



Constraints in translating the style of Qur'an into Malay

Azman Ariffin^a , Idris Mansor^{b,1} 

^a *Institute of Teacher Education (Perlis Campus), Perlis, Malaysia*

^b *Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia*

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Abstract

A translator's success can be measured by their ability to transfer meaning from a source text perfectly, without causing any doubt. This responsibility lies wholly on the translator. In the context of Qur'an translation, its linguistic style poses a challenge for translators. Thus, this study has been carried out to identify and examine the problems in translating the language of al-Qur'an into Malay. Text analysis is carried out in this study. Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman by Abdullah Basmeih is selected as the source of research data to identify problems in translating the language of al-Qur'an. Findings from the study show several issues that may pose as a challenge for translators in translating the language of al-Quran into Malay. These include metaphorical verses, elements of deletion, and others. It is hoped that findings from the study could serve as early guidelines for translators of al-Qur'an into Malay, particularly concerning the translation of the linguistic style of al-Quran.

Keywords: language style; Qur'an translation; constraints; Malay; Arabic

1. Introduction

Generally, translators are bound to encounter problems in the process of translating from one language to another. Experts in translation often attribute this problem to two main factors which are linguistic and cultural differences between the source and target language (Abdul-Raof, 2005; Abobaker et al, 2012). In translating al-Qur'an, Ali Yunis (2014) says the three common problems are linguistic, cultural and theological untranslatability (p. 24). Abdul-Raof (2001) has similar observation concerning the translation of al-Quran, "*the Qur'an itself will be lost when translated; its unique linguistic architecture, rhetorical beauty, music, and prototypical texture will be wasted*" (p. 40).

As a matter of fact, the text of al-Qur'an cannot be translated. Loss and weakness cannot be avoided in any translation of al-Qur'an. Abdul-Raof (2001) continues to emphasise that "*the target language cannot accommodate the linguistic and/or the rhetorical norms of the Qur'anic discourse*" (p. 109).

¹ Corresponding author.

E-mail address: idrismansor@usm.my

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Linguistic norms are different from one language to another and this poses a great challenge for translators. The uniqueness of al-Quran is beyond men's ability. Abdul-Raof (2001) has listed the following problems when translating from Arabic into other languages: stylistic, mechanism of style, word focus, cultural gap, literal translation problem, vague syntactic and semantic problem, emotive expressions in the Qur'an, difference of opinions among scholars of al-Qur'an, different contextual interpretations, morphological patterns, semantic-syntactic relationships, semantics of the functions of the connectors, effects of semantics style, prosodic and acoustic features, and most importantly, the nature of Arabic itself and the very specific nature of al-Quran's rhetoric (p. 1). Ahmad al-Abbasi (2006) also outlined the difficulties when translating the Qur'an as follows 1) linguistic and cultural differences, 2) the Qur'an is in Arabic, 3) the Qur'an is a miracle, and 4) the meaning of al-Quran must be referred to prominent and reliable tafsir.

The genre of al-Qur'an also combines literary (poetic) and non-literary (prose) forms which also pose a problem in translating al-Qur'an (Al-Azab & Al-Misned, 2012; Tzortzis, 2012). The selection of appropriate procedure in translating any Qur'an verse will produce good impact on the translation. Gibová (2011) says the genre of a text that is to be translated plays an important role in the selection of translation procedure. According to Gibová (2011), the calque procedure is often employed when translating non-literary text, whereas literary texts are often translated using transposition, modulation, simile, and adaptation.

Thus, it can be surmised that the problems of translating the linguistic style of Arabic can be in the linguistic, cultural and genre aspects. Linguistically, the problems include phonetics, semantics, and rhetorics which is closely related to the cultural and genre problem. Ibn Burdah (2004) observes that the linguistic issue in translation are vocabulary, grammar, style and context.

2. Literature review

2.1 The Concept of Qur'an's Linguistic Style

According to Za'ba (1962), linguistic style is the form of language in speech or writing, meaning the words, the ways the sentences are woven together, the manner of the language and the ways in which ideas are arranged and presented (p. 71). In Arabic, linguistic style is known as أسلوب [uslub]. From the linguistic perspective, *uslub* refers to the way someone speaks, be it in their manner, method, style, mode, form or art (Al-Zarqani, 1995, p. 239). *Uslub* is divided into two branches of study namely; 1) grammatical style أسلوب نحوية [uslub nahwiyyah] and 2) rhetorical style أسلوب بلاغية [uslub balāghiyah]. Grammatical style (*uslub nahwiyyah*) refers to the types of expressions used by speakers or writers with the aim to achieve certain meaning and effects; for example, to express terms and stipulations (الشرط) [al-sharṭ], oath (القسم) [al-qasam], praise and reproach (المدح والذم) [al-madh wa-al-dham], exclamations (التعجب) [al-ta'ajjub], to focus or single out (الاختصاص) [al-ikhtisāṣ], to encourage and warn (الإغراء) [al-ighrā' wa al-ahdhūr], and to enquire (الاستفهام) [al-istifhām] (Nikmat, 1958, pp. 186-189). Meanwhile, rhetorical style (*uslub balāghiyah*) consists of metaphors (الاستعارة) [al-isti'ārah], analogy/simile (التشبيه) [al-tashbīh], proverb (الأمثال) [al-amthāl], ellipsis (الحذف) [al-hadhf], short forms (القصر) [al-qasr], prevalent (التغليب) [al-taghlīb], metonymy (مجاز) [majāz], polysemy (المشترك) [al-mushtarak], shift (الانتفات) [al-iltifāt] and *uslub al-hakim* (أسلوب الحكيم) [uslub al-ḥakīm] (Abdul-Raof, 2001; Tzortzis, 2012).

In technical terms, *uslub* refers to the manner of speech in terms of sentence arrangement and word choice. Thus, *uslub* al-Qur'an is the language style of al-Qur'an that is unique in terms of verse arrangement and word choice (al-Zarqani, 1995, p. 239).

2.2 Analysis of Style in Translation

Scholars have proposed several models for analysing style in translation. Enkvist (1985) lists four approaches to describing style: a sentence-based approach, a predication-based approach, a cognition-based approach emphasizing the role of cognition in the arrangement and formulation of texts, and a model based on social interaction. The first, second and third approaches are concerned with idea and textual functions. Meanwhile, the fourth approach is concerned with interpersonal functions. DiMarco and Hirst (2012) outlined a two-way model that complement each other but may also contradict each other sometimes: 1) producing style that is suitable in the style of the target language and 2) retaining the style of the original author (p. 148).

Realising that there is a need for a more explicit approach, Malmkjaer (2004) offers a model founded in the understanding that linguistic style should not be based according to the translator's identity (p. 15). From one aspect, writing is a creative process which allows freedom for writers to express ideas from the depth of their heart, thoughts and imaginations to illustrate the phenomena around them. From another perspective, no matter how creative a translator is, he or she plays the role of a middle-person who must maintain the relationship between the author of the original text with the readers of the translation.

Generally, Malmkjaer's approach seems suitable for translation of al-Quran's linguistic style because the translation of the Holy Text is but an individual or a group's effort in spreading understanding of Islam in the best way possible, not to imitate the beauty and wonder of al-Qur'an. It is also not their aim to produce holy translations. The spiritual effect and beauty of Qur'an's style can only be experienced in the original language (Shehu, 1999, p. 360). Thus, this model which emphasises on delivering meaning and retaining the original meaning agrees with Islamic scholars who forbid *harfiyah* (word for word) translation and encourages *tafsiriyah* (sense for sense) translation.

2.3 Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman Kepada Pengertian Al-Qur'an [Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman for Understanding the Qur'an]

Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman Kepada Pengertian al-Quran is a translation of al-Qur'an into Malay, an effort started by Faisal bin Othman and later completed by Syeikh Abdullah Basmeih (Basmeih, 2002, pp. v – xii).

In the early stage in 1968, only 10 juz were completed. In 1972, 30 juz were completed and published in jawi (Arabic alphabets for writing in Malay) edition. In 1980, a rumi (Malay writing using roman alphabets) edition was published in one volume (Basmeih, 2002, pp. v – xii). This translation has since become a main reference and is well-known among Muslims in Malaysia.

The production of this translation was done by referring to eminent translations before it, namely Tafsir Al-Tabari, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani, Tafsir al-Jalalain, Tafsir al-Manar, Tafsir Fi Zilal al-Qur'an, Tafsir al-Maraghi dan Tafsir al-Qasimi. In addition, several books on the sciences of al-Qur'an (ulum al-Quran), language, hadith, explanation of meaning and Arabic-Malay dictionaries were also used as references (Basmeih, 2002, pp. xv – xvi).

2.4 Biography of Abdullah Basmeih

Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih bin Sheikh Muhammad Basmeih was an Islamic figure in Malaysia. His father Syeikh Muhammad Basmeih bin Salleh Basmeih was from Hadramawt in Yemen and his mother 'Aisyah binti Abdullah bin Hammad was from Bishah, Saudi Arabia. Basmeih is the name of his family

ancestry. Syeikh Abdullah Basmeih was born on 29 December 1913. Other records said he was born in 1915 because he was 12 years old when he migrated to Malaya in 1927. He was born in an area known as Ma'abdah, which is nearby Makkah. His biological mother passed away before the migration, when Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih was about two years old. He was raised in Makkah al-Mukarramah until he migrated to Malaya to follow his father (Abdullah, 2013, pp. 69-70).

His early education began at the age of seven. He studied religious knowledge and Arabic until he was 12 years old. When he migrated to Malaya, he was enrolled in the Pengkalan Balak Melaka Malay School until he passed Standard 4. He could not further his study due to financial constraints. However, he was steadfast in learning by reading on his own. Among his reading materials were the magazine *Guru* and Za'ba's works (Abdullah, 2013, pp. 70-71).

He ventured into writing by producing articles. His article was published in the newspaper *Warta Malaya*. His talent was realised by the writer of the newspaper *Utusan Melayu*, Haji Mohammad Dahlan Masood (Hamdan). He entrusted Sheikh with the task of translating religious editorials from the magazine *al-Musawwar* for publication in *Utusan Melayu*. It was from there that he began seriously getting involved in publishing and translation. He used to work for Syarikat Utusan Melayu (1939) and Syarikat Qalam Press (1950) (Abdullah, 2013, p. 72).

3. Methodology

This study examined factors which led to problems in translating the language style of al-Qur'an into Malay. The study employed text analysis approach for this purpose. Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman by Abdullah Basmeih was selected as the source of data to identify the problems in translating the language style of al-Qur'an. This research is modelled on Malmkjaer's (2004) analysis of style in translation. In addition, problems in the translation of al-Qur'an concerning the language style as listed by Abdul-Raof (2001) is integrated with the translation procedures outlined by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) to form an additional model for analysis and discussion of research findings.

Through the combination of several research models (Integration of models by Malmkjaer + Abdul-Raof and Vinay & Darbelnet), a procedure for data analysis has been outlined:

1. Determining category of data (based on Abdul-Raof's suggestions: analogy, metaphor, ellipsis, shift, *al-Qasr*, *al-taghlib*, metonymy and extraposition)
2. Collecting data from source and target text
3. Discussion of mechanism of style
4. Referring to eminent tafsir (Ibn Kathir and Al-Zamakhshari)
5. Reviewing cultural gap (if related)
6. Identifying Vinay and Darbelnet's translation procedures employed

Tafsir Ibn Kathir and al-Zamakhshari are selected as main references as both are recognised as reliable references of the Arab culture and Arabic language style.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

This study discusses five types of language style that often pose problems in translation as stated by Abdul-Raof (2001) which are analogy, metaphor, ellipsis, shift and extraposition.

1. Analogy (*simile*) (التشبيه) [*al-tashbih*]

Data from source text:

فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكَرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ ٤٩ كَانَتْهُمْ حُمْرٌ مُسْتَنْفِرَةٌ ٥٠ فَزَتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ ٥١

(74: 49-51)

Data from target text:

49. Maka tidak akan berguna kepada mereka sebarang syafaat pertolongan (kalaulah ditakdirkan ada sesiapa yang boleh memberikan syafaat itu. 50. (Kalau demikianlah halnya orang-orang yang bersalah), maka mengapa mereka berpaling lari dari peringatan (Al-Qur'an)? 51. Seolah-olah mereka sekawan keldai liar yang lari, 52. Melarikan diri (ketakutan) dari singa! (Basmeih, 2002, p. 1596)

Discussion:

The above verses employ analogy (simile). Atieq (1985a) explained that there are four elements in Arabic analogy which are *al-mushabbah* (the object that is compared), *al-mushabbah bihi* (the object that it is compared with), *adat al-tashbih* (connectors, eg.: like, such as, as if, as though), and *wajah al-syabah* (simile) (p. 64). The objects of comparison have similar meaning and nature. Elements that must be retained in the text are *al-musyabbah* and *al-musyabbah bihi*. Other elements must be realised by readers cognitively or based on their cultural experience. In the case that only the *al-mushabbah bihi* element is retained, it is then categorised as a metaphor.

In verses 49-51 Surah al-Muddaththir, Ibnu Kathir (1999) defined حُمْرٌ مُسْتَنْفِرَةٌ [*humurun mustanfira*] as a drove of wild donkeys and (قَسْوَرَةٍ) [*qaswarah*] as 1) a lion and 2) a group of hunters (pp. 273-274). The meanings given are literal ones. However, al-Zamakhshari (2009) explained that the Arabs often associate donkeys with foolishness and idiocy (p. 1159).

In the context of these verses, Allah has compared the people who turn their back (refuse) on the Qur'an with a group of donkeys who run, in alarm, from a lion. The element of *wajah syabah* that is the similarity in foolishness between those who refused Islam and the donkeys are not mentioned in these verses. Readers or listeners with Arab cultural understanding or experience would be able to realise and to picture the situation and meaning clearly through this literary style. Translations which fail to deliver this detail would result in some loss of meaning in the target text.

Other elements which can be found in these verses are rhythmic pattern for the words (مُسْتَنْفِرَةٌ) [*mustanfira*] and (قَسْوَرَةٍ) [*qaswarah*] and the ending of the verses before and after them. The use of certain rhythmic ending in Arabic has specific purposes (Atieq, 1985b, p. 216). The beauty of the sound could not be translated by anyone and could only be experienced from the original text. This element is directly related with the genre and the situational context of the verses.

In this translation, the translator of Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman used the direct and literal translation approach without explaining the implied meaning behind the use of this language style.

This discussion concludes that the translator probably did not refer to translations or tafsir such as Tafsir al-Zamakhshari and Tafsir al-Baidawi which elaborated on the cultural elements as shown in these verses, and thus causing the problem in transferring the literary style. This resulted in the loss of second implied meaning.

2. Metaphors (الاستعارة) [*al-isti'arah*]

Data from source text:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تُّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ١٦

(2: 16)

Data from target text:

16. Mereka itulah orang-orang yang membeli kesesatan dengan meninggalkan petunjuk; maka tiadalah beruntung perniagaan mereka dan tidak pula mereka beroleh petunjuk hidayat (Basmeih, 2002, p. 12).

Discussion

This verse contains the element of metaphor known in Arabic as *isti'ārah* [استعارة]. A metaphor is an expression that contains implicit meaning related with the literal or original meaning. The understood meaning also contains clues towards the implicit meaning which the original meaning could not convey (Atieq, 1985a, p. 167).

The plethora of metaphors in al-Qur'an is one of the main difficulties in its translation. The Qur'an employs metaphorical expressions which the translators in turn translated using the literal meaning. These examples have resulted in many errors in the translation of al-Qur'an (Abobaker et al, 2012, pp. 588-590).

Ibnu Kathir (1999) translated this verse by giving the literal meaning for the words (الضلالة) [*al-dalālah*] and (الهدى) [*al-hudā*] which are error and guidance as well as the original, implicit meaning which are disbelief and faith. According to al-Zamakhshari (2009: 50), this verse contains the element of *isti'ārah*. It is in the form of *taṣriḥiyyah*, whereby the words الضلالة [*al-dalālah*] dan الهدى [*al-hudā*] are used in place of the implicit words الكفر [*al-kufr*] which is disbelief dan الإيمان [*al-īman*] which is faith. Al-Zamakhshari also related in the footnote a story depicting such a trade as despicable for there is the element of usury. This is because Islam is invaluable, but the disbelievers have exchanged it with something which has neither value nor place to Allah. Such a trade not only is futile but will also result in losses.

In Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman, the translator translated the above metaphorical expression using direct translation which is literal translation. However, he added the following explanation in the footnote (2002):

Allah bandingkan keadaan mereka seperti orang berniaga yang tidak tahu cara berniaga dengan betul, maka orang yang seperti ini bukan sahaja tidak mendapat laba bahkan modalnya hilang. Modal yang dimaksudkan itu ialah sifat-sifat semula jadi yang suci sejahtera, yang dijadikan oleh Allah Ta'ala untuk menerima agamaNya dan pertunjukNya (p. 12).

[Allah has likened their situation to business owners who do not know how to conduct a business, and they not only fail to gain returns but will also lose their assets. The assets meant here are their nature and characteristics bestowed on them which Allah SWT has created out of purity and perfection, so men could accept His religion and guidance].

This shows that the translator understood the metaphorical expression but was incapable of reproducing it in Malay and he chose to use footnote to explain the meaning of the metaphor.

This finding agrees with the observation by Hanapi (2003, p. Introduction), who says the most obvious problems are leaving words that should be translated, limited knowledge concerning the accurate meaning of an Arabic word and understanding only one implied meaning.

Therefore, a suitable and consistent procedure for translating metaphors should be adopted for translating this style to produce translations which will not neglect the direct and implied meanings.

3. Ellipsis (الإيجاز) [*al ijaz*]

Data from source text:

فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا ۙ ۱۳

(91: 13)

Data from target text:

13. Maka berkatalah Rasul Allah (Nabi Soleh) kepada mereka: (Janganlah kamu ganggu) unta betina dari Allah itu dan (janganlah kamu menyekatnya daripada mendapat) air minumnya (supaya kamu tidak ditimpa azab)! (Basmeih, 2002, p. 1687).

Discussion:

Ellipsis refers to expressions that can be clearly and quickly understood without using many words (Al-Jurjani, 2004, p. 38). Meanwhile, Abdul-Raof defined ellipsis as a literary style that allows meaning to be understood implicitly through the context of the sentence or verse (2006, p. 77).

There are two kinds of ellipsis in the Qur'an which are 1) *al-qasr* (abbreviation) and 2) *al-hadhf* (deletion). An example of abbreviation is the word العفو [*al-'afw*] (forgiveness) which has many meanings; التسهيل [*al-tasāhul*] (simplifying or making things easier), التسامح [*al-tasāmuḥ*] (to give in), اللين [*al-līn*] (to be gentle), dan الرفق [*al-rifq*] (courteous). Meanwhile, *al-hadhf* refers to the style of dropping letters, words or part of a verse. The deletion is realised and understood by Arabic speakers based on a few indicators in the context of the verse (al-Sayuti, 1991, pp. 117-118).

In translating this verse, Ibnu Kathir (1999) replaced the element of ellipsis and instead made explicit the meaning of the phrase 'ناقة الله' as: "أحذروا ناقة الله أن تمسوها بسوء" [*iḥzarū nāqatallāhi an tamassūha bi-sū'*] meaning: "Be careful of harming the she-camel of Allah" and also the phrase 'وسقياها' as "لا تعتدوا عليها في سقياها وإن لها شرب اليوم ولكم شرب يوم معلوم" [*Lā ta'tadū 'alaihā fī suqyāhā wa inna lahā shurbal yauma wa lakum shurba yaumim ma'lūm*] meaning: "Be careful of preventing her from her drink because today it is the turn of the she-camel of Allah and your turn is on the other days" (p. 414).

Al-Zamakhshari (2009) explained that the phrase 'be careful' is hidden because there is a syntactic indicator on the word 'ناقة' [*nāqah*] which has vowel *fathah* (p. 1206). In Arabic, this shows that there are verbs in the original verse which could be readily understood. Meanwhile, 'وسقياها' was explained as "Do not prevent her from her drink" or "Do not harm her by taking her drinking water."

In Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman, this verse was translated using literal and direct translation. However, part of the hidden element was made explicit by inserting it in brackets in the verse.

The translator's choice of putting the ellipted element between two brackets shows that he was not only aware of the ellipsis, but also that the hidden meaning must also be conveyed to the readers of the target text. However, when a translator brings back or makes explicit the element that was originally hidden in the Qur'an, he must be cautious and refer to prominent tafsir scholars to ensure the meaning agrees with the interpretation of the scholars.

4. Shifts (الالتفات) [*al iltifāt*]

Data from source text:

وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَسُقْنَاهُ إِلَى بَلَدٍ مَيِّتٍ

(35: 9)

Data from target text:

Dan Allah jualah yang menghantarkan angin, lalu angin itu menggerakkan awan, kemudian Kami halakan awan itu ke negeri yang mati (yang kering kontang) (Basmeih, 2002, p. 1144).

Discussion:

Shift is one of the features of Arabic which refers to the shifting of point of view or perspective, number, verb and sound in the Qur'an. In the Qur'an discourse, shift is a pragmatic linguistic tool which serves the purpose of explaining as well as to avoid repetitive style (Abdul-Raof, 2005, p. 119).

Ibnu Kathir (1999) translated this verse literally as: “*It is Allah who sends the clouds which contain water and drives the rain to a dead land*” (p. 536). Al-Zamakhshari (2009: 882) has discussed the reason for the shift to present tense /تثير/ [tuthīru] when past tense /أرسل/ [arsala] and /سقنا/ [suqnā] are used before and after /تثير/ [tuthīru]. He explained that this shift is employed to illustrate that the wind sent by Allah is also at the same time, in the process of forming rain in the cloud. This shows the beauty of the language of al-Qur'an and the greatness of Allah SWT.

Abdul-Raof (2005) also explained that apart from shift in verb tenses, this verse also contains shifts in pronouns. The word /الذي أرسل/ [al-ladhī arsala] which refers to the pronoun He (Allah) shifts to /نا/ [nā] in /سقنا/ [suqnā] which refers to the pronoun We (Allah) (p. 120).

In Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman, the translator has translated this verse directly without providing any clue on this language style. This is because the syntactic functions of verbs in Malay do not have semantic indicators of the time and the doer of the action. Other element of style observed in this verse is the use of metaphor which is the word /ميت/ [mayyit] or dead, referring to the implied meaning which is ‘very dry’. The translator has inserted the second or implied meaning in bracket.

From this discussion, it can be surmised that among the problems in translating the elements of shifts in al-Qur'an is the linguistic differences between Arabic and Malay in terms of the syntactic functions of verbs and the pronouns of the doers. In fact, shift is not a commonly used device in Malay.

5. Extraposition (التقديم والتأخير) [al-taqdim wa al-ta'khir]Data from source text:

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرَ (٩)

(93: 9)

Data from target text:

Oleh itu, adapun anak yatim maka janganlah engkau berlaku kasar terhadapnya (Basmeih, 2002: 1696).

Discussion:

Extraposition is a form of language style in *balaghah* (rhetoric). This style is used to showcase the Arabs' great skills at expressing themselves in speech. The use of extraposition can tug the heart and soul of the readers or listeners, evoking deep effects. It has specific meanings, including to reproach, and to prioritise what is important (Al-Zarkashi, 2006, p. 770).

In his translation of this verse, Ibnu Kathir (1999) has replaced the element of ellipsis with the explicit meaning which is *كما كنت يتيما فأواك الله فلا تقهر اليتيم* [kamā kunta yatīman fa āwākallāhu falā taqharil yatīm] which means: “*You too were an orphan and so Allah has made things easier for you, as such do not oppress the orphans*” (p. 427). However, no explanation about the use of extraposition was given in the translation of this verse. This is because in his writing methodology, Ibnu Kathir did not repeat something which has been explained in the earlier surah. Thus, certain things may not be repeated. An explanation on extraposition has been discussed earlier on in the translation of the fifth verse of Surah al-Fatihah, which is the first surah in the Qur'an. Ibnu Kathir translated *اياك نعبد* [iyyāka na 'budu] which means: “*It is You (O Allah) we worship*” (Basmeih, 2002, p. 4) the word *اياك* [iyyāka] is placed in front of the word *نعبد* [na 'budu], when the original structure is *نعبد اياك* [na'budu iyyāka]. The purpose

of this is to show *الاهتمام والحصر* [*al-ih̄timām wa al-ḥaṣr*] which means ‘attention and priority’. Between Allah and human’s act of worship, Allah is the priority because first and foremost, human needs Allah SWT.

Similarly, the structure of the verse *فأما اليتيم فلا تقهر* is different from the normal structure *فلا تقهر اليتيم* [*falā taqharul yatīm*]. The word *اليتيم* [*al-yatīm*] is placed in front to convey the message that the orphans who are looked down upon have more honour in Allah’s sight.

Meanwhile, al-Zamakhshari (2009) translated: “Do not misuse their weakness to control their property and rights” (p. 1209). He has brought Ibnu Mas’ud’s style of reading to the word *فلا تقهر* [*falā taqhar*], changing it into *فلا تكهر* [*falā takhar*] which means: “Don’t you look down upon” (p. 1209). Al-Zamakhshari’s translation of this verse also did not emphasise on the use of this style. However, like Ibnu Kathir, al-Zamakhshari (2009: 28) has stated the purpose of bringing forward the word *إياك* [*iyyāka*] in the fifth verse of surah al-Fatihah is *لقصد الاختصاص* [*li qaṣd al-ikhtīṣaṣ*] which means “for the purpose of focusing”.

In Tafsir Pimpinan ar-Rahman, the translator translated this verse using direct translation and several additional words to fit into the structure of the Malay language. The translator also employed borrowing for the word *yatim* [orphan]. The term *yatim* is an established element of cross-culture between Arab and Malay and thus requires no further definition. However, the translator felt the need to explain the meaning of this verse in the footnote:

“Ya’ni oleh kerana engkau telah mengalami keadaan yatim dan kekurangan ilmu dan harta hendaklah engkau menaruh belas kasihan kepada orang-orang yang berkeadaan dengan salah satu dari hal-hal yang tersebut, serta hendaklah engkau menzahirkan ni’kmat Tuhan sebagai bersyukur kepadaNya” (Basmeih, 2002, p. 1696).

[As you have experienced being orphaned and lack of knowledge and property, therefore have mercy on those who are in any of those conditions, and as for the favour of your Lord, report it”] (Basmeih, 2002, p. 1696).

Based on the translation and the information in the footnote by the translator, the implied meaning for the ellipsis has been made explicit. However, the use of extraposition which is the priority or honour given by Allah for the orphans has not been explained by the translator. The reason for this problem is probably that the translator did not realise the methodology of the other translators who did not repeat explanation for elements of extraposition. This requires for specific rhetorical skills from the readers or translators. because the sentence patterns of this language style are similar and have their own indicators.

5. Conclusions

Translating Arabic language style requires the translator to deeply understand the semantic of words, sentences or verses, genre, culture and contexts. Factors that pose problems for translators to translate certain language styles in the Qur’an into Malay are:

1. Large number and variety of elements of Arabic style, and no special references or documentations for these elements
2. Difficulties in identifying and understanding the language styles and their mechanisms.
3. Translation references which are limited to language and meaning only, without referring to translations of rhetoric and art such as al-Razi, al-Baidawi and al-Zamakhshari.
4. Neglect or lack of awareness of cultural and cross-cultural issues between source and target language.
5. Suitable and consistent translation procedures are not adopted.

This study recommends that:

1. An approach for translating the language style of al-Qur’an which considers linguistic ability, cultural sensitivity, a variety of references and suitable procedures be adopted into practice consistently to

produce quality translations. This procedure is necessary to obtain translation which does not neglect the direct and indirect meanings.

2. A detailed documentation of the language style of al-Qur'an according to categories, especially the elements which often cause problems in translation. This effort will provide access to reference and classification of al-Qur'an's language style for translators.

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AUTHORS BIODATA

Idris Mansor is a senior lecturer of Translation Studies at the Department of Translation Studies and Interpreting, School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia. He holds a PhD in Translation Studies from the University of Leeds, United Kingdom. His research interests include Arabic-Malay translation, translation approaches, Islamic texts translation and history of translation which includes intralingual translation of Jawi (Arabic-influenced Malay script) into Rumi (Roman Malay script).

Azman Ariffin is a lecturer of Arabic Education and head of the Department of Islamic and Moral Studies at the Institute of Teacher Education, Perlis Campus. Currently he is pursuing a PhD in Translation Studies at the Universiti Sains Malaysia. His research interests include Arabic-Malay translation, Quranic translation, Islamic text translation and translation quality.