Western Scholars' Opinions on Rendering the Tense by Means of the Participle in Arabic

Natia ODILAVADZE

Abstract

In the discussions of participles in relation with the issue of 'tense', different approaches occur with Western scholars, as far as the theme of 'tense' provokes great debates among the students of Arabic grammar, owing to some historic and theoretical factors. The approaches of some scholars to the occurrence of the categories of 'tense' and 'aspect' in Arabic have been significantly influenced by the traditional orientalistic view concerning Arabic having 'aspect' rather than 'tense'. As for Classical Arabic, here the issue of tense in relation to the participle has not so far been studied sufficiently and, moreover, is not conceptualized as a separate issue, irrespective of the fact that ancient Arab grammarians have not disregarded it. They have repeatedly addressed the problem of tense reference by means of the participle. Several interesting studies have also been devoted to the discussion of the issue in contemporary Arabic dialects.

One of my papers[1], dealing with rendering of verbal properties by the participle, addressed some Western scholars' opinions on the role of the participle in the verbal system, and, of course, dwelt upon the issue of the relation of 'tense' with the participle. As far as the present paper is aimed at discussing the latter one, I will try to present a much wider scale of opinions than earlier, and will analyze the approaches of the scholars who more or less paid attention to the issue in point.

Natia Odilavadze *is a teacher of Arabic language at Department of Oriental Studies of Akaki Tsereteli State University, Kutaisi, Georgia*

Western scholars have devoted a number of investigations to the study of the verbal system in the Semitic languages and, namely, in Arabic. In the discussions of the system, the issue of tense has always been a matter of debates. Zafer Youssef notes that, while expressing their opinions concerning the issue in point, European orientalists are based on the situations in their own languages, which often profoundly differ from Semitic languages with respect to their grammatical systems. Transference of rules from one language to another has always been problematic as far as every language is based upon its own logic and applies distinct ways of expression (Youssef, 1990:188,190). However, it seems quite natural whenever a researcher attempts to appropriate a certain phenomenon, occurring in a foreign language, to the one in his/her mother tongue. Though, it should be done without enforcing and artificial frames, taking into account peculiar grammatical systems of each language.

While dealing with the issue of 'tense' in the Arabic language, Western researchers apply the terms as *aspect, 'Aktionsart', tense, time reference, perfect(ive)* and *imperfect(ive), past tense* and *non-past tense,* and others.

W. Reuschel defines tense, aspect and 'Aktionsart' in the following way: the verb is capable to convey both **temporal circumstance** (the relation of the verbal action to the moment of speaking), also **duration of an action**, and, at last, **the manner of the duration of an action** (determined by the verb meaning). In the first case, **tense** is dealt with, in the second – **aspect**, and, in the latter – '**Aktionsart**'. While Reuschel addresses aspect as a grammatical category, 'Aktionsart' is presented as a lexical one. Tense, aspect and 'Aktionsart' are indivisible from each other, and frequently it is difficult to tell them apart (Youssef, 1990:189).

J. Lyons gives the following definition of the difference between aspect and 'Aktionsart': the former refers to grammaticalized aspectual distinctions, while the latter refers to lexicalized aspectual distinctions, which (as Eisele (1990:190) puts it) Lyons prefers to call 'aspectual character'.

Z. Youssef[2] presents the classification of verbs based on W. Reuschel and D. Blohm; it includes: a) durative verbs without limitations, including subgroups, and b) non-durative or punctual or inchoative verbs, including subgroups. In the scholar's opinion, after such grouping, examples were studied more thoroughly in Modern Standard Arabic and, first of all, in Arabic dialects. All these have led to the issue of the functions of the

participle, having not been discussed formerly by Arab grammarians. Within the framework of describing the functions of the participle, orientalists arrive at the issue of tense (Youssef, 1990:189-190, see also Blohm, 1981).

According to G. Krahl, W. Reuschel and E. Schulz, "[A]s the participles per se do not express a tense in Arabic language, it must be decided by the context which temporal reference is given in particular cases" (Schulz et al., 2000:286). When active and passive participle is a nominal predicate in the principal clause, "[I]t is frequently difficult to differentiate when the participle and when the corresponding verb must be used. Often both are interchangeable" (ibid.:287).

The above-mentioned scholars note that, whenever a participle is used as a nominal predicate, then: 1. in the case of the verbs expressing an event, the participle and the finite verb form are interchangeable, however, in this case, the finite verb form occurs more frequently; 2. in the case of the verbs expressing a state, it is better to use either a participle or an adjective, derived from the same verb; 3. whenever verbs indicate both an event and a state; e.g. رقد ,قام, جلس the finite verbal form indicates the event and the participle indicates the state (ibid.:287).

Addressing the data of Classical Arabic, C. Brockelmann states that, owing to the verbal nature characteristic of them, participles and verbal adjectives in some cases precede a substantive in the function of a predicate instead of a finite verb in a complex nominal sentence; e.g.:

زيد ضارب أبوه عمرًا

'Zayd, his father beats Amr = Zayd's father beats Amr'.

Like other scholars, Brockelmann addresses the issue of tense in association with the participle when he talks about government. He writes: with a participle the object is in the genitive and determines it, if the latter has the meaning of **perfective**; with the participles with **present** (and **future**) meanings, the object may be in the accusative, with it, making up 'the improper annexation' (see Brockelmann, 1987:136, 172-173).

H. Reckendorf too shares the view that participles have no category of tense. He explains the instance of ضارب in the following way: this is the one who has a property to hit. As for when he performs, has performed or will perform this action, this will be seen from the context. When he has this property, is expressed not by nature of the participle, but is rather conveyed by the sense of a nominal clause and, accordingly, its tense, on which the participle depends. The adjectival *predicative participle* virtually always

conveys the property to perform an **imperfective** (mostly **present** or **future**) action. Contrary to this, the *attributive participle* (also *nominalized participle*) is used relating to a '**praeterital**' action. These are true both with the active and passive participles. Not rarely, the former has the 'praeterital' meaning, while, more frequently, the latter with that of present or future (Reckendorf, 1967:67-68).

W. Wright provides very scarce information concerning the issue of conveying of tense by means of the participle (it will be dealt with below), however, he provides a more comprehensive discussion of the issue of al-māḍī (الماضي) and al-muḍāriʿ (المضارع). The scholar refers to the Arabic الماضي and المضارع as 'perfect' and 'imperfect', analyzes them in terms of the (un)completion of an action. According to Wright, الماضي, that is perfect, mainly expresses a completed act at a certain moment (for instance, at some past time, or at the moment of speaking, etc.) (for the details of other meanings of the perfect see Wright, 1967b:1-18). As for the imperfect, Wright discusses separately the meanings of the Imperfect Indicative (المضارع المرفوع), the Imperfect Subjunctive (المضارع المنصوب) and the Jussive of the imperfect (المضارع المجزوم)(see Wright, 1967b:18-24).

As for participles, Wright provides the following definition: "The nouns which the Arab Grammarians call أسماء الفاعل, *nomina agentis*, and أسماء المفعول, *nomina patientis*, are verbal adjectives, i.e. adjectives derived from verbs, and nearly correspond in nature and signification to what we call *participles*. ...When formed from فَعَلَ and the *transitive* فَعِلَ ... these nomina agentis are not only real participles, indicating a temporary, transitory or accidental action or state of being, but also serve as adjectives or substantives, expressing a continuous action, a habitual state of being, or a permanent quality..." (Wright, 1967a:131-132). T.F. Mitchell considers it incorrect when Wright equates the active participle with, say, the Latin participles, as far as, in Mitchell's opinion, "Latin participles, which, formed from verbs, are adjectival in kind and behavior and thus contrast with the Arabic participle, which is nominal/adjectival in form and noticeably verbal in nature" (Mitchell, 1978:232). Wright notes that participles (to which he refers as *nomina agentis* and *nomina patientis*) occupy an intermediary position between the verb and the noun, and, thus, share the functions of both, for instance, in terms of government.

In his fundamental work, Wright gives little attention to the problem of the relation of the participle to tense. He addresses the issue when speaking about government. He points out that the active participle of directly

transitive verbs, owing to its verbal character, is able to govern the following noun both in the accusative, and in the genitive, in the meaning of the **imperfect** (المضارع, historical imperfect, present, future):

والمؤتون الزكوةَ

'and those who pay the poor-rate'

قاتلٌ الناسَ or قاتلُ الناسِ

'one, who kills people'

القاتلُ الناسَ or القاتلُ الناسِ

'he who kills people' = الذي يقتل

When the participles of directly transitive verbs have the meaning of the **perfect** (perfect, pluperfect, aorist, and future-perfect), they more resemble the nature of the noun, and govern a following noun only in the genitive:

قاتلُ الناسِ (and not القاتلُ الناسُ or القاتلُ الناسَ)

'one who killed, has killed, had killed, or shall have killed people'

فاطرُ السموات والأرضِ

'the Creator of (or He who has created) the heavens and the earth' (Wright, 1967b:63-65).

But what specific point of time refers to the action designated by the active or passive participle "can be deduced only from some other word in the sentence, which points to a specific time, from the nature of the thing or the character of the thought, or from the connection of the context" (see Wright, 1967b:195-198).

Concerning the كان + participle, Wright notes that, in such construction, participle expresses the *praesens praeteriti* or Greek and Latin imperfect. If مَن, إن, أيّ and other words are followed by the verb كان or one of its sisters (أخوات كان), which itself is accompanied by a participle or an imperfect, it must be rendered by the present.

B.M. Grande posed the question: 'Do the Arabic forms فعل-يفعل render temporal relations?', and answered himself positively: together with these controversial forms, by means of a number of syntactic rules and of some conjunctions, **the time of action can be rendered rather precisely**. Grande identifies two tenses in Arabic: 'совершенное' – perfect and 'несовершенное' – imperfect. In his opinion, the terms 'perfect(ive)' and 'imperfect(ive)' (where the latter is frequently substituted by the term

'aorist' in French grammars), having been introduced in Western European grammars of Arabic, can not entirely demonstrate the essence of Arabic tenses; nor the terms 'past tense' and 'present-future' correspond them precisely; nor 'perfect aspect' and 'imperfect aspect'; nor 'perfect tense' and 'imperfect tense'. Of them, the scholar regards the latter ones to be the most appropriate terms for Arabic tenses (see Grande, 1963:152-157, 146-147).

Like the above-mentioned scholars, Grande claims that participles are not carriers of temporal meanings. Despite of that fact that they refer to something either permanent or temporary, they are not associated with a definite moment of either acting or speaking. The Arabic participle does not have the appropriate forms to convey various tenses; it can be similarly attributed to any tense based on the tense of the verb in a given sentence (ibid.:185, 262).

As a predicate of a nominal sentence, the participle is able to acquire a shade of the completion or incompletion of an act, and, then, the active participle is semantically close to the meaning of either the present tense or a continuous action, while the passive participle is close to the meaning of either the past tense or a completed act (see ibid.:185, 475).

G.Sh. Sharbatov's opinion has been noteworthy concerning the occurrence of different temporal forms in Standard Arabic and in the Egyptian dialect irrespective of the fact that he does not discuss the tenses in question in association with participles. According to Sharbatov, while there are three simple tense forms in Standard Arabic (1. past; 2. 'present-future'; 3. future), the Egyptian dialect has four (1. past; 2. 'present-future'; 3. present; 4. future). Instead of the four complex tense forms in Standard Arabic (1. past continuous; 2. prior past; 3. future perfect; 4. future in the past), only two of them are attested in Egyptian (1. past continuous; 2. future in the past) (see Sharbatov, 1961:53-55; 1968:121-131). We are not dealing with the detailed description of the tenses given by the author as far as they have been discussed only in relation to verbs, however, it should be noted that, while addressing one of them, 'present-future', Sharbatov does not spare the issue of the use of the participle. He writes that in order to render 'the real present proper', Egyptian uses rather the present tense form or the active participle:

mantāš sāmiʿʔ[3]

'Cannot you hear?'

’anā sāmiʿ da”

'I hear knocking' (Sharbatov, 1968:123).

While dealing with the principal conjugational forms of the verb (الماضي and (المضارع), V.M. Mamedaliev concludes that they should be regarded as bi-functional, as far as they have been rendering the categories of aspect and tense both in the classical and contemporary periods in the development of the Arabic language. However, as different from Classical Arabic, in Modern Arabic, the notion of aspect has been weakened in them, while the tense reference has significantly increased. Similar processes can be observed in many of the world's languages, viz. in some Semito-Hamitic languages (Mamedaliev, 1979:9-19).

Z. Youssef pays appropriate attention to the issue of rendering of tenses by the participle in Classical Arabic texts. It should be noted that this scholar is among the few who was concerned with the issue in point. He identifies the participles having the verbal nature, that is convey verbal meaning (like the verb, they can convey all temporal grades, manner and procession of action), and believes that, as far as they have same meanings as the verbs, they have derived from, they can be easily substituted by corresponding verb forms. For instance, the participles, expressing the past, can be easily substituted by a verb in the perfective, and those, expressing the present and the future, can be substituted by a verb in the imperfective (Youssef, 1990:200-201). In the scholar's words, although it is unambiguous that such participles are able to express temporal relations, in Classical Arabic texts (being quite aged) it is difficult to establish exactly which tense an action belongs to.

According to Youssef, the participle may express:

1. Continuous action or state which a) goes on for a definite period of time. In this case, the auxiliary verbs مـادام, ظلّ, مـازال and others are frequently used; for example,

يكون عليه واليًا ما دام حيًّا.

'Until he is alive, he will be its ruler (he will govern, rule it)'.

b) goes on for an indefinite period of time. Frequently, these are the expressions used commonly (for instance, proverbs). They have a common formal character, and, in this case, an action may belong to any tense. In such expressions, participles are frequently used as predicates, rarely, in the function of an attribute (فإن القلب القاسي بـعيد من الله .) – 'Verily, a ruthless heart is far from God').

2. Past (an action that was completed at a certain temporal grade), in

which passive participles mostly occur in the function of the 'resultative'. The participles, forming an 'improper genitive connection' or occur with tanwīn, may be substituted by the corresponding verbs with the particle قد qad (e.g. قـد فقـد عقـله = فاقداً عقـله , قـد قطعت عقبـها = مقطوعةُ العقب) and the participles, forming a 'proper genitive connection', by means of an attributive clause, formed by way of the use of relative pronoun and a corresponding verb (e.g. الذي شرب الخمر = شاربُ الخمر).

3. Present. It frequently expresses a state or a process, which takes place or is in progress at the moment of speaking. In this case, participles can be substituted by the corresponding verbs in the imperfective (e.g. ونحن نجد = ونحن واجدون, فإنّي أخاف = فإنّي خائف), or when they substitute for attributive clause by means of a relative pronoun and a corresponding verb in the imperfective (e.g. الذي يطلب دمه = الطالب بدمه , الذي يأكل العشب = الآكل العشب). They predominantly express either individual or common circumstances, and sometimes are used in universally accepted expressions.

4. Future (an action or event, having not happened yet). In this case, a participle may be substituted by a corresponding verb in the imperfective with the prefix ســ sa-, or an imperfective form may be preceded by the particles لن lan or سوف sawfa (e.g. وأنا مبتدئ هذا الكتاب= لن أترك عشيرتي = لست بتارك عشيرتي ,وأنا سأبتدئ هذا الكتاب). It is noteworthy that negative particles facilitate to rendering of the future meaning. There are a number of examples evidencing the formation with the particle إنّ ᵓinna. For example,

وإنّا ، إن شاء الله ، بكم لاحقون.

'And, verily, we, if it is God's will, will follow you'.

ولست غادراً به .

'And I will not betray him' (Youssef, 1990:201-214).

Particularly interesting and diverse discussion of Western scholars related to the role of the participle in the verbal system of **Colloquial Arabic** (and, hence, the issue of the temporal relation with it), as far as the latter issue provokes controversies among scholars. Concerning this theme, I will discuss the opinions of the following scholars: K.E. Brustad (1991), whose work comprises the study of syntax of the dialects of four Arabic countries: Morocco, Egypt, Syria, and Kuwait; J.C. Eisele (1990), who discusses the processes in point in Egyptian dialect, and summarizes the

opinions of various linguists concerning the issue; H. Wise (1975), who, in her *Transformational Grammar*, presents the temporal system of Egyptian Arabic; M. Woidich (1975), who analyzes the meaning and function of the active participle in Cairene Arabic; T. F. Mitchell (1952, 1967, 1978), who discusses data from Egyptian, Jordanian Arabic and Bedouin dialect (of Cyrenaica); and others.

First of all, I will discuss the opinions concerning the verbal system of Colloquial Arabic, which, as already noted, has always been a matter for debates among linguists. In Cairene Arabic (CA) J.C. Eisele identifies two basic verbal forms, '**the perfect**' and '**the imperfect**', which, as he claims, correspond to a distinction between '**past tense**' and '**non-past tense**'. The scholar also notes that "[I]n addition to these purely verbal forms, CA makes frequent use of a derived verbal adjective form, the active participle (AP), in a number of quasi-verbal functions" (Eisele, 1990:173). T.F. Mitchell (1978) believes that, despite of the traditional approaches, instead of 'perfect(ive)'/'imperfect(ive)', it would be better to use the terms 'past tense' and 'non-past tense' for tense reference.

Based on the principal contextual meaning, **among the verb forms** of Colloquial Arabic, K.E. Brustad discusses '**the perfective**' (faʿal), '**the imperfective**' (yifʿal) and **the participle**, and notes that all of them describe actions, events, and states, each from a different perspective. Of them, with their form and function, the perfective and the participle are closer to each other, and they may be treated as 'syntactically homogeneous'. The researcher claims that mainly all the four dialects (viz. Moroccan, Egyptian, Syrian and Kuwaiti) share the same basic verbal system.

Brustad provides the following definition of the terms 'tense' and 'time reference': "The first refers to morphological forms; the second, to the role of these forms (and other elements) in establishing the location in time of actions, events and states with respect to the reference time. In other words, **the Arabic perfective and imperfective are tenses** (my emphasis – N.O.), whereas time reference is understood... to be a category of the sentence as a whole, and sometimes it is removed outside the bounds of the sentence to the discourse unit" (Brustad, 1991:59). As for aspect, it "refers to the description of the action of the verb as an event, or process, or state, in contrast to time reference, which refers only to location in time" (ibid.:60).

H. Wise notes that 'tense' in Arabic is a very problematic issue as far as it is very difficult to analyze temporal relations abstaining from modal and

aspectual analyses. She provides the structure of the tense system (see Wise, 1975:102), and claims that, while it certainly can not be universal, it however is most appropriate to the existing data.

S. Kyamilev, while discussing verb forms in the Moroccan dialect, indicates to the fact that the categories of aspect and tense are closely associated with each other, and frequently it is impossible to distinguish them (Kyamilev, 1965:818).

Brustad notes that Eisele has summarized the approaches of various scholars concerning the issues of aspect and tense. In one group, he locates those who believe that the perfective and imperfective are aspectual in nature, and not temporal, and in another group – those adhering to the idea that these verb forms combine both temporal and aspectual features (Brustad, 1991:58). He states the main problems due to which it is difficult to analyze Cairene Arabic verb forms as tenses, and thinks that any analysis of the forms in point should contain the explanations of those phenomena. Eisele himself concludes that verb forms in Cairene Arabic are marked for both **time reference** and **aspect** (Eisele, 1990:173, 190).

While dealing with E. Jelinek's (1981) research, Eisele points to some of the weak aspects of the work, among them to Jelinek's view that only 'aspect', and not 'time reference' or 'tense' occurs with verb forms. The scholar views same weakness in M. Woidich's (1975) work. In his opinion, the 'fundamental weakness' of Woidich's analyses is in the definition of the terms 'aspect' and 'tense' (ibid.:176).

Eisele discusses B. Comrie's (1985) and D. Dowty's (1979, 1982) approaches concerning 'tense' and 'time reference'. He also presents H. Reichenbach's (1947) framework for analyzing tenses (referring to it as something of an 'industry standard' in linguistic analyses of tense and time reference) and applies this framework to Cairene Arabic.

The researcher refers to '**time reference**' as a notional category, and to '**tense**' as a morphological and morphosyntactic category. In its turn, 'time reference' is divided into two types: **deictic time reference** and **non-deictic time reference** (see ibid.:190, Table 6).

As for **aspect**, Eisele distinguishes between two types of this category: '**formal aspect**' and '**lexical aspect**'. He associates the first one with a morphological form (expressing event, process, or state), and the second one with the lexical entry of a root or stem. It should be noted that Eisele's discussion of the issues of aspect, tense and time reference has been a serious attempt to answer the questions concerning the study of the Arabic

verbal system. It is the system of Eisel's views, that Brustad takes as a point of departure in her work, according to which: "the morphological tenses perfective and imperfective represent a past/non-past dichotomy; and aspectually the perfective is an event form, the imperfective is process form, and the participle is a state form" (Brustad, 1991:58-59).

I believe that, without the above-presented views on the verbal system of Colloquial Arabic, it would be impossible to discuss the role of the participle within this system, and, moreover, to address its relation to tense. Concerning different analyses of the participle in the verbal system of Colloquial Arabic, Brustad notes that "[S]ome of these analyses have attempted to codify the use of the active participle with various time references; others have investigated the aspectual nature... Terms like 'resultative' and 'stative' are often used to describe the participle" (Brustad, 1991:72).

Eisele treats verbal adjectives as 'stative' forms and explains that they are: the passive participle in English and the active and passive participles, as well as 'quasi-active participles' in Cairene Arabic. He notes that "time references... are not explicitly associated with these stative forms, a reflection of the fact that they are not grammaticalized for time reference – or, in other words, that they are not tenses" (Eisele, 1990:196).

According to Wise, "[A]ll active and passive participles are static, except participles of verbs of motion, e.g. 'waakil' means 'having eaten', *not* 'eating', 'šaarib', 'having drunk', *not* 'drinking'... etc., whereas 'maaši' means '(in the process of) walking'... 'gayy', 'coming', etc." (Wise, 1975:166).

Concerning the term **'stative'**, associated with the participle, Brustad states the following: "...'state' is not a defining characteristic of the active participle. ..[i]t is not the stative quality of participles that lends them their aspectual nature. Rather, it is the resultative and relevance features that allow participles to be associated with a particular aspect" (Brustad, 1991:72). The researcher draws some examples to illustrate **the resultative function** of the participle:

wi lāzim tiSallaḥi lfarāmil // ʾana katba di (E)[4]

and must repair-2fs the-brakes // I having-written-fs this

'And you have to fix the brakes. // I've written that down'.

Brustad believes that the participle is able to render pluperfect in contexts whose past time reference has been established. For example,

dxel lʿand dik ummu lli mrabbyah (M)

entered-3ms into this mother-his who having-raised-him

'He went into her (house) the mother who had raised him'.

xadta   imbāriḥ… Sār-li jimʿa šāyifha (S)

took-1s-it yesterday...became-3ms-to-me week having-seen-ms-it

'I took it yesterday... (although) I had seen it a week ago'.

And yet, in the scholar's opinion, participles are not completely of verbal nature. "The fact that active participles may be used in past, present and future frames prevents its association with any particular time reference. ...When the resultative state of the participle is not relevant to the moment of speech, past time reference must be specified by /kān/ " (ibid.:76):

waLLahi ma kunt mitSawwara di (E)

by-God not was-1s having-imagined-fs this

'By God, I had never imagined this'.

Concerning **the future time** reference by the participle, Brustad states that without the future time adverb it can not express the tense in point. There are cases when the participle implies future in negated oaths. Concerning rendering of the future meaning, Woidich refers to the combination of the participles (such as, for instance, ṛāyiḥ, misāfir, nāzil, miṛawwaḥ, and others), derived from **verbs of motion,** with the adverb bukṛa 'tomorrow.' The scholar also notes that it is impossible to combine the participles (such as, for instance, kātib, dāfiʿ, šāyif, ʿārif, and others), derived from verbs of other groups[5], with bukṛa or with any other adverb referring to future. In such a case it is necessary to use ḥa-imperfect (see Woidich, 1975:283).

Wise too indicates to the fact that participles of verbs of motion can be used with reference to the future time, however, saying nothing of associated adverbs of time. She observes that, in a similar construction, participles of non-motive verbs may not be used; e.g.:

not possible:

humma šarbiin bukra (E)

'they are drinking tomorrow'

Woidich states that in Cairene Arabic two constructions are used in order to render future time, in which participles are frequently applied; they are: 1. waḷḷāhi la- (ʼilla) with a following participle and 2. miš + participle; e.g.:

waḷḷāhi la-ana bayiʻha
'By God, I will sell it!'

laʼ da masmūm, miš šārib
'No, this is poisoned, I will not drink it!'

ana miš mitḥarrak min hina
'I will not move from here!'

However, the scholar analyzes the examples in which a similar construction refers not to the future, but present circumstance; e.g.:

waḷḷāhi ma-na ʻārif
'I really do not know it!' (see Woidich, 1975:284-286).

Wise draws the example in which participles of non-motive verbs may not be used in such contemporaneous clauses of sentences as:

šuftaha wi hiyya mašya fiššaariʻ (E)

'I saw her walking in the street'

not possible:

šuftaha wi hiyya ʼarya kitaab

'I saw her reading a book'.

Contrast the possible sentence:

hiyya ʼarya kutub kitiir

'she has read a lot of books' (Wise, 1975:167).

Dealing with the participle, Eisele notes that "for a number of verbs with a certain lexical aspect" (however, not specifying which verbs he means), "the Active Participle form is used instead of the *bi*-imperfect to express a present, ongoing state of affairs" (Eisele, 1990:175), similar to the 'progressive' present:

ana   faahim ʼaSd-ak (E)

I understanding intention-your

'I understand what you meant'.

In Egyptian "…the A[ctive] P[article] form, normally expressing a 'present' state, can be used with past time adverbials to express a 'resultative'... very similar in meaning to the present perfect in English. In contrast, the AP form can also be used with future time adverbials to express a future event" (ibid.:175).

Kyamilev addresses active participles in the Moroccan dialect among analytic forms. According to him, a form, presented by the participle, renders an action going on in a given specific moment, and may be interpreted as a temporal form of the given moment; e.g.:

fâyen ġâdi (ġâdya, ġâdyyīn)?

'Where are you going?' ('Where are you (fem.) going?' 'Where are you (pl.) going?')

mā-təzṛə́b-š, húψψɑ fâhem-ək məzyân

'Don't be quick, he understands you well'.

According to Kyamilev, in Moroccan, participles, derived from the verbs of motion, frequently have the meaning of the near future tense; e.g.:

ṣbəṛ šψéyya - họm žâiyīn

'Have little patience, (now) they will come' (Kyamilve, 1965:830).

In the Arabic dialect of Cyrenaica Mitchell (1952) analyzes the participle and tenses (perfect and imperfect) within verbal system, which, in his words, do not imply that the categories of participle and tense-forms do not differ from each other. According to Mitchell, "the participle is nominal in form with no distinction of person... But the participle of many verbs, of which katab/yiktib *to write* is one, may be sad to refer to the state of having performed the verbal action…" (Mitchell, 1967:89, see Woidich, 1975:274). Based on this, he provides two translations of the sentence: huwwa kaatib iggawaab: 1. 'he is the writer of the letter', 2. 'he has written the letter'. In the former translation, he considers kaatib iggawaab as a sequence of two nouns in construct, while, in the latter, he attaches it the past-time sense. The scholar notes that, in the regular pattern of the sentence as laʾeetu kaatib iggawaab – 'I found he had written the letter', the participle can easily be substituted by the perfect tense, e.g. by laʾeetu

katab iggawaab, but such an alternation, in a case of verbs of motion, causes the change of meaning; e.g.

šuftu xaarig m-ilbeet (E)

'I saw him coming out of the house'.

šuftu xarag m-ilbeet

'I saw him come out of the house'.

Mitchell (1967) confirms that, in some contexts, there is either a little or no difference between the use of the passive participle and the perfect tense of the derived forms; for example,

'ana 'abilt innaggaar wi 'alli maktabak maʿmuul (or itʿamal) (E)

'I met the carpenter and he told me your desk is (or has been) made'.

Cf.:   šuft iššibbaak maftuuḥ (E)

'I saw the window (was) open'.

with   šuft iššibbaak infataḥ

'I saw the window open (sc. of its own accord)'.

When the participles, like verbs, make up the construction with an auxiliary verb kān / yikūn, they express different temporal meanings[6]. With this respect, there still is a distinct situation between the participles derived from motive and non-motive verbs; for example, cf.:

f-ilwa'ti da-ykunu xargiin (E)

'They'll be leaving then'.

with   f-ilwa'ti da-tkun minaḍḍafa (or naḍḍafit) il'ooḍa

'She'll have cleaned the room by then' (Mitchell, 1967:91).

Kyamilev indicates to the fact that in Moroccan, the active participle, together with the perfective form of the verb kǟn, conveys the same meaning as the construction of the verb kǟn and the imperfective of a notional verb, that is, the meaning of the past continuous non-periodic action (synchronic past); besides, of the two constructions, the first one is

preferable; for example,

ᵾāḥd-əl-mṛa žəblīya kānət māžya l-əṣ-ṣoq

'A highlander woman was going to the market'.

When a participle is preceded by a verb kān in the form of frequentative, it conveys an usual, periodically repeated action, and, thus, with its meaning, partially coincides with the simple verb form of frequentative with the prefix kā-/tā-, but, as different from it, this analytical form can not convey an action going on at the moment of speaking (see Kyamilev, 1965:832).

Sometimes the verb kān introduces a minor change in the meaning of a sentence, or does not at all change its meaning. Mitchell considers that "however, when kaan is included, its inclusion will relate to the presence of a perfect tense form elsewhere in the context, thus kaan ʿaamil relates to miši in such an exchange as:

A. ʾilwalad miši badri leeh? [E]

B. laʾeetu kan ʿaamil šuġlu-w ʾultilu rawwaḥ

A. 'Why has the boy gone early?'

B. 'I found he'd done his work and told him to go home'" (Mitchell, 1967:91).

كنت عارف اسمه (Cyr.)

kinit ⁽ⁱɛrf 'æsmı

'I did know his name'.

نا عارف اسمه

na ⁽ⁱɛrf 'æsmı

'I know his name' (Mitchell, 1952:23).

In the scholar's opinion, "[D]ifferences of meaning with and without كان are related not so much to the use of the participle (or imperfect), but to that of كان as kind of "past-projector". This view is not that of other writers on Cyrenaican Arabic, viz. Panetta and Iannotta, who see in (كان + A.P.) full semantic correspondence with the Italian pluperfect" (see Mitchell,

1952:24).

كان شاريلها دبش وينما نا شفته (.Cyr)   (.A.P + كان)

kæn šæ'ri:lhæ di'bæš wɛinmæ næ 'šɪftɪ

'He had bought things for her when I saw him'. (He was
possibly no longer at the shops.)

كان يشريلها في دبش وينما نا شفته   (.Impf + كان)

kæn yɪš'ri:lhæ fi di'bæš wɛinmæ næ 'šɪftɪ

'He was buying things for her when I saw him'.

Mitchell notes that the data of the Bedouin dialect are closer that those of
Tripoli than Benghazi; the data of the latter frequently give a distinct picture
(for instance, sometimes, where the Bedouin dialect uses a participle, the
perfect tense is attested in Benghazi speech) (see Mitchell, 1952:32-33). As for
the Egyptian usage of the participle "[it] is fairly closely in accord with that of
Cyrenaica... and differs noticeably from Jordan in respect of participle
semantics" (Mitchell, 1978:241).

It seems impossible to exhaustively analyze the issue of rendering tenses
by the participle (moreover, when not only the Standard/Classical Arabic, but
also dialects are concerned) and discuss all existing researches within a single
paper. My goal was to show how interesting and diverse is the situation when
rendering of various tenses by the participle is concerned. As is seen, the said
issue needs further study and profound investigation.

Notes

1. On the Expression of Some Verbal Features of Participle in the Literary Arabic
   Language and Egyptian Dialect. *Proceedings of the Faculty of Arts*. Vol. VIII
   (I), Kutaisi: KSU Press, 2006. 333-343. (in Georgian)

2. Alongside the various views of different scholars in the paper, we find it
   reasonable to apply for the approaches of this Syrian researcher, where the
   scholar deeply analyzes the issue of rendering the tense by means of the participle
   in Classical Arabic.

3. All the examples in the paper preserve authors' original transcription
   conventions, the exception being only some phonetic symbols: in the given
   examples, š is commonly used to denote ش, ʕ for ع, ʔ for ء and ق, ḍ for ض and ظ, ġ
   for غ, ḥ for ح, y for ي. Besides, it is the same wherever authors provide both the
   examples in Arabic writing and their transcriptions, or their literal translations.

4. **E** is an abbreviation for the data from Egyptian; **S** for Syrian; **K** for Kuwaiti; **M**
   for Moroccan; **J** for Jordanian, **Cyr**. for Cyrenaican Arabic.

5. Concerning the division of verbs in Cairene Arabic (**Group A**, the participles of which express the past, completed action, and, hence, the resultative state, and **Group B**, the participles of which express either the present or future action), see Woidich's (1975) opinion, paying particular attention to the participles of the verbs in the latter group.

6. Regarding the rendering of temporal meanings by the construction كان + participle in Egyptian and Jordanian Arabic see Mitchell, 1978:242-243.

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