

## Alternative Positions of Adjectives and their Uses in Arabic and English: A Contrastive Study



Ali Flayyih Hasan

MA. Linguistics, Student, Nationality of Iraq  
Department of Linguistics  
University College of Arts and Social Sciences  
Osmania University,  
Hyderabad, India.

### ABSTRACT

This study is devoted to check the adjective alternatives in English and Arabic to search out the points of similarity and distinction between English adjective alternatives with their Arabic counterparts. By adjectival substitute we mean any word or a part of speech can work as adjective in any sentence. So, we can find so many words and parts of speech in both languages that can do what an adjective does in a sentence. This study is a trial to shed light on the points of similarities and differences between the adjective substitutes in both languages.

**Keywords:** subjective, substitution, verbs, nouns

### 1. Introduction

An adjective is a kind of word that modifies a noun. Nouns are words that name a place, a person, a thing, or an idea. An adjective is a word that gives more information about the noun that goes with it. As a rule, in English, the adjective comes before the noun it describes. It is also a part of speech. Adjectives that can only be used to pre-modify nouns are called **attributive adjectives**. Adjectives acting as a noun's complement linked to it by a preceding copular verb are called **predicative adjectives**. For example is **painful in the treatment was painful**. Still there are some grammatical items that can function as an

adjective in relation to their positions in a sentence, they are as follows:

#### 1.1. The problem of study

The problem of the study shows how the adjective substituted in both language (Arabic and English) in different parts of speech. Adjective substitutes in the two languages have different forms for they may be nouns, adverbs, phrases, and pronouns.

#### 1.2. Hypothesis of study

1. Adjective substitutes in the two languages describe single and plural Nouns.
2. Both of English and Arabic substitutes come either before or after the noun They describe
3. They can be a single word or a phrase in both languages.
4. There are some derived nouns can work as adjective substitutes in the two Languages
5. The substitutes in both languages have different forms as they can be nouns, adverbs, phrases, clauses, and pronouns

### 1.3. Aim and objective of the study

#### 1. Aim.

To understand the different properties in the two languages in respect of Adjective Substitutes.

#### 2. Objective.

The objective of this study is Adjective Substitutes in both languages

### 1.4. Significant of study

How the subjective substitutes in both languages.

### 1.5. Materials and methods

Materials used in this research project were the various books Al-badri, Hind Hamid. (2000). **Relative Clause in English and Arabic**. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Hodeidah: Hodeidah University Biber, Douglas, etal. (1999). **Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English**. Edinburgh Gate: Person Education Limited.

#### Section: A

#### Adjective in English

#### 1. What Is an Adjective?

The simplest definition of an adjective is that it is a word that describes or clarifies a noun. Adjectives describe nouns by giving some information about an object's size, shape, age, color, origin or material.

- It's a big table. (size)
- It's a round table. (shape)
- It's an old table. (age)
- It's a brown table. (color)
- It's an English table. (origin)
- It's a wooden table. (material)
- It's a lovely table. (opinion)
- It's a broken table. (observation)

- It's a coffee table. (purpose)

When an item is defined by its purpose, that word is usually not an adjective, but it acts as one in that situation.

- coffee table
- pool hall
- hunting cabin
- baseball player

### 2. There are different types of adjectives in the English language:

- Numeric: six, one hundred and one etc.
- Quantitative: more, all, some, half, more than enough etc.
- Qualitative: colour, size, smell etc.
- Possessive: my, his, their, your etc.
- Interrogative: which, whose, what etc.
- Demonstrative: this, that, those, these etc.

### 3. Adjectival Nouns

As you know, a noun is a person, place or thing, and an adjective is a word that describes a noun: For example:

#### Wood, Floor, Price, discrimination.

When a noun is used this way, a new concept is created. For example: **floor**, **price** and **floor price** are three concepts denoted using two words. Some dictionaries define **adjectival noun** to include only noun phrases like those in the examples immediately above, in which the phrase consists of a definite article followed by a word normally used as an adjective.

### a. The noun as adjective always comes first

If you remember this it will help you to understand what is being talked about: A **race horse** is a **horse** that runs in **races**

A **horse race** is a **race** for **horses**

A **boat race** is a **race** for **boats**

A **love story** is a **story** about **love**

A **war story** is a **story** about **war**

A **tennis ball** is a **ball** for **playing tennis** **Tennis shoes** are **shoes** for **playing tennis**

### b. The noun as adjective is singular

Just like a real adjective, the **noun as adjective** is invariable. It is usually in the singular form.

Right		Wrong
<i>boat race</i>	<i>boat races</i>	<i>NOT boats race, boats races</i>
<i>toothbrush</i>	<i>toothbrushes</i>	<i>NOT teeth brush, teeth brushes</i>
<i>shoe-lace</i>	<i>shoe-laces</i>	<i>NOT shoes-lace, shoes-laces</i>
<i>cigarette packet</i>	<i>cigarette packets</i>	<i>NOT cigarettes packet, cigarettes packets</i>

In other words, if there is a plural it is on the real noun only. A few nouns look plural but we usually treat them as singular, for example (**news, billiards, and athletics**). When we use these nouns as adjectives they are unchanged:

A **news reporter**, **three news reporters**

**One billiards table**, **four billiards tables**

**An athletics trainer**, **fifty athletics trainers**

### Exceptions:

When we use certain nouns "as adjectives" (**clothes, sports, customs, accounts, arms**), we use them in the plural form:

**Clothes shop**, **clothes shops**

### c. How do we write the "noun as adjective"?

We write the "noun as adjective" and the real noun in several different ways:

**Two separate words (car door)**

**Two hyphenated words (book-case)**

**One word (bathroom)**

There are no easy rules for this. We even write some combinations in two or all three different ways: (**head master, head-master, and headmaster**)

### d. Can we have more than one "noun as adjective"?

Just like adjectives, we often use more than one "noun as adjective" together. Look at these examples:

**Car production costs:** we are talking about the costs of producing cars:

<i>Noun as adjective</i>	<i>Noun as adjective</i>	<i>noun</i>
		<b>costs</b>
	<b>production</b>	<b>costs</b>
<b>car</b>	<b>production</b>	<b>costs</b>

### Exceptions:

Sometimes an adjective is not followed by a noun:

- The sky is blue.
- The joke she told was so funny, I could not stop laughing all day.
- He went crazy.
- It's still an adjective, because we could have "the blue sky", "the funny joke", and "the crazy man". The adjective is still describing the noun though they are not side by side.
- There is a tall man.

#### 4. Participle Adjectives.

##### 4.1. Participles Used as Adjectives

The participial adjectives are a major subclass of adjectives. They can be distinguished by their endings, either –er or –ing. Some exceptions to the rules include misunderstood and unknown, which also function like these special adjectives even though they do not end in –ed. They are called participial adjectives because they have the same endings as verb participles.

i. **Present participles** are formed by adding –ing to the verb stem. As an adjective, a present participle modifies a noun that affects someone or something else.

"The present participle can be used as an adjective. Known as a participial adjective, it replaces verb clauses:

**The show that annoys me → the annoying show a story that moves her → a moving story"**

**The new song is interesting.**

**The new song was interesting.**

ii. **Past participles** are formed by adding –ed, to the verb stem, but some of the irregular forms may end in –d, –en, –n, or –t. As an adjective, a past participle

modifies a noun that is affected by someone or something else.

**The fans are interested in the new song.**

**The fans were interested in the new song.**

iii. Participles generally come before the noun they modify. They may also be linked to the subject of the sentence by a linking verb such as **to be** or **to feel**.

**The park is a frightening place at night.**

**Steve felt frightened as he walked alone in the park at night.**

##### 4.2. Participles are verbal adjectives

They have some features of verbs and some of adjectives. But they are most basically a type of **adjective**.

i. Participles are verbal adjectives. Here are some participles with the nouns and pronouns that they modify:

**The waning moon.**

**The shining sun.**

**The crying child.**

**The running water**

ii. Ordinary adjectives can be used alone as "things" or "substantives":

**The poor need help.**

**The rich have an opportunity**

iii. Participles can be used the same way. The following participles are used substantively; that is to say that they stand for persons, places, or things just as nouns do:

**See the following.**

**Find the dispossessed.**

**Care for the dying and the wounded.**

iv. As verbal, participles can do something that ordinary adjectives cannot do. Participles can have objects:

**Catching the ball, the receiver fell to his knees.**

**Reading the Latin poem, the lady swooned.**

Studying participles, the students sat in silent amazement.

v. Notice that the participial phrases, which happen to be marked off here by a comma from the rest of the sentence, modify some substantive:

Which receiver? **The catching receiver, the receiver catching the ball.** What students? **The studying students, the students studying participles.** Which lady? **The reading lady, the lady reading the poem.**

Participial phrases do not include the words that they modify (e.g., **receiver, lady, students**), only the words that closely depend upon the participle itself.

### 5. Participles can have tense and voice.

TENSE indicates a reference to past, present, or future. TENSE indicates a reference to past, present, or future.

VOICE indicates an agency's direct action (active voice) or an agency's receiving of an action ("**suffering**", passive voice). (ibid, 2)

### 6. Prepositional Phrase

A prepositional phrase consists of a **preposition**, a **noun** or **pronoun** that serves as the object of the preposition, and, more often than not, an **adjective** or two that modifies the object. Prepositional phrases function as modifiers and complements of noun phrases, adjective phrases, and verb phrases. Words and phrases that function as modifiers modify or define other words and phrases. For example, the prepositional phrase **with blonde hair** modifies or describes the noun phrase **the little girl** in the phrase **the little girl with blonde hair** by describing what color hair the little girl has. Prepositional phrases also

function as modifiers of adjective phrases as in **on the walls in the paint was green on the walls** or **near the bathtub** as in **the floor was wet near the bathtub**. Prepositional phrases likewise function as modifiers of verb phrases as in **during the wedding in the woman cried during the wedding or after dinner** as in **the couple danced after dinner**.

### 7. Possessive adjectives

Possessive adjectives always go before nouns (they are not pronouns – they just look like them)

Example: **They tore their hair.**

**I put your hat on the table.**

**My, your, his, her, its, our, and there** are the English possessive **adjectives**, used

with **nouns** to show possession or ownership.

E.g. **that's my folder**. (**My** is an adjective which shows that **I am** the owner of the folder.)

**My; your; his; her; it's; our; & there** are the **possessive adjectives** in English. They are used before a **noun** to show possession.

### 8. Adjectival adverbs

An adverb may function as a modifier of an adjective or another adverb. For example:

**They are very happy.**

**He gave a far more easily acceptable explanation.**

**She drives too fast.**

The adverbs generally pre modify, except that **enough** can only post modify. For example:

- **He is stupid enough to do it.** (Quirk-et-al, 1985:441)



- They can also serve as modifiers of noun phrases (or parts of noun phrases), prepositional phrases, particles, and numerals or measurements. As in:
- **It came as quite surprise.** (Modifier of a noun phrase)
- **I have done about half a side.** (Modifier of a predetermine)
- **It is still not clear whether the approximately 250 people still listed as missing.** (Modifier of a numeral)
- **But there is a hell of a lot well into their seventies.** (Modifier of prepositional phrase)

### 9. Adjectival Pronouns.

Most of the words are capable of a double use,—they may be pure modifiers of nouns, or they may stand for nouns. In the first use they are adjectives; in the second they retain an **adjective meaning**, but have lost their adjective **use**. Primarily they are adjectives, but in this function, or use, they are properly classed as **adjective pronouns**.

### 10. Classes of adjective pronouns.

Adjective pronouns are divided into two classes:

1. Demonstrative pronouns, such as **this**, **that**, **the former**, etc.
2. Distributive Pronouns, such as **each**, **either**, **neither**, etc.

#### 10.1. Demonstrative Pronouns

It is one that definitely points out what persons or things are alluded to in the sentence. The person or thing alluded to by the demonstrative may be in another sentence, or may be the whole of a sentence. For example, "Be **that** as it may" could refer to a sentiment in a sentence, or an argument in a paragraph;

but the demonstrative clearly points to that thing. The following are examples of demonstratives:

**I did not say this in so many words. All these he saw; but what he faint had seen He could not see. Beyond that I seek not to penetrate the veil. How much we forgive in those who yield us the rare spectacle of heroic manners!**

#### 10.2. Distributive Pronouns.

They are words which stand for the names of persons or things considered singly.

##### Simple.

Some of these are simple **pronouns**; for example:

- **They stood, or sat, or reclined, as seemed good to each.**
- **As two yoke devils sworn to other's purpose.**
- **Their minds accorded into one strain, and made delightful music which neither could have claimed as all his own.**

##### Compound.

Two are compound pronouns,—**each other**, and **one another**. They may be separated into two adjective pronouns; as,

- **They led one another, as it were, into a high pavilion of their thoughts.**
- **Men take each other's measure when they react.**

#### Section: B

##### Adjective substitutes in Arabic

In Arabic, there are many expressions that can be used as adjective substitutes. They are either a noun or a phrase. These substitutes are as follows:

### 1. The abstract noun

when the letters (alalf, almym) are added to it and Comes after the demonstrative in vocative phrase, like the word (alrajl) "the man" in: (ya haða alrajal tukul ala Allah)

ya haða alrajal tukul ela Allah

O this man supplicate for God

O! This man supplicates for Allah

### 2. The derived noun

When it is defined by and comes after the demonstrative in vocative phrase, as the

word (altalba) "the student" in: (ya haða altalba ajthady)

Ya haða altalba ajthady

O this student be claver

### 3. The relative pronoun

In Arabic (alðy) as in the sentence (mararto balshxs alðy fasa)

mararto balshxs alðy fasa

I passed by person who win

Near the person who win, I passed

### 4. The nominal phrase

After the indefinite noun, as "beneficial" in:

Heða aldars fwa?d Jema

This lesson beneficial More

Lesson has most beneficial

### 5. The verbal phrase

After the indefinite noun like —running" in:

(Mera weledan yarkðh)

Mara waladan yarkðh

Passed boy run

The boy is running

### 6. The word. (møl)

Works as an adjective, as in (mararto alrajal **mølaka**) merartw alrajal **møleka**

I passed man like u

I passed man like u

### 7. Contrastive analysis:

This part of the study is dedicated for the analysis of the adjective substitutes in English and their counterparts in Arabic. It would be from the syntactic point of view so as to point out the similarities and differences between the substitutes in both languages. So, the substitutes both in English and Arabic are either a single word like: in (my and this) English and (**møl**) in Arabic, or a phrase like:

The adjectival clause —**Joe read the book that I gave him** in English and the nominal phrase in Arabic (heða alders fwa?d jema)

The substitutes in the two languages come either before the noun they describe as in (haða alders foa?d jama)

(**the crying child**) in English and (ya heða alrajal tukul ala Allah) in Arabic, or after it as in (**this is the best time to start**) in English and in Arabic (Mara waladan yarkðh)

Moreover, adjective substitutes in English are the same as their Arabic counterparts in that they describe single and plural nouns

Finally, adjective substitutes in the two languages have different forms for they may be nouns, adverbs, phrases and pronouns.

### **Conclusion:**

The study has come up with the following points of similarities and differences:

#### **A. Points of Similarities:**

1. Most of adjective substitutes in both languages are the same in form and function.
2. Adjective substitutes in the two languages describe single and plural nouns.
3. Both of English and Arabic substitutes come either before or after the noun they describe.
4. They can be a single word or a phrase in both languages.
5. There are some derived nouns can work as adjective substitutes in the two languages.
6. The substitutes in both languages have different forms as they can be nouns, adverbs, phrases, clauses, and pronouns.

#### **B. Points of Differences:**

1. English language differs from Arabic in using the possessive and distributive pronouns as adjective substitutes with no counterparts in it.
2. Arabic language differs from English in having single words like (**məl**) which are being used as adjective substitutes with no counterparts in it.