Dynamic Equivalence in Translating Narrative Features of the Qur’an: The Chapter of Joseph by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem

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Dynamic Equivalence in Translating Narrative Features of the Qur’an: 
The Chapter of Joseph by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem

By

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‘My Lord! You have given me authority; You have taught me something about the interpretation of dreams; Creator of the heavens and the earth, You are my protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Let me die in true devotion to You. Join me with the righteous.’
(12:101)

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Abstract

One quarter of the Qur’an is made up of narrative, giving moral and religious lessons for readers of the book. Translating these narratives into English is challenging because of the difference in narrative techniques in English and Arabic. One of the most intricate stories in the Qur’an is that of Joseph in Chapter 12. It is the only Chapter which is composed of one unit; it is also rich with narrative techniques like dreams and dialogues. This Chapter was translated by Abdel Haleem who prioritizes clarity and uses new techniques, like punctuation, to have a naturally expressed translation into English. This study examines how Abdel Haleem retold the story of Joseph and his strategies in this regard. The focus is on Abdel Haleem’s strategies of identifying pronominal references in Arabic and their translation into English as well as the role of punctuation in translating dialogues. His strategies are explained under the light of dynamic equivalence, a theory developed by Eugene Nida, a prominent Bible translator and a researcher in the field of religious translations. The theory is based on the high level of decodability in dynamic equivalent translations and equivalence of response between the original and the target audience. Hence, the research draws upon the strategies used to translate the narrative of Joseph’s story in the Qur’an under the light of dynamic equivalence by Nida.
Introduction

The first translation of the Qur’an into English was published over three hundred years ago by Alexander Ross in 1649 (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxvii). Since then, many translations of the Qur’an have been published by Western and non-western scholars. These translations include: George Sale (1734), E.H Palmer (1880), Abdul Hakim (1905), Muhammad Ali (1917), Gulham Sarwat (1929), M. Pickthall (1930), Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1934), A. J. Arberry (1934), N.J Dawood (1956), Syed Abdul Lateef (1968), Muhammad Asad (1980), and many others (Afsar, 2000:9). One of the recent translations is by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem in 2004, followed by two editions with corrections in 2005 and 2010.

The importance of translating the Qur’an stems from its centrality in Muslims’ lives. The book “differentiates between the right and the wrong” because Muslims believe that it is revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel between 610 and 632 AD (Abdel Haleem, 2010; Mustapha 1998). Like any religious book, the Qur’an aims at providing guidance to its readers. It is such an important book that Muslims around the world build their rituals, ethics, Islamic laws and their whole religious life on the Qur’an (Abdul Haleem, 2010: x).

The Qur’an covers a great variety of topics, ranging from commercial dealings in Islam, inheritance laws, codes of ethics, issues on women, and stories on previous prophets, wise men and previous nations. Mostly in the Meccan chapters, there are stories of individuals and societies that lived in the past (Gilliot, 2006: 516). There are 1453 verses which is a quarter of the Qur’an, narrating the accounts of the messengers and wise men (Gilliot, 2006: 517). Accordingly, narratives present a huge part of the Qur’an.

Narrations of stories are essential parts of the Qur’an as it is used to send its messages. Stories in the Qur’an are not only independent artistic work like other stories, but
are also used for religious purposes (Bahgat 1987; Nofal, 1989). Qur’anic style mixes religious and artistic aims, using art as a tool to emotionally affect the receptors (Kotb, 1978, cited in Nofal, 1989). There is mention of twenty-five messengers and prophets in the Qur’an; the narration of the stories ranges from brief mentioning to very detailed ones. The prophets and messengers include: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Zachariah, Joseph and Muhammad (Abdul-Raof, 2003: 130). Moreover, there is a mention of 14 non-prophet figures like the Pharaoh of Egypt, Luqman, Queen Sheba and many others. Indeed, narrations and stories in the Qur’an are one of its major components.

This research discusses the translation of narrative features of the Qur’anic stories. It is pivotal to study narratives in the Qur’an because they are extensively employed to send its messages and thus, compose large portion of the book. The focus is on the Chapter of Joseph in the translation of M.A.S. Abdel Haleem. The aim of the study is to examine the ways in which the story of Joseph is narrated in Abdel Haleem’s translation. The reasons for specifically choosing the Chapter of Joseph is the following: it is the only Chapter in the Qur’an that focuses on one story without digressing into other topics. Moreover, it is the most intricate narrative in the holy Qur’an as stated in the book itself: “We narrate unto thee (Muhammad) the best of narratives in that We have inspired in thee this Qur’an, though aforetime thou wast of the heedless” (Pickthall, 12:3). Further, narrative techniques like dialogues and dreams play a key role in the plot development of the story. Consequently, the story is rich and constitutes several challenges for translators.

Choosing the translation of narrative with a focus on Joseph’s story adds a new perspective into the translation field. The artistic narrative features of the Qur’an have been out of focus compared with studying theological aspects in stories. Ayaz Afsar (2000:9) states that “the literary study of the Qur’anic narrative has been only of marginal concern. Most Qur’anic scholars have directed their attention to approaches based on philosophical
and theological traditions, while the investigation of narrative’s artistic qualities has been pushed aside”. This study focuses on narratives in the Qur’an, in particular Chapter 12, and discusses the translation of its special features into English. Simply, the study is attempting to answer how the translator retold the Arabic story of Joseph in the Qur’an into English, which will hopefully fill some of the gap in this research field.

The research is guided by a main question:

- What strategies does Abdel Haleem use to translate the narrative of Joseph’s story into English?

To answer this question, several of Abdel Haleem’s strategies are explained in the light of dynamic equivalence as presented by Eugene Nida. Because of his research in Bible translation, Nida’s analysis of translating religious texts is an asset for examining sacred texts including the Qur’an. His theory on dynamic equivalence is still the foundation in translating the Bible, especially into less common languages (Kirk, 2005:91). Nida’s research and work as a Bible translator give valuable explanations and guidelines on translating religious texts. Thus, his theory on dynamic equivalence is used to understand the strategies used by Abdel Haleem in translating the narrative of Joseph’s story.

The reasons for choosing the translation of Abdel Haleem are several. In his translation, Abdel Haleem introduces new features that focus on clarity, readability and ease. Consequently, he fully utilizes English punctuation norms. It is a new convention to fully use punctuation and paragraphs in translating the Qur’an because the two common conventions divide each chapter into individual verses written on different lines or the second convention which is “free-flowing paragraphs [and] give the verse numbers only at intervals of five or ten verses” (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxiv). He argues that his use of punctuation makes the meaning clearer and suits the modern readers (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxiv). Further, he
attempts to avoid the inaccuracies he has witnessed in previous translations of the Qur’an (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxix).

The study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter highlights the general challenges facing translators of the Qur’an into English. Following this, it introduces Qur’anic stories and their features including style and dialogues. The second chapter introduces formal and dynamic equivalence by Eugene Nida. An analysis of Nida’s theory is followed by a discussion of recent theorists including contributions by Julian House, Jeremy Munday, Basil Hatim, and Peter Kirk. This discussion prepares the readers for chapter three, where an analysis of several strategies used by Abdel Haleem is presented in the light of dynamic equivalence.

The third chapter is divided into two parts: the first one introduces Abdel Haleem’s translation, the Chapter of Joseph and its narrative features. The second part presents the data analysis. It answers the main question of the research by highlighting two main strategies used by Abdel Haleem: identifying the reference of pronouns in the story of Joseph and the role of punctuation in translating dialogues. They are explained in terms of dynamic equivalence. Overall, the chapter shows how the translator retold the story of Joseph in English. The work will open up the possibilities of further researching Qur’anic narrative translation, expanding the narrative to include other stories besides the Chapter of Joseph.
Chapter 1: The Qur’an, its narrative features and issues of its translation

This chapter discusses the general issues facing translators of the Qur’an into English. It lists some of the common challenges in Qur’anic translations. Secondly, the chapter introduces the narrative features of the Qur’an: simple style and dialogues. The aim of this chapter is to prepare the readers for the data analysis in chapter 3 where Joseph’s story and the translation of its narrative features are studied.

1.1 General issues facing translators of the Qur’an into English

Muslims consider the Qur’an a miracle; one of the main reasons behind its miraculous nature is its linguistic and rhetorical features (Abdul-Raof, 2003: 63). Esack (1993, cited in Abdul-Raof, 2003) mentions that the linguistic and rhetorical features of the Qur’an are the most commonly agreed basis for Ījāz, inimitability of the Qur’an. When the Qur’an was revealed, the Arabs had mastered poetry, rhetoric and oratory but none was able to produce a chapter similar to the ones in the Qur’an (Abdul-Raof, 2003: 64).

The Qur’an, like other sacred texts, has special features which represent challenges to translators. Because of the Qur’an linguistic features, issues of untranslability exist (Abdul-Raof, 2001: 68). Abdul-Raof lists these features as: semantic ambiguity, shift, lexical repetition, final epithets, and metonymy.

Semantic ambiguity

Various interpretations of the verses and words of the Qur’an are provided by Muslim scholars which affect the translation of the book (Abdul-Raof, 2001:75). For instance:

فقال إني أُحببت حب الخير عن ذكر ربي حتى توارث بالحجاب
And he said, "Truly do I love the love of good, with a view to the glory of my Lord," - until (the sun) was hidden in the veil (of night) (Q 38:32, Ali 1983).

The semantic ambiguity is in ( hidden behind the veil) because it can refer to the sun or the evening which is a secondary meaning as suggested by Al-Qurtubi (Abdul-Raof, 2001:75).

Shift

Shift is the most common feature of Qur’anic discourse (Abdul-Raof, 2001: 77). There are three types of shifts used in the Qur’an: person and number shift, word order shift, and voice shift (Abdul-Raof: 77-80). An example for person and number shift is the following:

Their similitude is that of a man who kindled a fire; when it lighted all around him, God took away their light and left them in utter darkness, so they could not see. (Q 2:17, Asad: 1980).

In this verse, the pronoun shift is from the singular to the plural while in other verses it could be from third person masculine singular to first person plural and many more, like a shift in person using “I, We, he, us and God” (Abdul-Raof, 2001:78). This shift is intentionally used as a linguistic tool to emphasise that God cannot be described by using the same pronouns used for other beings (Asad, 1980, cited in Abdul-Raof, 2001).

Another kind of shift is word order shift. An example of this is the following (Abdul-Raof, 2001:79-80):

Allah would explain to you and guide you…Allah would turn to you in mercy…Allah would make the burden light for you (Q4:26-28; Pickthall, 1969:96)
In the previous verses, the first structure starts with the verb بُرِيد then followed by the noun الله and same with the third verse while the second structure starts with the subject noun الله then the verb بُرِيد (Abdul-Raof, 2001:79-80). The shift here is the word order as it changes from verb to noun then to verb again. In the translation above, this order is not reflected in English (Abdul-Raof, 2001:79-80).

The final type of shift listed by Abdul-Raof is the voice shift where it is often used in the Qur’an as, for instance, there are voice shifts in the following verses (2001:80):

وَنَفْخَ في الصُّورِ فَصِعَاقُ من في السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمِن فِي الأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَن شَاءُ اللهُ ثُمَّ نَفْخَ فِيهَا أُخْرَى فَإِذَا هُمْ قَيَامًا يَبْتَغُونَ

وَأَشْرَقَتِ الأَرْضُ وَنُورُ رُبُّهَا وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ وَجَيْهُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْسَّهَدَاءَ وَفَضَّلَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لا يَظْلَمُونَ

وَوَفَقَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أُعْلَمَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

وَسِيقَ الْذِّكْرِ كَفَرَوا إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ رَمُّرًا حَتَّىٌ إِذَا جَاءُوْا فَلَتَبِنُوهُ أَيْوَانَهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ حَزَنَتُهَا أَلَّمْ يَأَتِيكُمْ رُسُلٌ مَّشْتَهَرٌ بِتِلْوُونَ

وَلِيَأْتِ إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ وَيَنْبِذُوْنَكُمْ لِقَاءٍ يُومَكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا بَلِيٓ وَلَكُنْ حَقَّ كُلُّ حَقٍّ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

68. The Trumpet will (just) be sounded, when all that are in the heavens and on earth will swoon, except such as it will please Allah (to exempt). Then will a second one be sounded, when, behold, they will be standing and looking on!

69. And the Earth will shine with the Glory of its Lord: the Record (of Deeds) will be placed (open); the prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward and a just decision pronounced between them; and they will not be wronged (in the least).

70. And to every soul will be paid in full (the fruit) of its Deeds; and (Allah) knoweth best all that they do.
71. The Unbelievers will be led to Hell in crowd: until, when they arrive, there, its gates will be opened. And its keepers will say, "Did not apostles come to you from among yourselves, rehearsing to you the Signs of your Lord, and warning you of the Meeting of This Day of yours?" The answer will be: "True: but the Decree of Punishment has been proved true against the Unbelievers!" (Pickthall, 39:68-71).

Abdul-Raof (2001:80) comments on the previous verses and its continuous changes of voice, saying that:

The above structure displays a unique Qur’anic voice shift; it starts with passive نُفَخ then active صَعك the moves to active then passive نُفَخ then active صَعك then passive نُفَخ then active صَعك then passive نُفَخ then active صَعك then passive نُفَخ then active صَعك then passive نُفَخ then active صَعك then passive نُفَخ then active صَعك then passive نُفَخ then active صَعك then active قَال.

The verses have several voice shifts back and forth from the active to the passive. The change of voice is one of the features of the Qur’anic structure and has to be carefully dealt with in translation to avoid confusing for the target audience.

**Lexical Repetition**

In the Qur’an, lexical repetition is frequently used in the sentence or outside of it (Abdul-Raof, 2001:82). This type of repetition is a tool used for cohesion, creating a rhetorical effect (Abdul-Raof, 2001:82). He lists the following example among many:

وَمَا أَبْرَزْنَ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النُّفْسَ لَأَمَثَّةٌ بِالسُّوَءِ إِلَّا مَا رَجَمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Yet I claim not that my soul was innocent—surely the soul of man incites to evil—except inasmuch as my Lord had mercy. (Q: 12:53; Arberry, 1980)
Abdul-Raof comments on the previous verse, saying that the noun نفس/soul is mentioned twice and similarly is the noun ربي/my lord (2001:82).

**Qur’anic Structure-Final Epithets**

The Arabic name for Qur’anic Structure-Final Epithets is خواتم الأيات where they are very frequently used, placing themselves in the end of the verses (Abdul-Raof, 2001: 87). For instance:

وَالله وَاسِعَ عَلِيمَ

God is All-Embracing, All-Knowing (Q2:247).

وَالله عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

And God is Exalted in might, Wise (Q5:38).

وَاللَّه غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

God is Forgiving, Merciful (Q8:69)

**Metonymy**

Metonymy is the decency of style or حشمة (Abdul-Raof, 2003: 65-66). Abdul Raof mentions Grice’s maxims: “the principle of co-operation, the maxim of quality (be informative), the maxim of quality (be truthful), the maxim of relevance (be relevant), and the maxim if manner (be brief, be perspicuous, avoid obscurity, and avoid ambiguity” (2003: 65-66). The Qur’an observes the above principles together with the principle of politeness, which is “decorum” in Qur’anic studies as well as metonymy (Abdul-Raof, 2003:65-66).

After discussing some major issues of translating the Qur’an into English, it is useful to understand the narrative features of the Qur’an. The coming discussion is an overview of the main narrative features of the book which are: simple narrative style and dialogues.
1.2 Narrative features of the Qur’an

The main purpose of the stories in the Qur’an is to provide moral lessons for humans for all times and places (Abdul-Raof, 2003: 73). Each story differs to each other with regards to style, structure and where it is placed in the holy book (Abdul-Raof, 2003:73). Gillot explains that “some narrative pieces…have been integrated into suras containing non-narrative materials, can be isolated from their positions in the sura and appear to be originally independent units like when narrating Thamud story and the Pharaoh” (2006:517). Other narratives are composed of several stories like in the Chapter of “Taha” which has two stories: Moses (Q20:9-99) and Adam (Q20:115-28) (Gillot, 2006:519). However, with all the various styles, they send the same messages and teach moral lessons. After all, the Qur’an is seen as a “story book” which teaches people through its stories because story telling appeals to different levels of society (Johns, 1993:37-70).

The style of Qur’anic stories is not complex. Stories in the Qur’an consist of logically flowing events that progress to reach an ending (Abdul-Raof, 2003: 73). “Qur’anic stories are based on reality. They are narrated in a simple manner, avoiding the use of flowery description that can irritate and bore the reader” (Abdul-Raof, 2003: 206). Abdul-Raof adds that the stories in the Qur’an do not use linguistic and narrative complications to keep the audience interested and assist them in following the story. The stories are different with regards to themes, presentation, where they are located in the Qur’an and their repetition as well (Abdul-Raof, 2003: 206). For instance, the story of Moses is mentioned several times in different chapters in the Qur’an while Joseph’s story is only mentioned once in Chapter 12.

Besides having simple style in narrating the stories, the Qur’an employs dialogue. Mir (2006:531) states that one of the recurring and vital characteristics of style in the Qur’an is
dialogs and conversations between two or more persons. The Qur’an with its employment of dialogues differs from pre-Islamic Arabic literature which is dominated by poetry where there is little dialogue (Mir, 2006: 534).

Dialogues are used in the Qur’an to keep the recipients’ attention and portray the relations between the communities of the past. The Qur’an with its powerful “social dimension” employs dialogue as an “interactive” tool for its readers and listeners (Mir, 2006: 534). Further, Mir shows that dialogues present the dynamics of relations between Arabian communities:

The Qur’an- which presents a program of social action within a frame work of struggle-reflects, through dialogue, the interaction between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities of Arabia on the one hand and among the members of the Muslim community itself on the other (Mir, 2006: 534).

In brief, dialogues give a lively account of what happened between different individuals, send the messages of the Qur'an while playing their role in storytelling. They make the text alive. In the Chapter of Joseph, dialogue is used extensively in the narration and will be thoroughly discussed in chapter 3.

**Conclusion**

To sum up, this chapter presents some of the difficulties in translating the Qur’an. The discussion continues to offer an overview of the special features of Qur’anic narratives. The stories in the Qur’an are told in a simple style and give moral lessons. Dialogues are continuously used in the narration. Consequently, translating these features could be difficult for translators because of different story telling techniques between languages. In order to understand more about equivalence between languages, the coming chapter discusses equivalence theories in the translation field.
Chapter 2: Equivalence: definitions and types; formal and dynamic equivalence

This chapter introduces the issue of equivalence and the debate taking place in translation studies regarding its definition and types. Following this, a brief history of dynamic equivalence will be presented. This chapter explains the needed theory to understand the analysis on Joseph’s story and its narrative features in the Qur’an where the focus is on the use of dynamic equivalence by Abdel Haleem in his translation. Therefore, the chapter explains Eugene Nida’s basic orientations of translation then highlights the principles governing formal and dynamic equivalence. Towards the end of the chapter, there is a detailed discussion on dynamic and formal equivalence by several theorists.

Equivalence is a debatable topic

Equivalence has been highly debated in translation studies. “The notion of equivalence…is by no means a simple one” (House, 2009:29). It is a core concept in translation but causes lots of controversy (Kenny, 1998: 77-80). Some theorists like Catford (1965), Nida and Taber (1969), Toury (1980), Pym (1992) and Koller (1995) consider translation in terms of equivalence; on the other hand other theorists like Snell-Hornby and Gentzler think of this concept as “irrelevant” and “damaging” (Kenny, 1998: 77-80). For example, Newmark explains that this concept is either “too theoretical or too arbitrary” (1982: x). Further, Hatim and Mason (1990:8) think that equivalence as a term is problematic because full equivalence is an unattainable target; formal and dynamic equivalence do not exist between the target language and the source (Hatim and Mason, 1990: 8).

Because there is not one agreed-upon definition of equivalence, several definitions have been presented. Supporters of theorists based on equivalence define equivalence as “the relationship between a source text (ST) and a target text (TT) that allows the TT to be a considered as translation of the ST in the first place” (Kenny, 1998, 77-80). This definition
has been criticized by Pym (1992) as being circular because equivalence is defining translation and translation is defining equivalence (Kenny, 1998, 77-80). Another definition presented by House (2009:29) is that specific source texts will have various “equivalent” translations, depending on the interpretation of what is similar to the message and what its function is.

Several definitions of equivalence entail the existence of different types of equivalence. The primary types include: linguistic, formal, dynamic, and equivalence frameworks and others. Firstly, the linguistic type of equivalence is presented by Catford’s formal correspondence and textual equivalence. Catford (1965: 32) explains that “a formal correspondent is any TL [Target Language] category which may be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the ‘same’ place in the economy of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL”. TL category refers to unit, class, structure, element of structure (Catford, 1965: 27). On the other hand, textual equivalence is a wider concept; Catford defines it as “any TL form (text or portion of text) which is observed to be the equivalent of a given SL form” (1965:27). Therefore, formal correspondence is a subject of the language system while textual equivalence is the realization of that system (House, 2009:17).

Dynamic versus formal equivalence and overt versus covert translations represent different types of equivalence. Formal equivalence aims at keeping as many characteristics of the original text as possible (House, 2009:30). Conversely, dynamic equivalence tailors to the needs of the target audiences and their norms to produce a naturally-expressed text (House, 2009:30).

Frameworks of equivalence have been created to focus on certain levels of equivalence. One of these frameworks is designed by Werner Koller. He presents several kinds of equivalence. Firstly, denotative equivalence where a word in the source and the target
language have the same denotation like the word Rome in English and Rom in German, refer to the same city (House, 2009: 31-32). Secondly, connotative equivalence is related to “the culturally normative feelings or associations evoked by a specific term or phrase, and by different levels of usages, or social and geographical dialect” (House, 2009:31-32). An example of this is that ‘breakfast’ for English speakers can have a different meaning from what ‘breakfast’ means for Muslims in Ramadan (House, 2009:31-32). Thirdly, text-normative equivalence is where the norms of texts differ from one language and culture to another, for instance, the layout of letters differ from one cultural community to another (House, 2009:31-32). Hence, within the equivalence frameworks, certain level of equivalence is sought.

**Equivalence and religious texts**

Problems around equivalence are magnified when one discusses translating holy texts including the Qur’an. Hussein Abdul-Raof, a researcher on Qur’anic studies and theoretical linguistics, explains some of the issues of equivalence in translating the Qur’an. Abdul-Raof mentions that “language and culture-bound linguistics and rhetorical features are simply ‘inimitable’ and ‘unproduceable’ into other languages to a satisfactory level that can create an equivalent mystical effect on the target audience similar to that on source language readers” (2001:12). Finding equivalence to the “Qur’anic intricacies” does not exist (Abdul-Raof, 2001:13). Consequently, equivalence within religious translations including the Qur’an is more difficult to deal with and define.

One significant study dealing with equivalence issues in religious texts is that of Nida. He developed the theory on dynamic equivalence after its introduction in the early Christian era. During this time period, it was understood that a good translation of the Bible does not have to be literal (Kirk, 2005: 90). One of the translators who found a compromise between
literalism and freedom in translation was Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate, the Latin version of the Bible (Kirk, 2005:90). Jerome insists that “the sense should have priority over the form” (395, cited in Kirk, 2005). The sense-for-sense approach allows “the sense or content of the ST to be translated” (Munday, 2008: 20). The supremacy over form was later developed by Eugene Nida and Charles Taber and was known as “dynamic equivalence” (Kirk, 2005:91). The concept of dynamic equivalence aims at producing a translation that has the same equivalent response on the target audience as that of the original one (Nida and Taber, 2003:24). Hence, Nida’s contribution is developing the concept of dynamic equivalence in the religious translation.

2.1 History of dynamic equivalence and its employment in Bible Translation

The sense-for-sense tradition, as explained above is, was developed in the second half of the 20th century by Nida and Taber (Kirk, 2005: 91). They developed the theory of dynamic equivalence which was quickly accepted in the community of Bible translation (Kirk, 2005:91). Kirk (2005) states that the principles of dynamic equivalence are also taught by Beekman and Callow (1974), Larson (1984), Barnwell (1986, 1987), and De Waard and Nida (1986). By the late twentieth century, dynamic equivalence has become accepted method and Don Carson stated that ‘dynamic equivalence has won the day’ (1985, cited in Kirk, 2005).

Although there is strong support for dynamic equivalence, the concept has been criticized as well. Kirk explains that in conservative churches, more opposition existed towards this new approach to translation as they listed the “alleged exegetical and theological errors” of dynamic equivalent translations (Kirk, 2005:93). Despite the continuous criticism since 1990s against dynamic equivalence, this concept remains to be the foundation of most
work done in new Bible translations, especially translations into languages that are less known (Kirk, 2005:91).

2.2 Nida’s introduction on translation types and the factors of their variations

Nida explains many variations of translations exist and they are not limited only to two kinds: free or literal translations (Nida, 2003:156). There is a variety of translations because of three factors Nida. The first one is the nature of the message; the second one is the purpose of both the author and the translator and the third is the type of the audience (Nida, 2003:156).

The nature of the message is related to prioritising translating content or form. Nida (2003:157) explains that messages vary “in the degree to which content or form is the dominant consideration.” He adds that although the content and the message are not separated from each other in some cases the content has the priority over the form as in poetry because there is focus on the formal elements of the text (Nida, 2003:157). Thus, it is very rare to translate both the content and form; that is why there is more focus on translating content than form (Nida, 2003:157). Consequently, the translator has to make changes to make the reader fully understand the message (Nida, 2003:157).

2.3 Nida’s two basic orientations in translations

According to Nida (2003), the translator will not find an absolute equivalent when translating into the target language. As such, “one must in translating seek to find the closest possible equivalent” (Nida, 2003:158). From that premise, he launches his views distinguishing between two types of equivalence: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence.
The focus of the formal equivalence is on the message in its form and content where the attention is given to corresponding each sentence and concept with a matched message in the target language with the source one (Nida, 2003:159). Therefore, to decide the standards of accuracy in formal equivalence translation, constant comparison takes place between the source and the target messages (2003:159). Nida adds that formal equivalence can be called “gloss translation” because the translator literally and meaningfully reproduces the form and content of the source language as best as they can (2003:159).

In order to understand formal equivalence, it is vital to understand dynamic equivalence because it shows the paradigm in which Nida works. Nida uses the word “in contrast” to start his description of dynamic equivalence, contrasting its features with the formal equivalence. In dynamic equivalence, the focus is on dynamic relationships where the receptor and message in the source culture “should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (2003:159).

Nida defines dynamic equivalence and gives it the priority over formal equivalence. He defines dynamic equivalence that the receptors of the target language should respond similarly as the source language recipient (Nida and Taber, 2003:24). However, the equivalence of the response cannot be fully identical because of the difference in culture and history (Nida and Taber, 2003:24). The aim is to have “a high degree of equivalence of response” to have a successful translation in achieving its aims (Nida and Taber, 2003:24). The equivalent response should not only in understanding the message but also people can “feel its relevance…and can then respond to it in action” (Nida and Taber, 2003: 24). In short, the equivalence of response aims at having equivalent understanding, feeling and reaction as that of the original receptors.
There are two important features of dynamic equivalent translations: natural expression and receptor response. Regarding the first, Nida states that dynamic equivalent translation attempts to have “naturalness of expression” (2003:159). In order to understand the message, this type of translation does not require the receptor to comprehend the source language culture and its context (Nida, 2003:159). Thus, the translation is tailored towards the audience’s capacity to understand the message which require them no previous knowledge of the source culture.

The second feature of dynamic equivalence is related to the receptor response. Dynamic equivalence is oriented towards the “receptor response” unlike formal equivalence which focuses on the source message (Nida, 2003:166). It is a translation that a bilingual and bicultural person would highly accept its usage. In addition, it reflects the “meaning and intent of the source” not only reproducing the message of the source (Nida, 2003:166).

Before discussing the principles laid by Nida in governing translations oriented towards formal and dynamic equivalence, Nida sheds light on an important point. He illustrates that there are grades between formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence where several “acceptable” literary translations are produced (Nida, 2003:160). However, he states that there is more emphasis in the last fifty years from formal to dynamic equivalence (2003:160).

2.3.1 Principles governing a translation oriented toward formal-equivalence

In order to understand dynamic equivalence, it is important to comprehend the rules guiding formal equivalence. The contrast between the two methods helps in understanding the features of both. Nida defines formal equivalence and gives details its different components. In the start, Nida (2003:165) defines formal equivalence as a “source-oriented” translation that aims at extensively uncovering the original message with its form and content. During the process of formal equivalence translation, there is a trial to render various
elements that includes: grammatical units, word usage consistency, and the meaning of the source context (Nida, 2003:165). Firstly, the translation of grammatical units entails translating nouns by nouns and verbs by verbs; Secondly, it includes “keeping all the phrases and sentences intact” (Nida, 2003:164) and finally, it involves keeping all “formal indicator” such as breaks in paragraphs, punctuation marks and poetic indentation (Nida, 2003:164). Hence, it is rendering the translation as closely as possible to the source language.

In his conclusion, Nida mentions that the variations of formal equivalence translations, including the “completely concordant translation” are still “valid” as each translation has its own message for a specific type of audience (2003:166). Finally, Nida mentions that he is not judging the quality of these translations but only describing their features (2003:166).

2.3.2 Principles governing translation oriented toward dynamic equivalence

Nida uses the word “in contrast” to start his description of dynamic equivalence, contrasting its features with the formal equivalence. In dynamic equivalence, the focus is on dynamic relationships where the receptor and message in the source culture “should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (2003:159). In addition, Nida warns that dynamic equivalent translation is more than just transferring the message of the source text as dynamic equivalence focuses on the intent and the meaning of the source text and to convey them clearly to the readers (2003:166).

Concerning the features of a dynamic equivalent translation, Nida states that dynamic equivalent translation attempts to have “naturalness of expression” (2003:159). In order to understand the message, this type of translation does not require the receptor to comprehend the source language culture and its context. Being specific on the meaning of the term “natural,” Nida mentions that “ the word natural is applicable to three areas of
The focus of this discussion is only on the receptor language and culture and audience.

**Natural expression and receptor language culture**

The first aspect in the communication process is fitting the translation into the receptor language and its culture. It is a vital component for having a stylistic translation and at the same time translating into the receptor culture should not show that it is foreign (Nida, 2003:167). Grammar is one main area of adaptation (Nida, 2003: 167). Changing grammar is an automatic process necessitated by following the structures of the target language (Nida, 2003:167). Moreover, the translator is forced to make changes as in changing word order and replacing nouns for pronouns (Nida, 2003:167). Thus, adapting grammar in the target language is a must to have a natural expression in translation.

**Natural expression and receptor language audience**

The second aspect in the communication process is the audience of the receptor language and their acceptance of the translated message. Nida (2003: 170) believes that the message of dynamic equivalent translation should fit the receptors and this can be evaluated if they can understand and decode the message. In order to produce a successful dynamic equivalent translation, the translator should have an insight to the author’s intent, be aware of the author’s style of writing and have an understanding of the needs of the target audience (2003:174). However, no one is certain about the exact response by the original audience (2003:170). Indeed, it is difficult to fully predict how the audience would react but their needs should never be ignored while translating a text.
2.4 Decodability

Decodability is a concept strongly related to the clear presentation of the message. Because of cultural differences between the source and the target languages, there is a necessity to expand the message (Nida, 2003:175). The receptors can get confused or bored if the text does not offer a “satisfactory basis for decoding the message at an appropriate rate” (Nida, 2003:175). This means that recipients can lose track of the message when it is underdeveloped and briefly presented in translation.

The level of decodability of a text differs from dynamic to formal equivalence. There is a contrast in decoding the message in both type of equivalence. In dynamic equivalence, the receptor is given more time to decode and understand the message, although some redundancy may be included; the aim is to expand the translation to make it relevant (2003:175). In contrast, in formal equivalence, the receptor is not given time to decode the message (Nida, 2003:175). In addition, there is no consideration given to how quick can the receptor follow up with the message (Nida, 2003:175). Conversely, dynamic equivalent translations allow more time for the recipients and sometimes even repeat the information. Thus, dynamic equivalent translation has higher level of decodability than formal equivalent ones (Nida, 2003:175).

Nida’s views contrast dynamic with formal equivalence. In dynamic equivalence, the stress is on the equivalence of response while in formal equivalence it is on matching concepts and sentences between ST and TT. The equivalence sought is that of response “rather than the equivalence of form” (Nida, 2003:166). Moreover, naturalness of expression is stressed upon in dynamic equivalence which is not the case in formal equivalence. Finally, formal equivalence does not allow time for decoding, unlike dynamic equivalence. Therefore,
dynamic equivalence focuses on naturalness of expression and has higher decodability compared with formal equivalence.

2.4.1 Translating religious text requirements

Translating religious texts requires more considerations that generally do not occur in other types of texts. The first consideration is that translations with imperative purpose require more adaptation where the translator feels greater responsibility to make the translation clear and “compelling” (2003:158). While translating religious texts, it is crucial to produce a comprehensible translation that has no room for misunderstanding (Nida, 2003:158). In short, explicitly and clarity should mark translations of religious texts. The second consideration is that the heard language has the priority over the written one specifically in translating the Bible and the Holy Scriptures because people hear them read than reading themselves the text (Nida and Taber, 2003: 28-29). Accordingly it is vital that oral forms of the Bible are understood by the people (Nida and Taber, 2003: 28-29).

2.4.2 Punctuation

Nida presents punctuation as a measure to ensure the comprehension of oral translated scriptures, based on predicting the issues facing the hearers. Nida suggests the use of punctuation to assist in having clear oral presentation of the Holy Scriptures since in rituals, religious texts are usually read out loud (Nida and Taber, 2003:28). Punctuation should not be used to force clarity on the text; “punctuation should not be employed in an arbitrary manner to correct otherwise misleading grammatical arrangements” (Nida and Taber, 2003:29). The role of punctuation is to emphasis the “proper interpretation” of the text and not to make ambiguous structures clear (Nida and Taber, 2003: 29). However, they do not further explain how punctuation can be used. In brief, the structure of sentences should be understandable to the listeners where punctuation adds to the clarity of the message.
2.5 Dynamic versus formal equivalence by other theorists

While discussing formal equivalence, Nida mentions its lack of decoding where the receptor is given less time to understand the message. In contrast, Hatim and Munday state that in formal equivalence, deliberate ambiguity exists in the ST (Hatim and Munday, 2006:41). “Formal translation is almost contextually motivated: formal features are preserved only if they carry contextual values that become part of overall text meaning (Hatim and Munday, 2006:41). However, Nida sees these contexts with a focus on the message in both, its form and content; this is what Nida may have thought for his definition of formal equivalence (Hatim and Munday, 2006:41).

Hatim and Munday state the more form-bound a meaning is, “the more formal the equivalence relation will have to be” while the dynamic equivalence is related to the “context-bound” meaning (2006:44). Formal equivalence is “contextually motivated method of translation” which means that it is used to keep a specific “linguistics/rhetorical effect” (Hatim and Munday, 2006:42). In formal equivalence, the decision of keeping the “formal arrangement of the words” is done consciously to bring the target audience closer to the cultural and linguistic “preferences of the ST” (2006:42). In contrast, Hatim and Munday think that dynamic equivalence can dismiss translators’ concern of incomprehensibility experienced by the reader. Therefore, in this case, “explication and adjustment” are needed and dynamic equivalence is used (Hatim and Munday, 2006:42).

Finally, choosing between dynamic and formal equivalence is “not either/or choice” (Hatim and Munday, 2006:43). Translators usually consider the decision of choosing the method through making a choice from “literal, formal or dynamic equivalence” in this specific order (Hatim and Munday, 2006:43). On the whole, Hatim and Munday are not advocating one type of equivalence.
In addition to the previous criticism of Nida’s theory, Fawcett criticises dynamic equivalence. Fawcett points out the “essential impossibility” of dynamic equivalence (1997:58). Fawcett asks how one can know, not even render, the response “to a text from a culture distant in time and space” (1997:59). Finally, Fawcett concludes by saying that one should neither refuses dynamic equivalence not accepts it because it is a strategy used “where appropriate” as decided by the translation culture of which translators belong (1997:60).

2.5.1 Dynamic equivalence viewed by other theorists

Dynamic equivalence has been discussed by several theorists. Peter Kirk, a translator who works on projects of Bible translation, discusses Nida’s dynamic equivalence in relation with other subsequent theories including foriegnisation and domestication.

Barnwell (1986, cited in Kirk, 2005) in her Bible translation course, summarizes dynamic equivalence, saying it has three qualities: accuracy, clarity and naturalness. Concerning accuracy, the meaning of the original message should be precisely rendered into the target language (Kirk, 2005:92). Secondly, the translation must be clear and the message should be understood by the readers (Kirk, 2005:92). Thirdly, the translation should be natural and does not sound foreign (Kirk, 2005:92). Finally, a fourth quality was added by Larsen (2001) and Andersen (1998) which is “perceived authenticity or acceptability” by the target audience (Kirk, 2005:92). Thus, dynamic equivalence is marked by three main features that aim at producing an accurate, clear and natural translation.

Formal and dynamic equivalence have different audience. Kirk pinpoints that the first step in translation is defining the audience (2005:101); formal correspondence translations are good fit for academic and educated members of the church while dynamic equivalence translations, where topics are clearly explained, are suitable for less educated audience (Kirk, 2005:101). Further, dynamic equivalence translation will always be needed where the
language speakers can at least understand the messages (Kirk, 2005: 93). In short, the translator needs to know the audience to choose the type of equivalence used in the translation.

**Venuti’s criticism of dynamic equivalence**

One of Kirk’s discussions is about foreignisation and domestication by Venuti (1998) and its view on dynamic equivalence. There are two ways of methods of translating: “the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him. Or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him (Venuti, 1998, cited in Kirk, 2005). Critics of dynamic equivalence think it is closer to foreignisation, not realizing that the real audience for most Bible translations are not sophisticated enough to follow the text if it is foreignised (Kirk, 2005: 94); most of them will probably be confused especially the speakers of minority languages (Kirk, 2005: 94). Kirk refutes Venuti’s criticism of dynamic equivalence as he mentions the following:

According to Timothy Wilt (1998), Lawrence Venuti has considered dynamic equivalence from this background, identified it with the domestication that he deprecates, and rejected it. But Venuti’s dualistic approach has prevented him from appreciating how dynamic equivalence as formulated by Nida, finds a valid middle way by rejecting domestication of the cultural background while encouraging domestication of linguistic structures (Kirk, 2005: 94).

Hence, dynamic equivalence strikes a balance between domestication and foreignisation but has been wrongly criticized by Venuti, as Kirk argues.
Clarity versus authenticity: dynamic equivalence versus formal equivalence

Clarity and authenticity have been two different priorities for translators. Kirk (2005:99) suggests that the common ground between literal versus free translation, foreignising and domestication, formal and dynamic equivalence is that “full authenticity and communicative clarity cannot both be achieved, especially when, as with the Bible, the source and target cultures are very different. A choice must therefore be made” (Kirk, 2005:99). He adds that there are two choices for the translator; the first one is having authenticity with precedence over clarity; some think that translations of formal correspondence are the only “authentic” translations (Kirk, 2005:99). The second option is having clarity as a priority (Kirk, 2005:100). Beekman & Callow (1974, cited in Kirk, 2005) say that “even though there are few, if any, translations that are completely literal or completely idiomatic, each has been produced with one or the other approach in mind.” Hence, translators decide before their translations if clarity or authenticity would be their priority, affecting their produced translation.

Generally, Kirk defends dynamic equivalent translations. He thinks that dynamic equivalence seems to be “at least in general terms, the best way currently available to achieve communicative clarity” (2005:100). Kirk reminds the readers that dynamic equivalence equally stresses on accuracy, clarity and naturalness in translation (2005:100). Beekman & Callow (1974, cited in Kirk, 2005) clarify that there is a space in dynamic equivalence to have adaptation and make implicit information in the source text explicit in the translated text. In other words, dynamic equivalence provides accuracy and natural expression, while making the implicit information in the source text explicit in the target one.
Conclusion

From the discussion above on dynamic equivalence, Kirk strongly defends the theory and presents it as the “best way” for clear translation (2005:100). In contrast, Venuti has rejected dynamic equivalence because he believes it tends towards foriegnisation which Kirk refutes. Then Kirk lists the two options for translators: having authenticity or clarity as priority. Choosing formal equivalence takes place if authenticity is the priority while dynamic equivalence is used if the translator chooses clarity. In brief, Nida’s dynamic equivalence has supporters like Kirk and opponents such as Venuti, all with valid thier reasons on the viability of Nida’s theories.

Finally, the chapter presents an overview of the discussion on equivalence and its types. Then it focuses on dynamic equivalence and its relation with formal equivalence. Nida illustrates his theory of dynamic equivalence, highlighting the significant features of this concept: having naturalness of expression, keeping the original function of the source and having higher decodability by making the implicit explicit. Further, punctuation plays a crucial role in clarity especially for holy texts that are usually read out loud. Consequently, Nida’s findings provide assistance to understand the strategies employed in religious translations.
Chapter 3: Data analysis

This chapter is divided into two parts: the first one introduces the translator, his translation, the Chapter of Joseph and its narrative techniques. The second part presents the data analysis where it examines how Abdel Haleem translates some of the main narrative features in the Chapter of Joseph and his strategies. Consequently, this section answers the main question of the research. It focuses on Abdel Haleem’s strategies in dealing with clarifying pronominal references and pinpointing the role of punctuation in translating dialogues in the story. Abdel Haleem’s strategies are explained in the light of dynamic equivalence by Nida.

3.1 The translation of Abdel Haleem

_The Qur’an: A new translation_ by Abdel Haleem was published in 2004 and has two more editions in 2005 and 2010. In his introduction, Abdel Haleem explains his methodology of translating the Qur’an. He illustrates to the readers that “throughout this translation, care has been taken to avoid unnecessarily close adherence to the original Arabic structures and idioms, which almost always sound unnatural in English” (2010: xxxi). The reason behind this approach is that Abdel Haleem thinks Arabic literal translations produce meaningless English (2010: xxxi).

Abdel Haleem takes specific decisions in his translation regarding the following: paragraphing, punctuation and pronouns usage. First, in Arabic, the whole chapter is written in one paragraph which is not the norm in English and it can frustrate the English readers (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxiv); Abdel Haleem points out that his translation breaks the text into paragraphs to “clarify the meaning and structure of thoughts and to meet the expectations of the modern readers” (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxiv). Abdel Haleem explains that his new
format has not been used before as the two commonly used convention are dividing each chapter into verses separately written on lines and the other convention is having “free-flowing paragraphs” while writing the verses numbers in intervals of five verses or more (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxiv). Hence, Abdel Haleem has developed his own approach in incorporating paragraphing in translating the Qur’an.

Secondly, Abdel Haleem discusses his use of punctuation: quotation marks, dashes, colons and shorter sentences. Quotation marks are crucial because the Qur’an usually employs direct speech and dialogues (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxiv). Then, it becomes “imperative to identify in translation where one speaker ends and another begins” (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxiv). Abdel Haleem demonstrates his punctuation use of dashes to highlight Qur’anic commentary on events and colons in the final epithets:

Dashes have frequently been here because there is a feature of Qur’anic language, long recognized by Arab scholars, where for instance the Qur’an will report the views of disbelievers and interrupt their statement with comments such as ‘so they claim.’ Also, sometimes it will break the expounding of a general argument. Such material is placed between dashes in this translation in order to make the sentence structure and the flow of ideas clearer. Colons are used especially new the end of the verses, where a short statement concludes and comments on the sentence (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxiv-xxxv).

Therefore, the translator consistently uses punctuation to produce a clear translation. His use of dashes and colons are strategies formulated to deal with parenthetical sentences and final epithets in the verses.

The last point in Abdel Haleem’s use of punctuation is using shorter sentences. To avoid sentence fragments, the translator divides single sentences into smaller ones to solve the problem of pronouns shifts in Arabic known as Iltifat, which is a grammatical shift used for rhetoric (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxv). Iltifat means that “shifts can occur for instance from the first to second to third person or changes in tense form present to future” (Abdel
Haleem, 2010: xxxv). In English, all these forms are absent and therefore, Abdel Haleem breaks up verses that have been “traditionally kept together” to have an unambiguous text (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxv).

The third translation decision is related to pronouns use in Arabic and their translation. In the Qur’an, clarifying the reference of pronouns is a decisive factor because the shift within the same verse can be ambiguous; if the pronouns shifts are misidentified, this results in having incorrect meaning (Abdel Haleem, 2010:xxxii). In Arabic, there is a difference between second person ‘you’ singular and ‘you’ plural while in modern English, ‘you’ is used for both; for example, in Abdel Haleem’s translation, he adds ‘prophet’ in the verses where ‘you’ refers to the prophet as the addressee to have a clearly written English text (Abdel Haleem, 2010:xxxii). He clarifies the addressee in the verses where there is a shift between plural and singular address within the same verse. (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxiii). Hence, the translator makes additions in English to make pronouns identifiable.

**Feedback on the translation**

Besides employing punctuation and clarifying pronouns, Abdel Haleem workshopped his translation among native English speakers. In his acknowledgements section, he states that his translation was read by young graduates in English and Arabic and editors for feedback; he wants to assure that the translation is written in “ contemporary English, as free as possible from Arabism and archaism that marked some previous translations” (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxvi). Clearly, he sought feedback to check the response of the audience. It is a useful strategy that greatly helps the translator in producing clear and accurate text.
**Reviewing the translation**

One of the reviewers, Naiyerah Kolkailah, discusses Abdel Haleem’s translation. She appraises his translation because of its mix of authenticity and modernity:

Abdel Haleem has produced what may be considered one of the most genuine and refreshing translations in contemporary times. His most notable success is merging authenticity with originality and transmitting Qur’anic meanings from classical Islamic works in an easily accessible language for both the Muslim and non-Muslim English-speaking populace (Kolkailah, 2010).

She comments on his use of punctuation and structure, saying that he uses an “unprecedented” method where he uses paragraphs when the topic changes to have clear meaning and structure (Kolkailah, 2010).

Kolkailah analyses the use of punctuation in the translation. Firstly, Qur’anic Arabic does not have punctuation marks “that delineate parenthetical statements, quotations, exclamatory remarks, etc.—which are unnecessary and implied by context (for the most part) for those well-versed in the Arabic language” (Kolkailah, 2010). Therefore, Abdel Haleem presents his translation with punctuation for clarity (Kolkailah, 2010). Secondly, she shows that punctuation sometimes make the pause more defining in English when it is not in Arabic especially when punctuation is not accompanied by footnoting (Kolkailah, 2010). Overall, Kolkailah thinks his punctuation shows the implicit aspects in the Qur’anic Arabic.

After introducing the translation of Abdel Haleem and his approach, the following section is a discussion on the Chapter of Joseph. There is an explanation of the narrative structures and features of Joseph’s story to prepare the readers for the data analysis section.
3.2 Introduction on the Chapter of Joseph

The story of Joseph is mentioned in Chapter twelve which is a Meccan chapter; Meccan chapters usually feature warning and threat to non-believers but the Chapter of Joseph is different (Nofal, 1989:14). The Chapter uninterruptedly tells the story of Joseph with very vivid depiction of the characters mostly through dialogue. The story is told in 111 verses except for 10 verses at the end commenting on the lessons learned from it (Nofal, 1989:13).

The Chapter of Joseph was revealed because of two reasons. Firstly, the Chapter was disclosed during stressful and sad times for the prophet when he lost his wife and his uncle (Nofal, 1989:28). Also, the non-believers were continuously aggressive against the Prophet and his followers. Consequently, this Chapter was revealed to ease the pain and bring comfort to them (Nofal, 1989:28). Secondly, the Meccans challenged the status of Muhammad’s prophethood: if he is really God’s prophet then he should explain why Jacob’s family had moved to Egypt from Syria (Mawdudi, 1993:143 cited in Afzar, 2000). The story of Joseph was a proof of Muhammad’s prophethood at the same time it offers a relief to him and his followers, emphasising God’s support to believers, just like He did with Joseph.

The Chapter is about Joseph’s life and the difficulties he faced throughout the different stages of his life. Mir (2000:174) summarizes the story of Joseph in the Qur’an of how young Joseph went to Egypt, rose to power and overcame several difficulties:

Joseph dreams that eleven stars and the sun and the moon have bowed down to him. He related the dream to Jacob, who advises him not to tell it to his jealous brothers. The brothers nevertheless plot to get rid of Joseph and, having talked Jacob into sending him with then on a pleasure trip, cast him into a well, telling Jacob that a wolf has devoured him. Jacob, unconvinced, decided to bear the misfortune patiently. Meanwhile a caravan takes Joseph out of the well and sells him to one the Qur’an calls ‘aziz (powerful [official]); we will refer to him by his Biblical name, Potiphar. Potiphar’s wife tries unsuccessfully to seduce Joseph, and a similar attempt by other ladies of the Egyptian nobility fails too. Joseph is imprisoned. He interprets the dreams of two prison-mates, but the one whose release is foretold by him forgets to
mention him to the king, thus prolonging his stay in prison. The king sees a dream and Joseph interprets it to mean that seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of famine; Joseph also suggests a plan to provide for the difficult years. The king orders his realise, but Joseph would first have the truth about the scheming ladies revealed. Declared guiltless, he is made the virtual ruler of Egypt. When conditions of famine bring Joseph’s brothers to Egypt in search of grain, he instructs them to bring Benjamin with them on the next trip. Jacob only reluctantly agrees to send Benjamin with the brothers, whom he distrusts. When Benjamin arrives, Joseph uses a stratagem to detain him in Egypt, letting the others return home. A sorrow-sticken Jacob sends the brothers back in search of Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph reveals his identity to the brothers, forgiving them for their conduct toward him, and the entire family is reunited in Egypt, where Joseph’s dream is fulfilled as the members of his family bow to him.

Hence, the story ends with the victory of Joseph over his brothers’ cunningness as well as God’s forgiveness of the brothers’ mischief.

**Unique characteristics of the Chapter**

One of the unique features of the Chapter is its unity. It is the only long story in the Qur’an that was mentioned in one chapter and has not been repeated (Nofal, 1989:9). Furthermore, the story is the most diverse one in terms of characters, emotions, environments and events (Nofal, 1989:9). Finally, the nature of the story requires its compilation in one location in the Qur’an because Joseph’s vision is gradually being fulfilled and the lessons cannot be conveyed across unless one follows the events of the story and its stages till the end (Nofal, 1989:15).

**The moral lessons in the Chapter of Joseph**

There are many lessons learned from this story. Mir states that one of the lessons is God changes evil by humans into good; another one is “innocence sometimes come to underserved harm, though, in the end, the harm gives way to good” (2000:176-177). These two lessons are related to one main theme: God has the ultimate control (Mir, 2000:177); this is clearly stated in verse 21: “God is in complete control of His affairs, but most people do not know that.” Another two important lessons are God does not abandon those who
resolutely place their trust in Him (Joseph and Jacob), and He gives those who committed
wrongs an opportunity to correct their mistakes (the brothers)” (Mir, 2000: 177). These
lessons are crystallized with the positive outcome of the story. Joseph becomes Egypt’s ruler,
Jacob regains his eyesight, the jealous brothers are enlightened (Mir, 2000:177). Hence, the
story is filled with lessons about God and people, showing happy endings for believers.

3.3 The Chapter of Joseph and its narrative structure

Stories in the Qur’an are not only independent artistic works; artistic style is used to send
style mixes religious and artistic aims, using art as a tool to emotionally affect the receptors.
The strong appeal to the emotion is a Qur’anic feature; Abdel Haleem says that “the Qur’an is
passionate and forceful in presenting its material” (personal communication). Consequently,
Qur’anic stories engage the receptors emotionally while sending its messages.

The story of Joseph, like other stories, has a narrator, an audience and a plot. The
communication situation in this Chapter is as follows: the narrator is God, the narratee (or the
addressee) is Prophet Muhammad, and the “implied audience” are the Arabs in 7th Century
and all humanity (Afzar, 2000:42). Excluding the introduction and the conclusion of the
Chapter, Joseph’s story in the Qur’an has a unified plot that does not digress (Mir, 2000:184).
“Joseph in all likelihood represents a single revelatory event. In fact, if there is one Qur’anic
chapter of substantial length that decidedly gives no impression of being composed of parts
or fragments revealed at different times, it is probably Joseph” (Mir, 2000: 184). Thus, the
story has a unified plot addressed to the Prophet by God.

Characters in the story of Joseph belong to various levels of society: the king and the
ruling family, prisoners, women...etc (Nofal, 1989:35). The hero of the story is Joseph and
all the other characters are around him are either affecting him or affected by him (Nofal, 1989:15). The characters are: Joseph, brothers, Jacob, travellers, water drawer, the Egyptian king, the Egyptian’s wife and two prisoners (Afzar, 2000: 44).

3.3.1 The orientation and complication of the story

The beginning of Joseph’s story aims at gaining the listeners’ attention since it has no orientation. Afzar defines orientation, saying it gives the necessary details needed by the audience to understand the narrated events including information on time, characters, place and the situation (2000:29). From a narrative perspective, there is no orientation in the Chapter of Joseph because there is no background information on time, persons, place and situations required to follow the narration. However, the events in the story start quickly with the first narrative clause “Joseph said…” (Afzar, 2000:43). There is no mention of time or place or an introduction of who Joseph is, which is an abrupt and a dramatic start of the story; the details are assumed knowledge by the listeners (Afzar, 2000: 43). Immediately the Chapter starts with the main complication: the jealousy experienced by the brothers towards their youngest brother, Joseph (Nofal, 1989:38). This quick start in introducing the events is a stylistic method used to raise the readers’ interest to follow the story (Nofal, 1989: 38). From verse 4 till 100, the complication is developed where most of the story is told through dialogue and direct speech (Afzar, 2000: 43). Accordingly, the complication running throughout the story has several turning points as explained below.

Turning points in the story

The events are heavily focused on one character, Joseph, and they depend on four turning points that have their impact on the events to form an upward straight line (Nofal, 1989:38). The plot is not a simple line of events because of the several elements included like dreams, symbolism, good wishes on the part of Joseph, apprehension by the father and the
plotting by the bothers (Nofal, 1989:38). There are four main turning points for Joseph, the hero of the story; these points helped in having the events converge into one straight line (Nofal, 1989:38): the first turning point is throwing Joseph in the well which is the brothers’ plot; it marks moving from living in father’s protection and to being a slave (Nofal, 1989:38).

The second turning point is selling Joseph to the king of Egypt and having Joseph seduced by the wife, followed by his preference to go to the jail. This is where his talent in dream interpreting is uncovered (Nofal, 1989:38). The third turning point is Joseph’s dream interpretation of the prisoners then the king’s dreams (Nofal, 1989:38). Finally, the fourth turning point is Joseph’s promotion of God’s message which started in prison (Nofal, 1989:38).

3.4 Techniques of narration in the Chapter: Dialogue and dreams

In the following discussion, the techniques of narration used in the Chapter of Joseph are explored. Dialogues and dreams play a key role in the plot development of this story; they vividly portray the characters for the readers. Thus, the coming section highlights two main techniques used in Joseph’s story in the Qur’an.

Dialogues in the Chapter of Joseph and syncopation of events

Mir proves that dialogue advances the plot in the story (2006: 533). He mentions that the Chapter of Joseph and its 11 verses is delivered through “a serious of dialogues: Joseph and Jacob (Q12:4-6); Joseph’s brothers (Q 12:11-4); Potiphar’s wife and Joseph (Q12: 23); Potiphar’s wife, Joseph, the wise observer and Potiphar (Q12:25-9); Pitiphar’s wife, the Egyptian ladies and Joseph (Q12: 31-3); Joseph and his two prison mates (Q12:36-42); the king and his courtiers (Q12: 43-4); the butler and Joseph (Q12:46-9); the king, the Egyptian ladies and Potiphar’s wife (Q12:51); the king and Joseph (Q12: 54-5); Joseph and his
brothers (Q12: 58-61); the brothers, and Jacob (Q12:63-7); the brothers, Joseph's men and
Joseph (Q12:70-9); the brother among themselves (Q12:80-2); the brothers and Jacob
(Q12:83-7); the brothers and Joseph (Q12:88-93); Jacob and his neighbours (Q12:94-5); and
the brothers and Jacob (Q12:96-8) (Mir, 2006:533). Clearly, events in the story happen
through dialogue.

Dialogues can further the plot through syncopation of events. Mir (2006: 532) notices
that sometimes one dialogue “blends seamless with another,” and he gives an example of the
Chapter of Joseph Q12:80-2 where Joseph’s brothers were deciding on how to tell Jacob of
Benjamin’s detention in Egypt. After their discussion, they agreed to tell him that Benjamin
is in custody because of theft and members of the caravan can confirm this (Q12:82). The
next verse shows Jacob’s reaction and scepticism about their statement. Thus, the reader can
assume that the brothers repeated what they said in verse 82 (Mir, 2006: 532). This technique
keeps the continuity of the narrative (Mir, 2006: 532). It is called syncopation of events.

The technique is used in oral narratives where there is “syncopation of real time into
narrative time” (Johns, 1993: 37-70). It happens when the narrator changes the scenes and
shows immediately the results after a speaker says or does something. Syncopation of events
avoids repetitiveness in oral narratives. From a dramatic perspective, syncopation is
“strikingly effective” (Johns, 1993:37-70). Accordingly, syncopation of events is used for
efficiency in oral narratives.

Dialogues have another function in story telling which is characterization. Mir (2006:533-
534) observes that the Qur’an employs dialogue to portray characters including those of the
prophets. Dialogue is a tool used to show Joseph’s consideration and diplomacy while trying
to convert his fellow prisoners to his religion (Mir, 2006: 534). Joseph, firstly, confirmed that
he would interpret the dreams of the butler and the baker upon their request then he started
introducing them to his religion (Mir, 2006: 534). This shows Joseph’s tactfulness because if he had preached them immediately, they could have stopped listening. Joseph’s character is manifested through dialogue.

Finally, the narration in the Chapter is limited. The story consists of twenty eight scenes based on both dialogue and movement (Abdel Haleem, 1999: 156). The story does not have much narrative and it only exists to introduce the characters by mentioning ‘he said’ preceding the speech (Abdel Haleem, 1999: 156-157). Consequently, dialogues play the major part in developing the plot.

**Dreams and narratives in the Qur’an and in the Chapter of Joseph**

Only in the Chapter of Joseph, one comes across “dream narratives” while in other chapters, the word “dream” is not accompanied by any explanation of the content of the dream (Kinberg, 2006:522). Kinberg, thus, concludes that “this observation allows us to say that, except for the dreams of Joseph, the Qur’ an does not contain narratives of dreams” (Kingberg, 2006: 522). Dreams in the Chapter are an integral part of the story. They are “central to this narrative” where they predict Joseph’s future grasp of power, and also the king of Egypt’s dreams which only Joseph could interpret (Goldman, 2006:56).

In the Chapter, there are several symbolic dreams that need interpretation to be understood (Kingberg, 2006: 548). At the start, Joseph tells his father about his dream where he saw the sun, the moon and eleven stars are bowing before him. After several events and later on in the story, the prisoners tell their dreams to Joseph. One of the prisoners saw himself “pressing grapes, the other saw himself carrying bread on his head while birds were picking at it” (Kinberg, 2006:548). The dreams are interpreted by Joseph to mean that the first prisoner would serve wine for the king and the other person would be executed by crucifixion (Q35-41).
Another important dream is that of the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh dreamt of seven “fat cows eating the seven lean ones and about the seven green and seven withered ears of corn” in verse 12:42; the Pharaoh’s courtiers were unable to interpret the dreams. They said that these dreams were أضغاث أحلام “confused dreams” (Q12:44) (Kinberg, 2006: 548). Joseph, on the other hand, interpreted the dream to mean that there would be seven good years followed by seven bad ones (Q12:44). Afterwards, Joseph became a powerful authority in Egypt because of his responsibility for the finances of the country. At the end of the Chapter, the dream mentioned by Joseph at the beginning of the Chapter was fulfilled as his family came to Egypt as stated in verse 100: And he lifted his father and mother upon the throne and they fell down prostate before him. “‘See, father,’ he said, ‘this is the interpretation of my vision of long ago; my lord has made it true’” (Q12:100) (Kingberg, 2006: 548).

The story of Joseph in the Qur’an starts from a dream and ends by its fulfilment. When Joseph had told his dream to his father, Jacob’s reaction was “Your lord will choose you, teach you to interpret dreams, and perfect His blessing on you and the House of Jacob” (12:6). The final words by Joseph in the Qur’an reflect Jacob’s words which completes the cycle of the story (Abdel Haleem, 1999:154). Joseph says: “My Lord! You have given me authority; You have taught me something about the interpretation of dreams; Creator of the heavens and the earth, You are my protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Let me die in true devotion to You. Join me with the righteous” (12:101). Therefore, the narrative is represented in a complete cycle.
3.5 Data analysis

This section introduces some concepts on reference before analysing the verses. The introduction includes the meaning of reference, situational reference, pronominal reference, translating difficulties of reference, and translating countability. The section proceeds to analyse Abdel Haleem’s strategies in translating pronominal references from Arabic into English.

3.5.1 Identifying pronominal references

Reference is a commonly used cohesive device and it can be textual, situational or pronominal. The term acquires a specific meaning when it is used in a textual sense; reference takes place when the reader has to “retrieve the identity of what is being talked about by referring to another expression in the immediate context” (Baker, 2011:191). For the readers to understand the information, they have to refer back to the information mentioned before in the text, which explains the textual meaning for reference. In addition, references can be used situationally, for example, the first and second-person pronouns in English (I, you, we) do not refer back to “a nominal expression in the text but to the speaker and the hearer (or writer and reader)” (Baker, 2011:192). In short, references can be used in a textual sense, referring back to a nominal expression within a text or they can be used according to the situation.

Pronominal reference is another type of reference used in texts. Baker explains that there is a “continuum of cohesive elements that may be used for referring back to an entity already mentioned in the discourse” (2011:192). An example of pronominal reference is the following: There’s a boy climbing that tree. He’s going to fall if he does not take care (Halliday and Hasan, 1979, cited in Baker, 2011). “He” refers to the previously mentioned
noun “boy.” Therefore, within texts, pronominal reference is used to produce a cohesive text through referring back to a previously stated entity in the text.

**Difficulties in translating pronouns**

Pronouns could be difficult to translate. Papegaaij and Schubert explain the difficulty, saying: “the dual function of redundancy and efficiency makes pronouns very difficult to translate, yet very important to translate correctly” (Papegaaij and Schubert, 1988:55). If the pronouns are underspecified in the target language, the result is having an ambiguous text because the “wider inter-sentential connections” are unseen (Papegaaij and Schubert, 1988:55). In short, successful translations of pronouns provide clear messages to the receivers.

**Translating pronouns and countability**

Countablity is part of languages and its translation entails two procedures. Number and countability are universal in all languages but sometimes languages differ in expressing and viewing them (Baker, 2011:96). English differentiates between one and more than one by adding suffixes to nouns as Baker demonstrates in her examples: student/students, fox/foxes, man/women, child/children” (Baker, 2011:96). Unlike English, Arabic has singular, dual and plural forms (Baker, 2011:96-97). The translator has two choices when translating from a language that “has number distinctions into a language with no category of number” (Baker, 2011:97). The first option is to delete the information related to numbers and the second is to lexically explain the information about the numbers (Baker, 2011:97).
3.5.2 Abdel Haleem and his translation of pronominal reference in the Chapter

In translating the Chapter, Abdel Haleem assures throughout the translation that pronominal references from Arabic into English are very clear. If a pronominal reference is not obvious, the readers will lose track of the doers of events, which affects the coherence and clarity of the whole narration. That’s because underspecifying pronouns in translated texts results in confusion (Papegaaij and Schubert, 1988:55).

Abdel Haleem uses two strategies to translate pronominal references from Arabic into English: using brackets for additions and mentioning directly the name of the speaker, when it is absent in Arabic. Concerning the first strategy, in the following examples, Abdel Haleem adds the name of the addressees and the speakers in between brackets to highlight the additions which are not written in the Arabic text.

3.5.3 Using brackets

In the coming example, the Arabic verse talks about the two prisoners who met Joseph in prison and asked him to interpret their dreams.

"Two young men went into prison alongside him. One of them said, ' I dreamed that I was pressing grapes'; the other said, ' I dreamed that I was carrying bread on my head and that the birds were eating it.' [They said], ' Tell us what this means—we can see that you are knowledgeable man’" (36).

In Arabic, the dual grammatical category is expressed in verbs and nouns. In the following Arabic verse, there is no mention of the word “two” but only the addition of suffix ان in the noun فتیان to show that the number of prisoners is two. As stated in the section on translating countability, English does not differentiate between the dual and plural forms. In this case the translator has two options: deleting the information or adding lexicon that
shows the number (Baker, 2011:97). Abdel Haleem chooses the second option and adds “two young men” while in Arabic number “two” is not mentioned. He wants to demonstrate the number of the prisoners in the story.

In the following verse, the brothers are discussing within themselves how Joseph is treated better by their father. In Arabic, it is only mentioned “they said” at the beginning before their utterance.

إِدَّ قَالُواْ لَيْسَفُتُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحِبَّ إِلَى أَبِينَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عَصِيُّونَ إِنَّ أَبِينَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مَّيِّنٍ

“The brothers said [to each other], ‘Although we are many, Joseph and his brother are dearer to our father than we are — our father is clearly in the wrong’ (8).

It is understood from the context that neither Joseph nor his father are present. If Abdel Haleem does not mention in brackets [to each other], there is a room for ambiguity as the English reader might wonder whether Joseph is around or not or who the brothers are talking to. As explained previously, ambiguity can result from underspecified pronouns (Papegaaij and Schubert, 1988:55). Further, adding [to each other] gives the sense of secrecy, conspiracy and collective jealousy experienced by the brothers which would lead them to throw Joseph in the well.

Adding “each other” between brackets adds more clarity to the utterance and increases the decodability for the receptor. Through this addition, the translator ensures the readers’ understanding of the speakers’ and the addressees’ identities, to leave less chance for confusion. Therefore, Abdel Haleem expands the utterance by his additions, resulting in higher decodability translation and fulfilling one of the important features of dynamic equivalence.
There are more examples in the Chapter that have additions of the addressees and speakers between brackets:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْفَوَّلُونَ

“We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur’an so that you [people] may understand” (2).

أَفَلَا يَوْسُفُ أَوْ أَطْرُحَوْهُ أَرَضًا يَخُذُ لَكُمْ وَجْهًا أَيْبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ

“[One of them said], ‘Kill Joseph or banish him to another land, and your father’s attention will be free to turn to you. After that you can be righteous’” (9).

3.5.4 Mentioning explicitly the name of the speaker in English

In the following examples, the translator uses his second strategy of mentioning the names of speakers and addressees. He often does not use pronominal references in his translation. He clarifies the pronominal references in Arabic and mentions the exact noun in English. His use of characters’ names expands the translation and aims at decoding the message for the readers to follow the events of the story.

When Potiphar asked Joseph to interpret his dreams, Joseph said:

فَالَتَزَرَعُونَ سَبَعَ سِنَاتٍ دَائِنًا فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَروُوهُ فِي سَبْلِهِ إِلَّا أَقْوَالُ مَمَّا نَأْكُلُونَ

“Joseph said, ' You will sow for seven consecutive years as usual. Store all that you reap, left in the ear, apart from the little you eat” (47).

There are two points regarding the preceding verse. The first point is related to having clear translation for the receiver. The second one explores using situational reference in Arabic to identify the characters. Concerning the first issue, the translator adds “Joseph” while it is absent in Arabic to have a comprehensible translation. In Arabic, there is no mention of his name but only his spoken words preceded by “he said”. The speaker is known for the Arab receiver but if it is similarly transferred into English, it will be confusing because the previous verse is an utterance by Potiphar:
“Truthful Joseph! Tell us the meaning of seven fat cows being eaten by seven lean ones, seven green ears of corn and [seven] others withered, then I can return to the people to inform them” (46).

Thus if verse 47 is formally translated, the pronoun will remain to be “he said” as in Arabic; this verse is preceded with Potiphar’s words in verse 46. Having formal translation could make the reader think that the speaker might still be Potiphar when in fact, it is Joseph. Thus, the translator mentions the speaker’s exact name to avoid confusion and identify the speaker. Translating religious text should not allow any chances for misunderstanding (Nida, 2003:158). By stating the speakers’ names, Abdel Haleem expands the message to have a clear translation that does not assume the receptors’ knowledge of the story; the result is a translation that does not require the target receptors to know about the original text or culture, a core feature of dynamic equivalence as illustrated by Nida (2003) in chapter 2.

The second point is using the situational reference in Arabic to identify the characters in translation which results in having a decodable translation. In Arabic, the reference in this verse is identified by the context, which makes it a situational reference as explained earlier in this section by Baker (2011:192). In verse 47, the reference is defined by the context where Joseph is the speaker, even when his name is absent in Arabic, because it is his turn in the conversation to interpret dreams upon the request of Potiphar. Therefore, identifying the reference, which is here a situational one, assists the translator in pinpointing the possible unclear spots in translation. Then the translator can take the necessary measures in producing an understandable translation; here, Abdel Haleem adds the name of “Joseph” to have a decodable translation.
Other examples of clarifying situational references in translation are in verses 28 and 29. Firstly, in verse 28, the speaker is Potiphar. The verse captures his reaction after a member of his household explains that if Joseph’s shirt was torn from behind, then the wife tried to seduce Joseph.

“Why did you tear your shirt from behind? You are surely a woman who is very treacherous.” (28)

In verse 28, the translator is keen on clarifying who saw the shirt, although in Arabic it only says “he.” But the translator adds “husband” because the preceding utterances in verse 26 and 27 were said by the member of the household:

“Joseph, overlook this; but you [wife], ask for forgiveness for your sin- you have done wrong” (29).

But he said, 'She tried to seduce me.' A member of her household suggested, 'If his shirt is torn at the front, then it is she who is telling the truth and he who is lying,' but if it is torn at the back, then she is lying and he is telling the truth' (26-27)

Again, verse 28 is an example of a situational reference where in Arabic it is understood that this utterance is said by the husband because it is his turn in the conversation and also his words continue to address Joseph and Potiphar’s wife in verse 29 as explained below. Moreover, if “he said” in verse 28 is kept in English with no additions, the receptor
might think it is the household member continuing his utterance from verse 26 and 27, but it is actually Potiphar who speaks in verse 28.

Secondly, in verse 29 in Arabic, the receptors know that the addressees are Joseph and the wife. That is because in Arabic various forms of “you” exist, depending on whether the person is a male or a female (Baker, 2011:100). Also, the verb suffix shows the gender in Arabic. Hence, if verse 29 is translated formally, the addressees, Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, will not be identified in English because there is not a gender-specific pronoun referring to second person: “you”. This will result in complete ambiguity in identifying the addressees in verse 29 because the receptor will only think it is Joseph who is being addressed.

Consequently, Abdel Haleem identifies the speaker once he started to speak, saying “the husband” to avoid any confusion in verse 28 and adds wife between two brackets in verse 29. In section 3.1, it was discussed that Abdel Haleem explains his awareness of the issues resulting from the difference between “you” in English and Arabic (Abdel Haleem, 2010: xxxiii). Thus, his clarification of pronouns and addressees in the verse is part of his translation strategies.

3.5.5 Decodablity in Abdel Haleem’s strategies:

Situational and pronominal references in Arabic and English play a key role in understanding the patterns of strategies used by the translator in the Chapter. To have a decodable translation, Abdel Haleem uses two main strategies: adding the names of the speakers within brackets and specifying the speaker when it is only a pronoun in Arabic. Paying attention to the situational references helps in identifying the characters and making them explicit in translation. The translator wants to have a clear text for an audience who have no background information on the story. This is an important feature of dynamic
equivalent translations where the receptor is not expected to know about the original culture (Nida, 2003:159).

Identifying the exact pronominal reference can be understood by referring to Nida’s decodability. As shown in the examples above, the translator mentions the full noun in English although it is only a pronoun in the Arabic text to show the reader who is speaking and who is addressed. As explained in chapter two, Nida mentions the necessity for the “expansion of the message” to avoid confusing or boring the audience (2003:175). In dynamic equivalence, the receiver is given more time to decode and understand the message (Nida, 2003:175). The goal is to have the reader spend less time in understanding the message because it is very clear. If Abdel Haleem follows the exact Arab pronouns and translates them into English as in formal equivalence translation, the readers will lose track of the speakers and the events. Consequently, Abdel Haleem employs the concept of decodability to achieve clarity and naturalness of expression by identifying Arabic pronominal references in English.

3.6 The role of punctuation in translating dialogue features in the Chapter

As discussed earlier in section 3.4 on dialogues in the Qur’an, the story of Joseph has very limited narration (Mir, 2006:533). As a result, dialogues gain more importance in this story. This section highlights some of the strategies Abdel Haleem uses in presenting the story from Arabic into English. The main points are: highlighting syncopation of events, analysing punctuation use and explaining parataxis in this translation and Abdel Haleem’s strategy for achieving equivalence of response.

To understand translation strategies employed by Abdel Haleem, one should be familiar with two concepts used in oral narratives: syncopation of events and parataxis. As for the first, it is introduced in section 3.4 as a technique used in the oral narrative (Johns,
1993: 37-70). The narrator changes the scenes and shows immediately the results after a speaker says or does something to avoid repetitiveness. The second technique of oral narrative is parataxis which is used in religious language styles. In paratactic style "a series of segments or episodes . . . are implicitly linked in highlighting some person or theme" (Michael, 1986, cited in Daniell, 1995). That is, shift markers and connectives are absent, yet, themes and sentences are logically connected.

Parataxis is used in religious language. Paratactic syntax keeps the connections between sentences implicit and this was used in the Bible, where the authors had given little explanations in some passages (Burt, 2001:18). Indeed, paratactic style is used in religious language styles as Tom McBride explains: “parataxis is the language of faith: of stories, repeated over and over again, in order to establish communities of faith. They take on the aspect of folk wisdom. It is a matter of belief, not of rationality” (personal communication). Parataxis is related to oral speech and emotional language which is why it is employed in religious language styles. As Daniell explains, the style is frequently used in “emotionality,” women’s language and speeches (1995:254). To sum up its function, paratactic style is a feature of oral language and thought, where there is a lack of shift markers or explicit lexical connectives (Daniell, 1995: 254-255).

3.6.1 Verse 83: an example of syncopation of events in translation

In order to comprehend the syncopation in verse 83, one has to follow the story thread from verse 80. The scene is after Joseph’s refusal to take anyone but Benjamin in custody for stealing. The brothers pleaded to take anyone but Benjamin because Jacob’s heart would be broken for the lost of a second son. They were discussing this matter among themselves in verse 80, the older brother orders his younger brothers to travel to their father to tell him what happened. The syncopation happens when “without any explicit signal to indicate change of
location, the siblings are back in Canaan telling their father what has happened” (Johns, 1993, 37-70). In verse 83, the father is responding to his sons and the listeners/readers do not see the repetition of the older brothers’ words.

The scene starts as follows:

"When they lost hope of [persuading] him, they withdrew to confer with each other: the eldest of them said, ' Do you not remember that your father took a solemn pledge from you in the name of God and before that you failed in your duty with regard to Joseph? I will not leave this land until my father gives me leave or God decides for me — He is the best decider’” (80).

"so go back to your father and say, 'Your son stole. We can only tell you what we saw. How could we guard against the unforeseen?'” (81).

"Ask in the town where we have been; ask the people of the caravan we travelled with: we are telling the truth” (82).

"Their father said, ' No! Your souls have prompted you to do wrong! But it is best to be patient: may God bring all of them back to me- He alone is the All Knowing, the All Wise’” (83).

Abdel Haleem deals with the change of scenes simply by using the same decodability strategy explained in section 3.5.4: adding the name of the speaker, “their father.” In Arabic,
it is mentioned “he said.” After this addition, the listener knows who the speaker is and logically infers that the brothers went back to Canaan and reported to their father what happened, then he said the previous words. The exact mention of the speaker reflects the consistency of having a decodable translation, a main feature of dynamic equivalence.

3.6.2 Punctuation in the translated verses

Punctuation is heavily employed in verse 83, which is an utterance in a dialogue. There are nine punctuation marks in two lines; they vary from commas, quotations, exclamation marks, and dashes. The use of punctuation adds preciseness and clarity because of having shorter sentences. Abdel Haleem mentions that he sometimes breaks the seemingly one sentence into smaller ones to avoid having long fragmented sentences (2010: xxxv).

Referring to chapter two, Nida and Taber explain that punctuation marks are used to strengthen clarity in translations (2003: 29) but they do not explain any further details on how this can be done. Abdel Haleem realizes the role of punctuation in clarifying the message; he uses punctuation and paragraphs, one of the English language norms, to enhance clarity (2910: xxxiv). Shorter sentences in the verses are easier to follow by the readers and even introduce paratactic style to the text.

Punctuation use in the translation of the Chapter produces a paratactic style. Abdel Haleem usually writes sentences that are connected with punctuation marks, with no connectors, but are logically linked. Colons are used between independent clauses if the second independent clause explains the first one or summarizes it (Hacker, 1999). For example in the previous verse, “may God bring all of them back to me” is linked to the previous utterance “But it is best to be patience” by a colon. The connection between the two sentences is expressed by the colon as follows: God will bring all of Jacob’s sons back when he becomes patient. Thus, the characteristic of paratactic style, which is implicitly connecting
sentences, is clear when the colon links the two short sentences without explicitly using connectives.

Similar dialogue verses that follow the same pattern of using punctuation are the following:

قالوا: إنك لآنت يوسف فأنًا يوسف وهذا أخي قد من الله علينا إنه من يتق ويسبير فإن الله لا يضيع أجر المحسنين

“and they cried, ‘Could it be that you are Joseph?’ He said, ‘I am Joseph. This is my brother. God has been gracious to us: God does not deny anyone who is mindful of God and steadfast in adversity the rewards of those who do good’” (90).

قال سوف أستغفر لكم ربى إنه هو الغفور الرحيم

“He replied, ‘I shall ask my Lord to forgive you: He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful’” (98).

The final epithets, the last part of the verse, are commonly preceded by a colon. Abdel Haleem explains that he uses colon in the end of the verses “where a short statement concludes and comments on the sentence” (2010: xxxv). The last part of verse 90: “God does not deny anyone who is mindful to God and steadfast in adversity the rewards of those who do good” comments on the whole verse because it explains why God has been gracious to Joseph. In other words, God has been kind to Joseph and Benjamin because he rewards those who fear them. The colon expresses this explanatory connection between the last part of the verse and the whole verse. Similarly, in verse 98, because God is the Most Forgiving, He will forgive them. Hence, colons connect sentences within verses and are consistently employed to perform this function in the final epithets.
3.6.3 Punctuation and the production of a new text

From the above examples, Abdel Haleem extensively uses punctuation, however, this usage can have its drawbacks. Abdel Haleem employs punctuation as a strategy to ensure clarity as discussed in section 3.1. Although punctuation adds to the clarity of the text, it can result in having a new text in English that has its own internal rhythm. While reading the above verses for instance, the reader has to make pauses with each punctuation mark which frequently does not correspond to equivalent pauses in Arabic. This point in particular is highlighted by Kolkailah, a reviewer of Abdel Haleem’s translations. She explains that although Abdel Haleem’s punctuation assists the readers in distinguishing between narrative and quotations, “inserting punctuation without footnoting alternative readings or pauses may make the punctuation appear definitive, when in fact it is not” (Kolkailah, 2010). Accordingly, punctuation introduces new features in the translated text which are not present in the original.

3.7 Dynamic Equivalence and equivalence of response

Punctuation develops a paratactic style with the absence of connectives to have equivalence of response between Arabic and English receptors. The use of punctuation, therefore, produces a feature of English oral narrative. Hence, Abdel Haleem uses punctuation, one of the English language norms, to produce a paratactic style and emotionally affect the English native speakers. To have an impact on the English receptors, the use of parataxis by Abdel Haleem aims at producing “a language of faith” in English, as McBride calls it. Therefore, Abdel Haleem uses the English language norm of punctuation to create a strong emotional effect on the English language speakers, attempting to have equivalence of response to the ones experienced by the Arabic receptors. The core of dynamic equivalence is having the target audience react similarly as the original ones (Nida, 2003:159). Hence,
Abdel Haleem’s strategy of using punctuation that results in paratactic style is his approach to have a dynamic equivalent translation.

3.8 Conclusion

Translating Joseph’s story in the Qur’an entails employing certain strategies to produce a naturally-expressed translation. Firstly, Abdel Haleem identifies pronominal references by using brackets for additions and mentioning directly the name of the speaker, when it is absent in Arabic. The outcome is having a highly decodable translation with less room for misunderstanding, marking one of the features of dynamic equivalent translations.

Secondly, the chapter discusses the use of punctuation in the story. Seeking equivalence of response between the target and the original receptors, Abdel Haleem uses shorter sentences to have paratactic style which is employed in oral English and faith language styles. To connect shorter sentences, he uses colons in the final epithets. Overall, the translator tries to have a naturally-expressed text through using English language norms.
4 Conclusion

This research has explored the translation of Joseph’s story, as an example of narratives in the Qur’an. It is a distinctive story in the Qur’an because of its use of dialogues, dreams, syncopation of events and other features. Rendering the narrative features of this story into English represents several challenges to translators because of the different nature of storytelling in Arabic and English. Thus, the main question of this research is:

- What strategies does Abdel Haleem use to translate the narrative of Joseph’s story into English?

His strategies of translating the Chapter of Joseph can be understood through discussing the theory of dynamic equivalence by Nida, the Bible translator and researcher. Dynamic equivalence is used in Bible translation and it provides guidance to translating sacred texts. Its principles are: the equivalence of response between the original and the target receptors and naturalness of expression. Consequently, decodability is a main characteristic of dynamic equivalent translations because having unambiguous translation contributes in presenting naturally-expressed texts. Because of the imperative nature of religious texts, clarity becomes more important in their translation (Nida, 2003:158). Dynamic equivalence faces lots of criticism which were summarized in Kirk’s discussion in chapter two where he displays the criticising views of Venuti (1998) and the supporting ones of Wilt (1998).

Dynamic equivalence helps in understanding strategies used in translating Joseph’s story in the Qur’an. Abdel Haleem aims at producing a clear translation that suits the needs of the modern reader and keeps the originality of the source text (2010: xxxiv; Kolkailah, 2010), which represents a commonality with the principles of dynamic equivalence that stress upon
decodablity and receptor’s equivalence response with the source audience. The study examines two main issues in the translation: identifying the reference of pronouns in the story of Joseph and the role of punctuation in translating dialogues. Concerning the first, the clear reference of speakers and addressees in English avoids confusion about the events. As a result, Abdel Haleem has added brackets with the name of the speakers when they are not mentioned in Arabic as well as explicitly stating the name of the speaker in English when in Arabic it is only a pronoun. These two steps expand the translation with addition to ensure the clarity of the translated verses. This enables receptors to easily follow the dialogues and the plot, making the translation decodable. Thus, Abdel Haleem fulfils a core requirement of dynamic equivalence.

The second issue tackled in the research is punctuation in translating dialogues. Syncopation of events and paratactic style are introduced to understand how Abdel Haleem translated dialogues. Regarding syncopation of events, the translator adopts the same strategy of directly mentioning the name of the speaker to highlight the change of scenes and location.

Moving to the paratactic style, it is the result of extensively using punctuation in the dialogue verses including questions marks, dashes and colons. Parataxis is an English style used in religious language and speeches to appeal to emotions. The use of parataxis, through punctuation, resulted in having an English narrative feature in the translated text. Thus, the translator tells the Arabic story of Joseph with the same narrative features used in English story telling. He wants to achieve equivalence of response between Arabic and English receptors, which is the main principle of dynamic equivalence. To sum up, clarity and equivalence of response, which are two main principles of dynamic equivalence, are achieved by identifying pronominal references and using parataxis.
Abdel Haleem’s translation is not a flawless text. His use of punctuation introduces pauses in the translation that are absent in the original text. Punctuation with no explanatory footnotes has made the pauses seem more definitive in English, when they are not in Arabic (Kolkailah, 2010). Hence, the English text presents a story that flows differently than the Arabic one.

In addition to the previous preview on the research findings, this study has shown several points regarding naturalness of expression and audience needs. Firstly, there is a commonality between Nida’s and Abdel Haleem’s stress on naturalness of expression. Nida explains that naturalness of expression, with less traces of foreignness, is part and parcel of dynamic equivalence (2003: 167). Similarly, Abdel Haleem emphasises on having a naturally- expressed translation, saying “throughout this translation, care has been taken to avoid unnecessary close adherence to the original Arabic structures and idioms, which almost always sound unnatural in English” (2010: xxxi). Therefore, both Nida and Abdel Haleem have naturalness of expression as their method in translation.

Secondly is the audience of the translation and their needs. Abdel Haleem’s translation aims at modern English readers and he wants to meet their expectations (2010: xxxiv). He even sought the audience feedback on his translation as clarified in section 3.1. Referring to Nida, he mentions that understanding the target audience’s needs is vital for dynamic equivalent translation to be successful (2003:174). Abdel Haleem is aware of today’s English readers needs and his decision of including paragraphing and punctuation is to avoid overwhelming the receptors who are unfamiliar with the Qur’anic content (2010: xxxiv). Moreover, he mentions that his additions of names in English, instead of only mentioning pronouns as stated in Arabic, are for the sake of clarity (2010:xxxiii). Thus, Abdel Haleem takes into consideration the receptor audience’s needs, knowing that the modern reader can easily be frustrated from an unclear disorganized text. His strategies for
clarity are highlighted in this research within the focus of narratives and storytelling in both English and Arabic.

Finally, since artistic features in Qur’anic translated narratives have been out of focus, more studies should examine them. Afzar (2000:9) states that studying artistic qualities in the narratives of the Qur’an has been marginalized and the focus is mainly on philosophy and theology in the Qur’an. Due to limitation in space and time, the focus of this study is given to pronominal references and punctuation use in dialogues. However, many narrative features are yet to be analysed, including the translation of decorum in the Qur’an, word choices in dialogues, and conveying emotions in narratives from Arabic into English. The studies can include stories besides the story of Joseph. Future research should explore more of the narrative features in the Qur’an and how translators can retell the Arabic stories in English.
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