

Causitivity in English and Arabic: A Linguistic Syntactic Study

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ABSTRACT

The principal goal of this paper is to investigate and contrast the linguistic syntactic phenomenon of causitivity in English and Arabic. It also shows the differences and similarities regarding causitivity in the two languages. This paper comprises nineteen sections. They are as following: an introduction ,objectives of the study, questions of the study, significance of the study, limitation of the study , data collection , methodology, causitivity ,English causitivity , the lexical process, the prefixation process , the suffixation process, the causative verbs in Arabic, the Arabic basic causitives, the Arabic derived causitives, the form ?famala , the form ? ist famala , analysis, conclusion, references and an appendix

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KEYWORDS

Arguments; Causative verbs; Nominative and Accusative Cases; Prefixation; Suffixation.

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1. Introduction

As is well known that language is a universal Phenomenon. Without language, communication will be more difficult and it will break down. Language facilitates communication of people with each other. More generally each language has its system to be used by its speakers phonetics, semantics, syntax are parts of its system (Rahman & weda, 2019).

It is agreed upon that English and Arabic are two different languages. Therefore, their systems are dissimilar, nevertheless, they have similarities and differences regarding their universal grammar. Causitivity is a syntactic phenomenon that exists in many languages, English and Arabic are no exception. This study investigate and contrast the causitivity in English and Arabic.

The research objective are 1) to investigate the phenomenon of syntactic causitivity in English and Arabic, 2) to investigate the syntactic devices that the two languages apply to causativize verbs, and 3) to find out the similarities and differences regarding causitivity in the two languages. The current study is limited to the syntactic phenomenon of causitivity in English and Arabic only.

In society, language is often used in various contexts and has many meanings (Weda et al., 2021). Language is also a collection of words where each word has an abstract meaning and relationship with a concept. Language is primarily a means of communication, and communication almost always takes place in some kind of social context (Andini et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2021). Language can be an identity for a country or group. Language is a tool for communicating individual thoughts, as well as community cultural beliefs and practices (Wicaksono et al., 2021; Hasnia et al., 2022).

Causative verbs are verbs that are used to show that the subject makes someone or something take an action. In addition, In English, the causative form is used when we don't do something ourselves, but we ask someone else to do it (; Schäfer, 2009). Causative is an expression used to order someone to do something. This causative has two patterns, namely: 1) Active Causative, and 2) Passive Causative.

2. Methodology

To clarify this point, this study is a descriptive one. It depends on the syntactic analysis. Constructions in both languages (English and Arabic) are contrasted and analyzed thoroughly. Some sources are used to collect the relevant data. They are as following: 1) Arabic English bilingual dictionaries. 2) Arabic monolingual dictionaries. 3) English

Apparently, causitivity is a syntactic universal phenomenon that exists among languages. English and Arabic among them. It is noteworthy to indicate that language users tend to use causative constructions to express some one did something to someone.

3. Results and Discussion

Constructions (1-a) and (2-a) are causative transitive constructions. Each construction has two arguments. For example “paul” and “the door” are the two arguments of construction (1-a). “they” and “the ship” are the two arguments of construction (2-a). Constructions (1-b) and (2-b) are non causative intransitive constructions “the door” and “ the ship” are the only arguments in each construction. Syntactically, the objects “the door” and “the ship” in (1-a) and (2-a) become the subject in constructions (1-b) and (2-b).

a. Causitivity

Now, Arabic examples will be considered:

Let us consider the following examples in English:

(1) a- Paul closed the door.

b- The door closed.

(2) a- They sank the ship.

b- The ship sank.

(3) a-aghraq-a aħmadoon al-bab-a

closed Ahmed – Nom. The door-Acc.

“Ahmed closed the door.”

b – inghalaq – a al-bab-u

closed the door – Nom.

“ The door closed.”

(4) a-aghlaq-a al-qaraşinat-u a-Safinata

Sank the pirates-Nom. the ship-Acc.

“ The pirates sank the ship.”

b- ingharaqat a- ssafinat-u

sank the ship-Nom.

“ The ship sank”

Constructions (3-a) and (4-a) are causative transitive constructions. They contain dyadic predicates which include two arguments in each construction. “aħmadoon” (Ahmed) and “al-bab”-a (the door) are the two arguments of construction (3-a). “al-qaraşinat-u” (the pirates) and “a-ssafinata” (the ship) are the two arguments of construction (4-a).

Constructions (3-b) and (4-b) are non-causative intransitive constructions. The objects “al-bab-u (the door) and “a-safinata” (the ship) in constructions

(3-a) and (4-a) become the subjects in (3-b) and (4-b).

b. English Causitivity

Virtually, there are four processes regarding causitivity in English. They are; the lexical process, the prefixation process, the suffixation process and the lexicalization process. Each one will be discussed in some detail.

c. The Lexical Process

It is the main process to form English causative constructions. A number of linguists call it zero modification process, because no affixes can be attached to the root (word) consider the following examples:

(5) a- The bell rang.

b- The teacher rang the bell.

Construction (5-a) is a non-causative intransitive construction. It has only one argument "the bell."

Construction (5-b) is a causative transitive construction which has two arguments "The teacher" and "The bell". The subject "The bell" in construction (5-a) becomes the object of the causative construction in (5-b). Anyhow, this kind of process is used widely in English.

It is important to indicate that some adjectives can be turned into causative verbs. The following examples will exemplify this:

(6) a- Her hair is soft.

b- She softened her hair.

Construction (6-a) is a non – causative construction. It is a construction of copula verb (linking verb) with a subject complement (soft). Construction (6-b) is a causative transitive construction. The subject complement (soft) becomes a verb by adding the suffix "en" which turned the non – causative construction into a causative construction.

d. The prefixation Process

It is a process that enriches the word formation in English (Bauer,1983). Roughly speaking, from its name, prefixation comes at the beginning of the stem or root. It changes the word class from adjective to a causative verb. Let us consider the following examples:

(7) a- The farm is large.

b- The farmer enlarged the farm.

Construction (7-a) is a non- causative construction. The adjective "large" in (7-a) becomes a verb in (7-b) by adding the prefix "en" to change the adjective into a verb "enlarged". Now let us go to the third process.

e. The suffixation Process

Suffixation is one of the processes of word formation as well as causitization. It is the opposite of the prefixation process. It is a bound morpheme that is added to the end of the root to change the adjective into a causative verb.

According to Baker (2003, p.53) , suffixation is classified into three types: the first one is the suffixize, the second is – en and the third is ify.

The suffix – ize is the most productive one. The following examples illustrate this:

(8) a-The situation is stable in this country .

b- They stabilized the situation in this country.

Construction (8-a) is a non – causative construction. Construction (8-b) is a causative transitive construction. The suffix – iz is added to change the adjective "stable" into the causative verb "stabilize".

The second type of suffixation is – en. The following examples of this type will be considered:

(9) a- This dress is short.

b- They shortened this dress.

Construction (9-a) is a non-causative Construction. Construction (9-b) is a causative transitive construction, since the suffix – en added to the adjective "short". The third and the last suffixation is –ify. Let us look at the following examples:

(10) a- This water is pure.

b- They purified the water.

As can be seen, Construction (10-a) is a non- causative construction. The adjective "pure" in Construction (10-a) changed into a verb "purified" in Construction (10-b).

f. The Causative Verbs in Arabic

The causative verbs in Arabic can be categorized into two main categories the basic causatives and the derived causatives. Each one will be discussed in some detail.

g. The Arabic Basic Causatives

This Arabic type of causative is also called non – derived causatives. It is noteworthy to say that Arabic basic causatives can be classified into three forms: the first one is the form famala. The second is the form fammala and the third is the form famlala.

Regarding this type of causativity. The following examples will illustrate this:

Let us look at the form famala example:

(11) a- Fataña -a al-walad-u al-bab-a.

opened the boy – Nom. The door.Acc.

“ The boy opened the door.”

The verb “Fataña” (opened) in (11-a) is related to the form “famala”.

Now, consider the example of the form “famlala”:

(12) a-markaz-a al-ḥakim-u al-ḥukm-a

Centralized the ruler-Nom . the rule-Acc

“The ruler centralized the rule”

Here in (12-a) the verb markaz-a (centralized) represents the basic form famlala

h. The Arabic Derived Causatives

The Arabic derived causatives can be classified into three forms, they are as following: the first is the form fammala the second is the form ?afmala and the third is the form ?istafmala (Mahmoud,1989).

It is better to start with the form Fammala:

$$\text{Fam} \begin{Bmatrix} i \\ u \\ a \end{Bmatrix} la = \text{Fammala}$$

Consider the following examples of familia fammal \longrightarrow

(13)

a –sharib-a

Drank

a- ṭṭifl-u

the child-Nom.

“The child drank.”

b- sharrab-a

to cause to drink

al-walad-u

the boy –Nom.

a- ṭṭifl-a

The baby –Acc.

“ The boy caused the baby to drink”

Let us now have another example:

(14) a –ṣamulat al- bint-u

to become beautiful the girl-Nom.

“The girl became beautiful.”

b- 3ammal-a	al-muzayan-u	al- bint-a
to cause to become beautiful	the hairdresser-Nom.	the girl – Acc.

“The hairdresser beautified the girl.”

Now, we come to the last examples of the form 'fammala':

(15)	a –harab-a	al- liss-u	. .
	Escaped	The thief-Nom.	
	"The thief escaped ."		

b- harrab-a	a-ssa3an-u	al- liss-a
to cause to escape	the jailer-Nom.	the thief.Acc.

“The jailer caused the thief to escape.”

The Form ?fmala

This form is very important in Arabic language in general and for causative verbs in particular. The three types of ?afmala form come from the following formula :

$$\text{fam} \begin{bmatrix} i \\ u \\ a \end{bmatrix} \xrightarrow{la} \text{afmala}$$

(16) a-faqir-a	al-muwaṭṭin-u
To became poor	the citizen-Nom.

“The citizen become poor.”

b-afqarat	al-ḥakumat-u	al-muwatin-a
to become poor (impoverished)	the government-Nom.	The citizen .Acc.

“The government impoverished the citizen”.

The following example is the second type:

(17) a- ṣaluḥ-a	a-ttilfaz-u
became fixed	the television-Nom.

“The television became fixes.”

b- ?aşlaḥ-a	arraḡulu	a-ttilfaz-a
fixed	the man-Nom.	the television-Acc.

“The man fixed the television.”

The third and the last type is as following:

(18) a-waqaf-a al-mudarras-u
Stood the teacher-Nom

“The teacher stood.”

b- ?awqafa al-mudarras-u a- tṭalib-a
to cause to stop the teacher-Nom. The student-Acc.

“The teacher caused the student to stop.”

i. The Form ?istfmala

This form can also be classified into three types which comes from the formula:

fam $\begin{bmatrix} i \\ u \\ a \end{bmatrix}$ la ? istfmala

(19) a-baqiya → ṣaleh-u
Stayed saleh-Nom.
“Saleh stayed”

b-?istabq-a	aḥmad-u	Saleh-a
To cause to stay	Ahmad-Name.	Saleh-Acc.
“Ahmed caused Saleh to stay.”		

Here is other examples:

(20) a-Saluḥat al-arḍ-u
Reformed the soil-Nom.
“The soil reformed.”

b- ?istaṣlaḥ-a al-fallaḥ-u al-arḍ-a
to cause to reform the peasant- Nom. The soil-Acc
“The peasant reformed the soil.”

Now, the last examples will be taken.

(21) a- xara3-a al-maa-u
Got out the water – Nom.
“The water got out.”

b- ?istaxra3-a al-muzari9-u al-maa-a
extract al-muzari9-u-Nom. al-maa-a-Acc.
“The peasant extracted the water.”

From the data above, it is very clear that the phenomenon of causitivity exists in English and Arabic with a slight difference regarding the two difference systems, Arabic comes from the semitic family and English from the Germanic one (Kenneth,2003).

On the light of the data above, English depends on four types regarding causitivity: the lexical process, the prefixation process, the suffixation process and the lexicalization process. While Arabic depends on two main types to

generate causitivity. They are the basic causitives which is also called the non-derived causative and the derived causative type.

English depends more on suffixation to causitize a number of verbs while Arabic cannot. Finally, it can be said that the syntactic phenomenon of causitivity exists in English and Arabic with differences regarding the two difference systems of the two languages.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, this study tries to answer some questions regarding the syntactic phenomenon of causitivity in English and Arabic. It tries to investigate and contrast this linguistic phenomenon. It tells us how the two languages generate the causative verbs. Of course, the two language are not the same genetically, therefore they use difference syntactic devices to express the causitivity.

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Appendices

The Phonemic Symbol used to Represent the Arabic Data in the Study are Listed bellow with their Arabic Graphemes.

b//	Voiced bilabial stop	//ب
/t/	Voiceless dento-alveolar	/ت/
/t̤/	Voiceless dento-alveolar emphatic stop	/ط/
/d/	Voiced dento-alveolar stop	/د/
/d̤/	Voiced dento-alveolar	//ض
/k/	Voiceless velar stop	//ك

/q/	Voiceless uvular stop	ق
/ʔ/	Voiceless glottal stop	ء
/ʒ/	Voiced alveo-palatal	ج
/ħ/	Voiceless pharyngeal	ح
/ʁ/	Voiced pharyngeal fricative	ع
/f/	Voiceless labio-dental	ف
/θ/	Voiceless dental fricative	ث
/ð/	Voiced dental fricative	ذ
/ɣ	Voiced dental emphatic fricative	ظ
/s/	Voiceless dento-alveolar fricative	س
/ʃ/	Voiceless dento-alveolar fricative	ص
/z/	voiced dento-alveolar fricative	ز
/sh/	Voiceless affricate	ش
/x/	Voiceless uvular fricative	خ
/gh/	Voiced uvular fricative	غ
/h/	Voiceless glottal fricative	ه
/r/	Voiced alveolar flap/trill(when geminate)	ر
/l/	Voiced alveolar lateral	ل
/j/	voiced palatal glide	ي
/w/	Voiced bilabial round glide	و
/i/	High front vowel	ي
/a/	Low front vowel	-
/u/	High back round vowel	و