

A contrastive Study of English and Nobein at the Morphological Level

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ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on analyzing and contrasting the morphology of both English and Nobein(Nobein is a branch of Nile Nubian languages which was given this name by Bell(1970). Also the study intends to find out the potential productivities of these processes for pedagogical purposes, which may prove to be useful for native and non-native linguists as well as teachers and learners of English. The data for this study was collected from different sources. The main sources were the informants who supported the researcher with useful information. It is found that English and Nobein reveal similarities as well as differences. The similarities are found in some general universals, such as affixation, compounding and derivations. Differences, on the other hand, appear in the main tendency of Nobein towards inflection, while English depends on compounding more.

Keywords: *Contrastive analysis, Nubian language, Nouns, Verbs*

المستخلص :

تركز هذه الدراسة علي التحليل التقابلي علي المستوي الصرفي لكل من اللغتين الانجليزية و النوبيين (النوبيين فرع من اللغة النوبية النيلية , و أعطيت هذا الاسم من قبل هرمان بل 1970) والغرض من الدراسة هو التحقق بين هاتين اللغتين من أوجه الشبه و الاختلاف, و إلي أي مدي يمكن لمدرسي اللغة الانجليزية النوبيين الاستفادة من ذلك في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية. تم جمع بيانات هذه الدراسة من مصادر مختلفة, حيث كان الرواة من أهم المصادر. و قد كشفت الدراسة عن وجود تشابهات واختلافات في بعض العناصر اللغوية في اللغتين المستهدفتين مثل, اللواحق, التراكيب, والاشتقاق حسب طبيعة كل لغة, علي سبيل المثال, تعتمد اللغة الانجليزية علي التراكيب بصورة اكبر من النوبيين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحليل التقابلي , اللغة النوبية , الأسماء , الأفعال

INTRODUCTION :

Language plays a large role in culture, with humans using it not just to communicate, but also to identify with a particular cultural group. It can vary across regions, class, religious or ethnic groups, education levels and generations. The language an individual speaks and how they speak it informs

their cultural affiliations, how others perceive and interact with them and vice versa. Sudan is one of the countries that is rich in its language varieties. Some of them survived hundred years and witnessed citizens who spoke and wrote them, and carried historical heritage. Modern Nubian languages are

of these languages, i.e. they are African Sudanese languages which have their properties among human cultures. Stevenson (1985: 11) sees that the geographical position of Sudan spanned the Arab world and other cultures. The significance of this position lies in that Sudan contains within its borders representatives of all the major defined groupings of languages in Africa. In addition, it has an ancient history which goes back to pre-historic periods. Nubia, as described by Adams (1984), is partly a cultural province, partly a historical province, and partly a geographical one. A region, he says, in which human destiny has been shaped in particular and distinctive ways by a unique combination of history and environment. It is therefore obvious that the Nubian language is being so unique. Old Nubian was characterized by a writing system used in all the regions of Nubia between the First and Fifth cataracts. As many manuscripts found in many different places of Nubia testify, it used the Coptic alphabet with addition of some letters to write the typical Nubian words. The oldest manuscript in Old Nubia goes back to the beginning of the Christian period. With the appearance of Islam in Nubia, Arabic became the dominant language (Badr, 1955). However, Nubian continued to be used until today. The Modern language is formed by many dialects (Fadija, Kenzi, Sikut, Mahas, and Dongolawi), which were derived from the old one. Of all the Nubian languages, the ones spoken along the Nile traditionally have received the most attention. Many manuscripts have

been unearthed in the Nile Valley, mainly between the First and Fifth cataracts, testifying the Nubian presence in the area during the first millennium. Nobein is a Nubian language spoken along the banks of the River Nile in Southern Egypt and Northern Sudan. It is classified as Northern Nubia. Many Nobein speaking Nubians were forced to relocate in 1963 _ 1964 due to the construction of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt(Adams, 1984). Nowadays, Nobein speakers live in the following areas: (1) near Komombo, in Egypt. (2) in New Halfa, in Kassala state of Sudan, and (3) in the Northern State of Sudan, northwards to the Egyptian border at Wadi Halfa. Nobein and a dialect cluster related to it, Kenzi_ Dongolawi, are found in the same area. These languages were the languages of the Christian Nubian Kingdoms. Historical comparative research has shown that the Nile Nubian languages do not form a genetic unit; the speakers of Nobein arrived first in the area following later by the speakers of the Kenzi and Dongolawi varieties. Nobein, according to Bell (1974) has been called Mahas_ Fadidja, but he used the term "Nobein" instead. Today, many Nubians and foreign scholars are interested in the study of the Nubian language. This interest in its maintenance is very important for the Nubians since language is the most important instrument to perpetuate the memory of a culture. On the other hand, English is the global language and the most popular in the world.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this study lies in that Nubian and English have much in common; they are both unique in their grammatical innovations. For these reasons, and some others the researcher has chosen them in order to carry out this contrastive study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the points of similarities between Nobein and English at the level of morphology..
2. To provide a model for the morphological processes of both languages.
3. To clarify the confusion of the terms dialect and language, as far as the Nubian language is concerned.
4. To increase the existing knowledge about morphology of Nobein as a contribution to relevant studies.
5. To put forward some suggestions relating to the teaching and learning of English as well as those work in translation.

RESRARCH HYPOTHESIS

It is hypothesized that:

1. Nobein possess various structures of morphemes that can have the same counterparts in English.
2. Both languages have unique structures, each on its own right i.e one language can have one or more

structures to which there are no available counterparts in the other language.

3. Ancient languages can be compared with living ones, and there is a criterion for doing this comparison
4. There are similarities and differences in both languages at syntactical level.
5. Nobein language make much more use of suffixes than prefixes or infixes, especially in noun inflection.

METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

The study was carried out using two approaches. The prescriptive and descriptive approaches. The prescriptive views grammar as a set of rules for the proper use of a language, while the descriptive approach describes the regular structures of a language as it is used, which is the basis of most modern attempts to characterize the structure.

The data for this study was collected from Nobein informants who live in Khartoum and New Halfa, who represent speakers of Nile Nubian. The researcher used a notebook and a pen in order to write down the information immediately so that she can refer to it at any time. In addition to the published materials on Nobein such as articles or books .For the informants the researcher has chosen some old women who reside in Nobein region since they had been born and had never moved to any other place. The choice of these informants was based on the fact that they are expected to have a great storage of the native language. Their age ranged between 40 and 80, the researcher believes that too old people

might forget some information in this stage of their age. Again, too young people may not have much and accurate information. Therefore, the research sees that this choice of age is the most suitable to obtain what may be useful for the study. The other sources for collecting the data are printed materials, such as Ayoub (1965) and Bell (1974). Also, the books of Badr (1955). Moreover, there is a Nobein's dictionary by Adam (2002) which is a useful guide to Nobein's vocabularies, furthermore, the researcher attended the 2005 conference on Nilo-Saharan languages, the Institute of African and Asian, and listened to a number of papers on Nubian Language. For English grammar the researcher used many books.

LITERATURE REVIEW CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

Contrastive Analysis was used in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the 1960s and early 1970s as a method of explaining why some features of a target language were more difficult to acquire than others. According to the behaviourist theories prevailing at the time, language learning was a question of habit formation and this could be reinforced or impeded by existing habits (Chomsky: 1966). Therefore, the difficulty in mastering certain structures in a second language depended on the difference between the learners' mother tongue (L1) and the language they were trying to learn. According to Ellis (1985: 25), executing CA involves two steps: description and comparison. A comparison of two languages can be carried out using any of several

different models of grammar and it is important to give detailed, scientific description of the language in question, based on a description of the different categories that make up the pattern of that language.

MORPHOLOGY

Linguists have defined the "word" as the smallest free form found in language. The branch of linguistics which studies the word-formation rules of language is known as morphology. The most important element of word structure is known as the "morpheme", which is the basic concept of morphology. The morpheme is "the minimal meaningful unit of grammatical analysis".

MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN ENGLISH AND NOBEIN NOUN NOBEIN

In Nobein the noun is singular or plural. The plural is formed by using certain suffixes such as: 'ri', (kamri = camels), 'nch i' (terinchi = keys), 'i' (wild i = boys), 'ku' (kaj ku = donkeys). Nouns can be countable or uncountable. The countable can take the singularity marker, for example, we can say 'no:g wey' = one house. Some determiners are used with the nouns. Such determiners are the indefinite article 'wey' = one. The absence of this or zero morpheme indicates definiteness.

'id wey kiro' = a man came (* id a came).

'id kiro' = the man came (* man came).

In Nobein there are no marks for genders. For masculine and feminine the pronoun 'tar' is used. For example 'tar nasira' = she/ he is tall, where 'tar' includes the entire third person singular. A distinction between males and females can be made by using words

that indicates masculine and feminine, e.g. 'tar wilid urad a' = that boy is short.

In Nobein there are some nouns derived from adjectives and verbs such as the following examples:

| <u>Adjective</u> | <u>Noun</u> |
|------------------|----------------|
| Daww (old) | daww <i>ki</i> |
| Nolo (white) | nolo <i>ki</i> |

| <u>Verb</u> | <u>Noun</u> |
|-------------|----------------|
| Kab (eat) | kab <i>ad</i> |
| Tiig (sit) | tiig <i>ad</i> |

ENGLISH

In English nouns have two inflectional forms: the possessive and plural.

Examples:

Girl – girls girl's - girls'

Man – men man's – men's

Sheep – sheep – sheep's

Some nouns have zero morphemes for plural: e.g. sheep – sheep, counsel – counsel. Another plural allomorph

comprises a group of irregular unpredictable forms, including such plurals as ' ox – oxen, man – men, goose – geese, child- children: which undergo morphophonemic changes. Singular nouns have certain determiners such as: one, a, an, another, each, every, much, most, little and unstressed some or any. The definite article ' the' is used with both singular and plural. Generally, in English there is no distinction between masculine , feminine and neuter . gender is sometimes shown by different forms or different words:

Examples:

| | |
|--------|---------|
| Man | Woman |
| Father | Mother |
| Boy | Girl |
| Actor | Actress |

Some nouns can be used as either masculine or feminine:

Examples:

| | | | | | |
|--------|------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| Cousin | cook | student | teacher | parent | doctor |
|--------|------|---------|---------|--------|--------|

In English nouns can be grouped into morphological classes. Some nouns are derivational, i.e, derived from verbs, adjectives or nouns. This can be shown as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Noun</u> | <u>Noun</u> |
| King | Kingdom |
| Citizen | Citizenship |
| <u>Verb</u> | <u>Noun</u> |
| Run | Running |
| Teach | Teacher |
| <u>Adjective</u> | <u>Noun</u> |
| Kind | Kindness |
| Jealous___ | Jealousy |
| | - |

PRONOUN NOBEIN

In Nobein pronouns have three forms: subjective, objective and possessive.

| Form | Subject | Object |
|----------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Singular | Ay (I) | Ayga (me) |
| | Ir(you) | Ikka (you) |
| | Tar (she, he, it) | Takka (her, him, it) |
| Plural | Ou(we) | Ouga (us) |
| | Ur (you) | Ukka (you) |
| | Ter (they) | Tekka (them) |

ENGLISH

English has many pronouns. However, the central personal pronouns are shown as the following:

| Person | Singular | Plural |
|------------------------|---------------|------------|
| 1 st person | I - me | We – us |
| 2 nd person | You – you | You – you |
| 3 rd person | He- she- it | They- them |
| | Him- her - it | |

Two more marginal numbers should be included: generic 'one' as in 'one should always read the small print' and existential 'there' as in 'there is a fly in my tea'. The three definite personal pronouns are distinguished as masculine, feminine, and neuter; terms in a system of gender. They satisfy the general definition of the three gender categories in that they characteristically refer to males, females and in animates.

'he' is used for a non- specific member of a set including females as well as males(as in : if any of the student wishes to take part in the seminar , he should consult his tutor).

ADJECTIVES NOBEIN

In Nobein the adjective can be singular or plural. For plural the suffix 'tu' , 'ku' or 'gu', are added to the adjective.

Examples:

| <u>Singular</u> | <u>Plural</u> |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Kudud (young) | kudud tu |
| U:s (bad) | u:s ku |
| Ashria | ashri gu |

To form comparative the suffix 'leken' is added to the adjective noun. While the suffix 'kael' is added to the superlative case. This means adjectives are inflected in the formation of the comparative and superlative degrees.

Examples:

Tar nasir a = she is tall. *

* Tar Ali *leken* nasira — she Ali than tall is (she is taller than Ali).

Tar nasin *kael* = she tall the est (she is the tallest).*

ENGLISH

There are six kinds of adjectives in English : a) Qualitative (e.g. beautiful, excellent).b) Quantitative (e. g .some, no, few, any).c) Demonstrative (e.g. this, that, these, those).d). Distributive (e.g. every, each, either, neither).e) Interrogative (e.g. what, whose, which). Possessive (e.g. my, his, your). Adjectives which modify the nouns and pronouns are classified into:

Descriptive: they describe quality of the noun. For example: long journey
Limiting: they limit the noun they modify. For example: his house
Descriptive adjectives are of two types:

a. Attributive adjectives: they come directly before the noun to attribute a quality to the noun they modify. The same noun can be modified by more than one adjective. Example: They live in the white house.

b. Predicative adjective: they form a part of the predicate and appear after the verb to modify the subject of the sentence. Example: This boy is clever.

VERB NOBEIN

Tenses in Nobein are different and have different forms according to their occurrence. All tenses take the anaphoric clitics of the present tenses, present progressive, future simple and arranged future with some prefixes that show the progressiveness such as *a:g* and future forms such as *fa* or *ha* and the verb *ju*: (go) in the arranged future.

TENSE NOBEIN Present Simple

| Nobein | English |
|------------|-----------------|
| Ay kab r | I eat |
| Ir kab na | You eat (sing)) |
| Tar kab | She, he, it eat |
| Ter kab na | They eat |
| U: kab ro | we eat |

Past Simple

| Nobein | English |
|-------------|---------------|
| Ay kab s | I ate |
| Ir kab onam | You ate |
| Tar kab o | She he it ate |
| Ter kab sa | They ate |
| U: kab so | we ate |

Future Simple

| Nobein | English |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Ay fa kab r | (I will eat) |
| Ir fa kan name | You will eat |
| Tar fa kab e | He, she, it will eat |
| Ter fa kab enna | They will eat |
| U: fa kabro | We will eat |

Present progressive

| Nobein | English |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 'Ay a:g kab r' | I am eating |
| 'Ir a:g kab na | You are eating |
| 'Tar a:g kab' | He, she, it is eating |
| Ter a:g kab na | They are eating |
| 'U: a:g kab ro | We are eating |

ENGLISH

Tense in English is a recursive system in which a primary tense is modified by a sequence of tenses using 'to be' and 'to have' and 'to go', each expressing past, present or future relative to the time selected in the previous tense. Thus, 'he has been eating' can be referred to as the present in past tense. The major

tenses in English result from combining each of four times (present, past, future, future – in – past) with each of four aspects (simple, continuous, perfect, continuous perfect).

ADVERBS NOBEIN

In Nobein there are adverbs of places, time and manner. These adverbs are classified as follows:

| Adverb of place | Adverb of time | Adverb of manner |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Indo (here) | Elin (today) | Ashri kir (beautifully) |
| Mando (there) | Walu (tomorrow) | Beda kir (nicely) |
| Doro (above) | Hussan (always) | Simarkir (angrily) |
| Tawo (down) | Awaka (at night) | U:sakir (badly) |

ENGLISH

English has many adverbs. Adverbs of place, e.g., here, there, near, under, etc., . adverbs of time are: now, today, ever, never, before, after, etc., .adverbs of manner are often derived from adjectives by using the suffix – ly. The – ly is common but not reliable marker of a word being an adverb, since many adjectives also end in –ly, e.g, slowly,

happily, quickly, badly, briefly, etc., also, adverbs are formed from certain nouns, verbs, and adjectives using the prefix a- as in ahead and aloud. Moreover, they are formed from certain nouns and determiners such as wise-lengthwise, wards- backwards, some-somewhere, any – anywhere. There are also adverbs of frequency and degree

such as very, really, absolutely, usually, never, sometimes, etc. in English adverbs have comparative and superlative degrees as the regular adjectives, e.g., fast- faster- fastest. There are also irregular adverbs such as badly- worse- worst.

PREPOSITIONS NOBEIN

In Nobein there are many prepositions such as:

'Toon ' = from 'log' =

with

'Nagir' = like

Examples:

' tino toon kiro' = he came from the west.

'kandi log mero' = he cut with the knife.

ENGLISH

In English some prepositions are short, typically containing five letters or fewer. There are , however, a significant number of multi- word prepositions. These are: in, on, with, of, by, above, about, like , next , since, for, to, as far as, from, out of, etc.,.

CONJUNCTIONS NOBEIN

In Nobein the conjunctions are:

'Gon '= and '

log' = because

'Dan' = when, while

' Dutin '= whenever

Example:

' ay kabsi log kis'= I came because I have eaten.

'ay kabri dan kiro' = he came while I was eating.

ENGLISH

English conjunctions are: and, but, although, moreover, neither, nor, or, in spite of, because, since, not only, etc.,.

RESULT AND FINDINGS The study has dealt with the problem of morphology in both English and Nobein. Morphological processes have been discussed with regard to the parts of speech. The findings indicate that there is correspondence with regard to the morphological structure between Nobein and modern English in question in a number of instances, differences in others. The methodology of this study is largely that of CA. It forms a useful technique in that it informs the learners about the similarities and dissimilarities between their Mother Language and the Target Language they are learning, which undoubtedly warn them of the potential areas of interference. In addition, the model proposed by contrastivists which the researcher applied in this research, can be considered a very efficient descriptive device to the study of contrasting Nobein and English. The TG model of analysis has been implemented to compare how Nobein and English have formed the angle of morphology. To begin with, both languages are inflected in nouns number and gender. They can be derived into two forms: singular and plural. They both have suffixes used to indicate plurality, but English uses regular suffixes such as the – s, and irregular changes such as the replace morphemes in words like foot- feet, goose- geese, child- children, etc. Nobein has irregular suffixes for plural such as –ri, -i, e.g. koi r i, id i, etc.,. Both Nobein and English have countable and uncountable nouns with the same properties and have a gender system. Lexically, English shows three kinds of gender: masculine, feminine,.

and neuter. Nobein on the other hand shows only two kinds, feminine and masculine . In Nobein, there are no marks for feminine and masculine, to distinguish between them certain suffixes are used such as 'fab'- father, 'essi'= sister or the word 'ondi ' before the male nouns, and 'kare' before the female nouns, in contrast, English uses some suffixes to indicate masculine and feminine, for example, hero-heroine, actor- actress, and so on. Also, we notice that in Nobein there is no a definite marker to identify the noun, but nouns can be indefinite by using the article wey= one, while in English there is a definite article beside the indefinite one. In Nobein and English possession can be shown by certain inflectional suffixes. In Nobein the suffix 'n' is used, which corresponds to the possessive marker 's in English. In both languages nouns are derived from other nouns, adjectives, or verbs. English has much more derived nouns than Nobein. Both languages are similar in using pronouns but, Nobein differs in some pronouns. For example, in Nobein the suffix 'ay' = self precedes the pronoun, while it follows the pronoun in English. Also, there are three kinds of demonstrative pronouns in Nobein: 'in' = near, 'tar' = medium, 'man' = far, with subjective and objective forms. In addition, they are inflected in numbers i.e. 'in' singular, 'ingu' plural. English on the other hand has two types of demonstrative pronouns with replacive changes in the form of plural(i.e. this-these). In Nobein the adjective follows the noun and it is inflected in number, i.e., it has singular and plural forms, e.g., 'ashri'= beautiful 'ashrigu' – plural

of beautiful, whereas in English adjectives have only one form. Both have the degree of comparative and superlative, in addition to the use of certain suffixes to form derived adjective. With regard to verbs, Nobein and English have similar types of verbs. But in Nobein we find more suffixes than in English. Concerning adverbs, both Nobein and English have the three types of adverb: manner, time and place. The difference lies in that English possesses more bound morphemes for adverbs which are not found in Nobein. As for conjunctions and prepositions, we find that both Nobein and English use them with slight difference in the structure. Considering the frequency of occurrence of some suffixes in both languages, the analysis reveals that both languages have suffixes that can be compared, which validates the hypothesis stated for this study. However , the results of this comparative analysis are only tentative and need to be supported by further data. On the one hand, it may be interesting to analyze data with the same characteristics, as those analyzed in this study. This kind of analysis would allow us to observe how learners manage to contribute to those morphological structure and to compare them with other languages. Moreover, it would be beneficial to carry out the same kind of analysis of morphology with different aspects of grammar in both languages. Through comparing the structure of two languages the analysis will result in areas of similarities and differences between the two languages; thus proving the validity of the

hypothesis of the present study that contrastive analysis can also be used as

a useful tool of comparing an ancient language (i.e. Nobein) with a modern language (English).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The language of Nile Nubians has been the subject and the interest of much research and study. Some studies have been carried out by linguists, nevertheless, there are still many areas in which research is needed. Further analysis this type of grammar must be carried out to examine the tendencies of occurrence of structures. Therefore, the researcher believes that investigation of the areas below is important:

1. Morphological and syntactical studies of all the Nubian languages.
2. Mutual intelligibility testing to distinguish different dialect areas.

3. Contrastive studies on Nile Nubian as a dead language and a modern language (i.e, English, French).
4. Socio- linguistic and Folklore studies to collect more data about the oral traditions in the Nile Nubian group.

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