

Adjectives and their Difficulties in English and Arabic A Comparative Study

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to examine analytically the similarity and differences of adjectives in both languages, English and Arabic. The study attempts to methodically evaluate the different kinds of English adjectives as well as the Arabic adjectives focusing on the usage, the differences and similarities, as well as the difficulties.

Moreover it aims to shed light on the way to make such comparison understandable. It is prepared to contribute in enriching the field of study because of the lack to researches in this area.

The study is compromised of four sections. The first section deals with a brief introduction summarizing the importance of the study. A short definition of adjectives in English and Arabic is presented. The second section deals with Adjectives in English, detailed definitions, and the types of adjectives supported by examples. Whereas the third part independently, introduces with details the Adjectives in Arabic; its meaning, and types supported with examples. The fourth concentrates on a short comparative study between adjectives in English and Arabic shedding light on the problems and difficulties of adjectives in both Arabic and English followed by a general conclusions, findings and recommendations of the study.

The motive of this study is an endeavor to add to the knowledge of the humanity for the most part the society of learners and those who have interest in learning. The study is significant in its purpose because there is no satisfactory product in this area.

It is meant to help and assist both sides; students of English and at the same time students of Arabic because it deals with numerous kinds of the adjectives in English and Arabic. The study is supported with lucid number of instances to elucidate the point of view.

Introduction

English language as well as Arabic language is known by its various synonyms and uses of adjectives which make its study complicated for several learners who deal with them. English and Arabic are thoroughly two dissimilar languages chiefly in their style of writing, pronunciation, sentence structure and usage regardless of few sides of similarity in some sides of the sentence. A crucial difference between these two languages is **parts of speech which this study will focus mainly on them as a base of a language**. It produces a variety of difficulty in paraphrase and understanding. English language encompasses several parts of speech more than Arabic.

The parts of speech in English are Noun, Pronoun, Adjective, Verb, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction and others whereas Arabic language has just three major parts. They are Noun, Verb, and Preposition. From this, we understand that the **parts of speech** in English like adjective, adverb and the other parts are supplemented or incorporated with others in the Arabic language.

Section 1. Adjective in English

Adjective is defined as a word which is used to describe the noun. Moreover, according to the online Wikipedia Encyclopedia, the **adjective** is a word whose main role is to modify a noun or pronoun, giving more information about the noun. They can never take determiners like nouns but adjectives can take adverbs as modifiers. Different from the noun in English, the adjectives can never be used as plural. The function of adjectives in English is to add clarity to the meaning of nouns in order to make it obvious but also the adjectives limit their application. For instance:

- The house
- has a wide scope of imaginative meaning.
- The **large** house
- The **large white** house
- The beautiful **large white** house
- has the least range of imaginative meaning.

The more we add adjectives or determiners, the meaning becomes limited. The adjectives in English are constant for number, gender, person or case opposing the adjectives in Arabic. They are variable and uneven. Number, gender, person or case affects them as in the following instances:

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| a pink rose | <i>wardah Hammra</i> |
| pink roses | <i>worood Humr</i> |
| pink hair | <i>sha'ar ahmar</i> |

If we have a look at the above three instances, we find that the adjectives in English do not change – **pink**. However, we clearly observe the variation of ‘**pink**’ in Arabic like *Hammra*, *Humr*, *ahmar*.

In this part, analytical examination will be done to shed light on the meaningful context of adjective in English and also to evaluate its diverse types. Wren and Marten, in their book "High School English Grammar and Composition", define adjective as a word used with a noun to depict or point out the person, animal, place or thing which the noun names, or to tell the number or quantity, is called an Adjective. Whereas E.R.R. Menon, in "Standard English Grammar", says that the word 'adjective' means 'added to'.

Kinds of Adjectives

There are various categories of adjectives in English such as Adjectives of Numbers, Adjectives of Quality, Adjectives of Quantity, Distributive Adjectives, Demonstrative Adjectives or Adjectives of Demonstration, Interrogative Adjectives, Possessive Adjectives and Adjectives of Comparison. It worth noticing that there is much in common between pronouns and adjectives. Several words in English are used both as pronouns and as adjectives.

1. Adjectives of Numbers

The following adjectives are called numeral adjectives or adjectives of numbers. They can be definite or indefinite. They tell how many people, animals, places or things are there. Here are supporting examples:

1. I saw *three* princesses. (definite)
2. The foot has *five* toes. (definite)
3. January is the *first* month of the year. (definite)
4. There are *many* rooms in the girls' inn. (indefinite)
5. *Many* boys jumped round the fire. (indefinite)

Adjectives of Number are of three kinds: **the first is Definite Numeral Adjectives** that denote an exact number; as: *One, two, three*, etc. They are also called **Cardinals**. *First, second, third*, etc. are called **Ordinals**. **The second is Indefinite Numeral Adjectives** that do not denote an exact number; as: *All, no, few, some, many, any, several, sundry*, and *certain*. And **the third is Distributive Numeral Adjectives** that refer to each number. They answer the question: *how many?*

More instances are explained at **Distributive Adjectives** blow.

2. Adjectives of Quality

These kinds of adjectives qualify noun or its replacement – the pronoun. Here are some examples to make the idea clear:

1. The jasmine is a *beautiful* flower.
2. Sana'a University is *large*.
3. Sameer is an *honest* man.
4. *Intellectual* workers get prizes.
5. The narrator told us a *humorous* story.

3. Adjectives of Quantity

The third type of adjectives signifies how the noun is involved. It tells about the quantity without giving the exact number. The following sentences are instances to make clear of the idea:

1. They don't have *much* cement left for the building.
2. There is *some* juice in the bottle.
3. She ate *some* porridge.

As it is seen from the examples above that the adjectives of quantity are indefinite.

4. Distributive Adjectives

This type of adjectives points out one from two. These adjectives need to have the noun they qualify instantly. If not, then, the words (each, either and neither) are called Distributive Pronouns. The following are some instances of Distributive Adjectives:

1. *Each* state has its representative in the government.
2. *Every* individual of the congregation has been elected.
3. The children want *neither* journal.
4. *Each* girl must take her turn.
5. *Either* male will effort.

5. Demonstrative Adjectives

The function of this type of adjectives is to assist to indicate nouns. These adjectives suppose to take the nouns they point out directly after them. To distinguish the Demonstrative Pronouns from Adjectives we need to comprehend that pronoun stand-alone. It is worthy to mention that *this* and *that* are used with singular nouns while *these* and *those* with plural nouns. Demonstrative Adjectives answer the question: *Which?* The following are some instances of the Demonstrative Adjectives:

1. Put *this* cup on *that* table.
2. *This* boy is harder than Paul.
3. *That* gentleman is hard-working.

4. I like *such* quiet places.

6. Interrogative Adjectives

As similar as the Demonstrative Adjectives, Interrogative Adjectives need to be followed instantly with the noun they describe. But if the nouns are not placed, the interrogatives shall be called Interrogative Pronouns and not Adjectives. The Interrogative Adjectives help to ask questions. Here are some instances of Interrogative Adjectives:

1. *Whose* son is that boy?
2. *Which* road shall we use?
3. *Whose* notebooks are these?
4. *Which* jacket does she like?
5. *What* prize did they get?

The word *what* is occasionally used as an exclamatory adjective. The following are some sentences to clarify the idea:

1. What a brain!
2. What an idea!
3. What a piece of work is a man! Hamlet (Act II
Scene 2) by Shakespeare

7. Possessive Adjectives

There is deference between Possessive Pronouns and Possessive Adjectives. Possessive Adjectives show possession and ownership of something to someone. They must precede a noun such as the following instances:

1. This is *my* horse.
2. We like *your* house.
3. Those are *her* pens.
4. Those are *their* kids.
5. The dog bites *its* tail.

8. Adjectives of Comparison

Adjectives in English have three degrees of comparison. They are the Positive Degree, Comparative Degree, and Superlative Degree. The adjectives alter in appearance to show comparison.

The Positive Degree is the direct adjective, which is used to depict the noun. The positive degree of an adjective is the adjective in its plain shape. It is used to denote the existence of the quality of what we speak about. It is used when there is no comparison. For instance:

1. Khalid is *sad*.
2. Khalil is *bad*.
3. This boy is *strong*
4. She is *elegant*.
5. The ant is *small*.

The above sentences are examples notifying us about the first degree of comparison where the adjective is used without any addition. Furthermore, the adjective in every instance describes one singular subject.

The comparative degree of adjective is a bit little dissimilar where it deals with more than one aspect in meaning. It indicates a higher degree of quality than the Positive. That means to show the relationship of two things. In addition, the form of the adjective is changed by either adding 'er' plus 'than' to the adjective if it is one syllable like, happy, tall, small, and hard whereas some one-syllable adjectives are irregular like sad and bad. However, if the adjective is two syllables or more like gorgeous or generous, we should add 'more' before the adjective such as the following examples:

1. Dishonest is worse than fighting.

2. The camel is shorter than the giraffe.
3. A bird is not smaller than An insect.
4. English is easier than Arabic.

The third degree of comparison is the superlative degree in which it deals with comparing one among others (more than two). The structure of the adjective is changed. That is to replace 'er ... than' with 'the ... est' if the adjective is one-regular-syllable like the *happiest*, the *tallest*, the *smallest*, and the *hardest*. If the adjective is irregular, its form may change completely. Moreover, if the adjective is more than *one-syllable* we use '*the most*' before the adjective.

Here are some sentences clarifying the meaning.

1. Sameer is the *worst*.
2. This man is the *strongest*.
3. They are the *happiest*.

It is important to note that in the Superlative Degree the Definite Article ***the*** must be used before any adjective.

as + adjective + as

It is possible to express comparison by using the above rule as in the following examples:

1. A van is a fast bus.
2. A car is not as fast as an airplane.
3. There is no mode of transportation as fast as a jet plane.

These three sentences of comparison using **as adjective as** can be reconstructed as:

1. A tiger is fast. (positive)
2. A tiger is faster than a giraffe. (comparative)
3. Cheetah is the fastest animal. (superlative)

In addition, it is necessary to note that both Superlative Degree and Comparative Degree of comparison may be changed into the Positive Degree without any change in the meaning.

9. Adjective Phrases

Adjective Phrases are phrases that can commence with a preposition. They are also named as Prepositional Phrases, which can function as adjectives or adverbs. Here are some examples:

1. Millionaires are people *of great wealth*.
2. I want a house *away from the noise of traffic*.

The phrases in italics are Prepositional Phrases because they qualify the nouns that precede them, like people and house. They are known as Adjective Phrases.

Use of Adjectives

The adjectives have three places in the sentence. The first place is before the noun and before the verb. Its position is in the subject. It is called attributive such as the following example.

- The *black* bag is nice.

The adjective *black* mentioned in the above sentence clarifies and confirms the idea. It modifies the noun subject it precedes - *bag*. The second place or position for the adjective is independent after the verb such as the following example.

- The bag is *black*.

In this sentence the position of the adjective *black* is separate from the noun it modifies. It comes alone and after the verb irrespective of that it describes the noun in the subject position. Here the adjective is called predicative because of its place after the verb. The last usage is that the adjective is located after the verb but before a noun like the coming instance.

- This is a black bag.

It is similar from the first one but different in the place where the adjective *black* precedes the noun in both instances but the position is different – attributive and predicative. It is in the same place – after the verb but it modifies the noun it precedes.

10. Nouns used as adjectives

In English, it is possible that a noun can be used as an adjective. Here are some examples to support the idea:

- Security Council
- Head Delegate
- lady doctor
- press conference
- state budget
- world news

It is necessary to realize that any change of the position of the adjective-noun and the qualified nouns change the meaning. For example:

- *School* girl (it means a girl goes to school)

- *Girl* school (it means a school for girls)
- *Time* table (it means a schedule)
- *Tea* time (which means it is the time for drinking tea)
- *Race* horse (it means a horse participate in a race)
- Horse race (it means a competition for horses)

11. Emphasizing Adjectives

Emphasizing adjectives are determiners. They are not like the ordinary adjectives that describe a property of the main noun. Their rule is to convey strong feelings from the speaker.

Own and Very are used as **Emphasizing Adjectives** as in the following sentences.

1. This is the *very* thing we want.
2. She is his *own* master.
3. Mind your *own* business.
4. She was beaten at her *own* game.
5. I saw it with my *own* eyes.

12. Proper Adjectives

This category of adjectives is formed and derived from the Proper Noun. There is no such division in Arabic. Here are some examples to support the case:

1. The merchant deals in *Turkish* rugs.
2. He is an *Arabic* man.
3. He met an *English* sailor.
4. They are *Yemeni* thinkers.

Adjectives and adverbs: confusing Cases

Adjectives in – ly

Typical mistakes:

- She spoke to me very friendly. She is very friendly.
(correct)
- The bird sang lovely. The bird is lovely. (correct)

Friendly and *lovely* are adjectives cannot be used as adverbs to describe the verb. Their function go with nouns even though they end in *ly*, they are adjectives which take the form of verb **be**.

Many adjectives can be made into adverbs by adding – ly, Compare:

The butterfly is very quiet. It flies very quietly.

She is a wonderful novelist. She writes wonderfully.

However, there are words that end in – ly are adjectives, not adverbs. For example: friendly, lovely, lonely, likely, ugly, deadly, cowardly, silly. These words cannot be used as adverbs. Like these two sentences:

He spoke to me in a very friendly way.

Her singing was lively. (Or: She sang beautifully.)

Other words that end in –ly can be both adjectives and adverbs.

Examples are daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, early.

1. A daily paper is published daily.
2. It is a weekly occasion.

3. We get up early to catch an early train.
4. Weekly they organize a party.

Adjectives and adverbs with the same form: adverbs with two forms

Sometimes, an adjective and an adverb have the same form. For example,

A fast car goes fast.

The first fast is an adjective modifies the noun car but the second fast is an adverb describes the verb goes. In other cases, the adverb has two forms (for example, late and lately), one like the adjective and the other with – ly. There is usually a difference of meaning or use between the two forms.

Section 2. Adjective in Arabic

The Adjective in Arabic language does not have independent class or division as in English but it is a 'Follower'. There are four Followers in Arabic in which Adjective is one of them. It is called AL NA'AT or AL SEFAH in Arabic. It always comes after the noun to modify it. The adjective has numerous profits. The adjective in Arabic ought to be convenient and fitted with the noun in being definite or indefinite, in being singular, dual or plural, and also in gender as masculine or feminine.

The adjective in Arabic comes after the definite noun to define it and after the non-definite to specify it. It is also used for some other purposes such as praise, disparagement, and leniency. The adjective can come as singular, or a sentence, or even a semi-sentence as well. Moreover, the sentence in Arabic can be either verb-sentence or noun-sentence. But if it is semi-sentence

the adjective should be adverbial and the noun must be indefinite noun.

The Adjective or so called (*Na'at*) or (*Sefah*) is a word which takes the rule of its precedent. That means the adjective follows the noun and agrees with it in all cases. The adjective or *Na'at* is one of four parts always follow the noun. The other three are called **Conjunction**, **Confirm**, and **Substitution**.

The adjective in Arabic is mentioned after its noun to depict, modify, and qualify in its position and to describe also what is related to it. Some grammarians have put Adjectives as indices because, in their opinion, the adjective is not connected fundamentally with the Arabic sentence that the sentence has basic pivots such as the **Subject** and **Object** in the **noun-sentence** and the **Verb** and the **Subject** in the **verb-sentence**.

عبدہ الراجحي (١٩٨٨). بيروت: دار النهضة العربية،

Thus, it is understood that the noun-sentence has no verb which is different from the sentence in English. The sentence in English also has a pivot which is the adjective but in Arabic the adjective is extra in which it is related to the noun describing it.

The adjective has benefits that the speaker endeavors to achieve a benefit or more such as:

1. **Specifying**, if the noun is indefinite; for example, *garatu ketaban jadedda*. **I read a new book**. It is worthy to mention that the adjective in Arabic *jadedda* came after the noun *ketaban* on the contrary of English where the adjective **new** came between the article *a* and the noun *book*.

2. **Clarifying**, if the noun is definite; for example *wasal Mohammad at-tajer*. **The merchant Mohammad has arrived**. In this example we notice the difference between the Arabic sentence and its translation where in the Arabic sentence the adjective is the last word. The sentence starts with the verb in the past (*wasal*) followed by the subject *Mohammad* then the adjective *at-tajer* whereas the English translated sentence starts with the definite article *the* then the adjective or determiner *merchant* followed by the proper noun *Mohammad* and the verb *has arrived* is the last.
3. **Praise**, like the following instance *Jaa al mualim al mukhlis*. **The faithful teacher has come**. The Arabic sentence starts with the verb *Jaa* followed by the subject *al mualim* then the adjective *al mukhlis* whereas its translation begin with the definite article *the* followed by the adjective *faithful* then the subject *teacher* and ends with the verb *has come*.
4. **Dispraise**, as in the following example *rasebat fi al ekhtibar Samirah al muhmelah*. **The negligent Smeera has failed the exam**. As it is understood, the adjective *al muhmelah* comes after the noun and at the end of the sentence. Whereas it's translated adjective **negligent** comes at the beginning of the sentence and before the noun.
5. **Confirmation**, as what almighty Allah has said in Surat Al-Haagah verse number 13: *Fa etha nufikh fi soor nfkhtn wahedah*. **Then when the Horn is blown with one blast**. The adjective sued in this sentence *wahedah* is for the purpose of confirming to repeat and confirm that it is one sure blast.

Conditions of Adjective

The origin of the adjective is to be participle as present Participle or Past Participle or the resembling-adjective or the superlative adjective as in the following examples:

- *Jaa at-talib almujtahed*. The *assiduous* student came. The adjective here *almujtahed* is in the position of present participle.
- *Akram Khaled al mahboob*. Khaled lionized *the beloved!* The adjective *al mahboob* in the sentence is past participle in Arabic.
- *Hatha rajul hasanun khulguho*. This is a man of *good morals*. In this example, a resemblance of the adjective *hasanun khulguho* that has relation with the noun *rajul*.
- *Saeed talib a'agal mn gheerhi*. The student Saeed is more rational than others. We notice in this sentence that the superlative adjectives in Arabic *a'agal* is different from that of English *more rational* in which we can use the mode of *more* and *than* but in Arabic it is not used.

The adjective in Arabic can come in a form of solid-noun or derivative. It has nine cases.

1. **The infinitive** as in the following two examples:
He is a trust man. i. e. trustworthy or trusted
You are a virtues man. i. e. virtuous
2. **Demonstrative Adjective** as in *Ali Lionized this! Akrama Ali hatha*. The place of the adjective in Arabic is the opposite of English. In Arabic it is located at the end or after the related noun whereas in English its place is before the noun.

3. Using (*tho wa thaat* *ثو و ذات*) which means "of" as in the following example: A man of knowledge and a woman of favor have come. *Jaa rajul tho elm wa emrah thaat fathl*. This means that the man is possessor of knowledge and the woman is owner of favor.

The relative clause with *the* as in this sentence: The man who works hard has arrived.

Kinds of Adjectives

There are two types of adjectives or Na'at in Arabic. The first one is called **Fact** or **Real** whereas the second is called **Causal**.

a) The Real Adjective:

Real Adjective is a word that modifies a precedent noun and follows it in all the grammatical cases such as being definite or non definite, singular or dual or plural, and in being masculine or feminine. Here are some examples.

1. *najaha at-talib almujtahd*. and *najehat at-talibah almujtahedah*. These two sentences are of two sides as Arabic. They can be written as masculine *almujtahd* and the feminine *almujtahedah* differently but the English translation is one as: **The diligent student passed**.
2. *najaha at-tolab almujtahedon*. And *najahat at-talabat almujtahedat*. Translated as **The diligent students passed**. These two Arabic sentences express plural. We realize the Arabic adjectives *almujtahedon* and *almujtahedat*. The English adjective *diligent* has four forms in Arabic; masculine singular *almujtahd*, feminine singular *almujtahedah*, and masculine plural *almujtahedon*, feminine plural *almujtahedat*. It is clear that the English

two sentences are the same with the exception of the plural 's' after the noun in the plural case.

- The adjective may come as **infinitive** with conditions that its verb should be of three letters and not to start with M-sound. In this case the adjective accords with the noun in being definite or non definite as in the following two examples:

1. *hatha hakemun a'dl.* This is a just judge.

2. *haoula hukamun a'dl.* These are just Judges.

- If the noun is plural and common masculine, the adjective may come as singular feminine or sound-feminine-plural or it can be feminine-fragment-plural such as the following three Arabic sentences

hathehi beoot a'leatun

These are high houses.

hathehi beoot a'leaat

These are high houses.

hathehi beoot a'waal

These are high houses.

All these three different Arabic sentences can be translated into one English sentence.

Kinds of Real Adjective

- **Singular Adjective** which is neither a sentence nor a semi-sentence as in the following example:

fi jantun a'leah. **In an elevated garden** Surat Al-

Ghashyah verse number 10. **Elevated** here is a singular adjective. The singular adjective can be:

1. **Demonstrative Adjectives** such as the following example: *kafato at-talib hatha* which can be translated as; **I rewarded this student.** We notice that the demonstrative adjective *hatha* in Arabic comes at the end of the sentence

whereas its place in the English sentence is before the object.

2. **Relative Clause** which starts with connecting '*HAMZAT WASL*' as in the following sentence: *Najah almutalim allathi ejtahada*. The learner who worked hard has passed. Of course the translation of this sentence cannot be easily understood because *HAMZAT AL WASL* is Arabic and has no equivalent in English (*allathi*). It is different from the relative clause who.
3. **Number** as in the next example; *Kafatu tulaban khamsah*. I gratified *five* scholars. This example shows that the number 'five *khamsah*' is an adjective, real and singular.

- **Sentence Adjective:**

If an affirmative sentence took place after a sheer indefinite, it is called adjective. Here are two examples:

1. *Sametu asforan sawtuho jameel*. I listened to a bird of musical sound. The noun sentence *asforan sawtuho jameel* - a bird of musical sound - is an accusative adjective sentence.
2. *Sametu almareeth yaseeh*. I heard the sick man screaming. The verb sentence *almareeth yaseeh* - the sick man screaming - is an accusative adjective sentence.

- **Semi-sentence Adjective**

The semi-sentence is called adjective if it occurs after a sheer indefinite as in the following example.

hatha rajulun mn Sana'a. This man is from Sana'a. The semi-sentence *mn Sana'a* - from Sana'a - is related to a deleted adjective of *man*.

• The Causal Adjective

It is an adjective to illustrate a noun connected with an inflected pronoun. Here, the adjective is constantly singular and follows what comes after it in gender. The **Casual adjective** is dominated to be present participle or past participle. It is called *causal* because of the last name after the adjective which has a causal reason or relation with the first noun.

Here are some instances:

1. *hatha rajulun mujtahedun ibnhu* This man has a diligent son.
2. *hatha rajulun mahboobun ibnhu* This man has a dear son.

It is worth mentioning to perceive the above two Arabic sentences. They have no change except in the adjective. The noun after the adjective is causal because it shows the relationship with the preceding noun. In the first example diligent *mujtahedun* modifies the son – after the adjective – of the man – before the adjective. In the second example the adjective *mahboobun* shows that the son of the man is **beloved, lover or dear**.

Adjectives in Arabic follow the nouns or pronouns they modify in gender, number, grammatical case, and the state of definiteness. They always come after the words they modify. The Adjectives in Arabic belong to the noun category, and there are several types of nouns that can serve as adjectives.

Arabic has masculine and feminine adjective forms. In Arabic to form a feminine adjective from the masculine, you simply add “*taa’ marbuta*” which looks like (ة، ة) to the end of the adjective, for example:

Big: *Kabeerun* كبير (masculine) Big: *kabeeratun* كبيرة (feminine)
Small: *Sagheerun* صغير (masculine) Small: *sagheeratun* صغيرة (feminine)
Beautiful: *Jameehun* جميل (masculine) Beautiful: *jameelatun* جميلة (feminine)

Dual Adjectives in Arabic:

To form a **dual masculine adjective** in Arabic we simply add “*aan*” “ان” to the end of the adjective, note that you can do that even with adjectives starting with “a” “أ”

Big: *kabeer* كبير (masculine singular)
Big: *kabeeraan* كبيران (masculine dual)
Blue: *azraq* أزرق (masculine singular)
Blue: *azraqaan* أزرقان (masculine dual)

To form a dual feminine adjective add “*ataan*” “اتان” to the masculine adjective:

Big: *kabeer* كبير (masculine singular)
Big: *kabeerataan* كبيرتان (feminine dual)
Blue: *azraq* أزرق (masculine singular)
Blue: *zarqawaan* زرقاوان (feminine dual)

Plural adjective in Arabic:

The way to form a plural adjective is the same way you form a plural noun. It is necessary to understand that the adjective follows the noun, and not the opposite like in English.

Good: *jayyed*

Bad: *sayyea*

Plural Nouns and Adjectives

From what we understood and remember how adjectives work with nouns from the previous analysis, it is realized that adjectives in Arabic follow the nouns, and they also have to be the same gender as the noun they describe. Also if the noun is definite, then the adjective must be definite too. Now we learn that adjectives have to agree with the nouns they describe in a third way that is in number.

Arabic language makes an important distinction between nouns for people and nouns which are for things. "Human" and "Non-human" Human plurals take plural adjectives. For the feminine ones, again, we add the suffix -aat. For the masculine ones we usually just add -uun or oon or -iin, but some irregular ones just have to be memorized as they are. Now here is the tricky part: non-human plurals, in Arabic, are considered to be feminine singular, so we use the feminine singular adjective with them. Some examples are followed. Look at these examples changing the singular nouns and adjectives to plural ones:

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>mudeer muhimm</i> | an important male director |
| <i>mudeeroon muhimmoon</i> | important directors |
| <i>mudeerah muhimmah</i> | an important female director |
| <i>mudeeraat muhimmaat</i> | important female directors |
| <i>jareedah muhimmah</i> | an important newspaper |
| <i>jaraa'id muhimmah</i> | important newspapers |
| <i>mudarris yamani</i> | a male Yemeni teacher |
| <i>mudarrisuun yamanioon</i> | Yemeni teachers |
| <i>al-mudarris al-yamani</i> | the Yemeni teacher |
| <i>al-mudarrisuun al-yamanioon</i> | the Yemeni teachers |

The **demonstrative pronouns** "*hathaa*" and "*hathihi*" (this male/female) must also agree in gender, so if we talk about non-human plurals, it is necessary to use the feminine form *hathihi*, as in these examples:

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Maa fahimna hatha ad-dars</i> | We did not understand this lesson. |
| <i>Maa fahimna hathihi ad-duruus</i> | We did not understand these lessons. |
| <i>Qara'tu hatha al-kitaab al-jadeed</i> | I read this new book. |
| <i>Qara'tu hathihi al-kutub al-jadeedah</i> | I read these new books. |
| <i>Hal qara'ta hathihi al-jareedah?</i> | Did you read this newspaper? |
| <i>Hal qara'ta hathihi al-jaraa'id?</i> | Did you read these newspapers? |

The Three Cases of Nouns and Adjectives

Nouns and adjectives that modify them must agree with each other in all aspects. It is mentioned earlier that they must agree with each other in gender, number and definiteness. They must also agree with each other in case. There are three cases for nouns and adjectives to mark their functions as subject, object or their position after a preposition or as part of idafa (adding).

The Nominative Case

The first case is called **the nominative case**. It applies to nouns that function as subjects in verbal sentences, and also to both subjects and predicates in nominal sentences, and all adjectives that modify them. In the following examples, the nominative nouns and adjectives are underlined:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Al-bintu mashghooltun.</i> | <u>The girl</u> is <u>busy</u> . |
| <i>Al-mudaris al-jadeed yamani.</i> | <u>The new teacher</u> is <u>Yemeni</u> . |

It is worthy to notice that, in the first sentence, *Al-bintu* - girl - is the subject of a nominal sentence and *mashghooltun* – busy - is the predicate of a nominal sentence. In the second example, *Al-mudaris* - the teacher - is the subject of a nominal sentence, *al-jadeed* – new - is an adjective of a nominative noun and *Yemeni* is another adjective and it is also the predicate of a nominal sentence.

The Accusative Case

The second case is called the accusative case. It applies to nouns that operate as objects in verbal sentences, and all adjectives that modify them. In the following sentences, the accusative nouns and adjectives are underlined in the following examples:

1. *gabalna at-talibu al-jadeed.* We met the new student.
2. *akal al-walad tufahatn sagheerh.* The boy ate a small apple.
3. *akalat okhtuho burtugalatn kabeerah.* His sister ate a big orange.
4. *shahtu al-haadeth.* I saw the accident.

In the above examples, it is understood that the underlined nouns and adjectives express a relationship in the accusative case. They are *at-talibu al-jadeed* - the new student, *tufahatn sagheerh* - a small apple, *burtugalatn kabeerah* - a big orange, and *al-haadeth*- the accident.

The Genitive Case

The third case is called the genitive case. It utilizes nouns that occur after a preposition, and to nouns that occur as second nouns in *idafa* constructions, and all adjectives that modify them.

In the following sentences, the nominative nouns and adjectives are underlined:

1. *nahnu mn sana'a al-gademah.* We are from old Sana'a City.
2. *ana adruso fi jaamea'a sagheerah.* I study at a small university.
3. *ghurfat al-awlad akber mn ghurfat al-banat.* The boys' room is bigger than the girls' room.

It is essential to comprehend the underlined adjectives and nouns which are in the genitive case because they are associated with preposition.

Generally the sentence in Arabic has many diverse faces in analysis, such as the sentence located as **object**, the sentence located as **adverbial**, and the sentence located as **adjective**. The following sentences are instances of the sentence located as adjective.

Tahadatha fi al-hafl khateeb lesanhu faseeh. In the celebration, an orator of eloquent tongue spoke. It is needed to comprehend that *khateeb* - the orator - is a nominative subject, *lesanhu* – tongue - is a second subject *mubtada*, and *faseeh* - eloquent - is the object *khobar* of the second subject. The sentence that is formed of the second subject (*mubtada*) and its object (*khobar*) is in place of **nominative adjective**.

sametu mughanian sauteho jameel. I listened to a singer of magnificent sound. In this sentence, *mughanian* – singer - is an accusative object of the first part of the sentence, *sauteho* – sound - is a second nominative subject (*mubtada*) and its (*khobar*) is *jameel* – magnificent - which is also accusative. The sentence that is formed of (*mubtada* and *khobar*) is in place of **accusative adjective**.

taskun Lila fi madinatun jaoha jameel. Lila dwells in a city of gorgeous climate. In this example, *madinatun* – city - is a genitive noun, *jaoha* – climate - is a second nominative subject (*mubtada*), and *jameel* – gorgeous - is the nominative (*khabar*). The sentence which is formed of the (*mubtada* and *khabar*) is in place of **Genitive Adjective**.

In Arabic, there are several, taken for granted, sentences known as famous expressions such as the sentences after indefinite to be adjective and those which come after definite words to be adverbials. Nevertheless, some of the old grammarians do not estimate it an absolute rule but it is conditioned with some rules. They declare that if the affirmative sentence is associated with a sheer-indefinite, the sentence is an adjective but if the sentence is connected with a sheer-definite, it is an adverbial. However, if the sentence took place after not sheer-definite or not sheer-indefinite, then it is either an adjective or an adverb. With all this, it can happen on the condition that there is no exception to avoid making the sentence adjective or adverb. An example of the sheer-indefinite is the following sentence:

raiitu taalbn yagraau. I saw a student reading. The sentence of *yagraau* – reading - is located as an accusative adjective. The following example shows the sheer definite:

raiitu Sameerah tagraau. I saw Sameerah reading. The sentence *tagraau* - reading - is in place of adverb of *Sameerah*. The not-sheer indefinite is exemplified by these two instances:

1. *raiitu mutaliman mujedan yagraau.* I saw an assiduous learner reading.

2. raiitu *taalbo e'lm yagraau*.
reading.

I saw a scholar of knowledge

The sentence of *yagraau* – reading - in the examples can be analyzed as adjective or adverb because it is placed after not-sheer indefinite. The indefinite is specialized in **describing and modifying** as shown in the first sentence and by **adding** in the second sentence.

The not-sheer definite is presented in the following example:

Sameer methlu al-asad jara'atohu aseelah. Sameer is like the lion, his braveness is original. The sentence of *jara'atohu aseelah* - his braveness is original - occurred after definite, *al-asad* - the lion - which is gender definite. Grammarians have noted that gender definite is as close as the indefinite. So, the sentence can be conjugated as adjective.

Section 3. Comparison and Problems Comparison

English and Arabic are two international languages irrespective of that English is wider spread globally than Arabic. Both of these two languages, like other languages, depend on grammatical rules in which any language is governed and controlled. In any language the letter, the sound, or even the word are of less important to be called a language. A language is the meaningful thought or complete idea which can occur only through sentences. The sentences are the composition and formation of such words but they – the words – should follow a system or systems. The system of a language is its usage of certain rules which we call **grammar**.

Adjectives in both languages, English and Arabic, have almost the same meaning that they describe, modify, or qualify

the related noun. However, the function of adjectives in English is different from the function of adjectives in Arabic. The adjective in English is an independent part of the speeches where it can come alone in a sentence describing the noun or pronoun but after the verb like the following example: **The girl is beautiful.** *Beautiful* is an independent adjective followed the verb *be* to describe the noun *the girl*. Besides, the adjective in English can precede the noun in either the subject or the object. The two instances clarify the point:

1. The **charming** girl is Susan.
2. Susan is a **charming** girl.

In the previous two sentences, we clearly understand that **charming** is an adjective modifying the noun *girl* in its two positions, as subject and as object.

The adjective in Arabic is dependable. It is not an independent part of the speeches. As it is mentioned earlier, the **Parts of Speech** in Arabic are three. They are the **Noun**, the **Verb**, and the **Preposition**. The adjective depends on modifying a noun and follows it in all the grammatical cases. There are two kinds of adjectives in Arabic, **Real or Fact Adjective** and **Causal Adjective** but there are several types of adjectives in English such as;

1. **Adjectives of Quality** modify nouns.
2. **Adjectives of Quantity** specify a concerned noun.
3. **Adjectives of Number** enlighten definite or indefinite.
4. **Demonstrative Adjectives** point out nouns.
5. **Interrogative Adjectives** interrogate.
6. **Distributive Adjectives** point out one from two or more.
7. **Possessive Adjectives** demonstrate ownership.

8. **Adjectives of Comparison** three degrees of comparison; positive, comparative, and superlative.
9. **Adjective Phrases** initiate with a preposition.
10. **Nouns used as adjectives** nouns used as adjectives.
11. **Emphasizing Adjectives** accentuate the meaning using own and very.
12. **Proper Adjectives** derived from proper noun.

The adjectives in English have many confusing aspects that some of them can be used adjectives in a case, and pronouns in another case. Moreover, several English words can be used in both cases, as adjectives and as adverbs. The meaning should be understood through the context of the sentence.

The differences between English Adjective and Arabic adjective

(1) Agreement:

Adjectives in **English** have the same form for singular and plural, masculine and feminine nouns. They don't change such as:

a good girl good girls

a good boy good boys

In Arabic, however, adjectives agree with nouns in gender, case, and number but they are changeable such as:

walad *thakee* (smart boy)

bentun *thakiah* (smart girl)

awlad *athkia'* (smart boys)

(2) Position:

Adjectives in English may be located either before the noun (subject or object) or after the verb like: a happy man Yahya became rich. Yahya is a happy man.

In Arabic, adjectives come after the noun or the pronoun like:

kholod jameelah. Kholod is a beautiful girl.

khaled waseem. Khaled is handsome.

Hunna *jameelat* They are beautiful.

(3) Comparison:

Adjectives in English can be compared in the following ways:

He is tall. positive

She is younger than you. comparative

He is the shortest boy. Superlative

In Arabic, comparative adjective have a base form called **elative** measure. Comparative adjectives express indefinite meanings such as:

kabeer akbaar al-akbar

(4) Degree:

Both English and Arabic can be modified by degree modification such as:

English: too small It is nice too.

Arabic:

ennahu jameel jedan (it is nice too).

The adjective in Arabic has advantages that the speaker makes efforts to attain a benefit or more such as: **Specifying, Clarifying, Praise, Dispraise, and Confirmation.** They are two main adjectives in Arabic; **Fact or Real Adjectives** and **Causal Adjectives.**

The **Real Adjectives** are divided into **Singular Adjective, Sentence Adjective, and Semi-sentence Adjective.** The Singular Adjectives are also divided into **Demonstrative Adjectives, Relative Clause, and Number.**

Problems

The immense differences between Adjectives in English and Arabic may generate some kind of difficulties in which it is complicated for some learners of English to simply conquer the complexity and diversity of the adjectives in English. Learners of English need to apprehend the numerous sides of similarities and differences among all the above-mentioned different kinds of adjectives in English. Not only that but also they have to be aware of the exceptions in the usages of adjectives in comparison with nouns. Moreover, they need to be familiar with the similarities and differences between adjectives and adverbs in English and not to combine between them.

On the other hand, learners of Arabic may face several difficulties in understanding adjectives in Arabic because of the grammatical differences from English in gender, case, and number.

Section 4. Conclusion and Findings

1. With this result, we recognize that adjective in English is an independent part of the speeches in grammar in which it deals with noun. Adjectives in English are of different kinds and usage such as *Adjectives of Number, Adjectives of Quality, Adjectives of Quantity, Distributive Adjectives, Demonstrative Adjectives, Interrogative Adjectives, Possessive Adjectives, Adjectives of Comparison, Adjective Phrases, Nouns used as Adjectives, Emphasizing Adjectives* and *Proper Adjectives*.
2. Adjectives in Arabic are somehow not as simple and obvious as adjectives in English. They are not independent by themselves. The adjective – *NA'AT* or *SEFAH* - in Arabic is linked with the noun it describes. As it is mentioned earlier, adjectives are of two major categories; **Real Adjectives** and **Causal Adjectives**. The real adjectives constantly go before

the noun that they describe and they are of several branches like: **Singular Adjective**, **Semi-sentence Adjective**, and **Sentence Adjective**. The Causal Adjective is that type of adjectives which is linked to the noun but not directly. Both the **Real** and **Causal** Adjectives should follow their nouns in all cases; the nominative, the accusative, and the genitive. Adjectives moreover follow the nouns in gender such as singular, dual, or plural, and as feminine or masculine.

3. Nouns and adjectives that modify them have to agree with each other. Nouns and adjectives have to agree with each other in gender, number and definiteness. They should agree with each other in their three grammatical cases; the Nominative Case, the Accusative Case, and the Genitive Case. The adjectives perform a central role in describing, modifying, and qualifying the English sentences. Adjectives are independent part of the speeches in English grammar not as Arabic, which is dependent part, connected to its noun.

Recommendation

From such examination, it is understood that this task has dealt with a significant point which is the **Adjectives** in English and Arabic with their similarities, differences and difficulties. The study deals with the definitions first then it goes on a comparative investigation on the different types of adjectives in English and Arabic, showing the different aspects in the tow languages.

It is important to perceive that this study is not enough to cover all aspects and parts of Adjective in English and Arabic although it has shed the light on the subject matter. For that reason, it is recommended to advise enlarging the process of study and searching in the same field to enhance humanity with rational works in the same area because it is found that the study of such an issue is hitherto infrequent.

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