

SIMPLE SENTENCE WORD ORDER IN CLASSICAL ARABIC AND DIALECTS

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The article focuses on the word order of a simple sentence in Classical Arabic and Arabic dialects. Particular attention is paid to the Omani Arabic dialect. The word order in Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic is similar in all linguistic aspects. Both of the variants can be referred as Classical Arabic. It is revealed that Dialectal Arabic differs from Classical Arabic in having less fixed simple sentence structures.

Keywords: Modern Standard Arabic; Classical Arabic; Dialectal Arabic, Omani Arabic; word order; simple sentence.

ПОРЯДОК СЛОВ В ПРОСТОМ ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИИ В ЛИТЕРАТУРНОМ АРАБСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ И ЕГО ДИАЛЕКТАХ

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В статье рассматривается порядок слов в простом предложении в литературном арабском языке и его диалектах. Особое внимание уделяется оманскому диалекту арабского языка. Порядок слов в классическом арабском и современном литературном арабском языке совпадает. Термин «литературный арабский язык» можно использовать по отношению к ним обоим. Установлено, что в диалектах арабского языка существует более свободный порядок слов в простом предложении по сравнению с литературным языком.

Ключевые слова: современный литературный арабский язык; классический арабский; арабские диалекты; оманский диалект арабского языка; порядок слов; простое предложение.

Arabic is the fifth most spoken language in the world and it has three different varieties: classical Arabic which is used by the holy Quran, Modern Standard Arabic which is used in schools, universities, and news publications, and colloquial Arabic dialects. Compared to Classical Arabic, the regional dialects that are predominantly used for oral communication and daily interactions are still slightly absent from written communication. The same letters used in Modern Standard Arabic and the same (mainly phonetic) spelling conventions allow for the production of dialectal Arabic text, though. Thus, the spoken dialects of the Arabic language, which we generally refer to as Dialectal Arabic, depart from the formal variation known as Modern

Standard Arabic or Classical Arabic based on the geographical distribution and socioeconomic status of the speakers [1]. Several of these variants are mutually incomprehensible due to significant changes in phonology, morphology, lexicon, and even syntax. The syntactic variation can also be found in the sentence word order in both Dialectal Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic.

The main objective of the article is to explore the difference in the simple sentence word order in Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic. As for the dialects, considerable attention will be placed on the Omani Arabic Dialect.

The Arabic language is in a stage of diglossia, in which the regional dialects and the mainstream version of the language, which is Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, coexist and are intertwined. The Arabic diglossic situation denotes the existence of a higher and a lower mode of the language. The higher mode is known as fusha (Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic).

The Holy Quran was revealed in Classical Arabic and that early Islamic and pre-Islamic Arabic books were transmitted in this language. Classical Arabic refers to the form of Arabic that was spoken before the advent of Islam, as well as the literature, poetry, and golden periods of Islam and Arabic sciences. Furthermore, only the Holy Quran and ancient Arabic texts are written in what is known as Classical Arabic. Classical Arabic differs from Modern Standard Arabic both in written or spoken instances when it comes to diacritics or case indicators, except for confusing words and sentences.

The lower mode refers to the spoken variety of Arabic and is called Colloquial or Dialectal Arabic. The Dialectal Arabic can slightly differ from one region to another. A regional dialect, unlike Modern Standard Arabic, does not have an explicit documented set of grammar rules governed by a reputable body, but there is undoubtedly an idea of what is grammatical and what is not. In the majority of Arab nations, Modern Standard Arabic serves as the official tongue. On the contrary, Dialectal Arabic can vary from Modern Standard Arabic in some linguistic aspects and can be used in non-official communication.

Regarding the simple sentence word order, Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic distinguish two structure patterns [2]:

1) Verb + Subject + Object (VSO)

E.g. يكتب عليّ الدرس. 'Ali writes the lesson';

2) Subject + Verb + Object (SVO)

E.g. عليّ يكتب الدرس. 'Ali writes the lesson'.

The word order in both, Classical Arabic is similar to Modern Standard Arabic in all linguistic aspects. In this article, we will refer to both of them as Classical Arabic.

Although the simple sentence word order in contemporary Arabic dialects has not yet been thoroughly studied, there are plenty of claims about it [3]. Most scholars agree on the common structure typical of Arabic dialects when the verb is placed in the first or second position, resulting in VSO or SVO patterns:

1) Verb + Subject + Object (VSO)

E.g. يمسخ علي النافذة ‘Ali cleans the window’;

2) Subject + Verb + Object (SVO)

E.g. علي يمسخ النافذة ‘Ali cleans the window’.

As seen above, Classical Arabic has the simple sentence structure as Verb + Subject + Object (VSO), and Subject + Verb + Object (SVO), dialectal Arabic has the same patterns – Verb + Subject + Object (VSO), Subject + Verb + Object (SVO). However, Dialectal Arabic can have a free simple sentence order.

Having an accidental conversation in Omani Arabic, a sentence can be found *اجميلة مسقط هذه الأيام* like this ‘Muscat has been nice these days’ This sentence discloses some of the Omani dialect patterns as it begins with an adjective that is not permissible in Classical Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic. In Classical Arabic, an adjective is always located after a noun in a sentence. Contrary to that, it is possible to start a sentence with an adjective in Dialectal Arabic.

Also, an Omani speaker can produce a sentence in the passive voice like this *ماجد ضرب* ‘Majid was hit’. In the example provided, the noun opens the sentence while in Classical Arabic the verb should be at the start of it.

To conclude, Dialectal Arabic can have free word order patterns. They have already been paid attention to in some previous research, e.g. [4]. One and the same sentence in Classical Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic can be presented in four forms in Dialectal Arabic. For example, the following sentence in Classical Arabic *أنا حبيت هذه الفكرة* (*Ana habit hathih alfikra* ‘I liked this idea’), can have the following patterns in Dialectal Arabic:

حببت أنا هذه الفكرة (V + S + O; *Habita ana hathih alfikra*);

أنا حبيت هذه الفكرة (S + V + O; *Ana Habita hathih alfikra*);

هالفكرة أنا حبيته (O + S + V; *Halfikra ana habit*);

هالفكرة أنا حبيته (O + V + S; *Halfikra habit ana*).

Thus, the meaning of the phrase ‘I liked this idea’ can be expressed in a variety of word order patterns, including VSO, SVO, OSV, and OVS, all of which convey the same meaning and acquire no additional evaluative or sty-

listic meaning. Dialectal Arabic can enjoy a relatively great deal of freedom in word order due to its rich inflectional morphology.

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