A systematic contrastive study of the word class status of passive participles in English and MSA

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Abstract:

This study investigates for the first time using strict explicit criteria the categorial status of the passive participle in Modern Standard Arabic in contrast with English. Sources were standard published accounts in grammars and articles, and native speaker intuition. It is shown how, while possessing a morphologically distinctive form, i.e., that of a participle, its central associated syntactic functions in the two languages are twofold: adjectival, and verbal. Six adjectival criteria are explored contrastively: position attributively, predicatively with *be* or zero copula, and as complement of verbs like `seem', occurrence with gradeability markers, and in comparison, structures, and in adjective construct state. Three verbal criteria were explored contrastively: occurrence with finite auxiliaries, with adverbs of time and manner, and with expression of the `by agent` type in the two languages. This study offers insights into the different properties that associate with each of these functions, drawing attention to comparisons between MSA and the more extensive work done on parallel issues in English. The concluding result is that there exists a set of criteria that can be applied to, at least with strong probability, identify participles as performing adjectival versus verbal functions. Many of these run parallel in English and Arabic, though construct state constructions in Arabic and the lack of an inflected verbal passive in English are points of divergence.

keywords: MSA, English, passive participle, categorial status, syntactic functions and propertie

دراسة مقارنة منهجية لحالة فئة الكلمة من النعوت السلبية في اللغة الإنجليزية

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ملخص الدراسة:

تتناول هذه الدراسة لأول مرة، باستخدام معايير صريحة دقيقة، لتحديد الفئات النحوية لاسم المفعول (المبني للمجهول) في اللغة العربية الفصحى، مقارنةً مع الإنجليزية. كانت مصادر المعلومات مشتقة من مقالات وكتب نشرت في قواعد اللغة بشكل رسمي، بالإضافة إلى حدس الباحث والناطق باللغة العربية الأصلية. تبيّن أن اسم المفعول يرتبط بوظائف نحوية ذات شقين: صفات وأفعال، على الرغم من أنه يتمتع بوزن صرفي مميز (وزن مفعول)، أي: أنه بصورة المبني للمجهول. تم اكتشاف ستة معايير متعلقة بالصفة بشكل متناقض: وقوعها في مكان الصفة قبل الاسم، وقوعها في مكان الخبر في الجملة الأسمية التي لا تحتوي على أي فعل مساعد في الزمن المضارع، حدوثها في مكان الخبر للأفعال الناقصة (صار)، وكذلك حدوثها مع أدوات التدرج، حدوثها في تركيب المقارنة، وحدوثها في تركيب المضاف والمضاف إليه للصفات. وتم اكتشاف ثلاثة معايير متعلقة بالفعل بشكل متناقض: الحدوث مع أفعال مساعدة معيّنة، حدوثها مع ظروف الزمان والمكان، حدوثها مع الحال، حدوثها مع عبارات مثل (من قبلٍ، على يدٍ). تقدم هذه الدراسة نظرة واضحة للمعايير المختلفة المرتبطة بكل من هذه الوظائف في اللغة العربية الفصحى مع مقارنتها بما تم مناقشته في اللغة الإنجليزية في الدراسات والأبحاث السابقة. تبيّن النتيجة الختامية أن هناك مجموعة من المعايير التي يمكن تطبيقها، على الأقل بشكل ذو احتمالية كبيرة لتحديد طبيعة الوظيفة النحوية لاسم المفعول، عما إذا كانت صفة أم فعل. كما تبيّن أيضاً أن العديد من هذه المعايير متشابهة في اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية، باستثناء تركيب المضاف والمضاف إليه للصفة في اللغة العربية، وعدم وجود سمات التوافق لاسم المفعول في اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة العربية الفصحى، اللغة الإنجليزية، الوضع التصنيفي، الوظائف النحوية وخصائصها.

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to contribute to contrastive linguistics by providing an account of passive participles (PPs) in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in contrast with those in English. While participles in Arabic have attracted some research, hitherto greater attention has been paid to active (AP) than to passive (PP) participles. Passive participles have received some coverage within the remits of Modern Standard Arabic (e.g., Fassi-Fehri (1999); Ryding (2005); Fassi-Fehri (2012); Hallman (2017); Abushunar and Mahadin (2017) and Gadalla (2010)). PP in English grammar are also found named 'past participle' or 'second participle' and have attracted considerable attention (Biber, 1999; Aljohani et al,. 2022). However, the accounts there have not systematically assembled sets of criteria to enable a systematic approach to be adopted when attempting to distinguish between the part of speech functions of Arabic PPs, such as often happens in accounts of English. Hence comparisons with English are hard to make clearly. It is clear that it is adjective and verb uses that are the most crucial and hence those are the focus of this paper.

Focusing on what has been said in some other works more recently, Almalky (2021), for instance, has investigated the three distinct types of active participles in Hijazi Arabic, termed the deverbal, nominal, and adjectival forms, providing reference to the syntactic contexts in which they are individually employed, while exploring their semantic properties. In a similar vein, Al-Raba'a (2021)

examines the categorial status and syntactic derivation of active participles in an urban variety of Jordanian Arabic. Each paper however uses different or unclear criteria and differs in the precise variety of Arabic described.

Due to space limitations, the study here concentrates upon an investigation of the crucial adjectival and verbal uses of PPs and only touches lightly on noun uses. It proceeds as follows: §2 provides a general introduction to the notion of passive participle, which is contrasted with the active counterpart, and introduces their part of speech functions. §3 which can be treated as the bulk of this study, concentrates on the criteria identifying PPs as either adjectival or verbal in English and/or MSA. §4, then, concludes this paper.

2. Active and Passive Participles in English and Arabic

In the wider realm, participle forms have proved a fruitful area of research in many languages. This is because, while typically defined as fundamentally verbal, they usually have the ability to function also as adjectives and even as nouns. It is therefore paradoxical that PPs in Arabic have sometimes been described as lacking true verbal uses and only appearing as adjectives or nouns (Ryding, 2005). Their multiple functionality often also raises issues that concern the deciphering of the category being expressed by the participle form in a given syntactic context. A widely used definition of 'participle' is the following, taken from the *SIL Glossary of Linguistic Terms*: "A participle is a lexical item, derived from a verb, that has some of the characteristics and functions of both verbs and adjectives". For

English, this definition embraces words including *singing*, which functions as an active participle (AP) and *broken*, a passive participle (PP), as employed in the following respective pairs in both verbal (1a 1c) and adjective-like (1b 1d) functions.

(1) a. She is **singing**.   (part of periphrastic temporal and aspectual verbal structure, namely the one expressing the present progressive)

b.   The **singing** postman. (adjunct function of a reduced relative clause substituting: 'who is/was singing')

c.   The door was **broken** by the wind. (part of periphrastic verbal structure expressing the passive)

d.   A **broken** door.   (adjunct function of a reduced relative clause substituting: 'which has/had been broken')

While other lexical items may be derived from verbal sources in English, including words such as *singer*, which functions as an agent noun or *breakage*, which functions as an action noun, or *employee* which functions as a patient noun (close to a PP in meaning), these are not termed or referred to as participle forms. They do not display adjectival functions and neither do they occur as part of a verbal structure. Having said this, however, English participles may have limited nominal uses in addition to their adjectival and verbal functions, as illustrated below for PPs:

(2)   a. We should help the **persecuted**

b.   *It's a given that he will be offered a post in the government* .

PPs functioning as nominals are rare in English and mostly limited to non-specific senses with generic *the*. Those are usually plural in meaning: e.g. 2a means 'we should help people in general who have been persecuted'. Examples like 2b are very rare. In that example however PP *given* behaves like a typical countable noun which can occur with *a* indicating specific indefinite singular reference (meaning 'something well-known or agreed').

As is the case in English, Arabic displays two distinct types of participles: active (e.g. *kātib* 'writing') and passive (e.g. *maktūb* 'written'). The following illustrates the PP, which is our main interest.

(3)   a. kasar-a   l-walad-u   l-šubbāk‗a

    break-PFV.3SGM-ACC   DEF-boy-SG.M-NOM   DEF-window.SGM-ACC

    The boy broke the window

    b.   l-šubbāk‗u   l-ma-ksūr-u

        DEF-window.SG.M-NOM   DEF-PASS.PTCP.break.SG.M-NOM

    The broken window

The label *ism l-fāʕil* 'doer' is employed to refer to the AP, whereas the label of *ism al-mafʕūl* 'done' then refers to the PP. In one definition, the AP describes and refers to "the doer of an action", while the PP describes and refers to "the entity that receives the action done to it" (Ryding, 2005: 102). Holes (2004: 149) however emphasises better that participles are basically predicative rather than referential in function: "the basic difference between the two types of participle is that the active participle describes the state in which the subject of the verb from which it is derived finds itself as a result of the action or event that the verb describes, whereas the passive refers to the state in which the object or complement of the verb from which it is derived finds itself after the completion of the action/ event". This is the result of the forms' association with the voice feature expressed by the verbal form they derive from.

It is for this reason that the AP in Arabic can also function as an *agent* nominal, with the PP functioning as a *patient* nominal. One should mention here that within Arabic, the term "participle" is used in a slightly different way from in some other languages such as English. Within the notion of "participle", agent nominal forms equivalent to that of *singer* or *writer* are encompassed within the definition of an AP form (Ryding, 2005).

PPs used as patient nouns, as mentioned above, are similarly included in the Arabic notion of participle, and, unlike in English, many exist functioning as typical countable nouns. Often however their meanings are somewhat idiomatic and do not

straightforwardly connect to the root meaning of the verb they are derived from. Examples are *maǧmūʕ-a* `group', *mašrūʕ* `project', *mawḍūʕ* `topics', *maxṭūṭ* `manuscript', *mafhūm* `concept'. For example, the verbal meaning of the root underlying the first of those is 'gather' and the second 'authorize/approve'.

While recognising the sizeable difference between English and Arabic in exploitation of PPs as fully functioning nouns, this paper does not pursue noun uses of PPs further. This is because they barely exist in English and because the main challenge in the study of participles is separating their core adjectival and verbal properties.

A more crucial difference often also cited is that, in Arabic, the participle does not contribute to the formation of verbal periphrastic expressions in the same way as for instance in English and French. There the PP is routinely used to express a passive action (e.g. *The food was put on the table*). Having said this, however, the AP in Arabic has indeed been shown to display verbal functions and is also present in periphrastic formations including lexical verbs. Beyond its own semantics as a perfect-expressing form in certain uses within different dialects (see Hallman (2017) on Syrian Arabic, for example) APs are also progressive-expressing verbal forms. Furthermore, APs have additionally grammaticalised into auxiliary forms in the different dialects (see Agius and Harrak (1987)) as well as developed nuanced copula functions (see Camilleri and Sadler (2019, 2020) for an overview). Other verbal properties associated with active participles include for instance exceptional behaviours in

Syrian Arabic, where APs are able to show person agreement, as is the case in the form: *šāyftī* 'having-seen' (Brustad, 2000: 163) as well as the expression of negation via the use of the verbal negative exponent *ma*, rather than nonverbal mu, just as though such participle forms are functioning as any other typical verb (Brustad, 2000: 291). This criterion derived from certain spoken dialects does not seem to work for PP in MSA however so will not be pursued later.

Overall, then, while there are many published pieces of evidence for APs in Arabic having verbal functions, that is not the case for PPs. By contrast English is well known to have both APs and PPs fully utilised in periphrastic verbal uses. The main body of this paper therefore is focused on demonstrating whether PPs do have verbal uses in Arabic and contrasting the detailed nature of adjectival and verbal uses of PP contrastively in the two languages.

The above concludes an introduction to the notion of what defines participles in Arabic and English, including APs. From here on we focus solely on PPs.

3. Two key types of passive participle uses

As stated above, the account below is limited to adjectival and verbal uses of PPs of transitive verbs in MSA. It excludes noun uses and possible adverbial uses1. The aim is to explore the syntactic criteria that can be used to objectively distinguish between PPs as adjectives and as verbs, and to summarise how far they parallel those applied

to similar PP uses in English. This seems not to have been systematically done before.

The morphological shape of PPs in English is well known (Biber, 1999). There is a regular suffix written -*ed* which has the same three regularly conditioned alternative spoken forms as the past tense -*ed* (e.g. *reserved*). There are however many irregular verbs where the form is -*en* and/or various other shapes including vowel changes in the stem (e.g. *sung, written*).

The morphological shape of PPs in MSA is moderately complex. It involves the prefix, usually *ma-,* and other changes that mostly follow rules related to (a) what verb Form the root that a PP is derived from belongs to (10 or 15 Forms are commonly recognised) and (b) the nature of the constituent segments of the root (in the simplest case, three consonants). Table 1 shows some common examples for roots of different patterns within Form I. The fuller details are well documented elsewhere (Ryding, 2005) so are not repeated here.

Table 1. Form I passive participle (PP): *ism mafʕūl*

Strong/regular root	Geminate root	Hamazated root	Assimilated root	Hollow root	Defective root
maʕrūf ʻknown' *maḏʕur* ʻfrightened' *maǧhūl* ʻunknown' *maħbūb* ʻbeloved' *mašhūr* ʻfamous'	*maħẓūẓ* ʻlucky' *maʕdūd* ʻcountable, limited' *maħdūd* ʻlimited' *mahmūm* ʻcareworn' *maǧnūn* ʻcrazy'	*maʔxūḏ* ʻtaken' *maʔūl* ʻpeopled'	*mawhūb* ʻtalented, gifted' *mawrūṯ* ʻinherited' *mawǧūd* 'found to be present'	*mabīʕ* ʻsold' *madīn* ʻindebted' *maṣūn* ʻvirtuous' *madūs* ʻrun over'	*mansiyy* ʻforgotten' *mašwi* ʻgrilled, roasted' *maħkiyy* ʻspoken' *madʕūw* ʻinvited' *marǧūw* ʻexpected' *marmīy* ʻthrown'

While English PPs are naturally described as derived from the infinitive/present form of the verb, Ryding (2005) and Qafisheh et al. (1997) contend that MSA PPs are in the end derivations from transitive verbs that have been passivised and in which a passive form ends up being the origin for the deverbal PP. In fact a PP such as *maktūb* ‘written’ seems closest in form to the imperfective/present active form (3sgm) *yaktubu* rather than the corresponding passive *yaktabu* or indeed the usual citation form for verbs *kataba* (3sgm perfective/past active).

It can also be seen from the examples in Table 1 that the meanings of what are, morphologically, participles often depart from the literal meaning of the PP of the verb root. For instance, *maktūb* means straightforwardly ‘which has been written’, based on its root meaning (e.g. *risālah maktūbah* ‘a written message’). However, many PPs are like *mašhūr* which does not literally mean ‘which has

been proclaimed', following the meaning of its root, but rather the more specific but related meaning 'famous'. *maħẓūẓ* `lucky' is even more distantly related to the meaning of its root 'gain/win/ obtain '. This phenomenon also occurs in English. For example *affected* can mean 'acting in an artificial or pretentious way' which has little connection with the meaning of the root verb *affect*. Again *reserved* is often used in reference to a person's personality rather than booking a table, which is the meaning of its verbal source. In fact this is a good indicator of adjectival rather than verbal use. Participles with meanings that depart from that of their verb root are typically only adjectives (or nouns, which we are not considering) and not used verbally in that meaning. They may however be used verbally in their literal verb source meaning: *A table was purposely reserved*. However, since this is a lexical semantic rather than syntactic criterion, we do not pursue it further.

3.1 Adjectival use of pass.ptcp

The participle form is in Arabic frequently referred to by many as a "verbal adjective" (Mace (2006); Massey (2008); Erwin (2004); Wright (1974); Wright and Caspari (2011); Qafisheh et al. (1997); and Cuvalay-Haak (2011)). Indeed that is commonly expressed as part of the definition of the category of participle across languages, including English. Through the use of this terminology, the literature aims at capturing the intuition that participles mainly have adjectival functions, yet are derived from verbs. On the basis of this descriptive definition it stands to reason that one expects the adjectival pass.ptcp

to exhibit adjectival properties in parallel to regular adjectives. This expectation is borne out below, where it is shown that PPs behave as regular adjectives in: (i) occupying the same canonical positions that are designated for adjectives: predicative and attributive, while (ii) exhibiting the same pattern of morphosyntactic agreement as adjectives. The same is true in English, except that agreement is not relevant. We now look at those features in detail.

- Predicative and attributive occurrence

The defining syntactic behaviour of adjectives in both Arabic and English centers around their ability to be attributive or predicative (Bhat, 1994). In fact, most adjectives can be both. In Arabic, attributive adjectives occur as post-nominal modifiers within the noun phrase and exhibit agreement in definiteness, case, number and gender with the noun they modify, as demonstrated below (4). In English the default position is before the noun as pre-nominal modifiers, and no agreement is required, as adjectives are not inflected for definiteness, case, number or gender (seen in the translations of 4). In both languages the noun phrase containing an attributive adjective may occupy any of the sentence positions typical of NPs, e.g. subject, object, indirect object, prepositional object, etc.

In Arabic, predicative adjectives primarily occur in verbless or copular sentences in predicative position. Just like attributive adjectives, these display agreement with the noun, which in this instance functions as the subject. However, agreement is limited to

number, case and gender and does not include definiteness (5). In English the same applies, except that no agreement is required (translations of 5). In both languages predicative adjectives do also appear linked to object nouns following certain verbs (5c)

(4)

a. l-huwiyy-at-u   l-waṭaniyy-at-u
    DEF-identity.SG-F-NOM   DEF-national.SG-F-NOM

    The national identity

b. l-muʔtamar-u   l-duwaliyy-u
    DEF-conference.SG.M-NOM   DEF-international-SG.M-NOM

    The international conference

(5)

a. al-ṭarīq-u   ṭawilat-un
    DEF-road.SG.M-NOM   INDEF-long.SG.M-NOM
    The road/way is long

b. al-taǧirb-at-u   faḏḏ-at-un
    DEF-experience.SG-F-NOM   INDEF-unique.SG-F-NOM
    The experience is unique

c. ʔaħmad-u   ǧaʕal-a   al-fatāt-a saʕīd-at-an
    Ahmad-NOM   make.PFV.SG.M-ACC   DEF-girl.SG-F-ACC   INDEF-happy.SG-F-ACC
    Ahmad made the girl happy

For PPs the same applies. Attributive use is shown first:

Attributive with subject noun

(6)

a. ṭ. ṭāwilat-u   l-ma-<u>ḫ</u>ǧūzat-u ṣaġīrat-un
    DEF-table.SG-F-NOM   DEF-PASS-PTCP.reserve.SG-F-NOM   INDEF.small.SG-F-NOM

    The reserved table is small

(attributive adjective)

b. waṣal-a   l-raǧul-u   l-ma-ḥbūb-u
    arrive.PFV.3SG.M   DEF-man.SG.M-NOM DEF-PASS-PTCP.love.SG.M-NOM
    The beloved man has arrived
    (attributive adjective)

Attributive use is possible for the vast majority of PPs. In English it becomes difficult for some verbs that are associated with additional arguments beyond a direct object. For example *He brought me some food* but **The brought food was very tasty*; *He placed the books on the desk* but **The placed books were rather dull*. However *They donated food to charity* does allow *The donated food was helpful*. In problem instances of that type, English requires the adjective or PP to keep its complement and be placed after the noun head. Arabic, where the adjective or PP is already in that position, can

accommodate complements in situ (see the Arabic and its translation in 7).

(7)   al-kutub-u   al-ma-wquf-ah   ʕala
aṭ-ṭāwilat-i
        DEF-book.PL.M-NOM   DEF-
PASS.PTCP.place.SG-F-ACC   on
DEF-table.SG-F-GEN

The books placed on the desk

Predicative to subject noun

(8)

a. ṭ. ṭaawilat-u   ma-ḫǧūzat-un

   DEF-table.SG-F-NOM   INDEF-

PASS.PTCP.reserve.SGNOM

   The table is reserved

(predicative adjective)

   b. l-bint-u   ma-ḫẓūẓ-at-un

      DEF-girl.SG-F-NOM   INDEF-PASS-PTCP.

                              gain/ win/obtain S-F-NOM

                                    The girl is lucky

(predicative adjective)

c. l-raʔīs-ān   ma-wǧūd-ān

   DEF-president.M-DUAL-NOM   INDEF-PASS-PTCP. find-DUAL.M-NOM

The two presidents are present

   (predicative adjective)

In (8) it is seen that both English and MSA allow PP in predicative position after 'be' in present tense, although that verb is absent in MSA. Arabic however requires agreement of the adjective with the subject in gender, number and case but not definiteness.

Here below, (9) demonstrates the presence of both an attributive adjectival use of the PP modifying a subject along with the presence of yet another PP functioning as the structure's predicative adjective. Since the subject nominal is generic and plural, following a specific unexpected agreement rule of MSA, both PPs in their respective attributive and predicative adjectival functions display sgf inflection.

(9)

l-bināy-āt-u   l-ma-hǧūr-at-u
dāʔim-an   ma-skūn-at-un
DEF-building-PL-F-NOM   DEF-PASS.PTCP-haunt-SG-F-NOM   always-ACC   INDEF- PASS.PTCP-abandon-SG-F-NOM
Haunted buildings are always abandoned

The predicative context however does not in MSA distinguish clearly between adjectives and nouns, so for the present purpose of showing that PP can be adjectives the attributive context is crucial. E.g. in *tilka al-marʔatu ṭabībah* 'That woman is a doctor' the predicative noun exhibits the same agreement with the subject noun as does a predicative adjective or participle. In English, by contrast, the indefinite article signals that a noun rather than an adjective is the predicative complement in such sentences.

A critical consideration arises (both in Arabic and English) in the predicative examples, which is that often they allow an event as well as a state interpretation, and only the latter is typical of adjectives. It depends upon the wider context of utterance. E.g. 8a could be said by a man to his wife about a meal out that they will have together. It refers to the table as being in a state of having been reserved for that occasion – a state that would very likely last for some days between the booking and the eating (adjectival use). However, it could also be in a report of a police surveillance of a restaurant where some criminals are expected to meet. Via camera, an agent has to record all relevant events, and one of those is the moment when someone comes in and arranges to reserve the table. 'The table is reserved' there reports the action of reserving happening at a particular moment in time (verbal use).

The syntactic indicators of the verbal use will be elaborated in a later section. Here we may note what Fassi-Fehri (1993, 2012) and Hallman (2017) have to say about adjectival use. Both engaged in

discussions on the internal lexical semantics associated with participle forms in MSA and Syrian Arabic respectively, particularly in predicative position.

Fassi Fehri argues for Arabic, as others have stated for English, that PPs are very likely to function as adjectives, which typically have a state meaning, even though they may be derived from non-stative verbs, i.e., ones that are dynamic or eventive, like 'put' or 'open' in the examples below. The PP as adjective however always has a state meaning, regardless of any aspectual meaning inherent in the verb it is formed from (state, dynamic, change-of-state etc.). The PP of 'love' which denotes a state is stative 'loved', but the PPs of 'roll' or 'open' which do not denote states are also stative.

In turn, Hallman's focus concerns the detailed kind of state that emerges in a PP. He argues that passive participles that are derived from stative verbs such as the ones in (10) provided from MSA have a simultaneous and punctual reading (e.g. 'in a state of being loved/known'), while passive participles derived from eventive verbs have a past-shifted reading, as in (11) (e.g. 'in a state of having been opened/put on the stove').This is a subtle distinction, but the same in English and MSA.

(10)

a. nawāl   z-zġbi   ma-ẖbūb-e   ktīr
    nawal   Zoghbi   PASS-PTCP.love-SG-F   a lot

    Nawal Zoghbi is well loved

b. ğ-ğawāb   ma-ʕrūf

   DEF-answer.SG.M   PASS-PTCP.know-SG.M

   The answer is known

(11)

a. l-gawe   ma-ḥṭūṭ-a   ʕa   n-nār

    DEF-coffee.SG.M   PASS-PTCP.put.SG-F   on
DEF-fire.SG.M

  The coffee is put on the table

  My translation: The coffee is located on the stove (i.e. in a state of having been put there some time before)

b. š-šibbāk   ma-ftūḫ
    DEF-window.SG.M   PASS-PTCP.open.SG.M

    The window is opened (i.e. in a state of having been opened some time before)

Syrian Arabic: Hallman (2017, pp 162-163)

It is notable that an example like 11b (both in Arabic and English) can also have a fully verbal dynamic or event interpretation if accompanied by adverbs like 'suddenly', 'immediately' (see later section).

It is also important to realise that dynamic verbs like 'put' and 'open', in adjectival PP use with state meaning, can still be accompanied by any complements that they may habitually take as verbs, such as prepositional phrases (see 11a; 12b, 12d), thus constituting an adjectival phrase not just a single word adjective.

This all entails that the aspectual readings that associate with the PP in the above predicative structures show that their function can be purely adjectival.

A further sign that a predicative PP is adjectival rather than verbal can be not just the 'state' meaning and lack of adverbs that would prompt an event reading, but that it is difficult to think of a possible event reading at all. In the following examples (12) the PPs, although most easily translated as stative, all have the form of passive participles. However, since the verbs they are formed from have inherently stative meanings, it is quite hard to imagine an eventive meaning.

(12)

a. kān-a   zayd-un   ma-ǧnūn-an
   be.PFV.3SG.M-ACC   Zayd-NOM   PASS-PTCP.be.mad.SG.M-ACC
   Zayd was mad (i.e. in a state of having been made to be mad)

b. kān-a   al-raǧul-u   ma-slūlan

be.PFV.3SGM-ACC   DEF-man.SG.M-NOM
PASS-PTCP.afflict.PL-ACC
   The man was afflicted with T.B

c. kān-a   al-nisāʔu   ma-
    šdūhāt-in

   be.PFV.3SG.M-ACC   DEF-woman.PL-F-NOM
PASS-PTCP.emaciate.PL-F-ACC

   The women were emaciated

d. Kān-a   mūlaʕ-an   bihā

be.PFV.3SG.M-ACC   PASS-PTCP.fond.ACC
with-3SG.F-GEN
He was fond of her
MSA:Saad (2019, p. 3)

- **Appearance as a predicative complement of certain verbs *act,***
  become, look, remain, seem,* and *sound

As mentioned by Wasow (1977) for English, and also useful for
MSA, a better diagnostic for participles as adjectives than occurring
as a predicative complement of 'be' is use as a complement of
becoming, and appearing verbs which in MSA take a subject in the
nominative case and non-verbal (adjectives, participles, nouns)
predicative complement in the accusative case (case not marked in
English). The reason is that 'be' (whether overt as in English or zero
as in Arabic in the present tense) takes almost any part of speech as
complement while the other verbs are limited to adjectives and, in
some cases, nouns.

In fact it is not easy in either language to find a verb that only takes adjectives and no nouns at all as possible complements. For example 'become' allows nouns of profession like 'doctor'; and 'seem' allows descriptive nouns like 'idiot'. Hence the perfect single test for adjective status remains elusive in both languages.

(13)

a. l-ta-ʕaṣṣūb-u   l-qabili-u   ʔṣbaħ-a   ma-rfūḍ-an

DEF-tribal-NOM   DEF-fanaticism-NOM become.PFV.3SG.M-ACC   PASS-PTCP. reject.SG.M-ACC

The tribal fanaticism became rejected

b. ʔaṣbaħ-a   l-raǧul-u   ma-ʕrūf-an/ mašhūr-an

become-SG.M-ACC   DEF-man.SG.M-NOM   PASS-PTCP. proclaim.SG.M-ACC

The man became known/ famous

c. bāt-a   l-ʔamr-u/l-waḍʔ-u   ma-ǧhūl-an

become-SG.M-ACC   DEF-matter/situation.SG.M-NOM PASS-PTCP.not_know.SG.M-ACC

The matter/situation became unknown

e. ẓall-at   il-bin-t-u   ma-wǧūd-at-an

become.SG.F-NOM   DEF-girl-SG-F-NOM   PASS-PTCP. find_present.SG-F-ACC

The girl remained existing

- **Occurrence with Gradability markers**

Another property typical of the adjectival category (but not verbs or nouns) in both Arabic and English, even if it is not necessarily the case that all adjectives display this feature, is the fact that this category is able to associate with the semantic property of gradability. Thus many adjectives have non-absolute meaning and this can seen syntactically in their ability to be modified by a degree expression or degree modification. This is true of PP that function as adjectives. As demonstrated through the use of the ( ) (optional brackets) in (14) below, whose use implies optionality, the degree modification expression is shown to be able to precede or follow the form that is being modified.

(14)

a. al-ṭālib-at-u   ma-whūb-at-un (lil-ġāyat-i)
   DEF-student.SG-F-NOM   PASS-PTCP.gift.SG-F-NOM   to-DEF-extremely.GEN
   The student is extremely gifted/talented

b. il-mudīr-u   ma-šġūl-un (ğidd-an)
   DEF-director.SG.M-NOM   PASS-PTCP.occupy.SG.M-NOM   very.ACC
   The director is very busy

c. l-waḍʔ-u   ma-ğhūl-un (tamām-an)

DEF-situation.SG.M-NOM   PASS-
PTCP.not_know.SG.M-NOM   completely
The situation is unknown completely/ totally

However, there are also PPs with an absolute meaning that do not allow such forms, such as *captured* or *painted* in English: **the door was extremely painted; *the soldiers were very captured.*

- **Occurrence in Comparative and superlative expressions**

Gradability is also necessary for entering into the standard kind of comparative/superlative construction in Arabic (or English), where entities labelled by nouns are compared with respect to degree of an adjectival property/state. In Semitic linguistics, it is well known that comparative adjectives are constructed inflectionally through the use of a particular morphological pattern, namely: ʔccac, such that from the root /ṭwl/, the elative form: *ʔaṭwal i*s derived. This form results in the formation of comparative and superlative forms with different syntactic and semantic properties (Versteegh (2007); Hallman (2022)). This so-called elative form is restricted to occur only with triliteral adjectives (i.e., with adjectival forms derived out of a triconsonantal root), and is additionally an invariable sgm form. An elative adjectival form is followed by prepositional phrases headed by *min* 'from', which is used to express the standard of comparison. Ryding states that "certain qualities, attributes, or descriptors do not fit into the pattern-change paradigm for comparative and superlative meanings. For example, *nisba* adjectives and the active and passive participles functioning as adjectives from the derived verb forms (II-

X) have extra consonants or vowels as part of their essential word structure, so they cannot shift into the *ʔafʕal* pattern without losing some of their identity and meaning". (2005, p. 249).

PPs, then, unlike regular adjectives, cannot be morphologically constructed within the elative pattern, since they are themselves bound within a particular morphological template, as identified at the start of this section. Consequently, they cannot make an elative form. However, they can still form part of a comparative/superlative structure by making use of a periphrastic formation that involves the use of the elative form of *kaṯīr* 'much, a lot', namely, *ʔaktar* following the PP, while taking a prepositional phrase as its complement.

This situation is in fact mirrored in English where the inflected comparison with *-er* and *-est* cannot be applied to PPs. The existence of the PP suffix *-ed* seems to block the addition of comparative *-er* and superlative *-est* even on words that are quite short (and gradable in meaning) so in other respects would be expected to take the inflected comparison: **boreder, *scaredest.* Instead, the periphrastic forms with *more* and *most* are used, as in (15): they are again the comparative and superlative forms of *much*.

(15)

a. l-walad-u   ma-whūb-un
   ʔakṯar- u   min   ʔab-ī-ah
   DEF-boy.SG.M-NOM   PASS.PTCP-gift.SG.M-
   NOM   more-NOM   from   father-3SG.M-GEN

The boy is more talented/gifted than his father

b. hiya   ʔakt̲ar- u   ma-sʔūliyy-at-an
    min-ka
    she   more-NOM   PASS-PTCP.SG-
Fask/question-ACC   from-2SG.M-ACC
    She is more responsible than you
    MSA: Ryding (2005, p. 249)

Again there are of course exceptions in both languages that struggle
to compare at all in the standard way, due to non-gradability: e.g.
captured, ratified.

- **Occurrence in adjectival construct state (ACS)**

The final adjectival property PPs manifest in Arabic is their ability
to form the so-called adjectival construct, which is not exactly
paralleled in English. "The adjectival construct consists minimally
of any adjective or participle in construct with a noun which specifies
the degree or manner of the property expressed by the adjective" (Al-
Sharifi and Sadler, 2009, 27). This phenomenon has been discussed
for MSA by (Bardeas (2009); Fassi-Fehri (1999); Kremers (2005)
and Al-Sharifi and Sadler (2009)) and recently in Alzahrani (2019)
and Almalky (2021) for Hijazi Arabic. The adjectival construct in
MSA is composed of a [-def] adjective followed by a [+def] noun in
the genitive with strict adjacency between them, very much as is the
case of nominal construct state formations. Together they make an
adjective phrase capable of occurring in the usual locations for
adjectives as described above.

The nearest English equivalents the old-fashioned pattern Adj + *of* + noun (not explicitly definite, but arguably understood as definite) e.g. *fair of face, hard of heart, light of touch, fleet of foot*. Today that is limited to a few fixed expressions that are still used, none of which feature a PP. E.g. there is no **broken of heart*. English more often expresses the same meaning using *with (a)* Adj N: e.g. *with fair hair, with a light heart*. That syntactic pattern is fully productive so admits attributive PP, e.g. *with a broken heart, with stored energy*. A third pattern is also popular in much the same meaning though it is lexical and not fully productive: an adjective phrase pattern with *-ed* on the noun (so not the PP *-ed*) e.g. *hard-hearted, light-touched, red-haired, bare-headed, open-minded*. That extends to include a few with PPs: *broken-hearted, dyed-haired*. This last pattern will be used below to translate some key examples even though few exist in English.

In fact the ACS is not available with all adjectives or PPs in MSA either although it is more common than its nearest equivalent in English. ACS examples with adjectives are seen in (16 and 17 a,b) and with PP in (18).

(16)

a.	ʕalā	nār-in	mutawassiṭat-i	l-ḥarārat-i
	on	fire-GEN	medium-GEN	DEF-heat-GEN

    On a medium-hot fire

MSA: Ryding (2005, p. 254)

b.	ʔimraʔ-at-un	ğamīl-at-u	l-wağh-i

woman-F-NOM	beautiful-SF-F-NOM	DEF-face-GEN

a woman with a beautiful face

Almalky (2021) has demonstrated that while adjectival constructs exist in Hijazi Arabic as in (17a,b), active participle forms can also participate in such constructions, as shown in (17c).

(17)

a. šaxṣ   ṭayyib   l-galb
    INDEF-person.SG.M   INDEF-kind.SG.M   DEF-hear.SG.M
    a kind-hearted person
    Hijazi Arabic: (Almalky, 2020, p. 34)

b. šift   walad   ḥāfi   l-agdām
    see.PFV.1SG   boy.SG.M.INDEF   bare.SG.M   DEF-foot.SG.M
    I saw a barefoot boy
    Hijazi Arabic: (Almalky, 2020, p. 247)

c. rāfiʕ   ar-rās
    holding high   DEF-head
    holding his head (up) high
    Hijazi Arabic: (Almalky, 2020, p. 247)

A parallel behaviour is here also shown to be allowed in MSA with the use of PPs. In (18), a [-def] PP forms an adjectival construct with an adjacent [+def] noun. The result is a newly-formed phrase with an adjectival (or even nominal) function and meaning. This construction is in fact very common and used with a number of idiomatic meanings in this variety.

    (18)

a. ma-ǧhūl-u   l-huwiyyat-i

PASS-PTCP.not_know.SG.M-NOM   DEF-identity.SG-F-GEN

With an unknown identity

b.   ma-rfūʕ-u   al-raʔs-i
     PASS-PTCP.raise.SG.M-NOM   DEF-head.SG.M-GEN
   'raised headed' i.e., esteemed

c.   ma-ʕdūm-u   l-zamur-i
     PASS-PTCP.block.SG.M-NOM   DEF- conscience.SG.M-GEN
     'blocked conscienced' i.e. with no conscience, unscrupulous

Although these examples superficially resemble nominal construct state examples, which also often have an indefinite PP shape (used as a noun) followed by a definite noun in genitive case (if marked), there are two key differences. First, the meaning is different. In nominal CS the second noun 'possesses' the first, which very often in reality means the referent of the second causes or affects that of the first: e.g. food leads to expenditure in *masrūf-u al-ʔakal-i*, Neom requires something planned (a project) in *mašrūʕ-u nium-i*. However in adjectival CS the relationship is more that the referent of the second gives the object affected by the verbal action underlying the adjectival PP: e.g. the head is what is raised in (18b). The second test is also important, which is that only adjectival CS and not nominal CS can occur in the key position for adjectives, i.e. attributively after a noun.

3.2 Verbal use of pass.ptcp

As noted earlier, according to Brustad (2000), active and passive participles in formal Arabic exhibit more adjectival and nominal usage (see also Fassi-Fehri (1993, 2012)) where (regardless of whether the root verb is stative or dynamic) they denote states. By contrast, "[i]n spoken Arabic, however, participles maintain a primarily verbal function" (Brustad, 2000 p. 162), where they can (in predicative position) denote events and actions. She is however referring here to active rather than passive participles. Therefore we turn now to whether PPs in MSA possess any truly verbal functions, such as it is well known they do in English. In doing so a range of criteria will be applied, analogous to those used above for adjective uses of PPs.

First, however, it must be noted that, independent of PPs, and quite unlike English, MSA possesses a full set of passive inflected forms of lexical verbs, parallel to the active ones, across person, number, gender, tense and aspect and other variables. These verb forms do not involve a PP but occur in the same position as that discussed above for 'be' or 'seem' etc., or zero copula + PP. They express finite event meanings, unless the meaning of the verb is inherently stative, like 'love' or 'know'. The examples in (19) parallel those in (12) and, because the verbs in these examples do themselves have a stative meaning, the inflected passive verbal meaning in these cases is very similar to that of the adjectival PP versions in (12).

(19)

a. ğunn-a   zayd-u
    mad.PFV.3SG.M-ACC   Zayd-NOM
    Zayd was possessed; maddened

b. sull-a   al-rağul-u
    afflict.PFV.3S.M-ACC   DEF-man.SG.M-NOM
    The man was afflicted with tuberculosis

c. ḏuhil-at   al-nisāʔ-u
    emaciate.PFV.3SG-F-ACC   DEF-woman.PL.M-NOM
    The women were emaciated

d. ʔ-ūliʕ-a   bi-hā
    3-enamore.PFV.SG.M-ACC   with-GEN-3SG-F
    He was enamored (fond) of her
    MSA:Saad (2019, p. 2)

However, often the verb has a process, action or action+result meaning that makes an eventive meaning more plausible for the finite inflected form (non-PP). In (20), (a), the PP version, is more likely to express the resulting state arising from the window having been opened at some time in the past, while (b), the finite inflected verb version, describes the event of opening happening at some point in time related to the moment of speaking.

(20) 11b

a. š-šibbāk   ma-ftū-uħ
    DEF-window.SG.M   PASS-PTCP.open.SG.M

    The window is opened

b. ya-ftaħū-u   š-šibbāk-a

open.IMPFV.3SG.M-NOM P DEF-window.SG.M-ACC

The window is opened

In English of course there are no passive inflected lexical verb forms: the passive involves auxiliary verbs with the PP which together have to cover all possible verbal eventive passive tense and aspect meanings, as well as the adjectival stative ones in predicative position.

- **Finite characteristics such as tense marked by auxiliary verbs**

The main distinguishing feature of a PP's verbal use involves inflectional markers of finiteness. PPs differ from typical verbs both in English and Arabic in being primarily non-finite, which means their morphological shapes do not express any tense and person features. In fact, Holes (2004, p. 142) argues that "the participles have no fixed time reference: this has to be interpreted from the context". At the same time, Brusted (2000, p. 142) argues that: "When used verbally, participles are tenseless, but carry aspect". We can certainly say that they carry voice, since that distinguishes AP from PP, and that is bound up with the imperfective vs perfective distinction. In Arabic AP is active imperfective, PP is passive perfective.

If a PP is to be used in finite verb uses, then, whether in Arabic or English, it has to be accompanied by an additional verb or adverb of some sort that is marked for the missing features (especially tense),

or occur in a context where it is pragmatically implicated what time is involved or indeed whether a state or event is described.

We have already seen when discussing PP as adjectives that they very often appear in predicative position in copular sentences where in the present tense there is no overt copula 'be' verb. Tense is therefore understood as present (the unmarked value), and together with the perfective passive PP meaning, that often yields an interpretation 'currently (in a state of having been) V-ed'. E.g. *The children are loved; The bridge is broken*.

However, as we saw in the account of adjective uses, a verbal eventive interpretation may also be possible on the lines of 'being V-ed at some specific time'. This in MSA could be expressed with a pattern of finite verb inflection . However it may also be achieved as in English in examples with predicative PPs where an auxiliary is present to make the time clearer, and therefore frame what is described as likely an event rather than a state detached from time. In (21a) we see this where *kāna* is used to express the past tense of copula 'be' overtly. Often the particle *sa-* is used to indicate future time (21b). This encourages the verbal reading of example (21a) like these of Ryding:

(21)

   a. Kān-a   l-dawr-u   ma-ktūb-an
       fī   talāt̠at-i   mašāhid-a   faqaṭ
       DEF-be.PFV.3SGM   DEF-role-NOM   PASS-
       PTCP.write.SG-F-ACC   in three.PL-F-GEN scene.PL.M-
       GEN   only
       The role was written into three scenes only.

(2005,p. 278)

b. s-sayyār-a-u   sa-ta-kūn-u ma-šḥūnat-an   min Ɂamrīkā

DEF-car-SG-F-NOM   FUT-3SGF-be.IMPFV-NOM   PASS.PTCP-import.SG-F-ACC   from   America

The car will be imported from America

The effect here is however only probabilistic. Thus we are likely to interpret 21b (whether in Arabic or English) as describing a future event when the car is imported. However it cannot be ruled out that we are describing a future state that will exist when the car will be in a state of having been imported.

- **Adverbial modification**

The other common indicator of verbal PP use is cooccurrence with certain adverbs. As might be expected, time-related adverbs such as 'recently' or 'at 6 pm' or 'yesterday' (18b) tend to prompt the verbal interpretation (action at a specific time) in both English and MSA. However, interestingly, many manner adverbs in general such as 'carefully' also have this effect. This is presumably because many such adverbs describe how an action is performed rather than the nature of a state.

(22)

a. l-baḍāʔiʕ-u   ma-rmīy-at-un biʔīhmal-an   fī l-šāriʕ-i
DEF-good.PL.M-NOM   PASS-PTCP.throw.SG-F-NOM   with-carelessly-GEN   in-DEF-street.SG.M-GEN
The goods are thrown carelessly in the street

b. s-sayy ārat-u   kān-at   ma-š ūḫat-an   min   ʔamrikā   bi-l- ʔams-I
DEF-car.SG-F-NOM   be.PFV.3SG-F-ACC   PASS-PTCP.import.SG-F-ACC   from   America   with-yesterday-GEN

The car was imported from America yesterday

c. l-laħm-u   ma-šwi-un beʕenāee-atn
DEF-meat-NOM   PASS-PTCP.grill/roast.SG.M-NOM carefully.ACC
The meat is grilled/roasted carefully

- **Co-occurrence with min+agent or similar**

In English, *by*+agent or *with*+ instrument mostly occur with verbal not adjectival PPs. One of the diagnostics for verbal PPs applied in other languages is therefore that they can be modified by such phrases in predicative occurrence. In Arabic this works for phrases with preposition *min* or *bi* or the like, where the noun is in the genitive case.

(23)

a. kān-t   l-qaṣīdat-u   ma-ktūbat-an
    bi-qalam-i   l-šāʕir-i   l-maʕrū-
    i/l-ma-šhūr-i
    be.PFV.3SG.M   DEF-poem.SG-F-NOM   PASS-
    PTCP.write.SG-F-ACC   with-pen-SG.M-GEN   DEF-
    poet.SG.M-GEN   DEF-PASS.PTCP.known/famous-GEN

    The poem has been written by the well-known/ famous poet

b. l-baʕtā-t-u   ma-mnūḫat-un

    min   qibal-i   l-ḫukūmat-I   li- ṭullāb-
    I   kāffat-an

    DEF-scholarship.PL-F-NOM   PASS-PTCP.grant.SG-F-
    NOM   from   by-GEN   DEF-government.SG-F-
    GEN   to-DEF-student.PL.M-ACC   entire-ACC
    The scholarship had been granted by the government for all
    students

c. s-sayy ārat-u   ma-š ūḫat-un   min
    ʔamrikā   bi-s-safīn-at-i
    DEF-car.SG-F-NOM   PASS-PTP.import.SG-F-NOM
    from   America   with-DEF-ship.SG-F-GEN
    The car had been imported from America by ship

d. l-bināyāt-u   ma-bniyy-at-un

ʕalā   yad-i   xabīrʔ-in   ʔamrīkiyy-i

DEF-building.PL-F-NOM   PASS-PTCP.build.SG-F-GEN

on   hand-GEN   expert-GEN   American-GEN

The buildings are built by American experts

e. l-tāǧīr-u   ma-dīn-un

lil-bunūk-i   bi-kaṯīr-in   min   l-ʔamwāl-i

DEF-merchant-NOM   PASS-PTCP.indebet.SG-M-

NOM   DEF-bank-GEN   with-many-ACC

from   DEF-money.PL.M.GEN

The merchant is indebted to the bank for a lot of money

4. Conclusion

The syntactic status and categorisation of participle forms has been debated for a long time, both within English and, to a lesser extent, Arabic linguistics. By concentrating on passive participle forms specifically within MSA it has been shown that PPs, just as has already been shown for active participle counterparts, can take on both adjectival and verbal functions. Different syntactic behaviours displayed by PPs were identified in order to help determine the properties that can be attributed to each of the two identified categories that PPs can belong to at the syntactic level. For the most part the considerations ran parallel in both English and Arabic.

The following table 2 summarises the similarities and contrasts found and reported in the above account. It is remarkable that, on almost half of the points considered, MSA and English are in some

sense the same. The effect is that very much that almost the same set of criteria serves to distinguish between adjective and verb PPs in the two languages.

Table 2. Summary of PP contrasts between English and MSA

Feature		MSA	English
Morphology	Affixation	Prefix	Suffix
	Stem changes	Yes mostly regular	Yes irregular only
Noun use	Productivity	Moderate	Very low
	Idiomaticity	Moderate-High	Low
	Reference	All types	Mostly definite generic plural
Adjective use	Idiomaticity	Moderate	Moderate
	Attrib before N	No	Yes
	Attrib after N	Yes	Yes with complement
	Attrib agreement	Yes	No
	Predic zero or be	Yes	Yes
	Predic seem etc	Most	Most
	Predic nonsubject	Yes	Yes
	Predic agreement	Yes	No
	very	Most	Most
	Comp/ Sup productivity	Most	Most
	Comp/Sup inflected	No	No
	Construct state	Yes	No
Verb use	Productivity	Moderate	High
	Idiomaticity	Low	Low
	Inflected verb competitor	Yes	No
	Auxiliaries	Yes *kāna, sa-ta-kūn*	Yes, be, have
	Adverbs	Yes	Yes
	By/with etc.	Yes	Yes

The adjectival properties were varied. They were essentially based on the broad ability for PPs to display both attributive and predicative behaviours, including the demonstration of the same pattern of agreement as any other regular adjective. In the same vein, as with other adjectives, the PP, when functioning as such, can be modified by degree items and can substitute regular adjectives in periphrastic comparative structure formations and in adjectival construct constructions. Finally, the account of verbal properties attributed to the PP concentrated on the features that signal an event rather than a state meaning (at least probabilistically), such as accompanying auxiliary verbs, adverbs and by-phrases.

While the study solely concentrated on syntactic cues with which to identify the different syntactic categories PPs can belong to, aligning PPs closer to their active counterparts, in future work there remains a general need to also consider in more detail more semantic cues and how these interact with or determine syntactic categorisation. Furthermore the criteria to identify noun and possibly even adverbial uses of PPs remain to be explored and incorporated.

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