

A Contrastive Study on Certain Syntactic Aspects in English and Arabic

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One of the main undertakings of the youthful human being is to become familiar with the language of the general public into which the individual is conceived. Typically, it takes numerous years to obtain the dominance of language expected of mature adult. But, methods of studying languages are getting developed to help people to get more information about languages (whether their L1 or other languages they are interested in) with less effort and time. One of the methods is contrastive study. Studies of this kind help people with interest to know more about languages by seeing the differences and similarities between their elements. Moreover, a contrastive analysis of syntactic aspects of languages shows how languages share some universal syntactic properties, for example VP is seen to be universal, and, at the same time, how generating the constituents may vary substantially. The current research selects two important syntactic aspects, namely NP and VP, to investigate as they are seen to be two of the main constituents of the two languages studied, English and Arabic.

A description of each language's NP and VP system is provided starting from the English and ending with the Arabic. Later, a comparison is done to figure out the differences and the similarities between the two systems. Conclusions are stated at the end of the research.

1-Introduction

Syntax is the investigation of the manner by which expressions and sentences are organized out of words, as indicated by Andrews Radford (2004). Contrastive analysis (CA), on the other hand, is the study of a pair of languages to find similarities and differences between them. The current study seeks to conduct a syntactic investigation of some selected aspects of two languages within a contrastive linguistic method, thus it is concerned with the two definitions stated above, syntax and CA. As the globalization arises and as people's interest gets developed towards languages, providing information about how different languages build up their structures out of words gets to be necessary. CA studies of syntactic aspects of different languages provide such an information. The current study, specifically, tries to show how English and Arabic differ in their forms of noun phrases and verb phrases that they use in constructing their sentences. Also, it shows how the two languages share universal features such as having NPs and VPs in their language system. A study of this kind provides useful findings for number of people such as: (i) those who are interested in languages in general and English and Arabic in specific, (ii) learners of English language or Arabic language as a second language, (iii) teachers who seek to teach (Arabic or English) using comparative/contrastive methods, and finally (iv) researchers who are interested in studying the structures of the two languages meant. The current work follows the very simple method of conducting a contrastive analysis that is provided by James (1980). Thus, the study is done on two steps: 1. Providing description of each language separately, 2. Stating comparison of the descriptions. Finally, conclusions are given.

2- Contrastive Studies

Contrastive analysis (CA) is a sub discipline of linguistics concerned with the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities between them (Fisiak,1981:2) There are two types of contrastive studies: theoretical and applied, according to Fisiak (ibid). Theoretical contrastive studies give an exhaustive account of the differences and similarities between two or more languages, provide an adequate model for their comparison, and determine how and which elements are comparable, correspondence, etc. Within semantics and syntax, they deal with universal categories and the ways they are realized in contrasted language. Applied contrastive studies, on the other hand, are part of applied linguistics. Drawing on the findings of theoretical contrastive studies they provide a framework for the comparison of languages, selecting whatever information is necessary for a specific purpose, e.g. teaching, bilingual analysis, translation, etc. Applied contrastive studies are preoccupied with the problem of how a universal X, realized in language A as Y, is rendered in language B, and what may be the possible consequences of this for a given field of application. Another task of applied contrastive is the identification of probable areas of difficulty in another language. Applied contrastive studies deal with differences and similarities alike. Contrastive analysis (CA) is the technique associated with contrastive linguistics (which is a branch of linguistics seek to compare the sounds, grammars and/or vocabularies of two languages with the aim of describing the similarities and differences between them) and it may be defined as: a systematic comparison of selected linguistic features of two or more languages. CA, for James (1980:3), is a "linguistic enterprise aimed at producing inverted two valued typologies". He says that a CA is "always concerned with two languages and found on the assumption that languages can be compared". He, further, states his vision of CA studies saying that a CA

is done on two main steps: Firstly, making description for each language involved in the study, and, secondly, comparing the results of the description. He also asserts on two main points: (i) the steps must be in order, that is, description first and comparison second, and (ii) the same aspects must be tackled in each language in parallel.

3-Syntax and Syntactic Aspects

Syntax has to do with how words are put together to build phrases, with how phrases are put together to build clauses or bigger phrases, and with how clauses are put together to build sentences. In small and familiar situations, humans could communicate using single words and many gestures, particularly when dealing with other members of the same social grouping (nuclear family, extended family, clan and so on). But complex messages for complex situations or complex ideas require more than just single words; every human language has devices with which its speakers can construct phrases and clauses (Miller, 2002: xii) The current research examines English and Arabic phrase structures , specifically nouns phrases (NPs) and verb phrases (VPs). So, it deals with two selected syntactic aspects of the two languages involved.

4. English

English has a fixed word order. It is an SVO language. In SVO languages like English, two key movements take place in order to generate basic word order, specifically, NP (noun phrase)/DP (determiner phrase) movement and affix lowering. It should be noted that a language is parameterized as to whether it has verb raising or affix lowering Evidence from English suggests that affix lowering takes place from I to V (Pollock, 1989)

4.1 Noun Phrase in English

A noun phrase (NP) consists of a noun and all the elements (one or more) that belong to the noun and cluster around it. The main constituent of an NP is a noun which is the head of the phrase. Other elements that may surround it are the modifiers (Stageberg, 1981:187). In other words, it consists of a head which is a noun or a pronoun. It can be modified by different kind of modifiers (premodifiers or/and postmodifiers). Typically, the NP functions as the: subject, object, adverbial, complement of a subject or complement of a prepositional phrase. (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1992:59). In an NP, the head itself belongs to the open class system (nouns and pronouns) , whereas the elements that may surround and modify the head belongs to the close system items such as numerals , articles , and other post and predetermines like all. So, to cover the English NP, the head and modifiers need to be shown. Nouns in English, NP head, are of two main types:

1- **Proper noun:** is a name of a particular person, place, or thing who/which is usually unique. It is written in a capital letter whenever its position in the sentence (Maurer, 2000:105, also Quirk and Greenbaum, 1992).

2- **Common noun:** is “a name given in common to every person or thing of the same class or kind”. It is not written in a capital letter except when it comes at the beginning of a sentence. (Wren and Martin ,1990:5, also Quirk and Greenbaum, 1992). The following examples show the difference between common and proper nouns :

Proper	Common
Ali	boy
Firary	car
Iraq	country
Baghdad	city
Tikrit University	university

When classified into their particular details, common nouns can be divided into: count, noncount/mass, or both.:

1.**Count nouns:** they can be preceded by articles and some other determiners in forming NPs and have both singular and plural forms. Moreover, they are either concrete (student / students) or abstract (idea/ideas).

2.**Mass nouns:** they cannot be preceded by articles and have no plural form, e.g. fruit and traffic. Instead, they can be modified by much, little and some. Also, they can be either concrete (fruit) or abstract (education). Some concrete noun counts have particular plural form that may refer to either units or kinds of things such as three coffees.

3. Both: few nouns can be used as both count and noncount nouns, for example, cake, glass, egg etc. when they are referred to as separate items, they are treated as count nouns. In an English noun phrase, there can be determiners, quantifiers and modifiers, as well as a noun:

a Determiners: come before the noun, e.g. (a bomb / the result / this idea / my bag)

The determiners are the articles (a, the), demonstratives (this, that, these, those) and Possessives (e.g. my, your). They can be pre – post or central determiners according to their position.

b Quantifiers: also come before the noun, e.g. (a lot of money / two people/ every photo/ half the passengers) Quantifiers are a lot of, many, much, a few, every, each, all, most, both, half, some, any, no etc.

c. Modifiers: a noun can be modified by an adjective or by another noun., e.g. (Adjective: small bottles / the exact time - Noun: glass bottles /an emergency landing)

A prepositional phrase or adverb phrase can come after the noun and modify it, e.g. (the summer of 1978 / the people inside) (Eastwood, 1994:177)

Moreover, articles, which are forms of determiners, have three different references:

1. **Specific :** refers to one of a class thing and it is realized by the definite , indefinite and zero article, e.g. : the moon , the movie , a pen , this shirt
2. **Generic:** refers to a class or members representing a class and it is realized by definite, indefinite and zero article, e.g.: The poor, the flu, a bird, milk.
3. **Unique:** proper nouns are unique in their reference and no articles are used with them.

Typically, it is the context what specifies the type of reference that the article has, for instance:

I have a **bird (specific)**

A bird is a cute animal. (**generic**)

I saw **Ali (unique)**

An Ali is out (**Specific**)

4.2 Verb Phrase in English

A verb phrase (VP) in English is a phrase that is built round a verb. The verb, which belongs to the open class of words, is the head of the phrase. The head can be preceded by one or more linguistic elements e.g. "is playing", "will play". Thus, it can be said that verbs are of two types: simple and complex. The simple verb is the one that comes alone as in " He plays". The complex verb is the one that is attached by an element or more e.g. "He will play". (Eastwood ,2002 :4) Moreover, a VP is found in a sentence as that part of the predicate constituent that does not contain optional adverbials. (In many cases the predicate consists of a VP only.) . However, it may be useful to know that some linguistic works use the term in a different sense. Some use it in the sense of our 'predicate (constituent)', i. e. to refer to the sum of all those constituents of the clause that do not belong to the subject NP. Others use the term in a much narrower sense, to denote no more than the main verb and any auxiliaries accompanying it. Thus seen, the VP of Noor may have been cocking fish is may have been cocking (rather than may have been cocking a fish). The current study is concerned with the latter narrower sense of VP. (Declerck,2006 :15)

English VPs can be classified according to whether:

a- The verb is finite or non-finite:

1- Finite VP

A sentence that has only one VP is said to be containing a finite VP. So, a finite VP is one that can be the main verb of a sentence. It consists of either a present tense verb or a past tense. The following choices are available in the finite VPs:

Tense	- Past or present	- It worked, or It works
Modal	- Modal or not	- They could work, or They worked
Aspect	- Perfect or not	- It has worked, or It works
	- Continuous or not	- It was working or It works
Voice	- Passive or active	- It is gone, or It goes
Number	- Singular or plural	- He is / They are working.
Person	- 1 st or 2 nd or 3 rd	- I am / they are / he is working

2- Non-Finite VP

A non-finite VP consists of an infinitive, gerund or participle verb. e.g./

She kept working

She has to work

b- the verb is main or not :

1- **Lexical verbs:** are the main verbs in English. They form the head of a VP and can come in five different forms (work , works, working, worked)

2- **Auxiliary verbs or helping verbs :** are the elements that come with the main verb and they are of two types : primary (e.g. am , are , is , was , were, do , did , does , has , have , had) and modal (e.g. may m must , can , will)

In the VP, there is always a lexical verb. There may be one or more auxiliaries in front of it.

c- the verb is transitive or intransitive

1- **Transitive verbs:** are either nontransitive (has a direct object), ditransitive (has direct and indirect objects) or complex transitive (has object and object complement).

2- **Intransitive verbs:** no object e.g. Birds fly.

Another important point concerning VPs of English is that the interrogation, negation and proform are realized in the VP of a sentence. e.g.

She was working – She was not working – Was she working?

They have been working – They have not been working- Have they been working?

We will work together – We will not work together – Will we work together?

5- Arabic

Arabic is one of the Semitic languages. It is known for its rich morphology and flexible word order. Talking about the sentence structure of Arabic, it has two types of sentences; verbal sentence *الجملة الفعلية* and nominal sentence *الجملة الاسمية*. Nominal sentences are also called copular or equational sentences. The prototypical of verbal sentence starts with just a verb (or VP) conjugated with pronominal subject. The classical form of Arabic verbal sentence is (Verb-Subject-Object) or (VSO). Whereas, nominal sentence has two different forms; equational or (verb less) sentence, and sentence starts with subject followed by verb. (Al-Azizi ,2018 :22) Nominal sentences have two parts: a subject (which is, in Arabic, called *المسند* (اليه) and a predicate (*المسند*). When the nominal sentence is about being, i.e. if the verb of the sentence is 'to be' in English, this verb is not given in Arabic. Arabic morphology is based on roots and patterns through which words are derived. It is an inflectional one.

A stem consisting of a base root and a pattern which defines its semantic and syntactical role may compose an Arabic word. Moreover, as it is an inflectional language, affixes and clitics are often attached to words. Affixes include inflectional markers. They are used to identify tense, gender, and number. Clitics, on the other hand, include prepositions, conjunctions, determiners, and possessive pronouns.

The inflectional nature of Arabic language can be illustrated by comparing the simple form of the verb with the Arabic causative and the Arabic reciprocal or with any derived form. For example:

(i) He wrote a letter — كتب رسالةً - VO

(ii) He made him write a novel – كَتَبَهُ رسالةً - VO

(iii) He corresponded with him - كَاتَبَهُ - V (Ali & Abdin ,2011:159)

Moubaidin et al (2014) states some of the characteristics of and/or challenges that can be found in Arabic language. Those are:

(1) In Arabic , it is usual to find each of VSO, SVO and VOS word orders so it is relatively free word order language as in: (1a) *قرأ المعلمَ الدرسَ* VSO (1b) *المعلمَ قرأ الدرسَ* SVO (1c) *قرأ الدرسَ المعلمَ* VOS . All of these are grammatical and imply the same meaning (The teacher read the lesson).

(2) Arabic is a clitic or clitic-directed language. Clitics are morphemes that have the syntactic characteristics of a word but are morphologically bound to other words (e.g., coordinating conjunctions, the definite article, many prepositions and particles, and a class of pronouns that attach themselves either to the start or end of words) as in: *أتينا* (we came) which is made up of the verb (*اتى*) and the clitic *ينا*

(3) "Arabic is a pro-drop language. The subject can be omitted leaving any syntactic parser with the challenge to decide whether or not there is an omitted pronoun in the subject position".

(4) "Homographs of words with/without the same pronunciation are often produced. They have different meanings and usually different POS. For example, the word *ذهب* (can be interpreted as *thahab-a* (verb) meaning went or *thahab-un* (noun) meaning gold".

5.1 Noun Phrase in Arabic

The head of Arabic NP is a noun or pronoun, and sometimes an adjective with nominal reference. Arabic nouns are of two main types:

1. **Proper** *اسم علم*: it is a name referring to an entity, person, place or thing in particular. It can be simple as *علي* or complex as *البيت الابيض* The White House.

2. **Common**: اسم جنس it is either count (girl-بنت) or noncount (water ماء). Common noun nouns can be either singular (girl-بنت), dual (بنتان- two girls) or plural (بنات- girls). The plural form itself is of several types : (i) sound : formed by adding –uun- suffix e.g. معلمون , (ii) broken : formed by adding –aat- suffix e.g. معلمات , (iii) collective : اسم جمع قوم – رجل a completely different form, (iv) plural generic : حمامه – حمام , (v) singular generic: زيت زيوت which no dual form for this type, and (x) plural of plural: ايدي- ايدي

Moreover, common nouns are said to be either adjective origin (اسم صفة) e.g. حكيم or noun origin (اسم غير صفة) e.g. كتاب. The latter common noun is subdivided into concrete (اسم عين) e.g. حجر and abstract (اسم معنى) e.g. صبر

Arabic has only one article which is "ال المعرفة". So, a noun in Arabic can be either definite (معرف) or indefinite (غير معرف) (without (ال المعرفة). Indefiniteness, instead, is marked by nunation (التنوين). Moreover, Arabic Noun phrases contain (possessive) complements. They can also contain a number of other modifiers, such as adjectives, numerals, quantifiers and relative clauses. As Fassi Fehri (1999) shows, most of these modifiers (with the exception of relative clauses) can occur both before the head noun and after it in Arabic, although the unmarked position differs from modifier to modifier. There is a remarkable difference between the postnominal and the prenominal modifiers, (Brustad, 2000:112-140) However: prenominal modifiers are heads that take the noun as a complement, whereas postnominal modifiers are full projections that appear in specifier positions in the noun phrase

Nouns can have three references:

1. **Specific** : لام العهد : refers to an particular example of a class or group and it is realized by the use of ال التعريف , e.g. البيت
2. **Generic** : لام الجنس : refers to all members of a class of a member that stands for the whole class and it is realized by ال التعريف , e.g. الاسود , الحياة
3. **Unique** : proper nouns are unique in their refers even if no definite article or nunation is used e.g. العراق , عراق (Longobardi, 2001)

5.2 Verb Phrase in Arabic

Arabic VP (العبارة الفعلية) is not so much different in definition from the English one. It is a phrase that contains a verb as it is head. But, no other elements (auxiliaries as in English) are attached to VPs in Arabic. However, Arabic scholars see VPs in their language in two ways: some consider the VP as only the verb part and the others consider the whole predicate part (المسند) as the VP. For example: كتب علي الدرس As previously mentioned, Arabic has two types of sentences: verbal (الفعلية) and nominal (الاسمية). The first simple form for Arabic verbal sentence starts with such a verb in one of tense mood followed by non-pronominal subject and object in its left, the verb agrees with the subject in person and gender. Taking example of sentence introduced by Lambek (2011) as (كتب احمد الدرس) or (ahmad wrote the lesson). Here, the sentence is verbal sentence starts with verb (كتب or wrote) in past tense-mood as followed by subject (احمد) on its left and (الدرس or the lesson) on its left. In Arabic, the previous phrase may be written as nominal phrase where the subject comes before the verb in form of (SVO) e.g. احمد كتب الدرس. This structure considered to be special case of nominal sentence where the predicate of nominal sentence is a verbal sentence. Moreover, a verb, which is the head of VP, is classified according to whether it is:

a- Basic or Derived :

1- **Basic (Almujarad – المجرد)** : it has two sub-types

a- Trilateral (الثلاثي): consists of three consonants or radicals. فعل is its generic form. It has three subtypes according to whether the second radical has the vowels /a/, /i/ or /u/ (الفتحة, الكسرة, الضمة)

b- Quadrilateral (الرباعي): consists of four radicals. فعمل is its generic form. It has four subtypes: (i) reduplicative : the first two vowels are repeated (ii) verbs derived from nouns of more than three radicals (iii) verbs of blending : تلمذ from تلميذ (iv) verbs which are connected with others without certain rules e.g. خلب from خلبس , جم from جمهر

2- Derived (Almazeed – المزيد) :

(i) Derived from Trilateral: there are fifteen forms from the trilateral root. Some of the most common of them are : فاعل , فاعل , انفعال , تفاعل , تفاعل , استفعال , افعال

(ii) Derived from quadrilateral : three are derived from the quadrilateral root: افعلل , افعلل , افعلل

b- Transitive or intransitive

1- **Transitive verbs**: are of three types (i) montransitive (with one object) e.g. غبضت من علي , (ii) ditransitive: (two objects) e.g. سميته ابا عمر , and tri-transitive (three objects) e.g. ظن علي عمراً ابا

2- Intransitive verbs :no object is required and they are in the nominative case e.g. قام علي
 Arabic verbs tell us the tense of the sentence through the internal change of the word, i.e. morphological changes. They are rich of morphological changes Moreover, verbs in Arabic vary according to several considerations which are listed as follows:

Tense/aspect	perfect ماضي or imperfect مضارع	-	كتبت الدرس / اكتب الدرس
Gender	male مذکر / female مؤنث	-	يكتب / تكتب الدرس
Number	singular مفرد / plural جمع / dual ثنائي	-	اكتب / تكتب / تكتبان الدرس
Person	first الاول / second الثاني / third الثالث	-	اكتب / اكتب / يكتب الدرس
Mood	inductive مرفوع , subjunctive منصوب	-	اكتب تكتب
	Jussive مجزوم , imperative امر , emphatic توكيد		
Voice	active or passive	-	كتبتُ الدرس / كُتبت الدرس

6- Contrast

The two languages chosen to contrast their NP and VP structures are highly interesting languages since they are spoken by a big number of people, and countries. Arabic is a Semitic language which makes it so much different from English. However, similarities still may be found. Thus, in the current work, a list of the similarities will be presented first then a list of differences is stated. Finally a comment on deciding which language is more explicit than the other in its NP and/or VP with reasons is going to be stated.

The main similarities between the two languages are as follows:

First: NP in English and Arabic

1- In both languages, NP is a phrase that has a noun, pronoun or an adjective with nominal reference as its head. For example :

English: Ali / He / The boy/ The poor

Arabic: علي / الولد / هو / الفقير

2- NP takes the subject , object and complement position in both languages

English: The boy is sad / I saw the boy.

Arabic: الولد حزين / رايت الولد

3- NPs in both languages can be simple or complex. That is, it can be one word (the head only) or more than one word (one head or more and/or other elements.)

4- The NP system in both languages accepts modifications of different sorts: articles, determiners, etc.

5- In both languages, nouns are of two classes: proper اسم علم and common اسم جنس. The proper, in both, can be counted into a common noun with a change in its reference.

6- Common nouns are also subdivided in both languages into : concrete اسم عين and abstract اسم معنى

7- Definite articles in English (the) and Arabic (ال التعريف) show the same grammatical function.

8- Definiteness and indefiniteness are characteristics of nouns in both languages.

9- Nouns have three different kinds of references in each language : specific reference , generic reference and unique reference (لام العهد , لام الجنس , هـ)

10- In both languages, unique reference is realized with or without articles. It is for proper nouns. For example : علي – علي

Second: VP in English and Arabic

1. In both languages, grammarians discuss whether the VP is only the verb part and the elements attached to it (modifiers or auxiliaries) or it is everything in a sentence other than the subject (the whole predicate). However, the current study considers VP in both languages as the phrase that has a verb as its head and may or may not be attached an element or more.

2. In both languages, there is a distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs, thus transitive and intransitive VPs.

3. VPs are the parts that control the tense of the sentences in both languages.

The differences, on the other hand, that are seen in the two languages, English and Arabic, are as follows:

First: NP in English and Arabic

1. English grammarians see the noun or the pronoun as the basic head of an NP in which, in most cases, adjectives are not considered basic as they are very rarely occurring case. In Arabic, on the other hand, NP heads of common noun types are divided into اسم غير صفة (adjectives with nominal reference) and اسم صفة (nouns). So, another contrast arises in which commons in English are only nouns whereas in Arabic they are of two types.

2. In English, NPs that function as the subject in affirmative sentences can only come at one specific position which is at the beginning of a sentence since English Language is a fixed order language (SVO). In Arabic , on the other hand , a subject NP can come at different positions as the system of Arabic word order allows for different options (SVO , VSO)
3. Modification in Arabic is one of pre and/or post modification e.g. هذه السيارة, السيارة هذه, سيّارتي, هذه السيارة, سيّارتي, whereas in English it is based mainly on premodification, e.g. The car , my car, this car.
4. Concerning the head of the NP, nouns in Arabic show three kinds of plurality which are (singular كتاب – dual كتابان – and plural كتب), whereas in English there are only two forms of pluralization (singular: book, and plural books). Moreover, the pluralization of nouns in Arabic is more complex than in English . Different sort of pluralization is seen in Arabic (see p.8)
5. Arabic has only one definite article which is (ال التعريف) whereas English has one definite article (the), two indefinite articles (a/an) and a zero article. Also, the definite article in Arabic is a prefix whereas the one in English is a separate word.
6. Indefiniteness is expressed differently in each language. Whereas in Arabic it is expressed by the absence of the ((ال التعريف) definite article or nunation, In English it is expressed by the presence of the indefinite articles a/an, zero article or some. For example :
English: a book, an eye, books, some milk.
Arabic: كتاب, كتاب
7. For specific reference, English expresses specific reference by the use of definite, indefinite and zero article, whereas Arabic depends only on (ال التعريف) the definite article to realize specific references.
8. General references in English are realized by definite articles, indefinite articles and zero articles. In Arabic, on the other hand, it is realized by (ال التعريف) referring to a whole class of thing.
9. In English , the reference of a noun can be changed according to the context (see. P.5)

Second: VP in English and Arabic

1. Arabic VP are simple, whereas English VPs can be simple or complex. For example
English: Ali writs (simple –one element – writes), Ali has been writing (complex – more than one element – has+been+writing).
Arabic: يكتب علي
2. In English, verbs, which are the head of VPs, are either main (e.g. write) or auxiliary (e.g. has, is) whereas in Arabic there is no auxiliaries.
3. Arabic Verbs are either basic or derived; English has no such distinction.
4. English verbs can only take five form (write , writes, writing, wrote, written) , whereas the forms that an Arabic verb can take is numerous , can be more than twenty , e.g. : , يكتب , كتبت , تكتب, كتبن , كتبنا , كتب , يكتبان , يكتبون , تكتبون etc.
5. The grammatical categories that an English verb has are :tense , aspect, mood, voice, person and number, whereas Arabic verbs have all these in addition to gender , e.g.:
English: He write / She write (no gender distinction)
Arabic: هو يكتب / هي تكتب (gender distinction)
6. Tense in Arabic verbs is realized by prefixes (يكتب و كتب)while in English it is realized by suffixes (played)

Finally, the contrast (the similarities and differences highlighted) shows that, generally, Arabic language is more explicit than English in its building of phrases, namely NPs and VPs. But, considering the specific details, a variation may be seen. That is, Arabic is more explicit in some points than English and vice versa. For instance , Arabic NPs are more explicit than those of English when considering the different positions that they can fill according to the word order system of the languages when the NP is the subject of sentence (see difference n.2). Also, the pluralization of nouns in Arabic is richer than that of English. On the other hand, English is found to be more explicit in its definite/indefinite system of articles. English has more articles than Arabic so it allows for more options in expressing definiteness or indefiniteness.

Concerning VPs, Arabic VPs are clearly more explicit than those of English. The former has more forms for the same verb than English, and it is affected by one more grammatical category than English (that is, gender).

7- Conclusions

The current research has arrived at the followings:

1. Though languages differ in their essence, systems and lot of dimensions, there are mostly some shared universal features between them. That is, languages have differences and share similarities as well.
2. Arabic is found to be more explicit in its NP and VP systems and language structure as a whole.
3. English is more explicit in its indefiniteness system as it has two indefinite articles (a/an) whereas Arabic lacks such articles.
4. The NPs and the VPs are the two main components of sentence structure in both languages.

8-References

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