

# Adjective Substitutes in English and Arabic

A Contrastive Study

*Abeer Hadi Salih, M.A.*

### ABSTRACT

*This research is dedicated to study the adjective substitutes both in English and Arabic to find out the points of similarity and difference between the English adjectival substitutes 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.*

*As for English language, there is the noun like Wood floor, the adverb like **quite surprise**, the pronouns like **my folder**, the prepositional phrase as in **during the wedding** and verbal phrase as in **frightening place**. The same in Arabic language different parts of speech can be adjective substitutes. For example: the noun **الرجل** in **يا هذا الرجل توكل على الله** and the verbal phrase **يركض** in **مرر ولدًا يركض** and the pronoun like **الذي** in **مررت بالشخص الذي فاز**. But there are few single words in Arabic work as adjective substitutes for example: the word **رأيت رجلاً ذا علم** like **”ذو“** and the word **مررت برجلٍ مثلك** in **”مثل“***

*This study is a trial to shed light on the points of similarities and differences between the adjective substitutes in both languages.*

### Firstly: Adjective Substitutes in English

#### Preliminary

*Adjectives in English are words or phrases that characterize the object denoted by a noun. In English, they generally come before the noun, as in **atomic bomb**, **blue pajamas**, **clever solution**, etc. Adjectives that can only be used to pre-modify nouns are called **attributive adjectives**. Adjectives acting as a noun's complement and*

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. Adjectival Nouns

Many nouns may be used as adjectives. For example:

**Wood, floor, Floor, price, 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. Others define it to include noun phrases in which the initial word is a noun acting as an adjective, as in the examples prior to the ones immediately above, and rarer cases in which the initial word in a fixed noun phrase is an adjective, such as **black death** and **blue-green alga**. (Biber-et al, 1999: 99)

### 1. 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*
- ` *a computer exhibition is an exhibition of computers*
- ` *a bicycle shop is a shop that sells bicycles*

### 2. 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
boat race	boat races	NOT boats race, boats races
toothbrush	toothbrushes	NOT teeth brush, teeth brushes
shoe-lace	shoe-laces	NOT shoes-lace, shoes-laces
cigarette packet	cigarette packets	NOT cigarettes packet, cigarettes packets

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
- sports club, sports clubs
- customs duty, customs duties
- accounts department, accounts departments
- arms production

### 3. 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, headmaster**).*

## 4. 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>

## 2. Participle Adjectives.

### 2.1 Participles Used as Adjectives

*Both present and past participles are used with the verbs **to be** and **to have** to create common verb tenses, but they can also be used as adjectives. Since there is a slight difference in meaning between the present and the past participles when they are used as adjectives, it is very important to choose the appropriate form.*

► *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 new song is interesting.***

***The new song was interesting.***

► 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.***

► 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.***

### **2.2 Participles are verbal adjectives**

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

1. 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.***

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

***The poor need help.***

***The rich have an opportunity.***

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.*

3. As verbals, 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.*

(Pavur, 2009: 1)

4. 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)

### 3. 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 colour 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**.

(Kosur, 1:2009)

### 4. Possessive adjectives

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

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>1st</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>our</i>
<i>2nd</i>	<i>your (thy)</i>	<i>your</i>
<i>3rd</i>	<i>his, her, its</i>	<i>their</i>

Example: **They tore their hair.**

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



*My, your, his, her, its, our, and their* 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; its; our; & their* are the **possessive adjectives** in English. They are used before a **noun** to show possession.

## 5. Adjectival infinitives

*Just like a single-word adjective, an infinitive used as an adjective always describes a noun.*

*An adjectival infinitive always **follows** the noun it describes.*

*EXAMPLE*

*Like gerunds and participles, infinitives may incorporate other words as part of their phrase.*

*EXAMPLE*

## 6. Adjectival Clause

*The main function of a relative clause is post modifying a noun phrase. The noun phrase that is modified is called the antecedent and the relative clause normally follows the antecedent and the relative pronoun begins the relative clause. For example:*

*The man who dances there is a professor.*

*The relative pronoun here is **who**, and the whole relative clause **who dances there**. The relative pronoun **who** points back to the head of the noun phrase the **man** which is called the antecedent. Common relative pronouns: **that which who whom whose***

*(al-Badri, 2000:9)*

*For example:*

***Which** book did Joe read? **Answer:** the one that I gave him*

*Example of adjectival clause answering **what kind?***

***What kind** of politician has the support of the people? **Answer:** one who is trust worthy.*

*Adjectival clauses may also begin with selected subordinating conjunctions:*

***when** - to describe a time*

***where** - to describe a place*

***why** - to describe a reason*

*(Ibid: 11)*

## 7. 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 modifies, except that **enough** can only post modify. For example:*

*He is stupid enough to do it. (Quirk-etal, 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 predeterminer)*

*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)*

*(Biber-etal, 1999:548)*

## 8. 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**.*

### 8.1 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.*

### **8.1.1 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 fain 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!***

### **8.1.2 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, 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.*

## **9. Secondly: 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:*

**9.1. The abstract noun**, when the letters الألف واللام are added to it and

*comes after the demonstrative in vocative phrase, like the word الرجل*

*"the man" in: يا هذا الرجلُ توكل على الله*

**9.2. The derived noun**, when it is defined by الألف واللام and comes after

*the demonstrative in vocative phrase, as the word الطالبة "the student"*

*in: يا هذه الطالبةُ اجتهدِي*

**9.3. The demonstrative**, as in: أيهذا الشاكي وما بك داءٌ كيف تغدو إذا غدوت

*عليلاً*

**9.4. The relative pronoun**, مررتُ بالشخص الذي فاز،

**9.5. Adverbial phrase**, like the phrase فوق كل صوت "above all shouts"

*in:*

*لالحق صوتٌ فوق كل صوتٍ*

**9.6. Prepositional phrase, like the phrase** من القدس "from Quds" **in:** جاء رجل من القدس

**9.7. The nominal phrase after the indefinite noun, as** فوائدهُ جمّةٌ "beneficial" **in:** هذا درسٌ فوائدهُ جمّةٌ

**9.8. The verbal phrase after the indefinite noun like** يركض "running" **in:**

أبصرتُ رجلاً يسبحُ "swimming" **in** يسبح and مر ولدٌ يركضُ

(135-71: ١٩٨٧، عليان)

**9.9. The base** المصدر **as in:** هو رجل عدل (113 الأزهري)

**9.10. The word** "مثل" **works as an adjective, as in:** مررتُ برجلٍ مثلك

(١٥٩: السامرائي)

**9.11. The word** "ذو" **as in** علم رأيت رجلاً ذا علم (1/210: سيوييه)

## 10. 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: "this", "my" in English and "مثل", "ذو" in Arabic, or a phrase like:

The adjectival clause "Joe read the book that I gave him" in English and the nominal phrase "هذا درس فوائده جمّة" in Arabic.

The substitutes in the two languages come either before the noun they describe as in: “**the crying child**” in English and “يا هذا الرجل توكل على الله” in Arabic, or after it as in: “**this is the best time to start**” in English and “مر رجل يركض” in Arabic. In both languages there are derived nouns which are being used as substitutes formed by adding an affix to a verb, for example: **shine + -ing = shining “shining sun”** in English and a noun + the definite article as in: “يا هذه الطالبة الطالبة” in English and “يا هذه الطالبة” in Arabic. *it consists of “التعريف” and “طالبة”* in Arabic.

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

“**a love story**” a single noun and “**tennis shoes**” a plural one in English, whereas in Arabic “رأيت رجلاً ذا علم” a single noun and “يا ايها الناس” a plural one.

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

## 11. The Conclusion:

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

### 11.1 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.

### 11.2 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 "نَو" and "مَثَل" which are being used as adjective substitutes with no counterparts in it.

## Bibliography

- Al-badri, Hind Hamid. (2000). **Relative Clause in English and Arabic**. Unpublished M.A.Thesis. Hodeidah: Hodeidah University
- Biber, Douglas, et al. (1999). **Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English**. Edinburgh Gate: Person Education Limited.
- Chatmajian, M. (2005). **The Comprehensive English Grammar**. Syria: Aleppo. Shihab Eldeen Publishing House.
- Kosur, Heather Marie. (2009). **The Functions of Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases in English**. Recorded in 15-10-2009. [www.garden of phrases.com](http://www.gardenofphrases.com)
- Pavur, Claude. (2009). **Latin Teaching Materials**. Saint Louis University.
- Quirk, et al. (1985). **Comprehensive English Grammar**. New York: Longman House.

## المصادر

- ابن يعيش، موفق الدين. شرح المفصل. طبع ونشر الطباعة المنيرية.
- الازهري، خالد. شرح التصريح على التوضيح. دار احياء الكتب العربية.
- السامرائي، فاضل. معاني النحو. دار إحياء التراث العربي، بيروت، لبنان، ط١،

٢٠٠٧م / ١٤٢٨هـ

📁 سيبويه، عمرو بن عثمان بن قنبر. كتاب سيبويه. تحقيق: عبد السلام محمد، هارون.

مكتبة الخانجي، مصر، ط٢، ١٤٠٣هـ / ١٩٨٣م.

📁 عليان، هشام عامر و د. ابو مغلي، سميح. المرجع السهل في قواعد النحو العربي.

ط٧، ١٤٠٨هـ / ١٩٨٧م.

### المستخلص

يقوم هذا البحث على دراسة البدائل عن الصفة في اللغة الانجليزية مع ما يقابلها في اللغة العربية وايجاد اوجه التشابه والاختلاف بينهما.

ويراد ببدايل الصفة هي تلك الكلمات واقسام الكلام التي تقوم مقام الصفة في الجملة و تعمل عملها. قد تكون هذه البدائل اسماء، ضمائر، ظروف، حروف جر او جمل اسمية وفعلية او كلمات منفردة كما هو في اللغة العربية.

البدايل عن الصفة في اللغة الانجليزية تكون اما اسم، ظرف، ضمير، اسم اشارة، اسم فاعل، اسم مفعول، او شبه جملة. اما البدائل في اللغة العربية فتكون اما اسم، ضمير، اسم اشارة، جملة فعلية، او كلمات منفردة "مثل" و "ذو". وهذه الدراسة هي محاولة لتسليط الضوء على مواضع التشابه والاختلاف بين تلك البدائل في اللغتين الانجليزية والعربية.

وقد خرجت الدراسة بالنتائج التالية:

١. هناك تشابه كبير بين اغلب البدائل عن الصفة في اللغة الانجليزية وما يقابلها في اللغة العربية في الوظيفة والتركيب.

٢. توجد كلمات منفردة في اللغة العربية تعمل كبدايل عن الصفة لا يوجد لها مقابل في اللغة الانجليزية.