



**RHETORICAL QUESTIONS IN
ENGLISH AND ARABIC
WITH REFERENCE TO THE GLORIOUS
QUR'AN**

Asst.Prof. Dr. Hussain Hameed Ma'yuuf

University of babylon, college of education for
human sciences .department of english
husm56@gmail.com

Article Info

Received:13.03.2018
Accepted: 26.04.2018
Published online:01.05.2018

ISSN: 2231-8275

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to shed some light upon rhetorical questions (RQ henceforth), their forms types and use in English and Arabic with special focus on their uses in the Glorious Qur'an. Chapter One includes the problem, aims, hypotheses, procedures, limits and the value of the study. Chapter Two covers rhetorical questions in English and Arabic, the notion of rhetorical question (RQ), types of rhetorical questions, and the functions of rhetorical questions. Whereas Chapter Three ends with the conclusion.

Key words: Rhetorical question, Qur'an, form, function, use.

Introduction

1.1 The problem

A question is a sentence in an interrogative form, addressed to someone in order to get information or for an answer but to show that the action was really happened and we certain it by the rhetorical question. This paper tries to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are rhetorical questions in English?
- 2- What are rhetorical questions in Arabic?
- 3- What are the similarities and differences between English and Arabic in the use of the rhetorical questions?

1.2 The aims

The study aims at:

- 1- Presenting a comprehension study about the rhetorical question in English and Arabic.
- 2- Finding the points of similarity and difference in the rhetorical questions.

1.3 The hypothesis

It is hypothesized that:

- 1- Rhetorical questions are present in both English and Arabic.
- 2- The points of similarity are hyper than the points of difference.

1.4 The procedures

The following procedures will be followed:-

- 1- Presenting a theoretical study about rhetorical question in English and Arabic.
- 2- Presenting a comparison between English and Arabic in terms of rhetorical question.

1.5 Limits of the study

The study is limited to the rhetorical questions in English and Arabic with reference to their use in the Holy Quran.

1.6 Value of the study

The study is helped to be useful for us especially for university students to have knowledge about holy Quran and rhetorical questions in it, and what does it mean and to pave the way for further research.

Rhetorical Questions

2.1.1 Rhetorical Questions in English

A rhetorical question is asked for effect or to lay emphasis on some point discussed when no real answer is expected.

A rhetorical question may have an obvious, but the questioner asks rhetorical questions to lay emphasis to the point.

A rhetorical question is asked when the questioner himself knows the answer already or an answer is not actually demanded. So, an answer is not expected from the audience. Such a question is used to emphasize a point or draw the audience's attention. (www.literarydivices.net).

Rhetoric may be defined as the study of how effective writing achieves its goals.

“Rhetorical communication” which typically focuses on how to express oneself correctly and effectively in relation to the topic of writing or speech, the audience, and the purpose of communication.

In additional grammar, rhetoric was the study of style through grammatical and logical analysis, cicero, the ancient Roman orator and writer, describes rhetoric as “the art or talent by which discourse is adopted to its end.” (Richards, Platt and Heidi Platt, 1985: 316).

2.1.2 The notion of rhetorical Questions (RQ)

Rhetorical question is a figure of speech in the form of question that is asked in order to make a point, rather than to elicit an answer. So, it is a technique of using effectively and persuasively in spoken or written form. It is an art of discourse.

If you ask a rhetorical question, it means you don't necessarily expect an answer, but you do want an occasion to talk something. (en.wikipedia.org).

2.1.3 Types of Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical question lie into three categories:-

1- Positive: Is that a reason for despair?

(Surely that is not a reason.....).

Can anyone doubt the wisdom of this action? (Surely no one can doubt.....).

2- Negative: Is no one going to defend me?

(Surely someone is going to defend me).

Unlike exclamatory questions, these rhetorical questions usually have the normal rising intonation of yes/no question.

3- Rhetorical wh. question: which is equivalent to a statement in which the Q. element is replaced by a negative element.

Who know? (Nobody knows).

What difference does it make? (It makes no difference).

Again, the intonation is that of an ordinary wh. Question, except that arise. Fall tone is likely. (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973: 200).

2.1.4 The Function of Rhetorical questions

The rhetorical question is one which functions as a forceful statement. More precisely, a positive rhetorical question is like a strong negative assertion, while a negative question is like a strong positive one. (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973: 200).

2.2 Rhetorical Questions in Arabic

Rhetorical or metaphorical interrogative is one of the method used in Arabic language for achieving a certain purpose.

This type of interrogation does not really mean interrogate, but to show another purpose rather than interrogation, for example rebuking statement, or the like. Its purpose is rhetorical not real interrogation. This kind of interrogation was used in the Holly Quran.

(من ذا الذي يشفع عنده إلا بأذنه) (البقرة/ 255)

(Who can mediate with him except by his permission).
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyBynydgy8). (www.AIFaseeh.com).

One of interrogation meanings is reporting.

Reporting is of two kinds: either it means achieving, or it means making the addressee state what he knows. Here, it is conditional that what the addressee is made to state should proceed interrogation: the statement should follow it, unlike “هل,” it is to show ratio.

(هل ثوب الكفار ما كانوا يفعلون) (المطففين/36)

(Have the unbelievers been duly rewarded for their deeds?).
(quran.ksu.edu.sa/tafseer/katheer-tafheem-eerab/sura83/aya36).

The rest of interrogation tools are to show what to be expected by them and for example,
(www.dhifacf.com/vb/showthread.php?t=7981).

With X?

Who has murdered him? As an example about the first kind is talking to a friend, saying:
haven't I showed you doors of knowledge? Which means I did a lot for you.

(ألم أقل لك انك لن تستطيع معي صبراً) (الكهف/72)

(Did I not tell you that you would not be able to have patience with me !) (<https://ar.facebook.com/notes/discover-islam/surah-alkahf-arabic-verse-withEnglish-transliteration-andtranslation/11462515>).

(www.dhifacf.com/vb/showthread.php?t=7981).

What is desired is to prove and achieve the speech.

(ألم نشرح لك صدرك) (الشرح/1)

(Did we not expand for you, [Muhammad] your breast? Which means we did explain). As
for an example about the second kind is like saying the statement being the subject.

(أأنت فعلت هذا بالهتينا يا ابراهيم) (الأنبياء/62)

(Is it thou who has done this to our gods O Abraham).
(<http://tryhome.wordpress.com/2011/8/aubiya>).

(www.dhifacf.com/vb/showthread.php?t=7981).

They wanted him to state that he is the agent, they didn't want him to state the action for
the action truly done which is denoted by "هذا، this," and this really means that he has to state
for them that destroying the idols has happened. This is why Abraham (peace be upon him)
told then in his reply:

(بل فعله كبيرهم هذا) (الأنبياء/63)

(But this, their chief hath done it). (<http://tryhome.wordpress.com/2011/4/8/alanbiya>). He
replied stating the agent. If he had wanted to state the action, he would have said: I did, or I
didn't. (www.dhifacf.com/vb/showthread.php?t=7981).

It might be wanted to state what the addressee knows about the negative or the positive
implication of the speech.

(إذا قال الله يا عيسى ابن مريم أنت قلت للناس اتخذوني وامي الهين من دون الله) (المائدة/116)

(And when Allah saith: O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind: take me and my
mother for two gods beside Allah?). (<http://tryhome.wordpress.com/2011/4/8/almaidah>).

The meaning, God knows best, is to state what he knows that he did not tell them, so, not to state what the Hamza has inserted on to because, God's praying and peace be upon him, did not do so. The meaning is to state that they were lying about their claim that he is God's son.

(ألست بربكم قالوا بلى) (الاعراف/172)

(Am I not your Lord? They said: yes, verily). (<http://tryhome.wordpress.com/2011/4/8/al-araf>).

So what is stated by these techniques is not what comes after the Hamza or the meaning of the sentence, but something inside the addressee about this rule which he believes in. The sentence might be positive and the statement is negative. As in verse. (www.dhifacf.com/vb/showthread.php?t=7981)

(إذا قال الله يا عيسى ابن مريم أنت قلت للناس اتخذوني و امي الهين من دون الله) (المائدة/116)

(And when Allah saith: O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind: take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah?). (<http://tryhome.wordpress.com/2011/4/8/Al-Maidah>). It could be the opposite that the sentence is negative and the statement is positive.

(ألست بربكم) (الاعراف/172)

(Am I not your Lord?). (<http://tryhome.wordpress.com/2011/4/8/al-araf>). (www.dhifacf.com/vb/showthread.php?t=7981)

(ألم يجعل كيدهم في تضليل) (الفيل/2)

(Did he not make their plot so astray). (www.dhifacf.com/vb/showthread.php?t=7981).

Rhetorical interrogation by “ما” is the interrogation that is not associated to an answer or not really asks for one, nevertheless; the possibility for an answer remains implied within the structure that the spirit and effectiveness of interrogation does not leave it.

“ما” would come with a noun, verb or a preposition, and its denotation is associated with what comes after it contextually and with what it is associated with from another way. (Dr. Husney Yousuf, 2001: 101).

Chapter Three

Conclusion

The rhetorical question in English follows the same rules that found in Arabic even if there is a slight difference.

The rhetorical question functions as a forceful statement.

There are two kinds of rhetorical question either to be under the meaning of investigate and install or to the make recipient say what he knows.

The rhetorical question in the Glorious Quran have a deep meaning more than what is shown in the verse. This deep meaning or hidden meaning is important to give the real meaning after the rhetorical question or what is meant by this or that question that found in the Glorious Quran.

3.2 The study finds the following point of similarity:-

1- Positive rhetorical question in English is like strong negative assertion as well as positive rhetorical question in Arabic.

“Is that a reason for despair?”

(هل ثوب الكفار ما كانوا يعملون) (المطففين/36)

2- Negative rhetorical question in English is like a strong positive one, for example:-

“Is no one going to defend me?”

"ألم تر كيف فعل ربك بأصحاب الفيل" (الفيل/1)

3.2 Differences:-

Rhetorical questions in English come with both auxiliary verbs and wh. Questions, like:

“What difference does it make?”

“Is that a reason for despair?”

While the rhetorical questions in Arabic come only with wh. Questions because there are no auxiliary verbs in Arabic, for example:

(أأنت فعلت هذا بالهتنا يا ابراهيم) (المطففين/36).

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