

Pinning Down the Phenomenon of Idiomatic Phrasal Verbs in Arabic

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Abstract

This article investigates a vital phenomenon in the Arabic language, that is, idiomatic verb-preposition combination. It aims to explore the syntactic properties of this phenomenon and account for its underlying semantic subtleties. It also aims to establish a parameter for pinpointing the phenomenon, and underscore the key factors that control the syntactic and semantic relationships between the main two constituents of it. The study is based on an examination of a number of illustrative actual contexts of Arabic usage. It takes into consideration the view of both classical and modern linguists, and utilises realistic examples taken from classical and modern literature: the Qur'an, poetry, novels and press articles. It is hoped that this study may provide some practical insights not only for Arabists and constructivists, but also for pedagogues in the field of teaching Arabic for non-native speakers and for translators from and/or into Arabic. No claim is made here for comprehensiveness.

Key Words: Idiomaticity, Phrasal Verbs, Arabic Verbs, Arabic Prepositions, Arabic Verb-Preposition Combination, Arabic Syntax, Arabic Semantics, Contrastive Analysis.

Introduction

Since the eighteenth century, English linguists have been scrutinising a rather bizarre phenomenon occurred in their language whereby proper verbs and adverbial particles syntactically colligate and semantically collocate to fuse together and produce a significance which is by far different from the sum of their literal significances. After ample scrutiny, they labelled the phenomenon as idiomatic English Phrasal Verb (henceforth EPVs), which has been given a great deal of attention by scholars in such domains as grammar, linguistics, pedagogy, and lexicography¹. Those scholars have come up with rather comprehensive definitions of the phenomenon. A close look at the essence of their definitions shows that they perceive EPV as a combination of two or three elements (a verb + a preposition, a verb + an adverb, or a verb + an adverb + a preposition). This combination functions as a single unit of meaning in the sense that its significance cannot be deduced from the total sum of the significances of its separate elements².

¹ Cf. Bolinger, D. (1971). *The Phrasal Verb in English*. Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; McArthur, T. (1975). *Using Phrasal Verbs* (Second ed.). London and Glasgow: Collins; McArthur, T. (1979). The strange cases of the English phrasal verb. *Zielsprache Englisch*, 9 (3), 24-26; McArthur, T. (1989). The long-neglected phrasal verbs. *English Today*, 5 (2), 38-44; Fraser, B. (1976). *The Verb-Particle Combination in English*. New York, San Francisco and London: Academic Press; Lindner, S. J. (1983). *A Lexico-Semantic Analysis of English Verb Particle Constructions With Out and Up*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University; Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London and New York: Longman; Turton, N., & Manser, M. (1985). *The Student's Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan; Dixon, R. M. W. (1982). The Grammar of English Phrasal Verbs. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 2, 1-42; Dixon, R. M. W. (1991). *A New Approach to English Grammar, on Semantic Principles*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Azzaro, G. (1992). The Syntactic Learning of English Phrasal Verbs: Theory. *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata*, XXIV (1), 33-60; Shovel, M. (1992). *Making Sense of Phrasal Verbs*. London: Prentice Hall International (UK) Limited; Live, A. H. (1965). The Discontinuous Verb in English. *Word* (21), 428-451; Close, R. A. (1992). *A Teacher's Grammar: An Approach to the Central Problems of English*. London: Language Teaching Publications; Cowie, A. P., & Mackin, R. (1993). *Oxford Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs* (Second ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press; Crowley, T., Lynch, J., Siegel, J., & Piau, J. (1995). *The Design of English: An introduction to descriptive linguistics*. Auckland: Longman Paul; Lindstromberg, S. (1998). *English Prepositions Explained*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamin's Publishing Company; among others.

² Aldahesh, A. Y. (2009a). *Translating Idiomatic English Phrasal Verbs into Arabic*. UK. VDM Verlag Dr. Muller, p. 27.

Some examples include: *to carry out, to carry on, to turn up, to turn on, to turn off, to sort out, to give up, to give in, to give away, to get away with, to black out, to tip off, to take off, to take in, to put up with*, etc.

Arabic language, by contrast, does not allow proper verbs to combine with adverbs, it however allows them to combine with prepositions, for instance: *'atā'alā* (to destroy, to finish), *'atāmin* (to come from), *'atābi-* (to bring), *nazara'ilā* (to look at), *nazara fī* (to investigate) etc. These constructions are fairly common, frequent and widely used in both written and spoken Arabic. Yet, unlike English linguists, Arabic linguists do not group such constructions under a specific heading³. It is important to say, however, that while there are some researchers⁴ who have touched upon the phenomenon of Arabic Idiomatic Phrasal Verbs (henceforth AIPVs) in passing without elaborating on their form and function criteria, there are, on the other hand, a few who have given this issue more attention and tried to explore it in detail.

The leading study is Lentzner's doctoral dissertation entitled *Semantic and Syntactic Aspects of Arabic Prepositions* in which she assigns a chapter to explore the verb-preposition structures in Arabic⁵. Another important study is Heliel's *Verb-Particle Combinations in English and Arabic: Problems for Arab Lexicographers and Translators*⁶. Furthermore, in the last ten years or so there have been a number of Arab scholars who conducted studies in Arabic on such pertinent issues as transitivity of Arabic verbs and semantic behaviour of Arabic prepositions⁷. It is crucial to say that all of the scholars who have previously tackled this issue, did not distinguish between the idiomatic and non-idiomatic types of this structure. They instead took it for granted that every combination whereby an Arabic verb followed by a preposition is an 'idiom', and dealt with it as such.

Lentzner (1977), for instance, labels every construction of verb-preposition as an 'Arabic verb-preposition idiom', which is not accurate by any means. She confuses the idiomatic/metaphorical verb-preposition constructions with those of non-idiomatic/literal ones, and this sort of confusion, in our view, is due partly to the approach she adopted in her study. Lentzner approaches the point ably from prepositions rather than verbs standpoint, concentrating on the function of each preposition when it is combined with certain types of verbs. In spite of tackling, albeit casually, the syntactic characteristics of the verbs, she ignores the semantic features of them and their major input to the overall significance of the structure when they combine with prepositions. To the best of our knowledge and research, we know of no such a specific analysis. Hence the importance of this study, which aims to bridge the gap by exploring the phenomenon of AIPVs per se, establishing a parameter for them, and outlining the key factors that control the syntactic and semantic relationships between their main constituents.

1. Establishing parameter for AIPVs

It is fairly important to assert that Arabic verb-preposition structure falls into two distinct categories, being: idiomatic/metaphorical and non-idiomatic/literal. The first category is a construction of verb-preposition wherein the verb metaphors its basic significance to form with the preposition a single unit of meaning, which is divergent from the significance of the verb alone or the significance of the preposition by itself.

³A number of modern Arabic linguists label these Arabic combinations as *al-dhamā'im* (enclosures). Cf. Al-Shamsān, A. I. (1986). *Al-Fi'il fī al-Qur'an al-Karīm Ta'adyatuhuwa Luzūmuhu*. Kuwait University, p. 252 & p. 747.

⁴E.g. Ryding, K. G. (2005). *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic*. Cambridge University Press. UK; Al-Shamsān, 1986; Al-Shamsān, A. I. (1987). *Qaḍāyā al-Ta'adī wa al-Luzūm fī al-Dars al-Nahwī*. Matba'at al-Madanī. Juddah. Saudi Arabia; Kharma, N., & Hajjaj, A. (1989). *Errors in English Among Arabic Speakers: Analysis and Remedy*. London: Longman; Abboud, P. F., & McCarus, E. N. (1968). *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press; Bataineh, R. F., & Bataineh, R. F. (2002). The Difficulties Jordanian Graduate Learners of English as a Second language Face When Translating English Idioms into Arabic. *RASK*, 16, 33-83.

⁵ Lentzner, K. R. (1977). *Semantic and Syntactic Aspects of Arabic Prepositions*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University, Washington, D. C, pp. 155-195

⁶Heliel, M. H. (1994). *Verb-Particle Combinations in English and Arabic: Problems for Arab Lexicographers and Translators*. In R. De Beaugrand, A. Shunnaq & M. H. Heliel (Eds.), *Language, Discourse and Translation in the West and Middle East*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

⁷Dāwood, M. M. (2002). *Al-Qur'an al-Karīm Wa Tafā'ul al-Ma'ānī: Dirāsa Dilāliya li Ta'lluq Harf al-Jarr bi al-Fi'il Wa 'Atharahu fī al-Ma'nā fī al-Qur'an al-Karīm*. Dār Gharīb. Cairo. Egypt; Al-'Atyya, A. M. (2008). Hurūf al-Jarr bayna al-Nyāba wa al-Taḍmīn. *Majallat al-turāth al-'Arabī*. Year 28. No. 112. Beirut, Lebanon.

For example, the significance of the verb *amsaka*, (literally: ‘to catch’), becomes ‘to stop’ when combining with the preposition ‘*an*’ as in: *wa lisānuhā lāyumsiku ‘an al-tilāwati*⁸ ‘and her tongue does not stop reciting the Qur’an’. The second category being a construction of verb-preposition in which the verb and the preposition retain their basic significances. See for instance the combination *haraba min* ‘to escape from’, in: *wa ‘ahrudumin al-mouti*⁹ ‘and I escape from the death’. Having said that, the parameter by which we distinguish between the first and the second category (i.e. idiomaticity) is by far of varying degrees. In other words, constructions of verb-preposition can be somewhere between too literal and too idiomatic.

To account for the EPVs idiomaticity, Cowie and Mackin (1993) employ two testing procedures to know whether a given EPV is an idiomatic or non-idiomatic one. Both of the testing procedures, however, have to do with meaning rather than with syntax. The first testing procedure is to ask whether the whole phrase can be substituted by one word. The second testing procedure is to ask whether the second word (preposition and/or adverb) can be deleted. Thus, to know, for example, whether the EPV *fall out*, as used in *I was pleased with the way things had fallen out*, an idiomatic construction or not, you need to apply one of these testing procedures. In fact the answer of the first one is: yes, we can substitute *fall out* for one word, that is, ‘happen’ or ‘occur’, and the answer of the second one is: no, we cannot delete the second part of *fall out*, since its form is fixed and cannot be broken up, therefore it is an idiomatic EPV¹⁰.

We believe that these testing procedures are both applicable and relevant to this study. They can be well utilized to measure the degree of idiomaticity of Arabic verb-preposition combinations. To apply the first testing procedure, i.e., substituting the whole phrase for one word, one may ask: can we substitute an Arabic phrase such as *haraba min* ‘to escape from’ for one word? The answer is: no, there is no one word for this Arabic phrase, simply because it is made up of two lexical constituents each of which retains its own literal significance, and the whole significance of the phrase is so transparent that it can be easily deduced from the total sum of the significances of its components. To apply the second testing procedure, i.e. to delete the second word of the phrase, again one can ask: can we delete the Arabic preposition without changing the whole meaning of the phrase? The answer is: yes, we can use *haraba* only to express the same meaning of the phrase ‘to escape’. Therefore, this Arabic construction is a non-idiomatic/literal by any means.

By contrast, let us apply the same testing procedures on the phrase *insaḥaba ‘alā* ‘literally: to withdraw, to retreat ... on’ in the following example: *wa-ithā mā insaḥaba al-amru ‘alā ghayrihim aw ‘alā madākhil ‘ukhrā fa-in al-ḥāl sayatakarrar ayḍān* (This situation will happen again as well if the matter is applied to other people or to other incomes)¹¹. Can we substitute the whole phrase with one word synonym? Yes, we can. The phrase *insaḥaba ‘alā* can be substituted for the verb *ṭubbiqa* (to be applied). Can we delete the second component of the phrase i.e., the preposition ‘*alā*’? The answer is: no, we cannot. If we do so the verb *insaḥaba* will retain its literal meaning (to withdraw). Thus, this Arabic verb-preposition combination is by all means an AIPV. Another example illustrating this type is the phrase *intahā ‘ilā* ‘literally: to end ... to’. It forms an AIPV with a totally altered significance in the following example: *waintahā al-rajulu ‘ilāmouqifihā*¹² (and the man reached the place where she stands). At this point, it might be insightful to say that the context plays a vital role in determining the idiomaticity of the whole Arabic verb-preposition structure. That is, in order to understand whether a given Arabic verb-preposition structure is used literally or metaphorically, one needs to consider the surrounding context of that structure. Since both the literal and idiomatic types of the structure share the same syntactic properties, the distinction between them is confined to their semantic peculiarities. It is worth mentioning that the non-idiomatic/literal type of the structure is a mere verb plus a preposition combination thus it is excluded from the phenomenon of AIPVs and falls out of the scope of this study.

2. Constituents of AIPVs

Before tackling the syntactic and semantic interactions of the main components of AIPVs, *vis.* the Arabic proper verbs and prepositions, let us briefly shed some light on their individual properties.

⁸Mahfūz, N. (1991). *Bayna al-Qasrayn*. In al-A‘māl al-Kāmila. Matba‘at Lubnān. Beirut. Lebanon, p.328

⁹Adonis, A. A. S. (1996) *Al-A‘māl al-Shi‘ryya* Dār a-l-Madā. Damascus. Syria, p. 45

¹⁰ Cf. Cowie and Mackin, 1993, p. ix

¹¹<http://www.alwasatnews.com/3213/news/read/569333/1.html> Retrieved on 03/08/2015

¹²Mahfūz, 1991, p.330.

2.1 Arabic Proper Verbs

In the main, *al-fi'il* (verb) in Arabic denotes an action undertaken by *al-fā'il* (agent) either optionally as in: *'akala* (to eat) *qa'ada* (to sit), or by attributing the action to the agent as in: *māta* (to die)¹³. Arabic verbs are of two main categories, they are: *thulāthī* (trilateral) and *rubā'ī* (quadrilateral). The former refers to verbs with three-consonant roots, while the latter refers to verbs with four-consonant roots. Based on a number of morphological patterns '*awzān*' (they labelled by western scholars as 'verb forms', many forms can be derived from both trilateral and quadrilateral verbs. Arabic verbs are marked for person, gender and number. In terms of person, there are three classes: first person (e.g., *'aktubu* 'I write'), second person (e.g., *taktubu* 'You write'), and third person (e.g., *yaktubu* 'He writes'). As for gender, there exist two classes: masculine (e.g., *yaktubu* 'He writes'), and feminine (e.g., *taktubu* 'She writes'). With regard to number, there are three classes of Arabic verbs: singular (e.g., *yaktubu* 'He writes'), dual (e.g., *yaktubāni* 'They write'), and plural (e.g., *yaktubūna* 'They write').

Arabic verbs can be conjugated into three classes in terms of tense: past (e.g., *kataba* 'He wrote'), present (e.g., *yaktubu* 'He writes') and future by prefixing either *sa* or *soufa* (e.g., *soufayaktubu* 'He will write'). Arabic verbs have four major moods, being: indicative (e.g., *yaktubu* 'He writes'), subjunctive (e.g., *'anyaktuba* 'To write'), jussive (e.g., *lamyaktub* 'He did not write'), and imperative (e.g., *'uktub* 'Write'). In addition, Arabic verbs are of two types in terms of voice, being: active (e.g., *kataba* 'He wrote'), and passive (e.g., *kutiba* 'Was written').

What is relevant to our main topic is that Arabic verbs, in its all the aforementioned classes, may well constitute the first component of the AIPV. Two examples from the Qur'an will suffice:

*'Ulā'ika allathīnataba'ā Allahu 'alāqulubihim wa sam'ihim wa absārihim*¹⁴ 'These are people whose hearts, hearing, and sight have been closed off by God'¹⁵ (*taba'ā 'alā* is an active voice AIPV), and: *Thālika bi'annahum 'āmanu thumma kafarū fa tubi'ā 'alā qulubihim fa hum lā yaḥqahūn* 'because they professed faith and then rejected it, so their hearts have been sealed and they do not understand'¹⁶ (*tubi'ā 'alā* is a passive voice AIPV). It is crucial to mention here that, unlike EPVs, whose communicative function is mainly carried by particles¹⁷, the communicative function of AIPVs is typically carried by the verb in spite of the fact that the preposition modifies the meaning of the verb it combines with.¹⁸ It is interesting to note in this connection that Arabic verbs have been categorised into two distinct groups as to their combination with prepositions, namely: restricted and non-restricted verbs. The restricted verbs are verbs combine with one particular preposition. E.g. *'abaqa* 'fled' which appears in the Qur'an with one preposition only that is *'ilā* in: *'ith 'abaqa 'ilā al-fulki al-mashhūn*¹⁹ 'He fled to the overloaded ship'²⁰. The non-restricted verbs, on the other hand, can combine with many prepositions. E.g. *dakhala* which appeared in the Qur'an combined with *bi-*²¹, *'alā*²², *min*²³, and *fi*²⁴. It is worth noting that a verb could be a restricted verb in the Qur'anic rhetoric but a non-restricted one in the general usage of Arabic. E.g. the above-mentioned verb *'abaqa* combines with the preposition *min* in the general usage²⁵: *'abaqa al-'abdu minsayyidhi*²⁶ 'the slave fled from his master'.

A final point needs to be taken up here is that *al-af'āl al-naqiṣa* (defective verbs) and *al-af'āl al-jamida* (invariable verbs) are also excluded from the intention of this study since they don't indicate actions²⁷, and cannot combine with prepositions to form AIPVs.

¹³ Al-Shamsān, 1986, p. 17

¹⁴ Q. 16: 180

¹⁵ Abdel Haleem, M. A. S. (2010). *The Qur'an: English Translation and Parallel Arabic Text*. Oxford University Press. Oxford, p. 280

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 555

¹⁷ Side, R. (1990). Phrasal verbs: sorting them out. *ELT Journal*, 44 (2), 144-152.

¹⁸ See the two examples cited above.

¹⁹ Q. 37:140. Cf. Dāwood, 2002, p. 1:7

²⁰ Abdel Haleem, 2010, p. 452

²¹ Q. 2:23

²² Q. 5:23 and Q. 13:23

²³ Q. 12:67

²⁴ Q. 110:2

²⁵ Dāwood, 2002, p. 1/7

²⁶ Ibn Manzūr, Jamāludīn Muhammad bin Makram (1994). *Lisān al-'Arab*. Third Edition. Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, Lebanon. Cf. Dāwood, 2002, p. 1:7

²⁷ Dāwood, 2002, p. 1:5

3.0 Arabic Preposition

Classical and modern Arabic linguists do not incorporate prepositions when studying Arabic verbs. They rather devote a special part of their studies to them, or study them in separate monographs with other type of particles, which are commonly referred to as *ḥurūf al-ma'ānī* 'particles of meanings'²⁸. Arabic prepositions have been given two labels. Classical Arabic grammarians of al-Kūfa school named prepositions *ḥurūf al-iḍāfa*, on the ground that they are genitive particles that add the significance of verbs, which precede them to the significance of nouns, which follow them²⁹. On the other hand, classical grammarians of al-Basrah school and modern linguists call them *ḥurūf al-jarrah*/*ḥurūf al-khafḍ*, on the ground that they put nouns, which come after them, into the *majrūr* 'genitive' case³⁰.

There exist three types of Arabic prepositions, namely³¹: 1) Authentic/genuine prepositions, which complete the significances of entities with which they are combined. In addition, they put nouns that come after them in a genitive case, and need *muta'aliq* (relator)³². Authentic prepositions are: *min*, *bi-* (the letter *bā*'), *ka-* (the letter *kāf*), *li-* (the letter *lām*), *'ilā*, *ḥattā*, *'an*, *'alā*, *fī*, *matā*, *wāw*, and *ta-* (the letter *tā*'); 2) Redundant prepositions, which do not need *muta'aliq*³³. They are four in number: *min*, *bi-* (the letter *bā*'), *ka-* (the letter *kāf*), and *la-* (the letter *lām*); and 3) Quasi-redundant prepositions, which have a new significance and do not need *muta'aliq*. They are six in number: *khalā*, *'adā*, *ḥāshā*, *rubba*, *la'alla*, and *lowlā*.

It is necessary to point out here that not all of the above-mentioned Arabic prepositions can combine with verbs to form AIPVs. The rule is only the 'true' prepositions, which have the ability to be used in abstract senses can be used for that purpose³⁴. They can be classified, according to their semantic properties, into two types: locative prepositions and directional prepositions. The former type specifies 'where' something is either in space or in time; the latter type specifies a 'change' in location, or movement in space or time.³⁵ The locative prepositions are: *bi-* (by, in, with), *fī* (at, in), and *'alā* (on)³⁶. The directional prepositions are, in turn, of two types.

The first type is prepositions which indicate direction 'towards': *'ilā* (to, toward), and *li-* (to)³⁷. The second type is prepositions signify direction 'from': *min* (from), *'an* (from, away from), and *munthū* (since)³⁸. It needs to be mentioned though that redundant prepositions, and quasi-redundant prepositions falls out of the intention of this study since they have no *ta'alluq* (attachment/relation) with the verb³⁹. In addition, the prepositions *ḥattā* and *munthū* will be excluded as well, as they do not satisfy the aforementioned criteria of forming AIPV. Each Arabic preposition has its own basic functional significance and some other associated meanings, which may overlap with the meanings of other prepositions⁴⁰.

²⁸ Al-Kisā'ī (d. 189 H) was the first to devote a study to these vital particles followed by al-'Akhfash (d. 215 H), then al-Mubarrid (d. 285 H), then Ibn Kaysān (d. 299 H), then al-Zajjajī (d. 337 H), then al-Farisī (d. 377 H), then al-Rummānī (d. 412 H), then al-Qazzāz (d. 412 H), then al-Harawī (d. 415 H), then al-Muqālī (d. 702 H), then al-Murādī (d. 749 H). Let alone linguists who wrote books about Arabic grammar in general and devoted special chapters for prepositions such as al-Zamakshshīrī (d. 538 H) in *al-Mufaṣṣal*, and Ibn Hishām (d. 671 H) in *Mughnī al-Labīb*. For more details, see Dāwood, 2002, pp. 1:11-15; and Al-Shamsān, 1986, p. 733.

²⁹ Haywood, J. A., and Nahmad, H. M. (1965). *A New Arabic Grammar of the Written Language*. London: Lund Humphries, p. 412; Ghalāyīnī, M. (1986). *Jāmi' al-Durūs al-'Arabyyati*. Beirut: Al-Maktabat al-'Aṣriyya, pp. 167-168; Al-Sāmarrā'ī, I. (1979). *Muqaddimatun fī Tārīkh al-'Arabyyati*. Dār al-Hurriyya. Baghdad, Iraq, p. 12.

³⁰ Aldahesh, A. Y. (2009b). *Notes on Western Scholars' Classification of Arabic Prepositions*. Proceedings of the Conference "Arabic Language on Perspective of Social and Culture". October 12-14, 2009. North Sumatra University, Indonesia, Medan.

³¹ Cf. Zainul 'ābidīn, B. N. (2008). *Ḥurūf al-Jarr al-zā'ida wa al-shabīha bil zā'ida*: Dirāsa Naḥwiyya. *Majalat al-'u'ūm wa al-thaqāfa*. No. 9 (2); and Dāwood, 2002, pp.1: 28-29

³² It is this type of prepositions that is the very focus of this study.

³³ Redundant prepositions appear to serve one particular communicative function that is to conform the meaning of the sentence in which they are employed.

³⁴ Lentzner, 1977, p. 33

³⁵ Ibid, p. 33

³⁶ The prepositions (*bi-* and *'alā*) are the most commonly used in combination with verbs. See Lentzner, 1977, p. 33

³⁷ *Ḥattā* (up to, until) is also considered as one of this type of prepositions. See Lentzner, 1977, p. 33

³⁸ Ibid, p. 33

³⁹ Dāwood, 2002, p. 1:4

⁴⁰ Ibid, pp.1: 29-31

Classical and modern Arabic grammarians have accounted for these meanings with ample detail⁴¹. It may well be insightful to say that Arabic prepositions are context sensitive, *viz.* their functional significances cannot be grasped from their lexical individual and decontextualised meanings. They are rather comprehended by taking into account the surrounding textual and contextual factors. Arabic prepositions are language-specific items as well. That is, Arabic language has its own distinct and special manner of using them, which may or may not overlap with the usage of prepositions in other language(s). Research revealed that the context sensitivity of Arabic prepositions as well as their Arabic language specificity constitute the main two reasons behind the difficulty of mastering their usage by non-native learners of Arabic language⁴². The basic functional significances of the 'true' Arabic prepositions are as follows:

*Bi*⁴³ signifies *al-ilṣāq* (affixing); *fi*⁴⁴ signifies *al-ẓarfīyya* (adverbial); *alā*⁴⁵ signifies *al-isti'lā'* (superiority); *li*⁴⁶ signifies *al-ikhtīṣāṣ* (habitual belonging); *ilā*⁴⁷ signifies *intihā'* *al-ghāya* (end of destination); *min*⁴⁸ signifies *ibtidā'* *al-ghāya* (star of destination); and *an*⁴⁹ signifies *al-mujāwaza* (going beyond).

4. Syntactic and Semantic Characteristics of AIPVs

Arabic verbs have been classified into six main categories as to their syntactic relationships with the prepositions they combine with. They are⁵⁰:

- 1) Verbs that typically require prepositions. E.g., *intaqama*, which requires the preposition *min* (to take revenge on someone), and *takhlīlā*, which requires the preposition *'an* (to abandon, relinquish something).
- 2) Transitive verbs that can optionally take prepositions. E.g., *zāda*, which may occur with *min* (to increase something), and *baḥatha*, which may occur with *'an* (to search someone, something).
- 3) Intransitive verbs that use prepositions in construction with a noun phrase. E.g., *sahira 'alā* (to watch over someone), and *ḍaḥikamin* (to laugh at someone, something).
- 4) Verbs which are passive either in form or meaning, in which prepositions mark an underlying agents. E.g., *'ukhitha bi-* (to be influenced by something), and *'u'jiba bi-* (to admire someone, something).

⁴¹ For more detail see Al-Rummāni, Abi al-Ḥassan Ali bin 'Isā (2005). *Ma'ānī al-Ḥurūf*. Al-Maktaba al-'Asryya. Beirut, Lebanon. Al-Shamsān (1986) provides a table for each preposition and the verbs with which it combines (pp. 224-253) and elaborates on the semantic meaning of seven prepositions ('ilā, bī-', 'alā, 'an, fī, li-, and min) (pp. 733-738).

⁴² Aldaresh. A. Y. (2013). Context Sensitivity and Language Specificity of Arabic Verb-Preposition Structure: The Case Study of English Learners of Arabic. *International Journal of Linguistics*. Vol. 5. No. 3. ISSN 1948-5425. Doi: 10.5296/ijl.v5i3.3933, p.188.

⁴³ Other associated meanings of *bī* include: *al-tab'īd* (partition), *al-sababiyya* (cause), *al-muṣāḥaba* (accompanying), *al-ta'diya* (transitivity), *al-isti'āna* (assistance), *al-ẓarfīyya* (adverbial), *al-isti'lā'* (superiority), *al-mujāwaza* (going beyond), *al-badal* (replacement), *al-'awaḍ* (compensation), *al-ta'līl* (justification), *al-qasam* (oath), and *intihā'* *al-ghāya* (end of destination). Cf. Dāwood, 2002, pp.1:30-31; Al-Shamsān, 1986, pp. 733-738.

⁴⁴ Other associated meanings of *fī* include: *intihā'* *al-ghāya* (end of destination), *al-isti'lā'* (superiority), *al-ilṣāq* (affixing), *al-muṣāḥaba* (accompanying), *al-'awaḍ* (compensation), *al-ta'līl* (justification), *al-muqāyasa* (analogy), and *al-sababiyya* (cause). Cf. Dāwood, 2002, pp.1:30-31; Al-Shamsān, 1986, pp. 733-738.

⁴⁵ Other associated meanings of *alā* include: *al-mujāwaza* (going beyond), *al-ẓarfīyya* (adverbial), *al-ilṣāq* (affixing), *al-ta'līl* (justification), *ma'nā ba'da* (the meaning of after), and *al-muṣāḥaba* (accompanying). Cf. Dāwood, 2002, pp.1: 30-31; Al-Shamsān, 1986, pp. 733-738.

⁴⁶ Other associated meanings of *li* include: *istihqāq* (deserving), *mulk* (possession), *al-tabayn* (clarifying), *al-ṣayrūra* (act of becoming), *al-ta'līl* (justification), *al-nasab* (attribution), *al-tablīgh* (reporting), *ma'nā 'inda* (the meaning of having), *intihā'* *al-ghāya* (end of destination), *al-mujāwaza* (going beyond), *al-isti'lā'* (superiority), *al-ẓarfīyya* (adverbial), and *al-ta'diya* (transitivity). Classical Arabic grammarians and linguists have given a great deal of attention to this preposition. Az-Zajājī (d. 337 H) dedicated a whole monograph to account for its properties. He distinguished thirty-one types of the letter *lām* some of which overlap. Sibawayh refers to the meaning of *mulk* and *istihqāq* in *lām al-garr* or *lām al-'idafa* in which it functions as "a particle making the noun or pronominal suffix annexed to it in *ḥālat al-garr* or the so-called 'genitive case'. Cf. Dāwood, 2002, pp.1: 30-31; Al-Shamsān, 1986, pp. 733-738; Shboul, A. M. H. (1983). "Having" In Arabic. *Journal of Arabic Linguistics*. Otto Harrassowitz Wiesbaden. Heft 11, pp. 24-47, p. 30.

⁴⁷ Other associated meanings of *ilā* include: *ibtidā'* *al-ghāya* (star of destination), *al-ẓarfīyya* (adverbial), *al-ilṣāq* (affixing), *al-ikhtīṣāṣ* (habitual belonging), *al-tabayn* (clarifying), and *al-muṣāḥaba* (accompanying). Cf. Dāwood, 2002, pp.1: 30-31; Al-Shamsān, 1986, pp. 733-738.

⁴⁸ Other associated meanings of *min* include: *intihā'* *al-ghāya* (end of destination), *al-mujāwaza* (going beyond), *al-'isti'laa'* (superiority), *al-ẓarfīyya* (adverbial), *al-ilṣāq* (affixing), *bayān al-jins* (gender determining), *al-badal* (replacement), *al-tabayn* (clarifying), *al-ta'līl* (justification), *al-faṣl* (separating), and *al-tab'īd* (partition). Cf. Dāwood, 2002, pp.1: 30-31; Al-Shamsān, 1986, pp. 733-738.

⁴⁹ Other associated meanings of *an* include: *al-isti'lā'* (superiority), *al-ẓarfīyya* (adverbial), *al-ilṣāq* (affixing), *al-isti'āna* (assistance), *al-sababiyya* (cause), *al-badal* (replacement), *al-tabayn* (clarifying), *al-ta'līl* (justification), *al-faṣl* (separating), *ma'nā ba'da* (the meaning of after), and *al-tab'īd* (partition). Cf. Dāwood, 2002, pp.1: 30-31; Al-Shamsān, 1986, pp. 733-738.

⁵⁰ Lentzner 1977, pp. 155-195.

- 5) Verbs that involve two noun phrases introduced by prepositions. E.g., *samiḥabi-* (to permit someone to do something), and *'amlā 'alā* (to dictate something to someone).
- 6) Verbs that take one preposition for one meaning, another preposition for other meanings. E.g., *raghiba fi* (to desire something), and *raghiba 'an* (to detest something).

Semantically speaking, AIPVs are the product of combining Arabic prepositions '*hurūf al-jarr*' with proper verbs. In AIPVs the prepositions modify to a certain degree the basic significances of the verbs with which they combine. Therefore, changing a given preposition entails altering the meaning of the whole structure. In the very essence of AIPVs there exist a semantic interaction between the verb and the preposition. Such an interaction determines the degree of the AIPVs idiomaticity. The semantic affect that Arabic prepositions have on verbs entails a "semantic transfer" in that they affect the proper actions of the verbs to the extent that they change their dictionary meanings.⁵¹ Consider the following examples taken from the Qur'an:

*Wa 'ithādarabtumfi al-'arḍ*⁵² 'When you [believers] are travelling in the land'⁵³.

*Wa man yarḡhabu 'an millati 'Ibrāhīm*⁵⁴ 'Who but a fool would forsake the religion of Abraham'⁵⁵.

*'Ulā'ika allathīna 'imtahana Allahu qulūbahum li al-taqwā*⁵⁶ 'whose hearts God has proved to be aware'⁵⁷.

The prepositions *fi* in the first example has changed the original significance of the verb *ḍaraba* 'to blow/hit' into a new significance that is 'to walk or to travel'. The prepositions *'an* in the second example has changed the original significance of the verb *raghiba* (to like something and seek it) into a new significance that is 'to dislike something and go away from it'. The prepositions *li-* in the third example has changed the original significance of the verb *imtahana* 'to examine or evaluate something' into a new significance that is 'to prepare something for something else'⁵⁸. It is worth mentioning that some western scholars who dealt with Arabic grammar⁵⁹ have but some effort to establish some sort of systematicity between the classes of Arabic verbs and the prepositions they combine with on the basis of semantic cohesion. For instance, they assumed that because the Arabic preposition *min* signifies the casual point of departure, it is used with verbs meaning to sell and to give in marriage.

And because the preposition *'alā* means 'to be on, over' it is employed with verbs meaning 'to cover, to include' and 'domination' power⁶⁰. These analyses "while often intuitively valid, are nonetheless restricted by two facts: first, such statements are only generalities and cannot account for all instances of verb-preposition occurrence. Second, they are not precise enough to be able to predict which preposition will be used where"⁶¹. Nonetheless, researchers who scrutinised the phenomenon of AIPVs in the Qur'an have come up with some kind of regularity between the prepositions and the classes of Arabic verbs with which they combine. They assert that the prepositional typically collocates in the Qur'an with verbs signify *al-in'ām wa al-tafaddul* (bestowing favour); the preposition *'an* collocates with verbs signify *al-tejāwz wa al-ṣafḥ wa al-musāmaḥa* (pardon and forgiveness); and the prepositions *min* and *'ilā* collocate with verbs signify motion in time and place⁶². The point to be made here is that the non-transparent/metaphorical significance of AIPVs is affected by four distinct variables: 1) the original significance of the verb, 2) the contextual significance of the verb, 3) the associated meaning of the preposition (the special meaning understood from the preposition as a result of its combination with a verb), and 4) the object governed by the preposition, whether it is a human or non-human, indicating time or indicating place etc.⁶³. Thus, the relationship between the Arabic verbs and prepositions in AIPVs is multifaceted.

⁵¹Dāwood, 2002, p. 1:6; Lentzner, 1977, p.161

⁵² Q. 4:101

⁵³ Abdel Haleem, 2010, p. 95

⁵⁴ Q. 2:130

⁵⁵ Abdel Haleem, 2010, p. 21

⁵⁶ Q. 49:3

⁵⁷ Abdel Haleem, 2010, p. 516

⁵⁸ For more examples see Dāwood, 2002, p. 1: 6

⁵⁹ E.g., Wright, W. (1981). *A Grammar of the Arabic Language* (Third ed.). Beirut: Librairie Du Liban; Cantarino, V. (1974). *Syntax of Modern Arabic Prose*. Bloomington / London: Indiana University Press. Among others.

⁶⁰ Lentzner, 1977, p. 160

⁶¹ Ibid, pp. 160-161

⁶² Dāwood, 2002, pp. 1: 23-24

⁶³ CF. Al-Shamsān, 1986, p. 252 & p. 747; and Dāwood, 2002, pp.1: 21-22

It is of two concurrent dimensions. To use Firth's (1957-1986) terminologies, they are colligational⁶⁴ and collocation⁶⁵ dimensions. Arabic classical and modern grammarians have approached this subtle relationship by attending to four different but interrelated factors, namely: *al-ta'alluq* (verb-preposition relation/attachment/dependency), *al-ta'addī* (verb transitivity), *al-ināba* (preposition substitution) and *al-taḍmīn* (verb implication). To better investigate this intricate relationship, we believe that it is necessary to account for these factors so as to see to what extent they can affect the idiomaticity of this structure and, in turn, our understanding of them within the contexts in which they are employed.

4.1 *Al-ta'alluq* (Verb-Preposition Relation/Attachment/Dependency)

In his book *Dalā'il al-I'jāz*, while explaining his prominent notion of *al-Nazum* 'discourse arrangement', Abdul Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471 H) maintains that *al-Nazum* is nothing but relating types of speech to each other. Since there exist three types of speech in Arabic (nouns, verbs, and particles), *al-ta'alluq* is of three categories namely: relating a noun to another noun, relating a noun to a verb, and relating a particle to one of them. The latter category, in turn, is of three kinds one of which is relating a preposition to a verb, which would give that verb the sense of transitivity when it is an intransitive verb⁶⁶. The point to be made here is that *al-ta'alluq* means that the significance of the verb is completed by the preposition and the noun governed by that preposition⁶⁷. In other words, *al-ta'alluq* constitutes a link that complements the significance of the verb and joins the preposition and the noun it governs with that verb⁶⁸. Such a link makes the preposition and its object related and bound to the verb semantically "just as part is bound to its whole or a branch to its root"⁶⁹. Grammarians call such a verb *muta'alliq* (relator), and it is of two types with regard to its appearance in the sentence, namely: *zāhir* (stated/itemized) and *maḥthūf* (unstated/implicit). Despite the fact that *al-ta'alluq* is a precondition for AIPVs, only the former type of the *muta'alliq* is relevant to this study while the latter is not.

4.2 *Al-ta'addī* (Verb Transitivity)

Arabic verbs, in terms of transitivity⁷⁰, are of two categories: *af'āl muta'addiya binafsihā* 'transitive verbs which pass on to their objects through themselves', and *af'āl al-lāzima or af'āl muta'addiya bighayrihā* 'intransitive verbs which pass on to their objects through other means'⁷¹. There are some verbs, however, which can be used transitively and intransitively. In addition, there exist some doubly transitive verbs⁷², which can govern more than one direct object such as: *ra'ā* 'to see' and *wajada* 'to find'⁷³.

⁶⁴Colligation (*intizām*) refers to the grammatical conditions for combining a set of words. The English verb *prefer*, for example, colligates with *to* + infinitive as in *I prefer to go*. It does not colligate with the *-ing* form (CF. Daud, N., Dollah, N., & Zubir, B. (2003). *Linguistics Dictionary: English-Arabic Arabic-English*. Kuala Lumpur: A. S. Noordeen).

⁶⁵Collocation (*al-muṣāḥaba* or *al-taḍām*) refers to the frequent co-occurrence of words that have developed an idiomatic semantic relation. *Perform*, for instance, collocates with *operation*, *dog* collocates with *bark*, and *rancid* collocates with *butter* (CF. Daud et al. 2003).

⁶⁶Al-Jurjānī, Abdul Qāhir bin Abdirrahmān (1992). *Dalā'il al-I'jāz*. Edited by Mahmoud Muhammad Shākir. Maṭba'at al-Madanī. Cairo. Egypt, pp. 4-7.

⁶⁷Heliel, 1994, p. 146. See also Al-Daḥdah, A. (2009). *Mi'jam Qawā'id al-Lughati al-'Arabyati fī Jadāwil wa Lwḥāt*. Maktabat Lubnān Nāshirūn. Beirut, Lebanon, p. 21.

⁶⁸Al-Labādī, M.S. 1986, *Mu'jam al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Nahwyya wa al-Ṣarfyya*. 'Ammān: Dār al-Furqān. Cited in Heliel, 1994, p.146

⁶⁹Hassan, 'Abbās (1963). *Al-Nahū al-Wāfi*. Third Edition. Dār al-Ma'ārif. Cairo. Egypt, pp. 2: 405-406. Cf. Lentzner, 1977, p. 29.

⁷⁰Classic scholars who studied the notion of transitivity include: Sibawayh, Abu Bishir 'Amr bin Qanbar (1977). *Al-Kitāb*. Edited by 'Abdul Salām Hārūn. Al-hay'a al-Maṣryya al-'āma lil kitāb. Cairo. Egypt, p. 1:34 and beyond; Al-Mubarrid, Abu al-'Abbās Muhammad bin Yazīd (1965). *Al-Muqtaḍab*. Edited by Muhammad Abdul Khāliq 'Aḍima. Al-Majlis al-'Alī lil Shi'ūn al-Islāmiyya. Cairo. Egypt, p. 3:187 and beyond; Ibn al-Sarrāj, Abu Bakr Muhammad bin al-Sarrāj bin Sahl (1973). *Al-Aṣul fī al-Nahū*. Edited by Abdul Hussain al-Fatī. Maṭba'at al-'A'zamī. Baghdad. Iraq, p.1:203 and beyond; Al-Jurjānī, Abu Bakr Abdul Qāhir bin Abdul Rahman (1982). *Al-Muqtaṣid fī Sharḥ al-'Idāh*. Edited by Kāzīm Bahrūl Marjān. Wizarat al-Thaqāfa wa al-'Ilm al-'Irāqyya. Baghdad. Iraq, p. 1:628 and beyond; Ibn Jinī, Abu al-Faṭḥ Uthmān (1954). *Al-Khaṣā'is*. Edited by Muhammad 'Alī al-Najjār et al. Maṭba'at al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī. Cairo. Egypt, p. 2:214 and beyond; Ibn Jinī, Abu al-Faṭḥ Uthmān (1954). *Al-Munṣif*. Edited by Ibrāhīm Mustafā and Abdullāh Amīn. Maṭba'at al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī. Cairo. Egypt, p. 1:84 and beyond; Ibn Jinī, Abu al-Faṭḥ Uthmān (1972). *Al-Luma'*. Edited by Fa'iz Fāris. First Edition. Dār al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya. Kuwait. P. 51; Ibn Hishām, Abu Muhammad Abdullāh Jamāluddīn bin Ahmad bin Abdullāh (1953). *Shuḥūr al-thaḥab*. Edited by Muhammad Muhyiddīn Abdulhamīd. Sixth edition. Al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā. Cairo. Egypt, p.354 and beyond; Al-Siūfī, Jalaluddīn Abdul Rahmān bin Abi Bakr (1327H). *Ham' al-Hawāmi' Sharḥ Jam' al-Jawāmi'*. Edited by Badruddīn al-Na'sāni. First edition. Maṭba'at al-Sa'āda. Cairo. Egypt, p. 5:9 and beyond. Cf. Qinano, A. (2005). *Al-Mutqan: Mi'jam Ta'adi al-Af'āl*. Dār al-Ratīb al-JJāmi'yya. Beirut, Lebanon.

⁷¹ cf. Heliel, 1994, p. 144

⁷² Lentzner, 1977, p. 161

⁷³ Al-Shamsān, 1987, p. 39

Al-af'āl al-lāzima 'intransitive verbs' signify actions indicating movement and transport of the agent, whereas *al-af'āl al-muta'adya* 'transitive verbs' signify actions that surpass the agent to its surrounding world. They include actions indicating all activities undertaken by the agent within its environment⁷⁴. There is no clear cut, however, between these two categories of the Arabic verb. Verbs may be used transitively and intransitively depending on the communicative purpose of their usage⁷⁵.

Arabic grammarians identify three means by which an intransitive verb can be made a transitive one, they are: 1) introducing *hamza* to it (e.g. *thahaba* 'to go' and *'athhaba* 'to make something/someone to go'); 2) doubling the second radical letter of it (e.g. *fariha* 'to be happy' and *farraha* 'to make someone happy'); and 3) using prepositions (e.g. *thahaba* 'to go' and *thhaba 'ilā* 'to go to')⁷⁶. Hence, one of the major functions of Arabic prepositions is to transitivise the intransitive verb⁷⁷. Therefore, combining a preposition with a verb may change its functionality from a transitive verb to an intransitive one and vice versa. E.g. the verb *thahaba* is an intransitive verb. It becomes a transitive one when combines with the preposition *bi-*' as in the following Qur'anic verse⁷⁸: *thahaba Allahu bi nūrihm*⁷⁹ 'God takes away all their light'⁸⁰. Whereas the verb *khālaḥa* in the following example is a transitive verb and becomes an intransitive one when combines with the preposition *'an* as in⁸¹: *faliyahḥzar allathīna yukhālifūna 'in 'amrihi*⁸² '... and those who go against his order should beware...'⁸³.

4.3 *Al-ināba*⁸⁴ (Preposition Substitution) and *Al-taḍmīn* (Verb Implication)

The broadness of semantic range of the Arabic verbs and prepositions and the overlap occurs among their significances have made investigating the issues of *al-ināba* and *al-taḍmīn* gain a great deal of interest amongst classical and modern scholars alike. These two issues are interrelated to the extent that one cannot deal with them separately. *Al-ināba* means that a preposition may substitute another preposition in some contexts. Sybawayhi (d. 180 H.) attributes such a substitution to two main reasons: 1) diversity of Arabic dialects; and 2) significances' likeness of the prepositions⁸⁵. Whereas *al-taḍmīn* means that the significance of a verb may include a significance of another verb, which entails employing a preposition not typically combines with that verb, it is rather combines with the other verb that its significance is incorporated⁸⁶.

The majority⁸⁷ of classical and modern Arabic linguists are in favour of the notion of *al-taḍmīn* and accept the fact that verbs may incorporate significances of other verbs in some particular contexts. Yet, they are of three opinions as to the notion of *al-ināba*⁸⁸. Some of them (mostly from al-kūfa school) accept as a fact that prepositions may substitute other prepositions in some occasions. Others (mostly from al-Basra school) disagree, and attribute the co-occurrences of some prepositions with verbs that do not usually combine with them to the above-mentioned notion of *al-taḍmīn*. Others (such as Ibn al-sarrāj d.316H) steer a middle ground by accepting the notion of *al-ināba* with a condition that the prepositions in question have a similar significance, as in the prepositions *fī* and *bi-*⁸⁹ and the prepositions *li* and *'ilā* that can be used interchangeably⁹⁰. What is relevant to our study here is that *al-taḍmīn* confirms the fact that verbs implied new significances when they co-occur with prepositions with which they do not usually combine⁹¹.

⁷⁴ Al-Shamsān, 1986, p. 17

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 749

⁷⁶ Al-Shamsān, 1987, pp. 22-45

⁷⁷ For other transitivity particles see Al-Shamsān, 1987

⁷⁸ Dāwood, 2002, p.1: 21

⁷⁹ Q. 2:17

⁸⁰ Abdel Haleem, 2010, p. 5

⁸¹ Dāwood, 2002, p.1: 21

⁸² Q. 24:63

⁸³ Abdel Haleem, 2010, p. 60

⁸⁴ Some scholars call it *al-ta'āqub* (succession). Cf. Dāwood, 2002, p. 1:32

⁸⁵ Sibawayh, (1977), p. 4:226

⁸⁶ Ibn Jinī, *Al-Khaṣā'is*, p.2: 308; Al-Shamsān, 1987, pp.68-72

⁸⁷ For scholars in favour of the notion of *al-taḍmīn* see: Al-Shamsān, 1987, p 171; and Al-'Atyya, 2008, p. 259.

⁸⁸ For more details see: Sibawayh, 1977, p. 4:217; Al-Mubarrid, 1965, 1:45; Al-Samarra'ī, F. (2002). *Ma'anī al-Nahū*. Dār al-Fikr. Beirut. Lebanon, p. 3: 7; and Hassan, 1963, p. 2: 496.

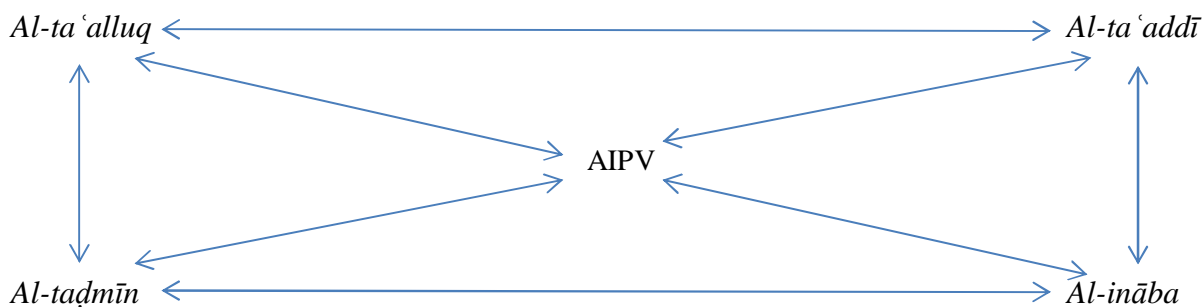
⁸⁹ Dāwood, 2002, pp.1: 32-37

⁹⁰ Lentzner, 1977, p.182

⁹¹ Al-'Atyya, 2008, p. 251

Ibn Jinī (d.392 H) maintains that using one preposition instead of another is not without a communicative purpose. Violating the norm of Arabic grammar by using a preposition other than the one typically combines with the verb at hand is undertaken here on purpose to communicate a subtle meaning and send a delicate message to readers/hearers⁹².

On the base of the aforesaid facts it is plausible to assume that these four factors (i.e., *al-ta'alluq*, *al-ta'addī*, *al-ināba*, and *al-taḍmīn*) control, to a great extent, the significances of both the verbs and the prepositions in any given context. They also control the degree of idiomaticity of the proper verbs and the prepositions when combining to form AIPV. Therefore, to understand the meaning of any given AIPV these four factors have to be taken into consideration. First of all one needs to know the *muta'alliq* (relator) of the given preposition, and then he/she needs to know the transitiveness of the verb at hand (whether it is a transitive or an intransitive verb). This would help in determining the significance of the preposition with which it combines, and in turn in determining whether the preposition in question is the one that typically combines with that verb or a substituted one (*al-ināba*) used since that verb carries a meaning of another verb (*al-taḍmīn*). The following diagram illustrates the interrelatedness of these four factors and their significance to the phenomenon of AIPV.



5 Register Variations of AIPVs

Unlike EPVs, which are less formal, less rhetorical and commonly used orally by everyone in everyday contexts, AIPVs are far more formal and highly rhetorical. As it has been shown in this study, they are typically used in formal settings such as literary works, religious contexts, press articles, etc. Most of them are confined to the written mode and used only by educated people from a certain sector of society and education. It is not uncommon, however, to hear AIPVs used by laypeople in informal colloquial Arabic with some modification of verbs forms imposed by the dialect-specific nuances. Three examples from the Egyptian colloquial will suffice:

Biyiğrī 'alā kūmat 'iyāl 'He is the breadwinner of for the troop of children'.

Bitimšī 'alā ḥalli ša 'rahā 'She is a scandalous woman'.

Yišrab min al-baḥr 'He can go stuff himself'.

The AIPV employed in these examples are *yīğrī 'alā* (literally: he runs ... on), *timšī 'alā* (literally: she walks ... on), and *yīšrab min* (literally: he drinks ... from) in that order.

6 Conclusion

This study has investigated the phenomenon of AIPVs, established a parameter for them, and outlined the key factors that control the syntactic and semantic relationships between their constituents. It has been shown that Arabic verb-preposition structure is of two types, namely: non-idiomatic/literal and idiomatic/metaphorical structures. The main parameter by which one can differentiate between these types is the idiomaticity, which is the very key feature of the latter. It is the idiomatic nature of the AIPVs that makes significances of both the verb and the preposition non-transparent and cannot be taken literally. Both components rather sacrifice their genuine significances and fuse together to produce new metaphorical significance, which greatly differs from their basic significances. The formertype of the structure, however, is a mere grammatical colligation between a verb and a preposition with no semantic collectability. Therefore, we believe that it shouldn't be included in the phenomenon of AIPVs.

⁹² cf. Ibid, 2008, 247p

The idiomatic tendency of AIPVs, along with their context sensitivity and language specificity, complicate the task of appreciating their intended meanings in different contexts by non-native learners of Arabic.

The study has also shown that the non-transparent/metaphorical significance of AIPVs is affected by four variables: the original significance of the verb, the contextual significance of the verb, the associated meaning of the preposition, and the object governed by the preposition. Each Arabic preposition has its own original semantic significance and a number of other associated meanings, which may overlap with the meanings of other prepositions. Not all Arabic prepositions, however, can collocate with verbs to form AIPVs. Only the 'true' locative and directional prepositions have the ability to do so. The study has demonstrated that there exist four key factors that govern the syntactic and semantic relationships of Arabic verbs and prepositions, they are: *al-ta'alluq*, *al-ta'addī*, *al-ināba* and *al-taḍmīn*. These factors delineate not only the significances of both the verbs and the prepositions but also the degree of their idiomaticity when merging to form AIPV. Finally, while AIPVs are predominantly formal and rhetorical expressions used by highly educated people, they may also be used by laypeople in informal colloquial Arabic.

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