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Textual Performativity in the Translation of *Sūrah Maryam*FATIMA ZAHRAE CHOQAIRI⁽¹⁾zahra.choq@gmail.comSOMIA MAAROUFI⁽²⁾Somia.maaroufi@um5r.ac.ma**Abstract:**

This paper investigates how five English translations of *Sūrah Maryam* render illocutionary and perlocutionary dimensions of the text and how the selected translators convey pragmatic meaning in Qur'anic discourse. Grounded in Austin's Speech Act Theory, the study adopts a qualitative analytical approach to examine a selection of Ayahs as translated by Arberry, Pickthall, Asad, Abdel Haleem and Shawkat Toorawa. The Study comprises three sections: a theoretical framework delineating Speech Act Theory and Qur'anic performativity, an analytical section examining selected translations, and a discussion of translational strategies and their pragmatic implications. The findings point out that the translators either prioritise formal adherence to the source text, limiting accessibility to target readers, or domesticate the source text to meet target-readers' expectations, thereby compressing the performative force of the source text. The paper highlights the constraints inherent in translating sacred texts, notably the Qur'ān and underscores the need for a translation model that systematically accounts for the text's pragmatic dimension..

Keywords:

Equivalence, Performativity, Pragmatics, Qur'ān, Translation.

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الأدائية النصية في ترجمة سورة مريم

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المخلص:

يتناول هذا البحث كيفية تمثيل خمس ترجمات إنجليزية لسورة مريم للأبعاد الأدائية والتأثيرية للنص، وكيف ينقل المترجمون قيد الدراسة المعنى التداولي في الخطاب القرآني. اعتمدت الدراسة منهجًا تحليليًا نوعيًا، حيث تم تحليل مجموعة مختارة من الآيات كما وردت في ترجمات أربري، بكتال، وأسد، وعبد الحليم، وشوكت توراوا. ينقسم البحث إلى ثلاثة محاور رئيسية: محور نظري يوضح نظرية أفعال الكلام والأبعاد الأدائية في النص القرآني، ومحور تحليلي يتجلى في دراسة الترجمات المختارة، ومحور يسعى إلى مناقشة الاستراتيجيات الترجمية المطبقة وانعكاساتها التداولية. وتُشير النتائج إلى أن المترجمين إما يفضلون الالتزام الشكلي بالنص الأصلي، مما يقلل من إمكانية وصوله إلى القارئ المستهدف، أو يعيدون صياغة النص لتلبية توقعات المتلقي، الأمر الذي يؤدي إلى تقليص القوة الأدائية للنص الأصلي. ويبرز البحث القيود المرتبطة بترجمة النصوص المقدسة، وخصوصًا القرآن الكريم، ويؤكد على الحاجة إلى نموذج ترجمة يراعي المنهجية التداولية للنص بشكل منهجي.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

التكافؤ، الإنجازية، التداولية، القرآن الكريم، الترجمة.

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Introduction:

Qur'ānic discourse is arguably affiliated with the concept of *alwaq'* (resonance), a quality that accounts for the effective and experiential bearing of the text on the recipient, both cognitively and emotionally (Abd al-Raḥmān, 2014), which not only alludes to the cognitive level of the text's comprehension but also embodies the emotional resonance it may create. Sūrah Maryam, as an emotionally-laden text (Quṭb, 1987, Vol. 4, pp. 2298-2322), aims at inducting theological information and creating a state of self-reflection in the recipient. This is served through the semantic weight of the Sūrah's narratives, along with its performative force of speech.

Conversely, the pragmatic features of the Qur'ān, notably the performative acts of speech, represent an ever-challenging character to translate. The source text (ST) and the target text's (TT) dynamics are constrained by what Abeysekara (2010) calls a "sovereign force of decision". This refers to the translator's agency of either to faithfully, yet merely, preserving the doctrinal semantic context of the ST or claiming agency over the latter to facilitate accessibility to the enactment dimension of the Sūrah, while risking domesticating the meaning.

The two translation strands of Sūrah Maryam reflect a zone of negotiation between the ST's authoritarian tone carried through the performative dimension and the TT's requirements of readability. Insofar as investigating how the selected translators render the illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts, Austin's (1962) view is inspiring as an approach that offers critical insights into the translation of the pragmatics of the Qur'ānic discourse in the Sūrah under study.

The current study examines how illocutionary and perlocutionary acts are rendered in English Translation, with particular reference to Sūrah Maryam. It aims to investigate the extent to which pragmatic meanings are retained, modified, or lost in translation. By fore-

grounding the role of pragmatics, the study contributes to Qur'ānic translation studies by demonstrating the necessity of attending to speech acts in order to achieve interpretive accuracy and communicative fidelity.

1. Theoretical Framework:

1.1. Performativity in the Qur'ānic Discourse

Qur'ānic discourse is argued to be an expressive medium for communicating doctrinal *truths*, igniting emotional and spiritual experiences for the reader through its utterances (Abdul-Raof, 2001; Al-Youbi, 2025). According to Keane (1997), religious language is defined by its intertwining quality of meaning and form, making structure, sounds, and lexis linguistic carriers of the sacred text and embodying utterances that enact a spiritual experience. Thus, the formal "markers" of religious language operate in establishing a relation between the divine and the recipient, negotiating concepts such as the invisibility of the Speaker. This concept, introduced by Keane, refers to the concealment of the sacred text's source, relevantly Allah (God), which triggers a performative interaction between the text and the reader as opposed to a conventional act of reception. Qur'ānic discourse manifests this interaction through its linguistic features, namely speech acts that reflect a contextual authority: the divine word.

The recipient (of the Qur'ānic text) is exposed to an unfamiliar communicative setting, for they do not have access to the speaker/source; by extension, they are unable to receive a direct response. "The supposed participants [in the spiritual speech] do not all share the same spatiotemporal context" (Keane, 1997, p.50). Invisibility of the divine is regarded as a defining characteristic of the religious language in general, and of the Qur'ān in particular. Accordingly, Qur'ānic discourse employs a *metapragmatic* language, through which there is a shift from a mere reporting narrative to an enacting speech, which "may help effect

communication with the spirit world or permit a textual world to direct concrete actions" (Keane, 1997, p.51). This is highly evident in the recitation of the Qur'ān, for instance, as the act is not only confined to conveying the message but also to enacting an emotional intensity for the reciter, through the performative dimensions of the language. In this sense, reading the Qur'ān operates as an enactment of revelation, as the reader performs through the speech acts of submission, remembrance, worship, or supplication, among others, thereby allowing a perlocutionary effect and fostering real-time engagement.

In exploring whether translation can carry the performative weight of the Qur'ān, Austin's Speech Act Theory (1962) is considered an insightful approach, arguing for the possible limitations of language translation in general and the transfer of religious language in particular. As opposed to the constative perspective, which defines language as a sign system operating to inform, Austin introduces a new angle: the performative quality of language. This entails three dimensions of speech acts: the locutionary act, involving the production of sounds and utterance of words; the illocutionary act, referring to the action performed through saying something, for example, requesting; and finally, the perlocutionary act, concerning the effect the utterance has on the listener, for instance, convincing or scaring.

A text, in general, may have different acts of speech in accordance with the context, the speaker, the authority of the speaker and the message. The Qur'ānic text is arguably distinguished by its performative discourse, which is characteristically rich in stories, warnings, commands and guidelines. They convey theological content to the reader while simultaneously provoking emotional and spiritual resonance within them. This double-layered function is viewed as a compelling reason for a successfully performative language, notably when it encompasses the convenient context and the equally appropriate form of expression.

The Qur'ān's translation is argued to have "new structural, textual and rhetorical features ad hoc to the target language" (Abdul-Raof, 2001, p. 10). This may challenge a faithful

transfer of the performative quality of the ST. The non-equivalence between the Qur'an and the transitions can be explored through the following two elements: (a) the varied dimensions and definitions of the speaker's authority between the two languages. The source language (SL) holds a divine character according to individuals, namely believers, while the TT is typically regarded as a humanly accessible speech. (b) The variations of expressive form and the situational context. Consequently, these linguistic and contextual shifts or "misfires", as Austin (1962) refers to, may lead to reducing or distorting the text's meaning and effect.

Through applying Austin's analytical framework to the English rendition of Sūrah Maryam, one is motivated to a) evaluate whether the target readership receives an equivalent semantic transfer, and b) assess the extent to which translation reproduces the illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect of the original. The following model suggests examining the Sūrah with lenses that encompass what is beyond the literal meaning and include the sensory nuances of the text. Prophet Zakariyyā's (Zechariah) intensified supplication to Allah for an offspring, despite his old age and his spouse's infertility, alongside the miraculous birth of Prophet 'īsā (Jesus), particularly his speaking to people while still in the cradle, highlight the performative and extraordinary aspects of the Qur'an broadly and Sūrah Maryam specifically. These stories condition the recipient to reflect upon them and develop a spiritual resonance with the text's underlying message. This immersion, on one hand, operates in accordance with the Tafssir traditions, while conceding a personal experience of individuals constructed by their questions, motivations, and curiosity. On the other hand, such spiritual and cognitive engrossment are enhanced due to the language's performative quality, leading it to be a living language. Thus, rendering this embodiment of spirituality into linguistic representations in the TT without the ST's defining formal features, speech acts may dilute the meaning and hinder the Sūrah's pragmatic communicative function.

The notions of agency and performativity in communication offer critical insights into

the challenges of translating the Qur'ān. Tavaast (2024) argues that meaning is not particularly encoded in words, but rather emerges through the intentional actions of individuals or human agents, as he refers to them. In the context of Qur'ān translation, this signifies the impactful role of the translator, as they arguably reconstruct the meaning into a new linguistic model, instead of merely transferring it from one language to another. Meaning is believed to be created instead of contained. Consequently, the translator's linguistic and stylistic choices directly influence the target readership's response. In other words, the more agency the translator carries over the source text, notably in Sūrah Maryam, the less comparable the target audience's response becomes to that of the source audience. When considering the emotionally and ontologically charged-passage of the Sūrah, Tavaast's model underscores that it is not only about what is translated, but equally how it is translated. The call is to assess semantic fidelity to the text as well as the preservation of performativity.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Pragmatic Equivalence in Translation

The concept of equivalence has been one of the most pertinent quandaries in the field of translation studies. Translators often find themselves required by several factors, notably the target audience's expectations, to create a spitting image of a source text – technically speaking, an equivalent. The complexity is further aggravated when the source text is a religious discourse. The sanctity, holiness, and particularity of these texts necessitate paying attention to the target texts' readers while simultaneously satisfying the source texts' audience, who are usually willing to criticise any translation that they deem strips their spiritual discourse of its holy spirit. Yet, in a world where there are nearly seventy thousand languages with different lexicons, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, achieving equivalency and correspondence at all levels—namely, linguistically, ideologically, and, most importantly,

performatively—seems rather challenging. Nida (1964) and Baker (1992) are among the pioneering books that tackled the concept of equivalence from different angles.

By shifting the focus from formal correspondence to communicative effect, Nida revolutionised the field of translation studies. He was the first to propose the technical terms “formal equivalence”, which emphasises structural similarity, and “dynamic equivalence”, which prioritises message naturalness and response of the target reader. Nida (1964) defended dynamic equivalence and emphasised that translators should not ignore it. His framework revolves around one major token: a good translation is one where the target text’s audience is impacted in the same way the original audience once was affected, or in Nida’s words, “the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (1964, p. 159). Although Nida’s work focused specifically on dynamic equivalence, he called for formal equivalence when possible. Yet being aware of the structural differences between languages and cultures, he recognised that aiming solely for equivalence at the surface level was meant to strip the receptor of the target text of something that was granted to the original reader. Taken all together, Nida’s influential contributions mirror Austin’s theory of performativity. They both seem to acknowledge that communication goes beyond the literal and surface structure of words.

In her influential book *In other words*, Mona Baker (1992) agrees with Nida’s propositions that formal correspondence between languages is quite rare. Throughout the book’s chapters, she demonstrates how differences between languages in terms of symbols, grammar, and semantics pose significant challenges in the translation process. Baker acknowledges that words are sometimes culturally bound and usually do not have an equivalent counterpart in another language. Cream tea, a term familiar to English people, does not have an equivalent in German, forcing the translator to either transliterate it or substitute it with a culturally familiar term, according to Baker.

Influenced by Grice, Austin, Searle and others, Baker observes the paramount relationship between pragmatics and translation. For her, the translator should focus on conveying the communicative effect of the original text rather than aiming to replace each linguistic item with an equivalent one in the target text. In simple words, Baker suggests that translators pay attention to implications and presuppositions in the original work and help the target reader understand them by replacing them with familiar ones in the target culture. Baker's framework, like Nida's, is oriented towards the target reader and recognises the key importance of making the target text accessible as well as relatable. Translating a presupposition, for instance, literally without considering the cultural, contextual, and even political conventions of the target culture risks the reception of the message by the target reader. Building on these two frameworks, this paper aims to investigate the extent to which translators of religious discourse, specifically *Sūrah Maryam*, balance form, function, and pragmatic dimensions of the original text.

2.2. Qur'ān, Pragmatics & Translation

Research linking Qur'ān translation to pragmatics remains underdeveloped, leaving a notable gap in the literature. This section begins with a synthesis of two general studies that examine the Qur'ān in relation to translation and pragmatics. Later on, the scope narrows to discuss research that specifically addresses *Sūrah Maryam*.

All of Mohammed and Khadim (2023) and Al-Azab and Al-Misned (2012) acknowledge the importance of pragmatics in translating the Holy Qur'ān. Yet, they approach the topic from different angles. Mohammed and Khadim's (2023) micro-study investigate the translation of emphasis constructions in the Qur'ān. They analyse Ayahs containing repetitions, rhetorical questions, the particle "Innā", and other emphatic constructions that strengthen and reinforce the divine discourse. The study highlights the focal difference between Arabic and English, especially in terms of emphatic particles and assertive markers.

Accordingly, it argues that, to retrieve the pragmatic force of these constructions in the target language, i.e. English translators are required to transcend formal equivalence and pay attention to the rhetorical context.

In contrast to Mohammed and Khadim (2023), Al-Azab and Al-Misned (2012) conduct a macro-linguistic analysis, investigating the general pragmatic losses in the translation of the Qur'an in terms of genre, cultural terms, word order, ellipses, and the like. The authors argue that the Islamic Scripture's language is endowed with pragmatic meaning. Each syntactical structure highlights illocutionary and perlocutionary forces. Notice, for instance, the syntactical deviation in the following Ayah from Sūrah Al Baqara (The Cow): *وَإِذْ أُنزِلَتْ عَلَيْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ فَأَنْزَلْتَهُمْ بِنُورٍ كَذِبٍ ۗ قَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ۗ* (Wa-idh ibtalā Ibrāhīma rabbuhu bikalimātin), where the subject (*rabbuhu*) is preceded by the object (*Ibrāhīma*), which is a marked syntactical choice in Arabic. This construction helps emphasise the centrality of Ibrahim as the figure being tested and the vividness of the divine discourse. According to the authors, these pragmatic meanings are lost in Pickthall's translation: "And (remember) when his Lord tried Abraham with (His) commands." Al-Azab and Al-Misned (2012) accept that pragmatic losses are inevitable due to the undeniable differences between human languages.

All in all, these studies argue that the translation of the Qur'an should pay attention to pragmatics as an important field. Therefore, focusing solely on replacing linguistic items with equivalent ones in the target language risks distorting the source text's message. Mohammed and Khadim (2023) and Al-Azab and Al-Misned (2012) emphasise that translators be mindful of pragmatic meanings and rhetorical context when translating the Qur'an.

Regarding the focus of the present study, several studies have underscored the importance of Sūrah Maryam as a landmark chapter in the Qur'an on theological, semantic and linguistic levels. However, few have explored the translation of the Sūrah in terms of the Qur'anic performative speech. Accordingly, the remainder of this section considers two pa-

pers that approach an interrelated though not entirely identical area of investigation.

In her Master's thesis, Bajubair (2023) investigates instances of translation loss in five selected English renditions of *Sūrah Maryam*. The researcher is motivated by two main rationales: identifying the causes and manifestations of partial and complete translation loss. The study's data scope concerns *Sūrah Maryam* as a source text and five internationally recognised translations: M.M. Ghali, N.J. Dawood, Hilali and Khan, G. Sale, and A.J. Areberry. The focus is narrowed to explore semantic loss in the five translations by examining semantic shifts at the lexical and phrasal levels.

The study reflects an organised research methodology and a quantitative documentation of data through which the readership can access the semantic loss samples in the TTs. Additionally, the study provides a structured interpretation of the correlation between semantic loss and the lack of cultural context awareness of the source text or a feeble mastery of Arabic vocabulary terms by the translators. However, the paper falls short in incorporating Speech Act Theory to examine the function of the performative dimension of Qur'anic discourse and whether it is preserved or compromised in translations. In other words, the study is merely limited to the semantic role of the words, especially as it exclusively examines the lexical level and is concerned with the rendition of what is said rather than the pragmatic level of the source text; in terms of what is achieved by the studied utterances.

Similarly, AlSwailem (2024) provides a comparative analytical study of the thematic progression of *Sūrah Maryam* in six English translations (Abdel-Haleem, Hilali and Khan, Maududi, Pickthall, Sahih International, and Yusuf Ali), employing the Hallidayan functional grammar approach. The objective of the study is to examine the semantic structure and thematic progression of the *Sūrah* in accordance with the selected six translations. Put another way, the researcher analyses how the *Sūrah's* themes are introduced, developed and altered across the ST and the TTs, assessing textual unity and coherence.

By contrast, this study considers, albeit to a limited extent, the phonological layer within

the thematic analysis of the same Sūrah. The thematic progression in comparison between the ST and the TT is examined through several thematic types and relevant phonological repetition. Thus, the comparison concludes that the Qur'ān's frequent use of rhyme and sound in the Sūrah is lost in translation. While this insight is regarded as a significant remark and a refreshing study angle, it is considered limited to the semantic layer and textual cohesion without exploring how the performative dimension is developed across the ST and the TT and how it is either preserved or compromised in translation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus & Framework:

This paper adopts a qualitative approach to analyse the pragmatic dimension of Sūrah Maryam in five selected translations. The Sūrah's rich, multilayered narrative progression, including supplication, admonition, and revelation, inspires an investigation into how these different types of utterances are rendered in translation. The Sūrah is notably distinguished by its narrative form, which is full of dialogues and interplay of speakers (Allah, Angels, and Prophets), allowing the scholars to examine the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts through several thematic and linguistic contexts. Additionally, regarding the universality of the Sūrah's stories (Zakariyyā's plea, Prophet 'Īsā miraculous birth, and the miracles that followed), the text offers a shared theological narrative, which is commonly recognised. This directly facilitates examining the adopted strategies of translation in a systematic pattern, focusing on the meaning rather than ensuring the TT's credibility vis-à-vis the ST's interpretative traditions. Moreover, the Sūrah remarkably relies on a cadenced rhyme aligning with the thematic progression and the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts manifestation within the text. The phonological, syntactic and semantic cohesion, which the Sūrah reflects, enhances the performative weight, providing an ideal case to investigate the TTs. In order to explore how performativity is altered, preserved or lost in the TT, the study selected a varied

corpus of translators who are widely recognised and critically acclaimed: Arberry, Pickthall, Asad, Abdel Haleem, and Toorawa. Renowned for its microscopic analytical lens that investigates not only what is said but also what it does, Austin's Speech Act Theory allows the study to examine the extent to which translators keep the pragmatics of the Ayahs intact.

3.2. Questions and Objectives

To address the gap in the review of the literature, this paper aims to investigate how the illocutionary and perlocutionary forces in Sūrah Maryam are rendered in five selected translations. To this end, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do different translators render the illocutionary and perlocutionary forces of God's speech in Sūrah Maryam?
2. To what extent do the five translators' adherence or deviation from lexical, phonological, and other linguistic choices in the ST shift the performativity of the original utterance? And what strategies do they employ in translating religious discourse?

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Supplication

(*Du'a*) is a devotional and communicative act through which individuals request Allah for their needs. According to Lane (n.d.), the word *du'ā* refers to the practice of calling Allah verbally and imploring Him spiritually.

Ayahs (Arabic)	<p>إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ نِدَاءً خَفِيًّا (19:03)</p>	<p>قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَأَشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنْ بِدُعَايِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا (19:04)</p>	<p>وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِنْ وَرَائِي وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا (19:05)</p>
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Transliteration	Idh nādā rabbahu nidāan khafīyyā	Qāla rabbi innī wahana l-‘aẓmu minnī washta‘ala l-rasu shaybā walam akun bidu‘āika rabbi shakiyyā	Wa-innī khif̣tu l-mawāliya min warāī wakānati im‘ra-atī ‘āqīran fahab lī min ladunka waliyyā
Arberry	when he called upon his Lord secretly	Saying, ‘O my Lord, behold the bones within me are feeble and my head is all aflame with hoariness. And in calling on Thee, my Lord, I have never been hitherto unprosperous.	And now I fear my kins- folk after I am gone; and my wife is barren. So give me, from Thee, a kinsman
Asad	When he called out to his Sus- tainer in the secrecy of his heart.	he prayed: «O my Sustainer! Feeble have become my bones, and my head glistens with grey hair. But never yet, O my Lord, has my prayer unto Thee remained unan- swered.	«Now, behold, I am afraid of [what] my kinsfolk [will do] after I am gone, for my wife has always been bar- ren. Bestow, then, upon me, out of Thy grace, the gift of a successor
Abdel Haleem	when he called to his Lord secret- ly, saying,	‘Lord, my bones have weak- ened and my hair is ashen grey, but never, Lord, have I ever prayed to You in vain:	I fear [what] my kins- men [will do] when I am gone, for my wife is barren, so grant me a successor—a gift from You—

Pickthall	When he cried unto his Lord a cry in secret,	Saying: My Lord! Lo! the bones of me wax feeble and my head is shining with grey hair, and I have never been unblest in prayer to Thee, my Lord.	Lo! I fear my kinsfolk after me, since my wife is barren. Oh, give me from Thy presence a successor
Toorawa	when he called to his Lord, calling secretly	saying, 'My Lord, my bones have weakened and my head blazes grey, but never in petitioning You, my Lord, have I felt despondency.	I fear my heirs who shall come after me, and my wife is barren. Bestow on me, from You directly, an heir and accessory,

Analysis of the Source Text

The three Ayahs reflect the theme of supplication, which inaugurates Sūrah Maryam. Zakariyyā, the Prophet, engages in an act of pleading to Allah for offspring. Across the texts, the selection of words, syntactic structures, and phonological features reinforces their semantic depth and intensifies their performative force.

While the first Ayah (19:03) takes a past-tense narrative form, through which the Prophet is depicted as praying in concealment, it carries directive and assertive tones. The Ayah opens with a depiction of Prophet Zakariyyā's earnest call to God, expressed through the verb *nādā*. According to the Mukhtar Sahih Dictionary (n.d.), the verb means to cry out to someone or sit down with a company in an assembly. However distinctive the two meanings may be, they contradict the manner in which the Prophet-God interaction is described in the Ayah through the use of the adjective *khafīyyā* (secretly or privately). Such referential conflict may be resolved by underscoring the emotionally intertwined condition of the addressee himself. According to the Tafsir traditions (Al-Qurṭubī, n.d.; Al-Shawkānī, n.d.; Ibn

Kathīr, n.d.), the action verb is regarded as a catalyst that actualises the active sensibility of the supplicatory act.

The prophet's call took an intense yet intimate way, for the prophet was either worried to be ashamed before his people for asking for children at an old age or to show a sincere devotion towards Allah. Accordingly, *nidāan* describes and transfers the intensity of the event.

As for Ayah (19:04), it comes as a follow-up detail to the preceding one. Zakariyyā, the prophet, unfolds his fragile state by providing a vivid delineation of his weakened bones and grey hair. According to Al-Bayḍāwī (n,d), the bones represent the supporting core of the body and its most rigid part. The word *'āẓm* is employed in the singular form, which indicates the entirety of bones, implying that his old age is an obstacle to having children. Furthermore, through *isti'āra* (metaphor), the whiteness of the prophet's hair is depicted as a flame, strengthening the directive and assertive acts of the text and highlighting the text's reliance on figurative language. This directly evokes the reader's curiosity and enhances their interaction. Additionally, as noted in Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (n.d.) and Ibn Manẓūr's (n.d.) dictionaries, *shaqiyyā* refers to *shakāwa* or *shakā* (a distressed state in this life and afterlife). Lane (n.d.) further elaborates that *shaqiyyā* is to be in a state of distress or difficulty.

The third Ayah aligns with the concepts of devotion, supplication and humility, which the first *juz`* (part) of the Sūrah embodies. In this context, the prophet reveals his fear and concerns about the faith of his family or/and people. Therefore, he asked Allah to grant him an heir. The text fosters the performative dimension of the preceding ones, as it asserts the prophet's request and provides a reason, namely his concern about the faith of his relatives. The direct appeal of the prophet is additionally motivated by the fact of his barren wife.

From the perspective of pragmatics, the three Ayahs serve an illocutionary force of supplication, depicting the vulnerable state of Prophet Zakariyyā, emphasised through several segments in the text, notably the employment of the verb *nādā* (he called) and the cognate

noun *nidāan* (a call). Also, the verb *hab* (grant) intensifies the illocutionary act of the text, viewing that its meaning—denoting limitless and unconditional giving (The Arabic Lexicon, 2025)—mirrors the desperate state of the prophet and his unexceptional request.

Equally important are the rhymed words that each of the three Ayahs closes with *khafiyyā*, *shakiyyā*, and *waliyyā*. The performative relevance of these words lies in their open syllables and final elongation, as these phonological features amplify the meaning and facilitate the transformation of an abstract narrative into a dynamic experience.

In a nutshell, the language of the three Ayahs enacts the complexity of being in a desperate condition, yet maintaining an unwavering faith, through the lexical and phonological choices. A religious text is characterised by its function of evoking an emotional and spiritual experience (Keane, 1997); in consequence, the Ayahs' linguistic features enhance their performativity and transmit the intended pragmatic effect to the reader.

Assessment of the Translations

Examining the provided target texts, the translators render the Ayahs prioritising the semantic fidelity and attenuating, on several occasions, the performative function of the text. The employed strategies vary according to the translators' end-goal in rendition; thus, the TTs display different tones.

Except for Toorawa, the four translators omit the cognate noun *nidā'an*, which is an accentual marker that emphasises the meaning through sound familiarity. This collapse reconfigures the performative force of the Ayah. Concerning the adjective *khafiyyā*, Arberry and Abdel Haleem employ "secretly" imitating the ST's coherence, which lays the Qur'anic strategy into displaying the scenery at loss. Asad and Pickthall's choice of an interpretative approach—in *the secrecy of his heart* and *a cry in secret*, respectively—aligns with the Tafsir's commentary, retaining the semantic content of the original.

Toorawa takes into consideration the ST's reliance on a rhythm thread, the sound roots

repetition, and cadence. Accordingly, he attempts to reproduce an approximate phonological structure “*called...a calling secretly*” of the ST’s based on sound echo “call” and preserving a rhymed end-word (secretly). Toorawa’s rendition is considered structural and provides a closer sound composition to the Ayah. However, it lacks the performative act’s intensity of the text, as it does not describe the totality of the scenery: the secrecy and the sincerity of the experience and the intensity of the supplication. Furthermore, Toorawa’s approach smoothens the act of reading and facilitates the capture of the meaning. Prioritising the phonological form, yet appears to reconfigure the performative function of the Ayah, notably in the examples of “despondency” and “accessory”. The former refers only to emotional distress, while the ST implies a comprehensive experience. The latter mistranslates the ST, introducing a diverging adjective.

Abdel Haleem, Arberry, Asad and Pickthal interpretively render the Ayahs, maintaining a mirroring syntactic scope of the ST and selecting semantically accessible clarifications of the ST, e.g., *feeble*, *hair in grey*, and *all aflame*. Although the translations achieve a faithful semantic transmission, the performative intricacies of the Ayahs are diluted. The lack of an apparent rhythmic thread, sound harmony, and uninterrupted flow of the speech reconfigures the illocutionary essence of the text.

4.2. Admonition

(*waʿẓ*) is a discursive and rhetorical act by which texts or speakers warn, exhort, or remind others of their moral, ethical, and spiritual obligations. It is communicated essentially by invoking the repercussions of human behaviour and appealing to divine sovereignty, as mentioned in Lane (n.d.). The Qur’ān is a fertile area of admonition where Allah seeks to guide the believers and warn the disbelievers. The following is a reflective examination of three Ayahs of admonition.

<p>Ayahs (Arabic)</p>	<p>فَلَا تَعْجَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّمَا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَدًّا (19:84)</p>	<p>يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ وَفْدًا (19:85)</p>	<p>وَنَسُوقُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ وِرْدًا (19:86)</p>
<p>Transliteration</p>	<p><i>Falā taʿjal ʿalayhim innamā naʿdu la- hum ʿaddā</i></p>	<p><i>Yawma naḥshu- ru l-muttaqīna ilā l-raḥmāni wafdā</i></p>	<p><i>Wa nasūqu l-mu- jrimīna ilā jahannama wirdā</i></p>
<p>Arberry</p>	<p>So hasten thou not against them; We are only numbering for them a number.</p>	<p>On the day that We shall muster the god-fearing to the All-merciful with pomp</p>	<p>and drive the evildoers into Gehenna herding,</p>
<p>Asad</p>	<p>Hence, be not in haste [to call down God's punishment] upon them: for We but number the number of their days.</p>	<p>On the Day when We shall gather the God-conscious unto [Us,] the Most Gracious, as honoured guests,</p>	<p>and drive those who were lost in sin unto hell as a thirsty herd is driven to a well</p>
<p>Abdel Haleem</p>	<p>There is no need for you to be impatient concerning them: We are counting down their [allotted] time.</p>	<p>On the Day We gather the righteous as an honoured company before the Lord of Mercy</p>	<p>and drive the sinful like a thirsty herd into Hell</p>
<p>Pickthall</p>	<p>So make no haste against them (O Muhammad). We do but number unto them a sum (of days).</p>	<p>On the day when We shall gather the righteous unto the Beneficent, a goodly company.</p>	<p>And drive the guilty unto hell, a weary herd,</p>
<p>Toorawa</p>	<p>So do not make haste against them We keep close count</p>	<p>The day We round up the pious for the Lord of Mercy as a contingent</p>	<p>And the sinful, like a thirsting herd, to Hell all send</p>

Analysis of The Source Text

According to Ibn Kathīr (n.d.), in Ayah (19:84), Allah addresses the Prophet Muhammad, commanding him not to hasten the punishment of disbelievers and assures him that all actions, whether good or evil, are indeed recorded. The use of the verb *naʿuddu* (we count) followed by the verbal noun *ʿaddā* (counting) conveys emphasis and reinforces the Ayah's stylistic solemnity and inevitability.

The last two Ayahs portray a comparative scenery between the rewarded good destiny of believers and the deserved evil destiny of disbelievers in the afterlife. Ayah (19:85) describes the honourable state of the God-fearing and promises them the rewards of their righteous actions. Al-Qurṭubī (n.d.) and Al-Ṭabarī's (n.d.) exegeses support this by stating that the noun *wafd* (delegation) has positive connotations, namely honour, privilege, and tribute.

In contrast, Ayah (19:86) describes the disgraceful state of the sinners and warns them of the harsh consequences of their wrongful actions. Al-Qurṭubī (n.d.) explains that the use of the verb *nasūqu* (We drive) and *wirdā* (herding) signifies humiliation and coercion. Through examining the positive connotations of the linguistic items (*naḥshuru* & *wafdā*) in the former Ayah and the negative connotations of the latter (*nasūqu* & *wirdā*), Al-Razī (n.d.) acknowledges the eschatological contrast between the two Ayahs. The structural parallelism of the two Ayahs creates a situational dichotomy, facilitating the audience's engagement and apprehension.

From a pragmatic perspective, these three Ayahs create a religious scenery where several speech acts are not only adjacent but also complementary. The first Ayah has a directive and assertive force, the second a promissive force, and the third a threatening or cautionary force. Accordingly, each one of them seems to impact the receptor in a particular way: the first Ayah fosters and reinforces the prophet's confidence in God, the second Ayah reassures

believers that their deeds are to be rewarded, and the third Ayah instils fear in the disbelievers by warning them of the consequences of their wrongdoings.

It is worth noting that these effects are phonologically reinforced through the remarkable display of alliteration and assonance. In Ayah (19:84), for example, the glottal stop *ʿ* (ayn), the dental *d*, and the imperative verb accentuate God's firmness and sovereignty. The parallelism (*naʿuddu, naḥshuru, and nasūqu*) enhances the agentivity, control, and inevitability of the divine entity. Equally interesting is the sound *dā* at the end of each Ayah, which creates a rhythmic cohesion.

Assessment of the Translations

Although all of Arberry, Pickthall, Abdel Haleem, Asad, and Toorawa retain most of the propositional exposition of the original Ayahs, their fidelity varies when it comes to illocutionary and perlocutionary forces. Acknowledging the importance of the linguistic items, Arberry attempts earnestly to recreate a similar form to *naʿuddu...ʿaddā*, opting for *numbering...a number*. This translational choice risks the target reader's comprehension, who, arguably, will find this formula inaccessible. In addition to this, by employing archaic language, e.g., *hasten thou not*, Arberry aims to preserve the directive, assertive, and declarative acts of the source Ayahs. All in all, these choices display his steadfast commitment to the original text.

Pickthall's translation navigates between loyalty to the source text and the target reader. He opts for a slightly archaic form, e.g., *make no haste*, maintaining the judicial form. In parallel, he adds information between brackets, seeking to facilitate the target reader's processing of the text. Asad's translation is nearly an interpretive version of the original. He adds semantic clarifications, such as *to call down God's punishment* when necessary, to clarify the meaning of the Ayah to the target reader; this compromise does affect the performativity of the Ayahs. Abdel Haleem distorts the directive tone of the original first Ayah by opting for a moderated choice, i.e., *There is no need for you to be impatient*, which

softens the firmness of the divine discourse.

Toorawa succeeds in retaining the rhythmic and phonological resonance of the original Ayahs. The sounds /k/ in the first Ayah, /h/ in the third Ayah, and /t/ at the end of all Ayahs create a similar impact on the target readers. That being said, the creation of this rhythmical resonance comes hand in hand with the abandoning of the firm tone of the original Ayahs. Driven by the legitimate impulse to end all Ayahs with the sound /t/, the translator backgrounds the verb "send", which makes the action no longer performed by the divine agency, resulting in the distortion of the Ayah (19:86).

All in all, motivated by their loyalty to the source text or the target reader, the five translators opt for different strategies. Arberry and Pickthall try to conform to the form and message of the ST. Through the insertion of explanations, Asad and Abdel Haleem aim to make the TT accessible to the target reader. Finally, Toorawa's dedication to imitating the resonance of the ST sometimes causes pitfalls.

4.3. Revelation (*wahy*) refers to the act of a divine source communicating knowledge, truth, and will to a recipient, often through a celestial intermediary such as an angel. Following Austin's (1964) words, "to say something is, in the appropriate circumstances, to do something" (p.94), it seems that revelation is not merely a transmission of information, but rather a performative act of divine discourse, warning, informing, creating, etc. The following analysis will illustrate how language can shift from representing reality to producing it and the extent to which translators succeed in recreating this in translation.

<p>Ayahs (Arabic)</p>	<p>فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا (19:17)</p>	<p>قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا (19:19)</p>	<p>قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّنٌ وَلِنَجْعَلَهُ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَقْضِيًّا (19:21)</p>
<p>Transliteration</p>	<p><i>Fattakhadat min dunihim hijaban fa-arsalna ilayha ruhanā fatamathala lahā basharan saw-iyyan</i></p>	<p><i>Qāla innamā anā rasūlu rabbiki li-ahaba laki għulāman zakiyyan</i></p>	<p><i>Qāla kathāliki qāla rabbuki huwa ‘alayya hayyinun wa-linaj’alahu āyatan li-nnāsi wa-rahmatan min-nā wa-kāna amran maqdiyyan</i></p>
<p>Arberry</p>	<p>and she took a veil apart from them; then We sent unto her Our Spirit that presented himself to her a man without fault.</p>	<p>He said, ‘I am but a messenger come from thy Lord, to give thee a boy most pure.</p>	<p>He said, ‘Even so thy Lord has said: \»Easy is that for Me; and that We may appoint him a sign unto men and a mercy from Us; it is a thing decreed.</p>
<p>Asad</p>	<p>and kept herself in seclusion from them, whereupon We sent unto her Our angel of revelation, who appeared to her in the shape of a well-made human being.</p>	<p>[The angel] answered: «I am but a messenger of thy Sustainer, [who says,] ‘I shall bestow upon thee the gift of a son endowed with purity’».</p>	<p>[The angel] answered: «Thus it is; [but] thy Sustainer says, ‘This is easy for Me; and [thou shalt have a son,] so that We might make him a symbol unto mankind and an act of grace from Us». And it was a thing decreed [by God]</p>

Abdel Hal-eem	and secluded herself away; We sent Our Spirit to appear before her in the form of a perfected man.	but he said, 'I am but a Messenger from your Lord, [come] to announce to you the gift of a pure son.'	and he said, 'This is what your Lord said: "It is easy for Me— We shall make him a sign to all people, a blessing from Us."' And so it was ordained
Pickthall	And had chosen seclusion from them. Then We sent unto her Our Spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man.	He said: I am only a messenger of thy Lord, that I may bestow on thee a faultless son.	He said: So (it will be). Thy Lord saith: It is easy for Me. And (it will be) that We may make of him a revelation for mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a thing ordained.
Toorawa	She placed a screen between them and her. Then We sent her Our Spirit, who appeared to her as a man, formed fully.	I am only a messenger from your Lord,' he said, 'come to bestow on you a son of great purity.	'It shall be so!' he said. 'Your Lord says, "It is easy for Me! — We shall make him a Sign for people and a Mercy from Us".' This is a firm decree.

Analysis of the Source Text

Applying Austin's Speech Act Theory sheds light on the deep performative nature of the three Ayahs: sending, informing, promising, and reassuring. Ayah (19:17) opens with an insinuation of the chastity and devotion of Maryam (Mary), a girl who leaves her people and heads to a secluded place to worship Allah. Later on, the Ayah mentions an angel sent by the Almighty, whom Al-Ṭabarī (n.d.), Al-Qurṭubī (n.d.) and Ibn Kathīr (n.d.) agree is Jibril (Gabriel), who appeared to Maryam as a well-proportioned man. Al-Razī (n.d.) states that this miracle of "tamathul" aimed to reassure Maryam, arguing that if he were to appear in his supernatural nature, she would have been terrified. This Ayah portrays the very first

moments of human-divine interaction.

It is worth noting that the following two Ayahs serve to clarify Maryam's inquiries, unfolding a dialogue between a messenger of God and a human being; thus portraying the hierarchical nature of revelation. In Ayah (19:19), the angel reassures Maryam of his identity as a messenger of God, who will grant her a pure son. Muslim scholars acknowledge the difficulty posed by the verb *li-ahaba* in that it suggests that the angel is the one who will grant Maryam Prophet 'Īsā. Al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr (n.d.) disagree with this interpretation, emphasising that God is the sole creator, and the angel is acting in accordance with the divine commands. This Ayah, therefore, enacts the announcement of one of the most remarkable events in theological history, the miraculous birth of Jesus.

According to Al-Ṭabarī (n.d.) and Ibn Kathīr (n.d.), the third Ayah (19:21) depicts the omnipotence of the Almighty, as a miraculous child is to be born from the womb of a virgin. The word *hayyin* (easy), as Al-Ṭabarī mentions, affirms that what seems impossible to human reason is trivial to Allah. The Ayah closes with *amran maqḍiyyā* (a matter already decreed), which declares that the divine wish had already been enacted, and no further discussion would abrogate it. This Ayah, therefore, reassures Maryam and the audience of the power, omnipotence, and inevitability of God's will.

Each of the three Ayahs contains a powerful verb, *fa-arsalnā*, *li'ahaba*, and *kāna amran maqḍiyyan*, respectively, which does not merely represent a linguistic item but carries illocutionary force. Hence, these verbs ascend description to action. In other words, *fa-arsalnā* functions as a performative declaration, where the acts of sending and announcing are performed, *li'ahaba* communicates a divine promise, and *kāna amran maqḍiyyā* serves a perlocutionary closure, securing acceptance and acquiescence in the listener.

All the speech acts displayed in the previous three Ayahs are accompanied by compelling phonological choices that enhance the perlocutionary force of the divine message. The voiceless sounds /s/, /h/, and /n/ in the first Ayah mark the fear and secrecy of *Maryam*. The

second Ayah opts for the sounds /k/, /q/, /ʕ/, and /ʔ/, enhancing the angel's divine authority. The most interesting part of the third Ayah is the majestic conclusion; the use of /q/ and /d/ reassures *Maryam* and the audience of God's sovereignty.

Assessment of the Translations

Analysing the translations through the lens of Austin's (1964) Speech Act Theory allows us to weigh the extent to which the performativity of the original Ayahs is preserved. As alluded to in the previous paragraph, the verbs *fa-arsalnā*, *li'ahaba*, and *kāna amran maqḍiyyā* not only describe actions but also enact them. Arberry and Pickthall manage to preserve the immediacy of God's speech, whereas Asad, Abdel Hallem, and Toorawa do not convey this aspect.

Arberry's translation reproduces the same speech acts of the original three Ayahs and preserves the archaic quality of the language, allowing the modern reader to experience the exoticness of the speech. Arberry, through the use of archaic English, mirrors the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary forces of the original Ayahs. The reader can sense the revelation happening while reading; hence, language is no longer merely reporting, but is already performing. Pickthall's translation is nearly similar to Arberry's; it uses a semi-archaic language and preserves the general message of the original Ayahs. However, he often softens the tone, causing the Ayahs to lose some of their performative force. To illustrate, by adding *may* in the second and third Ayahs, i.e., *that I may bestow on thee a faultless son and that We may make of him a revelation for mankind*, he shifts the original Ayahs' certainty and inevitability to a human-like hesitation, stripping the divine speech of one of the most important qualities, omnipotence.

In contrast, Asad domesticates the speech act by inserting explanations such as *the angel, who says*, and *thou shalt have a son*, apparently to facilitate the target reader's engagement. As much as these explanations are beneficial, they attenuate the performativity of

the original Ayahs. Asad's translation gives the impression of reading a narrative, where the immediacy and directness of the divine entity become shallow. That being said, it is worth mentioning that Asad's translation is the only one that addresses the quandary we encountered when analysing the second Ayah. It was noted that the verb *li-ahaba* suggests that the miraculous pregnancy is to be granted by the angel himself. Asad clearly solves the problem by inserting "who says" in the Ayah: *[The angel] answered: "I am but a messenger of thy Sustainer, [Who says,] 'I shall bestow upon thee the gift of a son endowed with purity'"*, emphasising that the miraculous birth is performed by God only.

Following the same path as Asad, Abdel Haleem attenuates the performativity of the original Ayahs by adding information. Thus, the speech's sharpness often fades away because of his commitment to modern clarity. One of the most interesting cases is noted in Ayah (19:19), where he adds *to announce*, causing the speech to be merely informative, whilst it had an illocutionary act of giving in the original Ayah. This translational choice jeopardises the essence of the holy message and undermines God's authority. God is no longer acting; he's merely informing. It is clearly apparent that Abdel Haleem opts for such choices in pursuit of facilitating the target reader's reception of the narrative. However, his approach attenuates the text's performativity, leading to a loss in translation.

Among the five translations, Toorawa is the only one that attempts to replicate the rhythmicity of the original Ayahs, allowing the target reader to experience a similar sense of assonance and musicality as the original reader. This translation also manages to preserve the essence of the message, the speech acts, and most of the performativity. However, similarly to Asad and Abdel Haleem, Toorawa blurs the qualities of the divine speech. In the second Ayah, for example, he opts for "come" in *come to bestow on you*, which makes the divine promise pending, causing the divine action to appear less immediate.

In brief, Arberry and, to a lesser extent, Pickthall preserve the archaicness, immediacy, and inevitability of the original Ayahs by preserving the illocutionary act of saying is doing.

Toorawa manages to replicate the rhythmicity but slightly attenuates the performativity of the originals. Asad and Abdel Haleem preserve the general message but dilute performativity in the process.

5. Discussion and Findings

This section interprets the findings through the lens of Speech Act Theory, underscoring its utility in accounting for illocutionary and perlocutionary forces operative within religious discourse. At the same time, it ought to be acknowledged that its application to the Qur'an is constrained by methodological limitations. As the theory in question initially emerged from the need to navigate human language in terms of its pragmatic dimension, it may not fully capture the Qur'anic text's nuanced theological and ritual features. Qur'anic utterances are perceived as manifestations of divine revelation no less than as communicative acts, being situated in oral recitation, memorisation, and worship rituals. Such unconventional characters arguably transcend the conventional speaker-hearer communication proposed by Austin's framework. Moreover, the theory does not adequately account for the sacred status of the speaker in religious texts, especially in the Qur'an, where this dimension is central to its discourse for Muslim believers. Henceforth, the present study adopts Speech Act Theory as a descriptive framework rather than an explanatory model. Within these acknowledged limits, the analysis remains focused on how translators negotiate illocutionary and perlocutionary aspects in Sūrah Maryam.

The Sūrah in question is notably an engaging discourse as it vividly reflects a performative quality, amplifying the recipient's emotional and spiritual experience. The intertwining interaction of form and meaning in the Qur'anic discourse hints at the core of the Speech Act Theory, integrating the utterances' communicative function with performative force, which poses critical challenges to translators. The results obtained from analysing Sūrah Maryam's supplicatory, admonitory, and revelatory Ayahs help to understand the challeng-

es that arise when translating the performativity of the Qur'ān. This paper began by raising three essential questions, aiming to investigate how five of the most recognised translators of the holy Qur'ān retain or compromise the pragmatic effects of this sacred discourse. This section, thus, is devoted to eliciting the answers previously sought.

The five translators have seemingly struggled to balance the source text's sacred character and contextual tone (declarative, directive or assertive) with the communicative requirements of the target text. Driven by their loyalties to the source text at times, and to the target reader at others, some translators have retained the semantic frame of the source text and echoed its syntactic structure, while others pursued the rhythmic body. While the record attempts benevolently to aim, on the one hand, at preserving the meaning, and on the other at engaging the recipient, they appear to be the translator's Achilles Heel, as they compromise the transfer of the illocutionary and perlocutionary dimensions of the text. Asad, Abdel Haleem, and Toorawa adopt the interpretive approach, prioritising the preservation of the perlocutionary force of the ST in pursuit of eliciting a similar response and impact on the target reader; they simplify the language and insert explanations. For instance, in their translations, the directive tone in the supplicatory act or the assertive tone of the admonition's Ayahs are transformed into formal reporting texts. Arberry and, to some extent, Pickthall's translations, in contrast, clearly mirror the source text, aiming to preserve its linguistic, spiritual and reverent properties in the target text. They succeed in rendering the illocutionary force quite faithfully; however, they often risk compromising the readability and accessibility of the TT to the target reader, distorting the performativity of the ST, which actively establishes an enactment of speech that draws the recipient close. The translations of Asad and Abdel Haleem, which aim to draw the ST closer to the target reader, align with Baker's (1992) suggestion of not striking the recipient with unintelligible syntax or information.

As stated previously, the Qur'ān's form, syntax, and phonology play a major role in enhancing the reader's curiosity and engagement. Qur'ānic discourse in general, and the an-

analysed *Ayahs* in particular, tend to use a systematic set of linguistic items that facilitate the utterances' enactment as opposed to merely reporting them. The analysis suggests that the translators' linguistic choices directly impact the performative force of the Qur'anic utterances in *Sūrah Maryam*. However, one should note that the degree of transferring of the ST's immediacy and enactment characters differs from one translator to another. On the one hand, Arberry and Pickthall's translations retain in remarkable scales the ST's illocutionary speech act. The translators' employment of archaic language and an economised lexicon creates an assimilating and direct encounter with the recipient. On the other hand, Asad and Abdel Haleem reframe the directive, assertive and declarative tones across the three thematic zones of the *Sūrah* into narrative and descriptive ones. While the translators provide a distinctly clarified and accessible transfer of the ST's semantic context, they limitingly represent a commentary as opposed to the enacting quality of the *Ayahs*. As for Toorawa, he focuses on building sound-based coherence, relying on the English language's linguistic code and rhetorical effects. His pursuit of rhythm often results in distorting the ST's agency as shown in *Ayah* (19:86), where the agentive entity (God) is backgrounded, mitigating the divine authoritative performativity. Accordingly, attempting to echo the cadence and rhythmicity of the Arabic versions, as much as it is nearly impossible given the differences between the two languages, results in mitigating the illocutionary and perlocutionary forces of the original *Ayahs*.

The comparative analysis of the ST and the TTs reveals that the five translators have opted for different translation strategies. Arberry's translation leans towards formal equivalence (Nida, 1964) and foreignization (Venuti, 1995), echoing the syntactic and structural identity of the ST and jeopardising the accessibility of the TT to the target reader. Arberry's translation succeeds in preserving most of the illocutionary force of the original *Ayahs*, especially those of admonition and revelation. Pickthall apparently navigates his loyalties, opting for a moderate style that preserves the reverent tone while also avoiding the alien-

ation of the target reader. Asad aims for dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964), attempting to engage the target reader through paraphrases and explanations. Similarly, Abdel Haleem domesticates (Venuti, 1995) the target text through the use of a modern English language that facilitates the readers' understanding of the TT. Following the same path and aiming for dynamic equivalence, Toorawa tries to reproduce the resonance and musicality of the original Ayahs. Additionally, he opts for a modern English language that is familiar to the contemporary English reader.

In a nutshell, Arberry and, to some extent, Pickthall preserve the divine authority of the speaker; the TT's revelation Ayahs still carry the sacredness and inevitability of the ST's. However, the adherence to the form of the Arabic Ayahs and the use of archaic language challenge the target reader's comprehensibility. In contrast, Asad, Abdel Haleem, and Toorawa's translations aim to elicit in the recipient the same response as the original reader by using modern language and inserting extra information when needed. This, however, does not come without challenges. Their simplified language causes the TT's Ayahs to lose the ST's inevitability and authority.

6. Conclusion & Implications

This study aimed to investigate how pragmatic and performative dimensions were rendered in five selected translations, with a special focus on illocutionary and perlocutionary forces. The findings suggest that there are two distinct patterns that translators of the Qur'ān follow. On the one hand, the translations of Arberry and, to some extent, Pickthall, are source-text oriented, deliberately aiming to preserve the prepositional form of the original text. On the other hand, the translations by Asad, Abdel Haleem, and Toorawa are target-reader oriented, inserting whatever necessary additions that will assist the target reader in comprehending the message. The performativity of the original Ayahs, however, was weakened or reduced by the five translators in several cases, either by neglecting the accessibility of the TT to the target reader or by diminishing the divine inevitability and authority of the ST.

Austin (1996) long ago asserted that utterances convey more than they appear to do; human beings' sentences, even words, are not simply phonemes flowing in the air, but they carry a performative force that affects the world around them. In the same vein, the Qur'ānic discourse carries a heavy pragmatic function that is clearly often overlooked in translation. By revealing the vulnerability of pragmatic loss in Qur'ān translation, this study seeks to affirm that translation should transcend focusing solely on imitating surface levels and instead aim to develop a model that helps capture the performativity of religious scriptures, especially the Qur'ān. It should be noted that this current study analyses only several Ayahs from Sūrah Maryam; therefore, further research that analyses different Ayahs and Sūrahs is needed.

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