

Contrastive Analysis Study of Auxiliary Verbs in English and Arabic

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ABSTRACT

Linguists usually assume that a learner of a second language tends to transfer auxiliary verbs of his native language to that of the target language in both speech and writing. They also contend that the differences between the auxiliary verbs of the native language and the target language constitute learning difficulties for ESL 's and EFL's learners.

This paper is an attempt to investigate the contrastive analysis study of the auxiliary verbs in English and Arabic. The paper falls into three sections. Section one deals with the auxiliary verbs in English. Section two deals with the auxiliary verbs in Arabic.

Section three investigates the contrastive analysis study of the auxiliary verbs in English and Arabic. This paper finds out that in English there are two sets of auxiliaries : primary auxiliaries and modal auxiliaries whereas in Arabic, auxiliaries are grouped according to the following categories : Kaana group (أخوات كان) , verbs of beginning (أفعال البداية) , verbs of approximation (أفعال التقريب) and particles which behave like auxiliaries

(الأدوات التي تنحى منحى الأفعال المساعدة) . Furthermore , in English, auxiliaries that express future time are " will " and " shall " while in Arabic , particles or prefixes that express future time are " saufa " (سوف) and " sa " (س) .

Keywords : English auxiliary verbs , Arabic auxiliary verbs , primary auxiliary verbs , modal auxiliary verbs , kaana group , verbs of beginning , verbs of approximation

Section One

Auxiliary Verbs in English

1.1 Definition and Classification

Leech (1987:82) states that “ an auxiliary verb is a verb used in combination with a main verb , to indicate the mood , tense , or aspect of the action denoted by the main verb . It has no complete meaning of itself “. Similarly , Twaddle (1973:27) lists two sets of auxiliaries :

1. Primary Auxiliaries : This set has subject – agreement ,and a full past syntax :
Have ,has , had ; be , is , am , was , are , were ; do , does , did.
2. Modal Auxiliaries : This set has no subject – agreement , and without full past syntax .Also , they can not be preceded by another auxiliary:
Can , could ; may , might ; must ; need ; ought to ; shall , should ; will , would ; dare .(Ibid: 28)

1.2 Syntactic Characteristics of Auxiliary Verbs

According to Finch (1987:121) , auxiliary verbs have the following grammatical characteristics :

1. In negation , auxiliary verbs precede the signal –n’t (not) ,e.g.

Don’t	doesn’t	didn’t	
Haven’t	hasn’t	hadn’t	
Isn’t	wasn’t	are’nt	weren’t
Can’t	couldn’t	needn’t	
Shan’t	shouldn’t	won’t	wouldn’t

2. In interrogative sentence , auxiliary verbs usually occur before the subject , except when the subject is the interrogative subject , e.g.

Did he go to school ?
Have you done your homework ?
Who came here last night ?

3. auxiliary verbs function as a substitute for the entire verb construction , e.g.

I will go home before you will

I can read fast but you can't

(Ibid :122)

1.3 Functions of Auxiliary Verbs

Swan (2005:120) states that auxiliary verbs are used with the main verbs to form verb phrases .

1. They precede and signal the uninflected forms of the main verbs :

Do : Do you write letters very often ?

Does: Does he write letters very often ?

Did : Did she cook dinner yesterday ?

Can : I can solve the problem

Could : We could swim in the river

Shall : Shall I come tomorrow ?

Should : You do your best

Will : I will help you

Would : He said he would come .

May : She may be sick .

Might : He might be in the office

Must : You must come early

Dare : How dare you do that !

Let's : Let's go to the movie .

2. Auxiliary verbs which form verbal phrases with the – ing form of the main verb :

Am : I am writing a letter

Is : He is doing his homework

Are : The boys are playing football

Was : John was writing a letter

Were : The boys were eating fish

4. Auxiliary verbs which form verbal phrases with the – en form of the main verb in the active construction :

Has : John has done his best.

Have : we have done our best .

Had : we have studied our lesson after we had left .

4. Auxiliary verbs which form verbal phrases with the infinitive of the main verb ,i.e.,

“to “ + base form , e.g.,

Have to : They have to study hard

Has to : He has to study hard
 Had to : John had to study hard
 Ought to: You ought to study hard .
 Used to : She used to study hard.
 (Ibid :121)

Section Two Auxiliary Verbs in Arabic

AL-Samaraai (1976:113) says that “ in Arabic there are a good number of verbs and particles which function like English auxiliary verbs . The particles do not have complete lexical meanings ; they, however , denote time and time relations .They are grouped according to the following categories “ :

1. Kaana group
2. verbs of beginning
3. verbs of appropinquation
4. particles which behave like auxiliaries

1. **Kaana group**

All the verbs in this group share linguistic characteristics ,i.e., when preceding a nominal sentence , they change the sound of the last syllable of the predicate, as in the following examples :

Al- Kitaabu Mufi:dun الكتاب مفيد
 (The book is useful)

Kaana al-kitaabu Mufi:dun كان الكتاب مفيد
 (The book was useful)

Asbaha al – Kitaabu Mufi:dun أصبح الكتاب مفيد
 (The book became useful)

Kaana (was) is the most frequently used auxiliary in Arabic .The past form of the verb can may denote past continuous tense provided that it precedes a main verb which is in the present form, for example :

Kaana al-waladu yalabu indama hadara abuuhu كان الولد يلعب عندما حضر أبوه
(The boy was playing when his father arrived)

If **kaana** precedes a main verb that is in the past form , it suggests past perfect tense ,for example :

Kaana al-rajula qad saafara كان الرجل قد سافر
(The man had travelled)

The following table shows **Kaana** group verbs and their meanings in Arabic and English :

[Table (1) **Kaana** group : verbs and their meanings in Arabic and English]

	Auxiliary	Arabic	Meaning in English
1.	Kaana	كَانَ	Be
2.	Baata	بَاتَ	To be or do during the night
3.	Adhaa	أَضْحَى	To become in the afternoon
4.	Laisa	لَيْسَ	Not , or never
5.	Maadaama	مَادَامَ	Denote actions taking place in the past and are still in process
٦.	Maazaala	مَازَالَ	
7.	Maabariha	مَابَرِحَ	
٨.	Maafatia	مَا فَتَى	
٩.	Maainfaka	مَا انْفَكَ	
10.	Dhalla	ظَلَّ	To do or be during the day
١١.	Asbaha	أَصْبَحَ	To become in the morning
12.	Saara	صَارَ	To become
13.	Amsaa	امسى	To become in the evening

The following verbs precede a main verb in the present from :

1. Dhalla: (ظَلَّ)

Dhalla al-rajulu yaktubu ظلَّ الرجلُ يكتبُ
Literally (The man (stayed) writing the whole day)

2. Baata :(بَاتَ)

Baata al-talibu yaktubu duruusahu باتَ الطالبُ يكتبُ دروسه
Literally (the student spent the night writing his lessons)

3. Asbaha: (أصبح)

Asbaha yaktubu bisuratin أصبح يكتبُ بسرعة
Literally (he became to write fast in the morning

٤. Adhaa : (أضحى)

Adhaa yaktubu bisuratin أضحى يكتبُ بسرعة

Literally (he became to write fast in the afternoon)

5. **Saara** : (صار)

Saara yaktubu bisuratin صار يكتب بسرعة

Literally (he became to write fast)

6. **Amsaa**: (أمسى)

Amsaa yaktubu bisuratin أمسى يكتب بسرعة

Literally (he became to write in the evening)

The following verbs have to be preceded by the particle **maa** (ما) which expresses negation .These verbs denote action taking place in the past and are still in process.

The following verbs have the same meanings :

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|
| 1. Maa bariha (مابرح) | Maa baiha al waladu yalabu
The boy is still playing | مابرح الولد يلعب |
| 2. Maa fatia (ماقتى) | Maa fatia al waladu yalabu
The boy is still playing | ماقتى الولد يلعب |
| 3. Maa infakaa (مانفك) | Maa infakaa al waladu yalabu
The boy is still playing | مانفك الولد يلعب |
| 4. Maa zaala (مازال) | Maa zaala al waladu yalabu
The boy is still playing | مازال الولد يلعب |

Another verb that belongs to **kaana** group is the negation word **laisa** (not or never) as an auxiliary which precedes a main verb in the present form :

Laisa yalabu abadan ليس يلعب أبدا

He never plays

(Ibid

: 114)

2. Verbs of Beginning

Hasan (1977:220) believes that the following verbs may express an action that has already begun .They behave like auxiliaries, some of them precede a main verb in the present form ,and some come before a main verb preceded by the particle (an) . The verbs which precede a main verb in the present form are :

1. **Jaala** (جعل) : to begin
Jaala yughanni جعل يغني
He began to sing
2. **Sharaa** (شرع) : to begin
Sharaa al waladu yabki شرع الولد يبكي
The boy has already began to cry
3. **Anshaa** (انشأ) : to begin
Anshaat al – bintu tughanni انشأت البنت تغني
The girl has already begun to sing
4. **Tafiqa** (طفق) : to begin
Tafiqat al- bantu tughanni طفقت البنت تغني
The girl has already begun to sing

3.Verbs of Appropinquation

Al-Hadithi (1975: 95) holds that verbs of appropinquation are those verbs that include : (1) proximity of predicate or (2) a hope of occurrence , come before a main verb preceded by the particle (an) (أن)

1. **Asaa** (عسى) : implies a hope of occurrence
Asaa Allaahu an yatia bi –l- faraj عسى الله أن يأتي بالفرج
Literally (may Allah bring relief)
2. **Aushaka** (أوشك) : be about to
Aushaka al-maridhu an yashfa أوشك المريض أن يشفى
The patient was about to recover
3. **Kaada** (كاد) : be about to
Kaada al-mualum an yakuna rasoula كاد المعلم أن يكون رسولا
The teacher was about to be a messenger

4. Particles which behave like Auxiliary verbs

Al- Yasuui (1976:75) lists the particles that behave like auxiliaries as follows :

1. **Saufa** (سوف) : will
Saufa abqaa hunaa سوف أبقى هنا
I will stay here
2. **Sa** (سـ) : will
Sa abqaa hunaa سأبقى هنا

I will stay here

The two particles **Saufa** , and the prefix **Sa** have the same grammatical function ; they both denote an action that will take place in the future .They are used interchangeably according to the individual' s reference

3. **Lam** (لم) : Did not

This function word indicates an action didn't take place in the past

Lam yati al-talibu ila al-madrasati لم يأتي الطالب إلى المدرسة
The student didn't come to school.

4. **Lan** (لن) : will not

This particle is used for the purpose of indicating that an action will not take place in the future time, e.g.,

Lan yaduhaba al-waladu ila al-madrasati لن يذهب الولد إلى المدرسة
The boy will not go to school

5. **Qad** (قد) : may

It can precede a main verb in the present tense form to denote an action that may happen, e.g.

Qad yanjahu al-talibu قد ينجح الطالب
The student may succeed

It also precedes a main verb in the past tense form to denote an action that take place in the near past , e.g,

Qad katabtu al-darsa قد كتبت الدرس
I have just written the lesson

5. **Rubba** or **Rubbama** (رب او ربما) : may

Rubbama adhabu ila al –masrahi ربما اذهب الى المسرح
I may go to the theatre

7. **Lamma** (لما) : not yet

It precedes a main verb in the present form

Azifa al-waqtu wa lamma yati ازف الوقت ولما ياتي
Time is over and he didn't show up yet

(Ibid : 77)

Section Three

Contrastive Analysis Study of Auxiliary verbs in English and Arabic

This section shows the main differences and similarities in the use of auxiliary verbs in English and Arabic as is shown in the table below:

[Table (2) Differences and similarities of auxiliaries verbs in English and Arabic]

Auxiliary verbs in English	Auxiliary verbs in Arabic
<p>1. Use of auxiliary verbs to express future time ,e.g. I shall write a letter</p> <p>He will write a letter</p>	<p>1. Use of particles or prefixes to express future time ,e.g. Saufa yaktubu risala</p> <p>2. He will write a letter</p>
<p>2. Be and some quasi-auxiliary verbs precede a main verb in the –ing form, e.g.</p> <p>I am writing a letter</p> <p>He is writing a letter</p> <p>They are writing a letter</p>	<p>2. The auxiliary kaana (was) precedes ism-al-faail (present participle) with forms different from the English –ing form,e.g.</p> <p>Kaana jaalsan</p> <p>He was sitting</p>
<p>3. Auxiliary verbs which express future time have past forms ,e.g.</p> <p>Can –could</p> <p>Shall-should</p> <p>Will-would</p> <p>May –might</p>	<p>3. Auxiliary verbs which are equivalent to the English auxiliary verbs that denote future time are particles or prefixes ;they do not have past forms .</p>
<p>4. Auxiliary Be does not precede a main verb in the past form ,e.g.</p> <p>* He was went to school</p> <p>He went to school</p>	<p>4 .Auxiliary Kaana precedes a verb in the past form ,e.g.</p> <p>Kaana kataba al-darsa</p> <p>He had written the lesson</p>
<p>5. Auxiliary Be present precedes a past participle form ,e.g.</p> <p>The car is made in America</p>	<p>5. Auxiliary Kaana present does not precede ism -al-faail unless kaana present is preceded by prefix sa , or particle saufa</p>
<p>6. Have is used to form present perfect tense ,e.g.</p>	<p>6. There is no verb that equals the English auxiliary have . Some</p>

<p>I have read the book</p>	<p>adverbs convey the meaning of have as a full verb only: Indi (عندي) and ladayya (لدي) (I have or posses) .An Arabic construction is Qad kataba al-darsa (قد كتب الدرس) He has written a lesson</p>
<p>7 . The construction have to in English denotes necessity ,e.g. I have to fix the car</p> <p>8. Do as an auxiliary verb is used in negative and interrogative sentences :</p> <p>Do you write fast I do not write fast</p>	<p>7. Possible equivalent in Arabic is Yajibu e.g. Yajibu an aktuba bisuratin يجب ان اكتب بسرعة I have to write fast</p> <p>8.Do as an auxiliary verb does not exist in Arabic , however , some particles and prefixes function as the English auxiliary do . They are : Hal (هل) = (do , does, did) and lam (لم) = did not Hal taktubu al-darsa هل تكتب الدرس Do you write the lesson ? Lam yaktubu al-darsa لم يكتب الدرس He didn't write the lesson</p>

Conclusions

The study comes to the following conclusions :

1. In English , an auxiliary verb is a verb used to indicate the mood , tense, or aspect of the action denoted by the main verb whereas in Arabic , there are verbs and particles which function like English auxiliaries . They do not have complete lexical meanings .They denote time and time relations.
2. In English , there are two sets of auxiliaries : (1) primary auxiliaries: this set has subject agreement such as have , has , had ; be , is ,am , was ,were ; do ,does , did. (2) the modal auxiliaries : this set has no subject agreement and without full past syntax such as : can , could ; will , would ; shall , should ; may , might ; need ought to .In Arabic auxiliaries are group according to the following categories :
(1) Kaana group , (2) verbs of beginning , (3) verbs of appropinquation , (4) particles behaving like auxiliaries .
3. In English , auxiliaries that express future time are **will** and **shall**. In Arabic , particles or prefixes that express future time are **saufa** and **sa** .
4. In English , **do** is used as an auxiliary to show question and negation. **Do** as an auxiliary does not exist in Arabic . Some particles and prefixes function as the English auxiliary , such as **hal** and **lam**.
5. Auxiliary **Be** does not precede the main verb in the English past form while auxiliary **kaana** precedes the main verb in the Arabic past form .
6. In English , **have** is used to form present perfect tense whereas in Arabic there is no such verb but (**qad**) is used as an auxiliary verb .

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دراسة تحليلية مقارنة للأفعال المساعدة في اللغتين الانكليزية والعربية

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ألمستخلص

يفترض علماء اللغة بان متعلم اللغة الثانية يميل إلى نقل الأفعال المساعدة للغة الأم إلى اللغة الهدف في كل من الكلام والكتابة وكذلك يؤكدون بان الاختلافات بين الأفعال المساعدة للغة الأم واللغة الهدف تسبب صعوبات لمتعلمي اللغة الثانية وكذلك لمتعلمي اللغات الأجنبية وهذا البحث هو محاولة للقيام بدراسة تحليلية مقارنة للأفعال المساعدة في كل من اللغتين الانكليزية والعربية . ويقسم البحث إلى ثلاث أقسام . يتناول القسم الأول الأفعال المساعدة في اللغة الانكليزية ويتناول القسم الثاني الأفعال المساعدة في اللغة العربية أما القسم الثالث من البحث فهو محاولة للقيام بدراسة تحليلية مقارنة للأفعال المساعدة في كل من اللغتين الانكليزية والعربية . توصلت الدراسة إلى ماياتي :

هنالك مجموعتان من الأفعال المساعدة في اللغة الانكليزية وهي الأفعال المساعدة الأساسية والأفعال الناقصة أما في اللغة العربية فتقسم إلى المجاميع التالية : مجموعة أخوات كان ، أفعال البداية ، أفعال التقريب ، والأدوات التي تنحى منحى الأفعال المساعدة .بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، في اللغة الانكليزية إن الأفعال المساعدة التي تعبر عن زمن المستقبل هي "will and shall" بينما الأدوات أو البوادي التي تعبر عن زمن المستقبل هي " سوف و _____ " .