



English Realizations of the Arabic Discourse Marker 'ف' in the Glorious Qur'an

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1. Introduction

This paper tackles discourse markers in general and the discourse marker (الفاء) in particular. Discourse markers denote those items which are used to link the elements of a sentence, text, paragraph, etc. It also deals with the relationship between discourse markers and the concept of cohesion which is fulfilled by those markers. The current research gives a detailed account of Arabic discourse markers and the diversity of terms used for this concept as well as stating the various definitions in the Arabic and English literature. Furthermore, it deliberately studies the functions of (الفاء) from both semantic and cohesive viewpoints.

2. Discourse Markers in English and Arabic

Before starting with the basic definitions of the concept of discourse markers, it is of importance to state that there is



diversity in the terminology of this concept. This fact becomes clear when Brinton (1996:29) says that there are many terms used to denote "discourse markers" as: comment clause, connective, continuer, filler, discourse particle, discourse operator, etc. Such diversity makes the area of discourse markers problematic and difficult to be tackled.

Risselada and spooren (1998:132) define discourse markers as "those expressions whose primary function is to facilitate the process of interpreting the coherence relations between a particular unit of discourse and other surrounding units."

Schiffrin et al (2001:57) and Cruse (2006:51) identify this concept by saying that it is a set of expressions comprised of members of various word classes as conjunctions (and, but), interjections (oh), adverbs (now, then), and lexicalized phrases (you know, I mean). See also (Leech and Svartvik, 1994:13)

Bussman (1996:323) adds that discourse markers have many functions as: turn-taking (e.g. "well" in initial position and "you know" in final one), or indicate the end of a turn (e.g. uh); topic management as using the marker "by the way" to show that the speaker is digressing from the current topic; indicate the speaker's attitude (e.g. using attitudinal disjuncts); and organize the overall discourse structure (e.g. first, finally) to indicate the beginning or end of paragraphs.

In Arabic, there is also diversity in the terminology of discourse markers by using such terms: "ادوات" (tools), "روابط" (connectives), "حروف" (particles), and so on. King (1992:260) clarifies that Arab scholars studied discourse markers under the notion "حروف المعاني" (particles of meaning). He defines them as "words that only make sense when joined with others."

Khudhair (2001:10) and Hassan (2006:224) deal with discourse markers under the concept "الأدوات" (tools). They show that markers are grammatical tools which do not have independent meaning; yet they are used to reflect the relations between the elements of the sentence. Hassan (ibid) adds that these tools are of two types: tools used to link sentences as the tools used in interrogation and condition; and tools used to link single items as prepositions and conjunctives. Thus, Arab grammarians regarded such items as "function words" rather than "conceptual items" since they do not indicate lexical meanings, but functional meaning which is "التعليق" (conjunction).

Moreover, Al-Hamooz (2002:364) and Al-Ghalayyini (2005:612) tackle discourse markers as "those particles which are used to link two elements making them

share the same parsing case." They list several particles as: "ف" (and then), "و" (and), "ثم" (then), "لكن" (but) as in the following examples:

(1) حضر محمد و خالد -

Mohammad and Khalid attended.

(2) حضر محمد فخالد -

Mohammad attended and then Khalid.

(3) ما شربت ماء لكن قهوة -

I did not drink water but coffee.

3. Discourse Markers and Cohesion

Khataby (1991:29) defines the notion of cohesion as "that relatedness among the elements of a text which deals with the linguistic devices that link those elements." Halliday and Hasan (1976:4) show that cohesion denotes the relations of meaning that exist within the text. Cohesion occurs when the interpretation of an element depends on the other elements.

Schiffrin et al (2001:55) outline the relationship between discourse markers and cohesion. They say that discourse markers such as (and, but, I mean, by the way,...etc) have cohesive roles by linking the different elements of a text providing it with texture. Thus, it is this property of texture



which distinguishes a text from a random collection of words. They add that the cohesive role of discourse markers lie in the fact that they are conjunctive elements that connect the parts of the text. Yet, they are not cohesive by themselves but by means of their specific meanings. That is, they express certain meanings which presuppose the existence of other elements in the discourse.

Arabic scholars also tackle the part of discourse markers in the relatedness of a text. Hussein (2005:160-162) illustrates that discourse markers (الأدوات) are regarded as the most important cohesive devices in Arabic which imply: temporal markers, conditional markers, interrogative markers, etc. Such markers are syntactic devices that have no independent meaning which are used to connect the sentences of a text or the elements within a sentence by various relations as negation, interrogation and so on.

Abdul-Raof (2002:178) highlights the conjunctive role of discourse markers by stating that the cohesion process through certain elements (markers) occurs between individual words (word level) and between phrases of more than one lexical item (phrase level). In Arabic rhetoric, there are certain markers (الفاء, الواو) which tie up two or more lexical items of

different grammatical categories within a given proposition to get one of the following grammatical structures as: a compound noun phrase, a compound adjective, a compound prepositional phrase, a compound active participle, and a compound passive participle.

4. Semantic Functions of the Discourse Marker "ف"

It is worth mentioning that most of Arab grammarians approach "الفاء" from a rhetorical perspective and they put certain conditions and classifications (Al-Hamadany,2005:89). Al-Ansary (1985:213-215) shows the semantic functions of "الفاء" by saying that it has three functions: sequence, order, and causality. 'Sequence' means that 'ف' connects two elements which occur one after the other without delay: it signifies an immediate action without delay as in:

(4)- (أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ) (عبس:21)

(He causeth him to die and putting him in his grave)

(Ali,1989:1689)

Thus, the case of being put in the grave (أَقْبَرَهُ) occurs immediately after being died (أَمَاتَهُ) without a delay.

Al-Samara'I (2003:201) adds that 'ف' has another function which is 'order'. Hence, 'ف' puts the elements it connects in such an order whereby the second occurs after the first. He makes clear this function by giving this example:

توضأَ فغسل وجهه ويديه ومسح رأسه ورجليه-(5)

He performs the ritual ablution and then washes his face and hands and wipes his head and feet.

This example illustrates how 'ف' arranges the elements it connects in a way starting from (الوضوء) in general and then its details in an order from the head to the feet.

Al-Samara'I (ibid: 204) identifies another function of the discourse marker 'ف' which is causality. He explains that it reflects causality on condition that what comes before 'ف' must be the reason for what follows it (the result), This function is shown obviously in the following:

(فوكزه موسى ففقتضى عليه) (القصص:15) -(6)

(and Moses struck him with his fist and made an end of him)

(Ali,1989: 1005)

So, 'الفاء' in this example plays a causal function by linking the cause and the result. That is, it connects the cause 'الوكز' (thrusting) and the result 'القضاء' (death): death is the result of thrusting.

Al-Ansary (ibid: 216-217) explicates another function of 'الفاء' by stating that it connects elements when it lies in the position of a response. It includes the meaning of condition whereby it connects the response which follows it with what comes before. This function links sentences rather than single items and it is limited to certain cases like: the response should be a nominal sentence, its verb should be past, its verb should be constative, or it should be linked with a future particle:

(ان كان قميصه قد من قبل فصدقت) (يوسف: 26) - (7)

(if it be that his shirt is rent from the front, then is her tale true)

(Ali, 1989:559)

(من يرتد منكم عن دينه فسوف ياتي الله بقوم) (المائدة: 54) - (8)

(If any from among you turn back from his faith, soon will God produce a people) (Ali, 1989:260)

Al-Asadi (1984:242) and Al-Rumani (2005:18) add that 'الفاء' may be redundant since omitting it does not affect on the meaning and the grammaticality of the sentence as:

(9)- (قل ان الموت الي تفرون منه فانه ملاقيكم) (الجمعة: 8) -

(Say: "the death from which ye flee will truly overtake you)

(Ali, 1989:1547)

The meaning of this Ayah shows that death occurs whether people run away from it or not. So, deleting 'ف' does not change the meaning because it is understood from the context.

5. Cohesive Function of the Discourse Marker "ف"

It is of necessity to state that Arab grammarians were interested in the notion of cohesion 'الأرتباط' and all the particles that lead to this phenomenon whether on sentence level or above. Ibrahim (2009:1) says that cohesion indicates the connection 'الأرتباط' between the words and sentences of a text whereby such connection is due to the use of certain cohesive devices. He (ibid: 7) focuses on the cohesive function of discourse markers by tackling the term 'structural cohesion'. This term indicates the relation between the elements of a text

by using discourse markers as (ف, و) or explanatory particles (I mean, I intend).

Fiud(1998:131) explicates that the cohesive function of the discourse marker 'ف' can be seen obviously in the process of temporal conjunction since it is a conjunctive particle. This marker connects the elements of a sentence by the relation of temporal sequence. Abdul-Raof (2002:181) illustrates this cohesive function by comparing 'ف' with another marker which is 'ثم' giving these two examples to make it clear:

دخل زيد فجلس - (10)

Zaid came in and then sat down.

دخل زيد ثم جلس - (11)

Zaid came in and then sat down.

Despite the similarity in the English realization of these Arabic discourse markers (ف and ثم), there is a semantic distinction between them. The use of 'ف' denotes an immediate action without delay: Zaid came in and immediately sat down. Whereas 'ثم' reflects a delay in action: Zaid came in and after a while sat down. Whether similar or different, the point is

that 'ف' links the elements of the sentence by means of temporal sequence.

Halliday and Hasan (1976:261) realize this function as they refer to temporal conjunction which implies the connection of proposition of two sentences by sequence in time. This sequentiality is referred to as the temporal relation that can be expressed by the temporal adjunct 'then'.

Al-Muradi (1976:124) adds that the cohesive function of 'ف' can be recognized when it acts as a response of condition. That is, it links the conditional sentence with its response by means of time sequence. Yet, Al-Muradi specifies certain cases in which 'ف' plays such a cohesive function as: the verb which 'ف' is attached to should be in the present tense; or when it reflects futurity expressing threat. In addition, when 'الفاء' is attached to a verbal sentence whose verb is in a demand formula; or when the verb is negated by *لن* and *ما*:

(12)- (ومن عاد فينتقم الله منه) (المائدة: 95)

(for repetition God will exact from him the penalty)

(Ali, 1989:273)

(13)- (ان كنتم تحبون الله فاتبعوني) (ال عمران)



(if ye do love God, follow me) (Ali, 1989:131)

ان قام زيد فما يقوم عمر -(14)

If Zaid stands up, Omar will not then stand up.

6. Data Analysis

The selected data for this study are five Ayahs taken from different suras of the Glorious Qur'an. The Ayahs are classified according to four concept: order, sequence, causality, and response which, in turn, subdivided into response whose verb is past, and response whereby its verb is in demand formula. The adopted interpretations in the current study are: Ibn Ashur's At-Tahrir Wat Tanwir and Az-Zamakhshari's Al-Kashaf. The adopted renderings of the Ayahs are three as follows: Addullah Yusuf Ali (1989), Mohammad Ahmed and Samira Ahmed (1995), and Mohammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Mohammad Muhsin Khan (1996).

6.1 Model of the Study

The adopted model in this study is Ibn Hisham's Mughni Al-Labeeb (1976). This model, as different from other resources, approaches Arabic discourse markers in general and 'الفاء' in particular from a semantic point of view. It classifies 'الفاء' into three types: conjunctive which expresses three functions: order, sequence, and causality ;response (جوابية) which



includes the meaning of condition ;and redundant (زائدة) which is out of the scope of this study.

6.2 Translation of Religious Texts

The concept of translation has been defined and tackled by several authors and from different point of view. Ilyas (1989:19) defines translation as "an operation that is performed on languages in which the source text is replaced by the target text on the basis of equivalence between both texts." Newmark (1988:5) defines it as "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text." Also, Kariminia (2003:3) show that the process of translation includes converting one language (SL) to another (TL) so that the TL could convey the intended message in SL.

Ilyas(ibid:32-33) indicates that there are two approaches to the process of translation: communicative and semantic approaches. He clarifies that communicative approach is marked by the fact that it focuses on the force of the message rather than on its content. The translator tries to produce the same effect on the TL receiver as that on the SL receiver. Accordingly, it is subjective. On the other hand, semantic approach tries to reflect the SL formal and contextual meaning of the original text as accurately as that of the SL text. Also, it focuses on the message itself rather than on its force.

Irving (1985:2) concludes that translating religious texts requires an additional consideration because of the sanctity of the text. Thus, Al-Maghdhawi(2002:30 cited in Al-Badrani, 2005:45) suggests certain notes when translating religious texts as: the translator should be well aware of the denotations of terms in both SL and TL and he should be acquainted with the meaning of legal terms. The interpretive translation should be brief and concise; legal names and the names of prophets should not be translated; as well as taking care of the accuracy of writing and printing.

6.3 Texts

SL Text (1)

(فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ) (البقرة: 36)

TL Texts

- 1- [Then did Satan make them slip from the (Garden), and get them out of the state in which they had been] (Ali, 1989:25-26)
- 2- [So the devil made them slip/fall from it, so he brought them out from what they were in it] (Ahmed and Ahmed, 1995:4)
- 3- [Then the shaytan(Satan) made them slip therefrom (Paradise), and got them out from that in which they were] (Al-Hilali and Khan,1996:14)

Discussion

Ibn Ashur(1884:434,Vol.1) shows that this Ayah describes how Satan seduces Adam and his wife in order to get them out from paradise. He states that 'ف' in 'فأخرجهما' is used to express order: it shows that making slips (الزلل) comes first and then getting out (الأخراج) comes later.

Subjects (1 and 3) do not reflect this function (order) since they render 'ف' as a coordinated particle 'and' which expresses coordination rather than order. Yet, subject (2) renders this function by using 'so' which expresses arrangement of action. Thus, subjects (1 and 3) follow the semantic approach of translation since they convey the content of the message whereas subject (2) adopts the communicative approach since it focuses on the force of the message rather than its content.

SL Text (2)

(وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ. وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ) (الشعراء: 80-81)

TL Texts

- 1- [And when I am ill, it is He who cures me; who will cause me to die and then to live(again)] (Ali,1989:956)



2- [And if I became sick/diseased, so He cures me, and who makes me die, then revives/makes me alive] (Ahmed and Ahmed,1995:260)

3- [And when I am ill, it is He who cures me and who will cause me to die, and then will bring me to life (again)] (Hilali and Khan, 1996:423)

Discussion

Fiud (1998:133) comments that this Ayah states the faith of Ibrahim in Allah and his certainty in the fact that Allah is the only one who has the power to cure and cause life and death. He adds that 'الفاء' is used in this Ayah to express sequence in action without delay. That is, the prophet Ibrahim intends to say that 'cure' comes after 'illness' immediately which reflects his perfect faith in Allah. yet, in the second Ayah, 'ثم' is used instead of 'ف' because there is a period of time between death and life.

As for renderings, translators (1 and 3) do not render the temporal sequence of 'ف' since they do not use any discourse marker which leads to such a function. However, subject(2) expresses this function by using 'so' which links cure and disease without delay. Accordingly, subjects(1 and 3) follow the semantic translation by conveying the content of the



message faithfully; while subject(2) adopts the communicative translation by rendering the force of the message freely.

SL Text (3)

(خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ) (النحل: 4)

TL Texts

- 1- [He has created man from a sperm-drop; and behold this same(man) becomes an open disputer] (Ali,1989:656)
- 2- [He created the human/mankind from a drop/male's or female's secretion, so then he is a clear/evident disputer] (Ahmed and Ahmed,1995:180)
- 3- [He has created man from Nutfah(mixed drops of male and female discharge), then behold, this same(man) becomes an open opponent] (Hilali and Khan,1996:296)

Discussion

Az-Zamakhshari(1998:423,Vol.3) shows that the current Ayah describes the state of human beings in general. Although Allah creates them from a drop and takes care of them, they start struggling with their creator instead of thanking Him on His blessings.'الفاء' is used to reflect causality: the creature of

humans is the reason for their struggle. Also, 'أذا' is used to express surprise on two totally different cases.

Subjects (2 and 3) realize another function of 'ف' which is temporal sequence because they use 'then' that denotes sequentiality of actions. Hence, they adopt the semantic translation by rendering the literal meaning of the Ayah. However, subject (1) realizes the causal function of 'ف' by employing 'and' which links the cause (creature of humans) and the result (being disputer). Thus, it follows the communicative translation by understanding and rendering the deep meaning of the Ayah.

SL Text (4)

(فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَلَا تَشْهَدْ مَعَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا) (الأنعام:150)

TL Texts

- 1- [if they bring such witnesses, be not thou amongst them nor follow thou the vain desires of such as treat our signs as falsehood] (Ali,1989:334)
- 2- [so if they witnessed/testified, so do not witness/testify with them and do not follow the self attractions for desires of those who denied/falsified with Our verses/evidences] (Ahmed and Ahmed,1995:92)

- 3- [Then if they testify, testify not you (O Mohammad) with them. And you should not follow the vain desires of such as treat Our Ayat] (Hilali and Khan,1996:162)

Discussion

The current Ayah shows Allah's order for His prophet (Mohammad) not to trust and follow the disbelievers who denied the verses of the Glorious Qur'an. 'الفاء' lies in a verbal sentence whose verb is in demand formula. Such discourse marker acts as a response for condition that links the conditional verb (لا تشهدوا) with the conditional response (لا تشهد). (Al Muradi, 1976:125)

In regard to renderings, Subjects (1 and 3) do not realize this function because they do not employ any marker that leads to this meaning (condition). But, subject (2) expresses it by employing 'so' which links the two sentences by the conditional relation. Unlike translators (1 and 3) who follow the semantic translation, subject (2) adopts the communicative one by realizing the conditional function of 'الفاء'.

SL Text (5)

(وإن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قَدْ مِنْ دُخْرٍ فَكَذَبْتَ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ) (يوسف: 27)

TL Texts

- 1- [But if it be that his shirt is torn from the back, then is she the liar, and he is telling the truth] (Ali,1989:559-560)
- 2- [And if his shirt/dress was ripped/cut from the back, so she lied and he is from the truthful] (Ahmed and Ahmed, 1995:157)
- 3- [But if it be that his shirt is torn from the back, then she has told a lie and he is speaking the truth] (Hilali and Khan ,1996:262)

Discussion

Ibn Ashur(1984:258,Vol.12) explicates that this Ayah is about the prophet Yusuf and his story with the wife of the king of Egypt (Al-Azeez).He adds that 'الفاء' lies in a conditional response whose verb is past linking two clauses by means of conditional relation.

It is worth mentioning that the three renderings of the discourse marker 'ف' realize its function as a conditional relation. That is, they render the conditional function of 'ف'



which connects the conditional clause with its response despite the different rendered forms (then, so). Consequently, the three subjects follow the communicative translation by reflecting the force of the message in their realizations.

Conclusion

Discourse markers, in Arabic and English, refer to certain items and expressions which are used to link the elements of a sentence, paragraph, or text providing it with texture. Arabic shows diversity in the terminology of discourse markers whereby the terms 'أدوات', 'روابط', and 'حروف' are used. The Arabic discourse marker 'ف' reveals several semantic functions as: order, sequence, causality, and response. Also, 'الفاء' plays a key role in connecting the elements of the sentence by several relations. Its cohesive function lies in the fact that it is a conjunctive particle which links the elements by means of temporal sequence as well as the conditional relation.

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