SYNTACTIC CHANGE in ENGLISH and ARABIC :

A Contrastive Study

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ABSTRACT :

Syntactic change can be defined as the change in syntactic structre of a particular language during the passage of time . In this respect , diachronic syntax is considered as a type of comparative syntax , where the comparison takes place between the different stages of the language , old , middle and modern according to English , rather than between different variations of that language during the same period of time .

In this brief introduction to the subject one can look at syntactic change according to two approaches , the first , the external language approach in which language is studied as an entity , and the second which is the internal approach where the individual properties are important . However , following Lightfoot (1979-1999) syntactic change and language acquisition are seen to be connected .

In the theortical part of the study , the researcher tries to find out the causality of syntactic change and its types in English and Arabic ,in addition to the relationship between language acquisition and language change. Some examples chosen from different stages of the two languages are provided in the practical part.

تغيير منطقي في اللغة الإنجليزية والعربية:

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الملخص :

يمكن تعريف التغيير النحوي على أنه التغيير في البنية النحوية للغة معينة أثناء مرور الوقت. في هذا الصدد ، يُنظر إلى النحو غير المتزامن كنوع من التركيب المقارن ، حيث تتم المقارنة بين المراحل المختلفة للغة ، القديمة والمتوسطة والحديثة وفقًا للغة الإنجليزية ، وليس بين الاختلافات المختلفة لتلك اللغة خلال نفس الفترة من زمن .

في هذه المقدمة الموجزة للموضوع ، يمكن للمرء أن ينظر إلى التغيير النحوي وفقًا لمنهجين ، الأول ، نهج اللغة الخارجية الذي تدرس فيه اللغة ككيان ، والثاني هو النهج الداخلي حيث تكون الخصائص الفردية مهمة. ومع ذلك ، يُنظر إلى التغيير النحوي بعد 1979-1999 (Lightfoot) واكتساب اللغة على أنهما متصلان.

في الجزء النظري من الدراسة يحاول الباحث معرفة سببية التغيير النحوي وأنواعه باللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية ، بالإضافة إلى العلاقة بين اكتساب اللغة وتغير اللغة. يتم توفير بعض الأمثلة المختارة من مراحل مختلفة من اللغتين في الجزء العملي.

CHAPTER ONE

Syntactic Change in English

1.1 Definitions

Language change, as it has been defined by Kroch (1989:81), is a social phenomenon occurs through communication. It is the process of failure in the transmission across time of linguistic features. This transmission may take place within group of speakers who, for particular reasons , replace one feature for another in their usage.

As far as syntactic change is concerned, Mair and Leech (2008:2), define this valuable type of linguistic change as the development that is embedded in a context, where semantic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors assume the roles of alteration. In fact, Linguists, like Lyons (1981:141), classify the history of English change into three stages, claiming that due to some political , cultural and even economic reasons, English gradually changes during the passage of time . Old English, the first stage (450-1100)AD, was a synthetic language with a rich inflectional morphology and relatively flexible word –order. Middle English (1100-1450), however, was highly simplified and word -order had become less flexible. English , gradually, changed into a type of analytical language using prepositions and a relatively fixed word-order, the English of our days or the Modern English, in order to convey the meaning of lost inflectional endings.

1.2 Factors of Syntactic Change

This section tries to study the causality of syntactic change, by discussing the different approaches that saved no efforts to answer , why a language changes .In the connection of this , Mair and Leech (2008,2), see that when one comes to analyze language change in general , and syntactic change , in particular , there will be two approaches   .

First ; where the focus is on the diachronic change of syntax , syntactic change can be seen as an abrupt or a discrete change of structure, .For example , the generativist tradition of Lightfoot's works (1979-1999) .Second ; when the focus is the survey of recorded data in the linguistic and social context , syntactic change appears to be a gradual process of development . For example, the grammalicalization theory, (Hopper and Traugott ,2003).

Lyons (1981:132) argues that this phenomenon operates with separate distinctions , between sound-change, on the one hand, and grammatical and lexical changes, on the other, and between internal and external factors.He also refers to one early explanation of language change comes from the assumption that all changes are towards something simpler , however, he adds , that this cannot explain the cause since simplicity has not really been defined.

According to Traugott (1984 :24) , the internal approach includes synchronic works on various kinds of iconicity and pattern match , in which motivations of syntactic change could be experiential , cognitive or perceptual . The same approach can also include diachronic works in which syntactic change is studied as a result of language acquisition. Hollmann (2009:551) mentions that the idea that grammatical change occurs when children acquire their first language and that they come up with a set of rules differ from their parents'. The idea was first associated by Lightfoot (1979) and his approach (acquisition-based grammar change), which believes that grammar changes abruptly between the consecutive generations and that language acquisition and syntactic change are radically connected.

It is worth observing , in this respect, that Harris and Compbell (1995:19) offer some outs spoken criticism , in addition to that syntactic change cannot be sudden but it occurs over along period of time, they suggest the theory of grammaticaliation calling that (errors) or changes that a child makes are of a totally different kind of how syntactic change really happens , Furthermore , the theory 'refers to the role of prestige , as an important work in sociohistorical linguistics, considering that children in fact do not enjoy that type of social prestige in the speech community, that might stimulate other members to copy them.

Hollmann (2009:552) adds that Chomsky and his followers believe that grammar grows in a child when it comes to acquire his/ her mother language from certain initial state '**universal grammar'** and that languages have a single basic order elements. Syntactic structure of them could be changed in terms of addition, loss or reordering of fixed rules that determine a speakers' competence.

In this connection , the main idea in historical linguistics , according to (Lightfoot , 1979) , is that grammatical change occurs when a child aquires his mother language , and through the process of acquisition , he / she comes up with a different set of rules from the previous generation .This claim is intimately associated with Chomsky`s view of '**Language Acquision** ' , in which he believes that this process is complete by the end of ' **the critical age '**.Hence ,this suggests that syntactic change must occur in young language learner . (Ibid , 551) .

By contrast , there are the 'External Approaches ` , Traugott (1984 :35) clarifies that such approaches refer to certain factors arising out of language use in community, like human acts and actions, particularly , they include processes like borrowing of constructions and convergence.

Many works in diachronic generative linguistics , Hroarsdottir (2009 , 123) has mentioned , advocate that external _language affect variation and change in the recorded internal_ language since they change the primary linguistic data for the next generation of speakers .

1.3   Types of Syntactic Change

The goal of the section is to discuss a number of different types of syntactic change as they were defined by Harris and Campbell (1995:61) :

1.3.1. Reanalysis

Reanalysis is 'the mechanism which changes the syntactic structure without involving any modification of the surface manifestation , in other words , Trask (1996:137) tries to clarify the idea , he adds that it is a change in the syntactic structure resulting from replacing certain unfamiliar form by a more familiar one. Anderson (1973:15) believes that reanalysis is the technique leads to grammaticalization , and for all other types of syntactic change . One of the most important examples of reanalysis, in English, is ' Modal Auxiliaries, that change during time from being lexical verbs to auxiliaries . In the late middle English , Trask (1996:138) , discusses , how ' **have** , was changed from a transitive verb meaning ' **possess**' in to a perfective participle as in ' **I have gone home'** . However; in other constructions such as **' I have a couple of ribes broken'** there is no idea that the speaker did the breaking , and this indicates that the identical construction has serval non - stative   uses , as ' **I have my money stolen'**.

1.3.2. Word Order

Bauer (1994:271) shows that all languages differentiate between   subject and object. This distinction   is   represented in terms of word- order . Old English had an extensive   system   of   case   marking , or word order . In the embedded clauses, the old English speaker used to place the verb in the second position , subject - verb object as in:

    S   V   O

1. **He geseah pone mann**

He   saw   the   man   (ibid)

But , if the sentence started in an element like ' **them** , or ' **ne** , which meant **' not** , the order will be verb _ subject _ object as in:

2. **Pa sende se cyning pone disc** .

~   **then sent the king the dish**   ~   **then the king sent the dish**.   (Ibid.)

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The word order in (2) is still used, in special restrictions , in Modern English' as in :

        (V)   (S)   (O)

3. **Rarely have they ever deceived me**. (Trask, 1996:141)

The version of S-V is quite clear in a construction when the direct object was a pronoun as in :-

S   O   V

4. Héo   hine   lapde
She   him   advised

∼ she advised him .   (Bauer, 1994: 272)

Many evidences indicate that the early form of Germanic , from which English descended , was that of   SOV. However , this order was developed , gradually , in the middle English and had become the way of marking grammatical relations.   (Ibid .)

1.3.3. Grammaticalization

Harris and Campbell (1995:19) argue that grammaticalization is the process of language   change   in which words that represent actions , verbs or nouns , can change during time to some grammatical markers, such as affixes or prepositions, etc. In other words, it creates the new function words .Trask (1996:144) gives an example, in this respect , that the verb ' **go**, in **I'm going home**, or , ' **I'm going to leave** , in both constructions it is an action verb , While in a construction like,' **you're going to like the story'** , one can notice that , ' **be going to'** , has totally lost its original meaning ' of action' and become a grammatical marker of the near future . For Hopper   and   Traugott (2003 : 15) , it is clear that forms go through many series of transitions and that they can not change abruptly from a particular category into another . However , they suggest that   grammaticalization can be understood as **Expansion** or **Reduction** , the expansion type of grammaticalization on the first hand , observes that a construction might increase its collocational range , as in the example of **' be going to'** above **,** which has been develped in Modern English to a future marker that first was collocated with an action verb before the extension to a stative one . Reduction

type , on the other hand , is refers to the type that tends to focus on form , and all the other changes in the language that depend mainly on form ,such as the phonetic attraction .

1.4. Auxiliaries

Lightfoot (1979) justifies his belief of the sudden change of syntactic change, that the next generation is not able to deal with such different verbs . In fact , Old English did not have modal auxiliaries , though their ancestors were available in the language , they used to be called 'Preterit _ present , verbs. Those verbs lost the past- tense meaning of their past-forms , as in' **might** , and '**would** , that no longer, were used as the past of '**may** , and '**will,** respectively. (Gelderen , 2016: 45).

The development of auxiliaries from lexical verbs to functional elements was a key ingredient in the history of English . For Zwart (2005 : 11) suggests that auxiliaries should have been characterized in Old English as functional elements exactly as in Modern English .He adds that what had happened is not that an auxiliary has acquired a particular function but that the lexical verb has lost its freedom of movement when English replaced the object shift by VP_ movement .

1.5. Syntactic change : **Examples and Discussion**

This section is going to deal with some practical examples chosen from different stages of English history. Actually ,Old English was synthetic in its rich use of verbale and nominal endings , however the word order during that stage was freer than that of the present stage .Gelderen (2016 : 36) gives the following example ;

1.**Nu scylun hergan hefaenricaes uarad metudas maecti ... ***
~ Now shall praise heavenkingdom`s guardian Lord`s might ...

~Now we must honor the guardian of heaven , the Lord`s power ...

The fact that English has changed from a synthetic language into an analytic one can be realized by comparing the lines above in which the first line , which represents Old English , lacks the grammatical words ; pronouns , articles and prepositions such as **the** , **of** and **we** , it also has made up the fewer use of the auxiliaries by the endings on verbs and nouns .(Ibid. 37)

Word order was quite flexibile in Old English because of the inflected nature of verbs , nouns and adjectives that indicates the relationships between the elements of the sentence . Main independent clause tends sometimes to have a **verb _second order** , where finite verb occurs in the second or third position regardless of what might come first . while the non finite verb is to be at the end . In subordinate clause , verb tends to be final . However , those rules were always broken specially in poetry .For example in Beowulf , main clauses have verb _ final or verb _ initial order while the dependent clauses may have verb _ second order . (Baure , 1994 :64)

Gelderen (2016 : 42) , refers to this in the following example in which the finite verb is underlined while the subject is bolded ;

2.Des ilces geares <u>com</u> **se abbot heanri of angli** after asterne to burch .

~this same year came the abbot Henry of Anglia after Easter to Peterborough .

~ in the same year , Abbot t Henry came to Peterbought after Easter . (Matthew 12 .25 , Rushworth Glosses)

The adverbial " des ilces geares " initiates the sentence and " com " the finite verb comes in the second position .The example here shows the verb followed by the subject . (ibid.43)

The next example shows the second position of the finite verb and the last position of the non- finite one , if a clause has more than one verb , they will be underlined and bolded respectively ; (ibid .44)

3.swa scean geong guma gode **gewyrcean ...**

So shall young man good perform ...

Such should young man accomplish . (Beowulf 18 _19)

According to auxiliaries , it`s believed  by Bauer (1994 : 98) , that  Old English didn`t have the sequence of auxliaries as in ; " **it may have been written early" ,** and that such sequence didn`t start till the Middle stage of English **.**Howevre , it is still argued that modals in Old English were lexical verbs , since they could occur on their own as in the following ;

4.He on mode wear forht on ferhte ; no py ar fram **meahte .**

He on mind became afraid on mind ; not through that before from **might** .

Fear came to his mind ; nowhere had he power to move .(Beowulf 753-4)

The difference   between auxiliaries and lexical verbs emerged during the middle stage of English development , namely that only the auxiliary verb undergoes movement to form a question .(Gelderen , 2016 : 64).

According to Mair and leech (2008:1) syntactic change is understood , in different way , It is a slow process that takes sometime hundreds of years to take place and that syntactic change of present days or what they call 'current changes' can hardly be noticed or stigmatized . A list of such changes that have happened during the 20th century will be given briefly:

1. Being inspired by the USA usage there has been a tendency to the use of   '   **Man dative   subjunctive** ' as in ' *I demand that he take part in the conference*, .

2. Elimination of some modal Auxiliaries like '**shall ,** as a future manker and '**ought to**' as an obligation manker. (Ibid.)

3. The use of some auxiliary- like verbs like **'want**, as in ' *you're sick , you want to see a doctor*. (Fischer, 2014: 142)

4. Getting more progressive , there has been a clear shift over time from '**to do,** into '-ing, specially with '**start,** as in '*he started enjoying his new job '* . (Ibid.)

5. Rise of '**Get- passive** , the passive from in English usually formed with '**to do,** . However , there is ' **get** , passive . But during the last 50 years , there has been a rapid change towards the '**get passive** , .For example , '*he got promoted* , instead of ' *he was promoted*,. (Ibid).

6. The use of some frequency adverbs with auxiliary verbs even if the speaker does not intend to show emphasis , as in ' *I never have hurt you* ,(Mair and Leech, 2008:3)

7. The use of '**do** , for '**have ,** as in '**have you any car?**'

- '**No, I haven't any car** . rised into ; '**Do you have any car**?' or '*Have you got any car?'*

- '*No , I don't have an car .,*

- *No, I haven't got any car.* (Ibid)

8. The use of '**less** , with countable nouns instead of '**fewer** , as in ' **less people**, (Ibid.)

9. The use of **s-genitive** instead of '**of –from** , with the inanimate nouns , as in ; '*The book's title* '. (Ibid.4)

CHAPTER TWO

Syntactic Change in Arabic

2.1. Definitions and Explanations

The system of Arabic linguistics constitutes one of the main linguistic traditions in the whole world . In fact , Abdultwab (1983:5) considers the language as alive phenomenon that can live , die and change during the passage of time. It is believed that linguistic change , in general , is that alteration that occurs in the language because of certain

internal and external factors. In other words, it is the transmission of a particular linguistic phenomenon from state into another , during a particular stage of its history .

For AlSamurraai (1995:113) suggests that languages change is partly a matter of being influenced by other languages and partly a matter of some political , cultural and economic reasons . However , a particular view about syntactic change , in Arabic, is presented by Ibn AlSarraj (2009 :95) who considers that this type of linguistic change happens because of some obligatory factors which includes , in addition to the previous ones, geographic , social and psychological factors . The development of the metaphoric expressions that adults use , is also of a special value in the process of change .

On the basis of the general approaches of understanding the relationship between language acquisition and language change , Abdultwab (1983: 67) speaks about '**Analogy theory**, in which the relation between form and meaning is governed by '**Regularity**'. For example , when a child does not know the word '**brush'** uses a word that expresses the function like ,'**cleaner** ,. Ibn Alsarraj (2009 :98) adds , in this respect , that this theory may be central in the level of semantics , but in syntax ,it is no doubt different. Hence , linguists like Alsamarrai: (1995:78) refers that children who acquire their first language do not pay attention to syntactic patterns , they hear the spoken language around them , and as an attempt to communicate , they use (one-two) utterances that lack inflections , prepositions and conjunctions.

It has been argued , that syntactic change , to happen , needs a big deal of conflict and challenge during long period of time , so that if it took place in a particular language , it would be a dangerous reference for the end of that language and for collapse of all its linguistic system.(Ibid.)

Abdultwab (1983:115) , Darqawi (2014:1) and others , agree that the language that had a promise to be well protected by glorious hands :

((انا نحن نزلنا الذكر وانا له لحافظون))   (الحجر _ 9)

~ **"Behold ,it is we ourselves who have bestowed the glorious quran and we will assuredly guard it"**[1] (Pickthall 1983:704)

Arabic language has been classified into **Classic** or **Quranic Arabic** , and **Modern Standard Arabic** , which is used in newspaper , radio broadcasts , Tv, movies ,etc. The latter differ from the Quranic language that it consists of many new words which might have been borrowed from other languages according to some technical or political factors. (Darqawi,2014:85)

Syntactic change in Arabic , can be defined as the change that takes place , not in the structure of the sentence , but when a particular pattern or a construction gives a function that differs from the function it used to express , or gains a new function , in addition to the one it already had. (Ibid.)

2.2 Types of Syntactic Change

2.2.1. Reanalysis

Trask (1996:134) refers to Arabic saying , that in an example like the following :

2. موسى طالبٌ ~ Musa is a student.

موسى هو طالبٌ ~ Musa is a student.

هو طالبٌ ~ He is a student.

' **he** ' ' هو ' is a pronoun , which is still a pronoun in " هو طالب " , but this pronoun has been reanalyzed depending on its meaning into some other function that was formally impossible , but recently has been normal as in :

3. "انا هو الطالب الذي حدثتك عنه محمد"

---

[1] Translation of all quranic verses are based on (pickthal , 1983).

~ I am the student that Muhammad told you about.   (Ibid.)

2.2.2. Word-order

Arabic is of flexible word order . Frequently , a speaker uses a verb_ subject –object order in what grammarians call '**Verbal sentence** ' and he can freely shift from that into , subject –verb_object in a type of sentence called '**Nominal sentence** , as (Abdultwab, 1983:124)

In:

4.   محمد ضرب علياً   (Normal)

~ Muhammed   hit   Ali

    (S)   (V) (O)

5. ضربَ محمدٌ علياً   (Verbal)

   (O) (S)   (V)

~   Muhammad hit Ali   (Ibid.)

The speaker can choose between those two orders according to the style of the message he tries to convey. Actually, Arabic is more flexible than this, since the speaker is able , sometimes to change the position of the object for the same reason , as in :

6.   محمدٌ علياً ضربَ

    (V)   (O) (S)

~ Muhammed   hit Ali

  (V)   (S) (O)

7.   علياً محمدٌ ضرب

    (V) (S)   (O)

~ Muhammed hit Ali   (Ibid.)

2.2.3 Grammaticalization

Darqawi (2014:87) talks about " **كم** " 'how many, which is used at the beginning of an **interrogative sentence** , to ask about the countable nouns as in:

8.   كم قلماً لديك

~   How many pens do you have?

During the passage of time , there has been a new function to   كم so , that it can be used to show '**exclamatory sentence** , as in:

9.   كم انا مسرور !

   How much I am happy!   (Ibid)

2.3. Syntactic change : Examples and Discussion

In this section , most of the   examples have been chosen from Glorious Quran . The first example is in **word –order** type,

10.(28\ فاطر)   **"انما يخشى الله من عباده العلماء "**

~   **…The erudite among His bondmen fear Allah alone…**

Actually , in this glorious aya there is the item " **انما** " ' Which refers to exception , that calls for the use of this word –order ;   الله, Allah,   (ﷺ)   here is the object which precedes the subject (العلماء) 'scientists'.

11.   (الضحى\9)   **"فأما اليتيم فلا تقهر"**

~ **Therefore the orphan oppress not.**

Here , one can see that the object اليتيم has preceded   the verb تقهر .

As far as Reanalysis Mechanism in Arabic   is concerned Ibn Alsarraj (2009: 36) refers to   the use of ' الا, . In fact this item had many   functions such as :

_ حرف استفتاح initialing item that gives the sense of "**offer**" as in :

12.الا هبي بصحنك فاصبحينا   ولاتبقى خمور الاندرينا

(عمرو بن كلثوم التغلبي)

Don`t you come  with your plate ,so we`ll wake up and don`t keep the Andrina wine

_ Another function is **denying** and **Rebuke** , (التوبيخ والانكار) as in

13. الا تستحي ؟ !

~   Don't you be shame ?!

However , during time only the latter two types remain in the language.

At the beginning of the chapter , there was the definition of syntactic change in Arabic ,that one of its important techniques   is that a structure can change its function just like the verb' انبرى, **starts,** which used to initial a Nominal sentence , where the predicative is verbal clause , as in

14.   انبرى الطفل يلعب

The child started playing .

انبرى has charged   its function , to initial a Nominal sentence , but the predicate this time is a prepositional phrase as in :

15.   انبرى محمد في عمله

~   Mahmmad started his job. (Al darqawi , 2014 : 87)

Finally, one of the most valuable phenomena of syntactic change in Arabc is the 'Elimination' of certain structures , just like '**الالف**, which was used at the end of , بين , to give the meaning of , **بينما,** 'While ,as in

16. بينا كنت اسير لمحتك

~ When I was walking I glanced you.

Another type of , **الالف** ,was eliminated during time , is that , الالف which used to be put at the end of a proper noun to show **waling** over the dead , as in **Oh Hussaina** " واوحسينا " "

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to investigate the phenomenon of syntactic change in English and Arabic .It has been found that the two languages are almost similar according to the types of changes that have taken place during the stages of their development .

From the present data , it has been clarified that word order in Old English was much more flexible , this corresponds to the fact that Old English was chiefly a synthetic language , with cases and inflections , opposed to the Modern English which has more articles , prepositions and more bound and constrained word order .

On the other hand , Arabic is described as a stable language , though linguists differ on whether this feature really exists , because its syntax has not changed for about fourteen centuries and what was discussed in the body represents few current changes in certain functions that were already existent in the basic syntactic system of Arabic . However , the types of those simple changes in Arabic almost resemble those in English .

Methodologically speaking , two approches have been dealt with to analyze how a syntactic change could occure , the first one was the acquisition - based theory of change , by Lightfoot (1979-1999) who believed that syntactic change is discrete in that syntax is newly constructed by each generation so it is a process driven by language acquisition . The second approach , was adopted by Kroch (1989)and Harris and Campbell (1995) that syntactic change is a gradual , grammar could gradually adapt to the new linguistic system through a series of perceptions in different syntactic environments .

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