, whereas in sentence [2] the pronoun *her* refers cataphorically to the *whaler*.

Eggenschwiler & Biggs (2001:36-37) write that pronouns always refer to the noun they represent which is called their antecedent, and in order to avoid confusion in writing relating pronouns to nouns has to be understood. They add that more errors occur when too general or indefinite pronoun reference is used. Look at the following example:

*I told Uncle Richard, Aunt Gretchen, and then Father,
which infuriated Gray.*

Did telling all three people infuriate Gray, or was it only telling Father?

In order to make the meaning clear, they suggest rewriting the sentence to be as follows:

*First I told Uncle Richard and Aunt Gretchen. Then I told Father,
which infuriated Gary.*

Or to be:

*My telling Uncle Richard, Aunt Gretchen, and then Father
infuriated Gary.*

Rozakis (2003:24) argues that carelessly placed pronouns can create unintentionally funny sentences as well as confusing ones. He gives the following two sentences as example:

[1] *Last week, a wart appeared on my right thumb, and I want it removed.*

(Are you removing the wart or the thumb?)

[2] *Guilt and unkindness can be emotionally destructive to you and your friends. You must get rid of them.*

(Are you getting rid of the guilt or your friends?)

In order to prevent pronoun confusion, Rozakis (ibid.) suggests three conditions:

- 1- A pronoun must clearly refer to a single antecedent.
- 2- A pronoun must be placed close to its antecedent.
- 3- A pronoun must refer to a definite antecedent.

Benner (2000) discusses three major errors of pronoun reference and the ways to correct them. These errors are:

1- Too Many Antecedents

A pronoun should have only one antecedent, which must be clear and unmistakable. Look at the following sentence:

Take the radio out of the car and fix it.

He suggests two ways to correct this error:

Take the radio out of the car and fix the radio.

or

Take the radio out of the car and fix the car.

2- Hidden Antecedents

Functioning as an adjective rather than a noun, the pronoun antecedent causes faultiness or vagueness in pronoun reference. In this case the true antecedent is "hidden" or obscured from the reader because it has been subordinated to another noun. Look at this sentence:

*The candy dish was empty, but we were tired of eating **it** anyway.*

It might be thought that the dish was being eaten since dish appears to be the antecedent for the pronoun *it*. As people do not eat dishes, what is meant here is, "*We were tired of eating **candy**.*" Since only nouns can be antecedents, *candy* cannot be the antecedent for the pronoun *it* because *candy* is acting here like an adjective. This error can be repaired by substituting the appropriate noun for the pronoun *it*. Another suggestion to repair this sentence is to put it like the following: *We were tired of eating the **candy**; however, the **candy dish** was empty.*

3- No Antecedent at all

Vague pronoun reference also occurs when writers use a pronoun without giving it any antecedent at all. Look at the following example:

*The witness called the television station, but **they** didn't answer.*

In this sentence the identity is unknown because the pronoun "**they**" has no antecedent. This error can be repaired by changing the pronoun, which has no antecedent, into a noun.

*The witness called the television station, but **the reporters** didn't answer.*

or

*The witness called the **television reporters**, but **they** didn't answer.*

Wittgenstein (2008) tackles other cases which constitute problems in pronoun reference. These problems occur when the antecedent of the pronoun is unclear or ambiguous. Such cases are:

1- Distant Pronoun Reference:

Distant pronoun antecedent makes the reader lose the connection between the two. Look at the following example:

Wrong: *The worst part of the soccer match occurred when the Argentineans slowed the play down to almost a stand-still by not going on the attack. Even the announcer lost interest and started talking about tomorrow's schedule. I don't think such a match will help promote the sport of soccer in North America. They should know that tight defensive play frustrates fans.*

(Here we have too much material that separates the pronoun and the antecedent.)

Corrected: *The worst part of the soccer match occurred when the Argentineans slowed the play down to almost a stand-still by not going on the attack. Even the announcer lost interest and started talking about tomorrow's schedule. I don't think such a*

match will help promote the sport of soccer in North America. The Argentineans should know that tight defensive play frustrates fans.

2- Using a Pronoun to Refer to a Possessive or an Adjective:

It is not allowed for the antecedent to be a noun in the possessive form, unless the pronoun takes a possessive form likewise. Look at the following examples:

Wrong: *The hockey player's goal in the Canada Cup brought him everlasting fame.*

(The pronoun him is not possessive. Thus it cannot refer to the possessive "hockey player's".)

Corrected: *The hockey player became famous because of his goal.*

An adjective cannot be an antecedent. Thus a pronoun cannot refer to an adjective.

Wrong: *Joe has an inexhaustible appetite for studying historical documents. That will be his major in university.*

Corrected: *Joe has an inexhaustible appetite for studying historical documents. History will be his major in university.*

2.5 Pronouns in Arabic

Al-Afghani (UD:92) states that the pronoun in Arabic is put under the definite nouns " المعارف ". Pronouns are divided into two types: explicit " صريح " which is pronounced such as the two pronouns " نا " and " ت " in " أنا كتبتُ ", " I wrote ", and implicit " مستتر " which is not

pronounced, but counted, such as the subject of the verb "يجتهد" which is the implicit pronoun "هو" to mean "يجتهد هو", "he works hard". Explicit pronouns are divided into attached "متصلة" and detached "منفصلة".

Attached pronouns are of three types according to their case:

- 1- Pronouns in the nominative case "حالة الرفع" only: these are "تاء الخطاب" as in "أكرموا" as in "واو الجماعة" as in "قمتين, قمتيما, قمتي...etc.", "you stood up", "أكرم من ضيوفكم", "honor your guests", "نون النسوة" as in "أكرمن ضيوفكن", "honor your guests", "ياء المخاطبة" as in "أحسني الى الفقير", "be charitable to the poor", and "ألف التثنية" as in "أكتبنا الدرس", "write the lesson".
- 2- Pronouns common in both accusative "حالة النصب" and genitive cases "حالة الجر": these are "ياء المتكلم" as in "ربي أكرمني", "my God honored me", "كاف الخطاب" as in the Quranic verse "ماودعك ربك وما قلى" (Al-Duha,3), "Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee, nor is He displeased", and "هاء الغيبة" as in "كافأهم على أعمالهم", "he rewarded them on their deeds".
- 3- Pronoun common in the three cases, the nominative "حالة الرفع", the accusative "حالة النصب", and the genitive "حالة الجر": this pronoun is "نا" as in the Quranic verse "ربنا إننا سمعنا", (Aal-Imran,193) "Our Lord! Lo! we have heard".

Hasan (UD:234) states that detached pronouns come under two cases:

- 1- Nominative Case: the first person "أنا" for the singular and "نحن" for the plural, the second person "أنت", "أنتِ" for singular, "أنتم", "أنتمن" for plural, and the third person "هو", "هي" for singular, "هما" for dual, "هم", and "هنن" for plural.
- 2- Accusative Case: the first person "إياي" for singular and "إيانا" for plural, the second person "إياك", "إياكِ" for singular, "إياكما" for dual, "إياكم", "إياكنن" for plural, the third person "إياه" and "إياها" for singular, "إياهما" for dual, "إياهم" and "إياهنن" for plural.

3. Text Analysis

In this section we will tackle three cases in which pronouns in the SL verses are unclear, and thus vaguely rendered, or even mistranslated.

In this research five translations of the Glorious Qur'an are taken in order to analyze the way translators have rendered the Qur'anic verses that contain unclear or confusing pronouns. The translations chosen are those of Pickthall (1930), Daryabadi (1957), Ali (1984), Ahmed & Ahmed (1995), and Qaribullah & Darwish (2001).

3.1 Pronouns with Confusing Antecedents:

SL (1):

{وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ} (٤٥) سورة البقرة

Pickthall (1930)

Seek help in patience and prayer; and truly it is hard save for the humble-minded.

Daryabadi (1957)

And seek help in patience and prayer and verily it is hard except prayer unto the meek.

Ali (1984)

Find strength in fortitude and prayer, which is heavy and exacting but for those who are humble and meek.

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

And seek support with the patience and the prayers and that it truly is a great burden except on the humble.

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

And seek help in patience and prayer. For it is heavy, except to the humble.

Discussion:

The attached pronoun "ها" in "إنها" apparently refers to its nearest antecedent, i.e. the prayer "الصلاة", however, Al-Baghawi (1997:89) and Al-Qurtubi (UD:373) say that the pronoun "ها" refers back to both the prayer and the patience "الصبر". Abilsu'ood (UD:98) suggests that "ها" refers to "الاستعانة" from "واستعينوا". The translation of Ali (1984) is appropriate since *which* refers to finding strength in both fortitude and prayer. The other translators use the pronoun *it* which refers to prayer only being its closest antecedent.

SL (2):

{يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ لِيَرْضَوْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ} (٦٢) سورة التوبة

Pickthall (1930)

They swear by Allah to you (Muslims) to please you, but Allah, with His messenger, hath more right that they should please Him if they are believers.

Daryabadi (1957)

They swear unto you by Allah that ye be pleased, whereas worthier are Allah and His apostle that they should please Him, if they be believers indeed.

Ali (1984)

They swear by God to please you; but if they are believers it would have been worthier to have pleased God and His Apostle.

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

They swear/take oath by God for you, to please/satisfy you, and God and His messenger (are) more worthy/deserving (that) they please/satisfy Him, if they were believing.

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

They swear in the Name of Allah in order to please you. But it is more just that they should please Allah and His Messenger if they are believers.

Discussion:

The attached pronoun " هـ " in " يُرْضُوهُ " apparently refers back to its closest antecedent " رَسُوْلُهُ ". In there interpretations, both Al-Sa'di (2000:342) and Al-Siyoti (2005:450) say that the attached pronoun " هـ " refers to Allah and His Messenger Muhammad (P.B.U.H). On this basis

we can say that Ali (1984) and Qaribullah & Darwish (2001) seem to have appropriately rendered this pronoun. The other translations are inaccurate.

SL (3):

{وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ * ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ} (سورة

المؤمنون

Pickthall (1930)

Verily We created man from a product of wet earth; (*) Then placed him as a drop (of seed) in a safe lodging;

Daryabadi (1957)

And assuredly We created man of an extract of clay. (*) Thereafter We made him of a Sperm In a receptacle safe.

Ali (1984)

We created man from the finest extract of clay, (*) Then We placed him as a sperm in a firmly established lodging;

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

And We had created the human from (a) descendent/gene/extract (*) Then We created/made him a drop/male's or female's secretion in (a) firm/established bottom.

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

We created the human from an essence of clay: (*) then We made him, a drop, in a secure receptacle (the womb).

Discussion:

The attached pronoun " هـ " in " جعلناه " refers back to Adam's offspring and not to Adam himself (Al-Mahalli and Al-Siyoti, UD:446; Al-Baydhawi UD:148/4; and Al-Qurtubi UD:202/2). All translators, as

shown above, have failed to appropriately render this pronoun and to show its correct antecedent. The above translations have to be revised by replacing the pronoun " *him* " by "*his offspring*" and adding (Adam) after "man/human".

SL (4):

{وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ} (سورة هود ٧٧)

Pickthall (1930)

And when Our messengers came unto Lot, he was distressed and knew not how to protect them. He said: This is a distressful day.

Daryabadi (1957)

And when Our messengers came unto Lut, he was distressed on their account, and he felt straitened on their account, and he said : this is a lay dreadful.

Ali (1984)

So when Our angels came to Lot, he grieved for them, and felt powerless to help them, and said: "This is a day of sorrow.

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

And when Our messengers came (to) Lot, he felt bad/evil/harm because of them and he was impatient with them (became uptight), and he said: "This (is a) very hot (difficult) day."

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

And when Our messengers came to Lot, he was troubled and distressed for them, and said: 'This is a harsh day' .

Discussion:

Al- Siyoti (2005:451) says that according to Ibn Abbas, the prominent Quran interpreter, the attached pronouns "هم" in "سِيَاءَ بِهِمْ" and "هم" in "وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذُرْعًا" do not refer to the same antecedent, i.e. "Our messengers" "رُسُلْنَا". The first pronoun refers to Lot's people and the second one refers to Lot's guests, i.e. Alla's messengers who were sent to destroy Lot's people. All translators use the pronoun "them", except for Daryabadi (1957) who uses "their account". However, it seems that the antecedent in all the renderings is the same for the two pronouns, which is the "messengers". The following translation is suggested:

"And when Our messengers came to Lot, he was distressed (for his people) and experienced hardship (with the messengers)".

SL (5):

{سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةً رَّابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةً سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةً وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُل رَّبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا} {سورة الكهف (٢٢)}

Pickthall (1930)

(Some) will say: They were three, their dog the fourth, and (some) say: Five, their dog the sixth, guessing at random; and (some) say: Seven, and their dog the eighth. Say (O Muhammad): My Lord is best aware of their number. None knoweth them save a few. So contend not concerning them except with an outward contending, and ask not any of them to pronounce concerning them.

Daryabadi (1957)

Anon they will say: they were three the fourth of them their dog. And they will say: they were five, the sixth of them their dog -- guessing at

the unknown --and they will say: they were seven, the eighth of them their dog. Say thou: my Lord is the Best Knower of their number; there knew them only a few; so debate thou not regarding them except an outward debating, and ask not regarding them anyone of them.

Ali (1984)

Some will say: "They were three, and their dog was the fourth;" and some will also say: "They were five and their dog was the sixth," -- guessing in the dark. And some will even say: "They were seven, and their dog the eighth." Say: "My Lord alone knows best their number; none but only a few know of them." So do not argue about it with them but lightly, and do not enquire about them from any one of them.

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

They will say: "Three, their fourth (is) their dog." And they say: "Five, their sixth (is) their dog." An unsubstantiated guess with the unseen/absent, and they say: "Seven and their eighth (is) their dog." Say: "My Lord (is) more knowledgeable with (of) their number, none knows them except few/little, so do not argue/discuss in (about) them, except apparent/visible argument/discussion, and do not take (an) opinion/a clarification (of) anyone from them in (about) them."

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

Some will say: 'They were three; their dog was the fourth ' . Others, guessing at the Unseen, will say: 'They were five and their dog was the sixth. 'And yet others: 'Seven; their dog was the eighth. 'Say: 'My Lord knows best their number. Except for a few none know their number ' . Therefore, do not dispute with them except in outward disputation, and do not ask any of them concerning them.

Discussion:

The attached pronouns "هم" in " وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ " and "هم" in " مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا " do not refer to the same antecedent. The first pronoun refers to the People of the Cave, whereas the second refers to the People of the Scripture (Al-Siyoti, 2005:451; Al-Thaalibi, UD:376/2); and Al-Khazin, 1979:207/4). Thus, the following translation is suggested:

" . . . and do not consult about them (the people of the Cave) from them (the people of the Scripture) anybody."

SL (6):

{مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ (١٩) بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ (٢٠) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (٢١) يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ} (٢٢) سورة الرحمن

Pickthall (1930)

There cometh forth from both of them the pearl and coral stone.

Daryabadi (1957)

There come forth from the twain the pearl and the coral.

Ali (1984)

Out of them come pearls and coral.

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

The pearls and the corals emerge from them.

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

Pearls and corals come from both.

Discussion:

Al-Siyoti (2005:450), Al-Zarkashi (2006:497), and Al-Andalusi (2001:144/8) state that in these verses two seas are mentioned, what is meant by the first one is a river with fresh water, whereas the second one

is salty, which represents the sea. The attached pronoun "هما" in "يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا" does not refer to the two seas "الْبَحْرَيْنِ" in "مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ", yet it refers to one of them, which is the salty one. Scientifically speaking, pearl and coral do not come from sweet waters yet from the seas. The following translation is suggested: "Out of one of them come out pearls and coral".

SL (7):

لَيَأْتِيَنَّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْأَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لَيَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

(٣٤) سورة التوبة

Pickthall (1930)

O ye, who believe! Lo! many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks devour the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar (men) from the way of Allah. They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom.

Daryabadi (1957)

O Ye who believe! verily many of the priests and the monks devour the substances of men in falsehood and hinder People from the way of Allah. And those who treasure up gold and silver and expend them not in the way of Allah -announce thou unto them a torment afflictive.

Ali (1984)

O believers, many rabbis and priests devour the possessions of others wrongfully, and keep men away from the path of God. To those who accumulate gold and silver, and do not spend in the way of God, announce the news of painful punishment.

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

You, you those who believed that many of the religious scholars, and the monks eat the people's properties/wealths by the falsehood, and prevent/obstruct from God's way/path, and those who accumulate/herd the gold and the silver and do not spend it in God's way/path, so announce good news to them with a painful torture.

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

Believers, many are the rabbis and monks who in falsehood defraud people of their possessions and bar people from the Path of Allah. Give glad tidings of a painful punishment to those who treasure gold and silver and do not spend it in the Way of Allah.

Discussion:

Al-Mawardi (UD:357), Al-Shanqeeti (1995:123/2), and Ibn Ashoor (2000:76) state that the pronoun "ها" in "وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَهَا" refers back to both gold and silver and not just to silver. Thus, the pronoun to be used has to be *them* instead of *it*. Daryabadi (1957) appropriately uses *them*, Ali (1984) does not use *them* nor does he use *it*, however his rendering shows that both gold and silver are included in spending. The other translators inappropriately use the pronoun *it*.

3.2 Pronouns with Absent Antecedents:

There are many verses in the Glorious Quran in which the antecedent of the pronoun is absent. Context plays a significant role in determining the antecedent. However, resorting to the interpretations of the Quran is decisive in deciding what the antecedent is, particularly when the pronoun is located in the first verse of the sura. The following

verses are examples of verses that include pronouns with absent antecedents.

SL (8):

{إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ} (١) سورة القدر

Pickthall (1930)

Lo! We revealed it on the Night of Power.

Daryabadi (1957)

Verily We! We have sent it down on the night of Power.

Ali (1984)

Truly We revealed it on the Night of Determination.

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

We descended it in the predestined/destiny night.

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

We sent this (the Holy Koran) down on the Night of Honor.

Discussion:

Al-Nisabari (2002:247/10), Al-Baydhawi (UD:513/5), Al-Zamakhshari (UD:786/4), and many other interpreters say that the detached pronoun " هـ " in " أَنْزَلْنَاهُ " refers to the Qur'an. All translators, except for Qaribullah & Darwish (2001), use the pronoun *it* without showing its antecedent. The rendering of Qaribullah & Darwish (2001) is more appropriate.

SL (9):

{قَالَ إِنِّي أَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَن ذِكْرِ رَبِّي حَتَّى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ} (٣٢) سورة ص

Pickthall (1930)

And he said: Lo! I have preferred the good things (of the world) to the remembrance of my Lord; till they were taken out of sight behind the curtain.

Daryabadi (1957)

He said: verily I have loved the love of earthly good above the remembrance of my Lord until the sun hath disappeared behind the veil.

Ali (1984)

He said: "The love of horses is worthy of desire to me for the remembrance of my Lord;" and when they were out of sight.

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

He said: "That I, I loved/liked love (of) the good/honour/wealth on (over) mentioning/remembering my Lord, until it became hidden/concealed (disappeared) at the divider/protection."

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

He said: 'Indeed I have loved the love of good things better than the remembrance of my Lord until the sun has vanished behind a veil.

Discussion:

Ibn Katheer (1994:351/4), Al-Baydhawi (UD:46), and Al-Mahalli and Al-Siyoti (UD:601) mention that the implicit pronoun "هي" after "تَوَارَتْ" refers to the sun. Both Daryabadi (1957) and Qaribullah & Darwish (2001) appropriately render this verse. Pickthall (1930) and Ali (1984) erroneously use the pronoun *they*. Ahmed and Ahmed (1995) ambiguously use the pronoun *it*.

SL (10):

لَوْ يَقُولُونَ طَاعَةٌ فَإِذَا بَرَزُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ بَيَّتَ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي تَقُولُ وَاللَّهُ يَكْتُبُ مَا يُبَيِّنُونَ
فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا { (٨١) سورة النساء

Pickthall (1930)

And they say: (It is) obedience; but when they have gone forth from thee a party of them spend the night in planning other than what thou sayest. Allah recordeth what they plan by night. So oppose them and put thy trust in Allah. Allah is sufficient as Trustee.

Daryabadi (1957)

And they say: Obedience. Then when they so forth from before thee, a part of them plan together by night other than they had said: and Allah writeth down that which they plan by night. Wherefore turn thou from them and trust in Allah and sufficeth Allah as a Trustee.

Ali (1984)

They say: "We obey;" but when they leave your company, a section of them discuss at night other things than you had said; but God takes note of what they discuss. So turn aside from them and trust in God; and God is sufficient as protector.

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

And they say: "Obedience." So if they emerged from at you, a group from them schemed at night other than what you say, and God writes what they scheme at night, so oppose/turn away from them and rely/depend on God, and enough with God (as) a guardian/protector.

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

They say, 'Obedience, ' but as soon as they leave you, a party of them hide other than what they said. Allah writes down what they hide. So turn away from them, and rely on Allah. Allah is sufficient for a Guardian.

Discussion:

In this verse there is an implicit pronoun after "تَقُولُ". This pronoun is apparently confusing for the reader, it could be the detached second person pronoun "أَنْتَ" referring back to the Messenger Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to be its antecedent, or it could be the detached third person pronoun "هِيَ" referring back to the party "الطائفة" in "بَيَّتَ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ". According to Hassan (2000:35/2), Al-Andalusi (2001:317/3), Al-Khazin (1979:365), and Al-Biqai'i (1995:682), the correct pronoun is the detached third person pronoun "هِيَ" referring back to the party "الطائفة" and not the detached second person pronoun "أَنْتَ" which refers to the Messenger. Pickthall (1930), Ali (1984), and Ahmed & Ahmed (1995) incorrectly use the pronoun "you", whereas Daryabadi (1957) and Qaribullah & Darwish (2001) correctly use the pronoun "they".

SL (11):

لِيُوصِيَكُمْ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ فَإِنْ كُنَّ نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَتْهُ أَبَوَاهُ فَلِأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِأُمِّهِ السُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنِ
 آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفَعًا فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

(١١) سورة النساء

Pickthall (1930)

Allah chargeth you concerning (the provision for) your children: to the male the equivalent of the portion of two females, and if there be women more than two, then theirs is two-thirds of the inheritance, and if there be one (only) then the half. And to his parents a sixth of the inheritance, if he

have a son; and if he have no son and his parents are his heirs, then to his mother appertaineth the third; and if he have brethren, then to his mother appertaineth the sixth, after any legacy he may have bequeathed, or debt (hath been paid). Your parents or your children: Ye know not which of them is nearer unto you in usefulness. It is an injunction from Allah. Lo! Allah is Knower, rise.

Daryabadi (1957)

Allah enjoineth you in the matter of your children; the male will have as much as the portion of two females, but if they be females more than two, then they will have two-thirds of that which he hath left, and if only one, she will have a half; and as far as his parents, each of the twain shall have a sixth of that which he hath left if he have a child, but if he hath no child and his parents be his heirs, then his mother shall have a third; but if he have brothers, then his mother shall have a sixth: all after paying a bequest he may have bequeathed or a debt. Your fathers and your sons - ye know not which of them is higher unto you in benefit: an ordinance this from Allah, verily Allah is Knowing, Wise.

Ali (1984)

As for the children, God decrees that the share of the male is equivalent to that of two females. If they consist of women only, and of them more than two, they will get two-thirds of the inheritance; but in case there is one, she will inherit one half. The parents will each inherit a sixth of the estate if it happens the deceased has left a child; but if he has left no children, and his parents are his heirs, then the mother will inherit one-third; but if he has left brothers, the mother will inherit one-sixth after payment of legacies and debts. Of parents and children you do not know who are more useful to you. These are the decrees of God who knows all and is wise.

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

God directs/commands/recommends you in your children, to the male equal (the) fortune (share of) the two females, so if they are/were women more/over two, so for them two thirds (from) what he left, and if she was one, so for her the half and to his parents, to each one from them the sixth from what he left, if for him was a child (son), so if (there) was not for him a child (son), and his parents inherited him, so to his mother the third, so if brothers were for him, so to his mother the sixth, from after a bequest/will he bequeaths with it or a debt; your fathers and your sons, you do not know, which of them (is) closer to you (in) benefit/usefulness, a religious duty/command from God, that God was/is knowledgeable, wise/judicious.

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

Allah charges you concerning your children, for a male like the share of two females. If they are women, above two, they shall have two thirds of what he left, but if she is one, then to her a half. While for his parents, to each one of the two a sixth of what he left, if he has a child. But if he has no child and his heirs are his parents, his mother shall have a third. If he has siblings, to his mother a sixth after any bequest he had bequeathed, or any debt. Your fathers and your children, you do not know which of them is nearer in benefit to you. This is an obligation from Allah. Surely, Allah is the Knower, the Wise.

Discussion:

In this verse the detached pronoun " هـ " in " وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ " apparently has no antecedent. Al-Baghawi (1997:174/2), Al-Baydhawi (UD:154/2), Al-Tabari (2000: 36/7), Al-Nisabori (2002:268/3), and many other interpreters say that this pronoun refers to the dead person. All translators

render this pronoun literally without any indication to its antecedent. Only Ali (1984) renders it correctly as he mentions the *deceased* in his rendering. His rendering, as shown, is: "... *The parents will each inherit a sixth of the estate if it happens the deceased has left a child ...*".

3.3 Pronouns with too many Antecedents:

In this case the pronoun has too many antecedents, and although Benner (2000) considers this an error and suggests that a pronoun should have only one antecedent which has to be clear and unmistakable, we notice that this case could be different when we talk about the Qur'anic verses and their renderings. The following verse is an example of a pronoun having twenty antecedents.

SL (12):

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ
وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ
وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا
(٣٥) سورة الأحزاب

Pickthall (1930)

Lo! men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard (their modesty),

and men who remember Allah much and women who remember Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.

Daryabadi (1957)

Verily the Muslim men and Muslim women, and the believing men and the believing women, and the devout men and the devout women, and the men of veracity and the women of veracity, and the persevering men and the persevering women, and the men of humility and the women of humility and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their modesty and the women who guard their modesty, and the Allah-remembering men and the Allah remembering women: Allah hath gotten ready for them forgiveness and mighty hire.

Ali (1984)

Verily men and women who have come to submission, men and women who are believers, men and women who are devout, truthful men and truthful women, men and women with endurance, men and women who are modest, men and women who give alms, men and women who observe fasting, men and women who guard their private parts, and those men and women who remember God a great deal, for them God has forgiveness and a great reward.

Ahmed and Ahmed (1995)

That truly the Moslems/submitters, and the Moslems/submitters, and the believers, and the believers, and the obeying humbly, and the obeying humbly, and the truthful, and the truthful, and the patient, and the patient, and the humble/submissive, and the humble /submissive, and the charity givers, and the charity givers, and the fasters, and the fasters, and the protecting/observing their genital parts between their legs, and the protecting/observing, and the mentioning/remembering God much, and

the mentioning/remembering, God prepared for them a forgiveness and a great reward.

Qaribullah & Darwish (2001)

For men and women who have surrendered believing men and women, obedient men and women; truthful men and women, patient men and women, humble men and women, men and women who give charity, men and women who fast, men and women who guard their privates, men and women who remember Allah in abundance, for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a mighty wage.

Discussion:

In this verse the detached pronoun " هُمْ " in " أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ " has twenty antecedents. All translators use the pronoun *them* which may, for the English reader, refer to its nearest antecedent. However, simply adding "*all*" after "*them*" may clarify the whole meaning of the verse showing the intended antecedents.

4. Conclusion

Analyzing different translations of the Glorious Qur'an into English the researcher has found that pronouns and their references comprise a critical area that translators face in translating the Qur'an. Translators have not realized that the Qur'an includes so many verses in which the relation between pronouns and their antecedents are apparently clear yet, in fact and according to the prominent Qur'an interpretations, are having other delicate meanings. These meanings are recognized through accurately discovering the relation between the pronouns and their correct antecedents.

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