Postpositive Adjectives in Modern Standard English and Modern Standard
Arabic: A Contrastive Analysis

Assist. Prof. Dr. Hussein Musa Kadhim Al-Nasrawi
Assist. Prof. Dr. Aasim Abood Zbar Al-Duleimy
Dept. of English- College of Basic Education
University of Babylon

Abstract

The present study is intended to compare English and Arabic in the area of **postpositive adjectives** in order to find out the points of similarity and the difference in both languages. In this study, the researchers adopt the approach of 'contrastive analysis' since we have two languages under comparison. Therefore, three steps are followed in doing so, i.e., (i) description of the two languages, (ii) selection of certain areas for detailed comparison and (iii) comparison, i.e., identification of points of similarity and difference. The researchers hypothesize that Arabic shows more difficulty and confusion than English in the field of **postpositive adjectives** and there are more differences than similarities.

Introduction

English and Arabic have very important status throughout the world, since English (a Germanic language) is the language of the present development, and Arabic (a Semitic language) is the language of the Holy Qur'an. The present study highlights the concept of 'postpositive adjectives' in Modern Standard English (MSE) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This investigation aims to identify and compare the meaning of 'postpositive adjectives' in MSE and MSA to find out the aspects of similarity and difference in both languages. The study tries to identify, analyze, and contrast the semantic and the syntactic features of 'postpositive adjectives' in MSE and MSA. In addition to reveal the aspects of similarity as well as of difference in both languages.

In dealing with such an investigation, the researchers use the Contrastive Analysis Approach which assumes that two languages could be compared in terms of their phonological systems, syntactic systems, writing systems, and cultural behaviour. Below is the outline that is usually followed while doing CA:

(1) *Description* of the two languages.
(2) *Selection* of certain areas or items of the two languages for detailed comparison.
(3) *Comparison*, i.e., the identification of areas of difference and similarity.
(Al-Nasrawi, 2011: 6)

The scope of such a study is limited to the semantic (meanings) of **postpositive adjectives** in both English and Arabic. It is also restricted to Modern Standard English and Modern Standard Arabic. The researchers try to explain and analyze the confusion in this area of grammar, i.e., **postpositive adjectives** faced by learners in both languages. It is hoped that this study will be a good guide for those who are interested in the field of scientific research, linguistics, textbook designers and teachers of English and Arabic at the same time.

Section one
1. Postpositive adjectives in English
1.1 Introduction

In English, adjectives are syntactic or lexical category that function as the head of the adjective phrase and have the semantic value of *qualifying or describing* (Fromkin et

al, 2003:573). Greenbaum and Quirk (1992:129) assert that adjectives have four major characteristics:

a. They can freely occur in *attributive* function, i.e., they can premodify a noun by appearing between a determiner and the head word of the noun phrase. For example:

1- It is an *ugly* painting.

b. They can freely occur in *predicative* function, i.e., they can work as a subject complement:

2- The painting is *ugly*.

c. They can be premodifyed by the intensifier *very:*

3- The children are very *happy*.

d. They can take the *comparative* and the *superlative* forms (-er and -est) or (more and most).

4- My children are the (happi/ er/ est) now.
5- The students are more intelligent.
6- The students are the most intelligent.

1.2 Types of Adjectives according to the position

There are three positions where an adjective can be placed: before a noun, after a noun, or in the predicate. These positions of adjectives are called attributive, postpositive and predicative respectively.

i) Attributive: **useful** information)
ii) Predicative: This information is **useful**.)

iii) Postpositive: something **useful**)

1.2.1 Attributive adjectives

An adjective is in an attributive position when it is placed before the noun it modifies. For example,

7- I found some **hilarious** pictures. (**Hilarious** premodifies

'pictures'.)

8- **Clever** people won't stay in such an environment. (**Clever** premodifies 'people'.)

However, pronouns cannot be premodified.

(Swan, 2005: 8)

Predicative adjectives 1.2.2
Adjectives are predicative when they function as subject complement or object complement. There is a copular relationship between subject and subject complement:
9- The children are **happy**.
10- He seems **careless**.
Adjectives are subject complement not only to noun phrase, but also to clauses, which may be finite clauses [11,12] or nonfinite clauses [13,14]:
11- That you need a car is **obvious**.
12- Whether he will resign is **certain**.
13- To drive a car is **dangerous**.
14- Playing chess is **enjoyable**.
There is a copular relationship between direct object and object complement:
15- I find him **careless**.
16- He made the children **happy**.
The adjective functioning as object complement often expresses the result of the process denoted by the verb:
17- He pulled his belt **tight**.
18- He pushed the window **open**.
19- He writes his letters **large**.
(The result can be stated for each sentence by using the verb (be):
20- His belt is **tight**.
21- The window is **open**.
22- His letters are **large**.

Most adjectives can be placed either in the attributive or the predicative positions. However, a small number of adjectives are restricted to one position only. For example, some adjectives such as 'previous' can only occur in the attributive position. For example, it is unacceptable to say 'this chapter is previous.' Conversely, some adjectives such as 'afraid' can only occur predicatively. For example, it is unacceptable to say ' * the afraid students did not say anything'.

(Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973: 127 and Quirk et al, 1985: 432-3)

1.2.3 Postpositive (after nouns and pronouns)
According to Swan (2005: 9-10) this kind of adjectives comes immediately after nouns and lies in six categories:
i) Fixed phrases)
Adjectives come after nouns in some fixed phrases.

- the president elect	- postmaster general
- heir apparent	- notary public
- attorney general	- court martial
- from time immemorial	- body politic

23- The **Secretary General** of the United Nations has called for new peace talks.

ii) Available, possible etc)

Some adjectives can be used after nouns in a similar way to relative clauses. This is common with adjectives ending in - *able/ - ible*.

24- Send all the <u>tickets</u> **available** / available tickets. (=…tickets which are available.)

25- It's the only <u>solution</u> **possible** / possible solution.

Some adverbs can also be used like this.

- the people **outside**   -   The woman **upstairs**

iii) Present, proper)

Before a name, *present* refers to time: after a noun it means 'here/ there', 'not absent'. Compare:

- the **present members** (= those who are members now)
- the **members present** (= those who are/ were at the meeting)

Before a noun, proper means 'real', 'genuine'. After a noun it refers to the central or main part of something. Compare:

26- Snowdon's a **proper mountain**, not a hill.

27- After two days crossing the foothills, they reached the **mountain proper**.

iv) Expressions of measurement)

Adjectives usually follow measurement nouns.

- ten years **older**   - two metres **high**

Exception: worth (e.g. **worth** 100 euro).

v) Adjectives with complements When an adjective has its own complement (e.g. skilled in design), the whole expression normally comes after a noun.

28- We are looking for people **skilled in design**.(not …..skilled in design people*)

The postposition structures can of course be regarded as reduced relative clauses:

29- We are looking for people <u>who are</u> **skilled in design**.

The complementation can of course be a prepositional phrase or a to-infinitive clause:

30- I know an actor **suitable** for the part.

31- They have a house **larger** than yours.

32- The boys **easiest to teach** were in my class.

33- Students **brave enough to attempt the course** deserve to succeed.

(Quirk et al, 1985: 420)

In some cases an adjective can be put before a noun and its complement after it. This happens with *different, similar, the same, next, last, first, second* etc; comparatives and superlatives; and a few other adjectives like *difficult* and *easy*.

- the **second** train **from**   -   a **different** life **from this one**
this platform
- the **best** mother **in**   -   the **next** house **to the Royal Hotel**

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or the house next to the Royal Hotel) **the world**)
- a **difficult** problem **to solve**

.vi) Something, everything etc)

Adjectives come after something, everything, anything, nothing, somebody, anywhere
.and similar words

?Have you read <u>anything</u> **interesting** lately -30

.Let's go <u>somewhere</u> **quiet** -31

Adjectives can sometimes be postpositive, ie they can immediately follow the noun or
.pronoun they modify

A postpositive adjective (together with any complementation it may have) regarded as
:a reduced relative clause

Something that is **useful**. Compound indefinite pronouns and adverbs -32
:ending in (-body, -one, -thing, -where) can be modified only postpositively

.Anyone (who is) **intelligent** can do it -33

.I want to try on something (that is) **larger** -34

.We're not going anywhere very **exciting** -35

:Of course, adjectives that can occur only attributively are excluded

.something (which is) **main** *

.somebody (who is) **mere** *

:.Postposition is obligatory for proper meaning 'as strictly defined', e.g
- the city of London **proper**

In several institutionalized expressions (mostly in official designations), the adjective
:.is postpositive, e.g

:Note also
- the person opposite [But: the opposite direction]
- all of us, me included [But: including me]
- Monday to Friday inclusive [AmE also: Monday through Friday]
- Longman Group Limited: Ltd(UK); Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Incorporated, Inc(US)
- Asia **Minor**   - poet **Laureate**
- devil **incarnate**   - all things **English**
- the best car going   - B flat, **sharp, major, minor**

(Quirk et al, 1985: 420-1)

Functions of Adjectives 1.4

.There are two main uses of adjectives, namely describing and classifying

i) Describing Function)

An adjective can be used to describe the quality of a noun. It helps answer the
,question "what is X like?", where X is the noun. For example

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61- The **quick** fox jumps over the **lazy** dog. ('Quick' describes the fox. 'Lazy' describes the dog.)Describing adjectives can be modified by adverbs of degree like 'very' or 'extremely".

ii) Classifying Function)

An adjective can be used to classify a noun. It helps answer the question "what is the type of X?", where X is the noun. For example,

62- These two **British** tourists know how to speak Italian.

('British' tells us the 'type' (nationality) of the tourists.)

Classifying adjectives cannot be modified by adverbs of degree like 'very' or "extremely".

63- I prefer **red** wine to **white** wine. ('Very red wine' and 'very

'white wine' are not acceptable, because 'red' and 'white

function as classifying adjectives here.)
http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/English_Grammar/Basic_Parts_of_Speech/Adjectiv es))

Section two

2. الصفة أو النَّعِثْ =) Adjectives = anna'it /aṣṣfa)

Introduction 2.1

In syntax, this word is called ‘النَّعِثْ’)= anna'it = adjective) while it is called ‘**aṣṣfa**’ in morphology (Jacob, 1988:418). Generally speaking, adjectives in Arabic normally post-modify their head and agree with it in number, gender, definiteness, and case,e.g,. (= a tall man =رجُلٌ طويلٌ rajulun **ṭawîl**), (امْرَأَةٌ طويلةٌ = a tall imra’atun **ṭawîla** = woman), (رجُلانِ طويلانِ = two tall men = rajulâni **ṭawîlân**),(الرِّجالُ الطِّوالُ =arrijâlu **aṭṭiwâl** = The tall men) (Al-Jurjaani, 2003: 136).In Arabic all kinds and sections of adjectives follow their nouns, like what we call in English ‘postpositive adjectives’ (Azzamakhshari, 1999: 148). Therefore, the researcher will discuss and analyze the adjectives in Arabic in general without going into absolute details in order not to scatter the subject matter we investigate.Arabic adjectives are similar to nouns in almost every aspect. In their syntactic function, however, they are said to be توابع)= tawâbi‘ = fowlloers) of the head noun, in that they agree with it in definiteness, number, gender, and case. Arabic adjectives are mainly derived from verbs and nouns. The most common adjectives derived from nouns are:

(i) فاعلْ عادل =: âdil = just ; جاهِلْ = jâhil = uneducated ; صابِرْ = ṣâbir = patient; etc.

(ii) فَعِيلٌ: كبير = kabîr = big; سعيد = saʿîd = happy; حميد = ḥamîd; thankful; etc.

(iii) فعولٌ: حقود = ḥaqûd = malicious; كسول = kasûl = lazy; عزوم = ʿazûm = careful; etc.ʾ

(iv) فعْلانْ: غَضْبان = ghaḍbân = angry; كسلان = kaslân = lazy; خْجْلان = khajlân; shy; etc.

(v) أفعَلْ the feminine of which is فَعْلاء denoting colours:

أبيضْ → بيضاء = white =ʾbayḍâ → abayḍ; أسود→سوداء = sawdâ = aswad ←; أحمر

حمراء = ḥamrâ'; etc = ḥamar ←.

Adjectives derived from nouns are formed by adding the suffix ي (=al- yâ') termed) (النسبة) to the noun, e.g.: عقْلي = ʿaqli = mental, نفْسي = nafsi = psychological = رمْزي = ramzi = symbolic, etc.Adjectives in Arabic are used attributively and predicatively. Attributive adjectives normally post-modify the noun head

1- .... الولدُ **الذَّكيّ**

- alwaladu **adhdhakiyyu**....

- * the boy the **clever**......

- The **clever** boy........

Predicative adjectives function as predicators in normal sentences (often no copula, verbal or otherwise is required):e.g. الولدُ **الذَّكي**. The relation between the two parts of the nominal sentence is intensive. A verbal copula is used to indicate past time and future time:

2-. كان الولدُ **صبوراً**

- kâna al-waladu ṣabûran.

- * was the boy **patient**.

- The boy was **patient**.

3- سيكونُ الطِّفْلُ **قوِيًّا**.

- sayakûnu aṭṭiflu **qawiyya**.

- * Will be the boy **strong**.

- The boy will be strong.

A pronominal copula is used when both parts of the nominal sentence are definite as in:

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4- الرَّجُلُ **الواقِفُ** هوَ المديرُ.

- arrajulu alwâqifu huwa almudîr.

* - The man standing he the director.

- The man who is standing is the director.

(Aziz, 1989: 165-66)

2.2 أنواع النَّعتْ (= anwâʿ annaʿt = Kinds of adjectives)

(i) الحقيقي = real = ḥaqîqi

The adjective here completes its head noun (the noun followed) by explaining one of its features. This adjective should agree with its head noun in inflection, singularity, duality, plurality, muscularity, femininity, definiteness, and indefiniteness. For example:

5- طَلَعَ البدْرُ **المُنيرُ**.

- ṭalaʿa albadru **almunîr**.

* - The moon appeared the **lightening**.

- The **lightening** moon appeared.

In this example, the word المنير (= lightening) which is singular, mentions one of the features of its singular followed noun, i.e البدْر (= moon).

(i) السَّببي = causal = assababi

In this kind, the adjective the follower that completes its followed noun by explaining some features related to it:

6- جاءَ الرَّجُلُ **النَّاجِحُ** ابْنُهُ.

- jâʾa arrajulu **annâjiḥ** ibnuh.

* - came the man the **passing** his son.

- The man whose son is **successful** came.

The word (النَّاجِح =) successful) here is a causal adjective because it relates to the man. (That is, the success is related to the son of the man (not to the man himself).

2.3 فوائد النَّعت (= fawâʾid annaʿt = Functions of adjectives)

The following are the purposes of adjectives:

(i) التّخصيص = Specification: when the head noun (followed noun) is = attakhṣîṣ indefinite.

7- مررتُ برَجُلٍ **نشيطٍ** .

- marartu birajulin **nashîṭ**.

- * Passed I with a man **active**.

- I passed an **active** man.

(ii) التّوضيح = Explanation: when the head noun (followed noun) is definite = attawḍîḥ.

8- مررْتُ بزيدٍ **الخيّاطِ**.

- marartu bizaidin **alkhayyâṭ**.

- * Passed I with Zaid the **tailor**.

- I passed Zaid the **tailor**.

(iii) المدْح = Appreciation = almadḥ:

9- جاءَ الطّالِبُ **المجْتَهِدُ** .

- jâ'a aṭṭâlibu **almujtahid**.

- * Came the student the **clever**.

- The **clever** student came.

(iv) الذَّم = Depreciation = adhdham

10- أعوذُ باللهِ من الشَّيطانِ **الرَّجيم**.

- a'ûdhu billâhi min ashshayṭâni **arrajîm**.

- * I depreciate by Allah from the Satan the **hateful**.

- I inclined to Allah from the **hateful** Satan.

(v) التوكيد = Emphasis = attawkîd:

11- ضرَبْتُ الكُرَةَ ضرْبةً **واحدةً**.

- ḍarabtu alkurata ḍarbatan **wâḥida**.

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- * **one** a beat the ball I Beated.

- **once only** the ball I beat.

(Hassan, 1976: 437-40 and Jacob, 1988: 418)

2.4 أقسام النَّعْت = Sections of adjective = **aqsâm anna'**t

2.4.1 Singular adjective which should be:

(i) (= اسما مشتقاً = isman mushtaqqan = derived noun) like:

12- أحبُّ الطّالِبَ **النَّشيطَ**.

- uḥibu aṭṭâliba **annashîṭ**.

- * the **active** the student I Like.

- I like the **active** student.

(ii) مصدراً = infinitive) Participial adjective (maṣdara =

13- جاءَ رجُلٌ **عَدْلٌ (عادِلٌ)**.

- Jâ'a rajulun **'adl**.

- * **just** a man Came.

- A **just** man came.

(iii) اسم الاشّارة = The determiners = ism alishâra

14- مرَرْتُ بالرَّجُلِ **هذا**.

- marartu birrajuli **hâdhâ**.

- * man **this** with I Passed.

- I passed **this** man.

(iv) الاسم الموصول المعرَّف بأل = Relative noun with = alism almawṣûl almu'araf bi'al definite article

15- جاءَ المديرُ **الّذي** تقاعَدَ.

10

- Jâ'a almudîru **alladhi** taqaʿad.

- * Came the director **who retired**.

- The **retired** director came.

(v) الاسم المنسوب = The Style noun = aism almansûb

16- شَاهَدْتُ رَجُلاً **دِمَشْقِيّاً**.

- shâhadtu rajulan **dimashqiyya**.

- * Saw I a man **Damascus**.

- I saw a **Damascus** man.

(vi) ذات, ذي = (صاحبْ , صاحبة) = The owner = dhî/ dhât

17- صافَحَ رَجُلٌ **ذو** عِلْمٍ امْرَأَةً **ذاتَ** فَضْلٍ.

- ṣâfaḥa rajulun **dhu** ʿilmin imra'atan **dhâtu** faḍl.

- * Shook hands a man **of** science a woman **of** virtue.

- A man **of** knowledge shook hands with a woman **of** virtue.

(vii) العددْ = The number = alʿadad

18- رَأَيْتُ رِجالاً **ثلاثةً**.

- ra'aytu rijâlan **thalatha**.

- * Saw I men **three**.

- I saw **three** men.

(Atturfi, 1986: 153 and Jacob, 1988: 688)

2.4.2 النَّعْتُ الجملة = Adjectival clause = annaʿtu aljumla

In this point, the head should be 'indefinite' with regard to اللَّفظَ (= = allafẓ =) *pronunciation*) and المعنى(= *meaning* = almaʿnâ):

i) Pronunciation)

19- رَأَيْتُ ولَداً **يبكي**.

- ra'aytu waladan **yabki**.

- * Saw I a boy **cries**.

- I saw a boy **crying**.

The adjective of the (ولدا = boy) in this sentence is the verbal clause (يبكي= crying).

ii) Meaning)

20- ولَقَدْ أَمُرُّ على اللَّئيمِ يسُبُّني......

- wa laqad ammurru ʿala **alla'îmi** yasubbuni.......

- * And passed on the **arrogant** man insults me.

- And when I passed the **arrogant** man, he insults me.

Here the Arabic adjective with definite article (اللَّئيم = arrogant) has generic meaning, i.e., not certain man who is arrogant.

(Jacob, 1988: 688)

2.4.3 = النَّعْت شبه الجملة anna'̇t shubh ajjumla = The adverbial clause

21-شاهدْتُ تِلْميذاً أمامَ المدرَجِ.

- shâdttu tilmîdhan **amâma almadraj**.

- * Saw I a pupil **before** the ladder.

- I saw a pupil **in front of** the ladder.

(Al-Samarra'i, 2003: 166 and Jacob, 1988: 688)

2.5 اسم **الفاعل واسم المفعول** = ism alfâʿil (= nomen agentis or present participle) and ism almafʿûl (= nomen actionis or past participle)

Participles are regarded as a part of adjectives in general and postpositive adjectives in particular in Arabic. They are divided into two groups: اسم المفعول and اسم المفعول. The first which may be called *the present participle* has the form of فاعل, when derived from الفعل الرباعي (= the verb of three letters), e.g (عاملworker), كاتب (clerk). If it is derived from الرباعي (= a quadrilateral verb), e.g. مقاتل (fighter), مسافر

the present participle* has the sense of the active (traveller: رجُل مسافر) a travelling man), شاب عامل (a working youth), امرأة مقاتلة (a fighting women).

The other participle which may be called *the past participle*, has the form of مفعول, e.g. مكسور (broken), مجروح (wounded), مفهوم (This) understood or understandable). This participle has usually sense شبّاك مكسور (a broken window), رجُل مجروح (a wounded man), أمرٌ مفهوم (something which can be understood).

These two types of participles behave like adjectives in that they agree with the noun head in definiteness, case, number, and gender: امرأة مقاتلة (a fighting woman), رجُلان مقاتلان (two fighting men), رجالٌ مقاتلون (fighting men), رجُل مجروح (a wounded man), رجالٌ مجروحون (wounded men), etc.

(Aziz, 1989: 294)

Section three

3. Contrastive analysis of 'postpositive adjectives' in English and Arabic

3.1 Similarities

1) Adjectives, in general, whether or not postpositive has the function of qualifying, describing or modifying in English and Arabic.

2) Postpositive adjectives come after nouns or pronouns in both.

3) When 'postpositive adjectives' have its own complement in English and Arabic all expression should follow its noun.

4) 'Postpositive adjectives' in both languages can be derived from their nouns, i.e., *denominal adjectives*:

<u>English</u>

1- The Secretary **General** of the United Nations has called for new peace-talks.
2- The members **present** are cooperative.

<u>Arabic</u>

1- **عادل** = just = ʿâdil

2- **جاهِلٌ** = uneducated = jâhil

3.2 Differences

1) It is noted that adjectives in Arabic only **post poses** their 'noun head and pronoun', i.e. توابع, while English has three kinds of adjectives in this respect, i.e., attributive, predicative, and postpositive.

2) There are fixed phrases showing 'postpositive adjectives' in English (**the** president **elect**, hair **apparent**, attorney **general**, etc.) whereas no such phrases in Arabic.

3) There are certain characteristics of the postpositive adjectives in English, i.e. some adjectives should end in (able = suitable, ible = flexible, etc.). On the other hand, there is nothing of this point in Arabic.

4) Only English has two choices in using adjectives postpositively or attributively, especially with such words as (*different, similar, the same, next, last, first, second*). For example:

- a **different** life **from this one** (or a life **different from this one**)

- a **difficult** problem **to solve** (or a problem **difficult to solve**)

5) English has **six categories** of postpositive adjectives as Swan (2005: 9-10) mentions in (1.2.3 = fixed phrases, available/ possible/ etc., present/ proper, expressions of measurement, adjectives with complement, and something/ everything/ etc.). In contrast, Arabic adjectives are **totally** regarded as *postpositive adjectives* or *predicative adjectives* at the same time since they come after their nouns and pronouns.

<u>English</u>

1- We are looking for people **skilled in design**. (adjective with a complement)

2- The **Secretary General** of the United Nations has called for new peace talks. (fixed phrases)
<u>Arabic</u>

1- أحبُّ الطّالِبَ النَّشيطَ.

(English translation = I like the **active** student.)

2- رأَيْتُ ولَداً **يبكي**.

(English translation = I saw a boy **crying**.)

6) Expressions of measurement are one of the examples of the 'postpositive adjectives' in English, but these expressions don't show the same function.

7) English (not Arabic) has particular words followed by postpositive adjectives, e.g., something, everything, anything, nothing, somebody, anywhere and similar words:

1- Have you read <u>anything</u> **interesting** lately?
2- Let's go <u>somewhere</u> **quiet**.

The Arabic Consonant and Vowel Sounds in the Present Study

Sounds	Examples	English meaning
'	'mîr	prince
b	bâb	door
t	tamr	dates
th	tha'lab	fox
j (researcher changed **di** to **j**)	jadîd	new
ḥ	ḥadîd	iron
d	dâr	house
dh	dhayl	tail
r	rajul	man
z	zîr	jar
s	safara	travelled
sh	sham'a	candle
ṣ	ṣalât	prayer
ḍ	marîḍ	patient
ṭ	ṭayr	bird
‛	‛ayn	eye
gh	ghubâr	dust
f	fawâkih	fruit
k	kalb	dog
q	qalam	pencil
l	layl	night
m	miftâh	key
n	nâr	fire
h	hâmish	margin
w	warda	flower
y	yarâ	see
ẓ	ẓulm	injustice
a	walad	boy
u	dub	bear
i	miftâh	key
â	bâb	door
û	sûra	picture
î	fîl	elephant

"This phonological system was adopted from "Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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