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A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF THE VERB SYSTEMS
OF ENGLISH AND ARABIC

by

Elham Al-Saleemi

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in Applied Linguistics with special reference to
Teaching English as a Foreign language in the
Department of English Language at Durham University

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for their moral support and encouragement during the period of my study in Durham.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my newly-met friends in Durham and to my old friends in Kuwait for standing by my side at all times which enabled me to produce this dissertation.

ABSTRACT

The present dissertation is an exhaustive attempt to give a detailed contrastive study of the verb systems of English and Arabic in order to determine the differences and similarities between the two verb systems.

Chapter one discusses contrastive analysis in general: its definitions, the two bases of contrastive analysis ie theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics, the different approaches to contrastive analysis and contrastive analysis contribution to language teaching.

Chapter two is a detailed description of the English verb systems. It describes the English verb according to tense, aspect and mood. Chapter three is a detailed description of the Arabic verb systems. This chapter describes the Arabic verb according to tense, aspect and mood. Chapter four is a detailed contrastive study of the two verb systems. Chapter five specifies how a universal category is realised in the contrasted languages.

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	i
DEDICATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
<u>CHAPTER 1:</u> CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS	6
1.1 What is Constrastive Analysis	7
1.2 Theoretical CA	9
1.2.1 Levels of Language	10
1.2.2 Grammatical Categories	11
1.2.3 Models of Description	12
A The Structural Model	12
B Transformational - Generative Grammar (T-GG)	14
1.3 Applied CA	14
1.4 CA and Language Teaching	17
<u>CHAPTER 2:</u> THE ENGLISH VERB SYSTEM	21
2.1 Typology	21
2.2 Tense, Aspect and Mood	24
2.2.1 The Present Tense	26
2.2.2 The Past Tense	29
2.2.3 The Future	32
2.4 Conclusion	35

CONTENTS (contd)

<u>CHAPTER 3:</u>	THE ARABIC VERB SYSTEM	36
3.1	Typology	36
3.2	Tense, Aspect, and Mood	39
3.2.1	The Perfect	40
3.2.2	The Imperfect	43
3.3	Conclusion	48
<u>CHAPTER 4:</u>	A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF THE VERB SYSTEMS OF ENGLISH AND ARABIC	49
4.1	The Present Tense	52
4.2	The Past Tense	58
4.3	The Future	64
4.4	Conclusion	67
<u>CHAPTER 5:</u>	LANGUAGE UNIVERSALS	72
5.1	Conclusion	78
<u>REFERENCES</u>		80

INTRODUCTION

Contrastive analysis (CA) is a branch of linguistics which seeks to compare two languages in order to describe the similarities and differences between them. Such a description may be carried out for its own sake, ie for the sake of comparing two languages, or its purpose may be to contribute to foreign language teaching. In this dissertation I intend to carry out a constrastive analysis (CA) or a contrastive study of verb systems of English and Arabic for its own sake.

Chapter one discusses contrastive analysis (CA) in general terms. First, it discusses what is CA in relation to its broad definitions. The chapter then turns to another aspect which is the two bases of CA: the theoretical basis and the applied basis. The chapter explains how CA borrows certain features from theoretical linguistics such as the descriptive models in which the two languages are compared. Chapter one also discusses the different approaches in which CA can be executed such as the structural approach which looks at the surface structure of the languages compared. The second model of description discussed in this chapter is the Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) introduced by Chomsky in 1957. This model claims that all languages have two structures: a surface structure and a deep structure which are related by sets of transformation rules.

After discussing the theoretical basis of CA, chapter one moves to another stage or section in which it discusses the applied basis of CA in relation to its psychological component. This section concentrates on the psychological foundation that CA draws most heavily upon, which is the



Transfer Theory. This theory states that if a learner attempts to speak a second language (L2) he/she transfers the features of his/her first language (L1) to the second language (L2). Finally, chapter one discusses briefly how CA can contribute to language teaching. This section discusses how CA can help in the arrangement of the syllabus.

Chapter two is a detailed description of the English verb system. In this dissertation I am mainly concerned with the grammatical category "tense" therefore I am concerned with the finite verbs and not infinite verbs. Finite verbs are groups of verbs that require tenses and which also require a subject of the category: I, he, we they, etc. The chapter describes the English verb system according to tense aspect and mood. Tense refers to whether the verb is in the present tense or the past tense, aspect refers to whether the verb is progressive or perfective and mood refers to whether the verb is indicative or subjunctive. This chapter starts with the description of the unmarked form of the English verb which is the simple present form. Then, the chapter moves to the description of the marked form of the English verb which is the past form. It should be noted that this description of the English verb system is carried out through the structural model of description.

Chapter three is a detailed description of the Arabic verb system. Arabic here refers to Modern Standard Arabic (M.S.A) which is found today in newspapers, magazines, books, the radio and public speeches. It is worth mentioning here that M.S.A is the form of Arabic that has descended from Classical Arabic which was used in the Koran and old Arabic Literature. This chapter also describes the Arabic verb system according to tense, aspect and mood. Tense refers to whether the verb is in the past or the

present, aspect refers to whether the activity is complete (perfect) or incomplete (imperfect), and mood refers to whether the imperfect form of the verb is indicative, subjunctive or jussive. This chapter starts the description of the Arabic verb system by first describing the unmarked form of the Arabic verb which is the perfect form of the verb. The chapter then moves to the description of the marked form of the Arabic which is the imperfect form of the verb. The description of the Arabic verb system is also carried out through the structural model.

Chapter four is the actual contrast between the two verb form systems. The contrast will be carried out according to form and meaning. Forms refers to the grammatical structure or construction of the verb; ie suffixes and auxiliaries which in turn will involve tense, aspect and mood. It is worth noting here that these three categories form the grammatical structure of the verb. Meaning refers to the message conveyed by the verb form construction, in other words, meaning refers to the function of the grammatical construction of the verb. The grammatical construction of the verb usually conveys three distinct meanings: factual, theoretical and hypothetical. Chapter four discusses how English utilises these verb forms in expressing meanings and whether or not MSA utilises the same verb form in order to express the same meaning. After discussing the English verb forms and how they are rendered in Arabic, the chapter goes on to discuss the other functions of the Arabic verb system and sees how these functions and meanings are rendered in English.

Chapter five investigates how a universal category is realised in the contrasted languages. It looks at the grammatical features that are common in the two languages.

The system employed in this dissertation is similar to that employed internationally (IPA) except for a few modifications. Therefore, it is necessary to give the symbols that are going to be used throughout the dissertation:

- [b]: voiced bilabial stop
- [t]: voiceless unaspirated dental stop
- [t̪]: voiceless interdental fricative
- [j]: voiced alveopalatal fricative
- [ħ]: voiceless pharyngeal fricative
- [x]: voiceless velar fricative
- [d]: voiced dental stop
- [d̪]: voiced interdental fricative
- [r]: voiced alveolar flap
- [z]: voiced alveolar fricative
- [s]: voiceless alveolar fricative
- [ʃ]: voiceless alveopalatal fricative
- [S]: voiceless velarised fricative
- [D]: voiced dental velarised stop
- [T]: voiceless dental velarised stop
- [Ð]: voiced velarised interdental fricative
- [ʁ]: voiced pharyngeal fricative
- [ʔ]: voiceless glottal stop
- [ḡ]: voiced velar fricative
- [f]: voiceless labio-dental fricative
- [q]: voiceless unaspirated uvular stop
- [K]: voiceless unaspirated velar stop
- [l]: voiced alveolar lateral

[m]: voiced bilabial nasal
[n]: voiced alveolar nasal
[h]: voiceless glottal fricative
[i]: high front close unrounded
[ɪ]: high back open unrounded
[ā]: low front close unrounded
[a]: mid central close unrounded
[ū]: high back close rounded
[u]: high back open rounded

CHAPTER ONE

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

There are three different kinds of comparisons each yielding different but important data. The first kind of comparison is what is known as interlingual comparison. This kind of comparison supplies us with data about the common core and the relative centrality of the various linguistic items in the target language (TL).

The second kind of comparison is the one I am concerned with in this dissertation. This kind of comparison is most commonly known as contrastive analysis or contrastive studies. It yields an account of the differences between the first language (L1) and the second language (L2), and it predicts learning problems.

The third kind of comparison is what is called error analysis (EA). It is concerned with the languages of the learner at some particular point in his/her course with the Target language (TL). It is said that error analysis and contrastive analysis complement each other. It is also believed that error analysis acts as a supplement to contrastive analysis. The latter discovers the differences between L1 and L2 and predicts that there will be learning problems which will entail the production of errors. The former studies the nature of these errors and thereby confirms or rejects the prediction of contrastive analysis.

1.1 What is Contrastive Analysis?

There are different terms that refer to the same thing. These terms are: comparative descriptive linguistics, linguistic confrontation and contrastive comparison. However, the term most commonly used is contrastive analysis, or contrastive studies. It implies that two languages or more have been described and analysed. Moreover, as the word contrast implies it is concerned with differences between languages rather than similarities. In other words, the main purpose of contrastive analysis is to give a detailed description of the differences between the languages compared.

The most well known definition of CA is introduced by Fisiak (198:1):

'Contrastive linguistics may roughly be defined as a subdiscipline 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.'

CA is designed to determine the difficulties and problems that an L1 speaker encounters when learning a L2. CA also anticipates errors rendered in learning L2 and helps to solve them.

I do not claim that CA predicates and solves all errors and problems encountered when learning L2. The value and importance of CA lies in its ability to indicate potential areas of interference which is the chief source and the most important source of errors but not the only source.

In determining the differences between the languages compared and difficulties encountered by L2 learners, CA can contribute to language

teaching because it has been proven that it is of great value to the language teacher and textbook writer. I will return to this point in the last section of this chapter.

Now, I turn to the question of whether CA is a part of pure linguistics or a part of applied linguistics. There are some linguists like James (1980: 7) who believes that CA is a part of applied linguistics because it draws on other scientific disciplines such as psychology. James (1980: 7) says:

'CA is assigned to a science of applied linguistics for two reasons: first, that is different from pure linguistics in drawing on other scientific discipline; and secondly, because linguistics is the science it draws most heavily upon.'

Other linguists like Fisiak (1981:2) claim that there are two types of CA; one is theoretical or pure linguistics, while the other type is applied linguistics.

I personally, tend to believe that CA is not pure theoretical linguistics nor pure applied linguistics. In other words CA is not 100% pure linguistics, nor is it 100% applied linguistics; it is 50% pure linguistics and 50% applied linguistics. To put it in another way, CA is 50% pure or theoretical linguistics in the sense that it borrows from pure or theoretical linguistics its framework in which description of the two languages is executed. It also borrows from pure linguistics the model in which the two languages are compared.

CA is 50% applied linguistics in the sense that it draws on the findings of theoretical linguistics in order to select the information needed for

specific purposes such as teaching, bilingual analysis or translation. CA is also applied in the sense that the data gathered can be applied to language teaching.

To sum up, there is only one kind of CA which is based on both theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics.

1.2 Theoretical CA:

Theoretical CA describes the structures and systems of the languages compared in order to determine the similarities and the differences between them. Theoretical CA also provides an adequate model for the comparison of these languages in order to determine which elements of the two languages can be contrasted.

Theoretical CA is language independent. It does not investigate how a given category present in one language is presented in the other language. Instead, it investigates how a certain category is presented in both languages and whether they are similar or different. And as Fisiak (1981:2) puts it:

'They do not investigate how a given category present in language A is presented in language B. Instead, they look for the realisation of a universal category X in both A and B.'

It should be noted that theoretical CA was first established by the structuralists and more specifically by Fries and Lado.

As I said earlier CA borrows its framework from theoretical linguistics. CA describes the two languages according to this linguistic framework.

And as Gleason (1968: 27 -38) puts it:

'Before we can contrast two languages, we need to establish a general framework within which both languages can be analysed; only then can we effectively compare the two languages and note the contrasts between them.'

Language description is usually executed according to three methods that is: levels of language, grammatical categories and models of description.

1.2.1 Levels of Language:

The descriptive framework of CA which is originally borrowed from theoretical linguistics is usually executed according to the four levels of language which are:

- a) phonology, where the description of the two languages is executed according to their sound systems.
- b) lexis, where the description of the two languages is executed according to the vocabulary of each language.
- c) morphology, where the description of the two languages is executed according to their morphological rules and morphemes.
- d) syntax, where the description of the two languages is executed according to their sentence structure and their different elements.
This level is also known as the grammatical level of language.

It should be noted that in order to achieve a full description of language one has to proceed through the above mentioned arrangement. This implies that one has to start with the phonological level before one starts with the lexical level, and one should describe the morphological level before one moves to the syntactic level. This is because these levels are

arranged according to priority and therefore, one has to start with the level that has more priority.

1.2.2. Grammatical Categories:

CA is theoretical in the sense that it utilises the grammatical categories in the description of the languages compared. It should be mentioned here that all languages have for fundamental categories which are: unit, structure, class and system. These categories are universal and sufficient as a basis for the description of any language.

Unit: the grammatical units in any language are arranged according to a scale rank. This scale is arranged in a descending manner ie, from the largest unit to the smallest unit, ie sentence - clause - phrase - word morpheme. In this case every unit consists of one or more instances of the next lower unit. The scale rank can also be arranged in an ascending manner, ie from the smallest unit to the largest.

Structure: structure is an arrangement of elements ordered in places. It accounts for the ways in which an occurrence of one syntactic unit can be made up of occurrences of the unit below it.

Class: it is the category that restricts the places in a structure to a certain unit. In Arabic, for example, the unit that usually is sentence initial is a verb. While in English the subject is the unit which is sentence initial as in the following examples:

naSaḥa -l-?b ibnahu.

Advise-past-3ps the father his son.

Advised (V) the father (S) his son (O).

The cat (S) caught (V) the mouse (O).

System: is the category that allows the speaker to select one particular term at one particular place on the chain in preference to other terms which are also possible at that place. For example, in a place where there should be a verb we have the entire freedom in choosing either the present or the past tense of the verb, progressive or perfective.

1.2.3 Models of Description:

CA is theoretical in the sense that it borrows its descriptive model from theoretical linguistics. Each model describes language in a different way. Therefore, the languages compared must be described through the same descriptive model. Since I am only concerned with the grammatical level of description; and more specifically I am concerned with verbs. I am going to discuss the descriptive model according to the grammatical level.

There are many grammatical models that have been utilised by CA such as the case grammar model introduced by Fillmore, the contrastive generative model etc. However, I am only going to discuss two models which are considered to be the most common and popular models utilised by CA. These grammatical models are the structural model and the Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG).

A The Structural Model:

This model was first introduced by Fries (1952:54:63). It is different from the conventional approaches in that it distinguishes two kinds of meaning in the total meaning of the utterance. First, the meanings of the

separate words of the utterance ie, the lexical meaning. For example, 'The man gave the girl the pen.' The lexical meanings of the utterance would tell us the sort of things the words refer to. Second, we can get from the whole sentence a range of meanings not expressed in the lexical items themselves. For example, the sentence will tell us who performed the action, to whom and when the action took place whether it is in the past, present or future. The sentence will also tell us that the information is given to us as a statement of fact, not something that is questioned, nor something that is requested. These range of meanings are known as the structural meanings of the sentence. Fries (1952:54:64) argues that the total linguistic meaning of any utterance consists of the lexical meanings of the separate words plus the structural meanings. He also says that no utterance is intelligible without both lexical meanings and structural meanings.

Structural meanings are fundamental and necessary meanings in every utterance and are signalled by specific and definite devices which are word order, function words (auxiliaries, articles and modifiers), affixation and intonation. These devices constitute the grammar of any language. To put it in other words, the grammar of a language consists of the devices that signal structural meaning.

In order to contrast between two languages using this approach the first thing an analyst has to do is to see if the two languages employ the same formal devices or not.

Contrastivists utilise this model in carrying out a contrastive description of the languages compared because according to Fries (1952:54:64) one

cannot speak or understand a language unless he knows the structural meanings. Fisiak (1981:3) also believes that learners learn foreign languages according to their surface structure before they can understand the underlying representation in the foreign language. I personally, strongly believe that we speak a language according to its surface structure.

B Transformational - Generative Grammar (T-GG):

This approach was first introduced by Chomsky (1957). The most important features of this approach is that it recognises a level of deep structure and a level of surface structure, the two being related by sets of transformation rules.

One reason for using T-GG in CA is that it has been claimed that deep structures are universal and can be applied to all languages.

A further bonus in this approach is that it provides for the two languages identical means for explaining in an explicit fashion the nature of sentential ambiguities.

So much for theoretical linguistics, now I am going to discuss the other basis that CA draws most heavily upon which is applied linguistics.

1.3 Applied CA:

As I have already said, CA is considered to be a part of applied linguistics because it draws on theoretical linguistics to enable it to

select the necessary information for specific purposes such as language teaching and translation.

The applied linguistics basis of CA is the practical basis because it puts the data gathered from the theoretical aspect of CA into practice and tries to solve the problems and errors rendered in L2 learning. Fisiak (1981:2) defines the applied basis of CA as:

'Applied contrastive studies are preoccupied with the problem of how a universal category X, realised in language A as Y, is rendered in language B, and what be the possible consequences of this for a given field of application.'

I also referred to CA's contribution to L2 learning. Since CA is concerned with the learning of L2 it needs a psychological component. This psychological foundation that CA draws most heavily upon is the 'Transfer Theory'.

Corder (1973: 132-133) argues that different languages have strong resemblances to each other and that is a second language is learnt.

The transfer theory states that learners transfer what they already know about performing one task to performing another similar task. In other words, the theory of transfer is founded on the assumption that an L2 learner tends to transfer to his/her L2 utterances the formal features of his/her L1.

Transfer can be either positive or negative. The Applied Linguistics Hypothesis states that positive transfer occurs wherever there are similarities between the two languages. This kind of transfer is also known as facilitation because similarities between languages can

facilitate learning. On the other hand, negative transfer occurs wherever the two languages differ. This negative negative effect of transfer is also known as interference because the learner transfers features of his/her L1 utterances to the L2 utterances.

According to Carroll (1968: 113-119), Interference Theory has at least two meanings in psychology. The first meaning arises in the explanation of forgetting where it is assumed that previous habits are forgotten because new experiences interfere with the memory traces. The greater the similarities between the languages the greater the interference is. Learning a L2 can affect the learner's L1 if the two languages are similar to each other. This kind of interference is often referred to as retroactive inhibition because the new learning is assumed to act back upon the previous learning.

The second meaning of interference is what is often referred to as the proactive inhibition. This interference occurs when the previous learning acts forward upon the new learning. This kind of interference usually takes place when learning a L2. It is claimed that the L1 habits tend to inhibit or otherwise modify the learning of second language habits.

CA is concerned with the latter kind of interference because most errors occur as a result of the proactive inhibition. Moreover, it is the kind of interference that prevents proper language learning from taking place.

Carroll (1968: 113-119) believes that transfer of features of the learner's L1 to L2 can occur in various psychological response system. Transfer can occur at a cognitive level. This usually takes place when a learner cannot

select appropriate words or right sentence structures in the L2 and that is when the learner tends to transfer his L1 features. Transfer can also occur at a psychomotoric level. This transfer can be seen when the L2 learner speaks the L2 with a foreign accent, or when he finds difficulty in the articulation of some phones.

Finally, the applied contrastive linguistics hypothesis presents us with a solution to the phenomenon of transfer. The hypothesis states that the similarities and contrasts between L1 and L2 must be identified and explained in order to reduce the effects of interference when learning a L2.

Although I am only concerned with the theoretical basis of CA I think that I should discuss briefly CA's contribution to language teaching; basically because it is a part of applied basis of CA, and to show that CA can be used in various fields.

1.4 CA and Language Teaching:

CA's purpose is to contribute to the task of foreign language teaching. CA provides us with teaching materials and tools. It also provides us with the data and information that could help us in the organisation of the teaching syllabus.

CA is directed specifically to those areas of language where errors are most frequent and it is likely to provide information on why the errors occur which at the same time suggest ways of organising teaching materials

which can anticipate and overcome the problems. Therefore CA is explanatory rather than predicative.

Catford (1968: 159-173) believes that the data supplied by CA can be of value to the teacher, and the text book writer.

CA is of some value to the teacher in the sense that it enables him to understand certain problems as they arise in Class. For example if an Arabic speaking student produces a sentence like:

I have just saw him

instead of:

I have just seen him

the teacher will discover that the past perfect verb form does not exist in the Arabic verb form system.

Marton (1981: 147-156) argues that a pedagogical contrastive grammar is of great value to the language teacher. He says that knowledge of the grammatical rules of the two languages will help in language teaching, especially if the teacher does not know the native language of his students. The contrastive grammar will help the teacher to explain the most essential structural differences between the two languages to his students in a clear, systematic way.

Moreover, CA is of value to the textbook writer because it acts as the basis for decision-making about grouping and sequencing of items and the kinds of drills and practical work of which they should be presented with.

Furthermore, Corder (1973: 142-156) outlines the general structure or hierarchy of applications of linguistics to language teaching. Corder says that there are various stages to language teaching. The first stage or, using his term, order of application is a very general one, which is related to the description of the language being taught. In other words, the L2.

The second order of application is concerned with specifying the content of the syllabus. We do not teach the L2 system as a whole. Therefore, we have to select the subsystem that we want to teach. We select these subsystems according to certain criteria. The first criterion we follow is the criterion of utility. This criterion states that we teach the student the things he needs most in order to enable him to communicate in the L2, such as parts of speech etc.

The second criterion is difference. We might teach the learner the rules and systems that do not exist in his mother tongue. And finally, the third criterion for selection is difficulty. We might start to teach the learner what is difficult in the L2.

Finally, the third order of application in language teaching that CA contributes to is structuring the syllabus.

CA suggests different ways to solve the problem of organising a teaching syllabus. The first approach is to move from the known to the unknown. It means to start with what is similar between L1 and L2 and move to what is different between them.

The other approach to the organisation of the syllabus is to move from the general to the particular. To put it in other words, to move from the unmarked form of the L2 to the marked form of it. This process is called the deductive process. Alternatively, we can employ the inductive process in the organisation of the syllabus. This process moves from the particular to the general.

To sum up, CA is both theoretical and applied. The theoretical basis of CA can be seen in its theoretical framework of description, while the applied basis of CA can be seen in the application of the theoretical basis to various fields such as language teaching. The applied basis of CA can also be seen in the way it draws on other sciences such as psychology.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ENGLISH VERB SYSTEM

A verb is a word or part of speech whereby something or someone is represented as existing, possessing, acting, or being acted upon, at some particular time: past, present or future, and this is expressed by various manners ie progressive, perfective, etc.

A verb is also a part of speech that joins the significance of other words together. It does not have case-inflections, but it has tense, number and person.

In order to give a full description of this grammatical category it is necessary first to make a typological study of the category of the language under study, which in this case is English.

2.1 Typology

English is an inflectional language which means that it has two kinds of word formation: derivational morphology and inflectional morphology.

The English verb is considered to be inflectional rather than derivational. The English verb is inflectional because it occurs in the form of affixes added to a stem as in the regular past tense 'walked' and because it can change the form of the stem as in the uncommon use of irregular past 'brought'.

According to Bybee (1985:11-47) the English verb is inflectional in the sense that the affixes combined with the stem have the proper syntactic and semantic features, yielding a predictable meaning. This means that if the same syntactic affix is attached to any verb stem the result will always be the same semantic meaning. For example, if the suffix '-s', or '-es' is attached to any verb base the result will always be the present tense form of the third person singular, as in 'go-es' and 'walk-s'.

It should be noted that the English verb is considered to be inflectional because it inflects for aspect, tense and mood.

The first inflectional category combined with the English verb stem is aspect. When aspect is combined with the stem of the verb it refers to the action or state described by the verb. For example, a progressive action or a perfective action. The progressive aspect is expressed by help of the auxiliary verb and the suffix of the verb stem. In other words the progressive aspect is expressed by a combination of auxiliary + verb + suffix as in, 'He is talking'.

Bybee (1985: 11 - 47) notes that aspect as an inflectional category preserves the meaning of the verb stem to a certain extent. It should be noted that English can also express aspect lexically, as 'do' vs 'complete' and 'know' vs 'realise'.

The other inflectional category attached to the verb stem is 'tense'. Tense is the category marked in the verb. This can take two different ways. Firstly, the verb binds the proposition together and makes it refer to a situation that can be placed in time. Secondly, verbs refer to

situations that are not time-stable. Again the tense distinction does not affect the meaning of the verb since the situation referred to by the verb remains the same whether it is said to occur in the present or the past.

The third category that is attached to the verb stem is mood. The term mood is traditionally restricted to a category expressed in verbal morphology. It is formally a morphosyntactic category of the verb like tense and aspect, even though its semantic function relates to the contents of the whole sentence. Mood distinctions express what the speaker wants to do with the proposition in the particular discourse. Mood also refers to the speaker's commitment of the proposition.

The English verb can express two kinds of mood: indicative and subjunctive. The indicative mood is usually expressed by verbal inflection only and it usually refers to factual meanings. For example: It is strange that he wakes up at six everyday.

The subjunctive mood can be expressed by various means. The use of the subjunctive occurs chiefly in formal style as where the verb base is used, as in:

It is necessary that every member inform himself of these rules.

This subjunctive use is known as theoretical or mandative.

The other use of the subjunctive has a hypothetical meaning which is used in conditional and concessive clauses and in subordinate clauses after optative verbs like wish. It occurs in the past tense form of the verb:

He spoke to me as if I were deaf.

I wish I knew where he was

Above all, the subjunctive mood is expressed by means of modal auxiliaries, as in:

It is strange that he should have left so early.

It is worth noting here that aspect and tense are more related to the verb than mood. As a result, it follows that mood occurs less frequently with the verb as an inflectional category than aspect and tense.

In addition to the above inflectional categories, the verb stem has another inflectional category, which is person. Person is often expressed by the presence or absence of suffixes; as 'come, comes'.

The English verb has three persons: first, second and third. The English verb also inflects on number, it can express either singular or plural. The suffix -s denotes that the subject is a second person singular, while the absence of this suffix denotes that the subject is anything but second person singular.

2.2 Tense, Aspect and Mood:

The term tense refers to those time-expressions which take the form of an inflectional verb suffix. And since there are two verbal inflections in English: -s and -ed it follows that most linguists and grammarians like Joos (1964: 121), Palmer (1974: 43-75) and Christopherson and Sandved (1969: 204:219) agree that the English verb has two tenses only, ie the past and the present. To put it in other words, tense is a diectic category that places a situation in time with respect to the present moment and to some other pre-established point in time.

In addition to inflectional verbal suffixes, time can be expressed by 'Aspect'. According to Comrie (1976: 4-7) both Aspect and Tense are related to time but each in its own way. Tense locates situations in time with reference to present or past points of time, while aspect relates time to the internal temporal constituency of a situation. In other words, tense is situation-external, while aspect is situation-internal.

The past tense and present tense are related to the progressive and perfective aspects. Tense and aspect can be combined together to provide a new verb form of the same tense. In order to combine these two we need to use the primary auxiliaries (be and have). If we combine the present tense with the progressive aspect by the primary auxiliary (be) and the suffix -ing we will have the present progressive as in: 'John is going home', while if we combine the present tense with the perfective aspect by the use of the primary auxiliary (have) we will have, the present perfect as in 'John has gone home' and so on.

To sum up, these three categories: tense, aspect and mood impinge on each other to a great extent. They work side by side and should not be separated at all. The expression of time present and past (Tense) cannot be considered separately from aspect, and the expression of time and aspect cannot be considered separately from mood.

I am specifically concerned with the tense system in the verb form. Therefore I am going to look at the present tense and the past tense in relation to the progressive and perfective aspects and the future tense in relation to mood.

2.2.1 The Present Tense:

The present tense is the unmarked form used in English. The present tense does not only refer to the present moment, but also to past and future times. Joos (1964: 121-145) uses the term actual tense to refer to the present tense, while Palmer (1974: 43-75) uses the term non-past to refer to the same tense.

The present tense can be expressed by three different verb forms: simple, present, present progressive, and present perfect.

a) The simple present:

The simple present has three distinct uses:

First, the unrestrictive use of the simple present. It is called unrestrictive use because it places no limitation on the extension of the state into past and future time:

Honesty is the best policy.

We live in Durham.

The simple present can also express eternal truths and universal statements:

The sun rises in the east.

Water boils at 100° centigrade.

Second, the instantaneous use of the simple present. It occurs with verbs expressing events, not states; and it signifies an event simultaneous with the present moment. For example, in sports commentaries:

Bond passes the ball to Smith who heads it straight into the goal.
The instantaneous use of the simple present refers to an act or event that takes place at the moment of speaking.

We accept your offer.

I say that you are wrong.

The third use of the simple present is the habitual use. The habitual use of the simple present refers to an event or activity that stretches back into the past and forward into the future:

He walks to work.

I wake up at six everyday.

In addition to these three uses, the simple present can refer to the past in what is traditionally known as 'the Historic Present', whereby past happenings are portrayed as if they were going on at the present time.

At that moment, in comes a policeman.

Finally the simple present is used to denote future time:

I start work tomorrow

The train leaves at 5 o'clock.

b) The present progressive:

The chief function of the present progressive is that it denotes an activity which is in progress at the moment of speaking. Again, there are various terms that refer to the same verb form. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 26-58) and Palmer (1974; 43-75) call it the present-progressive

form, while Christopherson and Sandven (1969: 42-52) refer to the same verb form as the expanded present form.

The present progressive denotes continuity and duration of action:

He is smoking a cigar.

We are having dinner.

The present-progressive can be used to refer to a habitual action conveying an emotional connotation as irritation or annoyance:

He's always bragging about his family.

The children are always annoying her.

In addition to the reference to present time, the present-progressive can also refer to the near future:

I'm coming in a minute.

I'm moving to London next week.

Finally, the present-progressive refers to an action that is in a state of incompleteness:

The bus is stopping.

The man is drowning.

c) The present perfect:

The present perfect refers to past events or states that move right up to the present moment.

We've lived in London since last September

We've known each other for years.

The present perfect can also refer to a very recent and completed activity occurred before time indicated:

I've just seen him.

He has just come back.

Moreover, the present perfect can refer to some indefinite happening in the past.

Have you been to America?

All my family have had measles.

The present perfect links up the result of a past event to the present moment.

I've cut my finger.

And finally, the present perfect can refer to future time if it is used in subordinate clauses.

Wait till I have finished my meal.

2.2.2 The Past Tense:

The past tense specifies past time, or in other words, reports a past action without reference to the present moment. Joos (1964: 121-150) refers to the past tense as the remote tense. He says that this term suits the meaning exactly because the referent is absent from that part of the real world.

The past tense can be considered according to three different verb forms: The simple past, the past progressive and the past perfect.

a) The simple past:

There are different terms that refer to the simple past. Comrie (1976: 26-41) refers to this form as the non-progressive past, while

Christophersen and Sandved (1969: 209-219) refer to it as the {D}₁ form.

This verb form refers to a completed action that has taken place before the present moment. This means that the present moment is excluded. In short, the simple past tense form denotes past time:

I saw him yesterday.

I wrote my letter of 16th June 1972 with a special pen.

It should be noted that past time is expressed by using time adverbials such as yesterday, last week, etc.

Christopherson and Sandved (1969: 42-52) believe that the simple past tense form denotes unreality when it is used in the subjunctive mood. It expresses hypothetical meanings.

I wish I knew where he was.

If I were in your place I would sort things out.

Moreover, Palmer (1974: 43-75) argues that the simple past tense form can be used to refer to tentative or polite attitude if it is in the subjunctive mood:

I wanted to ask you about that.

Did you want to speak to me?

The simple past tense form is also used to refer past events happening simultaneously and past events happening in sequence.

He enjoyed and admired the sonnets of Petrarch.

He addressed and sealed the envelope.

b) The past-progressive:

The chief function of the past-progressive is to denote an activity which is not completed at the time mentioned or implied in the sentence. Again, there are different terms that refer to the same verb form. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 26-58) and Palmer (1974: 43-75) call this verb form the progressive form, while Christophersen and Sandved (1969: 42-52) call it the expanded past form.

This form denotes an action that is not completed at the time implied:

I was reading a book this evening.

I was painting the room this morning.

It should be noted that the past-progressive form denotes an activity that has started before and continued after the point of time indicated by the other verb in the sentence:

When I saw him, he was running.

Furthermore, Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 26-58) argue that the past-progressive form, or the expanded past form refers to habitual activities provided that the habit is temporary:

At that time we were bathing everyday.

c) The past perfect:

This form is used to indicate a period of time that began before, but continued right up to a point of time. It links up a past event with the point of time implied in the sentence.

This form is used to indicate activities that took place within a period of time that extended to and included a point or period of time completely in the past:

When I arrived home, my father had already left.

The past perfect is used with verbs that denote hope and intention such as expect, hope, intend, etc.

I had hoped to catch the 8.30 train, but found it was gone.

2.2.3 The Future:

There is no obvious tense in English known as the future tense. Instead future reference can be covered by various verb forms. I have already discussed some of these verb forms that have future reference such as the simple present and the present progressive. Future can also be expressed by other verb forms, basically by the use of the auxiliary verbs.

Leech (1971: 51-65) and Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 47-50) agree that the verb forms that express future time can be arranged in the following way according to the order of importance: 'will/shall' + infinitive, be going to + infinitive, present-progressive, 'will/shall' + progressive infinitive, and simple present. I have already discussed how the simple present and the present progressive express future time in the previous sections. Therefore, I am only going to discuss future time expressed by auxiliary verbs in this section.

The most important verb form that expresses future time is 'will/shall' + infinitive. This form is used in a wide range of contexts in which it is

appropriate to make predictions:

Tomorrow's weather will be cold and cloudy.

You will feel better after this medicine.

'Will/shall' + infinitive is commonly used in the main clause of conditional sentences.

If you pull this lever, the roof will slide back.

It should be noted that will/shall + infinitive usually refer to neutral futurity:

One day you will die.

One day I shall die.

However, 'shall' can also denote an intention or a will.

I shall punish you if you don't behave yourself.

Will/shall future is also suitable for prophetic statements:

In twenty years' time man will live in space.

"Will/shall" can also express past in future if it is followed by the perfect infinitive. This form can refer to a state or event seen in the past from a point of orientation in the future.

By next month I'll have gone back home.

The second most important verb form that expresses future time is the construction "Be going to" + infinitive. The general meaning of this construction is 'Future Fulfilment of the Present'.

This construction refers to the future of present intention. The chief use of this construction is to imply conscious exercise of the will.

What are you going to do today?

They're going to get married next June.

The other function of "be going to" is to refer to the future of the present cause. It is used with animate and inanimate subjects as well as with human subject. In this future reference the factors giving rise to the future happening are already present. In other words, as Leech (1971: 55) put it:

'The Train of Events leading to the Future happening is already underway.'

She's going to have another baby.

It's going to rain.

The third most common verb form that expresses future time by the use of auxiliary verbs is the "will/shall" + progressive infinitive construction.

This verb form used to denote temporary situations in the future:

This time next week I shall be sailing across the Atlantic.

Don't phone me at seven o'clock, I shall be eating my supper.

Finally, "will/shall" + progressive infinitive also refers to Future as a matter of course. This construction indicates that a predicted event will happen independently of the will or intention of anyone concerned. In other words the futurity depends on external circumstances, and not any person's will or intention:

The train will be arriving at eight o'clock.

2.4 Conclusion:

The English verb form system has two tenses: present and past, but it has four verb forms that denote these two tenses: simple past, simple present, progressive (present and past), and perfect (present and past).

The English verb form system does not have an obvious future tense.

Instead future can be expressed by various verb forms.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ARABIC VERB SYSTEM

3.1 Typology:

Arabic is semitic as well as an inflectional synthetic language. The term inflectional includes all types of word formation; derivational and inflectional morphology.

The Arabic verb is derivational rather than inflectional. The fundamental grammatical process in the literary Arabic verb is derivational

The Arabic verb is considered to be derivational rather than inflectional because according to Bulos (1965: 3) and Anderson (1985: 34) each verbal stem is based on a root which in turn is based on its consonants. In other words, the verbal stem consists of a purely consonantal root of three radicals or more. The sequence of these radicals abstracted away from the vowels is usually found in words that have similar meanings. For example, the sequence K-t-b appears in words relating to writing. To put it in another way, the consonants are the ones that usually convey the meanings and not the vowels because vowels in Arabic are basically formative devices for derivational purposes and functions.

Every verbal derivative or stem is structured according to a set pattern, with which it has a double link: one with the consonantal root common to all derivatives having the same consonantal skeleton and general meaning,

while the other link is with a pattern which is the structural model for all verbs having the same grammatical concept.

In addition to the basic and most common verb form of Arabic, there are ten derived verbal patterns. All verbs have the same formal relation between base or root and the derivatives. It should be noted here that Bulos (1965: 4) regards the roots and derivative forms as two separate morphemes. The root is considered one morpheme, while the derivative form is considered another morpheme. This implies that the Arabic verb consists of two morphemes which are related to each other.

It is worth mentioning here that the derivational process in the Arabic verb is not cumulative. This means that once a root has been put together in order to form a pattern, the only way to put it into another pattern is to replace the entire structure, thus destroying any reflection of the first stage in a derivation. Derived forms thus cannot be the basis of further derivatives. In the semitic system, virtually all of the functional connections between a derivative and the basic stem must be associated with a one step relation.

Moreover, it is not possible to segment a form into a part representing the root and another part representing the derivational function. For example, it is not possible to segment Arabic 9allam 'teach' into non-overlapping formatives meaning 'know' and 'cause'. The two are inextricably bound up with one another in the overall structure of the word.

In addition to the derivational morphology the Arabic verb also has an inflectional morphology. The inflectional morphology of the verb is

reflected by the affixes that can be added to derived forms of the verb. These affixes indicate person, gender, number, aspect and mood.

The Arabic verb is inflectional in a number of ways. It is inflectional in the sense that number is inflected in the verb by adding a suffix to the derived form. For example, the morpheme /-ā/ denotes duality, the morpheme /-ū/ denotes plurality and the morpheme /-ī-/ denotes a singular number.

The Arabic verb is also inflectional in the sense that aspect can be inflected if the verb is preceded by certain prefixes. For example, if the prefix /y-/ is used, it denotes imperfect aspect; as in *yaktubu* 'he writes', while if there is no prefix added to the verb, this implies that the verb is in the perfect aspect; as in *kataba* 'he wrote'.

Moreover, gender is represented in the verb by the presence of a suffix in the feminine form which is represented by 0 in the corresponding masculine form. This can clearly be seen in the following examples:

tagtulina

kill-present-2ps (fem)

you kill.

tagtulu

kill-present-2ps (masc)

you kill.

Finally, mood is expressed by the presence or absence of suffixes. The presence of a suffix usually denotes that the verb is imperfect indicative; as in: *taktubu* 'you write', while the absence of the suffix implies that

the verb is either in the jussive mood; as: taktub 'you write', or is in the subjunctive mood. Moods can also be indicated by the particles that precede the verb.

3.2 Tense, Aspect, and Mood:

MSA has two simple forms of the verb: al-maDi (the past); and al-muDariJ (the present).

Most grammarians and linguists such as Beeston (1968: 48), Wright (1898; 1-24) refer to these two forms as the perfect and imperfect. The former denotes an action which at the time indicated was complete and finished; while the latter denotes an action which is or was incomplete at a stated or implied time.

Comrie (1976: 78-82) tries to solve the controversy of whether the distinction of the Arabic verb form is based on tense; ie the verb form refers to the time in which the event or action takes place (ie Past or Present), or an aspect; ie the verb form refers to the completion or incompleteness of the event or action.

Comrie (1976: 78-82) says that the Arabic verb forms refer to both tense and aspect and that these two aspects go side by side. He says that the verb forms refer to past time if they refer to a completed action:

sābaḥa-l-walad

swim-past 3ps the boy

the boy swam.

and the verb forms refer to present time if they refer to an incompleting action; as:

yasbaḥū--l-walad.

swim-present-3ps the boy.

the boy swims (or the boy is swimming).

Cowan (1958; 54) also agrees with Comrie on the predominance of the aspectual element of completion/non-completion in the Arabic verb forms. They, nevertheless, deal with the Arabic verb-tense within a framework of aspect plus time. Thus, when we talk about verb forms in Arabic, we refer to the combination of aspect and time. And as Comrie (1976: 80) puts it:

'Perfective indicates both perfective meaning and relative past time reference, while the I'm perfective indicates everything else (ie either imperfective meaning or relative non-past tense). The Arabic opposition Imperfective/Perfective incorporates both aspect and (relative) tense.'

To sum up, the Arabic verb is as Bulos (1965: 35) puts it:

'expresses the degree of realisation of a process the realisation of an event. It is concerned with the completion or incompleting of an action, and this gives us the perfect/imperfect opposition.'

3.2.1 The Perfect:

The perfect refers to the past tense form and denotes an action which at the time indicated was complete.

The perfect is used in a number of ways in order to denote different functions of the form.

The perfect points to a single action, regarded as instantaneous in its occurrence; as in:

taasallamtu risālahū qabla ustuj.

receive-past-1ps his letter before a week.

I received his letter before a week (a week ago).

The perfect tense is also used in Arabic to indicate consecutive actions in the past:

daxalat-l-bayt wa aq falat-l-?abwab.

enter-past-3ps the house and lock-past-3ps the doors.

she entered the house and locked the doors.

The Arabic perfect tense can also be used to denote a prayer or a wish:

sāʿadak-l-lāh.

help-past-3ps you God.

(may) God help you.

raḥimahu-l-lāh.

have-past-3ps mercy upon him God.

(may) God have mercy upon him.

The perfect tense indicates an act that has often taken place and still takes place, or the result of which is felt now:

ittafaqa-l-mufasirūn.

agree-past-3pl the commentators.

the commentators agree.

The perfect denotes an act which is just completed at the moment of speaking; as in:

ba9tuk had a.

sell-past-lps you this.

I sell you this.

The perfect is usually preceded by qad; when this happens it usually denotes two things.

a) If the perfect is preceded by the particle quad it emphasises an action; as in:

qad katabtu.

qad write-past-lps

I have written.

b) or, it can be used to refer to an act which is finished just at the moment of speaking; as in:

qad bi9tuka haḍa.

qad sell-past-lps you this.

I have sold you this.

According to Elder (1950: 64), Comrie (1976: 78) and Wright (1898: 4) the perfect can also denote past complete (pluperfect) by prefixing the perfect of (to be) kana to the perfect of the main verb with or without the particle qad; as:

kāna (qad) kataba.

to be-past-3ps write-past-3ps.

He had written.

And according to Elder (1950: 64) the perfect can denote the future complete (Future-perfect) by using qad and the imperfect (to be) yakuna with the perfect of the main verb:

yakuna qad katab.

to be-present-3ps write-past-3ps.

He will have written.

3.2.2 The Imperfect:

The imperfect is used to refer to the present tense which denotes an action which is or was incomplete at a stated or implied time.

When we use the term imperfect, we usually refer to the indicative imperfect because the imperfect is always indicative unless it is preceded by certain particles which makes it either subjunctive or jussive. The imperfect indicative is also known as the simple form.

The imperfect is as Wright (1898: 18) puts it:

'The imperfect indicative does not itself express any idea of time, it merely indicates, a begun, incomplete, enduring existence, either in present, past or future time.'

The imperfect points to habitual or repeated actions:

yadhabu ila -l-sūq kla ywam.

go-present-3ps to the market everyday.

He goes to the market every day.

The Arabic imperfect tense is also used to refer to universal statements:

tasriqu -š-amis min šarq.

rise-present-3ps the sun from the east.

The sun rises from the east.

The imperfect tense is also used in M.S.A to indicate actual present, ie an event that takes place at the moment of speaking:

al-ra ?is yarid an yuklimak.

the boss want-present-3ps to speak-present-3ps to you.

The boss want to speak to you.

Moreover, the imperfect tense can be used in M.S.A to refer to future time; ie arranged or fixed future:

abd?u -l-9amala gadan.

start-present-1ps work tomorrow.

I start work tomorrow.

Arabic uses the imperfect tense of the verb to refer to past events; ie 'The Historic present';

fi tilka -l- a ḥ a Dati yadxulu -l- malik.

at that moment com in-present-3ps the king.

At that moment comes in the king.

The imperfect also denotes a past continuous tense when combined with the perfect kana; as:

Kuntu a Ktuba xiTaban lamma daxalū 9alaī.

To be-past 1ps write-present-1ps a letter when enter-present-3pl to me.

I was writing a letter when they came into me.

or Kāna yasbaḥū Klu yum ?t̄na? ijaazatahu.

To be-past-3ps swim-pres-3ps everyday during his vacation.

He used to swim everyday during his vacation.

Furthermore, the imperfect can also refer to future time by prefixing particles such as sa-or saurfa to the main imperfect verb; as:

sanusāfir.

travel-future-lpl.

We shall travel.

or

sawfa nusāfir.

travel-future-lpl.

We shall travel.

It is worth noting that the imperfect always refers to future time when it is in the subjunctive, Jussive or Imperative mood.

The subjunctive of the imperfect has always a future sense after the adverb lan 'not' and the conjunctions and particles such as ?n 'that', la or ?ala 'that not' and hatta 'till' or 'until' etc; as in:

ḥatta taḥ Dra ?uxti.

until come-present-3ps my sister. (Subjunctive)

Until my sister comes.

The Jussive and Imperative moods are used to convey an order and they always refer to the future. The Imperative is always used with the second person to convey an order; while the Jussive is used with all persons to convey prohibitions. The Jussive is usually preceded by particles that

convey a prohibition such as lam and la 'not'; as in:

Lā yadxul.

not-future-enter-3ps. (Jussive)

Let him not enter.

?uktub.

Write. (Imperative)

It should be mentioned that there are kinds of verbs that can be used as auxiliaries, or as full verbs.

This group of verbs is called Kana and its sisters (ie Sara, aSbaha, Dalla, ?msa, etc). I have already referred to Kana as an auxiliary. When these verbs behave like auxiliaries they are called incomplete or defective verbs because they require an attribute to complete the sense. On the other hand, when they behave like full verbs they are called the complete or absolute verbs because they contain the attribute in itself and do not require any other; as:

Kāna tajirun wa Kāna lahu banūna ṭal ṭah.

To be-past a merchant and to be-past-3ps boys three.

There was a merchant and he had three boys.

Wright (1898: 99-109) believes that these verbs behave like full verbs in every sense and way. They behave like full verbs in the sense that the perfect form refers to a past tense; as:

Kāna -l-waladu fi -l-mal9ab.

To be-past 3ps the boy in the playground.

The boy was in the playground.

These verbs also have imperfect forms that refer to present and future tense; as:

sayakun -l-walad fi -l-mal9ab.

To be-future-3ps the boy in the playground.

The boy will be in the playground.

Moreover, the sisters of Kāna can refer to different times of the day when used in the perfect tense: aSbaḥa (in the morning) a Dha (in the afternoon):

aSbaḥa-l-rajulu fi makah.

in the morning to be-past-3ps the man in Meca.

In the morning the man was in Meca.

amsa-l-rajulu ta9iban.

in the evening to be-past-3ps the man tired.

In the evening the man was tired.

Sisters of Kāna can also be used to denote duration and continuity to the present moment:

mazāla yasbaḥ.

To be-past-3ps swim-present-3ps.

He is still swimming.

mazāla fi m-adrasati.

To be-past-3ps in school.

He is still in school.

Finally, it should be noted that Wright (1898: 99-109) believes that some of these verbs such as aSbaha, Sara and Dulla imply the concept of change or conversion; as:

Sāra -1- walad mu9allima.

become-past-3ps the boy a teacher.

The boy has become a teacher.

3.3 Conclusion:

To sum up then, the Arabic verb system has only two tenses: the perfect which denotes past and completed events and activities; and imperfect which denotes an incompleted and unfinished act. These two tenses denote various implications and significations.

Arabic also has a future tense, but it does not have future verb form that can stand on its own. In order to form a verb form that refers to future time one has to prefix the particle sa or sawfa to the imperfect verb. Future time can also be referred to by the subjunctive Jussive and Imperative mood of the imperfect.

Finally, the Arabic verb system has verbs that can behave either as auxiliaries, or as full verbs. These verbs are Kāna and its sisters.

CHAPTER FOUR

A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF VERB SYSTEMS IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC

The execution of CA involves two stages which should always be taken in the same order: description and comparison. Whitman (1970: 191-197) argues that CA must proceed through four steps: description, selection, contrast and prediction.

I have already gone through the first stage of CA, which is description. In Chapters 2 and 3 I described the two verb systems through the same model of description, which is the structural model. In this Chapter I move to the second stage of CA, which is the comparison of the two verb systems and which in turn involves going through the steps 2 and 3 of the CA process.

Step 2 of the process, which is selection, is generally based on the notion of equivalence. It has been assumed that only those constructions that exhibit equivalence are comparable. In order for the two languages to be compared they must have a certain degree of shared similarity. In other words, this means that the two entities to be compared, while differing in some respect, must share certain attributes. This requirement is especially strong when we are contrasting, since it is only against the background of sameness that differences are significant.

In this dissertation I am contrasting the verb systems of English and Arabic. However, I cannot contrast the two verb systems unless they have a degree of shared similarity. For example, I cannot compare the notion of tense in English with the notion of tense in Arabic unless the two

languages have similar ways to refer to tense or time. In doing so, I discover where and how the two systems differ.

After selecting the comparable categories, I move to the third step of CA, which is the actual contrast between the two verb systems. I formulate the contrast which has been identified by the analyses of steps 1 and 2. This contrast will take place according to form and meaning. This step will establish the two verb systems with respect to the grammatical category of tense. If the two verb systems have the same formal construction and express the same meanings, they can be referred to as congruent. If they have different formal constructions but express similar meanings they are equivalent. On the other hand, if the two systems have different formal constructions and express different meanings they are non-equivalent. In this dissertation I am concerned with constructions that are either congruent or equivalent.

The fourth and final step of CA is related to the pedagogic exploitation of CA. This step, which is prediction, is related to the formulation of difficulty and error in learning the L2.

In this dissertation, I am only concerned with the theoretical basis of CA; therefore I shall not be dealing with the final step of CA which is considered to be a part of the applied basis of CA.

In this Chapter I am going to contrast the two verb systems according to form and meaning. Form refers to the grammatical categories which constitute the form or construction of the verb which are: tense, aspect and mood. Tense refers to whether the verb is in the present or the past

tense, aspect refers to whether the verb is in the progressive or perfective aspect, and mood refers to whether the verb is subjunctive or indicative. Meaning refers to the message that the verb form conveys, or in other words, to the function of a certain verb form. The meanings conveyed by the verb structures are: factual, ie the sentence refers to a fact; it is truth committed, Theoretical, the idea conveyed by the verb form might be true or false it is truth neutral; and hypothetical meaning it implies an assumption by the speaker that the happening described does not, did not or will not take place, it is 'Contrary to Fact'.

It should be noted that Leech (1971: 106-122) believes that modern English has a threefold distinction between Factual, Theoretical and Hypothetical meaning which has substituted the distinction between indicative and subjunctive moods. The Theoretical meaning is truth-neutral, it leaves the question of truth and falsehood open. The theoretical meaning is usually expressed by verbs like believe, suppose, expect, etc. The theoretical meaning can also be expressed by conditional sentences; by either real or unreal conditions.

The factual meaning is truth-committed, it only refers to facts; and it is usually expressed by the indicative mood. Finally, the hypothetical meaning refers to imaginary past events. It has the categorical sense of 'Contrary to Fact' and is usually expressed by the past tense of full verbs and modal auxiliaries.

In carrying out the actual contrast between the two verb systems I intend to see whether Arabic and English utilise the same verb form or structure in order to convey the same meaning or not. Since CA is mainly concerned

with differences between the languages compared and not their similarities, my major objective is to find out how and where the two verbal systems differ. This is executed by first looking at the meanings and functions of the English verb systems and contrasting these constructions with the Arabic verb system to see how the same meaning or function is rendered in M.S.A. Then, I am going to look at the other functions of the Arabic verb system and how these in turn are rendered in English.

4.1 The Present Tense:

a) The simple present:

This form is used in English to refer to Universal statements:

The sun rises from the east.

The Thames rises in Gloucestershire.

Modern standard Arabic (M.S.A.) uses the imperfect tense which is equivalent to the English simple present in order to express the same meaning:

tašriqu -š-amis min-š-araq.

rise-present-3ps the sun from the east.

yanbu9u nahru-t-aimz min glawstiršir.

rise-present-3ps river Thames from Gloucestershire.

This form is also used in English to indicate habitual activities:

I get up at six everyday.

That girl smokes too much.

M.S.A. expresses this meaning by the use of imperfect form of the verb:

astayqīḍu fi-s-āḡati -s-āḡisati kulla yawm.

get up-present-1ps at six o'clock every day.

tilka -l-fatātu tudaxxinu aktara mina -l-luzūm.

that girl smoke-present-3ps too much.

Moreover, English employs the simple present to indicate actual present, ie an event that takes place at the moment of speaking:

I see an aeroplane there.

The headmaster wants to speak to you.

M.S.A. also employs the imperfect tense to indicate actual present:

arā Tāʔiratan hunak.

see-present-1ps an aeroplane there.

yurīdu -l-mudīru an yukalimaka.

want-present-3ps the headmaster to speak-present-3ps.

Furthermore, the simple present can be used to refer to future time, ie arranged or fixed future:

We leave for London tomorrow.

The plane arrives at 8.30.

Arabic also employs the imperfect form of the verb to refer to fixed future time:

nūḡadiru ila Lundun ḡadan.

leave-present-1ppl to London tomorrow.

taSilu -T-Tā? ratu fi -tāminati wa-n-niSf.
arrive-present-3ps the plane at 8.30.

The simple present is also used in English to refer to events that took place in the past, ie 'the historic present'.

I was sitting in my room reading, when suddenly the lights go off.

M.S.A. also employs the imperfect form of the verb to refer to the 'historic present':

Kuntu jālisan fi ġurfati aqra?wa ?ida bi-l-aDwā?

To be-past-lps sitting in my room read-present-lps when
tanTafi? faj?ah.

The lights go off-present-3ppl suddenly.

Finally, the present simple usually indicates theoretical meaning when used in conditional sentences:

If you touch me I'll scream.

This meaning is expressed in M.S.A. by the use of the perfect form of the verb:

?ida lamastani Saraxit,
if touch-present-2ps me scream-past-lps.

b) The present progressive:

The present progressive is used in English to denote an action or an activity that is in progress:

He is drinking water.

They are walking home.

The present progressive form does not exist in the Arabic verb form system. Instead the meaning is conveyed by means of the imperfect form of the verb:

inahu yaṣṣrabu ma?

he drink-present-3ps water.

innahum yasirūna ila -l-bayt.

they walk-present-3ppl to home.

Moreover, the present progressive can also be used in English to refer to near future:

I am going there next week.

He is coming tonight.

M.S.A. employs ism -al-fa9il (Active participle) which partakes the nature of the verb to express the same meaning:

anā dāhibun ila hunak fi -l-usbu9i -l-qadam.

I go-Active-participle to there in the week next.

anahu ātin il-laylah.

he come (Active participle) tonight.

Furthermore, the present progressive is used in English to refer to the duration of an activity that is taking place at the moment of speaking:

She is smoking a cigarette.

I am reading a book.

The meaning is rendered in Arabic by the use of the imperfect form of the verb:

anaha tudxinu sigaratan.

She smoke-present-3ps a cigarette.

annani aqra?u kitab.

I read-present-1ps a book.

c) The present perfect:

This verb form links up past activities with the present moment. It denotes an action connected through its effect with the present moment:

Twenty years have passed since we first met.

I have bought a new car.

In order to express this meaning M.S.A. uses the perfect form of the verb preceded by the particle qad or laqad.

Laqad marrat 9iṣruna sanatan mundu iltaqayna,

pass-passed-3ps twenty years since meet-past-1p.pl.

Laqad istaraytu sayyāratan jadidah,

buy-past-1ps a car new.

The present perfect is also used in English to indicate a very recent and completed activity:

He has just gone out.

This function is rendered in M.S.A. by means of the perfect form of the verb preceded by the particle laqad:

Laqad xaraja -s-a⁹ata.

go out-past-3ps just.

Moreover, the present perfect denotes an action beginning at some time in the past and continuing up to the moment of speaking. In other words, it expresses duration and continuity:

We have known each other for years.

This function is expressed in Arabic by the use of the incomplete form of the verb:

na⁹rifu ba⁹Dana⁹ mundu ⁹iddati sanawāt.

know-present-1p.pl each other for many years.

It is worth mentioning here that the present perfect refers to future time whenever it is used in subordinate clauses:

As soon as I have saved enough money, I shall retire from business.

In order to express this meaning, Arabic uses the sunjunctive of the imperfect form:

sa -ataqā⁹adu ḥalama uwa⁹fīru mablāḡan min-l-mal.

retire-future-lps as soon as save-present-lps enough.

money.

4.2 The Past Tense:

a) The simple past:

English uses the simple past to refer to a completed activity:

I received his letter last week.

He saw the boss yesterday.

Arabic employs the perfect form of the verb which is equivalent to the English simple past in order to express the same meaning:

tasallamtu risālatahu -l-usbu9 -l-māDi

receive-past-lps his letter week last

This form is also used in English to indicate consecutive actions in the past:

She cooked the dinner and washed the dishes.

In order to express the same meaning, M.S.A. employs the perfect form of the verb:

Tabaxit -l-9aša? wa ḡasalat -l-aTbāq.

cook-past-3ps the dinner and wash-past-3ps the dishes.

Furthermore, the past simple can also express hypothetical meaning, which in turn denotes unreality:

I wish I knew the fellow's name.

He acts as if he owned the place.

This meaning is rendered in M.S.A. by means of the imperfect form of the verb:

Laytani a9rifu isma-r-rajul.

wish-present-1ps Know-present-1ps name the fellow.

YataSarrafu Ka?annahū yamliku -l-makān.

act-present-3ps as own-present-3ps the place.

It should be noted that the perfect form of the Arabic verb system has other functions that is not rendered in English by the use of the past simple form. Instead these functions are rendered in English by means of various verb forms.

The Arabic perfect form can be used to denote a prayer or a wish:

sā9adaka -l-lāh.

help-present-3ps you God.

rahimahu -l-lāh.

have-present -3ps mercy upon him God.

This meaning is rendered in English by the use of the infinitive with or without the auxiliary:

(May) God help you.

(May) God have mercy upon him.

The Arabic perfect form can also be used to refer to an act which is concluded as soon as it is spoken of:

zawwajtuka ibnati.

give-past-1ps in marriage you my daughter.

This function is rendered in English by means of the simple present:

I give you my daughter in marriage.

Furthermore, the perfect form of M.S.A. indicates an act that has often taken place and still takes place; or the result of which is felt now; eg:

ittafaqa -l-mufassirun.

agree-past-3p.pl the commentators.

English uses either the past perfect or the simple present to express this meaning, eg:

Commentators agree.

Commentators have agreed.

Arabic also has some verbs that refer to different times of the day when used in the perfect form. These verbs are called sisters of Kana; aSbaha 'in the morning', amsa 'in the evening', bata 'at night' and aDha 'in the afternoon':

aSbaḥa -r-rajula fi makah.

To be-past-3ps the man in Mecca.

amsa -r-rajula ta9iban

To be-past-3ps the man tired.

English uses time adverbials and the past tense of "to be" to convey the

same meaning:

In the morning the man was in Mecca.

In the evening the man was tired.

Moreover, the sisters of Kāna can also be used to denote duration and continuity to the present moment; eg:

mazāla yasbah.

To be-past-3ps swim.

mazāla fi -m-ma19ab.

to be-past 3ps in the playground.

In the first example the function is rendered in English by means of the present progressive:

He is still swimming.

While in the second example the meaning can be rendered by means of the simple present:

He is still in the playground.

Finally the perfect form in M.S.A. can refer to the future perfect if the main verb is preceded by the imperfect of Kana (yakunu) and qad; eg:

yakunu qad Katab Kitaban.

to be-present-3ps write-past-3ps a book.

This function is rendered in English by means of "will" + present perfect:

He will have written a book.

b) The past progressive:

English uses this form to denote an activity that is in a state of incompleteness; eg:

I was reading a book.

I was painting the house.

M.S.A. does not have an obvious progressive verb form. Instead it employs the perfect form of the verb 'to be' Kāna followed by the imperfect form of the main verb:

Kuntū ?qra? Kitāb.

to be-past-lps read-present-lps a book.

Kuntū asbaġ -l-bayt.

to be-present-lps paint-present-lps the house.

This form is also used in English to denote an activity that started and possibly continued after the time implied:

When we arrived she was making coffee.

This meaning is rendered in Arabic by means of the perfect Kāna followed by the imperfect form of the verb:

9indama waSalnā Kānat ta9mala qahwā.

when arrive-past-lp.pl to be-past-3ps make-present-3ps.

This form is also used to denote temporary habitual activities; eg:

In those days, we were getting up at 7 o'clock.

This meaning is rendered in Arabic by the use of the perfect form of Kāna followed by the imperfect form of the main verb:

fi tilka al-ayam Kuna nastayquD fi-s-sā9atti -s-sabi9ah.
in those days to be past-lp.pl get up-present-lp.pl at.
7 o'clock.

c) The past perfect:

This form is used in English to link up past activities to the moment indicated in the sentence:

When I arrived home, my father had already left.

Arabic does not have an obvious past perfect form. Instead, this function is rendered in Arabic by the use of Kana + the particle qad + the perfect form of the main verb:

9indama waSaltu -l-bayt Kāna wāḷidi.

when arrive-past-lps home to be-past-3ps my father

qad ḡadarah.

leave-past-3ps.

Moreover, this form is also used to indicate past activities; eg:

My brother had come back.

In order to express this meaning Arabic employs the perfect form Kana + the particle qad and the perfect form of the main verb:

Kāna ?axi qad 9ād.

to be-past-3ps my brother come back-past-3ps.

The past perfect also indicates an intention or expectation when used with verbs like hope, expect, wish, etc. In this case, it has a hypothetical

meaning; eg:

I had hoped to catch the 8.30 train, but found it was gone.

Arabic expresses this meaning by the use of Kana followed by ism al-fa9il:

Kuntū āmalū an alḥaqa qiṭar

to be-past-lps hope to catch train

-s-sā9ati -l-taminati wa -n-niSif wa

8

30

lakin wajadtahū qad raḥal.

but find-past-lps it go-past-3ps.

4.3 The Future

As I have said earlier English does not have an obvious future tense.

Instead, it uses various verb forms to refer to future time. These verb forms may or may not have equivalent forms in Arabic.

"Will/shall" + infinitive is used in English to make predictions for the future:

Tomorrow's weather will be cold and rainy.

Arabic uses the imperfect form of the main verb preceded by the particle sa/sawfa to denote a prediction:

sayakunū al-jawa ḡadan bāridan wa mumṭir sa-tobe-present-3ps the
weather tomorrow cold and rainy.

"Will/shall" construction is also used in English for prophetic statements;
eg:

In twenty years time man will live on the moon.

This meaning is rendered in M.S.A. by means of sa/sawfa + the imperfect form of the verb:

fi xilāl 9krina sanah saya9iṣa al-ʔinsan.

in time twenty years sa-live-present-3ps man

9ala al-qamar.

on the moon.

Moreover, "will/shall" can express past in future if it is followed by the perfect infinitive:

By next month I'll have gone back home.

In order to denote this meaning Arabic uses the imperfect verb form of the main verb preceded by the particle sa and the imperfect form of Kana:

-ṣ-ṣahar -q-qādim sa ʔakunu qad.

month next sa to be-present- lps.

raja9it ila-al-waTan.

go back-past-lps to home.

English also uses "be going to" + infinitive to express future time:

They're going to get married next June.

M.S.A. uses the perfect form of the main verb preceded by the particle sa/sawfa in order to express the same meaning:

sawfa yataz wajān fi ṣahri yūnū -l-muqbil

marry-present-2ps in month June next.

This construction can also be used in English to refer to the future of the present cause, ie the train of events exists at the present moment:

It's going to rain.

This function is rendered in M.S.A. by means of sa/sawfa + the imperfect form of the verb:

satumTir.

rain-present-3ps.

The English verb system has another verb form that can be used to refer to future time, which is "will/shall" + progressive infinitive. This verb form is used to denote temporary situation in the future:

This time next week I shall be sailing across the Atlantic.

This function is rendered in Arabic by means of sa/sawfa + the imperfect form of the verb:

fi hada -l-waqat -l-usbu9 -q-qadim

in this time the week next.

sa?abihiru 9bar -l-aTlasi.

sail-present-3ps across the Atlantic.

Finally, this construction is also used in English to refer to future as a matter of course, ie the event will happen independently of the will or intention of anyone:

The train will be arriving at eight o'clock.

This form is rendered in Arabic by the use of the imperfect form of the verb preceded by the particle sa/sawfa:

saySilu -q-qiTār fi -s-sā9ati -l-taminah
arrive-present-3ps the train at o'clock eight.

4.4 Conclusion:

I conclude from the contrastive study carried out that English and Arabic deal with the field of tense in the very general sense of the word; sometimes in the same way ie the two languages use the same verb form (congruent), sometimes in a different way ie the two languages use different verb forms in order to express the same meaning (equivalent). The two languages have two simple verb forms which quite often agree in form and meaning; but English has a more clear-cut system of compound forms than Arabic with which to express the other aspects of meaning that can be expressed by the verb-system. However, the Arabic verb system of compound verbs is also capable of indicating certain shades of meaning that are not expressed by the normal English verb system.

To summarise the similarities and differences between the two verb systems I present the following contrastive tables which would make it easier for the reader to get an overview of the similarities and differences.

1) THE PRESENT TENSE

Meaning of the English Verb Form	Arabic Verb Forms Expressing Equivalent Meanings
<p>a) The simple present:</p> <p>Universal statements</p> <p>Habitual activities</p> <p>Actual present</p> <p>Fixed Future time</p> <p>Historic present</p> <p>Theoretical meaning</p>	<p>The imperfect form of the verb</p> <p>The imperfect form of the verb</p> <p>The imperfect form of the verb</p> <p>The imperfect form of the verb</p> <p>The imperfect form of the verb</p> <p>The perfect form of the verb</p>
Meaning of the English Verb Form	Arabic Verb Forms Expressing Equivalent Meanings
<p>b) present progressive:</p> <p>An action in progress</p> <p>Near future or intention</p> <p>Duration of an activity</p>	<p>The imperfect form of the verb</p> <p>ism al-fa9il</p> <p>The imperfect form of the verb</p>
Meaning of the English Verb Form	Arabic Verb Forms Expressing Equivalent Meanings
<p>c) the present perfect:</p> <p>Connection with the present through effect</p> <p>Recent, past activity</p> <p>Duration and continuity</p> <p>Future time (in subordinate clauses)</p>	<p>laqad (qad) + the perfect form of the verb</p> <p>laqad (qad) + the perfect form of the verb</p> <p>The imperfect form of the verb</p> <p>The subjunctive of the imperfect form of the verb</p>

2) THE PAST TENSE

Meaning of the English Verb Form	Arabic Verb Forms Expressing Equivalent Meanings
a) The simple past: Past time Consecutive actions in the past Unreality (hypothetical meaning)	 The perfect form of the verb The perfect form of the verb The imperfect form of the verb
Functions of the Arabic Perfect Form	English Verb Forms Expressing Equivalent Meanings
Prayer or wish Actions that take place at the moment of speaking An act that often takes place Different times of the day (sisters of Kana) Duration and continuity (sisters of Kana) Future perfect	May + infinitive The simple present form of the verb Present perfect Simple present Time adverbial + simple past form of 'to be' Present simple or, present progressive Will + present perfect form of the verb
Meaning of the English Verb Form	Arabic Verb Forms Expressing Equivalent Meanings
b) the past progressive: Activity in a state of incompletion Continuity from the past to the present and possibly future Temporary habitual activities	 The perfect Kāna + imperfect form of the verb The perfect Kāna + the imperfect form of the verb The perfect Kāna + the imperfect form of the verb

/contd

The Past Tense (contd)

Meaning of the English Verb Form	Arabic Verb Forms Expressing Equivalent Meanings
<p>c) the past perfect:</p> <p>Link up past activities to the moment indicated in the sentence</p> <p>Past completed activity</p> <p>An intention or expectation (hypothetical meaning)</p>	<p>The perfect Kāna + qad + the perfect form of the verb</p> <p>The perfect Kāna + qad + the perfect form of the verb</p> <p>The perfect Kāna + ism al fa9il</p>

3) THE FUTURE

Meaning of the English Verb Form	Arabic Verb Forms Expressing Equivalent Meanings
<p>1) "Will/shall" + infinitive:</p> <p>Predictions for the future</p> <p>Prophetic statements</p> <p>Past in future (will/shall + perfect infinitive)</p>	<p>Sa/sawfa + the imperfect form of the verb</p> <p>Sa/sawfa + the imperfect form of the verb</p> <p>The perfect form of the verb preceded by the particle sa and the imperfect form of the verb Kāna</p>
<p>2) "Be going to" + infinitive:</p> <p>Pure Futurity</p> <p>Future of the present cause</p>	<p>Ism al-fa9il, or Sa/sawfa + the imperfect form of the verb</p> <p>sa/sawfa + the imperfect form of the verb</p>
<p>3) "Will/shall" + Progressive infinitive:</p> <p>Temporary situation in the future</p> <p>Future as a matter of course</p>	<p>Sa/sawfa + the imperfect form of the verb</p> <p>Sa/sawfa + the imperfect form of the verb</p>

CHAPTER FIVE

LANGUAGE UNIVERSALS

One of the major objectives of carrying out a theoretical contrastive study is to look for language Universals. In other words, theoretical contrastive studies specify how a given universal category is realised in the contrasted languages. Since I am carrying out a theoretical contrastive study of the verb systems in English and Arabic, I intend to look for common universal features in both languages.

There are two methodological approaches to language universals. Some linguists have argued that in order to carry out research on language universals it is necessary to have data from a wide range of languages; linguists advocating this approach have tended to concentrate on universals statable in terms of relatively concrete (surface structure) rather than very abstract analyses, and have tended to be open, or at least eclectic, in the kinds of explanations that may be advanced for the existence of language universals. Whereas some linguists have argued that the best way to carry out research on language universals is by the detailed study of a single language in terms of abstract structures (such as deep syntactic structures with transformational-generative syntax), and have tended to favour innateness as the explanation for language universals.

The former approach was adopted by Greenberg and his followers, while the latter approach was adopted by Chomsky. I personally tend to believe with Comrie (1981: 2) that the best way to carry out a research on language universals is to have data from a wide range of languages. Simply because

in order to establish that something is universal in language one would need to look at a wide range of languages. Since I am carrying out the contrast through the structural model, I tend to believe that surface structure analysis is the best way to establish language universals.

There are reasons for believing that the study of language universals must operate with data gathered from a wide range of languages and not a single language. First, there are certain language universals that simply cannot be predicted of an individual language. In particular, Implicational universals which deal with two linguistic properties of a language. For example, Implicational universals state that a language that has VSO word order will usually have prepositions. However, if we investigate other languages that have different word order like English, which has SVO word order we will find it has prepositions as well. Second, a feature found in a single language cannot be generalised to include other languages. To put it in another way, the feature is not a valid cross-language generalisation.

In order to carry out a research of language universals we have to study the typology of each language.

Research on language universals is concerned with the properties that are common to all human languages. While language typology is concerned with the differences among languages.

Although language universals and language typology may seem to be opposed to each other, in practice, the two studies proceed in parallel. The study of language universals aims to establish limits on variation within human

language; whereas, language typology is concerned directly with the study of this variation. In other words, the two studies are concerned with variation across languages. Therefore, neither conceptually nor methodologically is it possible to isolate the one study from the other.

This becomes very clear in the interaction between language typology and implicational universals. If all the logical possibilities have actual representatives and there are no restrictions on language it is not considered interesting from the viewpoint of universals because it shows that there are no restrictions on language variation. On the other hand, if the logical possibilities are not represented, or are represented by a statistically significant low or high number of representatives, the typological result is considered interesting and important from the viewpoint of universals because the typological study shows some kind of restrictions on language variation.

Now, if we compare the typologies of English and Arabic according to surface structure we will find some features that are common in both languages; and which in turn will establish a language universal study.

In order to carry out a universal study according to the surface structure of the two languages (English and Arabic) we will need to utilise the formal devices introduced by Fries (1952: 54: 64) which are: word order, function words and affixation.

Although Arabic and English have different basic word orders within the clause: Arabic has VSO word order, while English has SVO word order, they have common features within this word order. First the two languages

have a grammatical relation of subject and object.

The grammatical relation is that the subject always precedes the object:

The farmer (S) killed (V) the fox (O).

qatāla (V) al-falāḥ (S) al-ṭaʿlāb (O).

Kill-past-eps the farmer the fox.

Second, both of the word orders have grammatical relations relative to the verb. This refers to the fact that the sentence cannot exist without the verb. To put it in another way, the verb is the dominant constituent in the sentence:

* The farmer the fox.

* al falāḥ al-ṭaʿlāb.

The farmer killed the fox.

qatāla al-falāḥ al-ṭaʿlāb.

kill-past-3ps the farmer the fox.

In addition to the grammatical relationships between the various constituents within the clause, the other common feature between the two languages that is related to word order is that they both have prepositions and not postpositions:

in the house.

fi -l-bayt.

in the house.

The third parameter related to word-order is the comparative constructions.

We notice that in the two languages, the standard of comparison precedes

the comparative:

I am bigger than my brother.

anna ?akbarū min ?axī.

I bigger than my brother.

After looking at the first device which is word order, I move to the second formal device introduced by Fries (1952: 54-64) which is function words, this device can also be related to word order because it looks at whether the function word is used before or after the verb.

If we utilise this device to look for common features in English and Arabic we will discover that there are function words that precede the verb in both languages. The function words that can be found in English are the auxiliaries (will, may, can, etc); whereas the function words that can be found in Arabic are "yakunu" and "qad" which partake the function of auxiliary verbs, in addition to 'sa/sawfa' which can also partake the function of an auxiliary. As mentioned above, the function word in both these languages precede the verb:

He will come tomorrow.

s(sawfa) yahDura gādan.

come-present-3ps tomorrow.

The third formal device utilised in the establishment of language universals is affixation. This refers to verb agreement affixes (affixes referring to tense, person, number, etc). English and Arabic both use verb to refer to tense. It should be noted that the verb systems of both languages can only refer to two tenses (present tense and past tense) through affixes. The two languages have similar simple forms of the verb,

ie the simple present form and the simple past form, which have equivalent meanings and functions:

I walked home yesterday. (past activity)
sirtū ila -l-bayt bi-l-amis. (past activity)
walk-past-lps to home yesterday.

He plays in the playground every day. (Habitual)
ya19abū fi-l-ma19abi kulla yawm. (Habitual)
play-present-3ps in the playground everyday.

Furthermore, English and Arabic have compound verb forms that have equivalent meanings and function:

I had come back home.
Kuntū qad 9udtū ila al-waTan.
to be-past-lps come back-past-lps to home.

It should be noted that these compound verb forms are formed by the use of the above mentioned verb forms.

Although the verb systems of both languages do not have an obvious future tense, they refer to future time by means of various verb forms which have equivalent meanings and functions.

To put it in another way, the meaning of the future verb form in one language (eg English) has an equivalent meaning in the other language, (eg Arabic) and vice versa:

He is going to start work next week.
Sawfa yabd?u -l-9amala -l-usbu9 -q-qādim.
Start-present-3ps work the week next.

The two verb systems also have different affixes that refer to person, but they differ in the sense that Arabic uses prefixes, whereas English uses suffixes:

She go-es to school.

ta-dhabū ila -m-madrasah.

go-present-3ps to the school.

Moreover, both verb systems employ suffixes to refer to number, but they differ in the sense that Arabic employs to refer to three numbers: singular, dual and plural, whereas English employs suffixes to refer to two cases of number: singular and plural:

She swims everyday.

tasbaḥ-ū Kulla ywam.

swim-present-3ps everyday.

5.1 Conclusion:

Carrying out a theoretical contrastive study involves looking for language universals. This in turn involves the investigation of how a given universal category is realised in the contrasted languages.

The research on language universals can be carried out according to two approaches. The first approach looks at data gathered from a wide range of languages in terms of a relatively concrete analysis. Whereas, the second approach carried out the research on language universals by looking at a single language in terms of an abstract analysis

In order to determine how the universal categories are realised in the contrasted languages (ie English and Arabic) I have adopted the former approach.

I have carried out the investigation of language universals by looking at three distinct parameters: word order, function words and affixation. In doing so I discovered that the contrasted languages have many features in common.

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