



A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF CERTAIN ARABIC AND ENGLISH SYNTACTIC FEATURES IN SELECTED CHILDREN'S STORIES

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: 6th February 2022 Accepted: 6th March 2022 Published: 22nd April 2022</p>	<p>This paper is a contrastive analysis of syntactic aspects of languages shows how languages share some universal syntactic properties, for example, the verb phrase is seen to be universal, and, at the same time, how generating the constituents may vary substantially. This study attempts to tackle the possible differences in syntactic features that have been made by translators of children's stories namely Old Man and Bird, and The Rabbit from two angles: Arabic and English.</p> <p>The current research selects two important syntactic aspects, namely Noun Phrase and Verb Phrase. It presents the formation of these syntactic aspects in English and Arabic. Stories selected for children by Mahasin Jada and Ahmed Hassan are analyzed for English and Arabic syntax.</p>

Keywords: Contrastive Analysis, Syntactic Features, Children's Stories.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a unique feature of humans. Languages are different from one another. Standard Arabic and Standard English languages, for example, are different but alike. That is, these languages are originally different from one another (Semitic & German) but they do share at least generally some linguistic features at all levels: phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatics' levels. This research paper tries to find how English and Arabic differ from each other syntactically.

The current research selects two important syntactic aspects, namely Noun Phrase and Verb Phrase, as well as the variations that occur in the language of children's stories happen due to word order. For instance, Arabic has primarily VSO order or SVO order; the verb can start the sentence followed by the subject's name or the subject can start the sentence. However, English is an SVO language; in which case the noun phrase heads the structure followed by the verb phrase. The word order of the source language imposes several other syntactic features not necessarily shared by the target language. Therefore, in translating stories, translators can change certain structures of the first language into new structures of the second language to get the nearest equivalent meaning.

This study tries to illustrate linguistically the structural differences between the source text and the target text in a limited sample. For example, there will be differences in deleting and adding noun phrases, and verb phrases. Translators may add, delete or substitute certain syntactic features of the source language while translating the received English texts from the agencies. This study tries to contrast the same texts in an attempt to find out the differences between the two versions and the most prominent syntactic features of the source language that can be maintained in form and function after being translated.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Language is a means of communication among people, societies, communities, regions, countries, etc. This is to say that the major aim of each language is the same, but this or that language will be necessary either completely or partially different from another language (Whitman, 1970:91).

Contrastive linguistics is concerned with comparing two languages for the purpose of identifying similarities and differences that hold between the languages compares as well as potential areas of learning problems. This kind of synchronic contrastive studies should be distinguished from those diachronic comparative studies that are part of the field of historical linguistics which is concerned with comparing languages for the purpose of reconstructing proto-languages (Aziz, 1999:2)

Contrastive Analysis attempts from an educational point of view to contrast two languages, concentrating on the differences between them to be taught to a second language or foreign language learners to solve their problems hindering the process of learning this or that particular foreign or second language.

Bell (1991) submitted that children's stories are read by mass audiences who are influenced by these stories and their capacity to understand them. It reflects images of daily life, and it has some values that are expressed through that language.

During the 1970s, the concept of extended standard theory prevails to refine the types of phrase structure rules used in the standard theory and then develops into the rise of the government and binding theory in Chomsky (1981). Some parts of this syntactic model have been modified in Chomsky (1986) and then propagated by Radford (1988) and Cook (1988). The theory comprises a number of sub-theories in syntax.

PHRASE CATEGORIES

1- The Structure of Noun Phrase

A noun phrase is a group of two or more words headed typically by a noun and other elements which are either obligatory that determine (specify) the head which can be represented by any determiner such as e.g. (that, my, the, etc.) or optional that modify (describes) the head as a pre-modifier or post-modifier which are either adjectives or adverbs according to Quirk et al. (1985:62), and they can function as the subject, the object, the complement in a sentence as in:

-The baby has really cute dimples.

noun phrase is expanded to the noun which is the head of the noun phrase in total. The projection of noun phrase plays a central role as it can be expanded to another noun that covers adjuncts and to complement the head noun. The noun phrase is a universal entity consisting of the head N, a possible specifier and the node N from which a possible complement or adjunct are projected.

Nouns in English

Basically, English nouns are either proper or common. Proper nouns which give a specific referent, are names of people such as Lisa, names of places such as Paris, names of months such as June, names of days such as Friday. Common nouns refer to people or things in general and can be countable nouns such as book, boy, ball or non-countable nouns such as water, tea, milk. Concerning the number of noun, English nouns have two number distinctions which are either singular or plural such as book, books.

Noun Phrase in Arabic

A noun phrase in Arabic generally consists of a head which is typically a noun and other elements which are either obligatory that determine the head or optional that modify the head.

Nouns in Arabic

Arabic nouns can be either proper nouns (اسماء العلم) or common nouns (اسماء الجناس). Proper nouns are either simple such as Ali (علي) or complex such as (بيت لحم). Common nouns can be adjectives such as (حكيم) نبيل, (جميلة). Arabic nouns can be concrete such as (كتاب, قلم) or abstract such as (صبر, شجاعة).

It was stated by Aziz (1989:99) that Arab grammarians consider adjectives as a subclass of the class of nouns. Thus, adjectives belong to the class of nouns because it is difficult whether a word is a noun or adjective as in (نبيل, حكيم, جميلة, كريم).

Concerning noun number, Arabic nouns have three number distinctions which are singular, dual and plural such as (كتاب, كتابان, كتب). Moreover, Arabic has plural of plural to show the largeness of number as in (أبيادي).

Similarities and differences of Noun Phrases in English and Arabic

2 The Structure of Verb Phrase

The verb phrase is an intermediate projection headed by a lexical verb and also projected into a complement. The specifier can be represented by any possible entity, but this is not always the case. Out of which, the projection of the verb is projected to account for any possible essential complements and non-essential adjuncts. The projection of the verb plays a central role as it can be expanded to another verb that covers adjuncts as well as complements to the head verb. The term verb phrase is used in two senses. Traditionally, it refers to a group of verbs which together have the same syntactic function as a single verb, e.g. is coming, may be coming, get up to. In generative grammar, the verb phrase (VP) acts as the predicate of a sentence. (Crystal, 2008:510)

Verb phrase in English

A verb phrase can consist of a single verb or a single auxiliary, or of a combination of one or more of each. The verb phrase may be finite (showing tense, mood, aspect and voice) or non-finite (not showing tense or mood but still capable of indicating aspect and voice).

Greenbaum and Quirk mention that whether finite or non-finite, the verb phrase can consist of one word or of more than one word, in which case the phrase consists of a head verb preceded by one or more auxiliary verbs (Lorenz, 2008:3)

Verb phrase in Arabic

Arabic verbs are usually divided into basic and derived classes, termed in Arabic "المجرد" and "المزيد" respectively. The majority of the basic verbs are made of three consonants and are known as (ثلاثي triliteral). The other basic forms which are less common than the triliteral are the (رباعي quadriliteral) made of four consonants. Examples of these two types are:

Triliteral: فرح, حزن

زلزل، وسوس: iQuadrlitral:

There are other forms of the verb derived from the triliteral and quadrlitral:

فعل، فاعل، افعال، تفعل، افتعل، تفاعل، انفعال، استفعل

Arabic verb phrases consist of either a single finite verb or a sequence of two finite verbs. The great majority of verbs occur as single verbs. For example: **جاء الولد**

Verbs in English

The kernel of the verb phrase is formed from verbs (lexical words) and auxiliaries (grammatical words). A verb phrase can consist of a single verb or a single auxiliary, or of a combination of one or more of each. The verb phrase may be finite (showing tense, mood, aspect and voice) or non-finite (not showing tense or mood but still capable of indicating aspect and voice).

Auxiliary and lexical verbs

In English there is a distinction between auxiliary verbs and lexical verbs. Auxiliary verbs is used with a main verb to create a verb phrase. One auxiliary verb or multiple auxiliary verbs can be used in conjunction with the main verb in the verb phrase. All the verbs found in the dictionary can be combined with auxiliary verbs. Besides auxiliary verbs relate subjects with their predicates in order to identify tense. Auxiliary verbs can also identify voice, person, number, or mood. In interrogative sentences, the auxiliary verb is placed before the subject. Consider the following examples:

She will read this story.

Will she read this story?

When will she read this story?

Here, "will" is an auxiliary verb because it can be placed before the subject. Besides, the verb "wrote", for example, can't be placed before the subject because it is a lexical verb. For instance:

She wrote a letter

*Wrote she a letter?

In negative sentences, "not" is placed after the auxiliary. For instance: She will read this book.

She will not read this book.

She wrote a letter.

She did not write a letter.

Moreover, auxiliary verbs in English can be divided into the following two subclasses:

• **Primary auxiliaries:** Do, Have, Be.

• **Modal auxiliaries :** shall, should, will, would, may, might, must, Modal auxiliaries have semantic function (modality) as well as grammatical function as auxiliaries.

Furthermore, when the verb phrase consists of only one word which is the head verb, it is called simple, when it consists of more than one word, it is called complex. A verb phrase may consist of simple, when it consists of more than one auxiliary:

She may have been reading the book.

Tense, person, and number

The first or only verb in the verb phrase is marked for tense, person, and number.

1. Tense

Tense is a grammatical category referring to the time of the situation; the tense is indicated by the form of the verb. There are two tense forms: present and past, and there are many tenses related to these two forms. Person marks pronouns and, in most languages, corresponding verb forms, according to whether the pronoun represents or includes the person or persons actually speaking or writing ("**first person**"), whether the pronoun represents or includes the person or persons being addressed ("**second person**"), and whether the pronoun represents someone or something other than the speaker/writer or the listener/reader ("**third person**").

So, there are three persons: first person (the person or persons speaking or writing), second person (the person or persons addressed), and third person (others).

There are two numbers: singular and plural.

Present: I think we're going to like it.

We live right at the top.

Past: We heard about it through a friend.

We were getting pretty desperate.

2. Aspect

Aspect indicates how the/event described by a verb is viewed, such as whether the action happens once or repeatedly, is completed or still continuing. For example:

She sang. (action happening once)

She sings. (action happening repeatedly) .

She has sung. (action completed)

She is singing. (action continuing)

So, the aspect is indicated by a combination of auxiliary and verb form. Verbs have two aspects: the **perfect** aspect and the **progressive** aspect.

The police **had closed** the shop months ago.

You **are neglecting** your work.

3. Voice

Verbs have two voices: active and passive. The active is the voice that is used most commonly. The active and passive have different verb phrases in that the passive has an additional auxiliary: a form of the auxiliary be followed by an ed participle.

Active: A team of detectives is investigating the crime.

He brokes the window.

Passive: The crime is being investigated by a team of detectives.

The window is broken.

4. Mood

Mood refers to distinctions in the form of the verb that express the attitude of the speaker to what is said. Finite verb phrases have three moods: indicative , imperative and subjunctive. (GREENBAUM and NELSON, 2002:62)

1. **Indicative** mood is the most common mood in declarative, interrogative and exclamative sentences.

- Roger has known me for a long time.
- How well does Rosalind play?
- What a heavy coat you are wearing!

2. **The imperative** is used in issuing orders:

- Stop them!

3. **Subjunctive mood** is used when we refer to a non-factual or hypothetical situation. There are two forms of the subjunctive: the present subjunctive and the past subjunctive.

The present subjunctive has the base form. It is used in:

1. that-clauses after the expression of such notions as demand or request:

- We demand that they **take** the witness stand
- My boss insists that I **be** on time.

The past subjunctive were is used chiefly to convey that the speaker is not sure that the situation will happen or is happening:

If he **were** to be appointed, I would leave.

Verbs in Arabic

Finite verbs

However, there are a number of finite verbs that occur as the first in two - verb sequences. These can be classified into three types: verbs of beginning افعال الشروع, verbs of propinquity افعال المقاربة and linking verbs.

Verbs of beginning

These verbs, which only occur in the perfect tense, are followed by an imperfect indicative verb. Both verbs have the same subject. Examples of these verbs are: هب, بدا, قام, جعل, اخذ. For example:

اخذ ياكل بعد ان وصلنا

Verbs of propinquity

These verbs, which may occur in the perfect or imperfect indicative, are also followed by an imperfect indicative verb but may also be followed by subjunctive. Examples are اوشك\يوشك and كاد\يكاد

كاد الولد يقع

اوشكت ان اتكلم

Linking verbs

These verbs, which usually occur in the perfect indicative, are followed by an imperfect indicative verb. These verbs are اصبح, امسى, اضحى, ما انفك, ما برح, ما فتى, ليس, صار

كانت تلعب كل يوم

ظل يكتب حتى المساء

Tense

In morphological terms, there are three verb tenses in Arabic. These are called past verb الفعل الماضي, often referred to as the perfect tense. It refers to action, states, situation before the present, present verb الفعل المضارع, often referred to as the imperfect tense, and فعل الامر often referred to as the imperative tense.

Conjugational patterns for the perfect and imperfect tense for:

1. **Singular** المفرد
2. **Dual** المثنى
3. **Plural** الجمع

Perfect tense الفعل الماضي

- He found the key. وجدَ المفتاح

- I found the key. وجدتُ المفتاح

You don't have to use the pronoun (ana) لانا (huwa) هو since the ending of the verb will tell you who is carrying out the action.

Here are all the singular endings for past verbs:

- I opened . فتحتُ . أنا -tu
- You opened. فتحتَ . أنتَ -ta
- You opened. فتحتِ . أنتِ -ti

- He opened. فتَحَ هو -a
- She opened. فتَحَتْ هي -at

When the subject of the verb is mentioned , it generally comes after the verb :

Verb +subject+rest of sentence

Fatima opened the door. فتَحَتْ فاطمة الباب.

Data Collection

Two stories for children chosen by Mahasin Jadu named Old Man and Bird and Ahmed Hassan named The Rabbit are analyzed for English and Arabic syntax.

Data Analysis

The data are analyzed in a very scientific method in a contrast style in a way to elicit the syntactic differences between source language and target language. The samples are analyzed according to structures of language.

Each sentence consists of a number of constituents which are organized in a way to make it grammatical. Referring to such parameter will be of a great significance in the sense that knowing such phrases makes the analysis simple to know what structures are deleted, added, substituted or changed in the process of translating the selected samples. Such syntactic issues are needed to highlight the differences between the English version as the Source language and the translated version as the Target language which is Arabic.

The sentence in Arabic (TL)	The noun	The verb	The sentence in English (SL)	The noun	The verb
سمعَ صوتَ عَجوزٍ	ضمير	سمعَ	He heard an old man.	He	Heard
بصرخ، فطارَ سريعاَ إليهِ.	مستتر ضمير	طارَ	The sparrow flew quickly to the old man.	The sparrow	Flew
ظلَّ العصفورُ حائراً أين يحمي نفسه.	مستتر العصفورُ	ظلَّ	The sparrow did not know where to go.	Cow	Did not know
غضبتَ البقرة.	البقرة	غضبتَ	The cow was angry.	The cow	Was
أعرضتَ عنه البقرة وانصرفت.	البقرة	أعرضتَ	The cow avoided him and turned away.	The animal	Avoided
اجتمعتَ الحيوانات لتأكل.	الحيوانات	اجتمعتَ	The animals sat to eat.	The old man	sat
رحبَ العجوزُ بالعصفور.	العجوزُ	رحبَ	The old man welcomed the sparrow.	The old man	welcomed
قررَ التخلصَ منه.	ضمير مستتر (هو)	قررَ	The old man decided to get rid of the sparrow.	He	decided
قامَ العصفور بنقل الخطب.	العصفور	قامَ	He took the wood.	He	took
وقفَ العجوز أمام الشجرة.	العجوز	وقفَ	He stood in front of the tree,		stood

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is obvious that the Noun phrase category plays a primary role in the structure of a sentence in a language. A sentence can never be grammatical if it does not contain an noun or its substitutes as the subject of the sentence. Noun phrase occupies five major grammatical functions in every sentence. It functions as (i) a grammatical subject, (ii) object of a transitive verb, (iii) indirect object of a verb, (iv) an object of preposition and (v) a complement. Such significant entity must be taken care of not only in constructing a grammatical structure in any language but also in translating it into any TL. Theoretically, it is evident that the noun phrase can be either deleted or absorbed but without affecting the grammaticality of a sentence. In other words, there are certain principles and parameters that govern its deletion, addition, substitution and absorption but the grammaticality of the original sentence must be maintained. For the benefit of achieving well TL meaning in translation, a translator may freely delete or substitute the noun phrase by other entities of different structures without taking into consideration the syntactic and semantic significances of such a phrase in the SL.

It is evident that the verb phrase is the most syntactic feature that is maintained at the phrase level

	In Arabic	In English
Overt Pronouns	7	10
Covert Pronouns	3	0
lexical Verbs	10	9
Auxiliary Verbs	0	1

There are some similarities and differences between English and Arabic noun phrase .

The Similarities:

1. In both English and Arabic, nouns are divided into proper nouns and common nouns.
2. In both languages, there is a definite article which is "the" in English and "ال" in Arabic.
3. In both English and Arabic, the head of the noun phrase can be a noun, a pronoun, or a demonstrative as in: This is a pen. هذا قلمٌ

Reem is wise ريم حكيمة

4. In both languages, nouns are either concrete as book and car in English and كتاب , سيارة In Arabic or abstract nouns such as love, courage in English and سعادة , شجاعة in Arabic.

5. In both languages, the head word can take pre-modifier and post-modifier.

The Differences:

1. Arabic is more explicit than English in relation to the noun phrase.
2. Arabic pronouns can be overt and covert, but English has no such distinction because all English pronouns are said to be overt.
3. Arabic nouns have plural of plural جمع الكثرة as in عين, عيون, أعين to show largeness of number, whereas English has no such case.
4. In Arabic, the gender and number of the possessor have an impact on the form of the head word as in " , كتابهم , كتابها , كتابهن". While In English, number and gender have no impact on the form the head word at all as "his book, her book, their book".
5. English nouns have two number distinction which are singular and plural, whereas Arabic has three number distinction which are singular, dual, and plural.
6. English has both definite and indefinite articles and both occur before a noun, while Arabic has only definite article "ال التعريف" however Arabic mark indefiniteness by suffix-n التنوين.
7. In English, adjectives are not inflected for number and gender but in Arabic they are inflected in number and gender as in: الشاعر مبدع, الشاعرة مبدعة , الشاعرات مبدعات , الشاعران مبدعان

Similarities and differences of Verb Phrases in English and Arabic

The Similarities:

- 1- English and Arabic verbs indicate tense, mood, voice and number.
- 2- Both English and Arabic verbs occupy the head position in English and Arabic verb phrase.
- 3- The present in English and Arabic can refer to the future.
- 4- Verbs are employed by English and Arabic to state actions and express events.

The Differences:

- 1- In English, verbs can be classified into lexical and auxiliary verbs whereas Arabic has only lexical verbs.
- 2- Classical Arabic prefers VSO order, while English prefers the SVO one.
- 3- In Arabic, past may indicate future.
- 4- In Arabic, two verbs follow each other قام ينادي, while in English, there is no equivalent structure.
- 5- In contrast to Arabic, English modals constitute a closed well-defined system Nevertheless, modality is expressed by Arabic particles, prepositions, uninflected verbs and regular verbs.
- 6- English is more explicit than Arabic in the concord field since it has both grammatical and notional concord, while Arabic has only the grammatical concord.
- 7- Arabic is more explicit than English in that Arabic verbs agree with the subject in number and gender, whereas English verbs agree with their subjects in number only.
- 8- English is less explicit than Arabic regarding the concord between verb and its subject.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study revealed that through the process of translation and at the phrasal level, It has been discovered that the verb is the most syntactic feature that was maintained in the process of deletion from the source text, and the noun phrase came at the second rank. But, in the case of their addition to the target text, the verb phrase was the category that was most maintained, and the last was the noun phrase in the same hierarchy.

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