

The Impact of Unique Linguistic Features of Arabic Language in Nigeria: An Overview of Number

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Abstract

Arabic Grammar upon which we develop mastery in the use of the language structure. It is aimed at equipping us with analytical skills to examine the nature of Arabic language by introducing you to Arabic Grammar upon which you will be able to identify types of noun which deal with different kind of number such as singular, dual and plural forms. Therefore, this study focuses on the impact of unique linguistic features of Arabic language which has to do with the number. To be more precise, dual plural maker seems to be very significant knowledge to people who use Arabic language in Nigeria for different purpose. The method use for scouting information in this study is secondary. This is because efforts are made to source relevant data from theoretical and primary research works such as journal articles, Textbooks, Seminars and e-materials from Internet. The findings of this study include: the singular noun, the dual noun and the plural noun. This is no doubt has found to be unique linguistic feature because most languages in Nigeria do not have the dual markers. It has now contributed to the existing literature in the field of languages.

Keywords: Arabic language, Grammar, Number, Arabic Education, Dual marker

Introduction:

It is strenuous to exactly say when Arabic Language arrived Nigeria, but it was the agreement of the investigators and intellectuals that the citizens of Nigeria, like their sister countries in West Africa, came in touch with Arabic Language through marketing routes. Business and commerce require a language of communication and Arabic language filled that goal, afterward became the lingua franca among the merchants in most of the towns and villages in the Northern Nigeria and beyond where the Arabs carried out their trading activities. This made it imperative for the people of this area to learn the language, at least enough of it that would help them to conduct their trading transactions. In proliferation to do business and transaction, the

Arabs also brought up Islam. The Arabs related well with the regional people and demonstrated good integrity, which motivated their hosts to accept their instructions and accept Islam. Thereafter, the new faith solicited that they should have a specific degree of Arabic knowledge to be able to hold up its fundamentals and deeds of glorifications. The Arabic language and Islam thus came with learned Muslim dealers who embarked on the spread of the language and the religion.

The repast accepted in a large number when some Arabians, such as Barbaras, Wugaras, Fulanis, Shuwas and others, relocated to the country and founded Islamic Empires and Emirates like Kanem Borno Empire, which was established in Borno in the 13th Century and eventually became a Centre for Islamic Civilization for many years. Others are Sokoto Caliphate which started in the 17th Century, with the leadership of Shaykh Usman bn Fodio and Ilorin Emirate established by the sons of Shaykh 'Alimi bn Jinta in the 18th Century. In addition to this, some traditional rulers adopted Islam, like the ruler of Kano Yajidan Isamiya (1349-85 CE) and Timi of Ede in Yorubaland, South-Western Nigeria, among others. Under this atmosphere, Arabic became the official language of the Emirates and the kingdoms, including being the language of administration and education, language of documentation and correspondence language of culture and civilization. Scholars became motivated. Some of such scholars were judges, secretaries, counselors and teachers. Some individual scholars and groups also visited Nigeria on their way to and from Hajj.

Whenever a scholar visited the country students would rally round him to benefit from his fountain of knowledge. Some rulers of kingdoms and emirates also invited Arabic scholars for admonition and consultation. Such erudite scholars included "Abdul Karim al-Maghili from Tilmisan in modern Algeria, Jalalud-Din as-Suyuti from Egypt and 'Aidah Ahmad at-Tazakti. Others were Ahmad 'Aqit, grandfather of Ahmad Baba at-Timbukti as well as Ahmad Baba himself. With the coming of these scholars, indigenous students were encouraged to perform Holy Pilgrimage at Makkah and Madinah and that afforded them the opportunity of visiting and studying in notable institution of Arabic and Islamic learning in such places as Timbuktu, Sudan, Egypt, Makkah and Medina among others. With these activities, Arabic language and culture grew and developed in Nigeria. All these were before the advent of the Colonialism and the resultant Christian missionary activities which tried unsuccessfully to uproot and annihilate Arabic influences from the country (Ibrahim & Abubakar,2012).

Above all, Arabic is positioned on equal pedestal with other international languages such as English, French and German to mention but a few. Likewise, Arabic has confidently withstood the test of time, achieved vast currency as an international language of commerce, diplomacy, politics and many more. Universally, it's recognised and considered as a legal tender in the United Nations Organization (UNO), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Arabic is specifically not only important to the muslims in Nigeria but also all over the world because it is the language of their sacred book; Qur'an and Sharīah (Islamic law) in which the tenets of their religion are written. Allah says: "We revealed it as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand" (Q12:2) (Chejne,1967; Hunwick,1964; Mazhar,1972; Versteegh,1997).

Therefore, it is based on this background that this paper sees the need to explore on the impact of Arabic language in Nigeria with a focus on grammatical number which comprises of rule on

singular, dual and plural markers in Arabic. This is because the specific knowledge is a key that help to master the language particularly in Nigeria and it can be used for many purposes.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this paper is to explore on impact of the unique linguistic features of Arabic in Nigeria through the following objectives:

I.To identify the three unique linguistic rules for number in Arabic language in Nigeria

II.To elucidate the three unique linguistic markers of number in Arabic language in Nigeria

Research Questions

I.What are the identity of three unique linguistic rules for number in Arabic language in Nigeria?

II.What are the explanations of the three unique linguistic markers of number in Arabic language in Nigeria?

Statement of the Problem

Arabic is no doubt one of the most important and widely spoken languages in the world. The language is very rich in both grammar and literature. In Islam, Arabic is regarded as the mother of all languages due to its richness and vastness. Arabic is said to have been introduced into this pan of West Africa in the 8th century. According to Ibn Munabbah, it reached Borno Empire around 738AD. The language was introduced by Arab traders who simultaneously brought with them the religion of Islam. The religion and the language started to spread and Umme Jilme the Mai ruler of Borno Empire who ruled between 1055-97 became a Muslim, laying the foundation of Islam as the state religion (Ajayi & Crowder, 1976). The trend continued, and in the 14th century, when Kanuri scholars and poets achieved a very high standard in the writing of classical Arabic. However, in Nigeria most of the speakers of Arabic language belong to school of oracy. That is to say they mostly learnt the language through route learning which is learning by memorisation. This implies that most people listen, speak and recite holy Qur'an in Arabic without comprehensible input. In an alternative expression, they lack linguistic competence such as the rule of number which dwells on singular, dual and plural markers in Arabic. Therefore, this paper intends to explore on the construct to address the existing problem in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature:

The Concept of Arabic Language

Arabic is the youngest of the Semitic group of languages. Other languages that fall into this class include Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Ugaritic, Acadian, Phoenician, Tigre, Tigina, Amharic and Geez. But marvelously, Arabic outlives them all. For instance, the Ugaritic and Acadian languages have died long ago while Aramaic, which was, for centuries, the lingua franca of the Western Asia survives in its pristine form only. Similarly, Syriac does thrive in its primitive form as at present. Furthermore, the Hebrew, one of the oldest Semitic family suffered untold neglect for centuries before and after the appearance of Prophet Isa (Jesus, peace be unto him) and during the days of Greek and Roman power. The rise of Islam and its spread further

eclipsed the language for centuries before it finally, found official shelter in Israel. The Semitic languages of Ethiopia were equally confined to their areas of origin and they could not spread beyond their environment.

Other languages, which are alien to the Semitic family but which also, suffered the same fate as the family did include Latin, Greek and Sanskrit. For example, Latin, which was the rich classical language that played important role in medieval Europe, finds little patronage in the modern world. Similarly, Greek, which was the most universal language in the ancient times, cannot be perfectly maintained by the Greece simply because her immediate neighbours have no interest in the language. As far as Sanskrit, which was the ancient Indian language is concerned, its popularity does not go today beyond the four walls of the country.

On the contrary, there has not been any established record of decline for Arabic. Though, the time of its emergence is yet to be known, its popularity dates back to Al-Jāhiliyyah (barbaric, primitive) age of Arab society and its popularity was not unconnected with the art of poetry. Some of the Arabs of this age in particular were gifted poets who composed poems brilliantly. Part of such poems composed was known as Al-Mu'allaqāt. It is said that the poetic competitions were organized among the poets of different tribes of the society.

Judges were appointed and eloquence of the poets was used as criterion for selecting the best poet. The poems of this period, at least a great percentage of them, were not recorded until the third century of Islam. They used to be transmitted only. The remains of the poems we have today testify to the fact that Arabic had attained perfection right from its emergence and that it has not suffered any vicissitudes (Chejne,1967).

The Influence of Arabic Language in Nigeria

The system of Arabic education in Nigeria before the advent of colonialism was informal. There were neither regular classes nor curriculum of study; students converged at the houses of their teachers or at the mosques to receive knowledge from the morning till evening. Every student had to wait for his turn to receive learning and there was no limit to the year of graduation. While some students stuck to a particular teacher, others moved from one teacher to another, the sole objective being to understand Islam and Arabic language. Through this process, they were able to excel and they perfectly understood the language and adequately utilized it for communication, educational instruction, correspondence and documentation of proceedings, history, research and transactions in addition to religious purposes. Above all, they were able to utilize it for composing literary works like poetry of different themes and prose of numerous forms, most especially during the period known as Jihad Period or Fulani Period (17th – 19th Centuries CE), which was adjudged as the Golden Era of Arabic literature in Nigeria (Ibrahim, & Abubakar,2012).

The Arabic Grammar in Connection to Number

In Arabic, the term “grammar” refers to the rule which governs the way the language is used. This includes: nouns which are categorized into three number categories: singular, dual, and plural. Singular nouns refer to one thing, like "book" or "person." Dual nouns refer to two things, like "two books" or "two people." Plural nouns refer to more than two things, like "many books" or "many people. The is directly connected to the rules for forming dual and plural nouns in Arabic and it refers to as number in this paper. In a lighter note, tense, person and

number, constitute what is called “concord” which is the agreement between one element of linguistics and the other as in the case of Arabic language. Therefore, the number is the target of this work.

Moreover, this explores more on how to form dual and plural nouns in Arabic. The rules for forming dual nouns are a bit simpler than the rules for forming plural nouns, so we'll start with dual nouns. In Arabic, dual nouns are formed by adding a "nun" sound to the end of the singular noun. For example, the dual of "kitab" (book) is "kitabun." In Arabic, plural nouns are formed in a few different ways, depending on the type of noun.

There are three main types of plural nouns: sound plurals, broken plurals, and plural adjectives. Let's start with sound plurals. Sound plurals are the simplest type of plural, and they're formed by adding certain suffixes to the end of the singular noun. These suffixes are different for masculine and feminine nouns. Sure thing! Let's use the word "kitab" (book) again. If "kitab" is a masculine noun, the sound plural is formed by adding "-un" to the end of the word, so the plural would be "kutubun." If "kitab" is a feminine noun, the sound plural is formed by adding "-at" to the end of the word, so the plural would be "kutubat." Now, let's move on to broken plurals. Broken plurals are a bit more complex than sound plurals. They're formed by changing the internal structure of the word, rather than just adding a suffix to the end. The specific changes depend on the type of noun, but there are some general patterns that can be followed. For instance, the word "banan" (banana). The broken plural of "banan" is "bananat." Notice that the "-un" suffix is dropped, and the "-at" suffix is added instead. This is a very common pattern for broken plurals in Arabic. The last is the plural adjectives. Plural adjectives are formed by adding the same suffixes that we used for sound plurals, "-un" for masculine nouns and "-at" for feminine nouns. For example, the plural of "sarih" (clear) is "sarihun" if it's a masculine adjective, and "sarihat" if it's a feminine adjective (Bolanle,2022; Cowan,1958; Jibril,2006).

Methodology

This study is significantly a review paper, which focuses on the major concept of opinion. Therefore, efforts are made to source relevant information from theoretical and primary research works such as journal articles, Textbooks, Seminars and e-materials from Internet. These are all used in addressing the constructs of this work.

Result and Discussion

Arabic language, nouns are divided according to their numbers into three main parts. They are: The Singular Noun (المفرد), The Dual Noun (المتنى) and The Plural Noun (الجمع).

The Singular (المفرد): The Singular nouns in Arabic language are the nouns with the counting number of only one (المفرد). A Singular item, either feminine or masculine is regarded as (المفرد) or (المفردة) in Arabic term. This Singular item can be person, animal, place or an ordinary item. The singular item in feminine noun can be identified mostly by ending with a close taa (ة), while the singular masculine item can be free of any attachment.

The Dual Noun (المتنى): The dual in arabic language is known as (المتنى). the dual are the items which are only two in number. Any item lesser or more than two is not regarded as dual any more. It will either be a singular or plural item. The dual nouns can as well be found in masculine, feminine, man, animal and things too, just like singulars. The dual noun in arabic

language can be identified by the addition of dual alif and nun (ا، ن) to the end of the singular noun, both masculine and feminine nouns.

The Plural Noun (الجمع): The plural in arabic language is called (الجمع). The plural nouns are the nouns which are more than two entities or items. In arabic language, the two items are regarded as dual while any items more than two are regarded as plural. that is, the items starting from three number upward are known as the Plural Items in arabic language. The plural noun can be formed with the addition of waw and nun (و، ن) to the masculine noun with healthy ends while addition of alif and taa (ا، ت) to the feminine noun with healthy or sound end.

Table.1 showcases that Singular, Dual and Plural In Masculine Nouns are as thus:

الجمع	المثنى	المفرد
Plural	Dual	Singular
كتب many books	كتابان two books	كتاب a book
أولاد many boys	ولدان two boys	ولد a boy
رجال many men	رجلان two men	رجل a man

Table. 2 demonstrates that Singular, Dual and Plural in Feminine Nouns are as thus:

الجمع	المثنى	المفردة
Plural	Dual	Singular
بنات many girls	بنتان two girls	بنت a girl
مسلمات many female Muslims	مسلمتان two female Muslims	مسلمة a female Muslim
غرف many rooms	غرفتان two rooms	غرفة a room

Conclusion

In conclusion, number is unique linguistic feature which operate in Arabic language as seen in this findings. In extension, number in this analysis implies that nouns can occur as singular, dual and plural. Therefore, the dual forms of Arabic nouns makes the linguistic feature unique as a result of it unavailability in most languages. This contribution hopes to add value to the existing knowledge in linguistics and so is significant for people who are directly and indirectly connected to Arabic language in Nigeria.

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