Rhetorical Challenges in the Translation of ʿIlm Albadīʿ (the Branch of Embellishments): Pun as a Case Study

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Abstract

The translation of punned language in spoken or written contexts in ancient texts poses great challenges to the translator. In Arabic, how such a rhetorical aspect is expressed differs from English due to creative features of style and word playing in order to produce punned language. This study will compare and contrast pun in Arabic rhetoric and its counterpart in English, and then will conduct a critical analysis of the translation of pun and its categories in two English translations by Jafery (1965) and Al-Jibouri (2009) of selected extracts from the *Nahğ Albalāğa*'s book. The aim is to draw attention to and potentially generalise some of the challenges encountered when translating this rhetorical device; this will be followed by comparisons between the two English translations and an assessment of the translation strategies followed by each translator.

التحديات البلاغية في ترجمة علم البديع الى اللغة الانكليزية: التورية كدراسة حالة

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المستخلص

تُشَكِل ترجمة لغة التورية في السياقات المنطوقة أو المكتوبة في النصوص القديمة تحديات كبيرة للمُترجم. في اللغة العربية، تختلف كيفية التعبير عن مثل هذا الاسلوب البلاغي عن اللغة الإنجليزية بسبب الخصائص الإبداعية للأسلوب والتلاعب في الكلمات من أجل إنتاج تورية في اللغة. في هذه الدراسة سيُقارن الباحث التورية في البلاغة العربية ونظيرها باللغة الإنجليزية، ثم سيُجري تحليلاً نقدياً لترجمة التورية وأنواعها لترجمتين باللغة الإنجليزية للمُتَرجِمَين جعفري (١٩٦٥) والجبوري (٢٠٠٩) لمقاطع مُختارة من كتاب نهج البلاغة. والهدف من ذلك هو لفت الانتباه إلى بعض التحديات التي تُواجه المُترجم عند ترجمة التورية كأسلوب بلاغي.

Introduction

The Branch of Embellishment is referred to in Arabic as 'بَديع - badī''. The fundamental purpose of employing rhetorical devices (RDs) that are part of this branch in verbal communication is to adorn the discourse of the orator. The word 'badī'' is derived from the verb 'يُبدِع - yubdi'' (to create) which means 'بَدع شيئاً جديداً - bada' šay'an ǧadīdan' (to create a new thing' or ' لا أبدعه على مِثال - 'abda'ah lā 'alā miṯāl' (to formulate something infrequent in the routine of the language) (Alḥāšimī, 1999: 298), which impacts upon the person who hears or reads the RDs. Thus, the producer of speech or of a written text, who includes RDs of this branch of Arabic rhetoric, continuously creates something new. Since in the context of rhetorical language words have a marked stylistic element, Arabic speakers tend to use words that create rhythm and impact both in written and in spoken language. We might in fact suggest that the rhetorical aspect discussed in this paper, Pun, have a pronounced musical effect – in that they are rhythmic and rhymed language. Their central objective is, therefore, embellishment, where the aesthetic underpins the purpose of the writing, embellishment that functions at the level of the linguistic and the lexical. Indeed, every rhetorical aspect whose marked nature attracts attention and has an effect on the listener/reader falls into this broad category. Alqazwīnī (cited in Owens 2013, 197) describes this branch of Arabic as 'a science though which the manners of embellishing discourse become known, after observing the adequacy [of the expression] and the semantic clarity'. Because this branch of Arabic relates to ornamental styles that serve to embellish discourse, I have termed this the Branch of Embellishments. Embellishments in this sense, as explained by Abdul-Raof, is "the independent rhetorical discipline through which we appreciate the mechanisms of beautifying the discourse" – in other words, it is the linguistic and stylistic mechanism that aims to provide ornamentation in Arabic discourse. In that respect, one of the main characteristics of an effective communicator is his/her ability to choose diverse modes of speech in order to influence the addressee with the beauty of the language chosen (Abdul-Raof 2006, 239). Each type of embellishment has, in turn, several secondary classifications. The lexical embellishment can be subdivided into alliteration, assonance, zeugma, onomatopoeia, among others; while linguistic embellishments are divided into pun, opposition, counterpart and antithesis, oxymoron, quotation, personification, and many others.

All these types of semantic and formal embellishments resemble the basic aspects of AR, and all serve to enrich Arabic discourse. Furthermore, every single one of these devices can be found in many of ʿAlī Ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib's sermons, letters, and utterances in the NA, a book that may be considered a veritable compendium of Arabic style. In terms of overall context, Arab rhetoricians, such as Alḥāšimī (1999, 300-325), have divided the Branch of Embellishments into two categories: Linguistic[i] (لفظية مُحسنات - muḥassināt lafẓiyya) and Formal (مُحسنات معنوية - muḥassināt maʿnawiyya). The former is concerned with improving pronunciation, while the latter is used to improve meaning. Both categories include multiple RDs, Pun and Antithesis as part of linguistic embellishments, and Assonance and Alliteration in formal embellishments. Arabic regards them as a rhetorical means of embellishing discourse in spoken or written contexts — which is why Abdul-Raof (2006, 239) refers to the third branch of Arabic rhetoric as the 'Branch of Embellishments'. Although other scholars working on Arabic rhetoric through the medium of English prefer to call it *badīʿ* (for example, Larcher 2013, 197) and provide Alqazwīnī's definition above, this research paper is underpinned by a strategy of translation, so that the term ascribed to the branch will be the 'Branch of Embellishment' (where the singular usage denotes an overall affect rather than a series of impacts). So, this paper will concentrate specifically on Pun and its categories (abstract and *muraššaḥa*) and the analysis of the rhetorical challenges for will be considered by adopting Van Dijk's model in the analysis of lexical and topic selection, rhetorical figures and their implications. This will be achieved by analyzing pun's translations from Arabic into English as provided by Jafery and Al-Jibouri of extracts from *Nahǧ Albalāġa* (NA). The NA is a manuscript consisting of different sermons, letters, and the sayings of ʿAlī Ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Muḥammad, who by virtue of being a successor of the prophet Muḥammad has the status of a religious successor, or leader. The book's title — *Nahǧ Albalāġa* (Path of Rhetoric) — derives from the fact that it presents and implements all of the aspects of rhetoric that exist in Arabic: The Branch of Meanings, the Branch of Figures of Speech, and the Branch of Embellishments. Consequently, the aim of this paper is to draw attention to and potentially generalise some of the challenges encountered when translating pun; this will be followed by comparisons between their English translations

(provided, once again, by Jafery and Al-Jibouri) and an assessment of the translation strategies followed by each translator.

1.   Pun in Arabic and English Rhetoric

Pun (tawriya) is used in spoken Arabic to enrich the semantic value of the particular discourse. It is a device that is both semantically enriching and stylistically attractive in that it conveys to the interlocutor, in a way that is both rhetorical and creative, an indirect concealed message. Drawing on an acknowledged richness of vocabulary, the speaker draws upon a specific term used within any particular context in order to deliver two meanings. There are, of course, always very significant challenges that accompany the translation of pun from one language into another, but as pun, in terms of its construction, stylistic value and heuristic charge, may vary from one language to another, before proceeding to examine how best to approach such translation, it is important to consider how pun is deployed in both Arabic and English rhetoric.

In Arabic, Pun is the deployment of a polysemous word in a particular utterance, whereby the lexical item carries a particular meaning but, at a deeper level, contains a reference to another meaning. The term itself – 'تورية - tawriya' – is derived from the Arabic verb 'وَرى - warā', meaning at root 'to disappear something' which indicates, according to Alḥāšimī, Alḥillī and Almadanī, 'to hide something and to appear something else' (Alḥāšimī 1999, 300; Alḥillī 1992, 135; Almadanī 1969, 5). A speaker uses one lexical item with two senses, one of which is near and apparent; it is not intended by the speaker, and its semantic indication appears in the context. The other is far and implied; it is intended by the speaker and its semantic indication is hidden. The speaker covers it with the near sense, so that the receiver presumes that the near sense is intended by the speaker, whereas the speaker actually intends the far one (Alḥāšimī: ibid., 301).

In Arabic, the component termed 'near sense' is denominated 'مُورى به - muwarrā bihi', whereas the 'far' is refers to as 'مُورى عنه - muwarrā 'anhu'. In order to demonstrate the positions and intents of the 'muwarrā bihi' and 'muwarrā anhu', although necessarily briefly, the following lines of poetry provide a useful example: 'وقالت رُح بربك عن فؤادي / فقلت لها بربك انتِ روحي - waqālat ruḥ birabbika 'an fu'ādī /faqultu lahā birabbiki anti rūḥī' can be translated into English as 'And she said: for your God's sake, go away my heart, and then I said: for your God's sake, you do go away'[ii]. Animating this piece of poetry are two senses concurrent within the lexical item 'روحي - rūḥī': the foremost meaning, prescribed by surface context, is 'to go away,' indicated by

the imperative form 'ruḥ - go away', while the second, the underlying meaning at the point where the pun is generated, is 'my spirit'. In this case, the translation that articulates the element that is *muwarrā 'anh* would be, 'she said: for your God's sake, go away my heart, and then I said: for your God's sake, you are my spirit'. In Arabic, the word 'rūḥī', as implied above, offers sufficiently widely dissimilar meanings for the word to be used in radically different contexts without imbalance in either of the two meanings; in this case, when the poet addresses his love, the first usage expresses the dignity because she tells him 'to go away', and the other when he expresses his love for her. Focussing on the English language use of pun, Dirk Delabastita (1996), a prominent scholar who has worked on the translation of pun, outlines its broader spectrum, notably as wordplay, which is:

> the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and with more or less different meanings (Delabastita 1996, 128).

Delabastita's definition is broadly applicable to the concept of pun in English, setting the conditions of two parallel linguistic terms and accordingly against the generation of divergent connotations. Moreover, he argues that the meaning of puns can vary in accordance with the formal aspects of the linguistic structures, affirming that pun also arises in contexts that 'contrast linguistic structures with different meanings on the basis of their formal similarity' (ibid). This wide-ranging interpretation of pun in English diverges from the Arabic usage, which develops pun from one source word with divergent meanings, while, in English, Delabastita, for example, also refers to the occurrence of homonymy, homophony, homography, and paronymy in pun (ibid). Moreover, as well as encompassing more than one lexical item, each of these categories may present lexical variations either in the spelling or in the pronunciation. In Arabic, in contradistinction, pun is triggered via the single mechanism described above.

Partington's (2009, 1794) further amplification on one type of motivator for the pun that differentiates differences between pun in English and pun in Arabic by specifying the importance of sound when he notes that punning is "the bisociative play between dual sound sequences". He also refers to the existence of two lexical items, but he chooses not to concentrate on the formal aspect of these words. Once again, this one definition of one type of pun diverges from the homonymic Arabic definition, although it should be noted here that the

characteristics identified by Partington, in that these are intrinsically associated with diverse formal aspects of words, while pun in Arabic, as we have stressed, is closely tied to the semantic properties of a single lexical form. It is Crisafulli's more simplified definition of English-language pun (1996, 261) that approximates most closely to the way pun is generated and functions in the Arabic rhetorical tradition: he notes that puns "create meaningful associations between words that are similar in form but different in meaning". In terms of comparison with Arabic, this explanation of pun equates closely to that of Arabic in that the words are similar in form (number, type and sequence of letters), but the possibility of the existence of more than one word within the context once again distinguishes English usage from Arabic.

2.   Translating Pun

This necessarily brief contrastive survey of pun in Arabic and English throws up clear differences in form and function between both languages; to put it succinctly, in Arabic, pun derives from one word that offers two meanings, one of which is near and intended within the immediate context, while the other is far and generates supplementary meaning within what appears to be an adjacent context. In contradistinction, the function of the pun and its forms are expanded where pun is generated across more than one word. Consequently, pun in the Arabic is both formally and functionally precise in contrast to its much more multifaceted English counterpart. To pinpoint such differences is more than an academic exercise, because it is precisely the range of devices and constructions associated with pun in English that points to the variety of responses that the English-language translator might consider — but not necessarily positively — when it comes to rendering the much more narrowly-conceived Arabic equivalent.

The reason for the caveat articulated immediately above is rooted in the clear perception that pun is not only intrinsically resistant to translation, but that, in the particular case of the language pairing that concerns us here, the concentrated aesthetic intensity of the Arabic form may well be dissipated and/or, indeed, trivialised by recourse to translation choices that draw upon the multiple forms of a device that in English has more to do with wit than beauty, with wordplay rather than semantic enrichment. This diminution becomes even more serious in the case of poetic discourse, as Newmark has observed (1988, 217). Referring to the problem of translating puns in poetic writing to be 'of marginal importance [but] of irresistible interest', he maintains nonetheless that "puns made by punning poets are most difficult to translate, since

they are limited by metre. Often the pun simply has to be sacrificed" (ibid.). More recently, but echoing Newmark's conclusion to a notable extent, Girard (2007) discusses the challenge of translating the formal and dynamic aspects of pun by arguing that "puns are translatable but involve the inevitable loss of information not only in the form or code (signifier), but also in the content or message (signified)."

In short, the preservation of both form and content when translating pun is, to put it mildly, a difficult task. As with the translation of poetry, as Newmark implies, the translator may choose or be obliged to focus on either form or content; indeed, given that translation is more centrally concerned with transmission of meaning, it frequently occurs that what is lost in translation is precisely the aesthetic intention. In the case of the NA[iii], which inextricably binds the thematic and the aesthetic, this leads to a serious diminution not solely of impact, but also of the work's relevance in another language. Delabastita (2007, 170), however, as a practicing translator is more concerned both to recognize the challenges of translating puns, and to propose ways in which, translators may competently deal with such challenges. He acknowledges that the linguistic mechanism and semantic force of pun has long been the bane of literary translators — so much so that many researchers have regarded pun as untranslatable, but the overall movement of his book is to reject the label of untranslatability and instead to emphasise the endless creativity of translator's agency.

As noted, it is important that the translator of the NA confronts the challenges of the particular form of pun deployed in the book, where punning language has surface and implied meanings, noting that, in general, it is the enhanced or supplementary meaning that is intended. But, of course, there is a significant difference between translating Shakespeare (who is Delabastita's principal interest) for a re-creative medium like the stage and working with a religious text whose enhanced meanings are so closely dependent on formal rhetorical elements. So, while the translator will clearly struggle to reproduce the effect of the original pun, to find appropriate renderings for both near and far elements (in English, these are generally referred to as 'vertical' and 'horizontal'), it is important that s/he also has prime regard for the cultural factors while translating the meanings in the NA into English.

At this stage, however, before proceeding to a detailed analysis of the specific translational challenges arising from decoding and translating pun in the NA, a more general consideration of

possible strategies for translating pun would be useful, principally to provide a framework for analysis of the methods adopted by Jafery and Al-Jibouri in their respective translations.

Delabastita (2004), for example, offers an elaborate list of strategies, according to which the translator might render the source text (ST) pun as a pun or a non-pun by drawing on related RDs, endeavouring to compensate elsewhere in the translation (bearing in mind that he is referring primarily to texts for performance), although he also discusses editorial interventions that offer exegetic footnotes explaining both the differences between the two languages and any possible solution. His clear conclusion, however, is that to translate a source pun into a non-pun by rendering both punning elements literally is the least effective translational choice in that it not only obviates form, but also tends to impact negatively on meaning. But while, on the one hand, the conveying of a paraphrased source pun into a paraphrased target pun might well offer the most straightforward and, at times, least damaging option, it is possible that a thickened translation, in the way Delabastita suggests, might work well in the case of the NA, whereby each pun is fully activated in and through the interplay of two translations either provided consecutively in the text or, if possible, through another textual device, such as footnotes or hypertext – in other words, each translation offers one meaning of the pun.

Newmark (1988, 211) also suggests various strategies for rendering puns. He sets out four approaches that are determined by the function, form and mechanisms of the pun itself. In the first instance, he notes that if a pun is used for comic effect, it can be compensated for by another pun with a different but related meaning. The key element here is functional equivalence, which would have clear limitations in the translation of the NA, simply because ʿAlī Ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib's puns are not intended to evoke humour, but rather to impart advice, wisdom, or facts, all of which are to a very marked degree context-specific. Secondly, Newmark observes, as we have already implied, that in poetry puns tend to be excised due to the inseparability of form and meaning, although he himself advocates the maintenance of some sort of punning element, again from a functionalist point of view – punning understood as a poetic device whose meaning can be manipulated to sit broadly within the poem contextually or thematically. Once again, this is not appropriate to the semantic charge that is an intrinsic element of the NA. Thirdly, however, he argues that when all elements of the single pun are important, these can be

translated by bringing the meanings together in a consciously incongruous way. There is potentially a greater possibility of this working with the NA, because the puns offered here are either a small saying where the idea of the pun is a central concern or an illustrative idea within a sermon. Incongruity, if measured and carefully manipulated, might enable the aesthetic enrichment of the languages, and point to the far meaning. But the emphasis here must be on careful translator control because there is also the danger that such incongruity might distract the reader from the semantic import of the original.

Fourthly, again following Newmark's framework, when puns are used to indicate issues of understanding or linguistic processing, as might be the case, for example, in a slip of the tongue, he emphasizes that when meaning (or in this case, dislocated meaning) is of more importance than function, both meanings should be translated and explained. Since puns in the NA are not intended to be funny or to be a solely poetic device but are crucial vectors where form and content are one, it is this final strategy (which in turn prefigures Delabastita's advocacy of thick translation) that one might conclude is most appropriate for the task in hand. Clearly, there is a strongly prescriptive element in both Newmark's and this analysis, but in the case of the religious text that we are considering, there are constraints on the translator's accuracy that are much more rarely found in other text types. What is certainly true is that, while providing two translations makes less creative demands of the translator, in terms of reader apprehension it offers the advantage of providing a clarification of the pun, both in terms of form and meaning. There may be an objection that such doubleness interrupts reception, making reader experience fragmented and intermittent, but the fact remains that the NA is read primarily as an object of study where extra-textual apparatus, such as annotations and glosses, are considered an intrinsic part of reader engagement with the text. However, before I proceed to look at how successfully (or not) all (or any) of these strategies may be applied to the translation of the NA, the section immediately following must offer a brief introduction to what the two principal forms that pun may take in Arabic.

3. Categories of *Tawriya*

As a result of the duplicity of meaning that characterises puns — the result of the coexistence of surface meaning that is not intended and implied one that is — considerable challenges are posed when it comes to any attempt to reproduce them in another language. In the context of the NA, this is primarily the result of the linguistic contradictions between Arabic and English

which will be described in this chapter. In Arabic, moreover, as we have noted, there is a differentiation between categories of pun – *attawriya almuğarrada* and *attawriya almuraššaḥa* (Almadanī 1969, 5; Alḥāšimī 1999, 301; and Alqazwīnī 2003, 267), both types will be discussed separately in the following discussion.

4.1 Attawriya Almuğarrada (Abstract Pun)

In Arabic, abstract pun is referred to as 'التورية المُجردة - attawriya almuğarrada', principally because its meanings are abstracted from the *muwarrā bih* in the text (Almadanī 1969, 5; Alḥāšimī 1999, 301; Alqazwīnī 2003, 267). That is to say, one word or phrase may have more than one distinct meaning (near and far) in a sentence. For instance, in the example discussed above, the two meanings of the word 'روحي - rūḥī' are 'go away' and 'my spirit', so despite entirely different semantic meanings, each sense accords with the sentence, making full and clear sense. By way of illustration, the following example and its two English translations in Table 1, in which ʿAlī Ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib speaks about the construction of the universe (Sermon 1) and which can thus be seen as one of the NA's scientific texts, will be analysed in light of the abstract pun it contains.

Table 1: (Abstract Pun)

ST Extract	Transcription	Jafery's Translation	Al-Jibouri's Translation
...أُمَّ زَيَّنَها بِزِينَةِ الكَوَاكِبِ، وضِيَاءِ الثَّوَاقِبِ وأجْرَى فِيهَا سِرَاجاً مُسْتَطِيراً، وقَمَراً مُنِيراً في فَلَكٍ دائِرٍ، وسَقْفٍ سائِرٍ، ورقِيمٍ مائِرٍ. (ʿAlī Ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib 2006, 17)	... tumma zayyanahā bizīnati alkawākibi, wadiyāʾi attawāqibi waʾağrā fīhā sirāğan mustaṭīran, waqamaran munīran.	... The skies (galaxies) were (and are still today) floating in space without any support, occupying their places without any prop. He then allowed (each galaxy) to be adorned with its luminous suns or stars, planets (reflecting lights of sun) and satellites (moons). (Jafery 1965, 112)	.... Then He decorated them with stars and the light of meteors and hung in it the shining sun and effulgent moon. (Al-Jibouri 2009, 300)

Following the standard methodology used throughout this paper, we shall interpret the meaning of the example as well as examining certain lexical items it contains (including, of course, the abstract pun) before analysing the translation challenges that the pun poses. In this

regard, the word 'وأَجْرَى - waʾağrā' signifies the verb 'put'; the word 'سِرَاجاً - sirāğan' literally means 'lamp' or 'light', while the adjective 'مُسْتَطِيراً - mustaṭīran' means 'widespread' or 'outspread'. Generally speaking, this sermon can be classified as a scientific text, as noted above, because it speaks of the sky, the earth, and beginnings. The example does not only include pun but also other RDs such as assonance and alliteration. According to Alʾasadī's interpretation (2006, 82) of this quotation, the pun arising in the lexical item 'sirāğan' has two meanings: the first meaning (near) is 'lamp', a light that shines in the night, and the linguistic indication in the context is the verb 'waʾağrā - to hang'; whilst the second meaning (far), which is premeditated by the speaker, is 'sun', the star that turns night into day. Both meanings share the feature that they remove darkness and bring light to their surroundings.

Jafery and Al-Jibouri approach the translation of this polysemous lexical item differently. The phrase incorporating the pun is 'مُسْتَطِيراً وأَجْرَى سِرَاجاً فِيهَا - waʾağrā fīhā sirāğan mustaṭīran'; it is translated by Jafery as 'to be adorned with its luminous suns or stars, planets (reflecting lights of sun) and satellites (moons)' and by Al-Jibouri as 'and hung in it the shining sun'. Firstly, Al-Jibouri's strategy appears to be to adapt the literal rendition of the entire extract. Since a pun has two senses, the translator may not be able to produce another pun in the target language (TL); s/he either focuses on the near meaning or the far one. In this sense, Al-Jibouri interprets the underlying meaning of 'sirāğan' which is the 'sun', neglecting the surface one; therefore, we find no pun in Al-Jibouri's translation. He may opt not to render the pun into the TL, and this may be due to his failure to detect the existence of the pun in the ST. Furthermore, he transfers the second meaning of 'sirāğan' (the sun) directly, literally rendering the verb 'waʾağrā' as 'hung in it', where it refers to the sun. Jafery, on the other hand, deletes the verb 'hang' that describes the sun and uses the verb 'adorn' which is deployed to describe how God adorns the sky with stars; in doing so, he merges the description of stars, planets and the sun into one verb, 'adorn'. In this case, he translates the abstract pun as 'luminous suns' and then describes how the planets are reflecting the light of the sun – which is not mentioned in the original – as 'reflecting lights of sun'.

Consequently, because Jafery follows an exegetic translation approach, there is no pun in the English translation or even the merest indication of the existence of a pun in the original. It might again be surmised that Jafery does not recognise the pun in the ST due to the highly rhetorical nature of the NA, with the result that his English translation passes over it in silence.

Alternatively, he may simply neglect to transfer it to the target text (TT) by instead providing a detailed explanation of the idea that is being communicated with the pun in the original. In general terms, the procedure followed by Jafery is to interpret the meaning of the full text (similar to other instances as we have seen in the discussions of the previous examples); that is to say, he produces a sense translation of the original pun in the TL. Even if the translator seeks the meaning of the text and not the form, particularly when rendering the NA, many situations may require interpretations of certain lexical terms, but to over-interpret may lead to the loss of the rhetorical device (RD), the loss of the effect of the original, and even to a misunderstanding of meaning. This is, in fact, what happens in Jafery's translation, which is arguably made wordy through the addition of unnecessary intercalation, for example, he differentiates between the light of the sun and the moon in his translation, where the original separately attaches an adjective to each, portraying the power of the light itself.

On the other hand, Jafery provides one adjective for both the sun and the moon as 'luminous sun or stars', whereas Al-Jibouri chooses to distinguish between them as 'the shining sun and effulgent moon', where 'shining', as the equivalent of 'mustaṭīran', according to Attamīmī (2013, 20), semantically conveys a stronger, more powerful light than the heavily poeticised 'effulgent'.

So, although Arabic conceptualises pun as a single word/phrase that gives an utterance two (or more) distinct meanings, in the English translation, the translator may create any type of pun; Delabastita's classification is useful here (1996, 128) including homonymic (identical sounds and spelling), homophonic (identical sounds but different spellings), homographic (different sounds but identical spelling), or parhophony (slight differences in both spelling and sound).

Hence, in the case of pun, the translator has greater flexibility in rendering the device in English thanks to the variety of options available — although, of course, much depends on both the context and the linguistic capability of the translator. In the example discussed here, Jafery and Al-Jibouri, however, elect to circumvent the problem of translating pun by drawing

respectively on dynamic translation strategies or by omitting the pun entirely, focusing on communicating the meaning in English without formally acknowledging the pun. It may be that our translators have refused to make a choice between translating either the surface or the underlined meaning, preferring instead to communicate a meaning that is as clearly enunciated as possible. By the same token, however, had they wished to enrich the target audience with

more information, they might have chosen to provide such information through any sort of thickening medium, such as footnotes or brackets, explaining that there is a pun in the text and referring the reader to its other level of implied meaning. Of course, one other translation strategy that the translator of pun may choose to adopt is that of literal translation, in which at least some sense of the pun is retained in English (as I suggest in my own translation in the following paragraph).

So, having considered the translations offered by Jafery and Al-Jibouri, my following translation is based on an attempt to reflect the sermon's generally accepted meaning by following the literal translation of the lexical item 'sirāğan - lamp' and letting the audience predict its second meaning: '... and adorned it with shining lamp and bright moon under the revolving sky, moving the ceiling and rotating firmament'. In this more heavily literal translation, 'lamp', enables the audience to predict that lamp refers to the 'sun' from the constituent parts of the sentence and the context – particularly, references to sky, planets, moon and firmament etc. The connotation of 'sun' is also facilitated by placing the adjective 'shining' before 'lamp', as a clear collocation. For these reasons, the context should allow the reader of the translation to deduce that there is a second meaning of 'sirāğan', which is sun.

4.2 Attawriya Almuraššaḥa[iv] (Almuraššaḥa Pun)

In Arabic, this category of pun is referred to as 'التورية المُرشحة - attawriya almuraššaḥa', primarily because it pairs with what suits the near (apparent) meaning (Alḥāšimī 1999, 301; Alqazwīnī 2003, 267). Because the researcher couldn't find a clear and precise translation of this rhetorical term, I chose to transliterate it in English and then describe what it means. The following example in Table 2 will help us to examine the challenges of translating this type of pun. It draws upon Saying 232, which talks about donation.

Table 2: Attawriya Almuraššaḥa (Almuraššaḥa Pun)

ST Extract	Transcription	Jafery's Translation	Al-Jibouri's Translation
من يُعط باليَد القَصيرة يُعط باليَد الطويلة. (ʿAlī Ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib 2006, 591)	man yuʿṭi bilyadi alqaṣīrati yuʿṭa bilyadi aṭṭawīlati.	The little that you give for God will bring great returns to you. (Jafery 1965, 525)	If one gives with the short hand, he will be given with the long one. (Al-Jibouri 2009, 571)

In terms of our earlier discussion as to the interrelatedness in Arabic between pun and musicality, it is worth mentioning that the example not only includes pun but also assonance and alliteration. Our discussion here, however, is focussed on pun itself, although it is no less worth mentioning that the translation of musicality is, in its own right, a key test of translator ingenuity. What is notable here is that both English translations are strikingly different, a difference at root that can only be fully explained by considering each component of this RD. The surface meaning of the two senses of puns – الْيَدِ الطَّوِيلَةِ - alyadi aṭṭawīlati' and ' الْيَدِ الْقَصِيرَةِ - alyadi alqaṣīrati' – employed in the saying implies that the lexical items 'ālyadi - hand' refers to 'bestowal' and the two lexical items 'aṭṭawīlati - long' and 'alqaṣīrati - short' signify the extent of bestowal respectively. The linguistic meanings of these puns are: the verb 'يُعطِ - yuʻṭi' is derived from the verb 'to give' which means 'the person who gives', while the latter is the verb 'يُعطَ - yuʻṭa' which means 'to be given', whereby the 'alḥarakāt al'iʻrābiya - case endings'of the two verbs 'yuʻṭi' and 'yuʻṭa' occupy a significant role in converting the denotative meaning. The use of long and short hand in this context does not refer to the precise sense, the physical, of the 'hand'; rather it alludes to generosity and bestowal, so that short hand refers to 'the generosity of the human', and long hand indicates 'the generosity of God'. Such generosity is, importantly, not confined to money, but can also be related to kindness and goodness. In other words, in this pun there are sharp linguistic and cultural discrepancies between both languages at play. Once again, within this broad context of difference, the usual difficulties of translating puns apply – in particular, the way in which the cleverness of pun derives from its ability to link richly connotative but very precisely chosen words – so that, effectively, the translator, once again, may prioritise surface meaning (as in my translation of the previous example, given above) by following a literal translation, from which the reader may deduce the second meaning of the pun – in which case, the pun may be achieved. On the other hand, a translator may focus on the unapparent sense, ignoring the apparent, so that now the pun cannot be achieved. Once again, much depends both on the range of possibilities offered by the verbal choices available to the translator in English, and on the intersection of meanings that the original pun seeks to generate.

Let us consider Jafery's translation, by way of illustration. He abandons the literal translation of the original to concentrate on an exegetical version, effectively interpreting the meaning of how God will reward a person more even if s/he gives little by saying 'The little that you give for God

will bring great returns to you' and, in the process, neglecting the pun in terms of its near and far constituent elements alike – in other words, there is no mentioning of the long or short hand in his translation. In contradistinction, Al-Jibouri observes a literal approach, transferring both phrases – 'bilyadi alqaṣīrati' and 'bilyadi aṭṭawīlati' – as 'short hand' and 'long hand' respectively. There is a danger of misconstrual in this. At first glance, the target reader may interpret 'short hand' as the person who is not generous, whereas, in that case, 'long hand' might be understood as attributed to the person who is generous or to the action of generosity itself. 'Short hand' in the original in fact refers to the person who is generous but gives little, and this little may be all they have, so that they will not only be generous but also the most generous so that, in effect, the implication of the original may be reversed in Al-Jibouri's translation. This leads to the question: does the literal translation in this case allow the reader to deduce either the second meaning of the pun, or indeed its surface meaning? To put it succinctly: does this literal translation divert the original surface sense? One cannot assume reader response is univocal, but there is a clear danger in this translation that, while the reader might grasp the fact that there is some sort of pun at play, the meaning is lost and the impact of the punning itself is reduced to confusion.

However, in addition to this translation, Al-Jibouri appends a clarification provided by Arraḍī, the compiler of the NA, in order to elucidate the underlying meaning of the pun as follows:

> Al-Radi has said, "The meaning of this statement is that if one spends out of his wealth in the way of goodness and kindness, though it may be little, Allah Almighty will make its reward great. The 'short hand' here is a reference to that of the servant of Allah, whereas the long one is a connotation of the Lord, the most Exalted One, Who is never weakened by giving and Who provides with a lot for what is little" (Al-Jibouri 2009, 571).

As we have noted above, as most of the punning expressions used in Arabic in general and in the NA in particular are closely referenced to the specifics of culture and language, one of our mooted ways of translating pun into English is to provide two translations of the source: one that refers to the apparent meaning and the other that represents the unapparent one. Another solution that we have discussed briefly is that of thickening – in this case, appending an explanatory or, as here, scholarly footnote. One might therefore argue that Al-Jibouri's provision of Arraḍī's interpretation of 'long hand' and 'short hand' (cited in ʿAlī Ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib, 2006) assists him to acquaint the receiver with the far connotation of both phrases, while his word for word

translation allows the reader to locate the existence of the pun. Of course, one might argue in return that this makes the reader's experience more complex, but that, in turn, may not be out of keeping with a text of this nature. We would certainly not wish to suggest a standard solution to this issue of translation. In that spirit, we would suggest that another feasible solution might lie in the addition of some sort of clarification in brackets – for example, "if one gives with the short hand (little), he will be given with the long one (more)", whereby with minimum intervention the pun becomes visible and the translation more comprehensible to the target reader.

Comparing the two translations, we can see that Jafery's focuses on the transfer of content as he communicates the message without considering its rhetorical feature; consequently, we have no pun in the English translation. Al-Jibouri, on the other hand, translates the same sentence literally, and leaves it to the English reader to guess the, potentially imperceptible, meaning of 'short hand' and 'long hand'. Due to the cultural differences that we have constantly alluded to, English-language readers, especially if they are not Muslims, may well not distinguish between 'short hand' and 'long hand', and consequently not understand the intended meaning of the pun, i.e. 'short hand' signifies the person who gives little, while 'long hand' refers to the great retribution of God for an individual who contributes a small amount. So, while Jafery attempts to communicate the message without considering the rhetorical feature, as a result of which we lose the pun, Al-Jibouri seeks to communicate the message as well as to convey the RD literally, running the risk that the target audience may or may not understand the second meaning of the pun. And yet, if the translator strives for meaning rather than sense and form, as well as being unable to translate the pun into a pun due to the acute linguistic and cultural differences between Arabic and English, the translator can produce the original meaning which may resemble this proverb from the Bible.

> Give, and it will be given to you. You will have more than enough. It can be pushed down and shaken
> together and it will still run over as it is given to you. The way you give to others is the way you will
> receive in return (NLV, Luke, 6:38).

Since the pun is culture-specific, encompassing expressions that are intimately connected to Arabic and Islamic culture, a possible translation strategy may involve suggesting equivalent sayings, such as the one in the quotation above – similar in meaning but dissimilar in form, paraphrasing the connotative meaning of the Arabic in English. For instance, in the case of the Biblical quotation, the imperative in the first statement represents the same sense ʿAlī Ibn ʾAbī

Ṭālib locates in the verb 'yuʿṭi - give' in its general sense (giving everything good and for the benefit of people). Furthermore, in the Biblical quotation, the whole statement 'Give, and it will be given to you' renders, firstly, the idea of a giving that is not restricted to God and, secondly, the idea of the reciprocation of what is given to others is also present. In other words, what is achieved here is the communication of an intelligible meaning in English, where the pun may be sacrificed in terms of form, but the religious import of the message is preserved.

4. Conclusion

This paper has been concerned to examine the translation of *tawriya* (Pun), comparing it with its counterparts in ER. For this RD, this was followed by a critical analysis of excerpts of the NA that contained pun and their two translations as provided by Jafery and Al-Jibouri. By way of summary, for the translation of *tawriya*, it has been shown in this paper that the translation of pun is a challenging task for the Arabic-English translator as each language has its own way of playing on words to produce two different messages. For this reason, different strategies are followed by the translators in the examples that were under investigation here; once again, Jafery focuses on exegesis, Al-Jibouri on literalness. It can therefore be concluded that two possible ways of translating Arabic pun into English are to either translate it literally into the TL in the hope that the target reader may be able to deduce the far meaning in addition to the near one; or to translate the surface meaning and, in addition, provide a thickening (perhaps in a footnote) that explains that it is a pun and presents the implied meaning of this lexical item. A third possibility is to provide two English translations — the first one for the near meaning and a second one for the far one. If none of these options is feasible, the translator may focus on the interpretation of the meaning of the text and delete the pun, i.e. as Jafery did in his translation of the *almurašsaḥa* pun. However, even if the translator provides two interpretations of the pun in the TT, the target receiver cannot experience the impact of the pun in the English translation.

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