The Translation of the Cognate Accusative in the Noble Qur'an

by

Mohammed Al-Taher

Abstract

The study investigates the translation of the cognate accusative in the Noble Qur'an into English, aiming at shedding light on the significance of the construction as well as holding a comparison and contrast with its closer corresponding construction in the English language.

The cognate accusative is a distinguished Arabic structure. Nevertheless, it has been on its way of extinction from the native speakers' daily life. This is attributed, to a great extent, to the influence of the English language in which it represents a somewhat grammatical void. Thus, the structure has been almost deserted for a long time by the media. In addition, when translation goes from Arabic into English, the repetition sounds natural in Arabic but is generally unacceptable in English. Such a redundancy can be regularly noticed in the literal renderings of students and novices of translation.

However, when it comes to sacred texts, different arguments arise with regard to the translation strategies. On the one hand, some call for a source-text bound orientation whereas others adopt a target-text bound orientation. These approaches are respectively called by Nida formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence.

The paper spots all the examples of the cognate accusative in the Noble Qur'an belonging to two of its categories – Type and Emphasis – comparing and contrasting between the translation of Taqiud-Din Al-Hilali & Muhsin Khan and that of Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall. A number of techniques are found to convey the cognate accusative, such as prepositional phrases, adverbs, repetition, objects and idiomatic expressions. Al-Hilali and Khan frequently employ prepositional phrases whereas Pickthall tends to combine two of the aforementioned techniques, mainly prepositional phrases and repetition. In the first version, prepositional phrases often contain an adjective, thus displaying the Type of the cognate accusative. In the second one, it is apparent that the major part of the dual technique covers the Emphasis category.