

The Particle *Bal* in Qur'anic Arabic

Safiah Ahmed Madkhali

Umm Al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

The aim of the present paper is to provide a characterization of the particle *bal*, translated as 'rather' in English, in Qur'anic Arabic. In the Qur'an corpus, which includes 77880 words, the particle occurs 121 times, and in the various occurrences, the particle *bal* does not have the same syntactic categorization, nor the same semantic meaning or function. Therefore, the present paper explores the syntactic and semantic features as well as the uses of the particle in the varying positions. It examines the distribution, syntactic categorization, semantic meaning and the function of the particle in the different contexts. The paper also sheds light on other recurrent or distinctive linguistic aspects that characterize the particle and the context of its occurrence. The method employed involves distributional and descriptive techniques. The study shows that *bal* introduces a clause or conjoins two elements and it is of two main types: *bal* which can be analysed as a conjunction which can be an adversative coordinator or subordinator, and *bal* that is a transitional marker. In the later case, the particle has the function of the turning away from the idea expressed by the preceding clause, whether as transitioning and negating or mainly transitioning. The paper thus highlights the diversity in the syntax and semantics of a single particle that is realized as *bal* in the contexts of Qur'anic Arabic. The paper thus makes the contribution to the literature in the understudied area of the syntax and semantics in particular and the linguistics in general of Qur'anic Arabic.

Keywords: conjunction, coordinating, distribution, subordinating, transitional marker