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Word Formation and
its Development in Arab Linguistics in Medeieval Ages

Collection of synonyms and preparation of synonym dictionaries became widespread among Arab linguists, at least partially as a result of the prominent medieval Arab linguist Al-Asmai proposing a different definition of synonyms. The linguists gradually started to compile synonym units covering a wide range of natural objects and man-made products and producing dictionaries of synonyms under the titles. It is interesting that various sources include references to instances where the authors of such works sometimes went to the extreme, bringing the number of synonymous words expressing identical or similar meaning to a hundred, sometimes even to a thousand words.

It is necessary to mention that the Arab linguists studied as well questions of word formations closely connected with the subject – emergence of collections and dictionaries of synonyms, history of similar works and stages of development. The author doesn't avoid also this subject, offering some curious facts connected with collecting words synonyms and the emergence of the first systematic works in this direction.

Key words: word formation, linguistics, Arabic language, term.

Г.Я. Махмудова
Орта ғасырларда араб тіл біліміндегі сөзжасам және оның дамуы

Мақалада араб тіл білімінде сөзжасамға байланысты пайда болған лингвистикалық терминдерге және осы салада тұңғыш рет пайдаланылған терминдер түрлеріне арналған. Автор Рамадан Тавваб, Аль-Гали сияқты аса көрнекті араб авторларының пікірлерін талдауға ерекше көңіл бөледі. Сөзжасам мәселесін зерттеген араб тілшілерінің пікірлерінде елеулі айырмашылықтар болғаны жалпы жұртқа белгілі. Сондай-ақ орта ғасырдағы араб тілшілерінің зерттеудегі негізгі бағыттары да ұқсас емес еді. Автор араб тілшілерінің әртүрлі пікірлерін қарастырады және салыстырмалы талдау әдісін өзінше топтастыруды ұсынады.

Араб тілшілерінің сонымен қатар сөзжасам тақырыбымен тығыз байланысты синонимдер сөздігінің және жинақтардың пайда болуына, бұлардың тарихына, даму кезеңдеріне көңіл бөліп, зерттегенін атап көрсетуіміз қажет. Автор бұл тақырыпты да назардан тыс қалдырмайды, осы бағыттағы синоним сөздер жинау кезіндегі, алғашқы жүйеге түскен жұмыста пайда болған сәттердегі аса қызықты фактілерді ұсынады. Аса көрнекті тілшілердің еңбектеріне, сөзжасам мәселесінде аталған тұлғалардың өмірінен алынған тарихқа тікелей сілтеме жасау ерекше ғылыми құндылық болып есептеледі.

Түйін сөздер: сөзжасам, лингвистика, араб тілі, термин.

Г.Я. Махмудова
Словообразование и его развитие
в арабском языкознании средневековья

Статья посвящена возникновению лингвистических терминов, связанных со словообразованием в арабской лингвистике и самым первым типом используемых в данной области терминов.

Автор уделяет пристальное внимание анализу мнений таких видных арабских авторов, как Рамадан Тавваб, Аль-Гали и др. Общеизвестно, что имели место серьезные расхождения во мнениях арабских лингвистов, изучавших вопросы словообразования. Так же несхожи и основные направления исследований арабских языковедов средневековья. Автор рассматривает различные мнения арабских языковедов и предлагает своеобразную категоризацию методом сравнительного анализа.

Необходимо упомянуть, что арабские языковеды изучали также и вопросы, вплотную связанные с темой словообразования, – возникновение сборников и словарей синонимов, история подобных работ и этапы развития. Автор не обходит стороной и эту тему, предлагая некоторые любопытные факты, связанные со сбором слов-синонимов и возникновением первых систематических работ в этом направлении. Особую научную ценность представляют ссылки непосредственно на работы выдающихся языковедов и истории из жизни этих личностей, связанные с вопросами словообразования.

Ключевые слова: словообразование, лингвистика, арабский язык, термин.

This approach of Sibaveyhi to the phenomenon of word formation is somewhat repeated by another medieval Arab linguist Mohammad Abu Al-Ghasem Al-Anbari. He writes:

اكثر كلامهم يأتي على ضربين آخرين. احداهما ان يقع اللفظين المختلفين على المعنين المختلفين كقولك : الرجل والمرأة والجمل والناقة واليوم والليل وقام وقعد وتكلم وسكت. وهذا هو الكثير الذي لايحاط به. والضرب الاخر ان يقع اللفظان المختلفان على المعنى الواحد كقولك: البر والحنطة والعير والحمار والذئب والسيد وجلس وقعد وذهب ومضى ...

[1, 36].

«Their (Arabs' – M.G.) words can be divided into two groups: some words are different both in composition and in the meaning expressed. For example: «rajul» and «mara», «jamal» and «naga», «yaum» and «leyl», «gama» and «gaada», «takallama» and «sakata». However all of these are impossible to be covered. There is another group that includes the different words with similar meanings. For example: «burr» and «hinta», «iir» and «himar», «zib» and «siid», «jalasa» and «gaada», «zahaba» and «mada» ...»

It is interesting that while a lot of scholars expressed their opinion of Sibaveyhi's phrase اختلاف اللفظين والمعنى واحد describing synonym words or tried to describe word formation in different terms, it was Al-Asmai (d. 316) who first made a crucial change to this definition. As such, he wrote one of his works specifically on this subject and named word formation ما اختلفت الفاظه واتفقت معانيه (different words with identical meanings) [1, 37].

It is noteworthy that the replacement of Sibaveyhi's term اختلاف اللفظين والمعنى واحد (two words different in form, expressing an identical meaning) with Al-Asmai's ما اختلفت الفاظه (words different in form), particularly the fact that Al-Asmai implies «multiple words» instead of

Sibaveyhi's «two words», soon in essence became a push factor for the beginning of synonym compilations in Arab linguistics.

As noted, collection of synonyms and preparation of synonym dictionaries became widespread among Arab linguists apparently, at least partially as a result of the prominent medieval Arab linguist Al-Asmai proposing a different definition of synonyms. The linguists gradually started to compile synonym units covering wide range of natural objects and and man-made products and producing synonym dictionaries under the following titles: « كتاب الخمر» , « كتاب العسل» , « كتاب الثعلب » , « كتاب الذئب» , « كتاب الأسد » , « كتاب السيف », etc. [1, 39]. It is interesting that various sources include references to instances where the authors of such works sometimes went to the extreme, bringing the number of synonym words expressing identical or similar meaning to a hundred, sometimes even a thousand words. In this regard, a story that is often told about Abu Ali Al-Farisi is particularly interesting. The story goes that one day Al-Farisi was attending Seif Al-Daula Al-Hamadani's gathering also attended by a group of linguists including Ibn Khalaveyh. At some point, Ibn Khalaveyh noted that he knew fifty names of the word «sword», to which Al-Farisi smiled and replied that there was only one word for «sword» and that was «seyf». When the frustrated Ibn Khalaveyh countered by saying «How about «muhannad», «sarem», «husam», etc.?», Al-Farisi replied that those were not names, but only adjectives expressing certain characteristics [2, 405].

It is noteworthy that this approach to synonym words, that is the attempts to differentiate between the words that are and those that are not synonyms came about in the fourth century. The authors who

lived before that considered the synonyms to be an important feature of the language, yet looked neither into the key principles of this phenomenon, nor synonym formation. As an example, a supposition of one of the prominent representatives of Basra school of grammar Gutrub Mohammad ibn Al-Mustansir (d.821) is of great interest:

إنما اوقعت العرب اللفظين على المعنى الواحد ليدلوا على اتساعهم في الكلام....

[1.36]

«In order to express the colorfulness of the speech, the Arabs have expressed one meaning with two words»

As noted previously, expressing the identical or a similar meaning by way of various phonetic compositions has been called in different ways in different periods of time in Arab linguistics. The first linguist in Arab linguistics to disregard Sibaveyhi's term اختلاف اللفظين and Al-Asmai's ما اختلفت الفاظه، واتفقت معانيه and to introduce the term الترادف that has since been used in linguistics to denote the phenomenon of word formation was Abu Al-Hasan Ali ibn Isa ibn Abdulla Al-Rummani Al-Varrag [1, 36]. It is interesting that specifically this definition and perhaps also Al-Rummani's synonym dictionary that the second push to compilation of synonyms in Arab linguistics started. We see synonyms compiled not only in works of the authors on linguistics, but also in books on theology and law, rhetoric, as well as in the studies of prominent linguistics, such as Saalab, Al-Zujaj, Al-Zujaji, especially Al-Gali's compilation «Al-Imali» [3, 147]. These scholars did not confine their research to gathering the synonyms mentioned in the works of their predecessors – linguists, but sometimes travelled to the desert and spent months, sometimes years living with the nomad bedoin tribes, collected synonym words and compiled large dictionaries [1, 45].

Naturally, the linguists with interest could not ignore the large volume of synonyms gathered in such dictionaries. Thus, and as it was already mentioned, the linguists started studying synonyms starting from the fourth century. Based on their differing positions on the issue of word formation, the Arab linguists can mainly be divided into three groups.

The linguists who lived in and before the second century can be considered to belong to the first group. These scholars' view of naming any and all groups of words, including the words with the same root, expressing an identical meaning without studying the words with the same root, yet with a different form, and disregarding that such nouns sometimes belong to different parts of speech, as well as whether the synonym words are in their real, dictionary, or abstract meaning. Such an approach led to a huge increase in the numbers of synonyms. Among these words, there have been a considerable number of those that are no longer considered synonyms [1, 34 - 39].

It deserves to be mentioned that while every one of the above-mentioned Arab linguists did study the issue and came forward with a number of clarifications, all relevant works with the exception of Ibn Jinni's «Al-Khasais» have mostly consisted of nothing but synonym dictionaries. Among these dictionaries, I believe Ibn Sida's «Al-Mukhassas» consisting of five separate volumes deserves particular notice. As to the theoretical aspects of the issue, only Ibn Jinni dedicates some space to their partial study in his «Al-Khasais». The author dedicates the chapter titled باب تلاقى المعانى على اختلاف الاصول والمبانى to this phenomenon and to the study of its theoretical aspects [4, 133].

The second group includes the scholars who reject the very existence of synonyms in the language. According to the linguistic sources the first Arab scholar in the history of Arab linguistics to reject the existence of the phenomenon of word formation appears to be Salab [17, 162]. However there is no uniform opinion on this issue in linguistics. There are also sources that suggest that the first Arab linguist to have rejected the existence of the phenomenon of word formation in the language was Salab's teacher Ibn Al-Arabi. Sometimes the sources note that the idea that the two words with the same meaning express the different shades of this meaning passed on from Ibn Al-Arabi to his student Salab, and then on to his student Ahmad ibn Faris [1, 65].

It is noteworthy that Ahmad ibn Fares, the linguist who also rejected the existence of synonyms in the language, and maintained that different words expressed meanings different from one another, that the synonym words approached one object from different angles and expressed its different characteristics, was of the opinion that the words in Arabic language can be synonyms onlywith words loaned from other languages.

The scholars belongin to this group are often named «al-furukiyyeen» in many sources. These scholars cannot be considered to be rejecting the phenomenon of word formation in its entirety. They are of the opinion that there are serious differences

between the words that are typically considered to be synonyms. In other words, the scholars belonging to this group did not accept the existence of adequate synonyms (الترادف التام) capable of replacing one another in full sense [5, 312]. For example, Abu Faris comments on the synonyms of the word «camel» mentioned in the book «Ar-Raud Al-Masloof fi ma lahu ismani ila al-uluf» by the author of the famous «Al-Gamous» dictionary, Majdaddin Firuzabadi: «If we look at the variants «al-mirad», «al-garib», «al-salluf» and «al-daffun» (الميراد، القارب، السلوف، الدفون) of the word ناقة (camel), then we will see that the bedoin Arabs attach slightly different meanings to these words –with «al-mirad» they mean «a camel heading to pasture», with «al-garib» they mean «a camel heading to water», with «al-salluf» they mean «a camel at the head of the herd», while with «al-daffun» they mean «a camel in the middle of the herd» [6, 294].

It should be noted that the researcher of Abu Hilal Al-Askari's life and work, a prominent Arab linguist Malik Al-Ziyadi writes that he came across a number of contradictions in Al-Askari's work. As an example, he looks into the explanations provided by the author as to why the words «hanin» and «ishtiyag» cannot be synonyms. The word «hanin», he notes, means a sound camels make when away from home, in order to remember home. Since this concept started being applied to men, the word «hanin» became synonymous to the word «ishtiyag». However, in terms of etimology, these two words are not synonyms [1, 226]. The author follows by explaining the difference between the verbs «ata» and «jaa» as follows:

...قولك أتى فلان يقتضى مجيئه بشىء ولهذا يقال جاء فلان نفسه ولا يقال أتى فلان نفسه، ثم كثر ذلك حتى استعمل احد اللفظين في موضع الاخر...

«When we say «ata» to someone's arrival, we mean that he/she came with something. Therefore, we use the word «جاء» for the arrival of someone, and not «أتى». However, these words are used so much that they gradually became interchangeable [1, 227].»

Dr. Hakeem Malik Al-Ziyadi writes that sometimes Abu Hilal Al-Askari does not only mention one difference between the words that are part of a synonym chain, but several of those, and follows by working out which of these differences was superior to the rest. When commenting on these differences, Abu Hilal Al-Askari speaks of the opinions of philosophers, lawyers and logicians,

even the doctors. It is understandable that readers find it surprising to see the references to statements by philosophers, logicians and lawyers in the author's book «الفروق اللغوية». That said, Abu Hilal Al-Askari justifies this approach of references to experts in different areas by noting that he needs specialist opinions to explain specific differences in meaning between the words belonging to various fields of human activity [1, 228-230].

It is interesting that a very small number of examples provided by the author relates to linguistics, and he often does not even include references – different statements are left without a clarification as to who authored them. When discussing different synonym units, for example, the words «sanatun» and «amun», Abu Hilal Al-Askari makes certain propositions about differences in their meanings, however does not clarify what sources he derives this information from. He writes that the word «sanatun» expresses the concept «year» as a period of time. When using this particular word, the starting point for counting a year is irrelevant. It may be the summer or the end of the winter. The word «sanatun» cannot be used to mean a full, an uninterrupted calendar year. The word «amun» is the one to be used when including the whole of summer and winter. The author goes on to note that the word «amun» has a more narrow meaning than its synonym – the word «sanatun». Thus, at the end of this explanation, the prominent representative of Baghdad grammar school of grammar concludes: كل عام سنة وليست كل سنة عاما.

In the later periods the linguists, particularly those considered to be reformers, for instance, Al-Dominiki and Mohammad Mubarak contributed to this topic by adding a large number of examples of words where the meaning is expressed by two of the three root consonants. Among these, the following examples can be provided: the verbs نفث، نفج، نفح، نفخ، نفد، نفذ، نفر، نفز، نفس، نفش، نفض، نفع، نفق where the meaning of «to exit», «to take out» or «to pass» is expressed by the root consonants «nun» and «fe», the verbs نبأ، نبّ، نبث، نبج، نبذ، نبر، نبز، نبس where the meaning of «to ascend» or « to raise» is expressed by «nun» and «ba», the verbs فرث، فرج، فرد، فرز، فرش، فرص، فرض where the meaning of «to separate» is expressed by «fa» and «ra», the verbs فرط، فرع، فرغ، فرق، فرك، فرم، فره، فرى where the meaning of «to hide» is expressed by «ghayn» and «mim», the verbs غمر، غمس، غمص، غمض، غمط، غمّ where the same meaning is expressed by «ghayn» and «ba», the verbs غبر، غبش، غبط، غبق، غبن where the same meaning is expressed by «ghayn» and «ba», the verbs خرب، خرّ، خرز، خرس

خرم، خرف، خرط where the meaning of «to be insufficient» is expressed by «kha» and «ra», the verbs أفصى، فصّ، فصم، فصف، فصر where the meaning of «to fall apart» is expressed by «fa» and «sad», the verbs فلّ، فلق، فلع، فلج، فلح where the meaning of «to be divided» is expressed by «fa» and «lam», the verbs قطل، قطف، قطع، قطّ where the meaning of «to cut» is expressed by «qaf» and «ta», the verbs خحب، حجل، حجم، حجز، حجر where the meaning of «to prevent» is expressed by «ha» and «jim», and the verbs لدم ، لطم ، لخم ، لكم where the meaning of «to strike» is expressed by «lam» and «mim». It must also be noted that the double root theory has been the subject of research of a number of modern researches of semitic languages. Scholars like V. Gezenius, F. Filippini, B. Schtade, Y. Vellinhausen, F. Delich, T. Noldeke and others have done research on this subject, yet have not come to exhaustive conclusions, thus leaving the topic open for future research [7, 95-96]. As a result, one may observe two diametrically different directions taken by the western scholars of semitic languages on the issue of the double root theory. The scholars taking one of these positions do not support the theory and are of the opinion that there have never existed a root form consisting of two consonants in semitic languages, including Arabic language. Those who differ from this view, take the position of supporting this theory, trying to defend it, however with limited success. It must be noted that one may consider the prominent Russian linguist N.V. Yushmanov to belong to the second group [7, 98]. It is noteworthy that while the prominent Soviet Arabist S. Maizel claimed that the author of the double root theory was V. Gezenius, he then notes, in the same monography of his, that the basis of this theory was laid by the prominent Arab linguist of the XIII century Baydavi and that this Arab scholar mentioned, in addition to a root with three consonants, an additional type of a a two-consonant root to which he referred to as another root composition [7, 90-95].

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