

Contrasting Masculinity and Femininity in Different Arabic Dialects

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This paper aims to study an important subject in Arabic dialects, namely the masculine and feminine. This subject has preoccupied the ancients before the modernists. They fought to seize it. The dialects of Arabs differed in the masculinising and feminising of words. Studying this subject is of great importance. It is possible to identify the differences between Arab dialects regarding the masculine and feminine. This paper aims to find out the methods used in this subject and tries to uncover some of the laws through which the words evolved and differed in their masculine and feminine nature. This is possible due to the absence of a significant difference in the unified language and dialects of the Arabs. However, there were differences in some phonological, morphological, grammatical and semantic phenomena in the past. The study is divided in two sections. The first deals with the study of the phenomenon of masculinity and femininity in Arabic and some other languages. The second presents words in which masculinity and femininity differed in Arabic dialects. The study has concluded a number of results: (1) The different dialects of femininity and masculinity are not vast and almost exclusively in the name of the sex. This distinguishes the singular from the plural in 'T'. (2) Old and new students have been masculine and feminine in Arabic. They fought to control and set laws for it, however, many words still oscillated between the masculine and feminine, especially those without signs of femininity. Consequently, scientists resorted to hearing as a way to distinguish between what is masculine and what is feminine. (3) The books of the ancients listed the proven Arab masculinity and femininity of things, accompanied by citation in poetry or prose. Without diligent reaching laws establishing masculinity and femininity, if a difference is mentioned, there is often a dispute over whether it is proven or denied by the Arabs (a dispute in hearing only). (4) The Arabic language is one of the finest languages in the world in the expression of masculinity and femininity as well as the most accurate among its Semitic sisters. (5) Originally,

language calls males masculine and females feminine. However, some dialects contradict original decisions to listen to people's use, as they may alter pronunciation or meaning. (6) Different dialects may differ due to various references to masculinity and femininity, or because the masculine dominates the feminine.

Key words: Arabic dialects, Arabic language, masculine.

A historical overview of masculinity and femininity in Arabic and other languages

Sex has been pointed out since the first human knew the difference between male and female in humans and animals. This was reflected in language, because language is a human expression of vocabulary and the relationships of the universe. Humans create names, so they describe the relations between names. Although the languages of the earth have agreed among themselves on some perceptions and methods of expression, they differ in that they do not have a single way of expressing masculinity and femininity. One of these ways originally adopted the characteristics of creation to differentiate between the two. What was created as masculine was made masculine, and what was created as feminine was made feminine. This provision applies to the living. What has no life has no relation to sex, such as the stars, the valleys and the stones. These are included in a third category, including any neutral things not aligned to one of them. (Abdel-Aal, 1999)

The Sophists were the first to distinguish between three types of linguistic sex in Greek. Aristotle followed their approach by distinguishing between these three types. The Romans differed to the Greek of philosophers and linguists; Latin has two different versions for both male and female. (Abu Barakat, 1970) The three languages include the Indo-European languages, such as German, English, Latin and Greek. German divides things into masculine, feminine and neutral, while the masculine as it is : who has a feminine of its gender is mostly masculine in its linguistic sex, and has a distinctive tool in the condition of lifting: 'ever' as well as feminine on the truth, there is a third race, which is neither masculine nor feminine in terms of linguistic handling, Its own tool is (das).

English divides things into other classifications. They are either sane masculine, sane feminine or neutral (regardless of their gender in nature). (Ramadan, 1982)

There are some African, Indian and American languages that we see adopting binary classifications. In another way, things and animals are put into one of two categories: living and non-living. Some put men and big things into one category and small things into another. Some put men and supreme beings above nature into one category, women lower and animals and inanimate objects into another category. (Abu Hayyan, 1993) Persian language has no

formal linguistic mark to distinguish between masculine and feminine. It isn't recognised in pronouns and the adjectives between them. Interpretation is based on the context alone to determine what is meant. The pronoun tu means him or she. Shamma means you and the word safid, means white. (Abdul, 1965) Bantu languages in South Africa divide grammatical sex into twenty independent classes on the basis of natural sex as well as aspects of size, shape, social class and others. (Sobhi, 1997) It seems that the classification of the sexes into male and female is based on the perception of the minds of ancient ancestors. This is helped by metaphysical and religious motives. In Semitic languages, the moon is masculine for all Semites. The Sun is feminine for the Southern Semites, masculine for the Northern Semites, and in the border area we find some confusion. The rising sun is feminine for Arab linguists. (Hisham, 1965)

Semitic languages were more specific in their tendency to clearly separate masculine and feminine. However, some words may be mentioned as masculine and feminine in Arabic, Hebrew and Syriac, for example, spirit, road and wind. This may be due to the following reasons: (Ibn, 1998)

1. Firstly, the convergence of these languages regards the permissibility of reminders. The feminising of some words may be due to an abnormal time before these languages were clearly separated. When each language separated from the others, it retained some common heritage, including words that may be masculinised and feminised.
2. Secondly, different tribes speak these languages. The terminology of things regards whether they are masculine or feminine. With time, people do not recognise which is feminine, and which is masculine. Thus, both cases are considered true.
3. Thirdly, some linguistic norms are mixed even after the independence of each language is established from the others.

The Arabic language is one of the Semitic languages. Names and adjectives are either masculine or feminine, whether they are living or static. Masculinised and feminised forms are classified according to types and degrees. These appear to be a natural reflection of a division known to early man and confirmed by the heavenly religions. For example, the Almighty said: 'And that He creates the pairs, male and female' (An-Najm/45).

Dr. Ibrahim al-Samarrai see that the science of the Arabic language has some ambiguity in terms of expressing masculinity and femininity. This is due to confusion between the two, as they may be expressed without discrimination.

It is important to note that male and female are described in terms of the human or animal self. Masculine and feminine is the description of linguistic references, which include humans, animals and other things. Hence, we may find that a masculine word may be used to

refer to males and females. Siboe explains 'you may say three persons, although women are concerned, because person is a male name. Regarding three eyes, although they were men, the eye is feminine.' (Mohammed, 1996)

Arabic differentiated between the expression of masculine and feminine. It left the masculine as the original form and developed signs of femininity. It also differentiated between them by demonstrative pronouns. For example, this (he) refers to the masculine and this (she) refers to the feminine. Originally, it is supposed to have an expression in both the masculine and feminine sense, such as the boy (a male servant) and the maid. As quoted by al-Suyooti, Ibn al-Nahas said, 'Originally, there must be a feminine for each masculine.' Alayar refers to a male donkey and ataan refers to a female donkey. Maa'z is a goat and inaaq is a female goat. Hamil is a sheep and rakhhal is a female sheep. Yet Arab linguists fear that if they do such a thing, there will be so many expressions that they will not be able to keep track of them. Thus, they suggest replacing what has been mentioned before with a distinctive sign that may distinguish between masculinity and femininity. This sign may exist in adjectives, e.g. 'dharib' and 'dharibah' or nouns, like man and woman. Until the difference between the word and the mark is established for emphasis and for the sake of making statements, they say ram and sheep. (Ismail, 1986)

Arabic divides words into masculine and feminine categories according to what is real and what is metaphorical. Real refers to an agreement between male and masculine as well as female and feminine in terms of humans and animals. Dammamini states that 'both masculine and feminine is real when a pair of sexes is a woman and a man, (naqa the female of camels and the male of camels). Thus, both a man is really masculine and a woman (naqa) is really feminine.' (Abdul, 1988)

In fact, the real issue is related to oneself, not to words. Accordingly, Ibn Hisham states that: 'You do not have to say feminising in women and Indians is real, because what is real is the one who has a vulva and a vagina in an individual, not in a plural, and you assigned the verb to the plural, not to the individual.' (Hebron, 1985)

This may explain the reason why the Kuffins state that the feminising of a verb can be true according to its sound masculine plural. This is so even if the combination of multiple masculine things end with the letters (waw) and (noon). On the one hand, one is feminine, stays the same, is still appreciated by a group. He appreciated the collection and collection of masculine and vice versa, Walt Where CARE from two sides, for his part that one remains a masculine and the second that he is destined to combine a masculine and feminine on the one hand and one which appreciated the group returned to the feminine (Manzoor, 1986)

Originally, if a thing has a name that distinguishes it from others, it can be divided into masculine and feminine forms. Therefore, each thing must have a name that distinguishes it, such as a male horse, a female horse. If linguists do not propose such a distinction between masculine and feminine, then people will find themselves obliged to say: male goose and female goose, male pigeons and female pigeons. (Mukhtar, 1997) Furthermore, Al Marbid states that ‘sometimes we cannot understand what is meant by feminised and masculinised. Sometimes, feminising is ambiguous.’ (Ahmed, 1996)

We find that most languages of the world prefer the masculine and are biased towards it. Arabic is one of these languages. Most of societies prefer males to females and consider men as more valuable. Most languages differentiate between masculine and feminine with an additional suffix. The masculine is the original form and the feminine branches off from it. When males and females occur together, usually males are mentioned predominantly in comparison to females. As in Arabic, parents to the father and mother and the moon on the sun and the moon (Ali, 1989)

Because of the preference of the masculine in their lives, Arabs prefer it also in their language, making it the original without a sign. Sibawayh described the masculine as having priority. He states that it is because the origin of things is masculine. Then things can be specialised. (Ramadan, 1975)

According to Al Mabrid, everything with unknown origin is masculine. He puts it as follows: ‘If you do not know whether the thing that you are taking about is feminine or masculine, you can judge it as masculine. It is so because every feminising of livings, other than animals, must be marked. Elsewhere, it is masculine’. (Ibn Sayedah, 1316)

We find that Arab linguists make past participles mostly masculine. Al Sijistani indicates that because the masculine is lighter than the feminine and comes before the feminine, the masculine is used to make past participles. (Ibn Tastari, 1983)

We also see that women are addressed conscientiously as masculine if there is one man among them. Sijistani says, ‘Someone has four boys and a sister,’ or ‘He is a brother and has several sisters.’ (Ibn Anbari, 1981)

According to Dr. Issa Barhouma, this predominance is a derivation with religious heritage: ‘It is discovered in this division, hidden beyond the limits of language, to extend, in its support for the beginning of the formation and the beginning of creation, the sub-originality on which generations relied in dealing with the sexes. This is not separate from the story of Adam and Eve, derived from his rib.’ (Abu Sijistani, 1997)

The orientalists, in their studies, dealt with the issue of masculinising and feminising. The German orientalist (Wright) attributed this phenomenon in Arabic to the lofty high imagination that diagnosed things. It conceived femininity in some and masculinity in others, subjecting all words to one of two things.

For Bergstrasser, feminising and masculinising is the most ambiguous aspect in grammar. It may cause problems that orientalists have not been able to resolve resolutely. (Ramadan, 1975)

Scientists have been interested in knowing masculinity and femininity and in different dialects. They considered it a form of eloquence. Some of them present the importance of knowing masculinity and femininity in knowing Arabic grammar. Abu Hatim al-Sijistani expresses, ‘the first eloquent aspect is the knowledge of masculinity and femininity in names and deeds and epithetic measurements and anecdotes.’ (Ramadan, 1970)

There is no doubt that these phenomena and the like have made scientists interested in hearing. Some of them argue that masculinity and femininity have no steady measurement and no disciplined origin. Ibn Testari Al Katib states, ‘there is no a steady measurement for the masculine and feminine, nor do they have an issue that may protect them as some people claim.’ (Mazen, 1975)

The manifestations of masculinity and femininity in different Arabic dialects

In in this section, we will address words that differ in their masculinity and femininity in Arabic dialects. They are few when compared to the agreement regarding most words:

- 1 - Thumb: AL Fraa stated that fingers are all female except the thumb. Arabs refer to them as feminine, but Bani Asad differ in that they use the masculine form when referring to them. (Abdul, 1993)
- 2 -Cow: According to Al-Sijistani, some of the Arabs, perhaps the people of the Hijaz, use the feminine form to refer to cows. For example, they say ‘these cows’. (Issa, 2001)
- 3 -Case: According to Al Fraa, case is feminine and the people of Hijaz may add a suffix to indicate this. That is, instead of saying ‘Al hal’, it becomes ‘Al halah’. The poet said ‘On his case, if Hatem with his generosity, one may think that money is Hatem.’
- 4- War: It is feminine. For example, ‘there was a severe war.’ (Ibrahim, 1985) In his book, Al Fraa says that war, shoes and bows are feminine. Elsewhere, war is masculine. (Abdel-Aal, 1999)
- 5- Hira: It is the name of the mountain in Mecca. Sibawayh sees Arabs differ regarding the words Hira and Qubaa. Some of them use the masculine forms when referring to these two words, indicating that they are names for places. They do the same with Wasit when making

it a place or a country. Others use the feminine form to refer to them, making them the names of two plots of land. (Abu Barakat, 1970) According to Al-Sijistani, they can be masculine and feminine, although being masculine is the most common scenario. (Ramadan, 1982)

6 - Wine: It is not attributed to masculinity of femininity by certain people. According to Al Fraa, it is feminine, though it may be used as masculine by some people. In this regard, the poet says,

‘Almighty Allah addresses eyes to be, thus they be,
And do whatever wine does with wise people.’

Sometimes, Al-Sijistani attributes the fact that some people use the masculine form for wine to the people of Fashaa. (Abu Hayyan, 1993)

7- Beetle: Sometimes, a suffix is used to distinguish between the male and female beetles. That is, with the suffix *ة*, it is feminine; whereas without suffix, it is masculine. (Abdul, 1965) Some people indicate it is feminine. (Sobhi, 1997)

8- Gold: Al-Fara says gold is female. (Hisham, 1965) It is said, ‘It is the red gold.’ Sometimes, it can be masculine. (Ibn, 1998) Furthermore, Al Khaleel bin Ahmad and Ibn Mandhoor distinguish plural and singular forms of gold. According to the people of Al Hijaz, it is feminine, since the singular form is feminine. If we consider it as singular, there must be a masculine form. For example, Al Imam Ali (PBUH) says, ‘He sent a piece of gold from Al Yamin.’ (Ismail, 1986)

9- Shield: Al Sijistani said it can be masculine and feminine, though feminine is the most common. Abu Hatim said, ‘the sons of Tamim mention the shield.’ (Mohammed, 1996)

10- Arm: It is from the tip of the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, as well as the forearm. It is feminine and it may be masculine. According to Al Fraa, arm is feminine. The people of Bani Ellal may use the masculine form to refer to an arm. (Ismail, 1986) Bin Salamah prefers the feminine form. (Abdul, 1988) This is confirmed by Al Sijistani. (Hebron, 1985)

11 - Wind: If air moves, it is feminine. It seems that the tendency to feminise language is characteristic of the Arabs and the tendency to masculinise language is characteristic of the Bani Asad. Al Fraa states that all the types of wind are feminine, however the Bani Asad use the masculine form for it. (Manzoor, 1986)

12 - Spirit: If it regards Gabriel, it is masculine. As it is mentioned in the Glorious Quran: ‘With it came down the Spirit of Faith and Truth’ (Surah of Shuraa/192). (Mukhtar, 1997) Also, Almighty Allah says, ‘The Day that the Spirit and the angels will stand forth in ranks, none shall speak except any who is permitted by (Allah) Most Gracious, and He will say what is right’ (Surah of Al Nabaa/32). (Ahmed, 1996) According to Al Sijistani, it can be considered feminine among some people. (Ahmed, 1995)

13- Husband and Wife: The people of Najd say wife (zawja) with the suffix (t); whereas the people of Hijaz say husband (zawj), indicating that the word zawj can be used to refer to both males and females. For example, Almighty Allah says: 'Retain thou (in wedlock) thy wife.' (Surah of Al Ahzab/37). (Ali, 1989) The people of Al Hijaz find a wife (zawja) is more common than a husband (zawj). (Ali, 1989) According to Abu Ali al-Qali, quoting Al-Asma'I, the Arabs hardly say 'his wife'. Jacob said 'it is said, his wife', which is used by a few people. (Ali, 1989) Tastri Al Katib showed us the most explicit use of the saying. Both can be called husband. This is more eloquent than wife. (Ali, 1989)

14- Weapon: It is feminine and may be referred to as masculine by some. Al Fraa says 'the weapon is feminine and masculine.' (Ali, 1989)

15 - Authority: It can feminine and masculine. Al-Fara'a stated that feminine is the most common case. (Ramadan, 1975)

16 -Peace: It is feminine and meaning peace (Ramadan, 1975) for example, Allah in the Glorious Quran says: 'But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace and trust in Allah.' Al Anfal/61. (Ramadan, 1975)

17- Rice, dates and raisins: They are masculine to most of the Arabs. Feminising is the language of the people of the Hijaz. (Ramadan, 1975) Sijistani says most Arabs make plurals masculine. Often, most Arabs say 'These are trees, and these are palms.' Perhaps the people of the Hijaz use the feminine form to name these things without any measurement. Thus, we find them sometimes say 'It is the cows, and it is the palms.' (Ibn Sayedah, 1316)

-18 Saa: This is a measurement used by the people of Al Madinah. It can be masculine and feminine at the same time. That is, the people of Al Hijaz use the feminine form when referring to it, while the people of Assad and Nejd use the masculine form when referring to it. (Ibn Sayedah, 1316) In the opinion of Dr. Ahmed Alam al-Din, the Saa had evolved from feminine in the Hijaz tribes to a reminder in the tribes of Nejd and Assad. However, it appears that this evolution was not comprehensive in all tribes. (Ibn Sayedah, 1316)

19- The way: the people of the Hijaz use the feminine form to refer to it, whereas the people of Najd use the masculine form to refer to it. (Ibn Sayedah, 1316) Most of the Arabs and the Holy Quran use the masculine form to refer to it. It is mentioned in the Glorious Quran: 'to a straight path'(Ahqaf/30). Another example is 'This way is far,' taraq baad. (Ibn Sayedah, 1316)

-20 Morning: It is feminine. As Al Fraa says, 'The morning is female.' (Ibn Sayedah, 1316) Perhaps Arabs make it masculine nowadays. In this regard, Bani Tamim use the feminine form to refer to it, whereas Bani Qais use the masculine form when referring to it. Sijistani says, "The morning is feminised in the language of Tamim and masculinised in the language of Qais. I have met Arabians (elderly), Qaisi and Tamimi. The Al-Tamimi said, 'the morning comes' by saying 'danat al.adha' and the Qaisi said 'dana al.adha.'" (Ibn Tastari, 1983)

21- Windy or stormy: Stormy is described as masculine and feminine. As it is said, 'The wind is stormy.' If we say stormy without the suffix, it is female, since being stormy is a

characteristic of wind, which is a female. If we say storm with the suffix, it will indicate the future. For example, 'It came with a windy wind' (Yunis 22). (Ibn Tastari, 1983)

22 - Disability: It is masculine and feminine. Its plural form is disabilities. (Ibn Tastari, 1983) According to Al Fraa, it can be both masculine and feminine, though the feminine form is the most dominant one. (Ibn Tastari, 1983) Linguists believe that there are two terms: disability and incapacity. In its plural form, it can be either. (Ibn Tastari, 1983)

23- Alba: It is a yellow ligament in the neck. It is feminine if we mean what has been mentioned earlier, elsewhere it is masculine. Arab linguists differ in this regard, some consider it as just masculine. Others state that it can be masculine, and others state that it can be both masculine and feminine. (Ibn Tastari, 1983)

24- Humerus: According to Al Fraa and Sijistani, the humerus is feminine. (Ibn Anbari, 1981) For example, one can say 'This is the backbone of three organs.' Ibn Mandhoor refers to Abu Zeid, who said, 'The people of Tihama say humerus and disability are masculine.' (Ibn Anbari, 1981)

25- Neck: Al Fraa states that the neck, according to the people of Hijaz, is feminine. They say 'three necks', and to make it shorter, they say pedicle. Others say 'this is a long neck', and in its shorter form, they say pedicle. (Ibn Anbari, 1981) Sijistani responded to al-Asma'i and Abu Zeid by saying, 'The neck is masculine'. Al-Asma'i claimed that he does not know about feminising. Abu Zeid claimed that neck is feminine and masculine and understood from his words that it is just feminine. (Ibn Anbari, 1981)

26- Alqtir: It is masculine and it means the heads of nails. Sijistani attributed its masculinity to the Tamim.

27- Destiny: It can be feminine and masculine. Some of the Bani Qais may make it masculine. Al Fraa says fate is feminine, yet it can be masculine among some of Bani Qais. (Ibn Anbari, 1981)

28- Port: It is the port of ships because it protects ships from the wind. (Abu Sijistani, 1997) Sijistani said 'Port is masculine, and some people make it feminine.' (Abu Sijistani, 1997) However, regarding this matter, the word's femininity and masculinity are not attributed to anyone.

29- Leg: In a human, it is below the knee to the heel. In animals, it is below the heel. (Abu Sijistani, 1997) Being feminine or masculine has a relation to the state of inflection. According to Al Fraa, the leg can be feminine and masculine. The same is indicated by Al Mabrid. He states that the leg can be both feminine and masculine. This is clear in Arabic Poetry. For example, Arabs may say, 'This dress is seven in eight'. That is, the speaker wants seven arms in eight Ashbar. (Abu Sijistani, 1997)

30- Whore: It is a female lion. It is said a whore is feminine only. However, sometimes people say 'lion' and add the suffix to the end of the word lion. (Abu Sijistani, 1997)

-31 Al-Munoon: It is feminine, and it seems that the masculine form of it is used in the language of the people of Huthail. Sijistani states, 'We heard it feminised, and it has been mentioned by many people.' (Ramadan, 1975)



-32 Palm: It is feminine according to people of Hijaz. However, it is masculine according to the people of Najd. Al Fraa indicates that the people of Hijaz say 'it is a palm', while the people in Najd use the masculine form. (Ramadan, 1975) This is evidence of feminising. The Almighty Allah says, 'fruits and palms with sleeves' (Rahman/11). (Ramadan, 1970)

-33 Guidance: It is the opposite of misguidance. (Mazen, 1975) It is masculine. The Bani Assad use it in its feminine form and say, 'This is a good guidance.' (Abdul, 1993) The guidance, which regards the day, is masculine. (Issa, 2001)



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