VERB FORMATION IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC: COMPARING AND CONTRASTING

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Abstract. The research deals with the problems of comparative analysis of word-formation in English and Arabic. The authors examine the systems of verbal word-formation in the languages that belong to different language families and have different structure. The analysis is carried out on the basis of comparative typological method with the aim of finding universal and different traits in these systems.

This article discusses English and Arabic affixal verbs in terms of content. The choice of this object of study is due to the significance of the verb among the other units of the language and significance of word formation, which has the most important place in the process of enriching vocabulary of the language. Affixation is the most productive means of word derivation in English and one of the main ways of morphological derivation in Arabic, along with inner inflection and compounding. Word formation systems of English and Arabic verbs become the subject of a comprehensive contrastive analysis..

Keywords: morphology, word formation, comparative studies, genetically distant languages, English, Arabic.

1.   Introduction

The problem of comparative study of both related and genetically distant languages remains relevant. On the one hand, even closely related languages have structural differences, on the other hand, it is possible to compare phenomena of the same kind in non-related languages. Such studies are conducted to identify typological similarities and differences in the systems of these languages on the basis of comparative and typological analysis. This helps to establish the characteristics of both the first and second languages. The results obtained in the course of such studies are important not only as a contribution to the development of the language science, but also have great practical value, as they can be used in language teaching. In many language universities and in some schools of our country not one, but two or even three foreign languages are taught. In the process of teaching students a foreign language, it seems natural to take into account the peculiarities of the native language of the students for better perception, comprehension and understanding of a language phenomenon. However, difficulties in learning foreign language speech mechanisms are due not only to interference from native language of students, but also from the second foreign language, studied in parallel. It is necessary to prevent and overcome language interference from both the native and second foreign language at all levels. V.G. Fatkhutdinova mentions that for the modern linguistics there is an indisputable fact that the derivation opens the great opportunities for conceptual, cognitive and ethno-cultural interpretation of reality. According to T. I. Vendina, it helps to understand which elements of extra linguistic reality and in what way are marked as derivational, why they are retained by consciousness, because the very choice of a real phenomenon as an object of formative determination indicates its significance for native speakers [1]. During Arabic language classes it is necessary to pay attention to the juxtaposition of the native and the Arabic language. For students who are also studying English, it will be useful to compare English and Arabic at different levels, while studying different language phenomena. Foreign language classes become more effective when the students' knowledge of other languages is taken into account. Students always know at least one language – their native one, and it may help the teacher to predict the difficulties and possible mistakes of the students and thus avoid them. But it is even more effective to compare the new foreign language with other foreign languages the students have learnt, because the interference between two foreign languages is often stronger than the interference between the native language and a foreign one [2].

2.   Methods

Research methods were determined by the goal, objectives and were complex. At different stages of the work, the methods of linguistic observation, description, component analysis, comparative analysis of language material, as well as the method of functional analysis in determining the semantic characteristics of derivative words were used. Taking as a basis the comparative-typological method, we conducted a study from the position of universal-differential approach developed by Z.Z. Gatiatullina, the initial position of which is as follows: just as the close and similar is determined on the basis of the identification of at least one matching element, whether in semantics, structure or functioning, the different and dissimilar can be revealed by determining at least one different element in relation to semantics, structure and functioning [3]. The comparison method compares unrelated languages in a statistical, synchronous cross-section. The typological method is aimed at identifying isomorphic and allomorphic features in languages.

3.   Results And Discussion

English and Arabic differ from each other genealogically, typologically and areally. English is one of the most widely spoken Indo-European languages. According to the morphological classification, the English language is inflectional, but among other Germanic languages, it is distinguished by the presence of clear signs of analytical system: the main means of expressing grammatical relations are service words (prepositions, auxiliary verbs) and word order.

As for the Arabic language, it belongs to the Semitic languages (one of the branches of the Afro Asian or Semitic language family), to the South-Central group. Arabic is an inflectional language, with elements of fusion and agglutination. Now, Russian linguists prefer to describe the way of the internal inflection as an agglutinative way to connect discontinuous consonant roots with the same discontinuous vocalic affix "diffix" (mixed cases – confix, transfix, etc.) Hence the term "discontinuous" morphemes. Accordingly, the typological characteristics of the Arabic language change in the direction of agglutinative technique of compounding morphemes. According to the syntactical classification, Arabic is the language of the synthetic system.

In our study, we encountered a number of difficulties due to the fact that English and Arabic are unrelated, belong to different language families and are not close in structural and typological terms. In addition, the formation and development of linguistics in the Eastern and Western cultural areas went largely their own way, reflecting the characteristics of both their languages and their cultures, and even the same linguistic phenomena could be interpreted differently in them. Despite the fact that in second half of the XX century there appeared the opinions of modern Arab linguists and European Arabists, including the Soviet ones (Rafiq Abdullah al-Abdullah [4], Rima Sabe Ayoub [5], G. Sh. Sharbatov [6], V. P. Starinin [7] and others) that in the Arabic language, there should be pointed out the noun, adjective, name, numeral, pronoun, verb, participle, adverb and function words like in European languages, this point of view is not yet wide spread. English verb has a highly developed system of tenses, the opposition of the active voice and the passive voice, the opposition of the Indicative, the Conditional and the Imperative mood. These are the main verb categories that embrace the entire system of verb in general. In addition, there are categories of person and number – inside paradigmatic categories. Whereas the Arabic verb has the grammatical forms of aspect, tense, voice, person, number, gender and mood [8].

In English and Arabic, the ratio of word formation and inflection is different. The range of word-formation types, their productivity and derivational activity are determined by the specifics of the lexical database [9]. Word formation is the formation of words, called derivatives and compounds, usually based on single-rooted words according to existing patterns and models in the language by means of affixation, composition, conversion and other formal means. The word inflection is the formation for each word (except for the invariant parts of speech) of its paradigm, i.e. all its forms and all analytical forms. When inflecting, the word (lexeme) identity is not violated (i.e. we are dealing with the same word in different grammatical forms), unlike word formation, where from one word other different from it words are formed. The border between word formation and inflection is not absolute in any language, as intermediate phenomena are possible. However, in English, this border is still more clearly visible, while in Arabic it is almost impossible to trace it. For example, many of the verbal foundations constitute the subject of grammar: there are clear rules for building these foundations and outlines the range of meanings of each of them. But the words formed by such models, in most cases have to be given in the dictionary, as the general meaning gets different shades. Thus, in many cases, attribution of word models to word formation and inflection or their division into "grammatical" and "dictionary" cannot be carried out. The same models should be considered in grammar as regularly formed forms and at the same time they are also given in the dictionary as words with their special meanings [10].

Before starting to talk about Arabic affixes, we need to define the concept of the root, because in Arabic and English, these concepts are not completely the same. The root is the carrier of the real, lexical meaning of the word, its central part, which remains unchanged in the processes of morphological derivation. In English, vowel sounds are included in the root. As for Arabic, vowels vary depending on the grammatical form of the word, i.e. the basics of different paradigms have a different set and distribution of vowels. Vowels, primarily short vowels, in Arabic represent a grammatical element that determines the grammatical form of a word. Thus, in order to distinguish in a word or words that form a paradigm the part that is the carrier of the real meaning of a group of words, and to separate it from the part of the word that is the carrier of the grammatical meaning, it is necessary to exclude not only prefixes and suffixes, but also vowels. The group of remaining consonant sounds is called the root of the word.

The role of affixes in English and Arabic is different. In Semitic languages, including Arabic, there is a complex system of word formation with the help of affixes and mainly vocalization of the root. Among morphemes in the Arabic language traditionally prefixes (preceded by the root) are pointed out, suffixes (following the root), infixes (within the root) and diffixes or transfixes (vowels, dividing the root). The main criterion for this division is the position of these affixes relative to the root. However, as T. A. Vavichkina suggests in her dissertation thesis, devoted to the comparative study of the morphological structure of the verb in Arabic and Russian, such classification is not entirely accurate. First of all, it concerns affixes involved in the formation of the verb tense forms and expressing grammatical meanings of the face, number, gender and mood. In Arabic they are called prefixes and suffixes [11, 10, 7], despite the fact that they form a paradigm without changing the lexical meaning. According to Vavichkina, these morphemes should be called inflections, the distinctive feature of which is the ability to stand not only after the root but also in front of it [12]. However, we in our study adhere to the traditional point of view.

There are many ways to form new words in English, but not all of them are used equally. Such methods as word production and composition, give the main number of coinages. In the process of word production stems of the words are used as building material, and affixes that are solely belonging to the word production, and deprived, in

contrast to the word, of syntactic independence. Affixes are morphemes that have acquired corresponding abstract meanings inherent in the whole class of words in their development, and which, joining the basis of the word, change its meaning. This meaning is often more or less abstracted. Moreover, different affixes have different degrees of abstraction. The sign of distraction is a necessary condition for the use of affix in the creation of new words, because it creates prerequisites for the assignment of the formed word to a certain lexical-semantic category, a group of words.

In Arabic, affixes are more polysemantic than in English. This phenomenon reflects a pattern, long ago noted in linguistic studies: the more word forms are pointed out in the language, the less meanings are associated with each of them and, conversely, the fewer inflectional forms in the structure of the language, the more elements of meaning each form transmits [13]. In English, for example, there are 35 prefixes involved in the formation of verbs, and 4 suffixes. In the Arabic language there are only 4 prefixes and 1 infix involved in the verbal morphology. That is, each prefix of the Arabic language must express several meanings. There is no suffixal verbal word formation in the Arabic language, suffixes are involved only in verb conjugation, i.e. in inflection.[14,15]

However, in the Arabic language, there are, in addition to affixes, other ways of word formation, typical only of Semitic languages and absent in English. This is hemination and reduplication. Hemination (doubling) of the second root sound is used to express the intensity, amplification of the action, which is symbolically indicated by the strengthening of the indigenous consonant. Also, with the help of a combination of formed basis with the meaning of "becoming of some color or getting some external quality." By reduplication of a two-way cell, extended stems are formed with the meaning of the intensity or frequency of the action of the stem, as well as with the meaning of the stronger degree of the property or state that is indicated by the initial stem.

4. Summary

Suffixal word formation has an important meaning in the word formation system of two languages. It is productive and in demand in both English and Arabic, although it has different characteristics.

Unlike Arabic, English has a large number of verbal models. Some of them are productive, some are not used. Arabic has relatively few suffixal verbal models, but the use of them regularly, their derivatives are an integral part of Arabic grammar (indicator of time, number, gender, etc.). while English derivatives represent a transition from one part of speech to another.

5. Conclusions

Our study revealed isomorphic and allomorphic properties of the category of affixal word formation in the English and Arabic languages. Isomorphism is manifested in the following:

1) The category of affixal word formation is inherent in verbs both in English and in Arabic. Affixal word formation is one of the most important means of coinage of new words, enriching the vocabulary of both languages.

2) In both English and Arabic verbs, the stable part of the word stands out – the stem to which the changeable elements are adjacent.

3) Analyzing the meanings of word-forming models of affixal verbs of English and Arabic, we have revealed some similarities, for example, the common meanings are: to be exposed to what is expressed by the verb stem, to give quality, expressed by the verb stem, to eliminate the phenomenon expressed by the stem.

However, given that English and Arabic are dissimilar and unrelated, it is not surprising that we have found more allomorphic features in our comparison:

1) In English, the verb has a developed system of temporary forms, which are formed almost exclusively analytically. Affixation in the English language is used mainly for word formation, in conjugation its role is insignificant.

2) In Arabic, a large role belongs to the forms of words formed by affixes – inflections and form-forming prefixes and suffixes. The verb clearly stands out for its conjugation for person and time. In conjugation forms, a word represents a predicative relation of a statement with the subject of the action, which is denoted by a suffix or prefix, i.e. the verb necessarily denotes: the person who speaks, the person to whom they address, and the person they are talking about.

3) For the English language the suffixal and prefixal verb derivation is typical, and for the Arabic – prefixal and infixal.

4) Arabic verb word formation is characterized by such phenomena as lengthening of the root vowel, hemination – doubling of the root consonant, reduplication (repetition). These phenomena are unique and not inherent in the English language.

5) In addition, it is necessary to mention the features of the Arabic verbs, which are formed from three, four or five indigenous root consonants of the stem. The verbs of the Arabic language form a group of advanced paradigms that are derived from the first one. The advanced paradigms are formed by the addition of prefixes and infixes to the original stem. In English, there is no such phenomenon; verbs are formed from nouns, adjectives and verbs that attach affixes to themselves.

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