

Nature of Prefixes in Arabic: A Proposed Classification

Dr. Abdusalam M. Gh. Al-Ghrafy

Associate Professor of Linguistics
Department of English, Faculty of Languages
Sana'a University

Abstract

Arabic prefixes are one of the most neglected areas in the modern linguistic literature of Arabic. This paper aims to investigate the nature of prefixes in Arabic, and propose a classification for their types and subtypes. This is achieved by defining the potential grammatical and/or semantic functions of prefixes in Arabic through examining their common occurrences in different Arabic contexts. On the basis of their potential functions, types and subtypes of Arabic prefixes are outlined and discussed.

It was found that prefixes in Arabic, as in many other languages, are a basic linguistic feature that influences grammar and meaning. Arabic prefixes, as proposed by this study, can be classified into three basic types; particle prefixes, inflectional prefixes and derivational prefixes. It is true that the second and third types might be present in many other languages, but the first type might not, which might make this study interesting. That is, for particles, including prepositions and conjunctions, to be prefixed to words may not exist in many other languages. Particle prefixes can be, then, considered a distinctive linguistic feature for Arabic language. The study concludes with recommending further researches to be conducted in the area of Arabic affixation in general, and in the semantic variations of particle prefixes in different contexts, in particular.

Keywords: Arabic Prefixes, Classification, Types, Subtypes, Particle prefixes

طبيعة البادئات في اللغة العربية: مقترح لتصنيفها

د. عبد السلام محمد غالب الغرافي

أستاذ علم اللغة المشارك، قسم اللغة الانجليزية،

كلية اللغات، جامعة صنعاء

الملخص

تعد البادئات العربية من أكثر المجالات التي تم إهمالها في الأدبيات اللغوية الحديثة المتعلقة باللغة العربية. وتبحث هذه الورقة في طبيعة البادئات في اللغة العربية، وتقترح تصنيفاً لأنواعها الاصلية والفرعية في اللغة. يتم تحقيق ذلك عن طريق تحديد الوظائف النحوية و/أو الدلالية المحتملة لهذه البادئات في اللغة العربية من خلال فحص تكرار ورودها في سياقات عربية مختلفة. بناءً على الوظائف المحتملة هذه، يتم تحديد ومناقشة أنواع البادئات العربية الاصلية والفرعية، يصاحب ذلك تقديم أمثلة توضيحية أصيلة لكل بادئة من النصوص العربية، متبوعة بكتابة صوتية لكل مثال من هذه الامثلة وترجمة موثوقة له إلى اللغة الإنجليزية.

1. Introduction

Affixation is one of the most familiar word formation processes in many languages including Arabic. It usually results in two types of word forms; inflected words or derived words. In the former, certain bound morphemes are attached to the word to alter some of its grammatical features, including tense, gender, number, mood, voice and person. However, in the latter, certain bound morphemes are attached to the word to alter its grammatical category and/or its semantic content. The bound morphemes that produce these two types of word forms are called affixes. In many languages, including Arabic, affixes are considered as bound morphemes that cannot function freely by themselves in language structure. Affixes which can be derivational or inflectional are divided into three types; prefixes, infixes and suffixes. Their functions, whether derivational or inflectional are usually decided by the word form resulted from each affixation process. Prefixes are widely studied and discussed in the linguistic literature of many languages including English; however, prefixes in Arabic have not been given enough attention in the modern linguistic literature of Arabic. Therefore, the main concern of this research paper is to investigate the nature of prefixes in Arabic and propose a classification for them on the basis of their potential grammatical and/or semantic functions in Arabic.

The importance of this study arises from the absence of similar studies in the linguistic literature of Arabic. That is, Arabic prefixes have not been paid enough attention in the linguistic literature of the language and were not studied and examined scientifically, leaving lots of gaps in our understanding of their nature, functions and classification. The study's significance also originates in the valuable analytic knowledge and results it introduces to analyzers and researchers of the Arabic language.

In this paper, the researcher tries to look at the nature of prefixes in Arabic, and propose a classification for them based on their functions in the language. To achieve this, the researcher attempts first to define the grammatical and/or semantic functions of Arabic prefixes through considering their common occurrences in different Arabic contexts. On the basis of understanding their potential grammatical and/or semantic functions, a classification of the types and subtypes for these prefixes will be proposed. That is, the main objective of the study is to propose a classification of the types and subtypes of these prefixes, based on those revealed grammatical and/or semantic functions of them.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Part two provides an overview of the Arabic tradition of morphological analysis and tries to relate that to modern linguistic analysis. Part three, which represents the main body of the paper, outlines the study proposed classification of

prefixes in Arabic, on the basis of which the nature of types and subtypes of Arabic prefixes are discussed. Finally, in Part Four a Summary and Conclusion is provided.

2. Arabic Tradition of Morphological Analysis

Morphology, which is concerned about the internal structure of words, studies the different types of morphemes found in a language and their distribution in the language structure. Morpheme can be defined as the minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function that are used in a language. Morphology identifies, analyzes, and describes morphemes, including among others, root words or base forms, affixes and their place or order of occurrence. It focuses on two main issues, namely word formation (derivational morphology) and word interaction with syntax, such as gender, number and tense marking (inflectional morphology).

According to Haspelmath and Sims (2010), morphology is not a very old term. They argue that morphology is both the oldest and one of the newest parts of grammatical analysis. It is the oldest because the first linguists were primarily morphologists. It was also prominent in the writings of the greatest grammarians of ancient times in the Indian, Greek, Roman and Arabic grammatical traditions. Linguists until recent times often thought of grammar as consisting primarily of word structure, perhaps because of the influence of the written grammars of these ancient periods. That is, it was felt that there was no need for a distinctive term for word structure analysis, i.e. morphology, as the term grammar is basically concerned about word structure. It was only in the second half of the 19th century that the term morphology was introduced into the new emergent science of language structure analysis, linguistics, and became current. While other terms, including phonology, concerned about sound structure analysis and syntax, concerned about sentence structure analysis had existed for centuries, the term morphology was introduced as a branch of linguistics. Thus, in this sense it may be concluded that morphology is a young discipline.

Haspelmath and Sims recently define morphology as “the study of the combination of morphemes to yield words” (2010, p. 3). They argue that morphological study aims to describe and explain the morphological patterns of human languages, represented by word-forms. Word-forms in an inflectional paradigm, for instance, generally share one free morpheme with a clear meaning and are distinguished from each other by the different shorter bound morphemes, called affixes (i.e., prefixes, infixes or suffixes). An affix, attached to the root or the main part of a word, usually has an abstract meaning and cannot occur by itself (Haspelmath and Sims: 2010).

Arabic as one of the ancient Semitic languages has a long grammatical tradition dated back to the second half of the eighth century A. D., when the first grammar book of the Arabic language, *Al-Kitab*, was written by the most influential Arabic grammarian, Sibawayh (A. D. 760-796). In *Al-Kitab*, Sibawayh sets the standard of explaining rather than merely describing grammar that all subsequent grammarians of Arabic have followed. The formula of the book begins with syntax and then finishes with morphology, with phonetics included as an appendix (Al-Ghrafy, 2014). The grammatical tradition established by Sibawayh with further additions by subsequent Arabic grammarians has been dominating until recent times, when the Arabic language started to be analyzed using scientific methods of the modern linguistic theory.

In the Arabic grammatical tradition, the two major kinds of grammatical analysis are *as-sarf* and *an-naḥw*, which are often referred to in English as morphology and syntax, respectively. However, the boundary between them is not the same as it is in the modern linguistic theory. Arabic morphology or *as-Sarf* covers many areas of derivational morphology (e.g., the derived verb forms of the basic or ground form of triliteral and quadrilateral verbs) and other areas of inflectional morphology (e.g., the verb tense, person, number and gender paradigms), (for further knowledge in these two areas, see Wright, 1962, pp. 29-52; Ryding, 2005, pp. 455-604; and Wightwick and Gaatar, 2008, pp. 38-54). A further kind of Arabic grammatical analysis, *al-ištiqāq*, actually deals also with Arabic derivational morphology and word etymology. *Al-ištiqāq* can be defined as the study of word origins and development, in the sense that it deals extensively with the creation of words from the lexical root system.

It was commonly believed that Arabic morphology is to a large extent based on discontinuous morphemes, consisting primarily of a system of consonant roots which interlock with patterns of vowels (vocalization) to form words, or word stems. Eisele (2002) notes that structural linguists in the early fifties of the 20th century were strongly interested in the Arabic morphology, when the two papers of Greenberg (1950) and Cantineau (1950) were published, influencing the development of subsequent studies that emphasize root and pattern over other processes. He argues that Greenberg's study might be one of the most important contributions that influenced modern Semitic linguistics and is still referred to and has a lasting impact on in the subsequent linguistic studies of Arabic morphology until today. "Greenberg's paper was seminal (and has stood up well to time) and perhaps had more of impact than any other work in advancing linguistic interest in the Arabic root and pattern system of morphology" (Eisele: 2002).

According to Eisele (2002), although Greenberg does not in any way generalize his findings of root pattern morphology to all of Arabic or Semitic words, Cantineau in his study clearly maintains that root and pattern system is "the primary (if not only) basis of Arabic and Semitic morphology", and that "derivation by suffix or prefix is rather rarely employed" (Cantineau 1950,

quoted in Eisele, 2002). Eisele also refers to Fleisch's studies (1956 and 1961) as a classic example to prove that this view of Cantineau was dominating in the many structuralist analyses of the fifties and early sixties. In his studies, Fleisch explicitly compared the affixal system of French with the root system of Arabic (Eisele: 2002). Fleisch (1961) argues that Arabic is completely different from European languages including French in utilizing a root and pattern system to create its vocabulary, adding that in Arabic,

The root is composed of consonants (and only consonants) in a grouping to which is attached a general idea more or less precise. The realization of this idea in autonomous words is made by the play of vowels interior to this root. It is therefore the vowels which give their "form" to words in this sort of indeterminate matter which is the idea expressed by the root. (1961: 248, quoted in Eisele: 2002)

Eisele (2002) argues that although Fleisch admits that some affixation are used "here and there" by Arabic, he marginalizes such use to a "remarkable enrichment" subordinate to its root and pattern processes system, and he terms it "internal inflexion". Eisele adds that this view of Arabic in the French Arabic tradition was concluded recently in Roman (1999),

in which the root is extended beyond its normal domain and is attributed even to particles to which a root is never attributed even in the most fanatical of "radicalists", -i.e., to such basic particles as kam "how much" or fi "in", which are considered by almost all researchers, traditional and modern, to be basic, underived particles. (Eisele: 2002)

Yushmanov (1961), as one of the European Arabists of the period, however, in his book, *The Structure of the Arabic Language*, gives equal view weight to affixation and root-pattern processes: "there are three basic items in Arabic word-formation-root, vocalization, and auxiliaries (prefixes, suffixes, and infixes)" (Yushmanov, 1961: p. 34). In discussing word formation in Arabic, Yushmanov refers to various types of prefixes and suffixes that are used in forming words of stems formed by roots and vocalization (1961: pp. 36-41). He clearly discusses some Arabic prefixes which play an important role in words derivations and formation in Arabic. He refers to prefixes including ?a-, ma-, mi- and mu-, used in word derivation, and others including ta- and ya-, used in other word formation (pp. 36-37). Previously, Gray (1934) in his book, *Semitic Comparative Linguistics*, refers to prefixes as performatives that precede base in different Semitic languages including Arabic. He mentions examples of these performatives including ?a-, ?i-, ya-, ma- and ta- (pp. 45-46), in addition to na- and sa- (p. 81).

In fact, Arabic as a Semitic language, like many other world languages, is based on a root-and-affix structure and is considered as a root-based language. It has a morphology based on building inflected word forms from roots that have three, sometimes four, or rarely five consonant letters. Most Arabic words are morphologically derived from a list of roots, to which many affixes can be attached to form different surface words. Arabic shows three types of affixes: prefixes, infixes and suffixes. Arabic words are inflected and morphologically marked according to gender (masculine and feminine); case (nominative, accusative and genitive); number (singular, dual and plural); person (1st, 2nd and 3rd); determination (definite and indefinite); tense (perfective and imperfective); voice (active and passive); and/or mood (indicative, subjunctive and jussive).

For instance, the Arabic trilateral root ك ت ب /k-t-b/ (to write) can be used, through modifying patterns of vowels (i.e., to make discontinuous morphemes) and other morphological processes (i.e. affixation), to generate most word forms in Arabic that have to do with writing. Table (1) below shows some of the word forms generated from the Arabic trilateral root /k-t-b/.

Table (1): Some word forms generated from the Arabic root /k-t-b/ (to write)

Word Root	Morphological Processes			Generated word	Meaning in English
	Discontinuous Morpheme	Derivation	Inflection		
k-t-b ك ت ب	katab (past tense stem)		Suffixation	katab-a	He wrote
				katab-at	She wrote
	ktub (present tense & passive participle noun stem)		Prefixation-Suffixation	ya-ktub-u	He writes
				ta-ktub-u	She writes
		Prefixation	Suffixation	ma-ktub-un	letter (Sing. Nom.)
				ma-ktub-ān	letter (Dual. Nom.)
	katib (active participle noun stem)		Suffixation	katib-un	writer (Sing. Masc. Nom.)
				katib-at-un	writer (Sing. Fem. Nom.)
	kitab (noun stem1)		Suffixation	kitab-un	book (Sing. Nom.)
				kitab-ān	book (Dual Nom.)
	ktab (noun stem2)	Prefixation	Suffixation	ma-ktab-an	office (Sing. Masc. Acc.)
				ma-ktab-at-un	library (Fem. Sing. Nom.)

The table above contains only samples of the morphological processes related to the Arabic trilateral root /k-t-b/. Full morphological paradigms of this root, as well as of other Arabic roots, have to include all their possible word forms through the discontinuous stem morphemes and other morphological processes including affixation.

In addition to the different word forms that result from such derivational and inflectional word formation processes, Arabic shows a further interesting and distinctive morphological feature. This feature is represented by the various Arabic inseparable particles that are attached to word forms as affixes producing further word forms. That is, in addition to the separable particles, including conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs, pronouns and possessives found in almost all world languages, Arabic has inseparable counterparts of such particles that can be attached to Arabic words as affixes. This unique feature of Arabic with the other morphological features discussed above resulted in a rich morphological system of Arabic, distinct from those found in most other world languages.

Morphologically rich languages like Arabic present significant challenges to natural language analysis because a word often conveys complex meanings decomposable into several morphemes. In contrast with English, some Arabic affixes are very difficult to remove without proper identification. It is common to have multiple affixes on a word. A clear example is the use of pronouns. Unlike English, where words and pronouns are written separately, Arabic has two types of pronouns; separable and inseparable. Arabic inseparable pronouns, like possessives and many others, are in most cases attached to the word as suffixes. To make it clear, the English sentence “They will marry her to you”, for instance, can be written in one Arabic word (verb), from right to left, as سيزوجونها /*sa-yu-zawij-ūn-k-hā*/. The mapping between this Arabic word-sentence, its phonetic transcription and its meaning in English can be shown in table (2) below.

Table (2) An Arabic word-sentence, its transcription and its English translation

Morphological Processes	Suffixes			Word Stem	Prefixes	
Arabic word-sentence	ها	ك	ونـ	زوج	يـ	سـ
Phonetic Transcription	-hā	-k	-ūn	zawij	yu-	sa-
Meaning in English	her	you	they	married	present (3 rd Pers. M. Plu.)	will
	<i>They will marry her to you.</i>					

When removing the three pronoun suffixes and the two prefixes attached to the word, what remains, زَوَّجَ /zawaj-a/ (married), can be identified as the stem of this word (Note that after removing all affixes from this word-sentence, the past tense form of the verb is always what remains as the stem). Although Arabic is very rich in such inseparable-pronoun and many other suffixes of different types and grammatical functions, only a few prefixes are found. Arabic prefixes, the concern of this research paper, are generally represented by some inseparable-particle and other inflectional and derivational prefixes.

It is better to conclude this part of the study by giving a note on the variety of the Arabic language referred to in this research paper. It is customary in linguistic study to distinguish between Classical Arabic (CA), the literary language used in the previous eras, and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) the literary Arabic used in modern times. The two forms of the language differ primarily in style and vocabulary, since they represent the written traditions of very different historical and cultural eras. CA and MSA are largely but not completely similar in their linguistic structures. "The high degree of similarity between CA and MSA gives strong continuity to the literary and Islamic liturgical tradition" (Ryding, 2005). The form of Arabic referred to in this paper, the grammar and examples used, is the common variety of Arabic language used these days by Arabic speakers/writers in all fields of day to day life. This form of Arabic mainly represents MSA in its structure, syntax and vocabulary and partially includes certain verses from the Holy Qur'an and examples from classical literature as these are still in common use by the language users these days.

3. A Proposed Classification of Prefixes in Arabic

Prefixes are bound morphemes that cannot function and/or get meanings unless they are attached to other free words in the text. Prefixes, attached to verbs, nouns, or to both to alter their semantic content and/or grammatical functions, are widely used in Arabic. Almost all Arabic prefixes consist of a single consonant letter, attached to words, marking certain semantic and/or grammatical aspects that are added to the linguistic content of these words. There are about thirteen different prefixes in Arabic. These can be shown in table (3) below, accompanied by their phonetic transcriptions, and their correspondents and order in the Arabic alphabet.

Table (3): Arabic Prefixes, their phonetic transcriptions and their alphabetical correspondents

No.	Arabic Prefixes		Correspondents in Arabic Alphabet		
	Symbol	Transcription	Letter	Transcription	Order
1	أ	/ʔa-/	أ	/ʔalif/	1
2	ب	/ba-/	ب	/bā/	2
3	ت	/ta-/	ت	/tā/	3
4	س	/sa-/	س	/sīn/	11
5	ف	/fa-/	ف	/fā/	20
6	ك	/ka-/	ك	/kāf/	22
7	ل	/la-/	ل	/lām/	23
8	م	/ma-/	م	/mīm/	24
9	ي	/mi-/	م	/mīm/	24
10	و	/mu-/	م	/mīm/	24
11	ن	/na-/	ن	/nūn/	25
12	و	/wa-/	و	/wāw/	27
13	ي	/ya-/	ي	/yā/	28

Generally speaking, these thirteen prefixes can be roughly classified, depending on their grammatical and/or semantic functions in Arabic, into three major categories: particle prefixes, inflectional prefixes and derivational prefixes. This proposed classification will be followed as the main framework of the discussion in the rest of the paper. On the basis of their functions, these three major categories of Arabic prefixes and their different types and subtypes will be discussed in the upcoming three sections of the paper. Throughout these sections, for each prefix discussed, illustrative examples are provided in Arabic, followed by their phonetic transcriptions and then their meaning in English. In addition, tables are used whenever the examples provided require detailed illustrations and/or clarifications. Note that some of the symbols mentioned in the table above may be used to represent different types of Arabic prefixes with different functions throughout the discussion.

3.1 Particle Prefixes in Arabic

Arabic particle prefixes are the ones that represent the Arabic inseparable particles attached to words in texts to alter their semantic and/or grammatical content. Particles in Arabic, which are traditionally called *ḥuruf*, literally "letters", can be either separable or inseparable. Separable

Arabic particles, which are in many aspects treated similarly as the English ones, might be prepositions, conjunctions or others. A separable particle in Arabic must consist of more than one consonant letter to be able to function as a free morpheme in the text. That means that for any single letter particle preceding a word in Arabic to get its function and/or meaning in text, it must be prefixed to the word it precedes. Such particles are called inseparable particles/prefixes in Arabic. That is, all inseparable particles in Arabic are single consonant letter prefixes that must be attached to other words in Arabic texts to be able to perform their functions. Arabic particle prefixes can be further sub-classified into conjunctive prefixes, prepositional prefixes and adverbial prefixes. The nature of these three subcategories of Arabic particle prefixes; their types and subtypes will be discussed in the following three subsections.

3.1.1 Arabic Conjunctive Prefixes

This is the first subtype of Arabic particle prefixes. The discussion here concentrates on all the Arabic conjunctive prefixes that are in common occurrence in Arabic texts. Arabic conjunctive prefixes refer to Arabic inseparable conjunctions prefixed to Arabic words in texts to join between words, clauses and/or sentences, in opposition to Arabic separable conjunctions which function freely as words in Arabic texts. Generally, there are about nine conjunctions in Arabic, only three of them are inseparable/prefixes including, و /wa-/، ف /fa-/ and ل /la-/. On the basis of their distinctive conjunctive functions, these three Arabic conjunctive prefixes can be further sub-classified into coordinating prefixes and subordinating prefixes.

3.1.1.1 Arabic Coordinating Prefixes

All English coordinating conjunctions are separable particles which function as free morphemes/words in all English contexts. The English word “and”, for instance, is usually rendered as a coordinating conjunction and has the same function almost in all textural environments; that is, connecting between two words, phrases or clauses of equal values. This is not only restricted to this example but is also common to all other coordinating conjunctions/coordinators in English. The case is different when Arabic coordinating conjunctions are discussed. In addition to the separable coordinating conjunctions, Arabic also has inseparable coordinating conjunctions/ prefixes. Arabic coordinating prefixes refer to the Arabic inseparable coordinators that can be prefixed to Arabic words, nouns or verbs, to join two or more constructions as coordinating conjunctions. Coordinating prefixes in Arabic are represented by the two inseparable coordinators و /wa-/ and ف /fa-/, which will be discussed in the following section. Note that, in addition to their grammatical function as coordinators, /wa-/

and /fa-/ also perform other grammatical and/or semantic functions occurring in different Arabic contexts; however, this is not the concern here.

Arabic Coordinating Prefix و /wa-/

Although the prefix /wa-/ has other functions, the discussion, here, concentrates only on its grammatical function as a coordinating prefix in different Arabic contexts. Almost all the occurrences of /wa-/ as a coordinating prefix, represents the simple English “and” we know. As a particle prefix of union, /wa-/ joins two phrases or clauses within sentences. In technical terms, it is mainly used as a coordinator to join the subsequent phrase to the previous one as a participant in, or recipient of, the same action. Consider the following two examples in which /wa-/ occurs as a coordinating prefix in two different Arabic contexts.

1. قابلت زيدا وعمرًا.
qābal-t-u zaid-an wa-omer-a.
I met Zaid *and* Omer.
2. جاء زيدٌ وذهبَ عمرٌ.
jā?-a zaid-un wa-thahab-a amr-u.
Zaid came *and* Amr went.

The examples above show two occurrences of the Arabic coordinating prefix /wa-/ functioning as a coordinator in different Arabic contexts. In example (1), /wa-/ coordinates two noun phrases of exactly the same value, zaid-an and omer-a, and in this case it can be translated into English as “*and*”. In example (2), /wa-/ coordinates two verbal clauses of the same value, jā?-a zaid-un and thahab-a amr-un, and in this case it can be rendered into English also as “*and*”.

Arabic Coordinating Prefix ف /fa-/

Although the prefix /fa-/ has other functions, the discussion, here, concentrates only on its grammatical function as a coordinator in different Arabic contexts. As a particle of union, /fa-/ as /wa-/, joins two phrases or clauses within sentences. However, /fa-/ functions differently in all its occurrences from the coordinator /wa-/. That is, it indicates a development in the narrative of the clauses or phrases it joins. Consider the following two examples of the coordinator /fa-/ occurring in different contexts.

3. قابلت زيدا فسعيدا.
qābal-t-u zaid-an fa-saʿīd-a.
I met Zaid *and then* Saeed.
4. (فَوَكَزَهُ مُوسَى فَقَضَى عَلَيْهِ) القصص 15
fa-wakaz-a-hu musā fa-qadh-a ʿalai-h-i.

And Moses struck him with his fist **and** made an end of him.

As shown above, /fa-/ occurs as a coordinator in these two different Arabic contexts, carrying the sense of order, compared to /wa-/. In example (3), /fa-/ coordinates the two nouns *zaid-an* and *saʕīd-a*, where one comes before the other, and in this case it can be rendered into English as “*and then*”. In example (4), /fa-/ coordinates the two verbal clauses of two events *wakaz-a-hu musā* and *qadh-a ʕalai-h-i*, where one occurs after the other, and in this case it can be rendered into English as “*and*”.

3.1.1.2 Arabic Subordinating Prefixes

Arabic subordinating prefixes refer to the ones that are usually prefixed to Arabic verbs in complex sentences to join two clauses in a relation of subordination. Arabic subordinating prefixes are represented by the two subordinating inseparable particles /la-/ and /fa-/. Although these two prefixes can also be attached to noun phrases as prepositions, the distinctive use of them here as subordinating prefixes is that each of them can be attached to a verbal clause within a complex sentence, making its verb subjunctive and the clause subordinate to or dependent on the other clause in that sentence. As subordinators, these two prefixes will be discussed in the following.

Arabic Subordinate Prefix ل /la-/

The prefix /la-/ functions as a subordinator in different Arabic contexts. It is attached to a verbal clause within a complex sentence to join its two clauses in a subordination relationship. It makes the clause to which it is attached subordinate to or dependent on the other, changing the mood of its verb form indicative into subjunctive. Consider the following two examples which show this prefix functioning as a subordinator in different Arabic contexts. Note that the occurrences of /la-/ in these two examples are represented by its phonetic variant [li-].

5. أَلَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ) النساء 137
lam ya-kan-i Allah-u li-ya-ghfir-a la-hum.
Allah will not forgive them.
6. (وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ) النحل 44
wa-ʔanzalna ʔilaika ʔathikra li-tu-baina li-n-nasi.
And We have sent down unto thee (also) the Message; *that* thou mayest
explain clearly to men.

As illustrated above, [i-] occurs in each context, attached to a verbal clause in a complex sentence, making this caluse subordinate to or dependent on the other clause in the sentence. In

example (5), [li-] is attached to the indicative form of the verb ya-ghfir-u, changing its mood into subjunctive *li-ya-ghfira*, and denoting the meaning of denial. In this case it can be rendered into English as "zero". In example (6), [li-] is also attached to the indicative form of the verb tu-bain-u, changing its mood into subjunctive *li-tu-bain-a*, and denoting the meaning of explanation. In this case it can be rendered into English as "; that". Note that, the prefix /la-/ can also function as a prepositional particle side by side with /ka-/ and /ba-/, which will be discussed in the following subsection.

Arabic Subordinate Prefix ف /fa-/

Although this prefix /fa-/ usually functions as a coordinator joining two phrases or clauses and expressing order as discussed above, it can also function as a subordinator to join two clauses within a sentence, making the one to which it is prefixed subordinate to or dependent on the other. Consider the following two examples of /fa-/, occurring in different Arabic contexts and functioning as a subordinator.

7. إن تأتيني فسوف أساعدك.
 ?in ta-?ati-ni fa-sawfa ?u-sa?id-a-k.
 If you come to me, I will help you.
8. يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ فَأَفُوزَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا. (النساء 73)
 yā laita-nī kun-t-u ma?a-hum fa-a-fūz-a fawz-an ?adhīm-ā.
 "Oh! I wish I had been with them; a fine thing should I *then* have made of it!"

As shown above, /fa-/ occurs in two different Arabic contexts, functioning as a subordinator. In example (7), it is attached to the clause *sawfa ?u-sa?id-a-k* of the conditional sentence to make it function as an *answer of condition*, which can be rendered into English as the comma punctuation “;”. In example (8), it is attached to the indicative form of the verb *?a-fūz-u*, making it subjunctive *?a-fūz-a*, to demonstrate *the result of a wish* and linking together two clauses in a *causative/explanatory* relationship. In this case it can be rendered into English as "*then*".

3.1.2 Arabic Prepositional Prefixes

The second subtype of Arabic particle prefixes, *Arabic prepositional prefixes*, refers to Arabic inseparable prepositions that are prefixed to words in contexts and make them genitive, in opposition to Arabic separable prepositions. Generally speaking, there are more than twenty Arabic prepositions that always precede nouns and assign them the genitive case. Only three of them are inseparable prepositions that have to be prefixed to nouns; namely, /ka-/, /ba-/ and /la-/.

/ . Each of these three Arabic prepositional prefixes will be discussed separately in the following subsection, supported by illustrative examples of its occurrences in different Arabic contexts.

Arabic Prepositional Prefix كـ /ka-/

The Arabic prepositional prefix /ka-/ grammatically functions as an inseparable preposition in different Arabic contexts, prefixed to nouns to assign them the genitive case. Consider the following two examples in which /ka-/, occurring in different Arabic contexts, functions as a prepositional prefix.

9. 35 مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ النور 35
mathal-u nūrih-i ka-mishkā-t-in.
The Parable of His Light is *as* if there were a Niche.
10. 198 وَأَذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ البقرة 198
wa-athkur-ū-h ka-mā hadā-k-u-m.
and celebrate His praises *as* He has directed you.

The examples above show that /ka-/ occurs in two different Arabic contexts, functioning as a prepositional prefix attached to noun phrases and making them genitive. In example (9), /ka-/ is attached to the noun phrase *mishkā-t* in the sentence to make a simile, which can be rendered into English as "*as or like*". In example (10), /ka-/ is attached to the Arabic indefinite pronoun *mā* preceding the second verbal clause in the sentence to explain why the command in the first clause has to be performed. In this case it can also be rendered into English as "*as*".

Arabic Prepositional prefix بـ /ba-/

The Arabic prepositional prefix /ba-/ grammatically functions as an inseparable preposition in different Arabic contexts, prefixed to nouns to assign them the genitive case. Consider the following two examples of the prefix /ba-/, represented by its phonetic variant [bi-], occurring in different Arabic contexts and functioning as a prepositional prefix.

11. كَتَبْتُ بِالْقَلَمِ الرِّصَاصَ.
katab-t-u bi-l-qalam-i ar-raSaS.
I wrote *with* the pencil.
- 12 43 كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا الرعد : 43
kafā bi-llah-i shahid-ā.
Sufficient is Allah as Witness.

As illustrated in the examples above, [bi-] occurs in two contexts functioning as a prepositional prefix attached to nouns to assign them the genitive case. In example (11), [bi-] is attached to the

noun *al-qalam* to denote an *instrumental* purpose of that noun phrase, and can be rendered into English as "**with**". In example (12), [*bi-*] is attached to the noun *Allah* for the purpose of *emphasis*, and can be rendered into English as "**zero**".

Arabic Prepositional Prefix لـ /la-/

The Arabic prepositional prefix /la-/ grammatically functions as an inseparable preposition in different Arabic contexts, prefixed to nouns to assign them the genitive case. Consider the following two examples of the prefix /la-/, represented by its phonetic variant [*li-*], occurring in different Arabic contexts and functioning as a prepositional prefix.

13. هذه المزرعة لزيد.
hāth-i-hi al-mazrʿah-tu li-zaid.
This is Zaid's farm. This farm belongs to Zaid. This is the farm of Zaid.
14. (إِنَّمَا نُنْطَعِمُكُمْ لِرِجَالِ اللَّهِ) الانسان 9
innamā nu-Tʿim-a-k-um li-wijh-i illah-i.
We feed you for the sake of Allah alone.

As shown in these two occurrences, [*li-*] functions as a prepositional prefix attached to noun and make them genitive. In example (13), [*li-*] is attached to the noun *zaid* to denote his ownership of the noun phrase *al-mazrʿah-tu* "the farm", preceding it in the sentence. In this case, it can be rendered into English as "**apostrophe, belong to or of**", as shown above. In example (14), [*li-*] is attached to the noun phrase *wijh illah* to denote the sense of reason. In this case, it can be rendered into English as the preposition "for".

3.1.3 Arabic Adverbial Prefixes

The third subtype of Arabic particle prefixes, *Arabic adverbial prefixes*, includes those Arabic particle prefixes which neither function as conjunctions nor as prepositions, but as adverbials in different Arabic contexts. Arabic adverbial prefixes perform three adverbial functions, including the *future particle prefix* /sa-/, *swearing particle prefixes* /wa-/, /ba-/ and /ta-/, and *interrogative particle prefix* /ʔa-/. These three groups of Arabic adverbial prefixes will be discussed in the following subsection.

Arabic Future Particle Prefix سـ /sa-/

The prefix /sa-/ represents the only Arabic inseparable future particle that can be attached to the imperfective forms of Arabic verbs, grammatically functioning as the future marker. Futurity in Arabic is commonly formulated using the imperfective forms of the verb preceded by the

separable future particle سوف /*sawfa*/, or prefixed by its contracted form (future inseparable particle) /*sa-*/. The use of this future prefix is more common in Arabic than its separable counterpart. Consider the two examples below which illustrate two occurrences of the prefix /*sa-*/ functioning as a future marker.

15. سَيُتَزَوَّجُ الرجل غدا.
sa-yu-ta-zawaj-u ar-rajul-u ghad-a.
 The man *will* marry tomorrow.
16. سَأَفْعَلُ لَكَ ذَلِكَ.
sa-ʔa-fʕal-u laka thālik.
 I *will* do it for you.

In example (15), /*sa-*/ is attached to the imperfective form of the Arabic verb *ya-ta-zawaj-u* to convey futurity, which can be rendered into English as “will”. In example (16), /*sa-*/ is attached to the imperfective form of the Arabic verb *ʔa-fʕal-u* to convey futurity, which can also be rendered into English as “will”.

Arabic Swearing Particle Prefixes

There are two different prefixes, /*wa-*/, /*ba-*/ and /*ta-*/, representing the two inseparable particles used for swearing in Arabic. Each of these three swearing prefixes will be discussed separately in the following.

Arabic Swearing Prefix و /wa-/

In addition to its use as an Arabic coordinating prefix, /*wa-*/ is also used in Arabic as a swearing prefix. That is, /*wa-*/ can be attached to many Arabic noun phrases, including *Allah*, *the star*, *the sun* and *the moon* to perform the function of swearing, especially in the Holy Qur'an. Note that this swearing prefix is the most common in use in Arabic, particularly, with the word “Allah”. Consider the following two examples in which /*wa-*/ occurs as a swearing prefix.

17. وَاللّٰهُ لَاذْهَبِنَ اِلَيْهِ.
wa-llah-i laʔthhabana ʔilaihi.
By Allah I will go to him.
18. (وَالشَّمْسُ وَضُحَاهَا) الشَّمْسُ
wa-as-sams-i wa-dhuHa-ha.
By the Sun and his (glorious) splendour;

In the examples above, the Arabic swearing prefix /*wa-*/ occurs once in (17) and twice in (18). In all these three positions this prefix performs the function of swearing, and can simply be rendered into English as “*by*”.

Arabic Swearing Prefix **بـ** /*ba-*/~ [*bi-*]

In addition to its use as an Arabic prepositional prefix, /*ba-*/ represented by its phonetic variation [*bi-*] is also used in Arabic as a swearing prefix. That is, [*bi-*] can be attached to many Arabic noun phrases, including Allah to perform the function of swearing. Note that this swearing prefix is used in Arabic, mostly, with the word “Allah”. Consider the following example:

19. بِالله وبِالبيت الحرام
bi-llah-I wa- bi-l-bait-I al-Harām-i.
 By Allah! And **by** the Sacred House!

[*bi-*] performs the function of *swearing*, which can be rendered into English as the swearing particle “*by*”.

Arabic Swearing Prefix **تـ** /*ta-*/

In addition to its use as an inflectional prefix attached to Arabic perfective verbs to mark the present tense of some of their forms, /*ta-*/ is also used to perform a minor function in Arabic as a swearing prefix. Note that this prefix is restricted to be attached only to the name of the almighty “Allah” and this use appears mostly in the Holy Qur’an. Furthermore, the use of this function of /*ta-*/ has become archaic in MSA, but rare uses may appear in some of its colloquial varieties. The example below shows how this prefix is used to perform swearing in the Holy Qur’an.

20. (تَاللّٰهِ لَآ كَيْدَنَّ اَصْنَامَكُمْ) الانبياء 75
ta-allah-i la-ʔkid-a-na aSnam-a-k-um.
By Allah, I have a plan for your idols.

In example (19) above, /*ta-*/ is attached to the name of “Allah” to perform *swearing* in some Arabic contexts.

Arabic Interrogative Particle Prefix **أـ** /*ʔa-*/

In addition to its use as an inflectional prefix to formulate certain forms of the imperfective verbs, /*ʔa-*/ is also used in Arabic as an interrogative prefix to indicate questions when no

interrogative pronoun occurs in the sentence. This interrogative prefix represents the only inseparable interrogative particle found in Arabic. It is usually used to formulate two Arabic interrogative forms; Yes/No questions, and wondering question (offerings). Table (4) below shows these two interrogative functions of this prefix, supported by illustrative examples form Arabic.

Table (4): Two functions of the Arabic interrogative prefix أَ /ʔa-/

Interrogative Function	Examples of Prefix Occurrences	
	Arabic with Transcription	Meaning in English
Formulating Yes/No questions	أَذْهَبَ الْوَلَدُ؟ <i>?a-thahab-a al-walad-u?</i>	<i>Did</i> the boy go?
Formulating wondering questions (offerings)	أَتُرِيدُ قَهْوَةً أَمْ شَايَ؟ <i>?a-turidu qahwah am shai?</i>	<i>Would</i> you like coffee or tea?

As the table above shows, /ʔa-/ is used to perform two different interrogative functions in Arabic. In its first occurrence, it is used to formulate a Yes/No question and can be rendered into English as “*Did*”. In its second occurrence, it is used to formulate an offering in the form of a wondering question denoting a polite request and can be rendered into English as “*Would*”.

3.2 Arabic Inflectional Prefixes

The second type of Arabic prefixes, *inflectional prefixes*, refers to those single-letter bound elements that are usually prefixed to Arabic verbs to modify their grammatical content without altering their meanings and/or grammatical categories. These are mainly represented by four Arabic inflectional prefixes: /ya-/ , /na-/ , /ta-/ and /ʔa-/. The basic function of these four inflectional prefixes in Arabic is *formulating the simple present tense*; i.e., they are added to the past tense stem of verbs to make the different forms of the simple present tense. In addition, the inflectional prefix /ʔa-/ alone is also used in *formulating other verbal constructions*. Both of these functions will be discussed in the following.

3.2.1 Formulating Simple Present Tense

All the four Arabic inflectional prefixes, /ya-/ , /na-/ , /ta-/ and /ʔa-/, are grammatically used to formulate all the simple present tense forms of Arabic verbs. In other words, these four prefixes,

which are named by Al-Najjar (2012) as “proclitics”, are responsible for modifying Arabic simple present tense forms in regard of *person, number and gender*. Table (5) below shows the different simple present tense forms formulated as a result of attaching these four inflectional prefixes to the past tense stem of the Arabic verb كَتَبَ /katab-a/ (wrote), with their phonetic transcriptions and meanings in English.

Table (5): Present tense forms related to the four Arabic inflectional prefixes

Inflectional Prefix	Present Tense Forms Formulated		
	Arabic	Transcription	Meaning in English
/ya-/	يَكْتُبُ	ya-ktubu	write 3 rd Masc. Sing.
	يَكْتُبَا(ن)	ya-ktubā(n)	write 3 rd Masc. Dual
	يَكْتُبُوا(ن)	ya-ktubū(n)	write 3 rd Masc. Plural
	يَكْتُبْنَ	ya-ktubna	write 3 rd Fem. Plural
/na-/	نَكْتُبُ	na-ktubu	1 st Masc./Fem. Dual/Plural
/ta-/	تَكْتُبُ	ta-ktubu	write 3 rd Fem. Sing.
	تَكْتُبَا(ن)	ta-ktubā(n)	write 3 rd Masc./Fem. Dual
	تَكْتُبُ	ta-ktubu	write 2 nd Masc. Sing.
	تَكْتُبِينَ	ta-ktubīn	write 2 nd Fem. Sin.
	تَكْتُبَا(ن)	ta-ktubā(n)	write 2 nd Masc./Fem. Dual
	تَكْتُبُوا(ن)	ta-ktubū(n)	write 2 nd Masc. Plural
	تَكْتُبْنَ	ta-ktubna	write 2 nd Fem. Plural
/ʔa-/	أَكْتُبُ	ʔa-ktub-u	write 1 st Masc./Fem. Singular

As shown in the table above, in the first row the prefix /ya-/ is attached to the past tense stem /katab-a/ (wrote) to produce, with certain other phonetic modifications, four different simple present tense forms related to the third person masculine singular, dual and plural, in addition to the third person feminine plural. In the second row, the prefix /na-/ is attached to the past tense stem /katab-a/ (wrote) to produce, with certain other phonetic modifications, one simple present tense form related to the first person masculine and feminine duals and plurals. In the third row, the prefix /ta-/ is attached to the past tense stem /katab-a/ (wrote) to produce, with certain other phonetic modifications, seven different simple present tense forms related to the third person feminine singular, and masculine and feminine duals, in addition to all the second person forms. In the fourth row, the prefix /ʔa-/ is attached to the past tense stem /katab-a/ (wrote) to produce, with certain other phonetic modifications, one simple present tense form related to the first person masculine and feminine singulars.

3.2.2 Formulating Other Verbal Constructions

This grammatical function is restricted to the Arabic inflectional prefix /ʔa-/, in addition to its basic function discussed above of marking some of the present tense forms of Arabic verbs. That is, /ʔa-/ can be attached to the perfective forms of certain Arabic verbs to formulate three other verbal constructions; *imperative*, *hyperbolic constructions* and *certain past tense constructions*. Table (6) below shows how this prefix, with its two phonetic variants [ʔi-] and [ʔa-], can be attached to the perfective forms of verbs in Arabic to formulate these three verbal constructions. In each case illustrative examples from Arabic are provided, with their phonetic transcriptions, and meanings in English.

Table (6) Formulating other verbal constructions using the Inflectional Prefix ʔ /ʔa-/

Formulating other verbal constructions	Prefix Variant	Examples of Prefix Occurrences		
		Arabic	Transcription	Meaning in English
1. Imperative	[ʔi-]	اِكْتُبْ!	ʔi-ktub!	Write! (2 nd Per. Sing. Masc.) (Applicable to all 2 nd Per.)
2. Hyperbolic constructions	[ʔa-]	أَحْسَنَ قَبِيحَ	ʔa-Hsana qabuha	He made well. He made worse. (Applicable to all pronouns)
3. Certain past tense constructions		أَجَبْتُهُ أَجَلَّتُهُ	ʔa-jbantuhu ʔa-jlaltahu	I found him a coward. I found him dignified. (Applicable to all 3 rd Per.)

As the table above shows, in its first function, the phonetic variant [ʔi-] of this prefix is commonly prefixed to the perfective form of Arabic verbs to formulate the *imperative*. On the other hand, the other phonetic variant of this prefix, [ʔa-], is prefixed to the perfective form of certain Arabic verbs to formulate *hyperbolic constructions*, in its second function; and *certain past tense constructions*, in its third function.

3.3 Arabic Derivational Prefixes

Finally, the third type of Arabic prefixes, *derivational prefixes*, refers to those single letter prefixes that perform the function of deriving new words in Arabic. This is achieved by attaching these prefixes to words in the language to create new words. Prefixes in many languages, including Arabic, work as derivational devices that are attached to words in the language to alter their meanings and/or grammatical categories. Generally speaking, derivation (*in Arabic al-ištiqāq*) is a lexical process whereby a new lexical category is derived from another lexical category such as deriving a noun or an adjective from a verb, or deriving a new meaning from the same lexical

category such as deriving a verb from a verb or an adjective from an adjective. Derivation, unlike inflection, has no bearing on the syntactic structure of the other constituents of the sentence.

Al-Najjar (2012) argues that Arabic does not exhibit derivational prefixes. He adds that the only derivational morph in Arabic is *laa* (no, not) which according to him is originally a free morpheme, but has been used recently as a derivational prefix. He lists some examples of derivations resulted from using this negative particle, including the nouns "*laa-ṣunf* (nonviolence)", "*laa-ṭaxlaaḳiyy* (immoral)" and "*laa-ṭinsaaniyy* (inhuman)", and the adjective "*laa-filiz* (nonmetal)" (Al-Najjar, 2012).

It is not completely true, according to Al-Najjar, that Arabic does not exhibit derivational prefixes. It might be acceptable to say that Arabic does not exhibit many derivational prefixes like English, for instance. However, we cannot consider the case of the Arabic negative inseparable particle occurring in such MSA examples mentioned above by Al-Najjar as a derivational prefix. It cannot be considered as a case of a derivational prefix in Arabic because; first, the derivations related to this negative particle are very restricted to few examples brought into Arabic through the word formation process known as *loan translation* or *calque* and cannot in any way be considered as a process of derivation. Second, Arabic has very good examples of derivational prefixes including the two noun derivational prefixes */ma-/*, with its three phonetic variants, and */ta-/*. These prefixes and the potential derivational functions they perform in Arabic will be discussed in the following.

3.3.1 Noun Derivational Prefix مـ */ma-/*

The prefix */ma-/* is basic in Arabic as it is used to derive various types of Arabic nouns through its three phonetic variants *[mu-]*, *[ma-]* and *[mi-]*. That is, each of these phonetic variants is responsible for deriving certain types of Arabic nouns as it is demonstrated in the following.

Arabic nouns derived by the variant *[mu-]*

The noun derivational prefix phonetic variant *[mu-]* in Arabic is usually added to the Arabic past tense verb stems to derive three types of Arabic nouns; *active participle nouns*, *locative nouns type (1)* and *gerundive nouns type (1)*. Table (7) below shows how these three types of Arabic nouns are derived by the noun derivational prefix phonetic variant *[mu-]*, supported by illustrative examples from Arabic with their phonetic transcriptions and meanings in English.

Table (7): Three types of Arabic nouns derived by the noun derivational prefix variant *[mu-]*

Type of Nouns	Example of Nouns		
	Verb Stem	Derived Nouns	Meaning in English
1. Active participle nouns	nassaqa نَسَّقَ tarjama ترجم	<i>mu</i> -nassiq مُنَسِّق <i>mu</i> -tarjim مُتَرْجِم	coordinator translator
2. Locative nouns type (1)	ʔaskara عسكر ʔalHaqa ألحق	<i>mu</i> -ʔaskar مُعسكر <i>mu</i> -lHaq مُلحق	camp attaché
3. Gerundive nouns type (1)	qābala قَابَلَ Sāraʔa صَارَعَ	<i>mu</i> -qābala مُقَابَلَة <i>mu</i> -Sāraʔa مُصَارَعَة	meeting wrestling

As the table above shows, when the noun derivational prefix phonetic variant [*mu*-] is attached to the Arabic past tense verb stems, the three different types of Arabic nouns can be derived. The first type of these derived nouns refers to the entities that enact the base meanings, i.e. the general actor. The second type refers to the places at which the base meanings are enacted. The third type names the actions denoted by their corresponding verbs.

Arabic Nouns Derived by the Variant [*ma*-]

The noun derivational prefix phonetic variant [*ma*-] in Arabic is usually added to the past tense verb stems to derive three types of Arabic nouns; *passive participle nouns*, *gerundive nouns type (2)* and *locative nouns type (2)*. Table (8) below shows how these three types of Arabic nouns are derived by the noun derivational prefix phonetic variant [*ma*-], supported by illustrative examples from Arabic with their phonetic transcriptions and meanings in English.

Table (8): Three types of Arabic nouns derived by the noun derivational prefix variant [*ma*-]

Type of Nouns	Examples of Nouns		
	Verb Stems	Derived Nouns	Meaning in English
1. Passive participle nouns	fahama فهم sharaʔa شرع	<i>ma</i> -fhūm مَفْهُوم <i>ma</i> -shrūʔ مَشْرُوع	concept plan; project
2. Gerundive nouns type (2)	qatala قَتَلَ jāʔa جَاع	<i>ma</i> -qtal مَقْتَل <i>ma</i> -jāʔah مَجَاعَة	kill/murdering famine
3. Locative nouns type (2)	kataba كَتَبَ sajada سَجَدَ	<i>ma</i> -ktab مَكْتَب <i>ma</i> -sjid مَسْجِد	office mosque

As the table above shows, when the noun derivational prefix phonetic variant [*ma*-] is attached to the Arabic past tense verb stems, three different types of Arabic nouns can be derived. The first

type of these nouns refers to entities upon which the base meanings of verbs are enacted, corresponding to the objects of the verbs. The second type names the actions denoted by their corresponding verbs. The third type refers to places at which the base meanings of the verbs are enacted.

Arabic Nouns Derived by the Variant [mi-]

The noun derivational prefix phonetic variant [mi-] in Arabic is usually added to the past tense verb stems to derive two types of Arabic nouns; *temporal nouns* and *instrument nouns*. Table (9) below shows how these two types of Arabic nouns are derived by the noun derivational prefix phonetic variant [mi-], supported by illustrative examples from Arabic with their phonetic transcriptions, and their meanings in English.

Table (8): Two types of Arabic nouns derived by the noun derivational prefix variant [mi-]

Type of Nouns	Examples of Nouns		
	Verb Stem	Derived Nouns	Meaning in English
1. Temporal nouns	walada وَلَدَ	mi-lād مِيلَاد	time of birth
	waʿada وَعَدَ	mi-ʿād مِيعَاد	time of fulfilling
	waqatta وَقَتَّ	mi-qāt مِيقَات	appointment time
2. Instrument nouns	fataha فَتَحَ	mi-ftāh مِفْتَاح	key
	Saʿada صَعَدَ	mi-Sʿad مِصْعَد	elevator
	wazana وَزَنَ	mi-zān مِيزَان	scale

As the table above shows, when the noun derivational prefix phonetic variant [mi-] is attached to the past tense verb stems, two different types of Arabic nouns are derived. The first type of these nouns refers to times at which the base meanings of the verbs are enacted. The second type refers to the entities used to enact the base meanings of the verbs, i.e. instruments used to conduct the actions.

3.3.2 Noun Derivational Prefix ت /ta-/

The noun derivational prefix /ta-/ is restricted to derive one type of Arabic nouns, represented by *gerundive nouns type* (2). This prefix is usually added to the past tense stems of certain Arabic verbs to derive this type of gerundive nouns. Table (10) below shows how this type of Arabic nouns is derived by the noun derivational prefix /ta-. This is supported by illustrative examples from Arabic with their phonetic transcriptions and meanings in English.

Table (8): Type of Arabic nouns derived by the noun derivational prefix /ta-/

Type of Nouns	Examples of Nouns		
	Verb Stem	Derived Nouns	Meaning in English
1. Gerundive nouns type (2)	Hallal-a حَلَّلَ	ta-Hlīl تحليل	analysis
	maththal-a مَثَّلَ	ta-mthīl تمثيل	acting/representation
	Tahhar-a طَهَّرَ	ta-Thīr تطهير	disinfection/sterilization

As the table above shows, when the noun derivational prefix /ta-/ is attached to the past tense verb stems, this type of Arabic nouns are derived. This type of nouns names the actions denoted by their corresponding verbs. Note that all the past tense stems of these verbs include geminated/doubled consonants as a feature of the Arabic verbs amenable to such noun derivation.

4. Summary and Conclusion

To conclude, it was found that prefixes in Arabic, as in many other languages, represent a basic linguistic feature in the language, which influences grammar and meaning. It is likely to find that languages differ in the way their prefixes are classified, and that it is not necessary for all types of prefixes to exist in all languages. In Arabic, prefixes, as proposed in this study, can be classified into three basic types; *particle prefixes*, *inflectional prefixes* and *derivational prefixes*. It is true that the second and third types might be present in many of world human languages, but the first type might not.

Regarding inflectional and derivational prefixes, it was found that their presence in Arabic is considered as a common linguistic feature similar to many other languages. In other words, these two types of prefixes exist in Arabic and play important roles in the language as in other languages. However, a very crucial aspect must be mentioned here that the number of inflectional and derivational prefixes in Arabic is small compared to those in other languages, like English.

Arabic displays four inflectional prefixes, i.e., /ya-/ , /na-/ , /ta-/ and /ʔa-/ , that are used mainly for formulating the different forms of present tense in the language. Furthermore, the prefix /ʔa-/ performs some other additional grammatical functions, and the prefix /ta-/ has a further function that is very restricted in use and might be considered archaic in Arabic.

Derivational prefixes in Arabic are represented by the two noun derivational prefixes: /ma-/ , with its sole but important functions of deriving five different types of Arabic nouns; and /ta-/ which is restricted to deriving one type of Arabic nouns, as discussed above.

However, what might be considered interesting in this study is related to the first type of Arabic prefixes named by this study as *particle prefixes*. Arabic Particle prefixes represent a unique linguistic feature that makes Arabic distinct from most of the world human languages. That is, for particles, such as prepositions and conjunctions, to be attached to words as prefixes may not exist in many other languages. It is worth to note here that, in addition to the few inseparable/prefix particles discussed above, Arabic also displays a long list of separable/free particles used side by side in the language with their inseparable counterparts. This is not the only case reached by this study; however, a very important issue was noticed that needs further investigation. That is, these Arabic particle prefixes show semantic variations when attached to words in different contexts. In other words, although Arabic separable particles usually denote constant meanings when preceding words in different contexts, Arabic inseparable/prefix particles may convey different meanings when attached to words in different contexts.

The area of particle prefixes in Arabic represents a rich and promising topic for research and investigation. Further researches are recommended by this study to be conducted in the area of Arabic prefixes in general, and the semantic variations of Arabic particle prefixes when attached to words in different contexts, in particular. In addition, the area of Arabic affixation in general needs to be studied and analyzed following modern linguistic methods and techniques, as this area is complicated and problematic in the language and rich for research.

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