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REVIEW ARTICLE

# Contrastive Analysis of English and Pashto Adjectives

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## Abstract

Language is a systematic means of communication that employs sound or conventional symbols. Using a foreign language can be problematic when attempting to communicate or translate written or spoken language from one's native language due to structural differences between languages. Among the most widely spoken languages in the world, English is understood by approximately half of the global population, though it is neither an official nor a second language in our country. Nonetheless, due to its significance, it is often taught as a foreign language at schools, institutes, and universities. As previously mentioned, Pashto, our language, shares both structural similarities and differences with English, which can pose challenges for learners. To address these difficulties in learning English, this paper presents a contrastive analysis of English and Pashto adjectives, examining the similarities and differences between them. The study employs a descriptive and contrastive methodology.

## Introduction

Contrastive analysis has been the matter of controversy for a long time. It has been used in the description of languages at least since the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe Fisiak J [1]. A contrastive methodology was explicitly formulated after the Second World War, when the importance of foreign language learning was recognized in the US, and research on immigrant bilingualism emerged Weinreich U [2], Haugen E [3]. English language has remained the language of education and medium of instruction for all subjects in most of the countries. Master in it is one of the prerequisites for admission into any higher institution, therefore, English become so important that we cannot avoid speaking or writing it in a way that is universally accepted. An appreciable degree of competence is expected from the learners of English. From this point of view, the language should be compared with each other in terms of grammar, linguistics, and so on, because a native students know all aspects in their language and don't have any problem while they are using different element of speech, for instance using verbs, pronouns, adverbs and adjectives. While they are learning other language they face up with problems or they are unable to specify the differences between the mother tongue and target language. So, the students always encounter the problems and teachers also ignore the fact. Thus in one way applied contrastive analysis and in the other way English grammar, are two important ways in English that must be considered, especially in the case those who learn English as a foreign language.

Adjectives are as a part of grammatical features in English. In this way contrasting target and mother tongue can help learners to improve their

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knowledge in target language. Considering these differences and similarities can enable the language learner to find their errors easily.

Adjectives are vital aspect of productive and receptive skills not only in English but also in other languages, so learning them can help to use the language correctly. This is why that is important to work on the difficult areas and reveal possible sources of difficulties that learners encounter in learning Pashto and English adjectives which can help students to learn language correctly. There was not enough empirical investigation in the case of contrasting Pashto and English grammatical features; one of them was a CA of adjectives in English and Pashto. There are several structural differences between English and Pashto that can make learning English challenging for Pashto speakers. Here are some examples:

**Word order:** English and Pashto have different word orders. In English, the typical word order is Subject-Verb-Object (SVO), whereas in Pashto, it is Subject-Object-Verb (SOV). This difference can lead to confusion for Pashto speakers when constructing sentences in English.

**Tense and Aspect:** English has a complex system of tenses and aspects that convey information about the time and continuity of an action. In contrast, Pashto uses a relatively simple system of past, present, and future tenses. Pashto speakers may find it challenging to master the intricacies of the English tense system.

**Articles:** English uses articles (a/an, the) to indicate whether a noun is general or specific. Pashto does not have articles, so Pashto speakers may struggle with when and how to use them in English.

**Adjectives:** English and Pashto use adjectives differently. In Pashto, the adjective usually comes after the noun, while in English, it often comes before the noun. Additionally, Pashto does not have a superlative form, which can lead to confusion for Pashto speakers when expressing degrees of comparison.

**Pronunciation:** English has a complex system of vowel and consonant sounds that may be difficult for Pashto speakers to accurately produce, particularly if these sounds do not exist in Pashto.

Overall, these structural differences can make learning English challenging for Pashto speakers, but with practice and guidance, it is possible to overcome these difficulties.

## English Adjectives

According to the Huddleston R, et al. [4], adjectives are properties of objects, persons and places which are related to age, size, shape, weight, color, merit or quality and so on. Adjective can be defined as modification of nouns and pronouns, modify means specifying the exact meaning of another word. As modifier, adjective does not change the basic meaning of the word it modifies, for instance 'a good teacher' is still a teacher. The modifier, 'good', merely tell us something more specific about the word it modifies. Adjectives may be more than one word which describe, limit or make its meaning more nearly exact. Other researchers do not limit adjective definition to the modification of nouns and pronouns, as Frank M [5], believed that all determiner such as articles, numbers, possessives, demonstratives, relatives and interrogatives, clauses and prepositional phrases are adjectives.

Quirk R [6], mentioned the four features for adjective; comparative and superlative forms, attributive position, predicative position, and pre-modified by identifiers, however, the modern researchers have called these features as traditional and nowadays are not further features of adjectives.

Adjective are divided into two major classes:

A. Simple adjectives that are subdivided into based and derived.

B. Compound adjectives that include phrase and clause.

A. **Simple adjective or normal adjectives:**

A.1. If they are preceded by the nouns they are called attributive and are different types as follow.

- Numerical (cardinal and ordinal): One, two, three, first, second, third and so on.

Twenty students are in the class.

- Quantitative: Some, more half, more than enough, etc.

The baby ate some cake.

- Qualitative: Size, color, smell, and so on. Interrogative: whose, which, what, and so on. She likes red car.

- Demonstrative: This, that, these and those, and etc.

That book is mine.

- Articles are special types of adjectives which are a, an, the.

The pen is there.

- Possessive adjectives my, our, your, and there are.

They came to my graduation party.

- Adjective can be used to describe color. the red book, give opinion about something a good teacher, describe size the tall woman, describe age an old woman, describe shape a square window, describe origin a Japan car describe something made of a plastic bag, describe distance a long walk, describe temperature a cold night, describe time a late end, use as noun adjunct, she is the crime reporter.

A.2. Predicative adjectives are considered as complements of verbs.

- After linking verbs, they are subject complement.

He felt excited. Her new coat seems tight.

"a verb expressing a perception, judgment, or change can allow its direct object to take an object complement" Garner B [7]. These verbs include paint, like, keep, find, make, etc.

I painted the plaster walls **white**. They found him calm.

- They can be object complement to a clause.

My teacher believes working hard is good.

A.2.1. Derived adjectives are formed by adding suffix to stems and they come before nouns, less (useless), -ly (locally), -y (faulty), -ous (famous), -like (manlike), -ish (selfish), -ful (helpful), -ic (comic), -al (national), -wide (nationwide), -ery (fishery). Some suffixes can be added to verb, for instance, -ing (surprising), ant (significant), -ed (interested), -ive (active), ible (visible), -ent (convenient), able (workable). Adding er and est to adjective stems for comparison, faster, fastest.

**B. Compound Adjectives: Compound adjectives are two forms of infinitives and participles.**

B.1. Infinitive adjectives: Can modify a noun or a sentence and they function as an adjectives.

Haroon needs water to drink. Here is your food to eat.

### B.2. Participial adjectives

Participial phrases as an object of a verb modify a noun or pronoun, and function as subject of preposition, a verb complement.

The crying baby kept her parents up all night.

She was really tired.

The boy talking to his father is deaf.

Haroon drew many pictures showing birds in flight.

B.3. Participial phrase can show cause of time in place of adverbial clauses.

Putting on her hat, Haroon ran out to see his mother (time).

Working hard all afternoon, he decided to go to bed early night (cause).

## Pashto Adjectives

Adjectives are called 'stāyanum' in Pashto language, which modify nouns in ways parallel to English that come before the nouns they modify.

[loy khān] [bigkhan] it means 'an important khan'

[Penza khkuli khazi] [five prett young-girls] it means 'five pretty girls'

Adjectives agree with the nouns they modify in gender, number and case.

MDS: [thirsty boy water wants] 'The thirsty boy wants water'

MDP: [thirsty boys water want] 'The thirsty boys want water'

FDS: [thirsty girl water wants] 'The thirsty girl wants water'

FDP: [thirsty girls water want] 'The thirsty girls want water.'

Adjectives also occur in predicates, as they do in English, with the Pashto equivalents of 'be' and with other predicates like 'become' [kege-] and 'seem' [khakar-]. These predicate adjectives agree with their subjects in gender, number, and case (which is always

direct, because predicate adjectives always occur in intransitive constructions). The examples above, the agreement can be seen with the noun 'mouth' [xulə] which is female, and adjective 'dry' [wach] which is Adjective.

Most adjectives can be used as nouns, in ways parallel to the English adjective poor in 'the poor ye always have with you' but more extensively than in English. (In many cases, the Pashto adjective-as-noun- translate as 'the \_\_\_\_\_ one', as can be seen in the example below.) In some dialects adjectives-as-nouns occur with adjectives ending, but others occur with noun ending; in the central dialect, however, any adjective that can be used as a noun takes on the ending of the noun class most similar to the adjective. In the example below, the adjective 'injured, hurt' is used as a male noun, direct plural form.

[Injured hospital to came]. 'The injured (ones) came to the hospital'

And in the coming example, the Adjective 'mounted, on horseback' [spor] is used as a female noun, direct plural form.

[Mounted wedding to came]. The mounted ones (f) (i.e. horsewomen) came to the wedding.'

Pashto adjectives also change according to the gender whereas nouns are either masculine or feminine, but not both. It means that the gender of a noun determine the gender of the adjectives that modify it. For instance, the form of the adjective for 'short' [tit] in the following phrases:

'Short boy' [tiṭ halak] 'short girl' [tiṭa najley]

### Types of Pashto adjectives

According to Pashto linguists, the classification of Pashto adjectives is contradictory. Rashtheen SA [8], identified six types of Pashto adjectives:

1. Descriptive adjective
2. Proper adjectives
3. Numeral adjectives
4. Demonstrative adjectives
5. Interrogative adjectives
6. Functional adjectives

The functional adjective further divided into two

parts: a. subject participle b. object participle. Hashimi SM [9], divided Pashto adjectives into two types:

**1. Descriptive adjective:** Are those adjectives which identify and clarify something, for example, [shakula baṅ] 'beautiful garden' [sha alak] 'good boy'.

**2. Comparative or descriptive adjectives:** Are those adjectives that compare one thing with another or one person with another or show the amount or degree of modification of one or more persons or things. It has two features:

A. Adding more [der] before adjective.

[da qalam ter hahga qalam der khkuli de] it means this pen is more beautiful than that pen.

B. adding more or most [zyāt] before adjectives to make both comparative and superlative degrees.

[zama waror ter ma dier hukhyar de] it means my brother is more/most clever than me.

Other examples:

[Haroon la Abubakar jag de] [Haroon from Abuakar from tall is] it means Haroon is taller than Abubakar.

[Khushal pa tolge ke tolo halakano zayat jag de] [khushal in class in from all boys from tall is] It means that Khushal is taller than all the boys in the class.

Taghey H, et al. [10], divided Pashto adjectives into four classes, two of which have sub-classes and also a very few irregular adjectives.

This class of adjectives have forms which are similar with masculine and feminine noun class forms which shown in table 1.

Adjective in this class have masculine forms which ends in [-ay] for the plural form add [-i] he feminine form which ends in [e] or [ə] the plural form ends in [-o] (Table 2) shows singular and plural form masculine and feminine.

The masculine direct singular ends in a consonant and plural ends in [ə] the masculine direct singular ends in [ə] and plural ends in [e] this is illustrated in table 3.

Adjective in this class for feminine and masculine singular ends in [-a] and plural ends in [-wo] as shown in table 4.

**Table 1:** Adjectives which are similar with masculine and feminine noun.

Male-noun	Direct singular: [tʰit] short'	Direct plural: [tʰit] short
Male-adjective	Direct singular: [tʰit] 'short'	Direct plural: [tʰito] shorts'
Female-noun	Direct singular: [tʰita] 'short'	Direct plural: [tʰite] 'short'
Female-adjective	Direct singular: [tʰite] short	Direct plural: [tʰito] shorts

**Table 2:** The singular and plural forms of Pashto adjectives.

<b>Male</b>	Direct singular: [tagy] thirsty	Direct plural: [tagey] thirstys
	Direct singular: [tagi] thirsty	Direct Plural: [tago] thirstys
<b>Female</b>	Direct singular: [tagi] thirsty	Direct Plural: [tago] thirstys
	Direct singular: [nary] thin	Direct Plural: [nareyo] thins

### Irregular adjectives

There are very few irregular adjectives in our Pashto word list. One of them is a group of adjectives the masculine singular forms of which end and in the syllable [-ar], for example 'skinny' [dangar]. Other examples of adjectives in this group are 'observant' [stargawar], 'brave' [zrawar], and 'fortunate' [bakhtawar].

The only irregular adjective is 'lively' [mastana], which is the same for masculine and feminine.

The feminine form for irregular adjectives are made by adding [a] at the end, for instance, 'skinny' [dangara], 'observant' [stargawara], 'brave' [zrawara], and 'fortunate' [bakhtawara].

### Order of adjectives

Adjectives in English come before a noun, they are usually put in a more or less the same order. For instance, (a nice handsome young man), Not (a handsome nice young man), (a big black Afghan car), Not (a black big Afghan car). In Pashto there is no such a limitation, and adjectives can come in any orders.

A fat old woman (= ywa ghata khaza)

An old fat woman (=ywa zara ghata khaza)

In Pashto, demonstrative adjectives, which modifies noun, come before nouns and like other adjectives, they have one form; they neither agree in gender nor in with noun that they modify. In Pashto we do not say [haghe ketabon] (= those books), however, we say [hagha ketabona] (= those books). Table 5 contains proximal and distal demonstratives

in English and Pashto.

### Compound forms

The basic demonstratives are combined with certain words and make compound demonstratives as shown in table 6.

More examples of proximal and distal adjectives;

- [Da ranga kitab]– such a book (Like English, the infinite article follows nouns)
- [Da ranga kitabona] – such books (English doesn't have plural indefinite articles)
- [Da dawal yani xalak] – such rich people
- [hagha la ma sara da dawal marasta wakra] – he did such a help with me.
- [Kala ham da khkule khobona ma wana] – Never dreamed of such beauty.

### Possession (Normal form)

Possessives come with noun phrase and show possession. Table 7 contains English and Pashto possessive adjectives.

**Table 3:** Direct masculine singular and plural form.

<b>Male</b>	Direct singular: [zeg] rough	Direct plural: [zega] roughs
<b>Female</b>	Direct singular: [zega] 'rough'	Direct plural: [zege] roughs

**Table 4:** The plural form of feminine and masculine which ends in [-a].

<b>Male</b>	Direct singular: [shysta] pretty	Direct plural: [shaysta] pretty or: [shaystawo] prettys
<b>Female</b>	Direct singular: [shaysta] pretty	Direct plural: [shaysta] pretty or: [shaystawo] prettys

**Table 5:** Proximal and distal demonstratives in English and Pashto.

Language	Proximal	Distal
Pashto	[da khawanze]	[hgha khawanze]
English	These schools	Those schools

**Table 6:** Compound forms of proximal and distal demonstratives in English and Pashto.

Language	Proximal	Distal
English	this/these/the same	that/those/the same
	Like this/these, such as ...this/these	Like that/those; such ...as that/those
Pashto	[da dawal]/[da ranga]	[hagha dawal]/[hagha ranga]

Examples of possessive adjectives in English and Pashto.

- [zama mor] – my mother.
- [hagha la mur sara mina lari] – she loves her mother.
- [sata num sa day] (singular) – what is your name.
- [staso numuna sa day] (plural) – what is your name.
- [hagha dars wae] – he studies the lesson.
- [hagha zama ketab paṭ karay] – he stole my book.
- [da haghe maktab band day] – her school is closed.
- [da hgha kor zama la kora kha day] – his house is better than me.

### Superlative adjective

Pashto has only two degree of adjectives, Pashto forms comparative statements like ‘Haroon is taller than Abubakar’ by means of prepositional phrases which do not involve special adjective suffixes like English comparative –er or superlative –est suffixes, and typically include the word ‘more’ [zayat or der] or ‘less/few’ [lag]. As shown in table 8.

**Table 7:** English and Pashto possessive adjectives.

Singular	Plural
[zama]/my	[zamung]/our
[sta]/your	[staso]/your
[hagha] (male)/his	[haghue]/their
[haghe] (female)/her	
[hagha] (animal or thing) its	

**Table 8:** Comparative and superlative adjectives of Pashto language.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
[kha] (good)	[der/zayat kha] (better than)	--- (the best)
[kharab] (bad)	[der/zayat kharab] (worse than)	--- (the worst)
[ghat] (big)	[der/zayat ghat] (bigger than)	--- (the biggest)
[kahayasta] (beautiful)	[der/zayat khayasta] (more beautiful)	--- (the most beautiful)

## Conclusion and Future Application

In conclusion, the comparison of various aspects of English and Pashto adjectives reveals both similarities and differences. While both languages make use of simple predicative and attributive adjectives, the absence of a superlative form in Pashto and the use of morphological constructions can lead to confusion and errors. Teachers must be aware of these differences and provide sufficient practice to overcome difficulties and achieve understanding. Contrastive analysis of Pashto and English adjectives can have several future implications, including the development of effective teaching strategies, bilingual dictionaries, and machine translation systems. Additionally, understanding the use of adjectives in both languages can help individuals navigate intercultural interactions more effectively. In summary, the contrastive analysis of Pashto and English adjectives can have significant implications for language teaching and learning, the development of language resources, machine translation, and cross-cultural communication.

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