



## تحليل مقارن للنفي بين العربية والانكليزية مع الاشارة للترجمة القرانية

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### الخلاصة :

تتضمن الدراسة الحالية تحليلا مقارنا بين اللغتين العربية والانكليزية من حيث النطاق الدلالي للنفي. كما انها تهدف الى اظهار درجات التشابه والاختلاف بين اللغتين فيما يتعلق بالمعاني المتضمنة في الجمل المنفية الغامضة وتحديد سلوكها قواعديا وداليا. يكون سلوك الافعال الدالة على المستقبل لا يمكن توقعه عند النفي لذلك تركز الدراسة على استغوار نطاق نفي الافعال الدالة على المستقبل . يدرس الباحث كذلك النفي الذي يقع في جوانب تركيب الجملة مثل الظروف و المحددات الكمية والجملة التابعة والعبارات المجرورة و جوانب اخرى وكذلك التطرق الى التنعيم من اجل القاء الضوء على اهمية تقليل درجة الغموض الموجودة في جمل منفية معينة . لذا تتعامل الدراسة مع الظاهرة بوصفها ظاهرة نحوية وليس صوتية .

يهدف التحليل المقارن المستخدم في هذا البحث الى استكشاف مدى التشابه والاختلاف في المجموعتين المختارتين قيد الدراسة(نطاق النفي في الانكليزية والعربية) وماهي اوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين هاتين اللغتين. تظهر النتائج وجود عدد كبير من نقاط التشابه والاختلاف في نطاق النفي بين اللغة العربية واللغة الانكليزية. اذ تظهر النتائج التي تم التوصل اليها ان نطاق النفي في اللغتين ينطوي على عدد ملحوظ من اوجه التشابه والاختلاف. كما تظهر النتائج كذلك ان اللغتين تختلفان من حيث نطاق النفي في الافعال الدالة على المستقبل اذ انه اكثر وضوحا ويمكن تمييزه بسهولة في اللغة العربية مما هو عليه الحال في الانكليزية. تنفي اداة النفي في العربية الجزء الذي يليها من الجملة فيما تتميز الانكليزية بعدم وجود اي طريقة شكلية لتحديد فيما اذا كان المنفي هو الفعل الرئيسي ام الفعل الدال على المستقبل . تظهر النتائج كذلك الدور الذي يلعبه التنعيم في تحديد نطاق النفي في الجملتين العربية والانكليزية.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** النفي ، نطاق النفي ، ترجمة قرانية، تحليل مقارن



## **Contrastive analysis of Negation Between Arabic and English with Reference to Quranic Translation Prof. Abdul Ali Salman Abdullah Al-Maliki**

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### **Abstract**

This study is a contrastive analysis between Arabic and English in terms of the semantic scope of negation. It is aimed at showing the degrees of similarity and difference between English and Arabic regarding the meanings involved in negative ambiguous sentences and figuring out their behaviour syntactically and semantically. The behaviour of modals is non-expectable under negation, the study is, therefore; focused on investigating the scope of negation of modals. The researcher also investigates negation that exists in such syntactic aspects as adverbials, quantifiers, subordinate clauses, prepositional phrases and others as well as touching upon intonation in order to highlight the importance of reducing the degree of ambiguity involved in specific negated sentences.

Hence the study is dealing with the phenomenon as a grammatical not a phonological one. The contrastive analysis adopted in this research aims at exploring how far the two selected categories being contrasted (the scope of English and Arabic negation) are similar or different and what their points of similarity and difference are. The findings show that there are considerable number of similarities and differences in the scope of negation in English and Arabic. The findings reached show that the scope of negation in English and Arabic involves a noticeable number of similarities and differences. The results show that the two languages are different in terms of the scope of negation in modal auxiliaries for it is more obvious and can be more easily perceived in Arabic than in English. In Arabic the negative particle negates the part of the sentence that follows it while in English, it is characterized by absence of any formal way to identify whether it is the main verb or the modal auxiliary that is negated. The role played by



intonation in determining the scope of negation in English and Arabic sentences is also shown by the results.

**Key words:** negation, scope of negation, Quranic translation, contrastive analysis

### 1-Introduction

Many studies in language regards denial negation an essential element of languages. Many Arab and English scholars have discussed this linguistic phenomenon found across world languages .However ,not many linguists or researchers were interested in conducting a contrastive study between English and Arabic. The various aspects of negation involved in English and Arabic are the main focus of the present study. The present study also attempts to illustrate negation types, words and correlatives and the way through which local negation can work . Mostly , the procedure for analysis involves : contrasting the same categories of the two languages, finding equivalents in the source language for a certain category in the target language , comparing rules in the two languages , a semantic category whose surface realizations are sought in the languages to be contrasted is started with for the analysis or starting the analysis from various uses of language (Aziz, 2001: 103).

The researcher opted for a descriptive model where the two languages (English and Arabic in our case ) or parts of them to be contrasted are thoroughly and scientifically described in terms structure ,the nature of the two languages and the aim of the analysis are taken into account (ibid: 104). Hence, the semantic scope of negation in English and Arabic is analyzed in terms of structure to describe the similarities and differences between the two languages

The analysis goes into three main sections, the first of which compares and contrasts negation between the two languages in terms of local negation in clauses and correlatives of negation while the second section explores how far the two languages are similar or different and what points of similarity or difference there are in the two. As for the third section, it is mainly concerned with assessing six translations of two quranic ayas into English in order to show the problematic nature of negation in translation in general and in the Quranic text in particular through demonstrating the drawbacks, errors and ambiguous renderings made in the translations and the alternative appropriate ones ,if any, and alternative renderings can be introduced. The analysis shows that the two languages tend towards partial negation of clauses (i.e. negating only elements of clauses). In



other words, it turns obvious that Arabic, on the one hand, is characterized by a frequent negation of either one or two elements whereas English, on the other, is characterized by negating whole clauses. Besides, the study shows that the two languages diverge in their use of negation. So, Arabic, for instance, is featured by the intensive use of negative correlative, unlike English, in which 'and' and 'or' are more heavily used. Based on the research findings, the researcher concludes his paper with an explanatory account of the category of negation in the two languages.

### 1-1 A Comprehensive System of Negation

negation is a universal mental element used to express the non-existence of something, an object, action or feeling, and thus languages make use of various ways of this basic structure to render negative meaning. It has long been attested that different languages make use of different negation patterns, despite some universal traits such as placing the negative marker before the verb. As a part of the negation diachronic development, what is known as Jespersen's negation Cycle (1917: 114), emphasis on negation has led to new negative structures in some Western languages while older structures have been – or are being – progressively abandoned. When negation and emphasis are associated, this association between the two is iconically reflected (Miestamo ,2005:209-10).

Every natural language has certain categories or structures, since they relate to the cognitive processes, which are expressed in one way or another. This basic assumption is so-called linguistic universals. Negation is one of the linguistic universals that are found in English, Arabic, and among others. Horn (1989: xiii) states, “all human systems of communication contain a representation of negation”. Bernini and Ramat (1996:1) also argue, “Yet it is a fact that there is no known language which does not have some means or another of expressing negation”. Languages differ in their formal representation of negation. It is a subject of variation across them. Each language expresses negation through its own distinctive syntactic, semantic and morphological devices. Even though Arab and English linguists have conducted much research to define the similarities and differences of negation in the two languages, the focus of this paper, however, is on the study of a special aspect which is the semantic scope of negation in English and Arabic. The topic is of relevance to the way ambiguous sentences including negation with certain grammatical aspects are interpreted semantically. Smith (1975, cited in Al-Omari 2008) argues that when negated, unambiguous sentences become ambiguous. So, sentence 1.a is unambiguous whereas sentence 1.b is ambiguous in the following examples: 1. a. Mary ran until dark. 1. b.



Mary didn't run until dark. Sentence 1.b is not the opposite of 1.a because it might mean "Mary stopped running before it became dark" or " Mary didn't run until it became dark". Modality as can be seen in the example above, show an unexpected behavior under negation. Radden (2007: 224) mentions that "The behavior of modal verbs is erratic when they occur with negation ". The reason behind the rise of ambiguity is that the same modal might have more than one meaning as well as due to the case that the negated modals might negate either the modality or the proposition. In other words, it is not always necessary that the negated modal verbs affect the modality but in certain cases the proposition of the sentence might be negated. These two terms will be distinguished in relation to negation in English and Arabic in this study. Ambiguity under negation is also involved in other aspects of grammar such as adverbials, quantifiers, subordinate clauses and others. These aspects are studied apart from modality in order to consider the role of intonation in eliminating their ambiguity. Horn and Kato (2000:48) argue that the ambiguity might be invoked when two or more logical operators are linked in the sentence. They are sure that phonology plays an essential role in eliminating this ambiguity. They say "the resolution of this ambiguity involves an array of factors, including phonological prominence, syntactic relations, and information structure." (ibid: 8).

The method of research is carried with the common objective of demonstrating the relevance and significance of what Mitchell (1975:76) called a basically inductive approach to the analysis of linguistic meaning. He says "one can never be wholly inductive or exclusively deductive but it is possible at a given time to be more one than the other, and when there is still so much to know of meaning in its formal linguistic aspects around the world, then it seems reasonable to believe that at least for the time being it is desirable to treat texts and part texts on their own merits. This is all that is implied by a "basically inductive" approach, namely that reasonably free, though properly controlled, rein should be allowed to the development and exploitation of contrasts arising out of close observation and textual analysis." (Mitchell,1975:7). The inductive approach can be carried out following different methods. One of them is the contrastive study .Johansson (2008: 9) defines contrastive linguistics as the systematic comparison of two or more languages with the aim of describing their similarities and differences. This study examines the semantic scope of the negative ambiguous sentences in English and Arabic. It is a contrastive analysis between these two selected languages. The method involved in making this study include collecting data from



many different sources. Many examples taken from the books of grammar and previous linguistic studies. The researcher has also used the internet to collect data In order to show the considerable similarities and differences between the two selected contrasted categories (the scope of English and Arabic negation), the English and Arabic examples which are not contextualized has been analyzed in the fourth chapter in order to contrast and compare these two categories. Negation in English is achieved by using the word “not” while in standard Arabic we find that there are five main elements used to show negation which are: laa, lam, lan, maa and the negative verb laysa. Benmamoun (2000) in his book **The Feature Structure of Functional Categories** argues that these particles are governed by the tense of the verb that they negate. Although the particles Laa, lam and lan are followed by imperfect tense, each one of them has a different tense interpretation. Laa refers to present time as in 1, lan is used to express negation in the future as in 2 and lam refers to the past as in 3. Consider: 1-laa yadrus لا يدرس (He doesn't study) 2- لن يدرس (He will not study) 3-lam yadrus لم يدرس (He didn't study) .He states that the negative verb laysa can occur in verbal and nominal sentences to express denial in the present. Consider the following examples: Laysa Ali unya?ku al-lutuffaahatain. ليس ياكل علي التفاحتين ( Ali isn't eating an apple ) = ( Ali isn't eating an apple ) .The first sentence is ambiguous because it has more than one meaning. The first is that Ali is not eating an apple, while the second is that it is not Ali who is eating an apple, so that the subject only may be negated or the verb may be negated when the negative particle precedes the subject. In the second sentence the negative particle precedes the verb and here there is only one possible meaning which is Ali isn't eating an apple. The particle maa occurs in the context of the past, but Moutaouakil (1993) as cited in Benmamoun`s (2000 ) book **The Feature Structure of Functional Categories** states that it might occur in the present tense. He gives the examples: maa taraka Ahmed ?almadiinata. =ماترك احمد المدينة. ( Ahmed did not leave the city) maa ?uSallii ما اصلي = (I do not pray) . Harrama as cited in Al-Omari (2008) in her thesis **Forms and Uses of Denial in Standard Arabic and Colloquial Jordanian Dialects** states that the scope of negation in Arabic might be the whole sentence or part of it. He argues that the negative particle and the part that it negates might be separated from each other by certain lexical items. Consider the following example: Lam yaðhab Ahmed musri9an ?ela Amman. =لم يذهب احمد مسرعا الى عمان (Ahmed didn't go to Amman hurriedly. This sentence implies that 'he went to Amman but not hurriedly'. Wright (1974) in his book A



**Grammar of the Arabic Language** argues that if only a part of a sentence is to be strongly negated, it must follow the negative particle immediately. With respect to this matter, Baso (2006 :168) discusses the scope of the particle *maa*, in that it is restricted to the part immediately following it when the perfect tense follows it. Consider the following example: *maa qara? Ahmed al-kitab* = ماقرأ احمد الكتاب (Ahmed didn't read the book). In this sentence what is negated is not the verb but it is the focused element which is Ahmed. It means that "it isn't Ahmed who read the book but someone else". The particle *maa* becomes an interrogative marker in imperfect tense if only an object immediately follows it. Consider the following example: *maa al-kita:b alladi yaqra?uahu Ahmed* = مالكتاب الذي يقرأه احمد? (which book is Ahmed reading?). Moutaouakil (1993, cited in Benmamoun 2000) argues that *laa*, unlike *lam* and *lan*, can occur in constituent negation which doesn't negate the whole sentence but only one part. Consider the following example: *laa radzula fid dari* = لا يوجد رجل في داري (There is no man in my house). Albakari (1984) has written about the styles of negation in the Qur'an. He divided Arabic negation in his study into plain negation and tacit negation as the two main parts of his study. He says: "plain negation implies negation in the present, past and the future tenses, expressed through certain literal instruments classified according to the tense of negation" . El-Hassan, Shahir. (1990) illustrated plain negation by dividing it into three components and distributing the particles of denial according to the tense of negation; negation in the present includes the particles ( *laa*, *laysa*, *maa*, *?inna*, and *layta* ), negation in the past includes the particles ( *lam* and *lamma* ) and negation in the future includes the particle ( *lan* ). "Tacit negation is expressed through literal ratification, improbability, exception, exclusion, aloofness, exaltation and other rhetorical expressions implying negated interrogation" (Albakari,1984: 2). He argues that this kind of negation may be achieved without the necessity to use negative particles to form negative statements. Consider the following example: *law Darabani Ahmad la Darabtuhu.* ( tacit negation ) = لو ضربني احمد لضربته ( if Ahmad hit me, I would hit him ) In this sentence, tacit negation is understood from the context without using a negative particle. It means that I would hit him, if he hit me, but he didn't hit me. Babteen (2004) studies many particles that might indicate the meaning of negation without using negation particle such as *law*, *hal* and *?illa* . Essa (1985) states that a negated sentence might indicate affirmative proposition and affirmative sentence might express negative proposition especially when an exceptive particle is used. Consider these examples: *djalasa al-?awlaadu*



ʔilla Ahmed احمد الاولاد الا =جلس (All the boys sat but Ahmed didn't) maa dʒalasa al ʔawlaadu ʔilla Ahmed احمد الاولاد الا =ما جلس (All the boys didn't sit but Ahmed did). Although the first sentence is affirmative, it indicates that Ahmed didn't sit. While the second sentence indicates that Ahmed did sit although it is negated. Al-Samirraʔi (2000) in his book **The Arabic Sentence and The Meaning** states that the negative particle might be used to express other functions. Consider the following example (alʔhzb: 23): "من المؤمنين رجال صدقوا ما عاهدوا الله =عليه" "Among the Believers are men who have been true to their Covenant with Allah". Maa in this sentence is a relative pronoun. He states that the negative particles might induce ambiguity. He gives the following example (Al-Samirraʔi,2000:16): ma dʒaaʔanii ʔaxuka raakiban اخوك راكبا =ماجاتني اخوك (your brother didn't come riding). This sentence has a narrow scope in that the negative particle negates only the adverb raakib-an at the first reading. It might mean that your brother didn't come at all; it has a wide scope at the second reading (Al-Masarwa, 2000,212).

## 1-2 Findings and Discussions

Auwers (2001: 452) states that "modality refers to the speaker's opinions and attitudes toward the proposition that the sentence expresses or the situation that the proposition describes". The semantic features here related to the word modality reflect various senses of the modal verbs such as possibility, necessity, permission, obligation, volition, etc. Palmer (1990:4-5) states that there is a difficulty in the interpretation of the negated epistemic and deontic verbs of possibility and necessity (can, may, must and need). The interrelation between modality and negation might induce two problems. First, the way we interpret the negated modal auxiliary, and secondly no formal way exists that can be utilized to identify whether it is the modal or the main verb that is negated. This is what is called the negation of modality and proposition. So, it should be argued that the component of "modality" and "proposition" must be taken into consideration to outline the scope of ambiguity that might arise in relation of the modal verbs with denial. Many researchers argue that the modal verbs behave in an irregular way when they are negated. It is not necessary that the same modal of the sentence may be used to negate that sentence. In other words deontic necessity and its negation are expressed by the same modal whereas epistemic necessity and its denial are expressed by different modals. Consider the following examples: 1.a.You must write your homework today. (obligation) 1.b.You





mustn't write your homework today. (prohibition) 2.a.He must be at home. (epistemic necessity) 2.b.He can't be at home. (impossibility) In 1.a.and 1.b, must as a deontic modal is used in both affirmative and negated sentences, while must as epistemic modal in 2.a is only used in affirmative sentences and the appropriate negative form of epistemic must is can't in 2.b. Coats (1983) states that( can't) is used because(mustn't) is unavailable while Palmer (1990: 9) argues that (mustn't) isn't used to negate epistemic (must) because( can't) is supplied. Radden and Dirven (2007: 259) state that “the most intriguing problem in the interaction of modals and negation is the scope of negation”. It will be easier to consider the notion of negation if we distinguish between the terms of modality and proposition. Many linguists differentiate between these notions and set them apart, Halliday (1976), Lyons (1977), Palmer (1990), Coats (1983), Radden (2007) and others. Modality of a sentence refers to the meanings expressed by the modal verbs, while proposition refers to what is expressed by all that follows containing the main verb Palmer (1987). In addition, the proposition is introduced by the predicate of the sentence. When the proposition is negated this means that the negation scope extends over the main verb while when the modality is negated, the negation scope extends over the auxiliary (El-Hassan, 1990: 166). It is essential to note that the particle not doesn't reveal which one of them is negated. The scope of negation can be determined only in the paraphrasing of the statements. The semantic and formal criteria are involved here. The latter criterion is marked by the form of negation (-n't) which occurs only with auxiliary verbs, i.e. formally it is the modal that is negated at the following sentences, while the former criteria is concerned with the interpretation of the negated modal, i.e. semantically what is negated either the proposition or the modality.

## 2- Translation of Negation in The Holy Quran

The present subsection discusses the evaluation of the translations of Qurânic ayas which include implicit negation . The evaluation shall discuss the introduced model. The findings of the research's contrastive analysis will be utilized in identifying the translation difficulty encountered in conveying the intended meaning. Alternative renderings are shown when the translations given fail to convey the sense of negation involved in the ayas discussed. To achieve this task, the researcher consults six Quranic translations , rendered by( Ali, A. Y ., Al-Hilali, M. and Khan, M. M. ,Arberry, A. , Irving, T. B., Shaker, M. H. and Pickthall, M. M. ) The names



of the translators mentioned above are given, respectively, in abbreviation as follows: (Ali, Hi. – Kh., Arb., Ivg., Sh, and Pick.) “فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ” (البقرة/ ٦٤) . (Faloula fadhlu Allâhi ‘alaykum warahmatuhu lakuntum min alkhâsiryin) (The cow/64) (Had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah to you, ye had surely been among the lost.) Ali.(p. 10) . (Had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allâh upon you, indeed you would have been among the losers). Hi.-Kh. (and but for the bounty and mercy of God, you had been of the losers.) Arb.(p.7) . (and if God’s bounty and His mercy had not [rested] upon you, you would have turned out to be losers!) Kh. (so were it not for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, you would certainly have been among the losers) pick. (and if it had not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy, ye had been among losers.)Ivg . The implicit negation in the above ayah signalled by the non-jussive conditional particle Al-Hâshimy, A. I. (1998) . (Faloula) (فلولا) was rendered into explicit negatives through( not). In the translations, there are no items selected on the lexical basis indicating the meaning of tacit negation. Hence, a more accurate translation would be : If Allâh’s Grace and Mercy had been prevented from you by Him; you would have been among losers. . (Faloula kânat qaryatan âmenat fanafa’ahâ (يونس ٩٨) (فلولا كانت قَرْيَةٌ آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ) . ?ymânuhâ ?illa qawm Younis) (Jonah/98). (If only there had been a single township (among those We warned), which believed, -so its Faith should have profited it, except the people of Jonah?)Ali. (Was there any town (community) that believed (after seeing the punishment), and its Faith (at the moment) saved it (from the punishment)? (The answer is none) – except the people of Yûnus (Jonah) ) Khan . (Why was there never a city that believed, and its belief profited it? -- Except the people of Jonah)Arb(p.94). (If only there had been a town which believed and whose faith had benefited it besides Jonah’s people) Ivg. (And wherefore was there not a town which should believe so that their belief should have profited them but the people of Yunus?) Sh . (of all those that were destroyed of old) that believed and profited by its belief as did the folk of Jonah! ) Pick. Among the translations of the ayah, Ali’s is a precise one because the meaning of negation included in the ayah is accurately conveyed to the target language through the syntactically collocating combination of (if only) along with a third type conditional clause. The other versions of the translation seem unacceptable for two reasons: the use of the negative particle (not) or due to lack the lack of accurately selected words able to convey the sense of negation involved.



### 3-Conclusion

The Results of this study introduce that there are several similarities and differences of the scope of negation in English and Arabic. In terms of the formal properties, it is necessary in English that the negative particle follows the modals as (can't) but not \* (not can), by contrast, in Arabic the negative particle precedes and follows the modal as *yastaTii9 ʔan laa* and *laa yastatii9 ʔan*. Negation of modality in Arabic, like English, affects both modality and proposition but there is a difference in that negation of proposition and modality in Arabic depends on the position of the negative particle whether before or after the modal element. That is to say, if the negative particle is before the modal this means that the modal is negated and the main verb is positive and if it is after the modal this negates the main verb, proposition, and the modal is positive.

In English, although, the position of the negative particle is always after the modal, negation may affect the proposition or the modality. With respect to intonation, the study concludes that the semantic influence of intonational variation, especially the falling and fall-rise contours, in determining the scope of negation in English and Arabic are the same in that the falling tone indicates the literal meaning of negation while the falling rising tone indicates the meaning of contrast.

The translation assessment of the translation of the Qurânic ayas produced the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. It is difficult to translate implicit negation from Arabic into English (as shown in the Quranic text where inaccurate renderings frequently introduced). The linguistic variation between the two languages highlights an obvious degree non-correspondence in the area of study.
2. When translated into English, the translation of Arabic interrogatives carrying the meaning of implicit negation would inescapably involve overtranslation. The interrogative occurring in the selected examples of the Quranic ayahs were rendered as normal interrogatives, rather, some syntactic, lexical, orthographic indications to the meaning of negation implicit in interrogatives must be given.
3. On the lexical level, the two languages demonstrate a high degree of similarity in terms of words carrying the sense of implicit negation. Accordingly, Arabic texts including lexis with implicit negation can be accurately rendered into English as implicit negation.



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**The parallel Qur'an**