Comparative Analysis of Written Form of Alif(ا) in Persian and Arabic Languages

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Abstract

Persian and Arabic languages both belong to the big Indo-European and Semitic languages; there are historically many deep roots between these two big languages. These roots are connected to each other while this lets many commonalities to exist. In spite of a lot of commonalities, one can overlook the differences between these two languages. Among different varieties, the written form of Alif(ا) is an example. Sometimes this difference encounters the learners with problems. In addition, considering of Alif(ا) as aboriginal among grammatical letters has added to this difficulty because considering of this vowel as aboriginal makes the structure of words and writing more complex and difficult in this language. In this research which is done by library method and in an analytic form the researcher tries to use comparative analysis of written form of Alif(ا) in both languages and show the complexities of this vowel in Arabic language and expresses the reasons of these changes. The research admits that these complexities are the reasons for increasing its language capacity but in many cases written form may follow the pronunciation form and some of the writing problems can be solved by this method.

Keywords: written form, Alif(ا), Persian language, Arabic Language.
Introduction

Using Alif (ا) phoneme in Persian and Arabic languages was always different. In Persian language Alif (ا) is pronounced as it is written, that means the written form follows pronunciation form, but it isn’t true in Arabic language. This issue has provided some mistakes and confusions for Arabic language learners while reading or writing of words that include Hamza (ء).

The priority of this study is finding a solution for the above problem by asking this question: what method can solve the written problem for Alif (ا) vowel in Arabic language? It also suggests a hypothesis that «the correct method for words with hamza (ء) is to follow Persian pronunciation». Givi, Ahmad et al. (2002) were the researchers who conducted the same study titled «Persian language and punctuation». This book refers to how to write Alif (ا) in Persian and Arabic languages. In addition, there is another reference article written by Abdollahi, Hassan under title of «the nature of Alif (ا) and its method of writing». In this article, the writer has analyzed the usage of Alif (ا) and Hamza (ء) as two different vowels. Another source is an article written by Maroof, Yahya, who concerned with «Lyricism by using alphabet in Arabic and Persian poetry». The writer refers to Arabic alphabet taken from Phoenician visual signs and studies the Alif (ا) form and its usage. There is no proper solution in all these researches that suggested for writing Alif (ا) in Arabic language. The researcher tries to suggest a proper solution for this problem through contrasting Alif (ا) in Arabic and Persian languages.

1. Alif (ا) pronunciation in Arabic and Persian languages.

We change the mouth form to pronounce long vowel "ا". It means we open our mouth from up and down not the sides but we do it in Arabic just in a few cases. In other cases, we use articulatory speech and mouth like fathe pronunciation to pronounce elongated ā, ā. It means in Arabic language the long vowel a "ا, ا" is equivalent to elongated fathe or :

ا، آ = ـَ + ـَ

Persian: کتاب ـَت اب، < كتاب Ketâb

Arabic: كـِت ـَب دب، < كتاب Kitâb (Azarnoush, 2013,p10).

As there is a difference between Arabic or Persian languages in pronouncing Alif (ا), this study compares it in both languages.

2. The writing form of Alif (ا) in Persian language

Pronunciation differences for Alif (ا) in both languages led to many differences in its writing form in these languages. Evidently, Alif (ا) is always written in elongated form in Persian even in limited Arabic words entered into Persian language. Then words like «اعلي»، «بلوي»، «تولي»، «فولي»، «مستفتي» must be written «اع»، «بلوا»، «تو»، «فوا»، «مستثنا». (Givi, Ahmad, et al., 2006,p:25)

Note: Three proper nouns «کبری», «صثقیفی صغری» and «صثقیفی کبری» are written in this form «کبری», «صثقیفی صغری» and «صثقیفی کباری» (Givi, Ahmad, et al., 2006, p. 26).


In Persian writing due to the fact that written and pronunciation form are correspondent words like: الیه (ا) which are commonly written without Alif(ا) in Arabic language as must be written using Alif(ا) also words like: زکوة, حیوة, مشکوة, which are written with waw (واو) in holy Quran, they should be written in Persian language as زکوة, حیوة, مشکوة (Gilanee, Sameiee, 2010, p. 210). Words such as تمیکا, جنیکا, منتیکا, نسیکا, ممنیکا, مذکیرا and такدایا can be written as تمیکا, جنیکا, منتیکا, نسیکا, ممنیکا, مذکیرا and такدایا (Solhjoo, 1998, p. 350).

There is a rule in Persian punctuation that holds there must be a correspondence between writing and pronunciation forms as much as possible. This is what professor Ahmadiar quoted in 1943. (Abdollahi, 2012, p. 102). The reason why we have changed words like زکوة, حیوة, مشکوة to زکوة, حیوة, مشکوة but we haven’t changed تمیکا is nothing save its frequent use. Frequent words always behave differently whether in phonetic or writing form (Solhjoo, 1998, p. 350).

Attached tanvyn(ای) is on Alif(ا) in all Arabic words entered into Persian language. Although it is written but it isn’t pronounced. الشی, اصلی, مخصوصا, ماFAQ, منشینا, محبتی. Persian speakers usually delete tanvyn(ای) and pronounce it as an elongated a like: اصلی, ایدا, مطلبی, حقا (Abdollahi, 2012, p. 103).

As the researcher has already mentioned, Alif(ا) lacks complexities in Persian writing and pronunciation similar to Arabic. In general, The writing and pronunciation form of Alif(ا) is the same except form in the cases already mentioned.

3. Alif(ا) writing form in Arabic language

Alif(ا) is never used at the beginning of Arabic words because when it is motionless or silent it is called Alif(ا). As it is silent that cannot be used at the beginning of words. The result is that Alif(ا) is used in the middle or at the end of words. Alif(ا) in the middle of words is either a main letter and it is originally Waw «واو» or Ya «یا» as in Qual (قال), or Saar (سار). One of the ways to recognize Alif(ا) is by the aid of present tense first person form. If Alif(ا) has no change in the middle of the word is always written elongated like: إیمان, استغفار, معامله, انکسار.
An Alif(ا) which comes at the end if it is originally Ya"یاء" is written limited but if its original form is waw "واو" it is written elongated form.

Final Alif(ا) is written elongated in the following cases:

1. In verbs and nouns ending in Alif(ا) which is originally Waw "واو" like "دوغدا"، "الحمصا"، "اللقة".

2. In articles: "االی"، "علي"، "اما"، "الا"، "لأ"، "بلى"، "حتی".

3. In non-Arabic nouns "الامیر"، "المک"، "الملک"، "الملک" there are five exceptions like "موسي"، "بطاری"，"المرکز"، "المرکز"， "المرکز" "الملک" but the word "موسی" is written with limited Alif(ا) although it’s a non-Arabic word (Yamin.2001,p:67). The "متی" word is written like its original form with limited Alif(ا)

4. In grammatical words in which using of their forms is required "الان"، "النا"， "النا"但 there are some words except from it such as "الان"， "النا"， "الان" and demonstrative words like "اولئک"， "واو"، "النی"， "النی" and relative clause meaning "الان" (Abdollahi,2012,P97).

5. In case elongated words "البيضاء" و "الجدع" becomes limited or in words such as "البیضاء" و "الجدع" "الجدع" there will be some changes to be pronounced more easily for example Hamza(ة) would be written elongated "البيضاء"، "الجدع"، "الجدع"، "الجدع"، "اقتیاز"، "ملجا"، "ملجا". (Abdollahi,2012,P97).

6. There are some words among verbs and nouns ending to Alif(ا) which their original form is in Waw(واو) or Ya(يا) form and writing of them elongated or limited is possible like "بع"، "بی"، "الکا"، "الکا"، "الکا"، "الکا" and "الکا" / "الکا"، "الکا" / "الکا"، "الکا"، "الکا"، "الکا" / "الکا"، "الکا" / "الکا"، "الکا"، "الکا".

Note: Basrians write the Alif(ا) formed from Waw(واو) in three letter words elongated while Kufis write them limited although it is originally Waw(واو).

This action by Kufis is contrary to the principles for example in "الهدی" and "الصحی". Yet, many writers follow Kufis style (Yamin, 2001,p:67 ).

In Arabic script it is acceptable to delete Alif(ا) in following examples. It means Alif(ا) is not written but it is pronounced.

1. Demonstrative Ha(ها), whenever there is a demonstrative noun which is not started with Ta(تاء) or Ha(ها) like "ها"، "هؤلاء"، "هؤلاء". If the demonstrative noun starts with Ta(تاء) demonstrative Ha(ها) is not deleted like "هاتان"، "هاتان" and "هاتان". If the noun starts with Ha(ها) Alif(ا) can be deleted or not. "ها"، "ها"، "ها"، "ها" (Yamin 2001,P84).

2. Demonstrative noun Za(ذا) where there is a L(ل) to point to far away things is attached to it like "ذلك" and "ذلك".

3. Alif(ا) in words like "الله"، "النور"، "الرحمن"، "التي"، "الله"، "الله"، "الله"، "الله"، "الله" and "الله" (Abdollahi, 2012 p:101).
In the following cases Alif(ا) can be deleted:

1. In demonstrative Ha(ها) before pronouns start with Hamza(ه) like «ها» / «ها أنا» (Yamin 2001, P84)

2. In the vocative Ya(يا) when it is used after a noun started with Hamza(ه) such as «يا أبها» (Yamin 2001, P84) provided that there is no Alif(ا) after Hamza(ه). If there is Alif(ا) after Hamza(ه) it isn’t acceptable to delete it like «يا آن» (Alif(ا) / «ها آن» (Yamin 2012, p:101).

3. In the word Mae(مائه) while it is singular, or compound with numbers three to ten اشتريت مائه دفترًا و خمسانه ورقة«مئات» / «مئون») (Yamin 2001, P:87).


In Arabic writing Alif(ا) is extra in following cases, it means it is written but it isn’t pronounced:

1. After plural masculine Waw(و) in verbs provided that it is beside the verb like «المجتهدون نجحوا».

2. At the end of names having Tnuyn(ن) provided that it doesn’t end in round Ta(ت) or Hamza(ه) or a Hamza which there is Alif(ا) before it or Alif(ا) like «هشتريت کتابا و قلمًا و دواه» (Yamin 2001, p:87). If it ends in one of the mentioned cases there is no need to extra Alif(ا) for example «سمعت نيا سارا»، «شاهدت مدرسه»، «شاهدت فتى يحمل عصا».

It is better in Arabic language to follow Persian language in writing form of Alif(ا). It means as Alif(ا) is used elongated in different Persian words it is better to use the same strategy in Arabic language as much as possible to make learning Arabic for Persian learners. Consider words like «قول، ذَخْوٌ» and the like. In these words, they read Alif(ا) as an apposition of Ftahe(ا) the upper diacritic mark. They don’t consider Alif(ا) as an original one and relate it to Ftahe(ا) the upper diacritic mark and other letters. The researcher’s opinion is completely different from this idea. A word like «قول» changes to «قال» after Elal(ال) lenis of weak consonants. There is no change in the verbs meaning here but there is a change in the form, structure and its pronunciation. In general, researcher believes that when the form and structure of word change the base words used in it are original because they have given a new structure and form to the word; in other words, one can say the word has been transformed as its form is completely changed. Consider prepositions as an example. When a letter or letters are added to the third person singular root or base it makes a new word because the letter added to the root causes the word to get about twenty different meanings. In fact, the word has changed both structurally and lexically. So calling them prepositions is a common saying because they change the form and meaning when added. They are so effective that they change the words completely. So we can’t call them prepositions because they effect the structure and meaning of the word.

In Alif(ا) case and using it in words and verbs like «قول» and «ذَخْوٌ» it is completely true and Alif(ا) is a part of word’s structure so it is completely original here. In words e.g. «کتاب» and the like Alif(ا) is extra and it isn’t necessary to use Alif(ا) at the end of these words because it doesn’t make any change in the meaning and the pronunciation of word. When a letter is used in a word it should change either the meaning or pronunciation or both.
There are some disagreements among Basrians on attaching extra Alif(ا) to the present tense for example in «لن يضربوا» there is disagreement although plural Waw(واو) is used. Akhfash considers it as past and Amar supposes it as present and adds extra Alif(ا) to it but some other Basrians didn’t add extra Alif(ا) to it (Abdollahi, 2012 P:105). Alif(ا) can be said wherever there is the possibility of confusion to be recognized from the singular form of the verb. In verbs like تدعونَ and لاتدعو Writing Alif(ا) makes declension as silent and does not lead to making a mistake to recognize the plural masculine from singular. In these cases, Alif(ا) shouldn’t be considered extra because it forbids the reader from making a mistake. In addition, most of syntax experts in Waw(واو) don’t add extra Alif(ا) to nouns for example «شاربو الماء» because it is less common than the verb which gets plural Waw(واو). This is the reason why the possible mistake is overlooked even some of them avoid adding extra Alif(ا) to plural Waw(واو) because it is less possible to make a mistake (Astarabadi, 2001, P328). The researcher believes that nouns used as Mansoob (noun which gets the upper diacritic mark) it’s better not to use Alif(ا) like «اشترتي كتاب و قلم و دواء» It seems there won’t be any problem if Alif(ا) is deleted or it isn’t used.

Conclusions

The research results can be shown as follow

Alif(ا) as a vowel has an exact position in Persian language both in writing and pronunciation. The writing and pronunciation form of it is the same in Persian language, but it isn’t the same in Arabic language. This is the reason that Alif(ا) isn’t original and it is determined by Waw(واو) or Ye(ی). In Arabic language the written form and the pronunciation form of Alif(ا) are different in many cases. If the written form and the pronunciation form follow the same rule many writing problem will be solved in learning of Arabic language. So, the best way is that Alif(ا) and its written form follow Persian language. Although there will be a few deficiencies, it has a lot of advantages that its few deficiencies can be overlooked.

Alif(ا) should be accepted in Arabic language as a vowel in the sentence structure and avoid considering it as an extra or not original term, because when the form and pronunciation of a word changes, in fact, it is transformed and has created a new word with a new form and pronunciation, so the letters used in the new structure of the word are completely genuine and fixed. We should avoid using and writing words having Tnuyn(ی) in Arabic language because Nasb tnuyn(ی) is the sign of Nasb(ین) in these words. As all languages are constantly changing and Arabic language isn’t an exception to this rule and written form has to follow pronunciation form it is better for experts in Arabic language to look for some solutions.
References