

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ANTONOMASIA IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC

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Abstract

Antonomasia is a word-formation process in English, in which new verbs, nouns and adjectives are derived from proper names. In Arabic, antonomasia is a derivational process subsumed under الاشتقاق الاسم من whereby only verbs can be derived from proper names.

The present contrastive study investigates the word-formation process antonomasia in English and in its counterpart in Arabic. The study will shed the light on the differences of this phenomenon in both language systems. The study also aims at investigating the purposes behind using antonomasia in the languages under investigation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Many speakers of English language use verbs, nouns and adjectives that once were proper names (of persons and places), but they do not know how these names became common words in the language and that antonomasia is the process whereby new verbs, nouns and adjectives are derived from proper names (of persons and places).

The same is applied to the Arabic counterpart of antonomasia, which is الاشتقاق الاسم من. Buy this time the derivation takes place from proper names (of persons and places) not from common nouns. There are many verbs exist in the Arabic language that came from proper names (of persons and places) and they are used in everyday conversation, but no one knows how they came to the language.

In tackling, this contrastive study there is a need to establish correspondence between antonomasia in English and their counterparts in Arabic. This can be done through a careful examination of antonomasia in English and Arabic, the words that came from proper names (of persons and places) of both languages too, to determine the similarity and difference of both processes each in its native language.

The present work tries to answer the following questions:

What is antonomasia in English and in Arabic?

What are the differences of antonomasia in English and Arabic?

1.2 The Aims

The present study aims at:

Investigating the processes of antonomasia and determining its types and functions in English and Arabic.

Showing the aspects of difference between English and Arabic in the use of the process informing new words.

1.3 The Hypotheses

The present study is based on the following hypotheses:

1. Antonomasia in English is different from its Arabic counterpart as far as the structure of the resulting words is concerned.

1.4 The Limits

The present study is limited to:

Standard English and Standard Arabic.

Morphological differences rather than semantic differences.

1.5 The Procedures

The procedures to be adopted in this study are as follows:

Investigating the process of Antonomasia in English with its counterpart in Arabic.

Carrying out a contrastive analysis to highlight the points of Difference between the English process of antonomasia and their Arabic counterparts.

1.6 The Value of the Study

The present study may be of value to students, researchers and teachers of both English and Arabic languages. It is also valuable as a contrastive study, because it sheds light on the differences between the two languages.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Antonomasia in English

2.1 Preliminary

Linguistics is the field of studying language. Linguists study language as man's ability to communicate, as individual expression, as the common heritage of speech community, as spoken sound, as written text etc. Such different approaches to language have in fact led to the development of schools of linguistics and theoretical models each with its own techniques and methods for observing, classifying and explaining the facts of human speech. The major branches of linguistics include phonology, grammar (morphology and syntax) and lexicology. Morphology was introduced into the study of language to cover both the process of inflection and word formation. Word formation covers the processes whereby new words are created. (Matthews, 1974: 38)

These processes include derivation, conversion, compounding, clipping, reduplication, acronyms, coinage, blending, folk-etymology, back-formation, borrowing and antonomasia. (Robinson, 1994: 569).

On Defining English Antonomasia

A large number of words in English have come from proper names, which often tend to retain their form in the language. The process in which this has happened is Antonomasia. This is one of the several ways by which English continues to grow; it involves adding to its vocabulary many verbs, nouns and adjectives that were names of people or places.

Many linguists like: Vallins, (1949: 187); Robertson, (1954: 211-12); Ernst, (1955: 67-69); Pyles, (1964: 285); Smith, (1966: 50) have stated that the definition of Antonomasia is the process whereby the forms of some words have been derived from proper names of individuals or places, such as the word *sideburns* a transposed form of *burnsides*, the name of an American General.

Pyles (1964: 285) maintains that proper names are used to form a number of words that can build up a dictionary. Also, this shifting of words from proper to common is known as commonization, and it includes person and place names, such as *Boycott* and *Sandwich* as examples of person names, and *Babel*, *Hamburg* as examples of place names.

The nature of this phenomena was explained by Galperin (1974) *antonomasia* is based on the interaction of logical and nominal meanings a these meanings must be realized simultaneously. If only one meaning is materialized in the context then it is not a stylistic device, as in *hooligan* and *boycott*, these words go back to proper names which have lost their capital letters (Galperin1974:164).

2.3 Types of English Antonomasia

As mentioned earlier, *antonomasia* includes the formation of a common noun, verb or adjective from the name of a person or a place. Accordingly, *antonomasia* can be classified into different types due to the different views of this process. For instance, Bukhardit and Nerlich (2010:17) ascribe the different types of *antonomasia* to the different semantic mechanisms of this figure. They classify it into two types: *metonymic* and *metaphorical*. The first mechanism is involved through the use of regular noun instead of a proper name, e.g., 'The thunder' to stand for 'Zeus'.

Metaphoric or "*metaphorical*" *antonomasia*, as expressed by Skrebnev (1994) , is when a proper name is applied to a person whose characteristic features resemble those of the well-known original. Thus, a ladies' man deserves the name of *Don Juan*, an orator may be referred to as *Cicero*. It also must be noticed that *metaphoric* *antonomasia* is often treated as a kind of *allusion* (an indirect reference by word or phrase to a historical, literary, mythological or biblical factor) (Skrebnev 1994: 57).

He classifies it into four types:

1. the use of a proper name of a real historic person (it may be universal or belong to one certain culture): e.g.: he would be a *Napoleon of peace*, or a *Bismarck*;
2. the use of biblical names, e.g.: *Ismael- the exile*, *Judas –the traitor*;
3. the use of mythological names, e.g.: He was a new *Apollo* for her;
4. the use of proper names taken from literature, e.g.: *Casanova*,

Scrooge.

Metonymic antonomasia is observed in cases when a personal name stands for something connected with the bearer of that name who really once existed (a name of a writer or a painter or a sculptor for his work of art) (Bukhardit and Nerlich 2010:17) for example :

- (1) He has sold his Vandykes. (Hurst).
- (2) This is my real Goya (Galsworthy).
- (3) Wonderful Rubens.

This type of antonomasia is often used in colloquial speech and in political vocabulary, e.g.: Wall Street, Down Street (the residence of the Prime Minister of Great Britain) (ibid). It should be mentioned here that the case with metonymic antonomasia remains a debatable question. Scholars have no common opinion whether this phenomenon should be regarded as one of the types of metonymy or as metonymic antonomasia. Kagramanov (2003: 53) suggests that it is not right to interpret the transfer of the artist's name to his piece of art as antonomasia, because it is a metonymic correlation,. At the same time Kramsch (1990) suggests that it is metonymic antonomasia, because here we see the use of a proper name and this proper name becomes one of the characteristics of the subject it refers to (Kramsch 1990: 82)

Another classification of antonomasia was made by Widdowson (1992) In which antonomasia may be linguistic and stylistic: Linguistic antonomasia is created when proper names become nominal and lose their bright expressiveness (e.g. mackintosh - earlier it was a proper name). But some words did not lose their connection with proper names and preserved their expressiveness (uncle Sam - an American, Patric - an Irishman, John Bull - an Englishman). On the other hand, stylistic antonomasia is traditionally represented by two types (Widdowson 1992:102):

- a. The use of a proper name to stand for something else having one or several attributes associated with that name (e.g.: 'Einstein' for a scientific genius; 'Solomon' to mean a wise ruler).
- b. The use of a general term (an epithet) to stand for a referent having a proper name (e.g.: Cactus state for New Mexico; The Iron Lady for Margaret Thatcher). This type of antonomasia is widely used by writers, satirists and humorists. Practically any common noun can be used as a proper noun.
- c. It is always original. In such cases the person's name serves his first characteristics. Such names are called "token or telling" names. They give information to the reader about the bearer of the name. Antonomasia of this type is created mainly by nouns, more seldom by attributive combinations (as in Dr. Fresh Air) or phrases (as in Mr. What's-his-name). Sometimes there may be a simultaneous use of an epithet and a proper name. For example:

(4) "Yes, he knew men and cities well, like the Old Greek without the dreadful disadvantage of having a Penelope at home for him". In this example an epithet "the Old Greek" substitutes the proper name "Odysseus" a symbol of eternal traveler, and the proper name "Penelope" is a symbol of the faithful wife (Widdowson 1992:103):

CHAPTER THREE

3. Antonomasia in Arabic

3.1 On Defining Arabic Antonomasia

Antonomasia is a widespread phenomenon in Arabic. It enriched Arabic rhetoric with the variety of types and styles. This part of the study is concerned with the proper names (of persons and places) in Arabic and how derivatives like the verbs have been derived from them. Many Arab linguists have approved this tendency. Referring to the process of derivation from 'الاسماء' 'the nouns', they stated that these nouns include common nouns like 'جلباب' 'robe', and 'حَجَر' 'stone', and proper names (of persons and places), like: 'زيد, عمر, بغداد, بصرة'.

Therefore, the derivation from the proper names in Arabic goes hand in hand with the derivation from the common nouns and it is a well-known tendency in the language. One of those linguists is 'سيويو' (180A.H. / 1982: 288). He said that we can derive a quadrilateral verb from nouns like 'جَدَوْل, زِينب, جَعْفَر'.

So proper names (of persons and places) exist in Arabic under the heading 'الاسماء' 'nouns' as 'المَبْرَد' (285A.H./ 1963: 3) said that 'الاسم' is a word which carries meaning, e.g. 'عَمْر, رَجُل, فَرَس, زيد'.

Another linguist who shares this belief is 'الهلواني' (1987: 222-23). He expresses the view that the process of derivation happens inside the speaker's mind and it is a linguistic process of a multiple base i.e. according to it new verbs have been derived from 'الاسماء' 'the nouns' (common or proper) or 'الافعال' 'verbs' or 'المصادر' 'the verbal nouns'.

Then we have the modern linguist 'الكرملي' (1926: 99) who approved of the derivation of verbs from 'الاسماء' 'nouns' of foreign origin like the word 'تلفون' 'telephone' from which the verb 'تَلْفَنَ' was derived by analogy with words already derived like 'نوروز' from 'نوروز' and 'فلسف' from 'فيلسوف'.

This is to be carried out on two conditions:

- 1-The foreign terms should be simple in structure and easily articulated.
- 2-They should be similar to Arabic terms.

In addition, he stated that we can derive new terms in the language if it is necessary, and that derivation is the only way in the language by which the language is enriched with many new words. ('الكرملي', 1924: 282-283)

Similarly, 'أمين' (1956: 23-24) emphatically states that the derivation of new verbs from proper names (of persons and places) is common practice in Arabic, since the Arabs have derived verbs from the names of well-known Arab tribes, like: 'تَلَيَّتْ' from 'ليث', 'تَقَيَّسَ' from 'قيس', 'تَمَضَّرَ' from 'مَضَر', 'تَمَعَّدَ' from 'مَعَد', 'بَصَّرَ' from 'بَصْر' as well as Arab place names like: 'بَصَّرَ' from 'بَصْر'.

بَصْرَةَ from أَحْجَزَ, الكوفة from كَوْفَ, تُهَامَةَ from أَثَمَ, الحجاز from أَحْجَزَ, بَصْرَةَ from أَثَمَ, all of which are names of cities in the Arab homeland. (Ibid.: 25-29).

3.2 Types of Arabic Antonomasia

In the Arabic language, most of the words derived from proper names (of persons and places) are verbs and mainly augmented verbs. They have been derived according to the different structures of the proper names, i.e. trilateral names have given trilateral verbs and quadrilateral names result in quadrilateral verbs; even if the names were augmented they have given augmented verbs too.

Those verbs are derived according to the several measures, which all-new verbs in Arabic follow. The derived verbs are divided into the following categories:

Verbs of the trilateral structure, augmented with one letters.

Some of these verbs have been derived according to the measure أَفْعَلَ ; for example: نُجِدَ from انجَدَ, and جُنُبَ from اجنَّبَ, تُهَامَةُ from ائْتَمَ. (أمين الله عبد, 1956: 23-25). A few verbs have been derived according to the measure فَاعَلَ-يُفَاعِلُ, Like: رَافَ from ريفَ, and سَاخَلَ from الساجِلِ. Other verbs have been derived according to the measure يُفَعِّلُ-فَعَّلَ, e.g.: الكوفة from كَوْفَ, البصرة from بَصَّرَ, لَيْثَ from لَيَّثَ, تَمِيمَ from تَمَّمَ, (Ibid.).

2. Verbs of trilateral structure augmented with two letters.

There are only a few verbs that have been derived according to the measure يُفَعِّلُ-افْتَعَّلَ, like: امْتَنَى from منى, احْتَجَزَ from الحجاز. Also there are verbs that have been derived according to the measure يَتَفَعَّلُ-تَفَعَّلَ, e.g. نُكِّوْفَ from الكوفة, تَيَمَّنَ from اليمن, تَلَيَّثَ from لَيْثَ and تَمَعَّدَ from مَعَدَ, تَمَجَّسَ from المَجُوسِ. (Ibid.)

3. Verbs of trilateral structure augmented with three letters.

Some verbs have been derived according to the measure يَسْتَفْعِلُ-اسْتَفْعَلَ, such as اسْتَوَطَّنَ from الوَطْنِ and اسْتَنْهَرَ from النَّهْرِ. (Ibid.)

4. Verbs of quadrilateral structure augmented with only one letter.

The measure according to which these are derived is تَفَعَّلَ, like the verb تَبَعَّدَ from بَعْدَ. (Ibid.)

Conclusions

At the end of this study, certain Finding can be reached at, the differences in both language systems concerning these phenomena.

The differences:

1. The English words that came from proper names are various as they are nouns, verbs and adjectives. The Arabic words, on the other hand, are only verbs from which other derivatives are come.
2. English depends heavily on its literature of names in antonomasia while Arabic focuses on acts and verbs to be utilized in this phenomenon.
3. The English words that came from proper names are of two types: The first type includes words unchanged neither in form nor in function through their

transformation from the proper case to the common one. The second type is the words changed either in form or function.

The Arabic words, on the other hand, change their form and function through transformation from the proper case to the common one.

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