The Pathology of English Translations of the Holy Qur'an at Syntactic Structures

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Qur'an, the holy scripture of Muslims, has been approached from different angles up to the present time and this Book, being a miracle at all levels, has been the subject of wide investigations by scholars of different fields of study, Muslim and non-Muslim, of whom the scholars of Translation Studies are not an exception. This paper, adopting a linguistic point of view, aims at studying the syntactic delicacies of Qur'an and delves into the problem of non-equivalence of the translations of this Holy Book at syntactic structures by three of the English translators of Qur'an: Arberry, Pickthall and Yusuf Ali. The scope of the study and the syntactic structures studied include: specification (tamyīz), circumstantial accusative clauses (hâl), cognate accusative (maf'ūl-é-motláq), subordinate clause (sélé), and emphasis (al-tōkid), with their equivalent target text structures, i.e. the translations. The study is done in a comparative-descriptive method, using syntactic analyses for both ST and TT structures where needed. The result of the research showed that the translators have adopted different methods to translate these structures in the aforementioned translations of Qur'an, and that the syntactic equivalence of these structures of Qur'an are not paid due attention to all translations, thus the meaning is blurred in some cases. Meanwhile, in the article some methods are introduced in some cases to translate the above mentioned structures proficiently and reference is made to solutions to solve the syntactic problems leading to non-equivalence of the translations of Qur'an.

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