# Usage of Relative Pronouns in Arabic and English: A Contrastive Study

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## ABSTRACT

This paper makes an attempt a corpus-based study of relative pronouns in English and Arabic with two points. First, this study makes an attempt to point out the similarities and variations between relative pronouns in Arabic and English as a contrastive study. This paper conjointly makes an attempt to judge and compare variety of hypotheses relating to the grammar, linguistics and pragmatic behavior of relative pronouns that has been mentioned before in English and Arabic languages. Second, it discusses the grammar structure of relative clauses, and therefore the relation between the relative pronouns and their antecedents. It conjointly encoded linguistics of the relative pronouns and argues for a unitary procedural linguistics. It conjointly argues that the relative pronouns cypher procedural directions for the attender.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper studies the relative pronouns as deictic expressions in customary Arabic and English by outlining their descriptive linguistics, grammar and linguistics properties within the 2 languages. On the idea of the end result of this define, a contrastive study of the linguistic properties of this cluster of deictic expressions within the 2 languages is conducted next. The aim is to seek out what generalizations can be made up of the results of this contrastive study.

## Problem of the study

The problem of the study shows however customary Arabic morphologically will notice the agreement between clause pronouns and their antecedents, whereas there's no agreement between clause pronouns and their antecedents in English.

In SA, relative pronouns inflected for variety (singular/dual/plural), gender (male/female), place (near/far), person (2nd/3rd).

Also to point out however the process clause in Arabic may be omitted in contrastive to English.

## Aim and Objectives of the study

-        The Aim of the study is to point out the necessary role of Relative pronouns in each English and Arabic languages, and conjointly to point out the similarities and variations between English and Arabic languages in reference to the clause.

-        The Objective of this paper is to check the reference of that means in each language (Arabic and English) further on study the link between the speaker and therefore the receiver in reference to variety and therefore the agreement between the relative pronouns and their antecedents.

## Relative Pronouns in general

Relative pronouns in English include who, whom, whose, which, what and that. A relative pronoun links two clauses into a single complex clause. To this extent, it is similar in function to a subordinating conjunction, but unlike a conjunction, however, a relative pronoun stands in place of a noun.

Relative pronouns in English include who, whom, whose, which, what which. A pronoun links two clauses into one complicated clause. to the present extent, it's similar in perform to a subordinator conjunction, however in contrast to a conjunction, however, a pronoun stands in situ of a noun.

Example:
*This is the book **which** he bought.*

A pronoun is termed in Arabic a "noun of the connected". Being nouns, relative pronouns have the characteristics of nouns, specifically gender, number, and grammatical category. Relative pronouns area unit perpetually definite words. Relative pronouns in English have some characteristics that aren't gift in Arabic as we have a tendency to area unit near to see.

In English, "that" is used for both humans and non-humans. There is a similar word in Arabic, but it will have to change to modify different numbers and genders as follows:

| General Relative Pronouns Who / Who / Which / That | | |
|---|---|---|
| Singular | Masculine | *'al-lathee* |
| | Feminine | *'al-latee* |
| D U A L | Masculine (subject) | *'al-lathaan(i)* |
| | Masculine (object) | *'al-lathayn(i)* |
| | Feminine (subject) | *'al-lataan(i)* |
| | Feminine (object) | *'al-latayn(i)* |
| P L U R A L | Masculine | *'al-latheen(a)* |
| | | *'al-'ulaa* (Archaic word) |
| | Feminine | *'al-laatee* |
| | | *'al-laa'ee* |
| | | *'al-lawaatee* |

These are the major relative pronouns in Arabic. The only case-inflected ones are the dual relative pronouns, the rest are "built words." Each one of those words can be translated as that, who, whom, or which.

Apart from "that," English uses specific relative pronouns for humans and for nonhumans.

"who" is used for humans.

*I know **who** did that.*

The Arabic equivalent would be:

| Who / Whom | *Man* | مَنْ |
|---|---|---|

This word is particular for humans, and it's solely this single type for all cases, numbers, and genders.

The pronoun "which" is specifically used for nonhumans in English. In Arabic, there's no such word and this word are going to be translated to the overall relative pronouns mentioned initial.

The relative pronoun "what" has also an equivalent in Arabic:

Example:
*I know **what** you did.*

| What | *Maa* | مَاْ |
|---|---|---|

## Usage of Relative Pronouns:

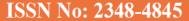### 1. General Relative Pronouns

Those are the relative pronouns most commonly used. They can be translated as who, whom, which, or that. They are used somewhat similarly to English but the point here is that they change in form to suit the antecedent.

Those area units the relative pronouns most ordinarily used. they'll be translated as who, whom, which, or that. they're used somewhat equally to English however the purpose here is that they modify in type to suit the antecedent.

*haathaa ('a)l-kitaab(u) ('a)l-lathee 'ishtarayt(u)*
= this (is) the book which/that (I) bought
Translation: this is the book which I bought

It is very common to add an attached object pronoun after the verb in such sentences: *haathaa ('a)l-kitaab(u) ('a)l-lathee 'ishtaraytu-h(u)*
= this (is) the book that/which (I) bought him
Translation: this is the book which I bought

It is also common to add a pleonastic <u>separation subject pronoun</u> in such sentences:
*haathaa huw(a) ('a)l-kitaab(u) ('a)l-lathee 'ishtaraytu-h(u)*
= this he (is) the book that/which (I) bought him
Translation: this is the book which I bought

There is another note that when using the general relative pronouns it is often possible to omit the word to which the relative pronoun refers (the antecedent).
Examples:
*haathaa huw(a) ('a)l-lathee 'ishtaraytu-h(u)*
= this he (is) that/which (I) bought him
Translation: this is what I bought

Or in this example:
*haa'ulaa'(i) hum(u) ('a)l-latheen(a) saa"adoo-nee*
= those they (are) that/who helped me
Translation: those are (the people) who helped me

## 2. The Relative Pronoun "Who"

"Who" in English changes in form as the following:

| Subject | Tom is the one who can do it |
|---|---|
| Object | Dan is the man whom I saw |
| Adpositional Complement | Jenny is the woman with whom he is happy |
| Possessive | Jack is the boy whose book is this |

Surprisingly, the Arabic equivalent does not change at all. It is a "built" word and it assumes a sole form for all cases, numbers, and genders.

| Who / Whom | *Man* | مَنْ |
|---|---|---|

However, the usage of this word differs from English.

Example in English:
Tom is the one who can do it
In Arabic, this sentence will become:
Tom is who can do it
This is the major point here, in Arabic the antecedent must go away when using the relative pronoun "who." Usually, a separation subject pronoun will be added so the final structure will be:
Tom he is who can do it

**Examples:**

- **Subject Case**

*tōm(un) huw(a) man yastatee"(u) 'an yaf"ala-haa*
= Tom he (is) who (he) can that (he) do her
Translation: Tom is the one who can do it
OR
*'al-raniyy(u) huw(a) man yagna"(u) bi-maa yamlik(u)*
= the rich he (is) who is sufficed with what (he) has
Translation: he who is sufficed with what he has is a rich person

- **Object Case**

*daan(un) huw(a) man ra'ayt(u)*
= Dan he (is) whom (I) saw
Translation: Dan is the man whom I saw
And more commonly:
*daan(un) huw(a) man ra'aytu-h(u)*
= Dan he (is) whom (I) saw him
Translation: Dan is the man whom I saw

- **With Prepositions**

The usage of relative pronouns as appositional complements is NOT present in Arabic.
Example, the English sentence:
Jenny is the woman with whom he is happy
In order to translate this sentence to Arabic, it must be rephrased first. Either one of the two types of relative pronouns can be used:
1. The General Relative Pronoun (≡That)
The structure in Arabic will be:
"Jenny is the woman that he is happy with her"
2. The Specific Relative Pronoun (Whom)
The structure in Arabic will be:
"Jenny she is whom he is happy with her"

It is NOT possible to delete the object pronoun after the preposition.
Example:
*jenee hiy(a) ('a)l-mar'a(tu) ('a)l-latee yas"ad(u) ma"a-haa*
= Jenny she (is) the woman that (he) is happy with her
Translation: Jenny is the woman that he's happy with

- **The Possessive**

Another usage of relative pronouns in English is in the possessive form "whose." This type of relative pronouns is NOT present at all in Arabic.
An English example:
Jack is the boy whose book is this
In order to translate this sentence to Arabic it must be rephrased in either way of the following two:

1. With the General Relative Pronoun (≡That)
The structure in Arabic will be:
"Jack is the boy that his book is this"
OR
"Jack is the boy that this is his book"

2. With the Specific Relative Pronoun (Whom)
The structure in Arabic will be:
"Jack is who his book is this"
OR
"Jack is who this is his book"

3. Without Any Relative Pronoun (the best way)

"Jack is the owner of this book"
Examples:
*jaak(un) huw(a) 'as-sabiyy(u) 'al-lathee haathaa kitaabu-h(u)*
= Jack he (is) the boy that this (is) (the) book (of) him
Translation: Jack is the boy whose book is this

3. The Relative Pronoun "What"

| What | *Maa* | مَأ |
|---|---|---|

Unlike "who," the relative pronoun "what" in English is similar to the Arabic one in that the antecedent is omitted in English too. Therefore, it should be easy here.
Example:
*'a"rif(u) maa fa"alt(a)*
= (I) know what (you) did
Translation: I know what you did

In general relative pronoun is the idea of restrictiveness. An English non-restrictive relative clause is preceded by a pause in speech or a comma in writing, whereas a restrictive clause normally is not. Compare the following sentences, which have two quite different meanings in English:
*(1) The builder, **who** erects very fine houses, will make a large profit.*
*(2) The builder **who** erects very fine houses will make a large profit.*

In Arabic, there are NO restrictive relative clauses. The only possible form of relative clauses is the second one.
A summary of relative pronouns in Arabic:

| English R.P | Usage | Arabic Equivalent |
|---|---|---|
| That | Humans & Nonhumans | (Changeable Form / Antecedent May be Omitted) |
| Which | Nonhumans | Not Present |
| Who | Humans | (No Antecedent) |
| Whom | | |
| To Whom | Humans | Not Present |
| Whose | Humans & Nonhumans | Not Present |
| What (No Antecedent) | Nonhumans | "maa" (No Antecedent) |

## SIMILARITIES

- ❖ Relative clause is found in both Standard Arabic and English.
- ❖ In both languages, relative clause modifies the antecedent.
- ❖ In both languages, relative clauses cannot stand alone and giving a complete sense.

## DIFFERENCES

- ❖ In English, relative clause are of two types (defining & non-defining) whereas in Arabic (definite & indefinite)
- ❖ In English there is no agreement between relative pronoun and antecedent from Number and gender, in opposite to Arabic.
- ❖ In English, (Defining Relative Clause) cannot be omitted but in Arabic 2(Definite Relative Clause) can be omitted in case it gives extra information about the antecedent.
- ❖ In English, Relative Clause is introduced by a relative pronoun whereas in Arabic only definite relative clause is introduced by a relative pronoun and the indefinite relative clause is omitted.

## CONCLUSION

We can conclude from this study that Relative pronouns in Standard Arabic and English share more syntactic and semantic features (such as modifying the antecedent and they cannot stand alone and giving complete sense), so they shared these features than one might think in the first place, given that the two languages belong to different, remote groups. The main differences between the two are related to their (types, agreement, omission and introducing by a relative pronoun)

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