The Translation of the Progressive Aspect in the Holy Quran into English

A search for Functional Equivalence

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Abstract

The present study attempts to address the Quranic progressive with attention to English counterparts. Arabic has productive morphological processes whereby a punctual verb can be made iterative, and a perfective situation can be made imperfective. Arabic has also a rich repertoire of linguistic devices that can affect the aspectual reading of verbal situations such as the 'thematizer' إن, the assertive particle (ل) the 'interpretive' particles إنما and لكن, the various negative and interrogative particles, the word order, etc.; all these devices contribute to the aspectual configuration of the Arabic clause.

An examination of the active participle shows that this form can be used to render one of the English progressive readings, namely the sense of continuousness.

In studying the Arabic renderings of the progressive situations in relevant studies and in some of the English versions of the Holy Quran, it is noted that the suggested renderings do not encompass the precise meaning of the progressive situation (see Ch.1).
A survey of studies about aspect in general and the progressive in particular is presented in chapter two. Chapter three is devoted to detailed study about the semantics of the progressive including an operational definition, and the different shades of meaning of this construction. Chapter four presents an analysis about the configuration of this aspect in the language of the Holy Quran. Chapter five concludes the major points of this study and suggests some points for further research.