

## English Focus Structures in Arabic Translation: A Case Study of Gibran's *The Prophet*

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**Abstract:** *The present paper aims to examine the translation of English focus structures into Arabic. The textual data is extracted from Gibran Khalil Gibran's The Prophet, being a good example of creative writing that may instantiate sufficient data of such structures. The extracted data (88 examples) feature four categories of focus structures: fronting (27), fronting plus subject-verb inversion (23), fronting plus subject-auxiliary inversion (28) and It-clefts (10). The findings show that English focus structures constitute a problematic area which requires a high degree of expertise on the translator's part. In addition to accounting for fronting as a major syntactic device for focusing a certain sentence constituent, which is successfully achieved in about two thirds of the examples, inversion and clefting as second-layer emphatic elements are largely missed in Arabic translation. The critical discussion of sample examples shows that such second-layer emphasis can be catered for by the use of both grammatical, e.g. pronouns or lexical, e.g. adverbial emphatic markers, which can effectively support fronting and achieve a comparable degree of focus.*

**Keywords:** Arabic translation, clefting, focus structures, fronting, inversion

### 1. Introduction

Language is a flexible means of communication in which the manipulation of grammar plays a major role in expressing what goes on the producer's mind. Although language is governed by a set of rules, it still shows variation and deviation from these rules in several ways for emphatic and aesthetic purposes. Because translators are the primary agents behind shifting tongues, they are assumed to pay due attention to grammatical maneuvers between languages in order to ensure successful delivery of encoded messages.

According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, grammar is defined as "the study of the classes of words, their inflections, and their functions and relations in the sentence". It is a key tool in the hands of a writer, which is used to express ideas and create intended effects on the readers. One dynamic syntactic process is to bring some elements into focus or prominence for contextual reasons. Such variations within the field of grammar come under the title of stylistic features. Literature is one area which abounds in varied structures that serve various rhetorical purposes. Literary writers depend on their style to communicate aesthetically by employing a number of constructions that would not normally occur in other genres.

It is highly important to be aware of the fact that translation is basically an act of form changing, including change of the actual words, phrases, clauses,

sentences or paragraphs of the language (Larson 1998:3). Clearly then, grammar plays an important role in the job of a translator. Translators build sentences by placing words within certain structures that are dictated by the source text (ST). Literary translators have a heavier burden on their shoulders because they work in the thorny area of literature with all its creativity and artistic value. Thus, the translator's task necessitates sensitivity to the ST in order to produce "the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message" (Nida 2003:166). However, achieving this goal in translation entails basic adaptations in grammar and lexicon. These are guided by the translator's ability to recognize and appreciate similarities and differences between the relevant language pair, particularly in the area of grammar. Hence, literary translation requires full awareness of the grammatical components of the writing style in the source language (SL) as well as the target language (TL). This enables translation to properly target some literary-modified uses of structures that languages offer to influence readers.

This paper aims to show how translators deal with marked focus-structures that involve shifts in word order in English-into-Arabic translation by looking at such structures in Gibran Khalil Gibran's novel *The Prophet*. The Arabic translation was made by Jamil Elabed and published in a bilingual book in 2010. The paper will explore changes in word order and check whether the rendering of such structures succeeds in transferring the intended effect or, otherwise, blurs or weakens it.

Style in literature is an arena where writers produce the essence of their experiences and feelings toward the world. Each author adopts a personal style within the textual and contextual parameters that are followed. In other words, "style... is not a property of the language system as a whole but of particular language users in particular (kinds of) settings" (Hatim and Mason 1990:10). It reflects the writer's personality, emotions and creativity (Hatim 2004:231). Thus, Hatim argues "...translators are also urged to take interest in 'translating' not only what the original has to say but also, when appropriate, how this is said" (Hatim 2004:233). Style supposedly verbalizes what the TT carries by means of word choice, word order or other stylistic features found in a literary piece. Insofar as grammar is concerned, Rochemont and Culicover (1990) state that grammar acknowledges a number of 'stylistic constructions' that identify a specific phrase as a focus in the sentence. In other words, focus can be achieved through syntactic manipulations that authors stylistically opt for.

## **2. Word order and markedness**

Word order is one dynamic feature of the grammatical system in human languages. It involves moving constituents to certain places in order to perform particular functions. Word order serves the progression of information and usually results in some tension between surface structure and information flow and may result in achieving rhetorical purposes. Whereas grammarians study word order in terms of correctness, rhetoricians/discourse analysts look into it in terms of textual and contextual considerations (Battat 2004). Literary writers, as is well known, deviate from familiar word orders to reach intended artistic

effects, emphasize specific information, or communicate in a logical order. Recognizing these intentions implies understanding unmarked and marked structures in any given language.

"Markedness relates to a choice or patterns of choices that stand out as unusual and may come to the reader's attention" (Munday 2012:96). This can be present at the word, clause or text structure level, or even in entire styles, genres or mediums (Hatim 2004:230). An unmarked word order follows the communicatively normal/familiar order of constituents in a sentence, while a marked word order communicatively manipulates the ordering of sentence constituents. Languages may have different word order patterns and they, consequently, differ in signaling various degrees of markedness. In terms of communicative value, for example, it is held that the unmarked English word order is Subject-Verb-Object/Complement (SVO/C), while the unmarked Arabic word order is Verb-Subject-Object/Complement (VSO/C). Typologically, however, some languages are more stable in the ordering of sentence constituents and are termed 'configurational languages', e.g. English, while others are termed 'non-configurational languages' because they enjoy more word order options whose communicative values are signaled by inflectional case markers, e.g. Arabic.

To explain, an English sentence like 'Zayd bought a book' represents the unmarked word order and may not lend itself to other word orders by just swapping the position of the constituents in the sentence, viz. 'Zayd a book bought', 'Bought a book Zayd', and 'A book Zayd bought' are all ill-formed. By contrast, due to its inflectional nature, Arabic practically allows the swapping of the position of all the constituents in the above sentence for communicative purposes, viz. "زيدٌ اشترى كتاباً" , "اشترى زيدٌ كتاباً", "كتاباً اشترى زيدٌ", "زيدٌ اشترى كتاباً" and "كتاباً زيدٌ اشترى".

Apart from changing the position of sentence constituents only linearly, both languages employ other syntactic processes such as fronting, clefting, thematization, etc. to assign a certain sentence constituent focusing or prominence for communicative ends. For example, the subject 'Ali', which is only assigned prominence by unmarked thematization in 'Ali called the manager', is given a focus position in 'It was Ali who called the manager' or in 'Ali was the person who called the manager'. Similarly, 'Ali' is given prominence by unmarked thematization in the Arabic sentence اتصل عليّ بالمدير, while it is assigned a focus position in من اتصل بالمدير هو عليّ or in من اتصل بالمدير هو عليّ.

Consequently, translators between Arabic and English are faced with the challenge of capturing or, at least, approximating rhetorical effects resulting from focus-structures. In this respect, Hatim (2004) argues that marked structures should be rendered dynamically rather than formally by investing the available resources in the relevant language pair. Languages can express a particular effect using their own methods without necessarily abiding by a given marked structure in the SL. He writes "What should be conveyed, then, is not 'linguistic markedness' as such, but an ultimate effect" (p. 244).

### 3. Theme and rheme

Since sentences are made up of clauses and each clause carries a message, Halliday (1985) sees that a message consists of a theme combined with a rheme. He defines theme as "the element which serves as the point of departure of the message" (p. 38). It is with which the clause is concerned and it is prominent by being positioned first. By contrast, rheme is what remains of the message or the part in which the theme is developed. Similarly, the Prague school (e.g. Danes 1974; Firbas 1975; Deyes 1978) argues that a clause has a communicative dynamism accomplished through the progression of information from older to new information (also see Battat 2004). Different authors may use varying labels such as 'topic', 'background' or 'given' for theme, and 'comment', 'foreground' or 'new' for rheme. In this sense, thematic structures communicate messages in an orderly manner, giving local prominence to themes and an overall discourse-level prominence to rheme (Baker 1992; Larson 1998). The Grammar of different languages controls the choice and ordering of themes in translation in order to keep the naturalness of the TT. However, according to Hatim and Mason (1990:217), "... if theme-rheme analysis is to have any relevance to translators, it must provide an account of thematic progression in the service of particular rhetorical purposes". In this way, understanding how themes and rhemes concatenate directs the translator's choice to preserve the thematic structure as long as it sounds natural in the TL, or abandon it if it does not, within the pragmatic parameters of different languages.

### 4. Marked focus structures

As part of coding and receiving information, grammatical organization emerges as an important communicative vehicle. Certain structures may highlight certain messages and draw attention to them in a marked manner. Focus in sentences relates generally to new information which is normally given at the end of an information unit and attained within a context of given information. Put differently, focus corresponds to rheme or what is said about the theme. Focus can be natural or marked. Halliday looks at structures in three ways: unmarked, partially marked, or marked. It is only when we foreground new information that we achieve marked focus (Greenbaum and Quirk 1990). Marked focus structures select a certain clause element as theme. Fronting of the main clause elements, which are subject, predicator, object, complement and adjunct, is then considered thematic (Baker 1992). Some choices are more meaningful than others, and that is what makes them more marked. Halliday defines a marked theme as something other than a subject in a declarative sentence (Halliday 1985). Mona Baker (1992) states that Hallidayan linguists recognize three main types of marked theme in English:

1. **Fronted theme.** It involves moving unusual items to initial position, such as time or place adjuncts, object, complement or predicator.
2. **Predicated theme.** It involves using an *it-structure* to place an element near the beginning of the clause.

3. **Identifying theme.** It involves using a *wh-structure* to place an element in theme position.

According to Halliday (1967), focus is a grammatical category that determines which part of the sentence contributes new, non-derivable, or contrastive information. Focus structures are termed by Rochemont and Culicover (1990) as "stylistic constructions" and are explained within the theory of focus. Based on the syntax of the English sentence, they identify six focus constructions as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Focus structures by Rochemont and Culicover (1990)

Focus structure	Example
1. Heavy Noun Phrase Shift	John invited to the party <b>his</b>
2. It-cleft construction	It was <b>a brand new fur coat</b> that
3. Relative Clause and PP	A man came into the room <b>with</b>
4. Directional/ Locative Adverbial	<b>Into the room</b> walked John.
5. Preposing around be constructions	<b>Standing in front of her</b> was
6. Presentational there insertion (PTI)	There walked into the room <b>a tall</b>

As for Arabic, Ford (2009) summarizes focus structures in terms of the linear presentation of sentence elements, as is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Arabic focus structures (Ford 2009)

Word	Focused	New	Summary	Example
<u>SOV</u>	Object	O	Topic-focus	محمدٌ كتاباً اشترى
<u>OVS</u>	Object	O	Narrow focus of	كتاباً اشترى محمدٌ
<u>VOS</u>	Object	O	Contrastive focus of	اشترى كتاباً محمدٌ
<u>SVO</u>	Subject	S	Focus of subject	محمدٌ اشترى كتاباً

Tables (1) and (2) give the impression that the two languages largely differ in how they show marked focus, which allows for communicative dynamism to play a crucial role in a successful translation of these structures. On the one hand, Table (1) indicates that English can focus a variety of sentence elements which goes as far as breaking the conditions of constituency, viz. the prepositional phrase within the subject NP in 'A man with blond hair came into the room' may be extracted and post-posed to highlight it as a focus element in 'A man came into the room with blond hair'. Table (2), on the other hand, restricts focus structures to the constituents in the VSO word order, thus giving the false impression that Arabic can only capture the focus elements in English clefts by freely moving sentence elements in the VSO order. A closer look into focus structures in Arabic unravels the fact that it manages to employ a variety of focus structures which, just like English, may go as far as violating constituency norms. For example, it is possible to extract a prepositional phrase

out of its subject NP for focus purposes the way it is done in English, viz. one may say the sentence دخل رجلٌ بشعره الأشقر إلى الغرفة instead of دخل رجلٌ بشعره الأشقر إلى الغرفة.

### 5. Material and procedure

This is a case study of Gibran Khalil Gibran's novel, *The Prophet*, which was published in 1923. It represents the genre of prose poetry, which is expected to include a variety of focus structures resulting from word order marked options. The Arabic translation by Jamil Elabed (2010) will be examined to see how the translator has dealt with the focus structures in the English original. The paper will look into the different types of English focus structures and their Arabic counterparts in an attempt to explore the translation procedures employed and critically check how successful they are.

### 6. Data analysis

The novel contains 88 examples of marked focus structures involving changes in word order. The collected data is categorized according to the type of focus structure employed. Focus constituents are found to be complements, objects, and adverbial adjuncts. Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage of each type of focus structures.

Table 3. Distribution of marked focus structures

	Frequency	Percentage
Fronting	27	30.68%
Fronting + subject-verb inversion	23	26.14%
Fronting + subject-auxiliary inversion	28	31.82%
It-clefts	10	11.36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

The following discussion will furnish a critical evaluation of the Arabic procedures that need to be employed to capture the communicative value sought by the English focus structures.

### 7. Fronting

Out of the 27 fronting cases, the communicative value of fronted elements have been preserved 18 times in Arabic (see Appendix 1). Fronting achieves marked theme by moving into initial position an item which is otherwise unusual there (Greenbaum and Quirk 1990). The fronted elements are either complements or adverbial adjuncts. Baker (1992) rightly notes that fronting adjuncts (adverbials/prepositional phrase) is less marked than fronting complements because complements have a fairly fixed place in the sentence. This observation is borne out in fronted elements as there are only 2 examples where we have fronted complements, the remaining 25 examples featuring fronted adjuncts. A quick look at Appendix 1 shows that the function of focus structures has been maintained in 18 cases (66.67%), while it has been missed in 9 cases (33.33%).

To start with fronted complements, the two cases are given in (1) and (2) below:

(1) ...and **together** you shall be for evermore.(p. 22)

... ومعاً تبتقيان مرَّ السنين. (ص 23)

(2) **True** it is that I have climbed the hills and walked in remote places. (p. 152)

صعدت التلال حقاً ورمت أبعد مكان. (ص 153)

As can be seen, the translator has succeeded in capturing the communicative value of the fronted verb complement in (1) by opting for a fronted verb complement in Arabic. By contrast, he has failed to follow the same procedure in (2) as he has kept the Arabic adverbial element *حقاً*, which functionally corresponds to the English verb complement 'true', in its unmarked position in Arabic. To achieve the communicative function of the English fronted complement, one needs to offer something like (3) below, where the adverbial is fronted:

(3) *حقاً* صعدت التلال ورمت أبعد مكان

As for fronted adjuncts (25 cases), the data shows that the translator has managed to relay the communicative function of marked fronted adverbials in 17 cases (68%), but has failed to do so in the remaining 8 cases (32%). The sample examples below attest to this finding:

(4) **Like sheaves of corn** he gathers you unto himself. (p. 18)

كأوراق ذرة يحشدكم إليه. (ص 19)

(5) And **together** we shall rejoice through all the seasons. (38)

ومعاً نختال عبر الفصول. (ص 39)

(6) **To you** the earth yields her fruit (p. 58)

تطرح الأرض لكم ثمارها (ص 59)

(7) **For the bee** a flower is a fountain of life (p. 122)

فالزهرة للنحلة ينبوع حياة (ص 123)

One can readily note that the emphasis achieved by the fronted adjuncts in (4) and (5) above is successfully relayed by fronting the corresponding Arabic adjuncts. However, the translator has missed the emphasis obtained by such adjuncts in (6) and (7) because he has opted for the unmarked Arabic word order in (6) and has changed the focus element in (7), viz. 'the flower' rather than 'the bee' has taken the focus position. To relay the emphasis by maintaining focus structures in (6) and (7) above, (8) and (9) below need to be offered, respectively:

(8) لكم تطرح الأرض ثمارها

(9) فالنحلة الزهرة ينبوع حياة

### 8. Fronting + subject-verb inversion

Fronted focus structures that involve subject-verb inversion occur 23 times in the novel. This category (Appendix 2) shows that the focus function has been preserved in 6 cases (26%), partially preserved in 10 cases (43.47%), and missed in 7 cases (30.43%). Fronting in this category naturally carries with it the

inversion that puts the subject in final position to achieve end-focus (Greenbaum and Quirk 1990). Thus, the fronted constituent in such sentences functions as a marked theme and receives a marked initial focus. The data in this category involves fronting verb complements (20 cases) and adjuncts (3 cases only), alongside subject-verb inversion.

Let us first examine three examples where the focus function has been maintained:

(10) But even **in their foregoing** is their pleasure. (p.120)

لكنهم حتى في تمنعهم يجدون لذة. (ص 121)

(11) **In the depth of your hopes and desires** lies your silent knowledge of the beyond (p. 136)

في عميق آمالكم وسحيق أشواقكم يكمن علمكم الصامت بالغيب (ص 137)

(12) **That which seems most feeble and bewildered in you** is the strongest and most determined. (p. 158)

إن أكثر ما يبدو فيكم ضعفاً وتحيراً هو الأقوى والأكثر عزماً. (ص 159)

In (10), the translator has managed to maintain the position of the focus English complement in Arabic and has appropriately supported it by the employment of the lexical verb *يجدون*, which performs the second-degree focus obtained by the use of inversion in English. Without this verb, the focus function in the sentence would be seriously reduced, viz. *لكن حتى في تمنعهم لذتهم*, which is less emphatic and dynamic than the rendering in (10) above. The same procedure is applied in (11) where the Arabic complement occupies the focus position and is duly supported by the lexical verb *يكمن*, which renders the utterance more emphatic. A stative rendering such as *علمكم الصامت بالغيب* would not capture the high degree of focus in the English utterance, where focus is doubly achieved by fronting and subject-verb inversion. As for (12), the Arabic fronted complement is supported by the emphatic pronoun *هو*, which renders the focus element more emphatic (cf. *إن أكثر ما يبدو فيكم ضعفاً وتحيراً الأقوى والأكثر عزماً*, which is less emphatic than the Arabic rendering in (12)). Apparently, in addition to fronting proper, the use of Arabic lexical verbs and pronouns constitutes an important supporting resource for capturing the doubly focus structure featuring fronting and inversion in English. Failure to duly invest this resource would result in partial preservation of focus (see below).

Partial preservation of focus, which is the most frequent in this category, usually results in stative utterances which are deficient in emphasis and dynamism despite the fact that fronting has been implemented in them. Following are three illustrative examples:

(13) **Long** were the days of pain I have spent within its walls (p. 4)

طويلة أيام الألم أمضيتها بين هذه الجدران (ص 5)

(14) **Brief** were my days among you, and **brief** still the words I have spoken. (p. 140)

قليلة أيامي بينكم، وأقل منها كلماتي لكم. (ص 141)

(15) **In your longing for your giant self** lies your goodness (p. 112)

في توفكم لذاتكم الكبرى خيركم (ص 113)



In (13) and (14), the translator has failed to render the element relayed by inversion in English although he has the focus elements by fronting. One should note that the unmarked English word orders corresponding to (14) and (15) are stative, viz. ‘My days among you were brief, and the words I have spoken still briefer’ and ‘Your goodness lies in your longing for your giant self’ respectively, and marked focus elements. However, their stative nature becomes more emphatic and dynamic by inversion, a nuance that needs to be accounted for in Arabic translation. Thus, taking care of fronting alone in such structures would only do the job partially and would, erroneously, offer stative sentences par excellence. As has been mentioned above, both pronouns (13 and 14) and lexical verbs (15) should be employed to cater for the inversion focus element. Following are the respective renderings which preserve the focus realized by fronting as well as inversion:

- (16) طويلة هي أيامي التي أمضيتها بين هذه الجدران  
 (17) قليلة هي أيامي بينكم، وأقل منها هي كلماتي التي قلتها  
 (18) في توقعكم لذاتكم يكمن/يوجد خيركم

More seriously, in some cases (7/23), the translator has missed the function of the focus element altogether, thus rendering a marked word order into an unmarked one. The following examples are illustrative:

- (19) **Like a giant oak tree covered with apple blossoms** is the vast man in you.  
 (p.146)

الإنسان الأكبر فيكم شجرة سنديان تكسوها براعم تفاح (ص 17)

- (20) **Ready** am I to go (p. 6)

إني متأهب للرحيل (ص 7)

- (21) **Only when you are empty** are you at standstill and balanced. (p. 48)

لا يستقيم قائمك ولا يستوي ميزانك إلا في فراغك (ص 49)

As can be noted, the translator has opted for unmarked Arabic word orders in (19)-(21). In fact, the renderings correspond to the following unmarked English versions respectively:

- (22) The vast man in you is like a giant oak tree covered with apple blossoms.  
 (23) I am ready to go.  
 (24) You are at standstill and balanced only when you are empty.

Consequently, the focus function in the English structures is completely lost in the renderings. To capture intended meaning, the translation needs to cater for both fronting and inversion as focus devices. Following are suggested Arabic renderings:

- (25) كشجرة سنديان تكسوها براعم تفاح هو الإنسان الأكبر فيكم  
 (26) متأهب للرحيل أنا  
 (27) ليس إلا في فراغك يستقيم قائمك ويستوي ميزانك

To explain, the focus function in (25) is achieved by fronting as well as the use of the pronoun هو. In (26), it is obtained through fronting of the adjective as well as placing the first person pronoun in a marked position at the end of the utterance. As for (27), focus is attended to by fronting as well as the employment of explicit negation in Arabic.

### 9. Fronting + subject-auxiliary inversion

This fronting structure involves fronting a sentence constituent plus subject-auxiliary inversion, which adds end-focus to the main verb. It is the most frequent focus structure in the data, accounting for 28 cases (31.82%). This kind of inversion is different from subject-verb inversion (section 7.2 above) by the fact that it involves inverting an auxiliary verb rather than a main verb with the subject where the main verb is usually a lexical rather than a stative verb and it naturally (i.e. unmarkedly) occurs in interrogative sentences. However, it is also used as a rhetorical device which co-occurs with fronted verb complements as well as adjuncts. Below are some illustrative examples:

- (28) **Too many fragments of the spirit** have I scattered in these streets (p. 4)  
 عديدة شظايا الروح نثرتها على هذه الطرقات (ص 5)
- (29) **All these things** shall love do unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart (p. 18)  
 كل هذا يفعله الحب بكم لتعرفوا أسرار قلوبكم (ص 19)
- (30) **Much** have we loved you. (p. 10)  
 لكم أحببناك. (ص 11)
- (31) And **alone and without his nest** shall the eagle fly across the sun. (p. 4)  
 ووحده وبلا عشه قدر النسر في الشمس أن يطير. (ص 5)

As can be seen, (28) and (29) involve fronting verb complements, namely direct objects, along with subject-auxiliary inversion in order to mark a sentence element as a focus structure. The unmarked counterparts would appear in the normal object slot, viz. 'I have scattered too many fragments of the spirit in these streets' and 'Love shall do all these things unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart', respectively. The translator has done well in (28) and (29) by fronting the Arabic verb complements to cater for the focus element. One may argue, however, that the element of emphasis conferred by inversion has been lost in the Arabic renditions. The question here is: How can this focus element be captured if subject-auxiliary inversion is non-existent in Arabic? The answer is to look for another evaluativeness correlate (see Farghal 1991) to support fronting, whether it be grammatical or lexical. In this way, (28) can be further emphasized by the employment of a reflexive pronoun, viz. عديدة شظايا الروح نثرتها بنفسي على هذه الطرقات and an emphatic adverbial in (29), viz. كل هذا حقاً يفعله الحب بكم لتعرفوا أسرار قلوبكم.

For their part, (30) and (31) feature fronted adjuncts plus subject-auxiliary inversion. These marked adjuncts are placed at the end of the utterance in the unmarked versions, viz. 'We have loved you much' and 'The eagle shall fly across the sun alone and without his nest', respectively. Again, the translator succeeds in bringing the adjuncts to focus position but, as in (28) and (29), does not capture the second-layer emphasis introduced by inversion. To capture such an extra focus nuance, a subject pronoun can be employed in (30), viz. لكم نحن ووحده وبلا عشه لا غير سيظير and a negative mitigating marker in (31), viz.

النسر في الشمس. One should note that the translator in (31) has brought another constituent, that is, في الشمس to a focus position, something that is not found in the English sentence.

Examining the renditions in this category (Appendix 3), we can observe that no renditions take account of inversion as a second-layer focus device. Apart from that, however, the translator has failed to capture the focus structure in 14 instances, which makes 50% of the examples in this category. Following are some illustrative examples:

(32) **Empty and dark** shall I raise my lantern (p.8)

مصباحي أرفعه خاويًا غير مضاء (ص 9)

(33) **Only when you drink from the river of silence** shall you indeed sing.

(p. 138)

(ص 139) لن تعرفوا الغناء حتى تترعوا من نهر السكون.

(34) **And not unlike the mist** have I been. (p. 144)

ولم أكن غير ما كان الضباب. (ص 145)

To start with (32), the translator has brought the direct object مصباحي rather than the adjunct خاويًا غير مضاء to focus, thus changing the focus structure, which is the adjunct 'empty and dark' in the ST. To capture fronting plus inversion as focus devices, one can offer خاويًا غير مضاء أرفع مصباحي بنفسه. Note that the Arabic reflexive pronoun is meant to relay the element of emphasis achieved by inversion in English. For its part, the English sentence (33) involves fronting a constituent containing implicit negation. Although the translator has recovered negation in his rendering, he has failed to employ a marked Arabic word order where the negative part is brought to focus. To do this, a rendering such as ليس إلا حين تترعوا من نهر السكون ستعرفون أنتم الغناء حقاً. Finally, the translator has missed the subject complement as a focus structure in the Arabic rendering by opting for the unmarked Arabic word order. To bring the complement to focus, the Arabic sentence should read غير ما كان الضباب لم أكن أنا.

### 10. It-clefts

*It*-cleft structures are the least frequent in the data (10 cases/11.36%). They give divided focus by breaking the sentence into two clauses (Greenbaum and Quirk 1990). They use the subject pronoun *it* as a dummy theme, followed by the verb *be* and a focused constituent. Examples show focus on post-copular subjects, objects and adjuncts.

Examining *It*-cleft structures (Appendix 4) shows that the translator has managed to capture the focus achieved by the *It*-cleft in 5 cases, whereas he has missed it in the other 5 cases. Below are illustrative examples:

(35) It is **when you give of yourself** that you truly give. (p. 30)

عطاؤكم من ذاتكم هو العطاء الصادق. (ص 31)

(36) It is **thy will in us** that willeth. (p. 116)

مشيبتك فينا هي التي تشاء. (ص 117)

(37) It is **in exchanging the gifts of the earth** that you shall find abundance and be satisfied. (p. 58)

في تبادل نعم الأرض الفيض والكفاية والرضا. (ص 59)  
 (38) It was **but yesterday** we met in a dream. (p. 162)

كان أمس يوم جمعنا في حلم. (ص 163)

On the one hand, examples (35) and (36) show that the translator has successfully relayed the emphasis in the cleft structures by employing emphatic pronouns. Thus, the emphatic pronoun هو marks the topic of the sentence عطاؤكم من ذاتكم as a focus element. Similarly, the relativized emphatic pronoun هي in (36) turns the topic into a focus element. On the other hand, the translator has missed the cleft structure emphasis in (37) and (38). In (37), he opts for a relatively unmarked structure where the comment precedes the topic. However, this humble structural maneuver does not cater for the strong degree of emphasis introduced by the English cleft structure. To relay a comparable degree of emphasis, one may employ the emphatic grammatical marker إنَّ, viz. إنَّ في تبادل or may use a lexical verb to turn the stative sentence into a dynamic one, viz. في تبادل نعم الأرض تجدون الفيض والكفاية والرضا. As for (38), the translator has opted for an unmarked word order that misses the emphasis altogether. To capture the focus element, a relativized emphatic pronoun can be used, viz. أمس هو اليوم الذي جمعنا في حلم.

## 11. Conclusion

In terms of the translator's success in capturing English focus structures in Arabic translation, the following quantitative picture obtains:

Table 4. Types of renditions in terms of accuracy

Focus structures	Preserved	Partially	Missed
Fronting	18 / 66.67%	-	9 / 33.33%
Fronting + Sub-Verb	6 / 26%	10 / 43.47%	7 / 30.43%
Fronting + Sub-Aux	-	14 / 50%	14 / 50%
It-clefts	5 / 50%	-	5 / 50%

Based on the above Table, it can be concluded that English focus structures constitute a problematic area for translators into Arabic, viz. only 29 cases (33%) properly preserve the emphasis achieved by them vs. 59 cases (67%) in which the emphasis is either only partially preserved or completely missed. While mishaps relating to the translator's failure to capture emphasis introduced by focus structures may not affect the propositional content of ST sentences, they seriously impact the author's style and the communicative value of packaging information in different ways in discourse. Hence, student translators as well as professional translators need to be alerted to the subtleties involved in this area.

While fronting may present several problems as the above Table indicates, English Subject-Verb and Subject-Auxiliary inversion as a second-layer focus element is the most challenging to capture in Arabic translation. It has been suggested that if fronting in Arabic is supported by either a grammatical or a

lexical emphatic marker such as a pronoun, an adverb, or a verb, the Arabic sentence will achieve the two layers of focusing. One should note that the most serious error in dealing with a marked word order introducing a focus structure is to turn it into an unmarked word order in the target language, thus doing away with the focus structure altogether. The Table shows that the translator has committed this serious error in 34 cases (38.63%), a fact which confirms how sensitive focus structures are.

Finally, as a focusing device, It-clefts present themselves as a problematic structure, viz. the translator has missed the emphasis in 5 out of the 10 cases in the data. Again, to capture the focus structure in an It-cleft the fronted element in Arabic needs to be supported by an emphatic marker, be it a pronoun, an adverb, or a verb. Fronting a constituent without employing an emphatic marker to relay the emphasis in an It-cleft would result in a stative Arabic structure whose comment-topic order lacks the dynamism included in an English It-cleft or in an unmarked Arabic word order.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Fronted focus structures

#	P.	Focus Structure	Translation	ص	Fronted Constituent	Focus
1	14	In your aloneness you have watched with our days,	في وحدتك راقبت مع أيامنا،	15	adjunct	Preserved

2	14	and in your wakefulness you have listened to the weeping and the laughter of our sleep.	وفي صحوك أصغيت لضحكنا ولنشيجنا في نومنا.	15	adjunct	Preserved
3	18	Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto himself.	كأوراق ذرة بحشدكم إليه.	19	adjunct	Preserved
4	22	and together you shall be for evermore.	ومعاً تبقيان مرّ السنين.	23	complement	Preserved
5	32	Through the hands of such as these God speaks,	بأيديهم يتكلم الله	33	adjunct	Preserved
6	32	and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth.	ومن خلف عيونهم يحنو على الأديم.	33	adjunct	Preserved
7	38	And together we shall rejoice through all the seasons.	ومعاً نختال عبر الفصول.	39	adjunct	Preserved
8	48	Together they come,	معاً يأتیان،	49	adjunct	Preserved
9	50	In their fear your forefathers gathered you too near together.	في خوفهم قرب أجدادكم ما بينكم.	51	adjunct	Preserved
10	58	To you the earth yields her fruit,	تطرح الأرض لكم ثمارها،	59	adjunct	Missed
11	58	To such men you should say:	له ولمثله من الرجال قولوا،	59	adjunct	Preserved
12	98	And in the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter, and sharing of pleasures.	وفي نعيم الود، اجعل هناك ضحكات وتقاسماً للمسرة.	99	adjunct	Preserved
13	98	For in the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed.	فالقلب يجد صباحه ونشاطه في ندى الأشياء والزواجب.	99	adjunct	Missed
14	100	In the bosom of such as these the spirit dwells in rhythmic silence.	في صدر هؤلاء تنفّس الروح بإيقاع صامت.	101	adjunct	Preserved
15	104	Of time you would make a stream upon whose bank you would sit and watch its flowing.	ومن الزمن تجعلون جدولاً تجلسون على ضفافه وترقبون انسيابه.	105	adjunct	Preserved
16	108	Of the good in you I can speak, but not of the evil.	عن الخير فيكم، لا عن الشر أستطيع الكلام.	109	adjunct	Preserved
17	110	For to the fruit giving is a need,	فالعطاء للثمرة حاجة،	111	adjunct	Missed
18	120	And in their fear of seeking and remembering they shun all pleasures,	في خوفهم من البحث والتذكر يتجنبون اللذات كلها	121	adjunct	Preserved
19	122	Oftentimes in denying yourself pleasure you do but store the desire in the recesses of your being.	في إنكارك اللذة على نفسك تختزن الرغبة في عمق الكيان.	123	adjunct	Preserved
20	122	For the bee a flower is a fountain of life,	فالزهرة للنحلة ينبوع حياة،	123	adjunct	Missed
21	122	And to the flower a bee is a messenger of love,	والنحلة للزهرة رسول حب	123	adjunct	Missed

22	124	And to both, bee and flower, the giving and the receiving of pleasure is a need and an ecstasy.	وأن عطاء اللذة وأخذها لكليهما، النحلة والزهرة، حاجة وسرور.	125	adjunct	Missed
23	134	For in reverie you cannot rise above your achievements nor fall lower than your failures.	فلا أنت في أحلام يقظتك فوق ماترك صاعد ولا دون إخفاك قادر على الهبوط.	135	adjunct	Missed
24	134	For in adoration you cannot fly higher than their hopes nor humble yourself lower than their despair.	فلا أنت في الهيام فوق آمالهم محلق ولا دون قنوطهم مدل نفسك في قنوط.	135	adjunct	Missed
25	140	Even while the earth sleeps we travel.	حتى والأرض نائمة نسير.	141	adjunct	Preserved
26	144	In the stillness of the night I have walked in your streets,	في هدأة الليل طفت شوارعكم،	145	adjunct	Preserved
27	152	True it is that I have climbed the hills and walked in remote places.	صعدت التلال حقاً ورمت أبعد مكان.	153	complement	Missed

#### Appendix 2: Fronting + subject-verb inversion structures

#	P.	Focus Structure	Translation	ص	Fronted Constituent	Focus
1	4	Long were the days of pain I have spent within its walls,	طويلة أيام الألم أمضيتها بين هذه الجدران،	5	complement	Partially preserved
2	4	and long were the nights of aloneness;	وطويلة ليالي الوحدة؛	5	complement	Partially preserved
3	4	too many are the children of my longing that walk naked among these hills,	وعديدة بنات شوقي تسير عارية بين التلال،	5	complement	Partially preserved
4	6	Ready am I to go,	إني متاهب للرحيل،	7	complement	Missed
5	8	A seeker of silences am I,	ما أنا إلا باحث عن الصمت،	9	complement	Preserved
6	10	No stranger are you among us,	ما أنت بغريب بيننا،	11	complement	Missed
7	10	But speechless was our love,	كان حبنا أخرس	11	complement	Missed
8	12	Deep is your longing for the land of your memories and the dwelling-place of your greater desires;	عميق شوقك لمهد ذكرياتك وعظيم أمانيك،	13	complement	Partially preserved
9	48	Only when you are empty are you at standstill and balanced.	لا يستقيم قائمك ولا يستوى ميزانك إلا في فراغك.	49	adjunct	Missed
10	112	In your longing for your giant self lies your goodness:	في توقكم لذاتكم الكبرى خيركم	113	complement	Partially preserved



11	120	But even in their foregoing is their pleasure.	لكنهم حتى في تمنعهم يجدون لذة.	121	complement	Preserved
12	126	“And with her cries came the sound of hoofs, and the beating of wings and the roaring of lions.”	ومع الصياح صوت حوافر، وصفق أجنحة، وزئير أسود.	127	adjunct	Preserved
13	136	In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond;	في عميق أمالكم وسحيق أشواقكم يكمن علمكم الصامت بالغيب؛	137	complement	Preserved
14	140	Less hasty am I than the wind, yet I must go.	إني أقل عجلة من الريح، لكن الرحيل علي حتم.	141	complement	Partially preserved
15	140	Brief were my days among you, and briefer still the words I have spoken.	قليلة أيامي بينكم، وأقل منها كلماتي لكم.	141	complement	Partially preserved
16	144	And to my silence came the laughter of your children in streams, and the longing of your youths in rivers.	مرح أطفالكم وصل صمتي جداول، وشوق شبابكم أنهرأ.	145	adjunct	Missed
17	146	Like a giant oak tree covered with apple blossoms is the vast man in you.	الإنسان الأكبر فيكم شجرة سنديان تكسوها براعم تفاح.	147	complement	Missed
18	150	And in this lies my honor and my reward,	وفي هذا جزائي ومكرمتي،	151	complement	Partially preserved
19	150	Too proud indeed am I to receive wages, but not gifts.	كثير التعفف عن تلقي الأجر أنا، وليس عن تلقي العطاء.	151	complement	Preserved
20	156	Vague and nebulous is the beginning of all things,	غامضة سديمية بداية الأشياء،	157	complement	Partially preserved
21	158	That which seems most feeble and bewildered in you is the strongest and most determined.	إن أكثر ما يبدو فيكم ضعفاً وتحيراً هو الأقوى والأكثر عزماً.	159	complement	Preserved
22	160	Patient, over patient, is the captain of my ship.	طال الصبر بربان سفينتي.	161	complement	Partially preserved
23	160	and restless are the sails;	والشرع في اضطراب؛	161	complement	Missed

## Appendix 3: Fronting + subject-auxiliary inversion

#	P.	Focus Structure	Translation	ص	Fronted Constituent	Word order
1	4	Too many fragments of the spirit have I scattered in these streets,	عديدة شظايا الروح نثرتها على هذه الطرقات،	5	complement	Partially preserved
2	4	Fain would I take with me all that is here.	ليتني أحمل كل ما هنا معي،	5	adjunct	Missed
3	4	Alone must it seek the	وحده عليه أن يشق	5	adjunct	Partially

		ether.	الأثير.			preserved
4	4	And alone and without his nest shall the eagle fly across the sun.	ووحده وبلا عشه قدر النسر في الشمس أن يطير.	5	adjunct	Partially preserved
5	6	Only another breath will I breathe in this still air,	مرة واحدة ساعب من هذا الهواء الساكن،	7	complement	Partially preserved
6	6	Only another winding will this stream make,	أمام هذا الجدول منعطف أخير،	7	complement	Missed
7	8	Empty and dark shall I raise my lantern,	مصباحي أرفعه خاويًا غير مضاء،	9	adjunct	Missed
8	10	A noontide have you been in our twilight,	في عسق أيامنا كنت لنا ضحي،	11	complement	Missed
9	10	Much have we loved you.	لكم أحبيناك.	11	adjunct	Partially preserved
10	10	and with veils has it been veiled.	حجاب يخفيه خلف حجاب.	11	adjunct	Partially preserved
11	12	And ever has it been that love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation.	لم يعرف الحب يوماً عمقه حتى تعجل ساعة الفراق.	13	adjunct	Missed
12	12	long have you searched the distances for your ship.	حنيناك لشراعك طال.	13	adjunct	Missed
13	18	All these things shall love do unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart,	كل هذا يفعله الحب بكم لتعرفوا أسرار قلوبكم	19	complement	Partially preserved
14	44	Often have I heard you say,	لكم سمعتمكم تقولون،	45	adjunct	Partially preserved
15	50	A little longer shall your city walls separate your hearths from your fields.	وحيناً ستفصل جدران مدينتكم حقولكم عن جانب - ناركم.	51	adjunct	Partially preserved
16	62	And for that wrong committed must you knock and wait a while unheeded at the gate of the blessed.	فيصبح لزاماً عليكم جراء ما اقترقتم طرق أبواب الصالحين والانتظار بلا مجيب لحين.	63	adjunct	Missed
17	62	And of the man in you would I now speak.	وعن الإنسان فيكم أود أن أتحدث اليوم.	63	adjunct	Partially preserved
18	64	Oftentimes have I heard you speak of one who commits a wrong as though he were not one of you,	كثيراً ما سمعتمكم تتحدثون عن أتم وكأته ليس منكم،	65	adjunct	Partially preserved
19	68	Unbidden shall it call in the night,	في هزيع الليل يأتي بلا نداء،	69	adjunct	Missed
20	70	Only then shall you know that the erect and the fallen are but one man standing in twilight between the night of his pigmy-self and the day of his god self,	فحينها ستعرفون أن السوي والساقط واحد يقف في العسق بين نهار ذاته الإلهية وليل ذاته القزم،	71	adjunct	Partially preserved
21	138	Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.	لن تعرفوا الغناء حتى تترعوا من نهر السكون.	139	adjunct	Missed
22	138	then shall you truly dance.	سترقصون كما يجدر	139	adjunct	Missed

			بالرخص أن يكون.			
23	142	And with a richer heart and lips more yielding to the spirit will I speak.	ويقلب أكثر ثراء سأخاطبكم، ويشفاه أكثر إحساساً بالروح.	143	adjunct	Missed
24	142	And not in vain will I seek.	ولن تكون نشدتي عبثاً.	143	adjunct	Missed
25	144	And not unlike the mist have I been.	ولم أكن غير ما كان الضباب.	145	complement	Missed
26	150	Less than a promise have I given,	أقل من وعد قدمت،	151	complement	Partially preserved
27	150	and yet more generous have you been to me.	وكنتم معي رغم هذا أكثر كرماً.	151	complement	Missed
28	156	For often have I put my finger in my own wound that I might have the greater belief in you and the greater knowledge of you.	فكثيراً ما أوغرت إصبعي بجرحي لأكون أكثر إيماناً ومعرفة بكم.	157	adjunct	Partially preserved

## Appendix 4: It-cleft structures

#	P.	Focus structure	Translation	ص	Focused constituent	Word order
1	30	It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.	عطاؤكم من ذاتكم هو العطاء الصادق.	31	adjunct	Preserved
2	34	For in truth it is life that gives unto life-	إنما هي الحياة تعطي للحياة-	35	subject	Preserved
3	58	It is in exchanging the gifts of the earth that you shall find abundance and be satisfied.	في تبادل نعم الأرض الفيض والكفاية والرضا.	59	adjunct	Missed
4	88	It is the bitter potion by which the physician within you heals your sick self.	هو الدواء المر به يشفي الطبيب فيكم عليل ذاتكم.	89	object	Preserved
5	116	it is thy will in us that willeth.	مشيئتك فينا هي التي تنشاء.	117	subject	Preserved
6	116	"It is thy desire in us that desireth.	وشوقك فينا هو الذي يشتاق.	117	subject	Preserved
7	116	"It is thy urge in us that would turn our nights, which are thine, into days, which are thine also.	إرادتك الكامنة فينا تحيل ليلنا وهو ملكك، نهاراً هو ملكك أيضاً.	117	subject	Missed
8	144	It is in the vast man that you are vast,	ما رحابكم إلا من رحاب ذلك الإنسان.	145	adjunct	Missed
9	156	And it is with this belief and this knowledge that I say,	وبهذا الإيمان وهذه المعرفة أقول،	157	adjunct	Missed
10	162	It was but yesterday we met in a dream.	كان أمس يوم جمعنا حلم.	163	adjunct	Missed