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A Comparative Investigation of Sibawayh and Jakobson in Functional Linguistics

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Abstract:

The objective of this research is to connect Arabic theoretical linguistics with modern linguistics, not by disregarding the present and attributing the later theories solely to Arab grammarians and rhetoricians, as has often been assumed. Rather, this research aims to qualitatively explore the linguistic accomplishments of ancient Arab scholars from a contemporary perspective and identify commonalities and controversies between past and present perspectives. Specifically, this study focuses on Sibawayh's interpretation of functional linguistics and its final formulation by Jakobson. Additionally, the study aims to analyse and compare the principles of language and grammar advocated by ancient Arab linguists and contemporary linguists to deepen our understanding of language and its role in human society. The results of this study reveal that while Sibawayh concentrated on the analysis of structure and function in Arabic grammar, modern linguists such as Jakobson have broadened their approach to include a wider range of perspectives including sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and neurolinguistics. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the contributions of Sibawayh as his work formed the foundation for language theories in general and linguistics in particular.

Keywords: functional linguistics; systematic review; grammar; language model; identity; syntax.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Functions of Language in the Arab Linguistic Heritage

The Arab world has a rich linguistic heritage that has been evolving over the centuries, dating back to pre-Islamic times. The language has undergone changes and adaptations in response to social, cultural, and political developments. The study of functional linguistics in the Arab world has deep roots in the linguistic heritage of ancient Arab linguists (Alfaifi, & Alshahrani, 2021). These linguists originated the linguistic principles related to the function of language and its role in human society. They recognized the importance of language not only as a means of communication but also as a tool for acquiring knowledge, preserving cultural heritage, and building social and political institutions. With the rise of modernity, new challenges have emerged, leading to the need to explore the interplay between Arab heritage and modernity in the study of functional linguistics.

One of the central concerns of ancient Arab linguists was defining the nature of language itself. Although they did not establish comprehensive definitions, they developed an advanced linguistic view for their time. The study of functional linguistics in the Arab world has also been shaped by the legacy of Arab scholars who made significant contributions to the field. For instance, it is worthy to highlight the definition of language provided by Al-Farabi upon which he did not bother to elaborate. He writes that language is a tool that allows humans to communicate their thoughts and ideas to one another and that it is essential for the functioning of any society (cited in Khalidi, 2022). Al-Farabi also notes that language is a means of expression that allows people to convey their emotions and feelings. It is, also, a powerful tool for shaping people's beliefs and behaviors.

Following Al-Farabi, Ibn Khaldun (n.d.) defined language as the expression of the speaker's intent. This expression is a linguistic act arising from the intention to produce speech. Therefore, it must become an established possession in the active organ for it, which is the tongue. And it is different in every nation according to its

terminology. If one looks closely at this definition, one can notice a modern linguistic element. The hearer's understanding of what is in the speaker's mind is nothing, but the expressive function of language mentioned by Jakobson (2002) and many linguists in modern times. That is, language is a medium possessed by the language speaker and through which he expresses his views, requirements, and sensations. The claim of Ibn Khaldun "the speaker's statement about his intended meaning" is simply what the speaker intends to convey to the hearer. This is the referential function in modern linguistics while the speaker's understanding is nothing but the information and news conveyed by the speaker to the hearer (cited in Hébert & Tabler, 2019). That is the basic function of the communicative linguistic process.

Another way to understand the interplay of Arab heritage and modernity in functional linguistics is to examine how modern linguistic theories have been integrated with the Arabic language. Building on the work of these ancient Arab linguists, contemporary linguists have contributed to the study of functional linguistics in the Arab world. They have explored the interplay between the Arabic language's unique features and contemporary linguistic theories. The works of Western linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Noam Chomsky, and Roman Jakobson have been incorporated into the study of functional linguistics in the Arab world. However, these theories have been adapted to fit the Arabic language's unique features and complexities.

Moreover, the interplay between Arab heritage and modernity can also be seen in the development of new fields of study, such as Arabic computational linguistics. This field combines modern technological advancements with the Arabic language to develop new tools and techniques for analyzing and processing Arabic texts. This is an example of how Arab heritage and modernity can come together to produce innovative approaches to studying the Arabic language.

In conclusion, the interplay of Arab heritage and modernity in the study of functional linguistics is complex and multifaceted. It requires an understanding of the Arabic language's unique features and complexities, as well as a willingness to adapt to new linguistic conventions and incorporate modern theories into traditional frameworks. Through examining these various points, we can appreciate the richness and dynamism of the Arabic language and its ongoing evolution in response to social, cultural, and technological changes.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Arabic is a complex language that has evolved over thousands of years, with multiple indigenous and modern linguistic influences contributing to its development. On the one hand, Arabic has a rich tradition of indigenous linguistic elements, including classical Arabic, the language of the Qur'an, which has had a lasting impact on the culture and identity of the Arab world (Versteegh, 2014). On the other hand, the language has also been influenced by modern linguistic elements, including loanwords from other languages, new colloquial expressions, and the impact of technology and media (Alfaifi & Alshahrani, 2021). The interplay between these two linguistic influences has created a unique and dynamic language that continues to evolve.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the role of language in human society and the function of grammar, as defined by ancient Arab linguists, in light of contemporary linguistic theories. The paper aims to bridge the gap between the views of ancient Arab linguists and modern linguists by examining their definitions of language and the principles they established regarding its function. Furthermore, the research problem is to understand the relevance and significance of the views of ancient Arab linguists in contemporary linguistic theory. This study hypothesizes that the views of ancient Arab linguists on language and grammar are still relevant today and can provide valuable insights into the nature of language and its function in human society.

Moreover, the researchers' rationale for this study is to highlight the contributions of ancient Arab linguists - such as Sibawayh - to the study of language and to demonstrate that his ideas are not less important than those of Western linguists. The methodological approach used in this study is a comparative analysis of the definitions and principles of language and grammar as presented by Sibawayh and the contemporary linguist Jakobson, for instance.

Add to that, the potential outcomes of this study are to enhance the understanding of language and its role in human society to highlight the contributions of ancient Arab linguists to the field of linguistics and to promote a more inclusive and diverse perspective in linguistic research.

The focus of this study is not to argue that ancient Arabs came before Western linguists, engaged with their theories, and put forth their ideas. Furthermore, it does not attribute the viewpoints of contemporary linguists such as Saussure (1916) to ancient Arab linguists like Ibn Jinni (2003) or the perspectives of Jakobson (2002) to Al-Jahiz (2000), but rather, this work aims to examine how language was defined in traditional Arab literature to gain insight into its role. While ancient Arab linguists did not prioritize defining language and creating all-encompassing definitions in this area, their work contains some definitions that reflect a remarkably advanced linguistic perspective for their time, which are equally significant as current linguistic views prevalent in the field.

Hence, the remaining structure of the paper will include a literature review of the views of ancient Arab linguists on language and grammar, a comparative analysis of their definitions and principles with those of contemporary linguists, and a conclusion that summarizes the findings of the study and their implications for linguistic research.

1.3. Research Questions

This study raises several questions, the chief of which are:

- How can the ideas and principles of ancient Arab linguists on language and grammar contribute to the advancement of contemporary linguistic theory?
- What are the similarities and differences between the definitions and principles of language and grammar as presented by ancient Arab linguists and contemporary linguists, and how can a comparative analysis of these perspectives enhance our understanding of language and its role in human society?

2. Literature Review

Sibawayh and Roman Jakobson are both highly regarded in the field of functional linguistics for their pioneering contributions. However, they come from very different cultural backgrounds and time periods. Sibawayh lived in the 8th and 9th centuries in the Arab world while Jakobson lived in the 20th century in the Western world. Despite these differences, both linguists had similar interests in studying the functional aspects of language.

2.1. Sibawayh

Although his work predates modern linguistics, it still influences and informs contemporary linguistic research. Sibawayh's "Kitab" (Book), which is a comprehensive guide to Arabic grammar, lays the foundations for modern Arabic linguistic studies and is still widely referred to and studied today (Khaya, 2022).

Additionally, his analysis and observations on the language are consistent with modern linguistic theories, demonstrating the lasting impact and relevance of his work in the field of linguistics. Sibawayh's approach to the study of language was ahead of his time, as he recognized the importance of considering the context and purpose of communication in understanding the meaning of words. In his book "Al-Kitab", he delved into the rules of Arabic grammar and analyzed the structures of sentences and the choice of words. He emphasized that to effectively communicate, it was necessary to consider the listener's situation and the speaker's intended purpose (Hochmuth, 2020). This approach is similar to the insights revealed by contemporary linguists regarding the role of context and the listener's situation in shaping the meaning of speech. Sibawayh's emphasis on the importance of considering the context in language use foreshadowed modern linguistic theories and highlights the significance of his contributions to the field of linguistics.

Yet, in his book, Sibawayh does not distinguish between the study of grammar, rhetoric, and semantics (AlOkaidy & Alfahdawi, 2021). One can infer that his understanding of speech is based on especially connecting certain words and arriving at grammatical meanings, considering the speech context without separating grammatical meanings from rhetorical ones. Sahaliya (2012) asserts that he does not only pay attention to grammar or isolate it or make it independent of the social phenomenon and the speaker's (or the functions of language) purposes or the position of the listener and the means of communication for speech, but rather he considers all of that as a cohesive and coordinated whole, mixing between sender and receiver through channel and understanding and context.

Consequently, in his book Al-Kitab, Sibawayh's approach to linguistic analysis was unique for his time, as the elements of language had not yet been separated and characterized to define their individual functions. This lack of clear distinction between linguistic elements led Sibawayh to mix and integrate different aspects of language in his work. He analyzed the rules of grammar, sentence structure, word choice, and context all within a single framework. This holistic approach to linguistic analysis was a departure from the fragmented and specialized views of language that would emerge in later periods of linguistic research. Sibawayh's mixing of linguistic elements highlights the innovative nature of his work and the comprehensive approach he took to understanding the complexities of language.

Therefore, Sibawayh's work and modern linguistic perspectives intersect in the field of functional linguistics. In this context, both Sibawayh and modern linguists share an interest in the role of language in communication and how context and the intended purpose of the speaker shape meaning.

For example, Sibawayh emphasized the importance of considering the context in which language is used and the intended purpose of the speaker to effectively convey meaning. This perspective aligns with the functional linguistic approach which views language as a tool for communication and seeks to understand how context and speaker intention shape meaning.

Furthermore, Sibawayh's comprehensive analysis of the structure and function of the Arabic language and its grammar lays the groundwork for the development of functional linguistic theories, such as systemic functional linguistics, which emphasizes the role of language in a social and cultural context and how language is used to achieve specific communicative purposes.

Overall, Sibawayh's work and modern linguistic perspectives intersect in the context of functional linguistics, with both sharing an interest in the role of language in communication and how context and speaker intention shape meaning.

Sibawayh's contribution to the field of linguistics has sustained its relevance and influence over time. His comprehensive approach to studying language, focus on grammar and semantics, and trailblazing attitude serve as a source of inspiration and valuable insights for modern linguistic research and theories.

2.2. Language Functions According to Jakobson

Many works studied linguistic functions and many theories have been put forward in this field. However, Jakobson's functional theory is eminent since he contributed to the development of some elements of this theory and collected, arranged, and presented it as a comprehensive one (Rebane, 2021). Jakobson had, also, a great impact on the crystallization of many ideas related to linguistic binarism and laid the foundation for the communication model. Jakobson first introduced this model in a paper wherein he gathered dispersed linguistic functions at a conference in 1958 (Fadhil, 2007). This paper was later published and became a foundational text in the field of linguistics.

Yet, his work does not linger on the auditory aspect of this theory, but rather focuses on the communicative aspect of it, considering that communication is the primary purpose of language (Zakaria, 2007). It is not possible to determine these functions without determining the linguistic senders or the elements of communication, which are as follows: sender, receiver, channel, code, message, and context. Each of the six elements of communication has a different linguistic function. Even though one distinguishes six linguistic elements, it is difficult to find messages that only perform one function, and thus the linguistic function varies depending on the load of one of these elements (Jakobson, 2002). The variety of messages is in the gradual differentiation between functions, not in the control of one function or another. Modern linguistics studies any set of phenomena systematically and scientifically, using a variety of methods and approaches to uncover the internal rules and make sure whether they are permanent or evolving (Wahba, 2022).

Based on the elements cited earlier, one can classify the linguistic functions as such: expressive, conative, poetic, referential, meta-linguistic, and phatic. The expressive function is closely related to the emotive function of language, which involves the expression of the speaker's emotional state (Mzber, 2007). It is often characterized by using words, phrases, or tone of voice that reflects the speaker's emotional state or convey their feelings or attitudes towards a particular topic.

The conative function is closely related to the imperative function of language, which involves the use of language to give commands or make requests (Jakobson, 2002). It is often characterized by using words, phrases, or tone of voice that convey a sense of urgency or strong emotion, and that seek to influence the listener or reader to take a particular action or adopt a specific attitude.

The aesthetic poetic function appears in messages that focus on the sender themselves as a self-sufficient element, and here the term 'poetic' does not refer to the study of poetry alone or the rules and foundations of poetry, but rather the way it is found in both everyday conversation and in prose literature (Jakobson & Halle, 1956). The aesthetic poetic function is often characterized by using figurative language, rhythm, sound patterns, and other linguistic devices that create a specific artistic or literary effect, or that seek to evoke an emotional response in the listener or reader. It is an important aspect of language and communication, as it allows speakers to use language in creative and artistic ways, and it helps listeners and readers to experience and appreciate the beauty and emotional power of language (Rebane, 2021).

The referential function refers to the use of language to refer to or denote objects, events, or ideas in the external world. It forms the basis for communication, in that the speaker's words deal with specific content that they want to convey to others for the exchange of views.

The metalinguistic function refers to the use of language to reflect on or comment on language itself or the use of language in a particular context (Mzber, 2007). The metalinguistic function is an important aspect of language and communication as it allows speakers to reflect on or analyze language and its use, and it helps listeners and readers to understand and interpret the speaker's message in a broader context.

The phatic function is observed in messages that seek to ensure the continuation of communication, such as the word 'Hello' or 'Pay attention' as it is not part of the communication process (Jakobson & Halle, 1956). It also has a role in ending communication, such as 'Sallam', 'bye', 'what do you want', and 'let's see you'. Malinowski was one of the first to address this function, considering that it strengthens and stimulates the connection between people through the exchange of these simple words.

Therefore, each function is related to a specific element, with the referential function connected to the referential element, the poetic function connected to the poetic element, and so on. It is difficult to find words that supply only one function, so this work prioritizes one function over others since each word has its specific function, despite contributing to others well. It is worth noting that Jakobson recognized this early on. In 1935, while working as a language professor at Brunn University in South-Eastern Czechoslovakia, he wrote one of his most important theoretical articles titled *The Dominant*. In this article, Jakobson formulated one of the central ideas of his functionalist theory, the concept of the "dominant element." In any artistic work, there is a dominant element that controls the other elements (Visonà & Plensky, 2020). Consequently, the most distinctive feature of poetic work is the dominance of the aesthetic function.

The following section briefly reviews the most important linguistic theories related to language functions, which either built upon Jakobson's theory or critiqued and undermined it and studying its weaknesses and flaws.

2.3. Language Functions Post Jakobson Time

Jakobson's communicative model served as a starting point for new research that sought to add to and revise his theory (Markandan, 2021). Although Jakobson's theory encompasses the complex human, informational, and connotative factors of communication and also tries to purify the structure of human communication from the narrow perspective of technologists, engineers, and media workers, Schmidt (2001) believes that Jakobson describes an idealized communication process without taking into account its specific social context (collective medium), its actual cultural context (mental state), or even its specific discourse context (context of observation and conversation) and all the internal or explicit media and requirements (speech introductions and speech markers) and all the previous or accepted arrangements and agreements (speech norms and conversation rules).

In addition to semiotic elements such as body language and hand gestures, and facial expressions, Jakobson disregarded these elements in his study because he considered them non-linguistic and therefore could not be included in the linguistic context. Therefore, it seems logical to see theories that try to develop and elaborate on Jakobson's model to include elements he did not consider in his theory.

Thus, Sibawayh and Jakobson are two significant figures in the field of functional linguistics who share many similarities and differences. Despite the cultural and historical distance between them, their work both emphasized the importance of context and the relationship between language and thought, making valuable contributions to the understanding of language and its role in human communication.

3. Methodology

Qualitative research is a research approach that focuses on exploring and understanding the meaning and complexity of social phenomena through the collection and analysis of non-numerical data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The strength of the qualitative approach lies in its ability to provide rich, detailed descriptions of complex social phenomena, and to uncover the meanings and perspectives of those involved (Patton, 2015). In the context of this paper on examining the interplay of Arab heritage and modernity in functional linguistics through the lens of Sibawayh and Jakobson, a qualitative approach would be useful for gaining a deeper understanding of the theories and concepts being examined as well as the context in which they were developed. A close reading and analysis of Sibawayh's and Jakobson's theories, for example, reveal insights into the historical and cultural factors that shaped their views on language and linguistics, and how they relate to the interplay between Arab heritage and modernity. Similarly, a review of relevant literature provides a broader perspective on the current state of research on this topic and helps to identify key themes and issues for further investigation. Another strength of the qualitative approach is that it allows researchers to collect and analyze data that is rich and contextual, providing a detailed understanding of the social phenomena under investigation. This makes it particularly useful for exploring complex and multi-faceted topics such as the interplay between Arab heritage and modernity in functional linguistics, which require a nuanced and in-depth analysis.

4. Findings and Discussions

The ideas and principles of ancient Arab linguists, particularly those of the 8th and 9th centuries, have made significant contributions to the development of contemporary linguistic theory. Arab linguists such as Sibawayh, Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad, and Al-Farahidi made groundbreaking contributions to the field of linguistics, which have influenced modern linguistics in several ways.

4.1. Exploring the Relevance of Ancient Arab Linguists' Ideas and Principles in Advancing Contemporary Linguistic Theory

Arab linguists made significant contributions to the study of language in the 8th to 10th centuries. They approached the study of language from a descriptive perspective, focusing on the structure and form of Arabic and Persian languages (Fadhil, 2007). Their methods were mainly based on observing and describing the language they were studying, often through writing grammatical treatises.

4.1.1. The Development of the Concept of Grammatical Analysis

Sibawayh's views and methods can be compared to those of contemporary linguists by examining his approach to language analysis and his focus on the meaning of words and context. In terms of similarities, his approach to linguistic analysis emphasized the importance of considering the context in which language is used and the intended purpose of the speaker in effectively conveying meaning (Khaya, 2022). This is similar to the contemporary view that recognizes the role of context in shaping meaning and the importance of considering the listener's perspective. He, also, studied the rules of grammar and sentence structure, which is still a central focus of contemporary linguistic research.

Here are some examples of how the work of ancient Arab linguists in general and Sibawayh in particular on morphology and syntax has influenced functional linguistics:

First, the concept of grammatical categories: Arab linguists were among the first to identify and describe the different grammatical categories of Arabic. This work laid the foundation for contemporary theories of functional

grammar, which seek to explain how these categories are used in language to perform different functions in communication. Sibawayh's contributions to the study of morphology are particularly relevant to functional linguistics. He developed a detailed analysis of Arabic word formation, including the use of prefixes, suffixes, and other morphological processes to create new words. His work on morphology laid the foundation for contemporary theories of functional morphology, which seek to explain how words are formed and how they relate to each other in a language system. Thus, for example, Sibawayh identified different grammatical categories in Arabic, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. For example, in Arabic, the word "كتاب" /kitab/ means "book" and is classified as a noun. Similarly, the word "جميل" /jami:l/ means "beautiful" and is classified as an adjective.

Second, the word formation process: Sibawayh's contributions to the study of morphology are particularly relevant to functional linguistics. He developed a detailed analysis of Arabic word formation, including the use of prefixes, suffixes, and other morphological processes to create new words. His work on morphology laid the foundation for contemporary theories of functional morphology, which seek to explain how words are formed and how they relate to each other in a language system. Thus, for example, in Arabic, the prefix "لم" /lam/ can be added to a verb to indicate negation. Thus, the word "يكتب" /yaktub/ means "he writes" while "لا يكتب" /la yaktub/ means "he does not write."

The third point is sentence structure. Sibawayh's work on syntax is also relevant to functional linguistics. He developed a detailed analysis of Arabic sentence structure, including the use of case markings, word order, and other syntactic features to convey meaning. For example, in Arabic, the sentence "كتب الولد القصة" /katab al-walad al-kissah/ means "the boy wrote the story." The word "كتب" /kataba/ is the verb and comes at the beginning of the sentence while the subject "الولد" /alwalad/ comes next, followed by the object "القصة" /al-kissah/.

Another contribution of Arab linguists was their focus on the importance of context in language interpretation. They recognized that language use is influenced by various social, cultural, and linguistic factors, and that the meaning of a word or sentence cannot be fully understood without considering its context. This emphasis on context has influenced contemporary linguistic theories on pragmatics and discourse analysis.

4.1.2. The Importance of Context in Language Interpretation

Sibawayh's focus on the importance of context in language interpretation is particularly relevant to functional linguistics, which seeks to understand how language is used in context to convey meaning. Here are some examples that demonstrate the relevance of Sibawayh's findings to pragmatics, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics.

Sibawayh's emphasis on context has influenced contemporary theories of pragmatics, which recognize that language use is influenced by various social, cultural, and linguistic factors. For example, the meaning of the Arabic word "ساعة" /saʿa/ can vary depending on the context in which it is used. In some contexts, it may refer to an hour while in others it may refer to a watch. Furthermore, in Arabic, the use of honorifics can indicate social status and influence how the speaker is perceived by their interlocutor. For example, the use of the honorific "سيد" /sajed/ before someone's name indicates that they are a respected or important figure. The choice to use or not use honorifics in Arabic is influenced by social and cultural factors and is therefore an example of how pragmatics can influence language use.

Sibawayh's work on syntax is particularly relevant to contemporary theories of discourse analysis, which recognize the importance of understanding how sentences are connected to form larger units of meaning. For example, in Arabic, the use of certain conjunctions such as "و" /wa/ or "أو" /aw/ can indicate different types of relationships between sentences in a discourse. Moreover, in Arabic, the use of certain discourse markers such as "فمثلاً" /famaṭhaln/ or "وبالتالي" /wɓaltali/ can indicate different types of relationships between sentences in a discourse. For example, "فمثلاً" indicates that the following sentence will provide an example of the previous sentence while "وبالتالي" indicates that the following sentence will be a result or consequence of the previous sentence. Understanding these types of relationships is important for analysing longer stretches of text or speech in Arabic.

Sibawayh's recognition of the importance of social and cultural factors in language interpretation has influenced contemporary theories of sociolinguistics. For example, in Arabic, the use of certain dialects or pronunciations may be associated with certain social or regional identities. Arabic dialects vary widely across the Middle East and North Africa and are often associated with specific regions or social groups. For example, the Levantine dialects spoken in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine are distinct from the dialects spoken in Egypt or the Gulf. Thus, for example, in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, the word for "hello" is spoken as /marhaba/ (مرحبا). In the Gulf dialect spoken in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Gulf countries, the word for "hello" is /salam/ (سلام). In Egyptian Arabic, the letter /kɔ:f/ (ق) is often pronounced like a /g/ or /z/ sound, depending on the word. For example, the word for "heart" in Standard Arabic is /kɔlb/ (قلب), but in Egyptian Arabic, it is often pronounced /gɔlb/ or /zalb/ (جلب).

4.1.3 Contributions of Ancient Arab Linguists to Lexical Semantics

Ancient Arab linguists made significant contributions to the field of semantics, particularly in the area of lexical semantics. They recognized the importance of understanding the meaning of individual words and how they relate to each other in a sentence. This work has influenced contemporary theories of semantics and the study of lexical relationships. Here are some examples from Arabic that demonstrate the relevance of Sibawayh's work to the field of lexical semantics:

- Polysemy: Arabic words often have multiple meanings, or are polysemous. Sibawayh recognized the importance of understanding how context can help disambiguate the meanings of polysemous words. For example, the word "عَلِمَ" /ʿalima/ can mean "to know" or "to teach," but the meaning is determined by the context in which it is used.
- Homophony: Arabic words can also be homophonous, meaning they have the same sound but different meanings. For example, the words "ذَهَبَ" /ḍahaba/ and "ذَهَبٌ" /ḍahab/ are homophonous but have different meanings - /ḍahaba/ means "he went" while /ḍahab/ means "gold."
- Semantic relationships: Sibawayh also recognized the importance of understanding the various semantic relationships that exist between words in a sentence. For example, the word "بَاب" /bab/ means "door" while the word "مِفْتَاح" /miftah/ means "key." These words have a metonymic relationship, meaning that /miftah/ is a part of /bab/.
- Collocation: Arabic words also have preferred collocations or words that tend to appear together in a sentence. For example, the word "شَمْسٌ" /šams/ meaning "sun" is commonly used with the word "غَرْبٌ" /ġarb/ meaning "West" to form the phrase "شَمْسٌ غَرْبٌ" /šamsġarb/, which means "sunset."

Overall, these examples illustrate how the Arabic language, and the work of ancient Arab linguists like Sibawayh, have had a significant impact on contemporary linguistic theory. The unique features of the Arabic language have been the subject of much research and analysis and have contributed to our understanding of language universals and typology.

4.2. A Comparative Analysis of Language and Grammar: Ancient Arab Linguists and Contemporary Linguists

A comparative analysis of the definitions and principles of language and grammar as presented by ancient Arab linguists and contemporary linguists can provide valuable insights into the evolution of linguistic thought and the role of language in human society. While there are similarities between the two perspectives, such as a focus on the systematic and rule-governed nature of language, there are also notable differences in their approaches to language study, including their theoretical frameworks and the role of social and cultural factors in shaping linguistic structure and use. By exploring these similarities and differences, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of language and its role in shaping human communication and social interaction.

4.2.1. Jakobson and Sibawayh's Communicative Function of Language: Resemblances

Sibawayh's views and methods can be seen as both similar to and different from those of contemporary linguists. His holistic approach to language analysis and emphasis on context and meaning anticipate contemporary linguistic perspectives while his focus on the Arabic language and lack of specialization are characteristics that distinguish his work from contemporary linguistic research.

Ancient Arab linguists and contemporary linguists consider language as a system of symbols that enables communication between individuals. Sibawayh, in his /Kitab/ emphasized the importance of language structure and grammar in enabling communication. He believed that language could be analysed and understood through its constituent parts, including phonemes, morphemes, and syntax. For example, in English, the word "cats" can be broken down into two morphemes, "cat" and "s," which represent the singular and plural forms of the noun, respectively. He, furthermore, described the Arabic sound system and the different types of Arabic verbs, such as perfect and imperfect verbs. The perfect verb refers to a completed action in the past. In Arabic, the perfect verb is formed by adding a prefix and a suffix to the root of the verb. Here is an example of the perfect verb in Arabic:

كَتَبْتُ /katabatu/ - I wrote

In this example, the root of the verb is "k-t-b" (كتب) which means "to write." The prefix /ka-/ and the suffix /-tu/ are added to the root to form the perfect verb.

Imperfect verb (الفعل المضارع):

The imperfect verb refers to an ongoing action in the present or future. In Arabic, the imperfect verb is formed by adding a prefix and suffix to the root of the verb as well. Here is an example of an imperfect verb in Arabic:

أَكْتُبُ /aktubu/ - I am writing

In this example, the same root "k-t-b" (كتب) is used, but with a different prefix /a-/ and suffix /-u/ to form the imperfect verb.

It is worth noting that in Arabic, there are many more forms of verbs beyond the perfect and imperfect, each with its own prefix and suffix patterns. These verb forms are used to convey different meanings and shades of tense and aspect.

Meanwhile, in contemporary Arabic linguistics, post-Jakobson linguists have emphasized the social and cultural functions of language, such as how Arabic reflects the culture and social context in which it is used. For example, Arabic is widely spoken across the Middle East and North Africa, and the variations in its dialects reflect the cultural and social context in which it is used. In Egypt, for instance, the Arabic expression /ajwa/ (أيوأ) is used to mean "yes" while in other Arabic-speaking countries, such as Saudi Arabia, /naʿam/ (نعم) is more commonly used. Jakobson identified six functions of language: referential, emotive, conative, phatic, metalingual, and poetic. Here are some examples:

Referential Function: this function conveys information about the world, including objects, events, and concepts. Examples of referential language in English and Arabic include:

English: The cat is on the mat.

Arabic: القطّة على البساط. /alkit.ta ʕala albisa:t/

Emotive Function: this function conveys the speaker's emotions and attitudes towards a subject. Examples of emotive language in English and Arabic include:

English: I am so happy to see you!

Arabic: أنا سعيد جداً برؤيتك. /ʔana safi:d ziddan biru?jatik/

Conative Function: this function is used to persuade or influence the listener. Examples of conative language in English and Arabic include:

English: buy our product today and you'll get a 20% discount!

Arabic: 20% اشتر منتجنا اليوم وستحصل على خصم /ʔiftari muntazna aljawm wasatahsul ʕala kasm/

Phatic Function: this function is used to establish social relationships and maintain communication. Examples,

English: how are you doing?

Arabic: كيف حالك؟ /kajfa haluka/

Metalingual Function: this function is used to clarify or explain language itself. Examples of metalingual are,

English: the word "dog" refers to a domesticated carnivorous mammal.

Arabic: كلمة "كلب" تشير إلى حيوان ثديي مفترس مدجن. /kalimat kalb tufiru ila hayawan ʕadiji muftaris mudaʕan/

Poetic Function: this function is used to create aesthetic and imaginative expressions. Examples of poetic language in English and Arabic include:

English: the sun sets on the horizon, a fiery ball of light.

Arabic: يغيب الشمس عند الأفق، كرة نارية من النور. /yj gi:b alshams ʕind alʔufuki kura narija min alnu:r/

These examples demonstrate how language can serve different functions depending on the context and purpose of communication. Similarly, in Arabic, Sibawayh also emphasized the importance of language structure and grammar in enabling communication. For instance, the Arabic phrase /As.salamu alajkum/ (السلام عليكم) serves a phatic function used to establish social relationships and maintain communication while the Arabic expression /mabru:k/ (مبروك) serves a poetic function used to express congratulations on a special occasion.

In summary, the similarities between the theories of ancient Arab linguists, such as Sibawayh, and contemporary linguists, such as Jakobson and post-Jakobson linguists, can be seen in their focus on the importance of language structure and grammar, as well as the communicative and social functions of language. Through these theories, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex and diverse nature of the Arabic language and its role in human society.

4.2.2. Principles of Language and Grammar: Ancient Arab Linguists vs Contemporary Linguists

While there are similarities between the definitions and principles of language and grammar as presented by ancient Arab linguists, such as Sibawayh, and contemporary linguists, such as Jakobson and post-Jakobson linguists, there are also notable differences.

Ancient Arab linguists, such as Sibawayh, had a functional approach to language and grammar. They believed that language was a tool for communication, and that the purpose of grammar was to describe the rules that govern the use of language in communication. According to Sibawayh, grammar should be based on the study of language in use rather than on prescriptive rules.

Contemporary linguists such as Jakobson, on the other hand, have a more scientific approach to language and grammar. They view language as a complex system of rules and structures that can be analysed and studied through empirical observation and experimentation. They also believe that grammar is not just a description of the rules of language use, but also a set of principles that can be used to explain how language works. In the scientific approach to language and grammar, linguists view language as a complex system of rules and structures that can be analysed and studied through empirical observation and experimentation. Here are some examples from Arabic and English that demonstrate this approach:

Morphology: in Arabic, words are formed by adding prefixes and suffixes to the root while in English, words are formed by adding suffixes or changing the word form. For example, in Arabic, the root word /dars/ (درس) means "study." By adding prefixes and suffixes to this root, a variety of related words can be formed. For example:

/tadru:s/ (تدرس) means "she studies"

/mu'daer.ris/ (مدرّس) means "teacher"

In English, on the other hand, words are often formed by adding suffixes or changing the word form, for example:

"act" can be changed into "actor" by adding the suffix "-or"

"beauty" can be changed into "beautiful" by adding the suffix "-ful"

Syntax: in Arabic, the order of words in a sentence is relatively free, and the case endings of nouns and pronouns help to indicate their grammatical function. In English, the order of words in a sentence is more rigid, and the grammatical function of a word is usually indicated by its position in the sentence. For example, in Arabic, the sentence / ʔahaba alwaladu ila elmadrasa/ (ذهب الولد إلى المدرسة) (the boy went to school) can be rearranged as /ila elmadrasa ʔahaba alwaladu/ (إلى المدرسة ذهب الولد) without changing the meaning of the sentence. In English, the sentence "The cat chased the mouse" cannot be rearranged as "The mouse chased the cat" without changing the meaning of the sentence.

Phonology: in Arabic, the sound system includes several consonants that are not found in English, such as the glottal stop and the emphatic consonants. In English, the sound system includes several vowels that are not found in Arabic, such as the long and short /i/ sounds. Linguists study the phonetics and phonology of each language to understand how sounds are produced and perceived by speakers.

Overall, the scientific approach to language and grammar emphasizes the systematic and rule-governed nature of language and seeks to uncover the underlying principles that govern language use. By studying the grammatical structures of different languages, linguists can gain insight into how humans use language to communicate, and how the brain processes and understands language.

There are also some differences between Sibawayh's views and methods and those of contemporary linguists. For example, contemporary linguistic research often incorporates the study of language from a wider range of perspectives, including sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and neurolinguistics (Durie, 2003). Sibawayh, on the other hand, focused primarily on the study of the structure and function of the Arabic language although his comprehensive analysis of grammar and language function still provides a valuable foundation for contemporary linguistic research.

To illustrate the difference between Sibawayh's approach and contemporary linguistic research, one can consider the example of Arabic plurals. Sibawayh's grammar provides detailed rules for forming plurals in Arabic based on the root letters of a word. For example, the plural of /kitab/ (book) is /kutub/ (books), and the plural of رجل/raḡul/ (man) is رجال/riḡāl/ (men). Sibawayh's analysis of Arabic plurals is still considered a fundamental contribution to the study of Arabic grammar.

In contrast, sociolinguistic research has examined how Arabic plurals are used in different social contexts. For example, some Arabic dialects use plural forms to express singular meaning, such as the Egyptian Arabic word غداً /ḡadan/ which means "tomorrow" but is derived from the plural of /ḡadan/ (tomorrows). This usage reflects the influence of historical Arabic grammatical rules and the importance of plurals in Arabic morphology.

Psycholinguistic research has investigated how Arabic plurals are processed in the mind. Studies have shown that the brain distinguishes between regular and irregular plurals in Arabic, and that the processing of these forms involves different neural mechanisms. For example, the processing of regular plurals, such as /awrāk/ (papers) involves the activation of the rule for forming plurals while the processing of irregular plurals, such as /riḡāl/ involves the retrieval of stored forms from memory.

Neurolinguistic research has investigated the neural correlates of Arabic plurals processing. Studies have shown that the processing of Arabic plurals involves activation in several brain regions that are involved in the processing of grammatical rules and the retrieval of stored forms from memory, respectively. To illustrate, English plurals:

-Cats (regular plural formed by adding -s to the singular "cat")

-Geese (irregular plural formed by changing the vowel sound in the singular "goose")

Arabic plurals:

كِتَابٌ /kitābun/, singular "book" - كُتُبٌ /kutubun/, regular plural formed by changing the ending,

شَجَرَةٌ /šajaraton/, singular "tree" - أَشْجَارٌ /ašjāron/, irregular plural formed by changing the vowel and adding a prefix,

As for the neural correlates of plural processing in Arabic, studies using brain imaging techniques such as fMRI have found that when Arabic speakers process plural nouns, there is increased activation in the left inferior frontal gyrus (IFG) and left middle temporal gyrus (MTG). These regions have been linked to different aspects of language processing: the left IFG is often associated with syntactic processing, including the processing of grammatical rules. This suggests that when Arabic speakers process plural nouns, they are using this region to apply the appropriate plural rule based on the form of the singular noun. The left MTG, on the other hand, is often associated with semantic processing and the retrieval of lexical information from memory. This suggests that when Arabic speakers process plural nouns, they are also using this region to access stored representations of plural forms in memory.

In summary, while Sibawayh's approach to the study of Arabic grammar focused primarily on the analysis of structure and function, contemporary linguistic research has broadened its scope to include a wider range of perspectives, including sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and neurolinguistics. These perspectives provide valuable insights into how language is used and processed in different contexts, and how it is represented in the brain. Therefore, the views and methods of Arab linguists and contemporary linguists have evolved, reflecting advances in our understanding of language and changes in the field of linguistics. Both groups continue to make important contributions to our understanding of language, and their work remains relevant to the study of language today.

5. Conclusions and Implications for Further Research

The Arabs have taken a great interest in linguistic studies, and no one can deny the effort they have made in this field, including a great deal of research, investigation, and care in collecting language words, classifying them, interpreting them, studying the structure of words and their functions within the system, and setting the foundations of language and deducing general rules (Visona & Plensky, 2020). However, it can be observed that they did not often stop at researching meticulously how to define language rather it came smoothly through their study of some linguistic issues. Thus, for example, Sibawayh's work provided the first systematic analysis of Arabic

grammar and language, and it was groundbreaking in its holistic approach to language study. He recognized the importance of considering the context in which language is used and the intended purpose of the speaker to effectively convey meaning. He also emphasized the role of grammar in shaping meaning and developing sentence structure. His work was influential in shaping subsequent linguistic research and theory, and many subsequent scholars built upon his ideas and methods (Suleiman, 2019). The development of classical Arabic grammar and linguistic theory was heavily influenced by Sibawayh's work. This legacy continues to be felt today as Sibawayh's ideas and methods continue to be studied and applied in contemporary linguistic research.

Despite the differences in approach and method, there are also similarities between the views and methods of Arab linguists and contemporary linguists such as Jakobson. Both groups are concerned with understanding the structure and form of language, and both use observation and analysis to do so. Additionally, both groups have made significant contributions to the understanding of language and continue to shape the field of linguistics. Therefore, the development of functional theories of language among linguists was the result of the convergence of efforts of scholars from different fields, each contributing their respective expertise. This allowed for a broader understanding of language as a tool for social interaction and communication (Afzaal, 2023). Furthermore, the evolution of these theories continues to this day, with new developments and approaches emerging to better understand the functions of language in different contexts.

In closing, the functional theory of language, as with any scientific theory, is subject to further criticism and development. This is because scientific theories are constantly evolving as new evidence is uncovered and new intellectual trends emerge. The functional theory of language was not an exception in this regard as it has continued to be subject to further criticism and development post-Jakobson's area. One way in which Arab linguists can do this is by incorporating new intellectual trends and interdisciplinary approaches into their research. For example, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and critical linguistics are all areas of study that have emerged in recent years, and offer new ways of understanding the relationship between language and society. By engaging with these areas of study, Arab linguists can develop new and innovative theories that are relevant to the social and cultural context of the Arab world.

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