

A Morphological Descriptive Analysis of Qatari Arabic Nouns

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Introduction:

Qatari Arabic is a form of the Arabic language. It is used by the native speakers of Qatar as a dialect¹ of Arabic. The social structure of the Qatari society is very similar to those of the Arabian Peninsula in origin, traditions, and customs. A dialect can be seen as a group of linguistic criteria which belong to a certain culture or society; and therefore, is used by the members of this society. It exists in the spoken form only since Qataris still use Modern Standard Arabic for writing. As a variant of Arabic, Qatari Arabic is similar to Standard Arabic in many respects; nevertheless, differences in the usage of constituents of grammatical categories do exist. Although the majority of words in Qatari Arabic are found in Modern Standard Arabic, noticeable differences between Qatari Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic are found in the areas of phonology and semantics. The morphological and syntactic differences exist in areas

¹ Languages develop dialects for a number of reasons. Arabic has various dialects such as Egyptian Arabic, Saudi Arabic, Najdi Arabic, Algerian Arabic, etc. This divergence happened because the use of Arabic is spread over a large geographical area; and because it is used by different groups of people. This resulted in developing dialects which are related to specific societies. Dialects are seen by Mutter (1985) as historical documents because of the relationships they reveal which are affected by society and its customs and traditions.

such as verb conjugations, noun pluralizations, definite / indefinite markers, sentence formation, etc.

There are several studies of Qatari Arabic as a language but none of them addressed any of the parts of speech morphologically. Al-Muhannadi (1991) addressed speech variations among Qatari Females. Ingham (1986) studied the dialect of 'Al-Murra', a tribe who lives in Qatar, trying to come to common linguistic characteristics with other eastern and southern Arabian dialects; in his study, however, there is no section devoted to the morphology of Qatari Arabic. Mutter (1986) studied the etymology of some nouns in Qatari Arabic but did not discuss their morphology. In (1984) he investigated the linguistic origins of geographical names in Qatar; and in (1976) he examined the drop of the [h] sound after vocatives in Qatari Arabic and he studied the pronunciation of one form of Qatari Arabic nouns which is pronounced similar to the same noun form in Classical Arabic. Aleasa (1983) studied loan words in Qatari Arabic. Al-Amadidhi (1985) studied lexical and sociolinguistic variation in Qatari Arabic. Bukshaisha (1985) studied some aspects of Qatari Arabic of phonetics.

To any language, obviously, word classes form an essential part of grammatical analysis. A 'word class' is a term that stands for any group of words which share the same morphological and syntactic features. In Qatari Arabic, there are two types of word classes: open word classes and closed word classes. The open class members are Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives and Adverbs. The closed class members are pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, articles, numerals and quantifiers. Closed class members can be shown as either separate words (free morphemes), or as affixes (bound morphemes) as in Qatari Arabic articles.

Some classes contain sub-classes. The class of pronouns in Qatari Arabic contains several sub-classes such as personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, etc. Closed number of words classes in

Qatari Arabic are restricted to a fixed and do not allow the addition or formation of new words. Open classes on the other hand, have a large number of words and allow the addition or formation of new words in both languages.

Qatari Arabic open word classes are inflectional. The role of inflections in grammar is to show ideas such as number, person, tense, aspect, etc. without changing the class membership. For Example, the class of nouns is inflected for the plural:

Singular	Plural	
[tʃalb] 'dog'	[tʃla:b] 'dogs'	(Qatari Arabic) ²

The class of verbs is inflected for tense, for example:

Present	Past	
[jamʃi] 'walk'	[miʃa] 'walked'	(Qatari Arabic)

Grammatical constituents such as verbs are also formed in Qatari Arabic. There are Noun Phrases, Verb Phrases, Adjective Phrases, etc. They are named after the word class to which the most important word in the phrase belongs, which is known as the head of the phrase. The head of a verb phrase is the verb and the head of a noun phrase is the noun and so on.

The verification of the data used in Qatari Arabic was done by native Qataris in addition to the researcher who is a native Qatari, too. The main objective of this paper is to describe the morphology of Qatari Arabic nouns.

² Words from Qatari Arabic are referred to in phonetic transcription. A gloss for the symbols of sounds used in Qatari Arabic is found in Appendix (1) at the end of this paper. The key symbols of the consonant and vowel transcription used in this paper are IPA symbols.

THE NOUN:

Nouns form the heads of noun phrases which are in turn arguments of predicators. For example, the noun fire refers to an event involving burning while the word burn relates arguments to an event. If we say:

The fire burned the book.	English
[ilfi:ɔh firagat ilkta:b]	Qatari Arabic
'The fire burned the book'	(translation)

The word fire is a noun which refers to something (an event) and the verb burn is a way of relating to that something (that event).

1. The Sub-classes of Nouns:

The class of nouns employs terms to refer to people, places, things, activities, states, events and abstract qualities. These different references are made through the following sub-classes of nouns: Proper Nouns and Common Nouns. In some languages of the world, nouns are inflected for gender, which means that the noun could be masculine, feminine and neuter as in German. Some languages show only masculine and feminine distinctions as in French. Other languages carry no gender at all as in English. Nouns are marked for the plural in most languages of the world; and Qatari Arabic nouns are, also, inflected for the plural and the dual.

The sub-classes of nouns will be discussed with respect to the areas of gender, number and the use of the article in addition to distinctions such as definite / indefinite and specific / generic. Therefore, it is necessary to get acquainted with the terms gender, number, and article.

There are two main sub-classes of nouns in Qatari Arabic. They are Proper Nouns and Common Nouns. Proper nouns refer to the names of specific people, places, countries, magazines, days and so on. For example, Ahmed, Mariam are proper nouns which refer to people: [do:ʔa]

'Doha', [landan] 'London' are proper nouns which refer to places; [gitar] 'Qatar', [masir] 'Egypt' are proper nouns which refer to countries; [zahret ilXali:d3] 'name of a magazine' is a proper noun which refers to a magazine; [ildum:rah] 'Friday', [ilsabt] 'Saturday' are proper nouns which denote days.

Common nouns in Qatari Arabic are sub-classified as count nouns and non-count nouns. Count nouns refer to countable entities which can be referred to individually such as [kirse:] 'chair', [kta:b] 'book', [ku:b] 'cup', [be:t] 'house', etc. Non-count nouns, also known as mass nouns, refer to uncountable entities such as [hibir] 'ink', [fe:] 'rice', [sinab] 'grapes', etc.

Collective nouns from another group of Qatari Arabic nouns. These are nouns that require singular verb agreement when used as subjects, although their semantics meaning is always plural as in the following examples:

- (1) [idija:j ibi:ʕ..]

chicken (collective noun) lay eggs.
- (2) [ittuma:t irXi:s]

The tomatoes (collective noun) is cheap.

There are nouns in Qatari Arabic which are derived from verbs, examples are:

Verb	Derived Noun
[wisal] 'he arrived'	[wusu:l] 'arriving, arrival'
[ʕagg] 'he tore'	[ʕagg] 'tearing'
[sibaħ] 'he swam'	[siba:ħah] 'swimming n.'
[sallam] 'he greeted'	[sala:m] 'greeting'

In addition to the sub-classes of nouns mentioned above, there are nouns of foreign origin which are found in Qatari Arabic [ba:s] 'bus', [se:kal] 'bicycle', [pankəh] 'fan', etc.

2. Gender:

Gender is a grammatical category which is used to show distinctions such as masculine / feminine / neuter when words are analyzed. Crystal (1980:158) distinguishes between natural gender and grammatical gender when he says:

" ... to distinguish **natural gender**, where items refer to the sex of real-world entities, and **grammatical gender**, which has nothing to do with sex, but which has an important role in signalling grammatical relationships between words in a SENTENCE The gender SYSTEMS of French, German, Latin, etc are grammatical, and shown by the FORM of the ARTICLE (e.g. *le* vs. *la*) or of the noun (e.g. nouns ending in *-a* are feminine)."

Gender as a grammatical category may not be a feature in some languages as in English. It is found in English only where the distinction between the pronouns he / she / it is needed. Many linguists see that gender in English is not a grammatical category of great influence; but it is seen more as a semantic category. Huddleston in (1984:289) states:

"Gender is however, a category of very minor significance in English..... We cannot divide English nouns into three classes masculine, feminine and neuter, such that *he*, *she* or *it* is required as the corresponding anaphoric pronoun. Rather, the choice between pronouns is determined semantically, Typically, *he* is used of males, *she* of females and *it* elsewhere"

Gender as a grammatical category applies to Qatari Arabic. Nouns in Arabic, as well as, in Qatari Arabic are inflected for masculine and feminine genders. The idea of masculine and feminine is a common phenomenon in Semitic languages. Some Arab linguists, as Al-Dajni (1979:208), relate the phenomenon of gender (a translation from Arabic):

" ... the ancient Semitic people used to differentiate between the masculine and feminine in the language not through grammatical means, but rather by a word for the masculine and another for the feminine."

Many other Arab linguists believe that the phenomenon of masculine and feminine gender went through a great deal of confusion due to the un-unified state which the Arabic language suffered from. But when Islam came, the Arabic language became one unified language because of the Holy Qur'an.

Gender appears in both proper and common nouns in Qatari Arabic. Usually in Arabic, the basic form of the noun is that which carries the masculine gender, the same rule applies to Qatari Arabic. The masculine gender is always unmarked in Qatari Arabic nouns as in the following examples:

Masculine Nouns

[kta:b]	'book'
[rajja:l]	'man'
[t{alb}]	'dog mas.'
[gallam]	'pen'

The feminine gender can be either unmarked or marked. The form of the noun is unmarked when the noun shows no mark whatsoever i.e. an affix that relates to the feminine gender. The noun can be marked for gender when the form of the noun carries a mark such as a suffix which

indicates the feminine gender. Some examples of feminine nouns that are unmar:

Unmarked Feminine Nouns

[ʔams]	'sun'
[na:r]	'fire'
[ʔe:n]	'eye'

Qatari Arabic noun forms which show the feminine gender marker can be identified by the morpheme {əh} as a suffix derived from the Standard Arabic feminine morpheme {ət} which is also a suffix that has two allomorphs /əh/ and /ət/ pronounced as [əh] and [ət] respectively. The allomorph /əh/ of Standard Arabic is used in Qatari Arabic to mark the feminine gender for the majority of feminine nouns, it is pronounced as [əh]. Qafisheh (1977) refers to the feminine gender marker of nouns in Gulf Arabic dialects as -a, but in Qatari Arabic the marker is actually [əh] or [ət] depending on the use of the word. The pronunciation of the feminine marker in Qatari Arabic has been verified by Qatari natives as well as the researcher. Therefore, the feminine gender marker in Qatari Arabic will be referred to as {əh} and not -a as Qafisheh states. The -a feminine marker could apply to other Gulf Arabic dialects. The feminine gender in Qatari Arabic is found not only in nouns such as [ka:tibəh] 'a writer', a common noun, but whialso in adjectives such as [na:jməh] 'asleep fem.' which is used as a modifier of feminine nouns.³ The allomorph /ət/, which is pronounced [ət], is also found in Qatari Arabic as a marker of feminine nouns in compounds such as [sala:t ildʒuməh] which

³ Some adjectives in Qatari Arabic which modify feminine nouns could be found in forms for the masculine gender as in [marəh sabu:r] 'a patient woman'. The adjective has the masculine form although it modifies a feminine noun. This form is usually used for literary expressions. The forms [sa:brəh] and [səbu:rəh] 'patient: in the feminine form' also exist in Qatari Arabic.

means 'Friday prayer' and [kʊrət ilqadam] which stands for 'football'. But as for non-compound nouns which carry the feminine gender, the marker is normally the allomorph /əh/. Proper Nouns, which are used for animate nouns, are divided into masculine for nouns which refer to males such as Ahmed, Ali etc.; and feminine for those which refer to females such as Fatma, Mariam etc.

3. Number:

The class of nouns in Qatari Arabic is inflected for the plural as in [kʊtɑ:b : kʊtub] for 'book : books' using the process of 'morpheme internal change'.

The plural is a grammatical category which shows the distinction between singular and plural 'more than one'. This category exists in the majority of the languages of the world.

Qatari Arabic also displays the feature of the plural which means 'more than two' next to the feature of the dual which means 'two'. There are two types of plural formation in Qatari Arabic, one is the Regular Plural where a process of suffixation operates on some count noun forms and the other is the Broken Plural where a morpheme internal change process operates on other count noun forms.

(1) The Regular Plural:

The formations of the Regular plural and the dual of nouns in Qatari Arabic is done by means of bound morphemes in the form of suffixes. Masculine nouns use different morphemes for the formation of the plural and the dual than those used for the formations of feminine nouns. Qatari Arabic nouns, which are inflected for gender, take their basic noun forms from the singular masculine nouns.

To form regular plural for masculine nouns in Qatari Arabic, the allomorphs of the morpheme {in}, /an/ (pronounced [a:n]) and /in/

(pronounced as [i:n]) are attached as suffixes to the singular masculine form. [i:n] is used with the masculine noun forms without affecting the structure of the original noun form as in the following examples:

Singular	[i:n] Plural
[mudarris] 'male teacher'	[mudarrisi:n] 'male teachers'
[tājja:r] 'male pilot'	[tājja:ri:n] 'male pilots'
[sabba:k] 'male painters'	[sabba:k:n] 'male painters'
[muhandis] 'male engineer'	[muhandisi:n] 'male engineers'

The [a:n] plural marker for masculine nouns, on the other hand, is added to those nouns that also undergo morpheme internal change when pluralized. In this type of process the long vowels of nouns are mutated, changed, or deleted first then a process of suffixation takes place by the addition of [a:n] to the end of the noun as the following examples show:

Singular	[a:n] Plural
[qami:s] 'shirt mas.'	[qumsa:n] 'shirts mas.'
[ʔaza:l] 'deer mas.'	[ʔizla:n] 'deer mas.'
[siba:l] 'monkey mas.'	[sibla:n] 'monkeys mas.'

To form dual masculine nouns in Qatari Arabic, the morpheme {en}, which is pronounced as [e:n], is added as a suffix to the singular masculine noun.

Singular	[e:n] Dual
[mudarris] 'male teacher'	[mudarrise:n] 'two male teachers'
[tājja:r] 'male pilot'	[tājja:re:n] 'two male pilots'
[sabba:k] 'male painters'	[sabba:k:e:n] 'two male painters'
[muhandis] 'male engineer'	[muhandise:n] 'two male engineers'
[qami:s] 'shirt mas.'	[qami:se:n] 'two shirts mas.'

[kaza:l]	'deer mas.'	[kaza:le:n]	'two deer mas.'
[siba:l]	'monkey mas.'	[siba:le:n]	'two monkeys mas.'

The plural of feminine nouns in Qatari Arabic is made by adding through the morpheme {at}, which is pronounced as [a:t]. It is a suffix added to the basic masculine form of the noun. When this is done, the singular feminine form of the noun loses its feminine gender marker {at} first and then the feminine plural marker is attached to it as in:

Singular	[a:t] Plural
[mudarris] 'male teacher'	[mudarrisa:t] 'female teachers'
[mumariʃ] 'male nurse'	[mumariʃa:t] 'female nurses'
[dikto:r] 'male doctor'	[dikto:ra:t] 'female doctors'

When the noun has no basic masculine form especially in the case of non-human or non-living beings, it loses its feminine gender marker, {at}, first and then the feminine plural marker is added as in:

Singular	[a:t] Plural
[fabaj] 'veil fem.'	[fabaja:t] 'veils fem.'
[maʃaj] 'eraser fem.'	[maʃaja:t] 'erasers fem.'

The dual of feminine nouns in Qatari Arabic is made by adding the morpheme {ten}, which is added, also as a suffix, to the basic masculine form of the noun. It is pronounced as [te:n].

Singular	[te:n] Dual
[mudarris] 'male teacher'	[mudarriste:n] 'two female teachers'
[mumariʃ] 'male nurse'	[mumariʃte:n] 'two female nurses'
[dikto:r] 'male doctor'	[dikto:rte:n] 'two female doctors'

But the dual of feminine nouns, which refer to non-human or non-living beings, is made in a way that is similar to forming their plural, i.e, by first deleting the feminine marker and then adding the dual marker for the feminine as in:

Singular	[te:n] Dual
[ʔabaj] `veil fem.'	[ʔabajte:n] `two veils fem.'
[maʔaj] `eraser fem.'	[maʔajte:n] `two erasers fem.'

Exceptions do exist with some masculine nouns which form their plurals by using affixes. Some masculine nouns form their plurals by the addition of the feminine plural morpheme, [a:t], to the singular masculine form as in the following examples:

Singular	[a:t] Plural
[rija:l] `riyal'	[rija:la:t] `riyals'
[wa:dʒib] `homework'	[wa:dʒaba:t] `homeworks'

But the same nouns form their duals by the use of the masculine dual morpheme, [e:n]:

Singular	[en] Plural
[rija:l] `riyal'	[rija:le:n] `two riyals'
[wa:dʒib] `homework'	[wa:dʒibe:n] `two homeworks'

(2) Broken Plural:

Some masculine and feminine nouns form the plural by means of morpheme internal change, which is recognized in Arabic as the Broken Plural. Broken Plurals in Gulf Arabic dialects, as Qafisheh (1977) notes have :

"... a number of pluralizing patterns, a few of which can be predicted from the singular pattern but in most cases it is very difficult if not impossible to deduce the plural pattern from the singular."

Some examples of nouns which form their plurals in this way in Qatari Arabic are:

Masculine Nouns

Singular

[saham]	`a share'
[asad]	`a lion'
[ka:tib]	`male clerk'
[rajja:l]	`man'

Plural

[ashum]	`shares'
[uʃu:d]	`lions'
[kita:ti:b]	`male clerks'
[rija:ji:l]	`men'

Feminine Nouns

Singular

[hurməh]	`a woman'
[tannu:rəh]	`a skirt'
[madrisəh]	`a school'
[saja:rəh]	`a car'

Plural

[hari:m]	`women'
[ti:na:ni:r]	`skirts'
[mi:da:ris]	`schools'
[si:ja:ji:r]	`cars'*

although [saja:ra:t] exists

However, Qatari Arabic nouns which form the plural by morpheme internal change, the Broken Plural, form the dual by the dual morphemes {en} for the masculine nouns and {ten} for feminine nouns without any change in the structure of the basic noun form:

Masculine Nouns

Singular

[saham]	'a share'
[asad]	'a lion'
[ka:tib]	'male clerk'
[rajja:l]	'man'

Dual

[sahame:n]	'two shares mas.'
[asade:n]	'two lions'
[ka:tibe:n]	'twomale clerks'
[rajja:le:n]	'two men'

Feminine Nouns

Singular

[hurmah]	'a women'
[tannu:rəh]	'a skirt'
[madriṣh]	'a school'
[saja:rəh]	'a car'

Dual

[hurm te:n]	'two women'
[tannu:re:n]	'two skirts'
[madriste:n]	'two schools'
[saja:rte:n]	'two cars'

There are loan nouns in Qatari Arabic. It is worth noting these loan nouns form their plural by following either the regular pattern or the broken plural pattern of Qatari Arabic; and when dualized they use the same dual rules for non foreign words in Qatari Arabic. When masculine foreign nouns follow the regular plural in Qatari Arabic, they take the feminine plural marker, [a:t], and do not usually take the plural marker of masculine nouns. However, feminine nouns of foreign origin take the feminine plural morpheme for regular plural forms, indicated in the following examples which illustrate the difference masculine between and feminine plural formation for loan nouns:

Masculine Nouns:

Singular

[ba:ə]	'bus'
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Regular Plural

[ba.sa:t]	'buses'
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[te:rm] `term, semester'
[pe:p] `pipe'

Singular

[se:kal] `bicycle'
[tikse:] `taxi'

Feminine Nouns:

Singular

[paŋkəh] `fan'
[ke:kəh] `cake'

Singular

[zu:lijəh] `carpet'

[te:rma:t] `terms, semesters'
[pe:pa:t] `pipes'

Broken Plural

[seja:kil] `bicycles'
[tika:se:] `taxis'

Regular Plural

[paŋka:t] `fans'
[ke:ka:t] `cakes'

Broken Plural

[zal] `carpets'

Foreign nouns in Qatari Arabic form their duals by the process of suffixation in which the morpheme {en} marks masculine duals and the morpheme {ten} marks feminine duals as in the following examples:

Masculine Nouns:

Singular

[ba:s] `bus'
[te:rm] `term, semester'
[pe:p] `pipe'
[se:kal] `bicycle'
[tikse:] `taxi'

Dual

[ba:se:n] `two buses'
[te:rme:n] `two terms'
[pe:pe:n] `two pipes'
[se:kale:n] `two bicycles'
[tikse:e:n] `two taxis'

Feminine Nouns:

Singular

[pʌnkʰ] `fan'
[ke:lʰ] `cake'
[zu:lijʰ] `carpet'

Dual

[pʌnkʰte:n] `two fans'
[ke:kte:n] `two cakes'
[zu:lijte:n] `two carpets'

The choice of different morphemes of the plural and the dual in Qatari Arabic depends partially on the gender of nouns; but it also depends on whether the noun is count or non-count.

Not all nouns can be inflected for the plural or for the dual in Qatari Arabic. In English the noun chemistry cannot be inflected for the plural *chemistries nor can music become inflected *musics. In Qatari Arabic the noun [ki:mjʰ] `chemistry' cannot be inflected for the plural *[ki:mja:t] `*chemistries' or *[ki:mje:n] `two chemistry'; nor can the noun [mu:si:qʰ] `music' be inflected for the plural *[mu:si:qa:t] `*musics' or the dual *[mu:si:qe:n] `two musics'. In other words, the plural in Qatari Arabic applies, as in other languages of the world, to count nouns only. Mass nouns cannot be pluralized or dualized.

4. Articles:

Nouns can be used with articles as in English the book: a book and in Qatari Arabic [ilktɑ:b : 'ktɑ:b] `the book : a book'. In English, the definite article the and the indefinite articles a or an are separate words (free morphemes) which are placed before the head noun. But the Qatari Arabic definite article is the bound morpheme {al} `the', a prefix which is attached to the beginning of head nouns and pronounced as [il]; while the indefinite article is expressed by the morpheme {n} as a suffix which is

pronounced as [in] or by the zero morpheme⁴. Not all nouns take the definite article; in Qatari Arabic, for example, the definite article can not be used with nouns such as Ahmed or Asia : *[ilɑhmad] or *[ilɑ:sjɑ]. In other words, the article can not be used with Proper Nouns⁵. This is why it is important to distinguish between sub-classes of nouns.

In Qatari Arabic the article can co-occur with demonstrative pronouns without affecting the structure or the meaning of the noun phrase as in [hɑ:ʕi irrajjɑ:l..] 'this the man'. This is not possible in some languages as English; English articles cannot occur in combination with demonstrative pronouns *the this man...

Qatari Arabic shows the semantic distinction of definite / indefinite by means of articles, too. Definiteness means the ability to identify the reference (the noun); and therefore, different languages use a sort of a marker to indicate it be it a separate word (a free morpheme) or an affix (a bound morpheme). For example, English uses the as the definite article as in 'the man next to me'; while Qatari Arabic uses the morpheme {al}

4 In Standard Arabic the morpheme {n} is used as a suffix to denote indefinite nouns. It has two allomorphs /n/ and /Ø/. Qatari Arabic uses /Ø/ to denote indefiniteness; yet there are cases where the /in/, as a variant of Standard Arabic /n/, is used with indefinite nouns. When /in/, in Qatari Arabic, is used as in [hɑ:ʕi rɑjjɑ:lɪn tɑjib] 'this is a good man', it expresses an idea other than indefiniteness, namely, emphasis on the quality of goodness. Therefore, this morpheme has a semantic function rather than a syntactic and a morphological one. When /Ø/ is used as [hɑ:ʕi rɑjjɑ:l tɑjib] 'this is a good man' the reference is decisively an indefinite one. Both expressions exist in Qatari Arabic.

5 In Qatari Arabic exceptions do exist also [ilɑhmad] 'AlAhmed' could be used as the last name or family name of a person; only in this case the Proper noun can be used with the article.

'the' or an allomorph of it⁶ as in [irrajjja:l ili^h b/a:j] 'Translation: the man next door'. Proper nouns in Qatari Arabic do not take the definite article since they already carry the feature of definiteness semantically e.g. Ahmed, Fatma, [afri:qja] 'Africa' etc. Indefiniteness, on the other hand, means the inability to identify the reference uniquely. Indefiniteness is expressed by means of the indefinite article(s) in English a or an e.g. a dog, an egg; and in Qatari Arabic by the zero morpheme as in [t{alb}] 'a dog mas.', [t{alb}h] 'a dog fem.', [beʔh] 'an egg'.

Qatari Arabic shows the semantic distinction of Specific / Generic. These are also shown by the articles. If the speaker has a specific reference to an entity in his mind, then the reference is specific. But when the speaker refers to a class of entities, the reference is generic. The reference to the noun dog in English is specific (which means that it is that type of animal which has certain characteristics that fit only dogs) and is an indefinite entity in the mind of the speaker. But if we say dogs are friendly animals, the reference is generic because it refers to the whole class of dogs and is

⁶ In Qatari Arabic, the definite article [il] 'the' is shown by means of a prefix attached to the beginning of nouns. Sometimes the phonology of the noun determines the type of the allomorph to be used with it. The morpheme {al} has two allomorphs /i/ and /il/. The allomorph /i/, which is pronounced as a [i], is a reduced allomorph as a result of assimilation. It is used with words which begin with alveolar, interdental fricatives, palatal fricatives. It is used also with sounds which are made with secondary articulation such as the pharyngealized palatal fricatives [s̥], the pharyngealized alveolars such as [t̥], and the pharyngealized dentals [ʔ̥]. In these cases the sound [l] of the morpheme {il} assimilates to the first sound of the word it is to be used with as in [rajjja:l] 'man' when it becomes definite [irrajjja:l]. The other allomorph /il/ which is pronounced as [il] is used elsewhere.

made here by the use of the indefinite article⁷. When the same reference is made in Qatari Arabic the noun [tʃalb] 'dog mas.' is specific and indefinite for the same reasons as in English. But if we want to make a generic reference to the whole class of dogs in Qatari Arabic as [iltʃla:b 'sadi:qəh lil insa:n] 'The dogs are friendly animals', the reference is not a definite one only because of the use of the definite article [iltʃla:b] but it is also generic in contrast to English generic reference which is made by using the indefinite article.

5. Proper and Common Nouns:

Nouns are divided into two major sub-classes Proper and Common. Proper nouns refer to unique entities. Certainly there are more than one Ahmed in the world; but when the noun Ahmed is used in Qatari Arabic, it is used to name one unique person or individual. The same idea applies when we use the noun Doha, there are more than one Doha in the world but speakers refer only to one specific place when they use this word, either the capital of Qatar or the district in Kuwait. The idea of proper nouns can be compared with the idea of common nouns. Common nouns are used to name classes of entities. The words [ʃajja:l] 'man' and the word [madi:nəh] 'city' in Qatari Arabic are only labels used for classes which denote kinds of entities. When referring to an individual a common noun denoting the class of man or a proper noun denoting Ahmed can be chosen to refer to that individual. When referring to a place a common noun denoting the class of city or a proper noun denoting Doha can be chosen to refer to that place.

In some cases proper nouns can function as common nouns. The proper noun Kleenex, a name for a specific product, is now used in Qatari Arabic as a generic name for a class of entities and a common noun [kli:niks] which refers to a unit/units of tissue(s).

⁷ The indefinite article with plural Head Nouns is represented by the zero morpheme in English.

One of the characteristics of proper nouns in Qatari Arabic, which is similar to other languages as English, is that they do not occur with articles although exceptions exist. Look at the following examples from both languages, the definite article in English is the, and in Qatari Arabic is [il]:

English		Qatari Arabic
John	*the John	[aħmad] * [il aħmad]
Jupiter	*the Jupiter	[ʃata:rid] 'Jupiter' * [il ʃata:rid]
Lebanon	*the Lebanon	[libna:n] 'Lebanon' * [il libna:n]
*Hague	The Hague	* [qa:hirəh] 'cairo' [il qa:hirəh]
*Andes	The Andes	* [andi:z] 'The Andes' [il andi:z]

Common nouns have a further classification; they are divided into two sub-classes Count Nouns and Non-Count Nouns. Count Nouns denote entities or things which can be counted. Non-Count Nouns refer to nouns which are not countable such as liquids, solids, abstract qualities or even collections of entities. Examples of count nouns in Qatari Arabic are (including plurals and duals with masculine morphemes and the feminine morphemes in addition to plurals mame internal change):

Meaning	Qatari Arabic	Gender
teacher (male)	[mudarris]	masculine
teacher (female)	[mudarrisħ]	feminine
teachers (males)	[mudarrisi:n]	masculine
teachers (females)	[mudarrisa:t]	feminine
two teachers (males)	[mudarrise:n]	masculine
two teachers (females)	[mudarriste:n]	feminine
shirt	[qami:s]	masculine
shirts	[qamsa:n]	masculine
two shirts	[qamise:n]	masculine
veil	[ʃabəħ]	feminine
veils	[ʃabaja:t]	feminine
two veils	[ʃabajte:n]	feminine

In Qatari Arabic, count nouns can occur with the quantifier [wa:jid] 'many' and with cardinal numbers such as one, two. But non-count nouns can not occur with any of these except for [wa:jid] 'many' which can occur with non-count nouns. However, they can occur with [ka:fi] 'enough'. The following are examples of these two subclasses of common nouns:

Count Nouns		Non-Count Nouns	
[saja:ɸh]	'a car'	*[ma:j]	'(a) water'
[wa:jid sija:jir]	'many cars'	*[wa:jid ma:j]	'(*)many water'

Some nouns can be read as both count and non-count nouns. The difference in this case is related to the change in meaning between the count and non-count classification for the same noun. Sometimes the count noun refers to a unit of the entity denoted by the corresponding non-count noun. The following are examples of count nouns which can be classified as non-count nouns:

English		Qatari Arabic	
Non-Count	Count	Non-Count	Count
cheese	a cheese	-	-
wheat	a wheat	-	-
philosophy	a philosophy	[falsifəh]	'philosophy' [falsifəh]
coffee	a coffee	[gəhwəh]	'coffee' [gəhwəh]

In some cases the relationship between the count and mass noun is more idiosyncratic:

Qatari Arabic	
Non-Count	Count
[warag]	'paper'
[gəhwəh]	'coffee'
[iwriɸəh]	'a paper, a report'
[giha.we:]	'a coffee-shop'

Sometimes a count noun in one language could be a non-count noun in another language. In English a grape is a count noun but in standard Arabic, as well as in Qatari Arabic it is a non-count noun [ʕinab] 'grape' and for the unit of grapes, Arab speakers say [ħabət ʕinab] 'a grape', [ħabət] in this case refers to one unit of the entity of 'grapes'. This distinction is usually language specific. It means that count nouns in English could be non-count nouns in another language; for example, grape is a count noun in English but it is a non-count noun in Qatari Arabic [ʕinab] 'grapes'. Also non-count nouns in English could be count nouns in another language; for example, the non-count noun homework in English is a count noun in Qatari Arabic [wa:dʒib] 'homework sg.' with a plural [wa:dʒiba:t] 'homework pl.'. This kind of interpretation happened because of the overlap between abstract nouns and non-count nouns. Count nouns and non-count nouns show gender in Arabic. Inanimate common nouns can show gender by means of masculine and feminine suffixes used for this purpose in Qatari Arabic.

Another distinction between count and non-count nouns lies in Concrete and Abstract nouns. To refer to material objects concrete nouns are used; and to denote non-material objects and abstract qualities abstract nouns are used.

SUMMARY:

Nouns have been examined with respect to gender, the number and use of the article. As for gender Qatari Arabic nouns are inflected for masculine and feminine genders which are exhibited by means of affixes. Qatari Arabic count nouns are inflected for the singular, the plural and the dual. The features of the plural and the dual are shown by the use of affixes, the dual is expressed in Qatari Arabic by affixes. The gender of the noun determines the choice of affix for the plural and the dual. There are different plural and dual suffixes for masculine nouns than those for feminine nouns with few exceptions for masculine nouns. Qatari Arabic

can form plurals in two ways: by means of suffixation and by means of morpheme internal change.

As for the article, Qatari Arabic exhibits a definite article, while the majority of indefinite nouns are expressed by means of a zero morpheme. Qatari Arabic uses the definite marker to denote generic reference as in [iltʃla:b sadi:qɔh lil'insa:n] 'dogs are friendly animals'.

Qatari Arabic classifies nouns as proper and common. Common nouns are further classified into count and non-count. There are cases where the same noun can be considered as either non-count or count carrying two different meanings. However, not all non-count nouns in Qatari Arabic are also non-count nouns in other languages as with the noun grape / [ʃinab].

APPENDIX (1)

KEY TO SYMBOLS OF TRANSCRIPTION

1. The Consonants:

<i>IPA Symbol Employed</i>	<i>Arabic Equivalent</i>	<i>Phonetic Values of the Symbols</i>
b	ب	a voiced bilabial stop.
p	پ	a voiceless bilabial stop.
m	م	a voiced bilabial nasal.
w	و	a voiced bilabial approximant
f	ف	a voiceless labio-dental fricative.
ʁ	ر	a voiced dental fricative.
θ	ث	a voiceless dental fricative.
ɛ	ع	a voiced phryngeal fricative.
ħ	ح	a voiceless phryngeal fricative.
d	د	a voiced alveolar stop.
t	ت	a voiceless alveolar stop.
ʈ	ط	a voiceless pharyngealized
z	ز	a voiced alveolar fricative.
ʒ	ج	a voiced pharyngealized dental fricative.
s	س	a voiceless alveolar fricative.
ʃ	ش	a voiceless pharyngealized
ʝ	ي	a voiceless palatal fricative.
n	ن	a voiced alveolar nasal.
l	ل	a voiced alveolar lateral.
r	ر	a voiced alveolar trill.
dʒ	ج	a voiced palatal affricate.
tʃ	چ	a voiceless palatal affricate.

j
g
k
ħ
q
X
h
?

ي
ك
ق
خ
ح
ه
(هزه) ه

a voiced palatal approximant.
a voiced velar stop.
a voiceless velar stop.
a voiced uvular fricative.
a voiceless uvular stop.
a voiceless uvular fricative.
a voiceless glottal fricative.
a glottal stop.

2. The Vowels:⁸

i
a
u

i:
e:
a:
o:
u:

⁸ The vowel system used in this paper is the one set by Bukshaisha (1985 : 37-52)

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