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 model auxiliaries whereas in Arabic, auxiliaries are grouped according to the following categories: Kaana group (أخواص كاٌ), verbs of beginning (أفعال انثدايح), verbs of approprinquation (أفعال التقترب) and particles which behave like auxiliaries (الأدواخ انري ذُذى يُذى الأفعال انًساعدج). 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” (سـ).

Keywords: English auxiliary verbs, Arabic auxiliary verbs, primary auxiliary verbs, model auxiliary verbs, kaana group, verbs of beginning, verbs of approprinquation
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, aren’t, 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:

الكتاب مفيد
(The book is useful)

الكتاب مفيد
(The book was useful)

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
(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
(The man had travelled)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auxiliary</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Meaning in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kaana</td>
<td>&quot;كان&quot; Be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Baata</td>
<td>&quot;بات&quot; To be or do during the night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Adhaa</td>
<td>&quot;أضحى&quot; To become in the afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Laisa</td>
<td>&quot;ليس&quot; Not, or never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Maadaama</td>
<td>&quot;مادام&quot; Denote actions taking place in the past and are still in process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Maazaala</td>
<td>&quot;مازال&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Maabariha</td>
<td>&quot;مارح&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Maafatia</td>
<td>&quot;ماتفي&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Maainfaka</td>
<td>&quot;ماتنفك&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Dhalla</td>
<td>&quot;ظل&quot; To do or be during the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Asbaha</td>
<td>&quot;اصبى&quot; To become in the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Saara</td>
<td>&quot;صاص&quot; To become</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Amsaa</td>
<td>&quot;امسي&quot; To become in the evening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

1. Dhalla: ("ظل")
   Dhalla al-rajulu yaktubu
   "ظل الراجع يكتب"
   Literally (The man (stayed) writing the whole day)

2. Baata: ("بات")
   Baata al-talibu yaktubu duruusahu
   "بات الطالب يكتب دروسه"
   Literally (the student spent the night writing his lessons)

3. Asbaha: ("اصبى")
   Asbaha yaktubu bisuratin
   "اصبى يكتب بسرعة"
   Literally (he became to write fast in the morning)

4. Adhaa: ("أضحى")
   Adhaa yaktubu bisuratin
   "أضحى يكتب بسرعة"
Literally (he became to write fast in the afternoon)

5. **Saara**: (صار)

   \[\text{Saara yaktubu bisuratin} \]  
   \[\text{صار يكتب بسرعة} \]
   
   Literally (he became to write fast)

6. **Amsaa**: (أمسى)

   \[\text{Amsaa yaktubu bisuratin} \]  
   \[\text{أمسى يكتب بسرعة} \]
   
   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** (مأبِرح)

   \[\text{Maa baiha al waladu yalabu} \]  
   \[\text{مأبِرح الولد يلعب} \]
   
   The boy is still playing

2. **Maa fatia** (مأفتِئ)

   \[\text{Maa fatia al waladu yalabu} \]  
   \[\text{مأفتِئ الولد يلعب} \]
   
   The boy is still playing

3. **Maa infakaa** (ماؤفِئك)

   \[\text{Maa infakaa al waladu yalabu} \]  
   \[\text{ماؤفِئك الولد يلعب} \]
   
   The boy is still playing

4. **Maa zaala** (مازال)

   \[\text{Maa zaala al waladu yalabu} \]  
   \[\text{مازال الولد يلعب} \]
   
   The boy is still playing

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:

\[\text{Laisa yalabu abadan} \]  
\[\text{ليس يلعب أبدا} \]

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** (جَعْلُ) : to begin
   
   Jaala yughanni

   He began to sing

2. **Sharaa** (شَرْعَ) : to begin
   
   Sharaa al waladu yabki

   The boy has already began to cry

3. **Anshaa** (اَنشَا) : to begin
   
   Anshaat al – bintu tughanni

   The girl has already begun to sing

4. **Tafiqa** (طفق) : to begin
   
   Tafiqat al- bantu tughanni

   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 (ان) (An)

1. **Asaa** (عَسَى) : implies a hope of occurrence
   
   Asaa Allaahu an yatia bi –l- faraj

   Literally (may Allah bring relief)

2. **Aushaka** (أوشك) : be about to
   
   Aushaka al-maridhu an yashfa

   The patient was about to recover

3. **Kaada** (كاد) : be about to
   
   Kaada al-mualum an yakuna rasoula

   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** (سَوْفُ) : will
   
   Saufa abqaa hunaa

   I will stay here

2. **Sa** (سَ) : will
   
   Sa abqaa hunaa
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** (لَمُ): Did not
   This function word indicates an action didn’t take place in the past.
   
   *Lam yati al-talibu ila al-madrasati* لَم يأتي الطالب إلى المدرسة
   The student didn’t come to school.

4. **Lan** (لَنِ): 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* لَن يذهب الولد إلى المدرسة
   The boy will not go to school

5. **Qad** (قَدِ): 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* قَد 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* قَد كتبت الدرس
   I have just written the lesson

5. **Rubba or Rubbama** (رَبْ عِنْ يُمَ): may
   *Rubbama adhhabu ila al–masrahi* رَبْ عِنْ يُمَ أذهب إلى المسرح
   I may go to the theatre

7. **Lamma** (لِمَ): not yet
   It precedes a main verb in the present form
   *Azifa al-waqṭu wa lamma yati* أُذف الوقت ولما يأتي
   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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auxiliary verbs in English</th>
<th>Auxiliary verbs in Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Use of auxiliary verbs to express future time, e.g. I shall write a letter He will write a letter</td>
<td>1. Use of particles or prefixes to express future time, e.g. Saufa yaktubu risala 2. He will write a letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Be</strong> and some quasi-auxiliary verbs precede a main verb in the -ing form, e.g. I am writing a letter He is writing a letter They are writing a letter</td>
<td>2. The auxiliary <strong>kaana</strong> (was) precedes ism-al-faail (present participle) with forms different from the English -ing form, e.g. Kaana jaalsan He was sitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Auxiliary verbs which express future time have past forms, e.g. Can – could Shall – should Will – would May – might</td>
<td>3. Auxiliary verbs which are equivalent to the English auxiliary verbs that denote future time have past forms; they do not have past forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Auxiliary <strong>Be</strong> does not precede a main verb in the past form, e.g. <em>He was went to school</em> He went to school</td>
<td>4. Auxiliary <strong>Kaana</strong> precedes a verb in the past form, e.g. Kaana kataba al-darsa He had written the lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Auxiliary <strong>Be</strong> present precedes a past participle form, e.g. The car is made in America</td>
<td>5. Auxiliary <strong>Kaana</strong> present does not precede ism-al-faail unless kaana present is preceded by prefix <strong>sa</strong>, or particle <strong>sautfa</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Have</strong> is used to form present perfect tense, e.g.</td>
<td>6. There is no verb that equals the English auxiliary <strong>have</strong>. Some</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| I have read the book | adverbs convey the meaning of have as a full verb only: 
\textit{Indi} (عندی) and \textit{ladayya} (لدي) (I have or posses). An Arabic construction is \textit{Qad kataba al-darsa} (قد كتب الدرس) He has written a lesson |

| 7. The construction \textbf{have to} in English denotes necessity, e.g. I have to fix the car |

| 8. \textbf{Do} as an auxiliary verb is used in negative and interrogative sentences: Do you write fast I do not write fast |

| 7. Possible equivalent in Arabic is \textbf{Yajibu} e.g. \textit{Yajibu an aktuba bisuratin} يجب أن أكتب بسرعة I have to write fast |

| 8. \textbf{Do} as an auxiliary verb does not exist in Arabic, however, some particles and prefixes function as the English auxiliary \textbf{do}. They are: \textit{Hal} (هل) = (do, does, did) and \textit{lam} (لم) = did not \textit{Hal taktabu al-darsa} هل تكتب الدرس Do you write the lesson? \textit{Lam yaktabu al-darsa} لم يكتب الدرس He didn’t write the lesson |
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 model 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.

References

دراسة تحليلية مقارنة للأفعال المساعدة في اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية

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جامعة بغداد / كلية اللغات / قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

الملخص

يقترح علماء اللغة بأن تتعلم اللغة الثانية بمثابة نقل الأفعال المساعدة للغة الأم إلى اللغة المهدى. في كل من الكلام والكتابة وكذلك يؤكدون بأن الاختلافات بين الأفعال المساعدة للغة الأم واللغة المهدى تسبب صعوبات لمتعلم اللغة الثانية. وكذلك لمتعلم اللغات الأجنبية وهذا البحث هو محاولة للقيام بدراسة تحليلية مقارنة للأفعال المساعدة في كل من اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية. ويقسم البحث إلى ثلاث أقسام. يتناول القسم الأول الأفعال المساعدة في اللغة الإنجليزية 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 الإنجليزية والعربية.

توصلت الدراسة إلى ما يلي:

هناك مجموعتان من الأفعال المساعدة في اللغة الإنجليزية وهي الأفعال المساعدة الأساسية والأفعال النافية. أما في اللغة العربية فتقوم إلى المجاميع التالية: مجموعات أخوات كان، أفعال البداية، أفعال التقرب، والأدوات التي تحمل منحى الأفعال المساعدة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، في اللغة الإنجليزية إن الأفعال المساعدة التي تعار عن زمن المستقبل في "will and shall" بينما الأدوات أو البوادر التي تعبِر عن زمن المستقبل هي "سوف و...".