The Role of Morphology in Translation: Arabic Semi – Active Participle Adjectives as an Example

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Abstract:

This paper probes into the realm of morphology and translation. The aim of this descriptive qualitative paper is to examine the effect of the morphology of the semi-active participle adjectives upon the process and product of their translation into English. The analytical model used for the sake of analyzing the data is Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) functional grammar. Data for analysis are taken from al-Samarra'i (2007) and some Quranic verses. The findings showed that the morphology of these adjectives does play a significant role upon their rendering into English in that their case marking does entail meaning differences. It is concluded that forms and functions of these adjectives are highly influential and have a role in the representation of a given text via their meanings on the three metafunctions: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual ones. It is recommended to give a good space for the teaching and learning of the morphological processes in the translation from Arabic into English.

Key words: semi-active participle adjectives, functional grammar, morphology, translation

دور علم الصرف في الترجمة : الصفة المشبهة في اللغة العربية إنموذجاً

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الملخص:-

تسبر هذه الورقة الغور داخل مملكتي علم الصرف و الترجمة و تهدف هذه الورقة الوصفية ذات المنهج الكمي الى تفحص أثر علم صرف الصفة المشبهة باسم الفاعل على عملية و نتاج الترجمة الى اللغة الانكليزية , و لغرض تحليل البيانات تم استخدام النموذج النظري للنحو الوظيفي لهاليدي و ماثيسن (٢٠٠٤). و كانت البيانات المستخدمة لغرض التحليل مأخوذم من السامرائي (٢٠٠٧) و بعض من الايات القرانية و أوضحت النتائج بأن علم صرف هذه الصفات يلعب دوراً بارزاً في التجويل الى اللغة الانكليزية من حيث أنَ حركاتها النحوية تؤثر فعلا في المعنى و من هنا نستنتج بأن صيغ و وظائف هذه الصفات لها الاثر البالغ و بأنَّ لها دوراً في التمثيل النص المعني من خلال معانيها على المستويات الثلاثة و هي الفكرية و التبادلية و النصية. و توصي الدراسة باعطاء مجال واسع لتعليم و تعلّم العمليات الصرفية في الترجمة من اللغة العربية الى الانكليزية .

الكلمات الاساسية: الصفات المشبّهة باسم الفاعل ، النحو الوظيفي ، علم الصرف ، الترجمة

1. Introduction

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 531) state that "language is stratified into semantics, lexicogrammar and some medium of expression". This medium of expression is either spoken or written. Morphology adds a lot to the meaning of discourse, and more important is the fact that "[m]orphology is where all linguistic dimensions come together" (Booij, 2012: 1). For example, in many languages, verbs can take affixes that "carry tense, mood, voice, and person. These affixes are very important in adding cohesion and in showing the boundaries" (Larson, 1984: 403). These boundaries give a signal of the lack of cohesion in a given text.

As for translation, Wilss (1982: 112) asserts that the text-oriented nature of translation necessarily "requires the syntactic, semantic, stylistic and text pragmatic comprehension of the original text by the translator." The importance of meaning in translation has been asserted by many linguists and translation researchers. Under this conception a translator begins with sentences which have meaning in the semantic structure of one language and attempts to construct equivalent sentences using the semantic devices of the second language. Hence, semantic theory, built upon phonology, morphology and syntax, is sufficient to provide an adequate theory of translation. In the introduction of his book, Geert Booij (2012: 1) showed that " [t]he semantic interpretation of complex words is governed by the general principle of compositionality". That is, morphology and semantics are interfaced. In a variety of languages, there are aspectual distinctions that are "often captured entirely via the verbal morphology, without the use of auxiliaries " (Tallerman, 1998: 55). In addition, he argued that "some languages have specific verbal morphology which is used for hypothetical events, termed the SUBJUNCTIVE mood" (ibid). Even syntactic processes are realized by morphological processes such as the passive voice. Arabic is one example of such languages. In Malawi in Africa, for example, there is a Bantu language called Chewa or Chichewa, which "has a true morphological passive, represented by the – edw affix in (Mkazi wa njovu a-na-b-edw-a = the elephant's wife was stolen)" (ibid: 57). In a

study on the relationship between morphology knowledge and translation, Aski (2008: 2) concluded that "Morphology knowledge is an instrument in hand of translator to guess the meaning". Accordingly, morphology plays a significant role in the process of translation across languages. In this paper, this interrelationship of morphology and translation is highlighted by examining the derivations of semi-active participle adjectives.

In the context of language learning, morphological awareness is highly important because it leads to improving other language skills such as comprehension, which is the core of sound and adequate translation. Huseyin Oz (2014:98) defines morphological awareness as the "ability to decode the morphemic structure of words" and the ability to analyze them. He provides some implications for English language teaching on the basis of empirical research findings. Recognizing different morphological forms of the same word in reading texts has an impact on the semantics of words. He concluded that morphological awareness is a critical factor in assisting students to comprehend a given text.

In some languages, there are grammatical features that are seen as marked due to their morphological properties. This results in markedness or unmarkedness on the semantic level. Bale et. al (2011: 197) concluded that 'the morphological diagnostics lend support to the view that plural features are interpreted as augmenting functions". In their crosslinguistic research, it is proved that markedness is of strong relationship with the morphological system of a given language. This issue supports the fact that morphology and semantics are interrelated.

In translating from English into German and vice versa, Stymne et. al (2008: 138) proved that morphology has an impact on the translation process across these two languages. Their research territory was statistical machine translation by utilizing linguistic analyses so as to improve performance whether in human or machine translation. In their study, they presented the effects of morphological analysis in translation between German and English, and they concluded that adding morphological processing improved translation results in both directions

for both text types. Thus, morphology and translation are interrelated, and in this paper this finding is highlighted via investigating the morphology of the semi-active participle adjectives in Arabic.

The semi-active participle adjectives are derivative forms as they are derived from intransitive three - tier verbs. Their basic function is to construe a dominant characteristic or a quality which refers to the doer of the action. According to Katamba (1993: 163), in Arabic as a Semitic language, word formation "takes place internally. Infixing and modification of the root … is the norm". One of these realizations can be found in Arabic derivative forms such as adjectives in the form of an active participle. Such adjectives are derived according to twelve patterns (Al-Naaylah, 1988: 180). The most recurrent ones are the following:

1. (فعلان , e.g. عطشان) (thirsty)
2. (فَعِلْ , e.g. ضَجِرْ) (bored)
3. (فَعَلٌ , e.g. حَسَنٌ) (nice)
4. (فَعْلٌ , e.g. طَلْقٌ) (crisp)
5. (فُعال , e.g. شُجاع) (brave)
6. (فَعال , e.g. جبان) (coward)
7. (فَعيل, e.g. كريم) (generous)

In the context of noun morphology across Arabic and English, Salim (2013) attempts to compare and contrast the two languages in this respect to find out affinities and discrepancies, which help in the context of foreign language teaching. As a Semitic language, Arabic exhibits a basic consonantal root, where different shades of meanings can be attained by variations in these basic roots (for a detailed account of Arabic phonology, morphology and syntax, see Ryding, 2005). One of these shades of meanings is the semi- active participle adjective. This paper attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the forms and functions of the semi-active participle adjectives in Arabic?
2. How do the morphology and use of these adjectives affect the way they are translated into English?

3. How can these adjectives be represented in functional grammar?

Analytical Framework

In his book *Language as Social Semiotic* (1978) , Halliday proposed his systemic functional grammar in an attempt to show how people employ the semiotic resources of language to make meaning and the representation of the social functions. A given sign reflects three metafunctions which are the ideational, interpersonal and the textual ones.

In fact, language provides a theory of human experience, where the lexicogrammar of any language is manipulated to achieve this function (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 29). There are two basic principles at the core of language: "stratification" and "metafunction" (see Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 24ff and 29ff). According to Halliday (1994: 15), "[a] language is a complex semiotic system composed of multiple *levels*, or *strata", including expression (phonetics and phonology), lexicogrammar (content), semantics (content), and context* (adapted from Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 25). Moreover, there are three main functions that are used by   speakers/writers: the ideational function (to represent experience), the interpersonal function (to encode interaction) and the textual function (to organize the previous functions into a coherent whole).According to Halliday, the ideational function is subdivided into two components, i.e., "experiential" and "logical", which convey different ways of meanings. These three metafunctions work together in a given text. These functions or meanings are realized in the lexicogrammar by utilizing different systems of wording according to the context in which they are manipulated.

 For instance, the ideational function is construed to represent experiences, either to encode them (experiential) or to show the relationships between them (logical). These are activated by field, which concerns the activity of discourse, and are realized in lexicogrammar by the systems of Transitivity (Participants, Processes and Circumstances) . In this function, the clause is seen as a message consisting of Theme and Rheme. Themes can be textual, interpersonal or tropical (Halliday &

Matthiessen, 2004, p. 79). As for the system of information structure, basically the Theme maps onto the given information, and the Rheme goes with the New information. The division of Theme-Rheme is interpreted according to the speaker, while given-new distinction is viewed from the listener's perspective (ibid: 93).

The Interpersonal functions are instantiated by the variable of tenor, which deals with the relationship between participants and their attitudes, and are construed in grammar by the systems of Mood and Modality. In this meaning, the clause is seen as Exchange. What is to be exchanged is either goods and services or information. That is, the clause can basically express four speech acts: offer, command, statement and question. A clause is divided into Mood and Residue. The structure of the mood comprises the subject and the finite element and the remainder of the clause is the Residue part. The mood element has got its own semantic function: "it carries the burden of the clause as an interactive event" (ibid: 120). The Residue part consists of the predicator and complement. As for the system of modality, there are two types: proposition (degrees of probability and degrees of usuality) and proposals (positive, i.e. do it or negative, i.e. don't do it).

 The third function, viz. the textual meaning, is triggered by the mode of discourse and are realized by structural cohesive devices, such as thematic structure, and non-structural ones, like cohesion. Here, the clause is seen as " a quantum of change as a figure, or configuration of a process, participants involved … and any attendant circumstances" (ibid: 169). This figure encapsulates " a figure of happening, doing, sensing, saying, being or having…." This grammatical system is called Transitivity, which represents the world of experience into a variety of process types such as material, mental, and relational processes. Most important is the fact that there are contextual variables which pave the way to the lexicogrammatical choices made and the meanings that are construed (Miller 2005: 27) .

2. Analysis

In this paper, the Arabic morphology of semi-active participle is analyzed from the perspective of functional grammar and the effect of this morphological awareness upon the process of translation into English. The examples are taken from Al-Samarra'i (2007: 154) because he examines Arabic grammar from a functional point of view adequately as well as his interpretations bridge both traditional and modern Arabic grammatical thinking.. there are also Quranic verses included in the analysis of these adjectives. Functionally, an adjective can work as an Epithet which is either experiential or interpersonal in function (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 318). It is used to indicate "an objective property of the thing itself; or it may be an expression of the speaker's subjective attitude towards it". However, these two types differ in that the experiential Epithet adjectives are "potentially defining, whereas interpersonal ones are not" (ibid: 319).

Consider the following example:

1. (مررتُ برجلٍ حَسَنٍ وجهُهُ) (I met a man whose face is pretty)

Metafunction	مررت	برجل	حسن	وجهه
Ideational	Theme	Rheme	Theme	Rheme
Interpersonal	Mood	Residue	Residue	Mood
Textual	Process + Actor	Circumstance Scope	Attribute	Carrier

This is a declarative sentence, having two parts: a verbal clause and a nominal clause. On the ideational level, the first theme in this example is the verb with its subject (مررتُ) which "serves the point of departure of the message; it […] locates and orients the clause within its context" (ibid: 64). It is a conflated theme because it consists of a verb with its subject as a dependent pronoun. The second theme is part of a nominal clause. The first theme is unmarked because it is a normal verbal clause which starts with a verb, but the second theme is marked because the normal order reads (وجهه حسن) (His face is pretty). Because it is marked, it represents New information in the information structure of this clause. This is to give it more prominence.

On the interpersonal level, where the clause is seen as an Exchange, what is exchanged here is information, not goods and services. In this level, the mood system consists of Mood and Residue. In English, the Mood component has two parts: the subject and the finite element. We can map the same division onto this Arabic sentence. In the verbal clause, the Mood component consists of the verb and its subject conflated with it. This verb is a lexical one which is in the past simple tense. In the nominal clause, we have a marked nominal clause, so there is an inversion having the Mood component postposed. However, there is no tense contrast because it is a nominal clause, which refers to fixed characteristics. Thus, we have a declarative sentence which is an indicative mood.

On the experiential level, the figure, which is a quantum of change through time, consists of three parts: a process, participants and circumstances. As stated by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 175), circumstances "are almost always optional augmentations of the clause". In this example, we have a material process, which is an intransitive process of 'doing' represented by the verbal group (مرّ). As for the participants involved in this process, the Actor represented by the subject which is the dependent pronoun (ت) conflated with the verb, and we have the Scope represented by the nominal group (رجل), which is set within a circumstance as it is preceded by a preposition. It is the Scope because it represents the domain of the process. The second clause is an identifying clause because there is an Attribute that specifies indirectly the resultant state of the referent which is the Scope (رجل). The carrier of the attribute (حسن) (pretty) is the nominal group (وجه) (face), and the whole nominal group refers to the antecedent (رجل) in the preceding clause.

The adjective (حسن) is in the genitive case because it directly modifies the noun (رجل). This adjective is similar to a verb in its function. Thus, it has the function of a verb here which requires a nominative subject to occur after it (Al-Samarra'i, 2007: 154). The English equivalent to this adjective and its subject is a relative clause of possession. A relative clause in English functions " as Qualifier in the nominal group" (Halliday & Matthiesen, 2004: 324). This is similar to the function of the

semi-active participle adjective in Arabic. The semantic core which is qualified is the noun or the "Thing", which represents the world according to the speaker, in the context of a speech exchange" (ibid: 325). In this example, the semantic core is (رجل) (man), which is one of the participants in this clause. The English relative clause gives an elaborating function, and it does not form a separate tone group. That is, the relative clause and its antecedent represents one piece of information (ibid, p. 429). Because this relative clause gives the sense of possession, it further adds the meaning of extension to the overall meaning of the clause (ibid: 432).

2. (مررتُ برجلٍ حسنِ الوجهِ) (I met a man of a pretty face)

Metafunction	مررت	برجل	حسن	الوجه
Ideational	Theme	Rheme		
Interpersonal	Mood	Residue		
Textual	Process + Actor	Circumstance	Attribute	Carrier

The same descriptions of the three metafunctions in the first example can be applied here, but there is an identifying phrase not a clause. The adjective here is in the genitive case because it forms the second part of the Construct with the item (رجل), the Thing to be modified. The two lexical items (حسنِ الوجهِ) are also set in a Construct relationship. Here, the adjective is the first part of the Construct. So, the item (الوجه) is in the genitive case. It is interesting that the form of the adjective here agrees in number and gender to its antecedent. For example, in the following example:

Now, consider the following example in which an indefinite accusative noun follows the adjective:

3. (مررتُ برجلٍ حَسَنٍ وجهاً) (I met a man of a pretty face)

Metafunction	مررت	برجل	حسن	وجها
Ideational	Theme	Rheme	Theme	Rheme
Interpersonal	Mood	Residue	Residue	Mood
Textual	Process + Actor	Circumstance Scope	Attribute	Carrier

The same descriptions of the three metafunctions in the first example can be applied here. In this example, because the item following the adjective is an accusative indefinite noun, this means that the adjective modifies the following item exclusively, but indirectly the whole phrase (حسنٍ وجهاً) modifies the antecedent (رجل). That's why, in our translation, we have specified modification to the face only. The item (وجهاً) here is an accusative noun of distinction or it is considered as an adverbial accusative of specification.

Al-Samarra'i (ibid: 156) refers to another interesting difference resulting from different morphological cases used in the semi-active participle adjectives. For example, in the clause (هو كريمٌ أباً), the indefinite accusative item (أباً) can be a Manner or a Distinction item. In the former, it means that there is a possibility of being generous in his fatherhood, i.e. he is generous when he is a father. Accordingly, we can translate this clause as (He has a father who may be generous). However, if we say (هو كريمٌ أبوه) with the item (أبوه) is in the nominative case, this means that the father is definitely generous. Now, we can say (He has a father who is surely generous). According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 23), meaning is a matter of selection in a system of networks. In other words, one can make meaning out of the resource of language, and "meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice" (ibid).

In light of the above thinking, we will look at some of the Quranic verses having semi active – participle adjectives:

1. (إنا سنلقي عليك قولاً ثقيلاً) (المزّمّل: ٥)

(surely We will make to light upon you a weighty word) (Shakir)

The adjective here is the word (ثقيل) which is in the pattern (فعيل). This adjective is taken from the intransitive verb (ثَقُلَ) (become heavy). This adjective is used within the energetic mood in Arabic. The whole clause can imply a command which should be obeyed and fulfilled. Morphologically speaking, the Arabic adjective (ثقيلاً) (heavy) is set in the accusative case because it modifies the object (قولا) (lit. saying or speech) which is also in the accusative case. This adjective is within the Residue functioning as an attribute to the carrier (قولا). In English, the

adjective (weighty) modifies the noun (word) within a noun phrase that takes up the position of an indirect object.

2. (وهو الذي مرج البحرين هذا عذبٌ فراتٌ) (الفرقان:٥٣)

(And He it is Who has made two seas to flow freely, the one Sweet …) (Al-Furqan:53) (Shakir)

The adjective (فرات) (ambrosial) occurs within a nominal clause, taking up the position of an adjective modifying the Rheme (عذب) (delicious water) in the Residue part of the mood system. In this mood, it can be considered as energetic because we have a verbal emphasis through the use of the two words (عذب) and (فرات) because they take part in similar features. From a functional point of view, we have a figure of 'sensing' here, which is rendered into English in the form of an identifying clause. Morphologically, the adjective (فراتٌ) is in the nominative case modifying the Rheme (عذب) which is also in the nominative case. This adjective is in the pattern (فُعال) and it is taken from the intransitive verb (فَرُتَ) (become ambrosial).

(فشاربون شرب الهيم) (الواقعة:٥٥)

(And drink as drinks the thirsty camel) (A-Waaqi'a:55) (Shakir)

The word (الهيم) is a noun which names the camels that get sick due to excessive thirst. This noun is taken from the intransitive verb (هام) which means a person who suffers from excessive thirst, which is called 'polydipsia'. Syntactically, this adjective occurs within a Construct relationship with the preceding cognate object (شربَ) (drinking). Thus, it is in the genitive case. Again, this adjective occurs within the Residue part in the Rheme component. The mood system of this verse is also energetic because the cognate object here is used for emphasis, a case which is not reflected in the translation of this verse. In the translation provided, this adjective modifies the noun (camel) which also occurs in the Rheme component.

3. (و تبرىء الاكمه و الابرص) (المائدة:١١٠)

(… and you healed the blind and the leprous …) (Al-Maa'idah: 110) (Shakir)

This example is selected because lots of these adjectives reflect an illness or a defect or colour. In this verse there are two adjectives in the pattern (افعل): (الاكمه) (a person who is born blind) and (الابرص) (the leprous). Both adjectives occur in the Rheme component within the Residue part of the system of mood. The clause is in the indicative mood. These two adjectives refer to all people who carry the attribute signaled by these adjectives. Syntactically, they function as objects. Thus, in Arabic they are in the accusative case reflecting the function of objective items.

   3. Results and Discussion

Out of the analyses of the above examples, the most important finding is that all the different derivational patterns of the semi-active participle adjective reflect a constant characteristic of the Thing or the Scope of the identified referent. The case marking of these adjectives together with its argument has an impact on the product of the translated text.

In the first example, the nominal clause (حسنٌ وجهه) has a marked word order so as to give prominence to the adjective (حسنٌ) which is a nominative foregrounded Rheme. Because the semi-active participle adjectives are taken from intransitive three-tier verbs, they have the force of such verbs. That is, they require a subject, which is (وجه) (face). It is also a nominative functioning as a backgrounded Theme. This nominal clause has an identifying function used to modify the Scope of this sentence. This sentence can be translated as (I met a man whose face is pretty). The nominal clause is rendered as a defining relative clause, which has a possessive identifying function.

In the third example, the case of the adjective (حسن) is the genitive one working as a follower attribute to the Scope (رجل). It is an epithet to the Scope because this adjective directly identifies the Scope (رجل). The item (الوجه) (face) disambiguates the reference of the preceding adjective. That is why, the item (الوجه) is the second part of the construct. The whole nominal group (حسن الوجه) identifies the Scope (رجل). The whole sentence can be translated as (I met a pretty – face man). The nominal identifying group functions as an attributive adjective here. The fourth example has the same discoursal function.

In the sixth example, the adjective (حسن) is also nunated but the following item is indefinite nunated one. It is an accusative noun of specification. In this case, the meaning is that the subject is the category which is identified and modified. That is why, it can be translated into English as (I met a man of a pretty face).

In the Quranic verses provided, one can deduce that these adjectives generally occupy the position of the Residue in the Rheme component in the Arabic clause. They specify a certain attribute to modify the carrier of this attribute. These adjectives can assume all cases of nouns: the nominative, accusative or the genitive case according to the position of the carrier of the given attribute. A large part of the instances of these adjectives in the Quran can be set within an energetic mood because these adjectives are used to denote a constant attribute in the specifies carrier. Thus, an idiosyncratic feature of such adjectives can be signaled through their difference from the active – participle nouns as shown in the following pair (taken from Al-Naaylah, 1988: 179):

a. (هذا المكان ضيّق) (this place is narrow)
b. (هذا المكان ضائق بالناس) (this place is full of people)

In (a), there is a semi-active participle adjective in the pattern (فَعِلْ), so it denotes the fixedness of the narrowness of that place; whereas in (b), the item (ضائق) refers to an action not to a fixed property of that place. In the latter, the meaning is that the place is wide but made narrow due to the presence of a lot of people inside it.

The above discussion shows that Arabic has a rich morphological system affecting the process of translation into other languages to a great extent. In fact, morphology is the hub of other areas, so it is highly recommended to raise the morphological awareness of the students of translation and foreign language learners.

4. Conclusions The findings of this study proved the significance of understanding the Arabic morphological processes and meanings in translating into other languages. Below are the answers of the proposed research questions:

1. The semi-active participle adjective is derived from an intransitive three-tier verb. These adjectives resemble the active participle because they denote the action and its doer. Like the active participle, these adjectives are affected by number and gender, and they affect an argument. These adjectives can refer to an action, modification or as an attribute. The most important feature of these adjectives is that the intended modification is fixed and constant. It does not change whether in the past, present or future.

2. Regarding the impact of morphology upon translation, if the adjective is in the nominative case, it can take a subject governed by it. This subject can relate directly to the Thing preceding the adjective or it can refer to another entity. If it is in the genitive case and not nunated, it works as the first part of the construct. In such a case, it directly modifies the second part of the construct. Another possibility in the genitive case is that when the adjective is nunated. In this context, the adjective can modify both the Thing before it and its argument after it.

3. As for the representation of these adjectives in terms of functional grammar , these adjectives have their own function to achieve. On the experiential level, these adjectives function work as epithets potentially defining and identifying the Things preceding them. On the interpersonal level, such adjectives basically fall within the Residue part within a nominal group. In this interpersonal meaning, they do not give identifying function. On the textual level, they give the meaning of Enhancement by qualifying a nominal group in the same clause. They represent the value of the carrier , and they function as the identifier of a certain identified in a given clause.

4. Via the instances of the Quranic verses, translators should pay attention to the mood behavior of these adjectives. Generally, they tend to occur within the energetic mood. This point should be reflected in the translation product. Thus, translation trainers should expose their students to more instances in various

contexts. By so doing, this will consolidate gains for the translation students and will deepen their understanding and manipulating of these adjectives.

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