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A Contrastive study: Motion Verbs in Some Selected Short Stories in English and Arabic

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Abstract: Motion verbs are those verbs that express a kind of movement such go, walk, run, and hurry and so on. Ikegami (1970:87) states that "Verbs of motion are understood in this paper as those verbs which refer to changes in locus". Besides, the meaning of the "English Motion verbs "are classified into nine classes according to their syntactic behavior".In Arabic, Al Mu'jam Al Wasset's definition of the word 'ḥaraka' was not very far from this definition, if not the same "the displacement of something from one place to another". In general, Arab linguists agreed on Ibn Manzour's definition that the word motion is 'anti-statism'. The Arabic definition will be taken into consideration more than the English one because the latter definition focuses on displacement and change of state as the main feature of motion verbs. Later, it will be demonstrated that some motion verbs do not necessarily involve displacement or change of state.

This paper aims at identifying the similarities and differences between English and Arabic in connecting with motion verbs to find out whether the findings are language-specific or not. In order to achieve the aims of the present paper stated above, the following steps are to be followed: a theoretical background of motion verbs in English and Arabic will be introduced, analysing the data, carrying out a contrastive study to show the similarities and differences between English and Arabic in connecting motion verbs and drawing some conclusions.The English and Arabic data collected for this paper was extracted from two short stories written by modern English and Arab authors: one story in each language. The minimum length of these stories is (1578) words and the maximum length of them is (2708) words. These two short stories are as the following:

- Text number 1 is "A Mother" (1993) by James Joyce
- Text number 2 is "في بيت المقدس" (1957) by علي الطنطاوي .

Key words: Contrastive study, monition verbs, Arabic stories, English stories

Introduction

The short story is a modern form of writing, dating back to the middle years of the nineteenth century. The parables, the fairy tales, the fables, the myths, and the legends or even the allegories, actually all these have all had a part to play in the changing and development of the short story of today (Kawther, 1990: 12).

According to Leech (2002: 36-40) a verb is a very important part of any sentence. There are two main functions that a verb can play: there are those verbs that put a subject into motion and other verbs offer more clarification on the same subject.

The study of motion verbs has recently been a top priority for linguists in practically every language on the planet. Alonge (1991: 97) stated that motion verbs have been the topic of various investigations due to their intriguing semantic properties. The term motion refers to a change in position from a scientific standpoint. It began in physics as "a change in the position of an object with respect to time and its reference point" (Wikipedia). The phrase soon made its way into linguistics. Motion is defined by Talmy (1985: 85) as "situations containing movement or the maintenance of a stationary place" (Alakrash et.al .2020).

Statement of the Problem

Motion verbs have been studied by different scholars. Each scholar views these verbs from his/her own perspective. Thus, there are contradicted assumptions about the nature of motion verbs. This study is oriented toward characterizing this issue. Hence, because motion verbs do not appear to function syntactically as a coherent semantic class, they are a problematic verb class to analyze in terms of the relationship between syntax and semantics. Some syntactic subjects of motion verbs have some qualities with direct objects of transitive verbs (i.e., they act as Patients or Themes), whereas subjects of other motion verbs act as Agents across languages.

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In doing this paper, the researcher thinks it is important to decide the problem that is going to be analyzed, in order to make it clear and easier to be understood. In reference to this, the problem is: What are the similarities and differences between English and Arabic in motion verbs?

4. Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that: there are no similarities and differences between English and Arabic in motion verbs.

5. Aims

The researcher has several aims in analyzing motion verbs used in A Mother by James Joyce and Fi Bayt al-Maqdis by Ali Al-Tantawi. The aims of this paper concern with the problem of the study.

Also this paper aims at identifying the similarities and differences between English and Arabic in connecting with motion verbs to find out whether the findings are language-specific or not.

6. Procedures

In order to achieve the aims of the present paper stated above, the following steps are to be followed:

1. A theoretical background of motion verbs in English and Arabic will be introduced.
2. Analyzing the data.
3. Carrying out a contrastive study to show the similarities and differences between English and Arabic in connecting motion verbs
4. Drawing some conclusions.

6. Scope

In this paper, the researcher has analyzed motion verbs that have found in A Mother by James Joyce and Fi Bayt al-Maqdis by Ali Al-Tantawi, and showing the similarities and differences between these two languages as concerning with motion verbs.

7. Value

The present paper will hopefully contribute to the notion of language universals as it sheds light on the similarities and differences between English and Arabic as far as motion verbs are concerned. Consequently, it is hoped that the findings of the present paper will be significant to linguists, other researchers in the field of text linguistics, textbook writers, EFL teachers, and translators.

Motion Verbs in English

Definitions of Motion Verbs

Leech (1991:267) shows that motion verbs are often followed by prepositions, adverbs which describe the direction, goal, etc., of the movement: the main preposition of motion go in pairs as in the table below the words in (brackets) are the equivalent prepositions of position.

Motion verbs are defined as the real expression of life. According to Dawood (2012: 19), there are five factors of motion verbs: the time they take, the place where they occur, the force needed for them, the source of such verbs, and the environment accompanying them. He discussed three main issues related to classifying motion verbs. The first one is the dilemma of ' which is a verb of motion and which isn't? The second one has to do with how common and frequent a motion verb is being used in the language of a specific era. Language is always changing and developing. If a certain verb is rarely or widely used in the contexts of time, this indicates that the linguistic society of the time is abdicating or approving such a verb and thus can or cannot be counted upon. The third issue is that classifying motion verbs of a language remains a point of view after all. It is controlled by different considerations: alphabetical, developmental, historical, or in terms of meanings. Overlapping between the fields permits a verb to be a member of more than one field and many other sub-fields (Ibid: 268).

Types of Motion Verbs

According to Quirk *et al.* (1985:749) verbs like walk ,swim , post , jump , turn , leave , surround , cross , clime , may be followed by direct object and the direct object ma have a (locative role) ,e.g.

1. We walked the streets. [We walked through the streets]
2. She swam the river. [She swam across the river]
3. He passed a cyclist. [He passed by a cyclist]
4. The Horse jumped the fence [The horse jumped over the fence] (Ibid: 749)

Here, there some meaning of motion verbs in English according to (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary):

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- Come: to move to or towards a person or place.
- **Move**: to change position or make sb/sth change position in away that can be seen , heard , felt.
5. Don't move –stay perfectly still.
6. He comes to work by bus.
- **Go**: to move or travel from one place to another .
7. She went into her room and shut the door behind her.
- **Arrive**: to get to a place , especially at the end of journey .
8. I'll wait until they arrive.
- **Walk**: to move or go somewhere by putting one foot in front of the other on the ground , but without running .
9. The baby is just learning to walk.
- **Run** : to move using your legs, going faster than when you walk .
10. Can you ran as fast as mike?
- **Trot**: to move fairly quikly , lifting the feet high off the ground
11. the boy trotted along behind his father.
- **Get**: to move to or from a particular place or in a particular direction
12. The bridge was destroyed so we couldn't get across the river.
- **Reach** : to arrive at the place that you have been traveling to.
13. They didn't reach the border until after dark. (Oxford Dictionary).

Motion Verbs in Arabic

Frawley (1992: 64) described motion verbs as a displacement of an entity. In Arabic, Al Mu'jam Al Wasset's definition of the word 'ḥaraka' "الحركة "was not very far from this definition, if not the same "the displacement of something from one place to another". In general, Arab linguists agreed on Ibn Manzour's definition that the word motion is 'anti-statism'. For this study,the Arabic definition will be taken into consideration more than the English one because the latter definition focuses on displacement and change of state as the main feature of motion verbs. Later, it will be demonstrated that some motion verbs do not necessarily involve displacement or change of state.

Motion is central to the human experience. It seems to be a universal concept present in all the languages of the world. Languages encode motion in different ways. Since the appearance of Talmy's typology of motion verbs, many non-English linguists carried out studies(1) to certify whether their languages satisfy Talmy's typology or not and (2) to draw a comparison with the English language to indicate where the two languages meet and where they differ in terms of expressing motion (ibid: 65).

Talmy (1985: 69) claims that languages according to verb roots with relation to the expression of 'Motion' are classified into two types: Verb-framing describes the path which refers to the direction of the movement, e.g., movement across, into, out of, etc. The direction of the verb is expressed in the root verb itself. The manner is expressed independently. These types include Romance, Semitic and Polynesian ones. Satellite-framing describes the manner of motion which expresses motion using a particular verb (satellite such as from, away, to……). They encode Path in a satellite (that is, a verbal dependent). This type includes English, some other Indo-European languages, and Chinese.
Standard Arabic has two main word orders where the subject can either precede or follow the verb:

Bilingual English-Arabic dictionaries are not unanimous about the (Modern Standard) Arabic equivalent to the English verb go. these three verbs ḏahaba, maḍā, and rāḥa will be focused
14. ḏahaba / maḍā / rāḥa al='ab-u   ilā   markaz   al=šurṭa ḏahaba
/ maḍā / rāḥa.   ART=father-NOM ALL station ART=police
went the father to station the police
'The father went to the police station' (ibid: 7071).

Shalaby (2010) differentiates members of the Arabic group as having the characteristics of moving forward to achieve a specific goal. āta is(-/+animate) while āqbala is (+animate); ja'a is(-/+ willingly); ḥaḍara (+continuous attendance).
-backward: rear, recede, retreat, return.
-backward: rajā,رجعāada عاد ,adbara إدبر,wallaa ولّ,radda ردkhalaffa خَلف.

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All these verbs have in common the feature of turning backward for a specific purpose whether willingly or unwillingly. The speed of action is determined according to the situation. For example, the Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms gives retreat and recede (+ voluntary) because they mean withdrawal from a point or position under pressure, while the return is (+/- voluntary). In Arabic, Shalaby demonstrates that adbara إدبر and wallaa ولّى have the feature (+voluntary) and are usually faster than rajā'a رجع and āada عاد. Al Mu'jam al Wasseet defines both verbs as to flee quickly, whereas rajā رجع and āada عاد are (+/- voluntary) (ibid: 74).

Motion Verbs in English and Arabic

English is a Germanic language. Arabic is a Semitic one. This means that both languages belong to two different remote language families. Despite this fact, the two languages show no big differences in the way they express motion. Both languages admit the semantic components according to which motion verbs are classified: Motion; Direction; Manner; Path and Environment. Both languages contain pairs of Locomotors verbs which require the verb to change the place from one point to another such as in go/ kharaja خرج and Non-Locomotors verbs which require the verb not to change the place from one point to another and to move around the spot such as kneel/ raka'a ركع . Both have motion verbs of the component Direction and its categories: (1)horizontal come/ ja'a جاء and return rajāa 2 ; (رجع)vertical descend habaṭa هبط and ascendrafa'a رفع ; and(3) circular roll daḥrajaدحرج . Finally, both languages express path using particles. They differ in that in Arabic, an additional element is needed to show how the action is carried such as in dakhala jarian دخل جريا. Although each group is categorized under one title, they are not synonyms. The choice of the adequate verb depends on the semantic properties, even if slight, of such a verb (Shalaby, 2010: 92).

Methodology

Research Method

In analyzing the data, the researcher tends to use the qualitative descriptive method. The researcher observed two English and Arabic short stories (A Mother by James Joyce and Fi Bayt al-Maqdis by Ali Al-Tantawi). The data were sentences from both two short stories that contain motion verbs in it. Descriptive method is a way in solving a problem by describing the facts of subject/object of the research as the way they are. According to Simatupang (2011: 19), descriptive method is "a method of research that makes the description of situation of event or occurrence".

Data Collecting Method

The English and Arabic data collected for this paper was extracted from two short stories written by modern English and Arab authors: one story in each language. The minimum length of these stories is (1578) words and the maximum length of them is (2708) words. These two short stories are as the following:

- Text number 1 is "A Mother" (1993) by James Joyce
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The data that are considered to be relevant for this paer are collected by using technique of sampling. Purposive sampling is used to collect the required data.

As Bailey (1987:94) state that "*In purposive sampling the investigator does not necessarily have a quota to fill from within various strata, as in quota sampling, but neither does he or she just pick the nearest warm bodies, as in convenience sampling. Rather, the researcher uses his or her on judgement about which respondents to choose and picks only those who best meet the purposes of the study*".

Data Analysis Method

The Qualitative Descriptive Research Methodology has been used in this paper. The aim of this methodology is to making "a comprehensive summarization, in everyday terms, of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals. Qualitative research is more descriptive because the data shaped of words and more emphasize on process more than product".

Data Analysis
English Data

Before making the analysis of motion verbs in 'A Mother' that has written by James Joyce, it seems that it is necessary to provide the reader with some details about this short story. "An inexperienced Dublin

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impresario named Mr. Holohan arranges with Mrs. Kearney for her daughter Kathleen to accompany on the piano the singers at a series of four concerts. When the first three concerts are sparsely attended, Mrs. Kearney demands payment for all the performances before the fourth show, delaying the start of that evening's entertainment. Finally, Mrs. Kearney refuses to let Kathleen play during the second half of the concert because she has not been paid the entire promised fee".

Analyzing Motion Verbs in *A Mother*

Motion verbs are verbs that describe motion. They cannot be used in passive voice. Common examples of motion verbs include: "go", "walk", "run", "swim" or "fly".

Text (1):

"Mr. Holohan, assistant secretary of the Eire Abu Society, had been __walking up__ ....."

Analysis

Here, the motion verb is 'walking up' refers to leaving, this verb has also the property of leaving, but from some kind of a narrow space into a wider one. It is distinguished by its wide variety of semantic features.

'Walk' is to move or go somewhere by putting one foot in front of the other on the ground , but without running .

Text (2):

"She shuddered".

Analysis

In text (2), he explained that things that shudder are people, animals, earth, machines/engines that have 'self-controlled bodies'.Shake denotes an event that can be 'externally caused' and Things that shake are the above and leaves, furniture, dishes. Shudder denotes an event that is 'internally caused'.

Text (3)

"As the assistant secretary walked to the Eire Abu"

Levin states that "semantically, the verb 'walk' always describe an entity's movement to an endpoint". 'Walk' means to move or go somewhere by putting one foot in front of the other on the ground , but without running .

10.5 Arabic Data

Text (1):

"Mariette was __running__ around the house....."
"Marriette kant __tadur__ fi al-bayt..."

Analysis

The motion verb in this one is 'Running', which is used to indicate a forward movement to achieve a specific goal willingly. The motion might be performed quickly or slowly, by animates and inanimates.

What Levin (1993) called 'Run verbs' and Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995: 282) later renamed agentive verbs of manner of motion is the largest and most important class. It encompasses verbs which describe the manners in which animate entities can move.'Run' to move using your legs, going faster than when you walk.

Text (2):

"Her husband had __gone out__ to repel the enemies...."

Here, in this text, the motion verb is 'gone out', which used by the author to refer to Mariette's wife. This verb has also the property of leaving, but from some kind of a narrow space into a wider one. It is distinguished by its wide variety of semantic features. The agent might be animate or inanimate. It might be quick or slow.

Text (3):

"Then her husband __entered__ safely....."

Analysis

In quote (3), the author used the motion verb 'entered', which means to come or gain admission into a group. So, semantically the motion verb 'entered' describes an entity's movement to an endpoint.

Text (4):

"They __fled__ like stray ewes"

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In this one, the motion verb is 'fled', which means go away. Verbs of motion are often followed by prepositions, adverbs which describe the direction, goal, etc., of the movement. But here in text (4) there is no preposition, adverb or even there is no direction goal.

Text (5):

> *"She __walked with__ him to the great church to join the victory celebration"*

In this one, the verb 'walked' is considered as a motion verb, which semantically means to move or go somewhere by putting one foot in front of the other on the ground , but without running.

Conclusion

It is concluded that:

1. English is a Germanic language. Arabic is a Semitic one. This means that both languages belong to two different remote language families. Despite this fact, the two languages show no big differences in the way they express motion. Both languages admit the semantic components according to which motion verbs are classified: Motion; Direction; Manner; Path and Environment.

2. English and Arabic have subclasses depending on the direction of motion along a given path (forward/backward on the horizontal axis as is the case for (advance/ retreat) upward/downward on a vertical axis, for (ascend/ descend), or no direction at all (arrive/reach), and circular movement).

3. In both languages, motion verbs that share particular semantic features are grouped into semantic components. Grouping a set of verbs under one component does not mean that these verbs are synonyms. The slightest semantic property, for example (slow/quick), makes a difference.

4. Motion verbs in Arabic have many names for the same meaning, while in English there is not.

5. According to the results of this study, there are similarities and differences between English and Arabic, so the hypothesis of this study has been rejected.

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