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Syntactic and morphological variations of adjectives in English and Arabic
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الصيغ النحوية والمورفولوجية للصفات في اللغة الإنجليزية والعربية– دراسة مقارنة

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الملخص

تلقي هذه الورقة الضوء على الفروق في الصفات بين اللغة الإنجليزية والعربية. على الرغم من أن الصفات تؤدي في بعض الأحيان نفس الوظيفة باللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية، إلا أن هناك اختلافات كبيرة في البنية النحوية والمورفولوجية. تتبع الصفات باللغة الإنجليزية نفس النمط مع بنيات تركيبية ومورفولوجية مختلفة، مع بعض الاستثناءات القليلة مثل الأشكال المقارنة والفائقة. لا تتغير حسب الجنس. تعمل الصفات في اللغة الإنجليزية في الغالب بشكل مختلف عن الأسماء على الرغم من استخدام الصفات أحيانا كأسماء كما هو الحال في الفقراء أو كبار السن. سوف تحدد هذه الدراسة الاختلافات المورفولوجية والنحوية بين الصفات في اللغة الإنجليزية والعربية لمعالجة مشكلة الاختلافات اللغتين. قد تساعد هذه الدراسة ايضاً المهتمين بدراسة اللغات على إجراء دراسات أعمق سواء في الصفات أو في مجالات أخرى من اللغة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النحو، الصرف، الصفات.

Abstract

     This study sheds light on the differences between English and Arabic in the aspect of adjectives. Although adjectives sometimes do the same function in both English and Arabic, there are big syntactic and morphological differences. Adjectives in English follow the same pattern with different syntactic and morphological structures, with few exceptions like in comparative and superlative forms; they don't change according to gender. Adjectives in English mostly function differently from nouns though sometimes adjectives are used as nouns as in the poor or the elderly. Examples from both the English and Arabic languages will be analyzed to show the differences between the adjectives in English and Arabic. This study will identify the morphological and syntactic differences between adjectives in English and Arabic to address a problem of the differences between adjectives in English and Arabic. This study may help those interested in studying languages to do deeper studies whether on adjectives or other areas of the language.

Keywords: Syntactic, morphological and adjectives.

1. Introduction

     According to Quirk and Greenbaum (2003), "adjectives are attributive when they pre-modify nouns, and they appear between the determiner and the head of the noun phrase. For example: 'the beautiful painting'; 'his main argument'. But in Arabic this construction would be completely different, the noun comes before the adjective and the article' the' in the first one would be repeated in the same noun phrase as in; 'the painting the beautiful' and in the second one the possessive adjective 'his' came after the noun 'argument', then we add the article' the' before the adjective 'main' and becomes in Arabic (argument his the main)". Adjectives are core part of English and Arabic languages, and it refers to these words which modify nouns or pronouns. They color the language and give it better taste. Although adjectives sometimes do the same function in both English and Arabic, there are big syntactic and morphological differences.

The Arabic language is one of the most important languages spoken in the world. Morphologically, Arabic is a non-concatenative. Arabic verbal morphology is the large number of variants that must be generated. Verbal stems are based on triliteral or quadriliteral roots. Stems are formed by a derivational combination of a root morpheme and a vowel melody; the two are arranged according to canonical patterns. Roots are said to interdigitate with patterns to form stems.

Adjectives in English follow the same pattern with different syntactic and morphological structures, with few exceptions like in comparative and superlative forms; they don't change according to gender. Adjectives in English mostly function differently from nouns though sometimes adjectives are used as nouns as in the poor or the elderly.

On the other hand, Arabic is far more complicated than English. Adjectives follow the same syntactic structure as nouns. Even morphologically adjectives undergo the same inflectional changes. Adjectives in Arabic change according to different causes. Gender and plurality cases change adjectives in Arabic. If the adjective is in predicative case, it morphologically and syntactically differs from the case when it is in predicative case. Adjectives can be in attributive, predicative or genitive case.

2. The morphological differences between adjectives in English and Arabic

Adjectives are more complicated in Arabic than in English, because in Arabic, they traditionally belong to the class of nouns and they are of different types. Adjectives and nouns in Arabic, unlike English, have the same grammatical and morphological attributes. They are divided broadly into two kinds; triptotes and diptotes as following:

2.1 Triptotes

Some adjectives came under this category; this means that they can take all the three vocalic endings (u, a, i), and nunation (end with sound (n); namely, an, in, un)

An example:

The adjective	Nominative case	Accusative case	Genitive case
Book كتاب /ketap/	كَتابٌ /ketapu/	كِتَابًـا / ketapn /	كِتَابٍ /ketapen/

Notice that the accusative case has different vocalic ending from the genitive case. It is also noteworthy that the definite article ال /al/ when precedes the adjective, the adjective changes from being diptotes to being triptotes.

2.2 Diptotes

The diptotes are the nouns which take /fatħah/ instead of a /Kasrah/ if in genitive case. Diptotes are those nouns or adjectives which never take /tanwīn/ (Double Vowel Mark). So whenever a diptote noun is preceded by a preposition or is /Muđâf Ilaihi/ (when it is a possessed (annexed) noun of the possessive (annexation)) it will take a /fatħah/ instead of a /Kasrah/ as following an example:

The adjective	Nominative case	Accusative case	Genitive case
Book كتاب /ketap/	كَتابٌ /ketapu/	كتابَ / ketapa /	كتابَ /ketapa/

Adjectives in Arabic can be derived from verbs according to the following rules:

Pattern	Singular masculine	Plural masculine
فاعل /fa'elun/	عالم (knowledgeable) /alemun/	علماء /ulamaa/
فعيل /fa'eelun/	صغير (little/young) /sagheerun/	صغار /sighaarun/
فعل /faelun/	حسن (good) /hasanun/	حسان /hisanun/
فعلان /faalanun/	عطشان (thirsty) /atshaan/	عطشى /atsha/
فعول /fa'oulun/	صبور (patient) /sabur/	صابرين /sabereen/
مفعول /mafa'oulun/	مجروح (hurt; injured) /majrouhun/	مجاريح /majreeh/ جرحى /jarhaa/

Pattern	Singular feminine	Plural feminine
فاعلةُ /fa'elatun/	بارعة (skillful) /bare'aun/ عالمة (knowledgeable) /alemun/	بارعات /bare'aoun/ عالمات /ulamaa/
فعيل /fa'eeltun/	صغيرة (little/young)	صغار
فعل /faeltun/	حسنة (good)	حسان
فعلان /faalantun/	جوعانة (hungry)	جوعى جائعات
فعول /fa'oulatun/	جهولة (ignorant)	جهلاء جاهلات
مفعول /mafa'outlun/	مجروحة(hurt; injured)	مجاريح جرحى

In the above schedule, it is noticed that adjective in Arabic follow the noun they modify in terms of gender and plurality and syntactic structure. So each one pattern of the patterns mentioned above is used according to gender, plurality or grammatical category

In English, there is no such a kind of division. Adjectives keep the same form with different nouns; they do not change according to gender. They keep the same form whatever the gender is.

For example: **He** is a smart student.

She is a smart student.

Moreover, in English, there is no plural form of adjectives. On the other hand Arabic has plural form for both feminine and masculine cases. And unlike English, Arabic has muthanna (dual case), and plural forms. English has neither of them as following:

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والذي عقد في رحاب جامعة القاهرة للمدة 31/ 3 - 1/ 4/ 2019

Arabic					English
Muthanna (dual) (Masculine)	Muthanna (dual) (Feminine)	Plural (masculine)	Plural (Feminine)	Broken Plural	The same form
مجتهدين/ mujtahidain/ مجتهدان /mujtahidan/	مجتهدتان /mujtahidatan/ مجتهدتين /mujtahidatain/	مجتهدون /mujtahidoun/ مجتهدين /mujtahideen/	مجتهدات /mujtahidat/	جوعى /jawaa/	Studious Hungry

3. The Syntactic differences between adjectives in English and Arabic

Syntactically, adjectives have no specific order in Arabic. However these adjectives semantically are ordered according to their importance in the sentence. Adjectives in Arabic, unlike English, come after the nouns they modify

For example: Ahmed is a **strong** and **honest**

In praising, the order of adjectives starts with adjectives denoting ethics, and if there be more than one adjective modifying the noun in the sentence, then the order of such ethical adjectives relies on their importance. Consider the following example:

He is a **worshiper**, **obedient**, **sincere** and **charitable**.

In English, adjectives do not agree with the noun in number and gender as in Arabic language, in English language adjectives precede the nouns they modify.

For example: I have a **nice** car.

　　　　She is a **clever** girl

　　　　They are my **best** friends.

The adjectives nice, clever and best precede the nouns they modify. The adjective is preceded by an indefinite article if it modifies a singular countable noun. The definite article can precede the adjective whether the noun it modifies is a singular or plural, depending on whether it is definite or indefinite. The following examples show the difference between English and Arabic:

Arabic	English
أحمد طالب ذكي /ahmadtalibunzaki/ smart student ahmad	Ahamd is a smart student
وفاء فتاة مجتهدة /wafaafatatunmujtahedatun/ studious girl wafaa	Wafaa is a studious girl.

In the above examples the noun طالب /talib/ which means student preceded the adjective ذكي /zaki/ which means smart, but in English as it is shown the adjective "smart" preceded the noun "student".

On the other hand, In English, we use the copular verb to relate the subject with the adjective. On the other hand in Arabic we usually delete the copular verb as it is understood implicitly. Using copular verb to relate the subject with the verb is completely wrong, Arab speakers do not do that.

Look at the following examples to notice the difference

Arabic	English
أحمد سعيد /ahmadsaed/ Ahmad happy	Ahamd **is** happy

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4. Conclusion

We conclude from this study that the adjectives in Arabic and English have several similarities and differences, and that the adjectives in the Arabic language are more complex than English because they belong to the category of nouns, verbs and there different types. In addition, Adjectives follow the same syntactic structure as nouns. Even morphologically adjectives undergo the same inflectional changes. Adjectives in Arabic change according to different causes. Gender and plurality cases change adjectives in Arabic.

Moreover, in English, adjectives are placed before nouns, unlike Arabic, in which the noun comes after the noun or is often derived from the noun or verb.

The study found that the attributes adjectives in English and Arabic are more similar than differences.

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