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The Structure of the Noun According to the German Orientalist Karl Brockelmann Through His Study of Arabic Morphology: A Descriptive Analytical Study

Abstract

This paper presents a descriptive and analytical reading of the structure of the Arabic noun from the perspective of the German orientalist Karl Brockelmann through his study of Arabic morphology in his book *The Grammar of Semitic Languages*, within the framework of comparisons he made between Semitic languages. After reviewing the field of morphological study and the standard scale by which Arabs measure their speech, the researcher illuminates on Brockelmann's view of the structure of the Arabic noun, which he limited to gender, number, case marking, specification, and derivation, in contrast to the classical Arabic morphological study. This shows his focus on form rather than meaning as a morphological criterion, influenced by the agglutinative aspect of his own language. This influence stems from his adherence to the Western linguistic theory in his study of the Arabic language in particular, and Semitic languages in general.

Keywords: noun structure, Arabic language, Arabic morphology, descriptive study, analytical study

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Alman şərqşünası Karl Brokelmanna görə ismin quruluşu ərəb morfolojiyasını öyrənməsi ilə: təsviri analitik tədqiqat

Xülasə

Bu məqalə alman şərqşünası Karl Brokelmannın semit dilləri arasında apardığı müqayisələr çərçivəsində "Semit dillərinin qrammatikası" kitabında ərəb morfolojiyasını tədqiqi vasitəsilə ərəb adının strukturunun təsviri və analitik oxunuşunu təqdim edir. Morfoloji tədqiqat sahəsini və ərəblərin nitqini ölçdükləri standart şkalayı nəzərdən keçirdikdən sonra tədqiqatçı klassik ərəb morfoloji tədqiqatından fərqli olaraq, Brokelmannın ərəb ismin quruluşu ilə bağlı fikrini işıqlandırır, o, cins, say, həl işarəsi, dəqiqləşdirmə və törəmə ilə məhdudlaşır. Bu, onun öz dilinin aqqlutinativ aspektindən təsirlənən morfoloji meyar kimi mənadan çox forma diqqətini göstərir. Bu təsir onun xüsusən ərəb dilini və ümumilikdə semit dillərini öyrənərkən Qərb dilçilik nəzəriyyəsinə bağlılığından irəli gəlir.

Açar sözlər: isim quruluşu, ərəb dili, ərəb morfolojiyası, təsviri araşdırma, analitik araşdırma

Introduction

This research aims to clarify the perspective of the German orientalist Karl Brockelmann in his treatment of the structure of the noun through his study of Arabic morphology in his book *The Grammar of Semitic Languages* (without the verb), as the field of Arabic morphology, according to Arab linguists, is divided into two categories: the stable nouns and the inflected verbs. Anyone who browses Brockelmann's *Semitic Languages* book will notice his approach to various linguistic issues

in Semitic languages: phonological, morphological, syntactical, and semantic. This study will attempt to answer the problem of how Brockelmann addressed the structure of the noun in his study of Arabic morphology, the basis he relied on in his analysis of the Arabic noun, and the focus of his morphological analysis (Abdul Jalil, 1997).

The standard for morphological analysis of the noun in Arabic studies is based on meaning, i.e., it pays great attention to the semantic criterion of the word. What criterion did Brockelmann adopt during his morphological analysis of the Arabic noun? Did his perspective on the studied morphological phenomenon align with or deviate from the traditional Arabic morphological study (Hassan, 1979)?

Research

The research attempts to shed light on how Karl Brockelmann, like other orientalists, was influenced by the Western perspective, which he applied in his treatment of the Arabic linguistic phenomenon. We rely on the descriptive-analytical method in general. Before delving into this study, we must first address some basic concepts of Arabic morphology (Abbas, 2010).

1) Morphological Principles:

Modern scholars affirm that the study of Arabic morphology is an introduction to the study of syntax, and it is closely linked to phonology in linguistic studies.

1.1) Definition of Morphology:

The meanings of *morphology* in the language revolve around change, transformation, and alteration. For example, "to morph something" means to turn it from one direction, and "to redirect the wind" means to change its direction (Abdul Daim, 2001).

In technical terms, scholars define morphology as "a science of principles through which the states of word structures that are not related to grammatical inflection are known." Some add, "and no construction." The term *structure* refers to the structure of the word, its form, or its weight. A related term is *morphing*, which was used by ancient scholars to refer to the procedural operations like addition, subtraction, and changes made to words (Abdul Hamid, 2009).

1.2) What does Arabic morphology study?

Arabic morphology studies "Arabic words in terms of their states, such as correctness, illness, originality, increase, and so on. It specifically deals with stable nouns and inflected verbs." Based on this, morphology covers two sections (Hegazy):

A) The section dealing with changes in the word's structure that reflect different meanings, such as changing the form of the verb to past, present, imperative, or to active participles, etc. This includes derivatives, diminutives, adjectives, and broken plurals.

B) The section dealing with changes in the word's structure that do not imply new meanings, such as changes related to the relationships between sounds within the structure, like vowel changes, alternations, and assimilation (Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi, 1998).

1.3) The Subject Matter:

The subject of Arabic morphology consists of two main elements (Fleish, 1996):

A) **Stable Nouns:** These are the declined nouns that are not originally built; because the built nouns do not undergo change or transformation as they are fixed in one form.

B) **Inflected Verbs:** These are verbs that can undergo inflection and from which derivatives can be formed, unlike rigid verbs that do not inflect. Excluded from inflection are foreign nouns (like يوسف, George, and so on), onomatopoeic words (like "غاق" and "طاق"), interjections (like "مه", "شأن", "هيهات"), and rigid verbs like "نعم", "عسى", "ليس", "بئس", "كَيْفَ", "مَنْ", "حيث", "متى", "حيث", and all meaning particles (Ibn Manzur).

1.4) The Goal of Arabic Morphology:

Ibn Asfour mentions that this science is the noblest and most intricate part of the Arabic language. Its benefit lies in the necessity of knowing it because "it is the standard of the Arabic language, by which the original words of Arabs are known from the added parts, and it is the only way to know derivation; a large part of the language can be taken by analogy, but this can only be done through morphology (Al-Anbari, 1961)..."

1.5) The Measure of Morphology:

Morphologists established a unified standard measure, called the "scale," to understand the states of word structures and identify their intrinsic structure, including their roots, affixes, vowels, and consonants. Since most Arabic words are trilateral, they structured the morphological measure around three roots: "ف ع ل," naming the first letter "the root letter," the second letter "the middle letter," and the third letter "the final letter." This scale is used to correspond with the word being measured, matching its letters, with adjustments made based on the vowel and consonant changes and affixations (Al-Hamlaoui, 2003).

The morphological scale assists scholars in accurately controlling their morphological work, preventing mistakes that could occur in such detailed studies (Bashir, 2005).

2) Morphology in Light of Modern Linguistics:

In modern morphological analysis, the morpheme (the morphological unit) is the foundation of study. A morpheme represents a morphological meaning, such as gender, number, person, specification, and inflection. Most morphemes are affixes, which can be prefixes, such as in the verb forms like "أَنْتِ" in the present tense; infixes, like the long vowel in "قَاتِلٌ"; or suffixes, like the "ت" in "كَتَبْتَ."

Affixation refers to the addition of a morpheme to a word, which can occur as a prefix, suffix, or infix. European languages often rely heavily on prefixes and suffixes to form words, with less use of infixing or internal modifications (Al-Ishbili, 1970).

3) Morphological Topics Among Orientalists:

The study of Arabic morphology by orientalist is influenced by Western theory. In their view, morphology does not only study the changes that occur in word forms to create a new meaning, such as affixation and internal changes, but "morphology studies various types of words like verbs, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and others, and the changes that occur in their forms." This means that Western linguists address the forms of all structures and their transformations (Al-Istrabadi, 1982).

Orientalists consistently studied "words that were outside the scope of morphological analysis by Arab grammarians. The most important of these types are pronouns and question words..." While Arab scholars excluded built words from morphological analysis, as explained earlier, because they:

First: They limited themselves to recording what has a phonetic rule. Pronouns and other built forms do not have a rule that indicates the changes they undergo. Thus, Arab morphologists were right to exclude built words from the rules of morphological change, as they wanted to establish rules for things that are regulated. The factor influencing linguistic studies, as is well known, is the response to the challenges posed by the entry of foreign elements and their influence on classical Arabic, as well as the understanding of the Qur'an (Al-Mansouri, & Al-Khafaji, 2002).

Second: To differentiate between morphological changes and phonological changes. For example, the addition of the "hamza" and the "ta" in "استمع" (from "سمع") is a morphological change that enters the morphological measure (فَعَلَ - اِفْتَعَلَ). However, the change in the "ta" in "اصطنع" is not morphological because it does not affect the structure of the form but rather modifies the sound of some of its phonemes. Thus, processes like substitution, as in "اصطنع - اصطنع" (and their weight "اِفْتَعَلَ"), and vowel alternations, such as in "باع" (with the measure "فَعَلَ" and not "فَالَ"), are excluded because they are phonological changes not related to changes in meaning (Al-Munsif, 1999).

4) Carl Brockmann's Approach to the Structure of the Noun:

In his book "The Grammar of Semitic Languages," Brockmann divided Arabic morphology into two major sections within the comparison he made between Semitic languages: the noun and the verb. He divided the noun into pronouns, common nouns, and some built forms such as adverbs and particles (Faris, 1979). In his study of pronouns, he discussed personal pronouns (separated and connected), demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, and interrogative pronouns. He then derived verbs and conjugated them, not based on their temporal meaning (past, present, or imperative) or their verb classes (like "فَعَلَ", "فَعَّلَ", "فَعَّلَ"), but according to their root letters (whether they were "همزة", "واو", or "ياء" etc.), and based on prefixes (like the imperfect tense markers) or suffixes like the pronouns attached to the past tense verb. This study will explore Brockmann's morphological perspective on the structure of the Arabic noun as follows (Al-Qureshi, 1998; Sibawayh, 1982):

5) The Structure of the Noun:

The structure of the noun, according to Arab grammarians, especially later scholars, generally follows several formal principles, including:

- Root and affixation.
- Rigidity and derivation.
- Health (regularity) and irregularity.
- Masculine and feminine.
- Number (singular, dual, plural).

Brockmann, on the other hand, began his discussion of noun structures by referencing the binary structure as an ancient linguistic form, and the trilateral structure as the most common form in Arabic speech. He then considered the noun structure in terms of (Ali; Yesh'ash Al-Asadi, 1973):

5.1. Gender (Masculine and Feminine):

The agreement between parts of a sentence in terms of gender (masculine or feminine) is important for showing cohesion and concord within the sentence (31). It is one of the key forms of agreement in Arabic syntax (32), especially since Modern Standard Arabic requires agreement between the two main components of a sentence, such as: "ذهبت أمينة" (Amina went) and "أمين مسافر" (Amin is traveling) (Saussure, 1988).

The expression of gender differences in languages, including Arabic, takes a morphological form. Perhaps the most prominent feature of this morphological difference is the creation of distinct masculine and feminine words that differ completely in their roots, such as (رجل – امرأة) (man – woman), (أب – أم) (father – mother), and (ولد – بنت) (boy – girl), among others. Brockmann states: "In cases where the real gender stands out and draws attention, the language distinguishes between genders not by a grammatical means, but with another word of a different root. Compare in early Semitic (حمار) and (أتان), and in Arabic (حصان) and (فرس)" (34).

In addition to the distinction between masculine and feminine through a linguistic means, there are suffixes that express femininity, such as the "tā' of femininity" (تاء التانيث) and the "alif maqṣūrah" (ألف مقصورة), as in (فعلى) (feminine) for (أفعل) (masculine), and the "alif mamdūdah" (ألف ممدودة) in (فعلاء) (feminine) for (أفعل) (masculine) (35).

There are three exceptions to these rules (36):

1. First: Masculine nouns may take a feminine marker, such as the tā' (تاء) in words like "علامة" (scholar), "خليفة" (caliph), and "راوي" (narrator). Arab grammarians explain this as a tā' of exaggeration (38).

2. Second: Special feminine forms may replace the feminine marker, such as in words like "عاقرة" (barren), "حامل" (pregnant), and "مرضع" (nurse) (39). This view aligns with the theory of the Kufan grammarians, who believe that the omission of the tā' of femininity in words like "طالق" (divorced), "طامت" (menstruating), "حائض" (menstruating), and "حامل" (pregnant) indicates that the feminine aspect is inherently understood (Bai, 1998).

3. Third: There are adjectives in the form of (فعليل) that are used for both the masculine and feminine forms, such as in "امرأة قتيل" (a woman with a killed man), "كف خضيب" (a hand with hennaed fingers), "لحية دهين" (a greased beard), and similar constructions (41).

As for the suffix used for femininity (tā'), it should be noted that: (43)

The suffix indicating femininity (tā') is noteworthy because:

- It is more commonly used than other feminine markers.
- It is dropped when the word is at the end of a sentence or clause and is replaced by the "hā' al-sakt" (silent h).
- It is pronounced as a consonant when attached to verbs, but when attached to nouns, it takes the case inflection (i' rāb).

5.2. Number:

The concept of number refers to singular, dual, and plural forms (44), and number is a morphological feature expressed through suffixes (45). Languages typically vary in how they express number, with two main systems: the binary system (singular and plural) and the ternary system (singular, dual, and plural). Arabic is one of the languages that retains the dual form (46).

In Arabic, plural is classified into three main types (Hassan, 1973):

- Masculine sound plural (جمع مذکر سالم),
- Feminine sound plural (جمع مؤنث سالم),
- Broken plural (جمع تكسير), and two additional types for specific purposes, indicating scarcity or abundance, a feature that distinguishes Arabic (47).

Brockmann studied these three types of plural but did not mention the scarcity and abundance plurals commonly discussed by Arabic grammarians. According to him, plural in Arabic is expressed in the following forms (Bakoush, 1973):

- Broken plural (جمع تكسير),
- Masculine plural (جمع المذكر),
- Feminine plural (جمع المؤنث).

5.2.1. Broken Plural (جمع التكسير):

Brockmann pointed out that broken plural is unique to Semitic languages, especially in Northern Arabic (48). He suggested that the origin of the broken plural is the "collective noun" (اسم الجمع), which he referred to as a "collectif" (49). In Arabic morphology, however, there is a distinction between collective nouns and broken plurals. A collective noun does not have a singular form or does not follow a specific plural pattern, such as (فُرُج) (tribe) or (رَهْط) (group), while a broken plural does have a singular counterpart, such as (علوم) (sciences) with its singular (علم) (science), or (أقلام) (pens) with its singular (قلم) (pen). The form of the broken plural is created through internal changes in the word's structure, involving additions, deletions, or alterations of consonants and vowels (50) (*Scholars*, 1961).

Brockmann and other Western scholars defined the process of creating broken plurals through suffixes and internal modifications of the word's structure, such as doubling, stabilizing, adding, or deleting letters. This led to the common view in Western studies that broken plurals are internal plurals (51).

5.2.2. Regular Plurals (جمع المذكر والمؤنث السالمين):

Regular plurals are formed by adding a specific suffix (52). Brockmann's analysis of these regular plurals focused solely on sound plurals for correct nouns. Arabic grammarians, however, considered the nature of a noun based on whether it is sound or defective, distinguishing between types such as truncated, suspended, and extended forms (Bergsträsser, 1997).

The sound plural for masculine nouns involves the suffix (واو) for nominative case and (ياء) for accusative and genitive cases, while for feminine nouns, the suffix (ألف وتاء) is added (53). Brockmann studied the plural forms through their suffixes as follows (55):

- Suffix (u), the long vowel waaw, is used for the nominative case of masculine plural.
- Suffix (i), the long vowel yaa, is used for the accusative and genitive cases of masculine plural.
- Suffix (a), or "alif" followed by tā', is used for feminine plurals.

5.2.3. Dual (المثنى):

The dual form in Semitic languages originally referred to paired natural objects and later generalized to apply to any word (56). It is agreed upon by both classical and modern linguists that Arabic uniquely features and extensively uses the dual form (57). It is used for nouns (including pronouns, demonstrative and relative pronouns) and is added to verbs with dual pronouns (Shaheen, 1980).

In Arabic, dual is expressed with an addition of (ألف) and (نون) in the nominative case, and (ياء) and (نون) in the accusative and genitive cases (58). In Western studies, dual is expressed with the suffix ((a) for the nominative and (ay) for the accusative and genitive (59). An example of this dual ending shift is the change from (مُعَلِّمَان) (two teachers) to (مُعَلِّمَان) due to phonetic changes in vowel sounds (60). The reason for the shift in the dual's final vowel (from ā to ī) is explained as a way to avoid a sequence of similar or continuous vowel sounds (61) (Salah El-Din Al-Munjid, 1978).

5.3. Case Inflection (الإعراب):

Case inflection is studied in Arabic morphology as a suffix because it represents a change in the word's form based on its syntactic role (62). Since Arabic classification of nouns relies heavily on case inflection, it is a critical feature after number and gender in linguistic analysis (63). Western

scholars examine case inflection as a "morpheme" that attaches to the end of the word, marking a new perspective on Arabic case system (Brockelmann, 1977).

5.4. Determination (Definiteness and Indefiniteness):

6. Derivation of Nouns:

It is important to note that the topic of derived nouns was not included in Brockmann's study of noun structures. Instead, he deferred this after completing his study of verbs. His analysis was limited to the active participle, passive participle, and the verbal noun, excluding other common derived forms discussed in Arabic morphology.

As previously mentioned, the study of Arabic morphology by Western scholars is largely formal in nature. Brockmann explains that the derivation of nouns in Arabic typically involves adding certain affixes such as the *mīm* (م) or long vowel shifts, such as the stressed vowel *kasra* (كسرة) or elongation of vowels. This approach to derivation contrasts with the modern morphological view in which words change from one category to another through the application of a morphological template (65).

6.1. The *Mīm* of the Active Participle (اسم الفاعل):

In Arabic, the *mīm* has a special role because it precedes many derived noun forms. As stated by Sibawayh: "The *mīm* is primarily added to forms like *maf'ūl*, *mif'āl*, *maf'al*, *mif'al*, and *muf'al*" (66). Brockmann specifically studied the formation of the active participle from quadriliteral or higher verbs, stating that "an active participle is derived from these verbs by adding a *mīm* at the beginning, and the *u* (مُفْعَل) is the typical vowel marking the nominative case in Arabic" (67). However, in Arabic morphology, the active participle of non-triliteral verbs is formed by replacing the present tense prefix with a *mīm* and modifying the preceding vowel, such as in *mudahrij* (مُدْخِرٌ) from *yudahriju* (يُدْخِرُ). Brockmann's analysis of the *mīm* in the active participle is based on the Western approach of affixation, while Arabic morphology involves more complex vowel shifts.

6.2. The *Mīm* of the Passive Participle (اسم المفعول):

Brockmann discusses the passive participle in Arabic by stating that "it is derived from the root verb by adding a *mīm* at the beginning of the word, which takes the same vowel movement as the active participle" (69). For example, the passive participle of a verb like *qatala* (قَتَلَ) becomes *maktūl* (مَقْتُول) by adding the *mīm* and keeping the same vowel changes. The passive participle is generally formed from triliteral or higher verbs by adding the *mīm* prefix, though in Arabic morphology, it is derived similarly to the active participle but with different vowel patterns, such as *mukram* (مُكْرَم) or *mu'zam* (مُعْظَم).

6.3. Extension of the Past Tense for Deriving the Verbal Noun (المصدر):

Arabic triliteral roots have specific, though somewhat intuitive, sources, whereas non-triliteral verbs generally follow a more regular, predictable pattern. Brockmann mentions that "extending the middle vowel in the past tense of non-triliteral verbs is the typical way to form the verbal noun" (71). For example, the verb *akhraja* (أَخْرَجَ) (he brought out) can derive the noun *ikhraj* (إِخْرَاج) by elongating the middle vowel. The extension of vowels, particularly the contrast between short and long vowels, plays a role in the derivation of the noun form (73).

In cases like *iftā'ala* (اِفْتَعَلَ) or *istaf'ala* (اِسْتَفْعَلَ), the noun forms are derived by elongating the middle vowel, producing forms like *ifti'āl* (اِفْتِئَالَ) and *istif'āl* (اِسْتِفْئَالَ). Brockmann makes exceptions for verbs that are formed with doubled consonants in the active voice, such as *fa'ala* (فَعَّلَ), which results in nouns like *tafkīr* (تَفْكِير) from *fakkara* (فَكَّرَ).

Conclusion

Brockmann's approach to the structure of nouns is heavily influenced by a formalist and agglutinative view, derived from his study of Western languages, and he attempts to apply this model to Arabic, which is primarily a synthetic, inflected language. His studies of noun derivation are mostly based on affixation, using additions such as *mīm*, *kasra*, and vowel lengthening to modify word structures. However, Arabic morphology traditionally involves more complex rules, including vowel changes and word templates that are not always consistent with Western agglutinative models.

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