



A Syntactic Study of Case Marking Dropping among Arab TV Newsreaders

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Abstract

Inspired by the sustained efforts at preserving the standard form of Arabic language, this study explores the phenomenon of dropping the case markers of Arabic words among TV newsreaders. It focuses mainly on the structural functions of these words within the syntactic structure as well as on the relationship between this phenomenon and the type of TV shows in which it occurs. It is a quantitative-qualitative exploratory study that is based on a corpus of records of different shows collected from different TV channels broadcast in Arabic language. The results of this study show that some structural functions occur more than others during these TV shows, and some of them lose their markers more than others. Adjectives are used without their case endings in the majority of times. In particular, multiple adjectives, adjectives of adnominals and adjectives of objects of prepositions are mostly uttered without their case markers. Results also reveal that live TV shows, in which newsreaders have to improvise, witnessed dropped case markers much more than recorded TV shows. The current study concludes that this phenomenon mostly, and unreasonably, occurs on structural functions which always have fixed case endings irrespective of their position within the syntactic structure.

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1. Introduction

What is the position of Arabic language among human languages? It is far away sufficient to say that it is the language of the Holy Quran. It is a Semitic language and one of the most spoken languages in the world with nearly half a billion speakers all over the world, and it is one of the six official languages used in the United Nations (Bassiouny & Katz, 2012). Although there are a number of different varieties derived from Arabic spoken in different parts in the Arabic region, Standard Arabic (SA; henceforth) resembles a lingua franca to Arabic speakers whatever their own varieties are (Owens, 2013). Nonetheless, the use of spoken SA is to a great extent restricted to official uses like: teaching, speech delivering and broadcasting (Hallberg and Niehorster, 2021).

Since media, in general and TV channels in particular, constitute platforms that affect people's ideas and experiences (Qumaiha, 1998) besides enriching their culture and knowledge (Al-Dulaymi, 2012), Al-Arjaa (2013) asserted that such platforms have a great and a direct impact on the language of their viewers and the way they use language because these means are available everywhere and can be easily accessed any time. Moreover, media's effect on Arabic language, especially, is immense and can be positive or negative due to the fact that they are oriented to both literate and illiterate people.

To approach the focus of this study, let us first pose this question: is Arabic language spoken on air by newsreaders really standard? For those who have adequate knowledge of how SA should be spoken, the answer is definitely no. This is due to the fact that many newsreaders make different types of mistakes during their presentations. Among these mistakes, one can easily perceive how a lot of newsreaders tend to drop case markers, that should be uttered at the end of Arabic words, during connected speech to the extent that some of them make a short pause almost at the end of each word in strings of connected sentences.

We know only a little about the nature of the phenomenon of dropping case endings by newsreaders during connected speech. In other words, there is a scientific and linguistic need to spot the light on this issue so that we can extensively know more about it. To this end, this study digs rigorously in the course of the Arabic language spoken by newsreaders to discover, particularly, the syntactic aspects of dropping the case markers in Arabic connected speech.

The importance of tackling this problem lies heavily on the fact that it represents a part of the ongoing collaborative efforts put into preserving Arabic language. To put it more forwardly, the majority of Arabic media viewers are profoundly affected by what they receive from these media platforms which broadcast in Arabic. Therefore, Arabic language used in formal mass media should be as standard as possible so that Arabic speakers preserve their language and identity. Further, this study investigates the issue from an angle that has almost been neglected in the existed literature, i.e., it studies the phenomenon of dropping case markers in depth in order to know where exactly it usually occurs and what structural functions it usually affects during speech. Therefore, it represents a novel try that is meant to fill in the gap in the existing body of linguistic knowledge pertaining to using SA in the industry of broadcasting. In particular, this study addresses the two following questions: 1) On what structural functions do Arab TV newsreaders tend to drop case endings? And 2) What is the relationship between this phenomenon and the type of the TV show where it occurs?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical framework

As this study is dedicated to explore the phenomenon of case endings dropping during Arabic spoken discourse and show their correct manner, it will theoretically follow the traditional Arabic framework of *iʿrāb* ‘parsing’ proposed by classical Arabic grammarians. *Iʿrāb* is a significant feature of Arabic language since it plays a crucial role in understanding the exact meaning of a particular sentence (Mannaa, Azmi and Aboalsamh, 2022). To define the term *iʿrāb*, it reasonably suffices here to adopt Ibn Ājurrūm’s (1276-1327) definition, in his well-known “*Al-Muqaddimah Al- Ājurrūmyyah*”, which has been widely used and accepted in Arabic pedagogical grammar. He defined *iʿrāb* as “the change of word-endings due to the variation of operators which occur before them either explicitly or implicitly” (Hallberg, 2016, p.65). *Iʿrāb* rests on the Arabic word system which is divided into three types: *ʾism* ‘noun’, *feʿl* ‘verb’ and *ḥarf* ‘particle’. The *ʾism* is the type of a word that has a content meaning and does not associate with time while the *feʿl* is the type of a word that has a content meaning and does associate with time; either past, present or future (or imperative in Arabic). The *ḥarf* is the type of a word that has no content meaning and does not associate with time, (Abdulhameed, 2007).

According to Ibn Hishām (1306-1360), there are four types of *iʿrāb* in Arabic namely: *rafʿ*, *naṣb*, *jarr* and *jazm* that is ‘nominative, accusative, genitive and jussive cases, respectively’. The first two of these cases *rafʿ* and *naṣb* are applicable to both nouns and verbs, the third one *jarr* is exclusively used on nouns and the fourth one *jazm* is devoted only to verbs. This infers that particles are not considered in terms of *iʿrāb*. There are markers used to show these four cases of *iʿrāb* on words. These markers are of two types; original and subsidiary. Original markers are: a) ‘*ˆ*’ *ḍammah* which is used to indicate the nominative case on both nouns and verbs, b) ‘*ˋ*’ *fathah* which is used to show the accusative case on both nouns and verbs, c) ‘*ˊ*’ *kasrah* which is used to show the genitive case on nouns, and d) ‘*ˋˋ*’ *sukūn* which is used to show the jussive case on verbs (Ibn-Hisham, 2004).

Orthographically, these markers are presented with diacritics placed atop the last letter of the Arabic word, except for c) which is placed under the last letter. Phonetically, these markers are produced as short vowels at the end of words (Hallberg and Niehorster, 2021).

Specifically, the diacritic *ḍammah* is produced as a short [u], *fathah* as a short [a] and *kasrah* as a short [e], except for d) which resembles a very short pause at the end of the word (Al-Sharkawi, 2017; Versteegh, 2014). Due to the fact that Classical Arabic has a flexible word order, it is mandatory that its speakers verbalize these short vowels at the end of words in order that the function of each element in a string of constituents could be obviously comprehended by the hearer (Al-Sharkawi, 2017; Bohas, Guillaume, & Kouloughli, 1990).

With regard to the subsidiary markers, they are mostly letters affixed to words to indicate their case marking. *Rafʿ* could be shown by the letter *ʿalif* in dual nouns, by the letter *wāw* in the Five Nouns¹ and in sound masculine plural nouns, and by fixing the letter *nūn* at the end of the Five Verbs². *Naṣb* also could be indicated by letters; by the letter *ʿalif* in the Five Nouns, by the letter *yā* in dual nouns and in sound masculine plural nouns, and by dropping the letter *nūn* at the end of the Five Verbs. Whereas *jarr* can only be indicated by one letter which is *yā* in dual nouns, sound masculine plural nouns and in the Five Nouns. In contrast, what could replace the *sukūn* marker is the deletion of *nūn* in the Five Verbs and the deletion of the vowel letter if it is the verb's final (Abdulhameed, 2007). It is worth noting here that structural functions and semantic notions of words within sentences play vital role in assigning these words their cases which are shown either with original or subsidiary markers.

Depicting the considerations and rules that govern case assignment and the use of overt or covert case endings are far beyond the scope of this paper. It is adequate here to include what the researchers have summarized from Abdulhameed (2007) and Ibn-Hisham (2004) regarding the main rules of *iʿrāb* and the definitions of the structural functions relevant to this study explained in some notes and examples. Table 1 shows how case markers are distributed in Arabic language according to the type of words and their structural function in the syntagm of the sentence.

Table 1
Distribution of Arabic case marking according to iʿrāb properties

Case	Noun	Verb
Nominative	Subject of active voice in verbal sentences Subject of passive voice in verbal sentences Primate Predicate Predicate of <i>inna</i> and its sisters Noun of <i>kāna</i> and its sisters	Present verbs if not preceded by an accusative or a jussive operator
Accusative	Object of verbal sentences Adverb of time or place Adverb of manner Excluded nouns Noun of <i>lā</i> Causative object Accusative of state	Verbs preceded by accusative operators

¹ These are definite five nouns known in Arabic grammar. They are *abū* 'father of', *axū* 'brother of', *hamū* 'father-in-law of', *fū* 'mouth of' and *dhū* 'owner of' (Abdulhameed, 2007).

² These indicate five patterns of Arabic verbs; replacing Cs in these patterns with any three consonantal root of Arabic verbs yields one of these five verbs. The patterns are: yaCCaCān 'indicates the 3rd dual subject', taCCaCān 'indicates the 2nd dual subject', yaCCaCūn 'indicates the 3rd sound masculine plural subject', taCCaCūn 'indicates the 2nd sound masculine plural subject' and taCCaCin 'indicates the 2nd feminine subject' (Ibn-Hisham, 2004).

	Distinctive noun Noun of <i>inna</i> and its sisters Predicate of <i>kāna</i> and its sisters	
Genitive	Object of a preposition Adnominal	-
Jussive	-	Verbs preceded by jussive operators Imperative verbs

The following are the main structural functions that are closely related to the purpose of this study (most of these items are translated from Al-Daħdaħ (1988)):

Primate and **predicate** are the two components of the nominal sentence in Arabic language. Primate is the nominative noun on which no verbal operators apply while predicate is the nominative noun that is associated to the primate. E.g. *albentu jamilatun* ‘the girl is beautiful’; the first noun is a primate while the second is a predicate.

Noun of *inna* is the primate that is preceded by an emphatic article like *inna*. E.g. *inna alwalada dhakiun* ‘the boy is smart’. In such instance, the primate undergoes a change in its case marker which is rendered accusative instead of being nominative.

Predicate of *inna* is the noun associated with the primate that is preceded by an emphatic article. E.g. the word *dhakiun* in the previous example.

Noun of *kāna* is the primate that is preceded by *kāna* ‘was/were’ (or any of its sisters). *kāna alwaladu dhakiian* ‘the boy was smart’.

Predicate of *kāna* is the noun associated with the primate that is preceded by *kāna*. E.g. the word *dhakiian* in the previous example in which it took an accusative case as a consequence.

Adjective is the noun that modifies another noun and which syntactically and phonologically follows it, i.e., the adjective comes after its noun and takes whatever case marker this noun has. E.g. *ishtaritu saiiaratan jadīdatan* ‘I bought a new car’.

Adnominal is the noun annexed to another noun. It is always in the genitive case. E.g. *lawnu alqalami aħmarun* ‘the colour of the pen is red’.

Object of a preposition is the noun that follows a preposition. It always has the genitive case. E.g. *alwāledu fī albaīti* ‘the father is in the house’.

Coordinate is the noun which is coordinated with another noun using a coordinating conjunction. It takes the same case marker as this preceded noun. E.g. *sharibtu almā'a wa al'ašīra* ‘I drank the water and the juice’.

Subject is the nominative noun whose verb is mentioned before it. E.g. *akala alwaladu* ‘the boy ate’.

Subject of passive is the object whose subject is not mentioned. E.g. *shuriba almā'u* ‘the water was drunk’.

Object is the accusative noun that is affected by the action. E.g. *sharibtu almā'a* ‘I drank the water’.

Causative object is the accusative noun used to indicate the reason for doing something. E.g. *ḥaḍhartu xawfan* ‘I came because I was afraid’.

Accusative of state is the accusative noun that describes the state of something. E.g. *jāʿa alwaladu māshīan* ‘the boy came walking’.

Distinctive noun is the accusative noun that clarifies what has been obscure before it. E.g. *ʿishtarītu darzanan kutuban* ‘I bought a dozen books’.

Appositive is a noun used after another noun and can either emphasize or replace it (or a verb after another verb), and it follows it in terms of case marking. E.g. *raʿitu sālihan ʿaxūka* ‘I saw Saleh, your brother’.

Adverb of place is the accusative noun that indicates a place. E.g. *wajadtuha taḥta alṭāwilah* ‘I found it under the table’.

Adverb of time is the accusative noun that indicates a time. E.g. *wajadtuha sabāahn* ‘I found it in the morning’.

Past verb is the verb that describes what happened. It is always accusative. E.g. *nabaḥa alkalbu* ‘the dog barked’.

Present verb is the verb that initially has either of the following letters ‘*ʿa, n, y, t*’. It is usually nominative except if preceded by an accusative or a jussive operator. E.g. *nuḥebbu bilādanā* ‘we love our country’.

2.2 Empirical background

In recent literature, there have been a lot of sources and studies that tackled the issue of Arabic language in the discourse of broadcasting media. A substantial part of this body of knowledge is devoted to the mistakes that many newsreaders make while they present different programs. For example, Omar (1993) recorded different mistakes that many newspaper writers and radio newsreaders had been making during the 1980s. In this long-lasting record, Omar focused mainly on the newspaper writings of famous writers at that time and on Cairo Radio for the spoken material, particularly news and politics programs. He also recorded some notes on Arabic linguistic mistakes made by newsreaders of London Radio, America Voice and Kuwait Radio. He divided his book into different chapters each of which pertains to a type of linguistic mistakes. He started listing many phonological and phonetic mistakes like: wrong intonation, wrong stress, change in the phonetic characteristics of some sounds, in addition to resorting to *sukūn* ‘dropping of case endings’ as a strategy to avoid making *iʿrāb* mistakes. The next chapter tackles the morphological issues that pose bewilderment to writers and newsreaders; for instance, mistakes in forming the dual or plural nouns and the derivation of *ism al-fāʿil* ‘the agent’ and *ism al-mafʿūl* ‘the theme’. Then he went on describing the syntactic mistakes that people sometimes listen to or read in media. One issue in this chapter is the problem of the improper insertion of numerical expressions in sentences. Other problems were perceived in the wrong use of case markers at the end of words, e.g., rendering the subject of a sentence accusative while it should be nominative. Eventually, Omar included lexical and semantic criteria to show how writers and newsreaders mistakenly use some words that do not indicate what they really mean; for example, using the word *ṭaraf* ‘an end of something’ while the intended meaning is *ṭarf* ‘the eye’.

In a similar fashion, Abo-Suroor (2012) traced the syntactical and morphological mistakes that many newspapers' writers made during the period from 1990 to 2011. She postulated that mistakes found in different media means, written or spoken, do not substantially differ; therefore, she sampled only written mistakes in newspapers. She divided her book into two chapters: the first one deals with the characteristics of the language that media use and the role of these means in the spreading of linguistics mistakes, whereas the second chapter shows samples of syntactical and morphological mistakes dispersed in different newspapers. For example, there were mistakes in the use of the definite article *al* 'the', wrong structure of negation, wrong form of annexation and mistakes in conditional structures. There were also some mistakes in the derivation of some words, in forming the dual nouns and plural nouns and other mistakes in using *hamzah* [ء] 'glottal stop'.

Recently, Hamdan and Al-Hawamdeh (2020) conducted a study based on the use of SA by TV newsreaders. They analysed a sample of five-minutes tracks recorded from news bulletins which were presented by seventy male and female Arabic native speakers from fourteen Arabic countries. Their study was phonologically oriented and concentrated only on reviewing the literature pertaining to the production of the sound /d/ in Arabic language as well as on examining the way this sound is pronounced by different Arabic newsreaders from different Arabic varieties. It concluded that this sound is recently being realized as an emphatic dental stop; particularly if it is used in SA. The study also revealed that newsreaders often fail to distinguish between the two sounds /d/ and /dh/.

With a broader focus, Daniëls (2021) analysed a corpus of twenty-eight news bulletins, which date back to January 1998, from the Lebanese radio channel of *Ṣawt Al-Janūb*. Initially, the researcher had no particular purpose of collecting this corpus at that time, yet he used it later in providing Lebanese dialectological examples in sociolinguistic courses. After many years, the researcher realized that the same corpus could be the impetus for a detailed linguistic study that seeks to find out the linguistic, functional and symbolic features of language used by Lebanese news broadcasters. To this end, the researcher analogically analysed SA versions and Lebanese versions of news bulletins from the corpus. The study found that there are syntactic, morphological, lexical and phonological differences in the newsreaders' use of the two varieties. It showed also that the use of SA is impaired by some violations with regard to declensional endings, word order and phonology. Further, the researcher concluded that the use of Lebanese in radio news broadcasting meant to represent the Lebanese identity and reflect some political attitudes.

With even a broader linguistic orientation, Belkhait and Kardoosi (2022) carried out an investigation of the phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic errors made by radio broadcasters. They devoted their analysis to monitor the linguistic violations and the overlap between the standard and the colloquial variety of Arabic spoken by Algerian radio broadcasters. The study sampled recordings from two radio programs from a single governmental radio channel during the period between April 30, and May 10, 2022. The two researchers concluded that the problem in the language of radio broadcasters does not lie only in their prevailing use of the colloquial variety but also in the fact that their use of SA is distorted by many mistakes across different linguistic levels – phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. The study found also that there were some examples of code-switching in which the broadcasters mixed between Arabic and French in addition to the presence of different loanwords from languages like: English, French and Persian.

However, most of these previous works were conducted to trace a variety of linguistic mistakes in different media means with no particular attention to any particular type of

mistakes. They were also restricted in focus in different ways: the first sampled mainly one radio channel, the second took its data exclusively from newspapers, the third focused only on the realization of one speech sound, the fourth compared between the use of a local variety and SA, and the fifth of analysed only recordings from two radio programs on one radio channel. Moreover, they all peripherally indicated the phenomenon of dropping the case endings, which is the main concern of the current study.

Nevertheless, the study that is most related to the purpose of the current paper is offered by Hallberg (2016) who presented an empirical and detailed account of the use of Arabic case markers in TV programs. This researcher carried out a quantitative analysis of a corpus composed of seventeen televised interviews which were made with well-educated native speakers of Arabic. Thirty-five thousand words were involved in these interviews that totally lasted more than five hours. These interviews were solely recorded from the program of *liqā' al-yaūm* 'meeting of today' which is aired via Al-Jazeera TV channel. The purpose of the study was to explore how Arabic speakers use case endings during their speech. This study revealed that speakers widely differ in this respect. It showed also that case endings were rarely used in words with the definite article *al-* 'the' and in adjectival attributes. Also, it surfaced that case endings that could appear in written forms of the words are mostly used by speakers in addition to words with enclitic pronouns. However, this study has many limitations. Firstly, it only involved one TV program from a single TV channel. Secondly, it focused only on the language spoken by the seventeen interviewees who took part in the recorded episodes of the aforementioned program. Thirdly and most importantly, it investigated the use of case markers in general during the connected speech. Stating that, the significance and novelty of the current study lies on the fact that it exclusively concentrates on the structural functions where TV newsreaders tend to drop the case endings during the connected speech. Further, it enlarges the recording corpus to encompass speakers, newsreaders in particular, from different Arabic TV channels and during different TV shows.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

The principal objective of this study is exploratory in nature since it seeks to discern the syntactic characteristics of a phenomenon that has not been thoroughly investigated. Methodologically, researchers may resort to rigorous exploratory studies when there is not much known about a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2018; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2011). According to Abusaleh and Anwar (2022), exploratory research is the type of studies via which researchers attempt to establish a basic understanding of the nature of a problem about which they know only a little.

In terms of its data, this is a mixed-methods study because it first gathers qualitative data and then converts them quantitatively in order to find answers to the research questions. It is the nature of the topic that requires the blending of these two research methods. It is called a mixed method after Creswell (2018) who maintained that, in mixed method studies, researchers need to elicit quantitative data from their collection of qualitative data.

The researchers believe that this exploratory mixed-methods design is the best way of investigating the research problem since it delves deeply into its explorations by means of combining both qualitative and quantitative data. Notwithstanding the time and effort such design requires, the phenomenon of case endings dropping is definitely worth all effort.

3.2 Population and Sample

This study adopts the technique of cluster sampling which was applied in different layers. First, TV channels represent a layer from which a sample was randomly drawn. Second, different TV shows make up another layer of clusters from which a random selection of programs was applied. Thirdly, recordings are another layer where only some parts of some recordings were randomly selected for the analysis process. Moreover, the randomization technique in this study extended to days of recordings as well as to times of the day when the recorded process took place. Doing so, the researchers aim at collecting data from as many different newsreaders as possible in order to increase the sample's representativeness.

3.3 Research instruments

The researchers used only one tool to collect primary data. It is a corpus of recordings from different TV channels. As long as the study is focused on SA spoken by newsreaders, it is logical that having recordings of their speech is the best way to explore the phenomenon under investigation. It is a tool that other researchers, such as Omar (1993) and Hamdan and Al-Hawamdeh (2020), have also utilized. These recordings helped the researchers to answer the two research questions by providing a means that enabled the researchers to listen to newsreaders' utterances thoroughly and analyse them carefully.

3.3.1 Testing the instruments

The researchers initiated the recording phase with pilot recordings from several TV channels. This sample of recordings was initially analyzed and helped the researchers get a brighter idea of how the whole process of recording and analysis would be, and it greatly helped to overcome many issues that rose during the time of conducting the study. For example, this pilot sample guided the researchers that the time of each recorded track should range between thirty to sixty seconds in most occasions. On the one hand, this period is adequate to provide sufficient space for the collection of some sentences. On the other hand, it is not too long to include plenty of sentences which require tremendous effort during analysis.

3.4 Data collection procedures

The researchers started data collection by recording different and random samples of newsreaders' speech from different and random TV channels as well as from different TV programs. The recording process was implemented by two StarSat HD satellite receivers which have the feature of recording via a memory stick. One of the significant features of such devices is that they automatically save the recorded track in a folder holding the name of the TV channel, date and time of recording. This feature enormously helped the researchers by perfectly bearing the burden of tracks referencing. The random selection resulted in recordings from the following TV channels: Al-Araby, Al-Arabyiah, Al-Arabyiah Al-Hadath, Al-Jazeera, Al-Mahryiah, Al-Mayadeen, BBC Arabic, France 24, RT Arabic, Sky News Arabyiah and Yemen Shabab. It is worth noting here that the number of recordings per channel is not the same due to the fact that some of these channels broadcast news all day which made their random recording more appropriate than others.

There were many considerations that the researchers took seriously during the recording phase in order to ensure the randomization of the selection of the recordings. Among these considerations are the following:

- i. There was a pre-determined length for all instances of recordings; ranging between thirty to sixty seconds.
- ii. Times of recordings were different: different times during the day, different times during the week and different times during the month.
- iii. Genres of programs recorded varied.

- iv. The process of recording stretched for more than one month, precisely between June 20, and July 27, 2022.

After finishing the recording phase, the recorded and saved files were transferred to a laptop. During this time, the researchers were able to sort the recordings into five different categories based on the type of the recorded TV show. They were of the following types: headlines, live dialogues, live reports, news and recorded reports. These categories were then given random codes from A to E in the order they were written here. And within each category, each track was given a number rendering the code of tracks labelled as A1, A2, D3, E12, etc.

After that, the researchers started listening and carefully transcribing the contents of all the recorded tracks. Since it was a prerequisite, each word that accepts signs of *iʿrāb* is marked according to what the newsreader uttered. Needless to say, neither words that have *sukūn* by their virtue nor those which do not accept case endings are included in this process of analysis since they are irrelevant. Then, a summary was drawn under each track's transcription showing the different relevant structural functions along with the number of times when they were marked and the number of times when they were not. It is worth mentioning that only full sentences that are uttered in each piece of recording was considered in the process of collecting and analysing data. This is because the syntactic relationships between elements in a single sentence would not be clear if the sentence is fragment.

3.4.1 Ethical considerations and confidentiality

Inspired by Creswell's (2018) guidelines on ethics of research, the researchers paid a considerable attention to the following:

- i. The absolute linguistic purpose of the study.
- ii. The anonymity of the newsreaders: neither their recordings were linked to their names nor were they used in the analysis or reporting phases of the study.

3.5 Data analysis procedures

Since it is an exploratory study, the researchers primarily analysed the obtained data descriptively. The process generally followed Creswell and Creswell's (2023) framework of qualitative analysis. In the first stage, recordings were organised and transcribed. Next, these transcriptions were thoroughly parsed to explore the different structural functions where newsreaders tend to drop case markers. After that, the status of each function was compared with the rules of SA that prescribe the correct use of its case endings. Then, a detailed description was provided to account for the analysed data. Finally, the researchers used many statistical features provided by Microsoft Excel to produce tables and figures that illustrate the common structural functions of dropping of case endings.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Syntactic analysis of dropped case markers

Since the focus of this study is on the syntactic features of the phenomenon of case endings dropping, the analysis should depict the different structural functions as found in the recorded tracks. This analysis reveals that there are some structural functions, in Arabic sentence structure, that occur more than others during TV shows. Table 2 details the 2,405 structural functions included in the recordings. It indicates the number of times each function occurred, with or without its case marker, in addition to its percentage out of the total number of functions.

Table 2
The distribution of structural functions in the recorded tracks

Structural function	No.	%	Structural function	No.	%	Structural function	No.	%
Adnominal	566	23.5%	Past verb	76	3.2%	Noun of <i>kāna</i>	16	0.7%
Object of a preposition	560	23.3%	Coordinate	73	3.0%	Predicate of <i>inna</i>	14	0.6%
Adjective	352	14.6%	Adverb of place	40	1.7%	Accusative of state	10	0.4%
Present verb	215	8.9%	Adverb of time	40	1.7%	Distinctive noun	9	0.4%
Object	120	5.0%	Noun of <i>inna</i>	37	1.5%	Appositive	6	0.2%
Primate	114	4.7%	Predicate	27	1.1%	Subject of passive	5	0.2%
Subject	103	4.3%	Predicate of <i>kāna</i>	20	0.8%	Causative object	2	0.1%

As illustrated in Table 2, the structural function of adnominal is used in TV news programs more than any other function. It is followed closely by the object of a preposition function which came second. Third in the list, there is the adjective function. The three totally amount more than 61% of the total number of structural functions found in the recordings. This can be attributed to the nature of these three structural functions since they are all used as modifications to other constituents within the sentence syntagm.

The researchers believe that such structural functions come atop this list probably because news has usually a lot of description and details about the topics under discussion. Therefore, clarifying the picture for the viewer requires that news editors excessively use words that fill in these structural functions since they mostly bear additional semantic indications for the constituents that they modify in the syntagm.

In order to explore on what structural functions TV newsreaders tend to mostly drop case markers of Arabic words, it is essential that the analysis presents a detailed statistical account that shows the structural function, the number of times it occurred and the number of times on which its markers are dropped. Table 3 displays all of these data combined with the relevant percentage.

Table 3
The most structural functions whose case markers are dropped

Structural function	Total	Dropped		Structural functions	Total	Dropped	
		No.	%			No.	%
Adjective	352	295	84%	Adnominal	566	265	47%
Appositive	6	5	83%	Distinctive noun	9	4	44%
Predicate	27	19	70%	Object of a preposition	560	212	38%
Predicate of <i>inna</i>	14	9	64%	Object	120	42	35%
Noun of <i>kāna</i>	16	10	63%	Primate	114	37	32%
Subject of passive	5	3	60%	Accusative of state	10	2	20%
Present verb	215	111	52%	Adverb of time	40	6	15%

Subject	103	53	51%	Adverb of place	40	4	10%
Predicate of <i>kāna</i>	20	10	50%	Past verb	76	5	7%
Noun of <i>inna</i>	37	18	49%	Causative object	2	0	0%
Coordinate	73	35	48%				

It is evident from table 3 that the structural function of adjective is the one whose case markers are mostly dropped by TV newsreaders during their connected speech. As it appears, in 84% of the total number of times where this function is found in the recordings, the case endings on adjectives were not uttered by newsreaders. This is an interesting number since it represents a very substantial portion of a structural function whose case marking system is not complicated. In other words, adjectives in Arabic language come after and take the same case marker as the nouns they modify, e.g., if the noun is nominative, its following and modifying adjective is also nominative. Despite this obvious syntactic rule, it is found that TV newsreaders fail to assign an adjective its deserved case marking. No reasonable justification can be postulated here except that such speakers may find it phonologically exhaustive to utter the case marker of each adjective particularly if there are more than one adjective used to describe a certain noun.

A similar conclusion can be drawn out of the numbers of both adnominals and objects of prepositions. Although it is a syntactic fact in Arabic language that these two structural functions take the genitive case marking wherever they occur in the syntagm, it is found that nearly half 47% of the occurrences of adnominals lack their case markers in these recordings. For the objects of prepositions, more than one third 38% of times were found when newsreaders did not end them with their case markers. Remarkably similar, the structural function of subject took its share from the dropped case endings. More than half of the subjects used by TV newsreaders appeared with no case endings in the recordings though this is a structural function which is always nominative in every Arabic sentence.

Table 3 shows also some other interesting numbers. For example, the structural function of appositive is the second most function that suffers the loss of its case endings. In five out of the six instances of this function, the newsreaders left it without a case mark. Other structural functions like subject of passive and distinctive noun also lost their case endings in a substantial number of utterances. However, such numbers cannot be generalized since their overall totals of uses are relatively small.

According to the findings that have been discussed so far, adjectives took the lead on the list of the most structural functions whose case endings were dropped by TV newsreaders. Thus, a detailed analysis should be provided about this structural function since it follows other different types of functions in the structure of the sentence. Table 4 illustrates the distribution of the 352 adjectival constituents where the case endings were neglected by TV newsreaders.

Table 4

Distribution of adjectives according to the nouns they modify

Modified noun	No.	%	Modified noun	No.	%
Adnominal	136	38.6%	Noun of <i>inna</i>	11	3.1%
Object of a preposition	91	25.9%	Predicate	5	1.4%
Subject	27	7.7%	Noun of <i>kāna</i>	3	0.9%
Multiple	23	6.5%	Predicate of <i>inna</i>	2	0.6%
Object	23	6.5%	Distinctive noun	2	0.6%

Primate	16	4.5%	Subject of passive	1	0.3%
Coordinate	12	3.4%			

What can be elicited from table 4 is that adjectives are used to modify adnominals more than any other modified noun; more than 38% of the modified nouns were adnominals. Objects of prepositions appear second in the table making up more than a quarter of the total number of nouns modified by adjectives in the recorded tracks. Other nouns also have been used and modified by adjectives. Subjects and objects made up around 14% of these modified nouns. In more than 6% of instances, multiple adjectives were used to modify a single noun.

Nonetheless, the analysis here focuses mainly on the most two types of nouns modified by adjectives as shown in table 4. These two types are depicted in figure 1 which illustrates the total number of each one alongside the percentage on which each one received case endings and on which it did not.

It is clear from figure 1 that adjectives lose their case endings in the majority of times when they were used to modify adnominals or objects of prepositions even though both types of nouns are always marked genitive (see excerpts 1 and 2, where the uttered markers are underlined while the dropped ones are bracketed). That is, it is unreasonable for newsreaders to drop case endings particularly on structural functions like these two since there is no other way of marking them other than the genitive case; therefore, the risk of making a mistake is eliminated here.

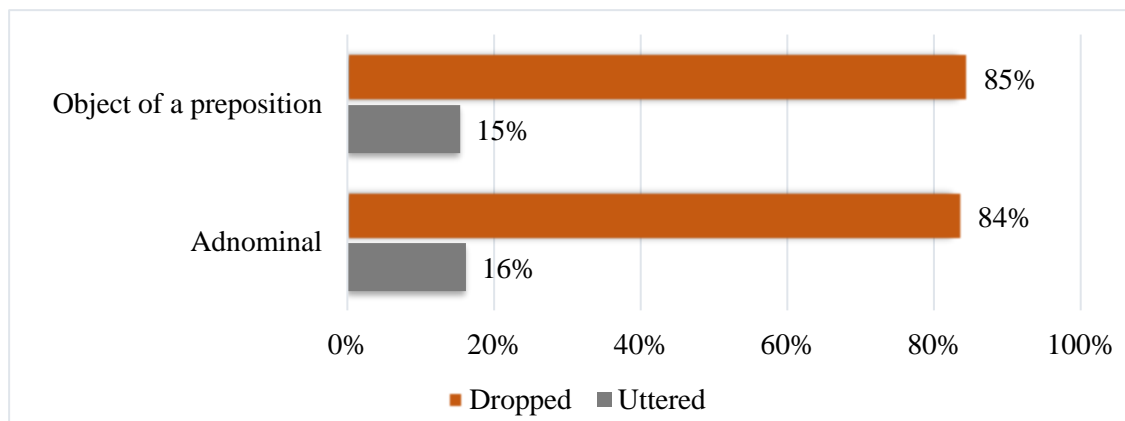


Figure 1. Instances of adjectives modifying adnominals and objects of prepositions

Excerpt 1: “... *muntaqidū addustūrī ljadīd(i)* ...” منتقدو الدستور الجديد ‘critics of the new constitution’

Excerpt 2: “... *menā alʾaṭrāfi lmushārikah(ti)* ...” من الأطراف المشاركة ‘from the participated parties’

Another interesting finding is what the statistics of multiple adjectives show in figure 2 below. Although the total number of utterances that included multiple adjectives was restricted to only twenty-three, all of these excerpts had the case endings of the second successive adjective dropped by the TV newsreaders. It is again unjustifiable that those speakers did so though on some occasions they successfully produced the mark at the end of the first adjective, but they drop it on the second one (as shown in Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3: “... *beḥukūmatin madanīyatīn dīmūqrāṭīyah(tin)* ...” بحكومة مدنية ديمقراطية ‘by a civil democratic government’

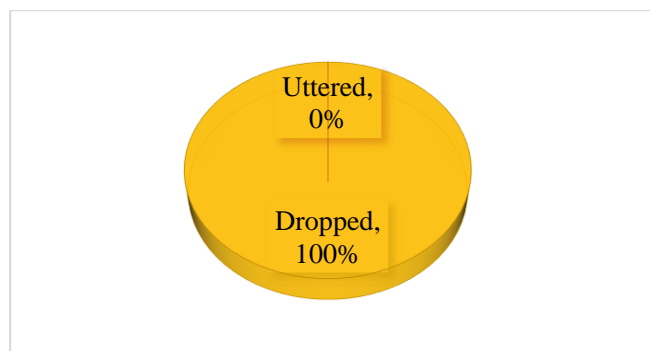


Figure 2. Percentage of both uttered and dropped case markers of multiple adjectives

4.2 Dropped case markers in different news shows

The discussion moves now to depict the data in a way that can show the relationship between the type of the broadcasted program and case endings dropping. First, there is a need to show some general statistics through which the analysis gradually reaches its aim. Figure 3 shows how the total number of 75 recorded tracks is distributed on five different types of news programs; namely: headlines (HL), live dialogues (LD), live reports (LR), news (N) and recorded reports (RR). This categorization is suggested by the researchers on the basis of certain characteristics like: nature of discourse, place of broadcast and spontaneity of the speaker. Such division proves its significance as the following sections of analysis show. It is worth noting that the number of tracks recorded for each category reached these figures at random after being carefully transcribed and coded.

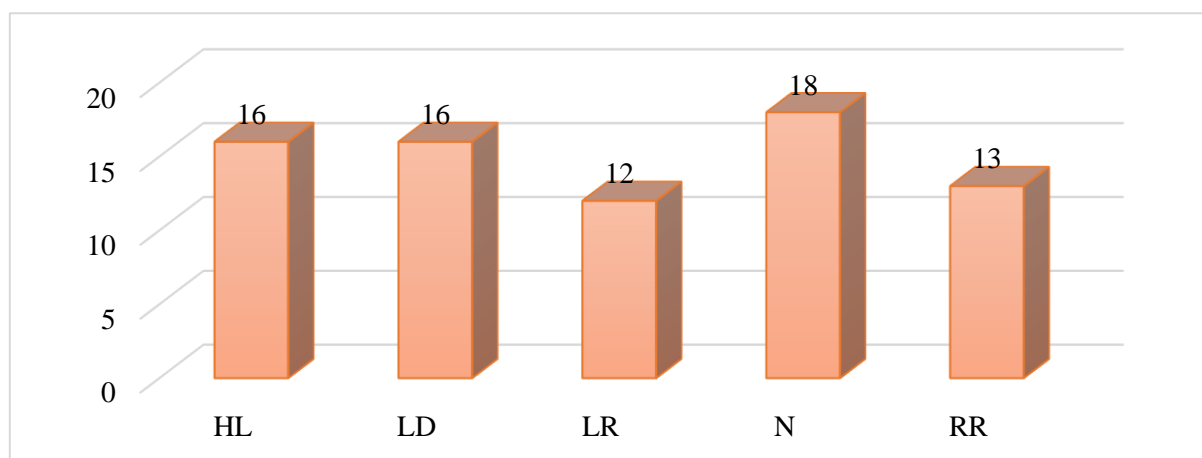


Figure 3. The distribution of different types of the recorded news programs

After such classification, the process of analysis tackled each category per se. The statistics of each category is clearly illustrated in figure 4 which shows how many structural functions were analysed per type of news shows.

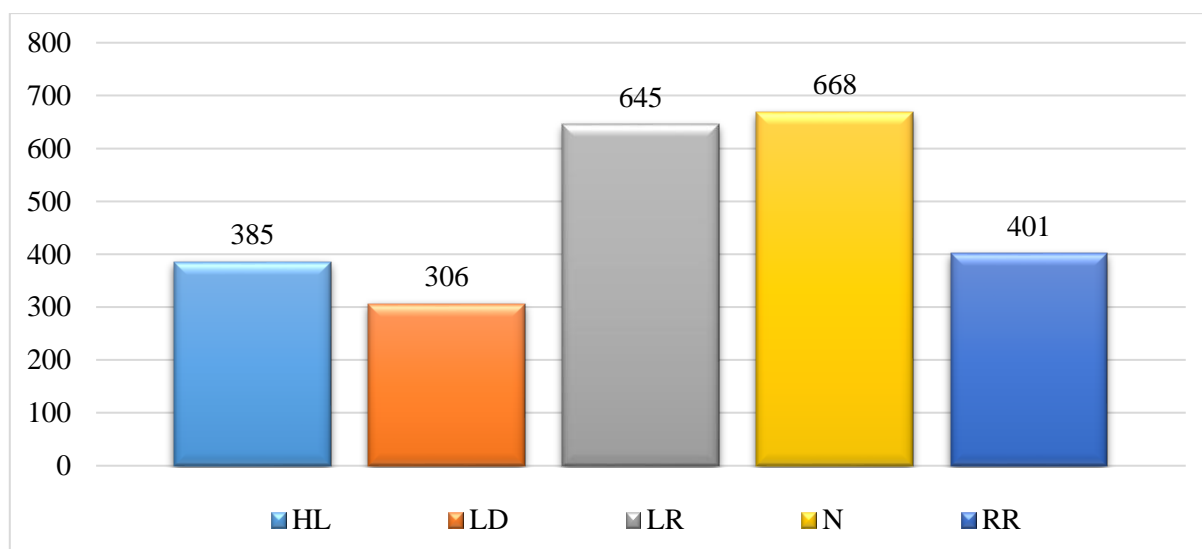


Figure 4. Total number of analysed structural functions according to each category

As figure 4 shows, tracks of news programs had the largest number of the analysed structural functions, followed by tracks of live reports. Recorded reports come third, and headlines and live dialogues appear fourth and fifth respectively. Such difference in numbers is due to the nature of each category. News programs, for instance, include many details and descriptions that the newsreader may spend the whole track speaking, which absolutely increases the chances that many structural functions are targeted among this track. Conversely, live dialogues usually have short utterances produced by the newsreader, and headlines are often worded in short sentences. Consequently, the number of the targeted structural functions that can be found in such categories is substantially smaller than in other types.

The calculations lead to a comparison between the uttered and the dropped case markers in each category so that the researchers can statistically answer the second research question. Figure 5 displays the results of this comparison showing the percentage of both the uttered and the dropped case markers in each category.

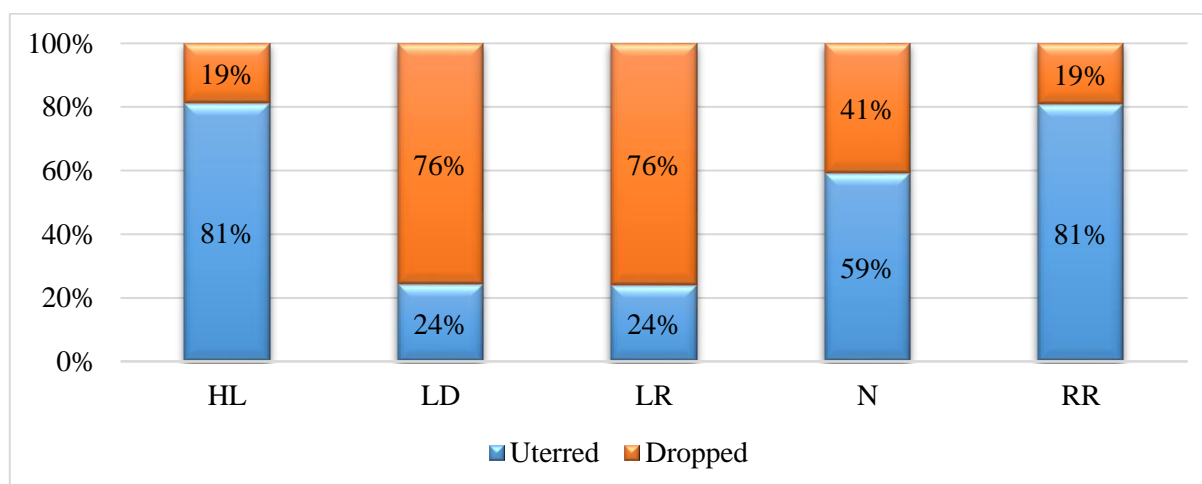


Figure 5. The percentage of the uttered and dropped case markers in each category of TV programs

Figure 5 presents some interesting findings. While news programs had 59% of their markers uttered and 41% of them dropped, the other types of programs had more contrasted

percentages. On the one hand, the percentage of dropped case endings is the least (only 19%) in headlines and recorded reports. On the other hand, live dialogues and live reports witnessed the most occasions of dropped case markers (74% each).

According to these statistics, dropping of case markers by TV newsreaders occurs in both live dialogues and live reports more than the other types of programs. It is shown that more than three quarters of the structural functions where the case markers should be uttered are dropped during the broadcasting of these two types of programs. It is definitely a considerable number that clearly indicates the current state of SA in Arabic TV channels. It is true that one can find some justifications for this issue since the program itself requires that the newsreaders depend on their linguistic repertoire while spontaneously composing their speech. Nonetheless, improvising Arabic questions and statements is not an excuse particularly in the light of the findings of this study which revealed that the majority of such mistakes occur on structural functions that have obvious and static rules.

Another important observation is that TV newsreaders pay more attention to the existence and necessity of uttering the case endings while they are presenting headlines or reading recorded reports. In these two types of programs, newsreaders successfully vowelized the case marker at the end of more than 80% of the occasions. This success is probably attributed to the shortness and structure of sentences, in the case of headlines, and to lesser pressure that newsreaders are under while reading recorded reports because they take their time and record at more ease off-air than they do if the program is on-air. Table 5 presents an excerpt taken from each of the distinguished categories.

Table 5

Excerpts from the recorded tracks according to the type of news program

Type	Excerpt	Gloss
HL	“ <i>inqisāmun fi lmawāqif(i) baīna murahhibīna wa mu‘āridīn</i> ” انقسامٌ في المواقف بين مؤيدين ومعارضين	‘a division in attitudes between proponents and opponents’
LD	“ <i>hal taḍa(u) hādhihi lmunāwarātu tāiwan fi mawqif(i) muājahah(tin) ma‘a aṣṣīn</i> ” هل تضع هذه المناورات تايوان في موقفٍ مواجهه مع الصين	‘does these manoeuvres put Taiwan in a fronting state with China’
LR	“ <i>kayfa sayakūn(u) shakl(u) lhukūmah(ti) ljādimah(ti)...</i> ” كيف سيكون شكل الحكومة الجديدة	‘how the new government will look like’
N	“ <i>innahū yastajīb(u) limutaḥallabāti marḥalti ‘e‘ādati benā(i) ddawlati lawaṭanīyah</i> ” إنه يستجيب لمتطلبات مرحلة إعادة بناء الدولة الوطنية	‘it complies with the prerequisites of the phase of reconstructing the national state’
RR	“ <i>attaḥawwufu hwa min sū‘i ttaqdīr(i) wa lhisābāti lxāṭī‘ah</i> ” التخوف هو من سوء التقدير والحسابات الخاطئة	‘the dread is from underassessment and miscalculations’

Generally, the findings of this study confirmed the peripheral notes that Omar (1993), Abo-Suroor (2012) and Daniëls (2021) made with regard to the fact that many newsreaders resort to drop case markers. Further, the findings of the current study, and more specifically that adjectives are mostly used without their case endings, are in partial agreement with the results of Hallberg (2016) who concluded that case endings were rarely used in words with the definite article *al-* ‘the’ and in adjectival attributes.

5. Conclusion

Generally, this study aimed at investigating the phenomenon of dropping the case markers by many TV newsreaders while they present news programs. Its focus was on exploring the structural functions in Arabic sentences where these newsreaders tend to drop case markers in addition to finding the relationship between the type of news programs and this phenomenon.

This study has revealed that the adnominal, the object of a preposition and the adjective are the most three occurring structural functions in TV news shows. It has also found that these three functions were among the top functions, in addition to the subject function, from which newsreaders mistakenly drop their case endings. On percentage basis, the adjective function has lost its case endings in the majority of times when it is used in sentences. Within this structural function, it has also been found that the adjective of an adnominal and the adjective of the object of a preposition were among the most adjectival constituents affected by the case endings dropping. Moreover, in all the occasions when multiple adjectives were used to modify a single noun, the second adjective has been uttered without its case marker.

Furthermore, the current study has found that TV news shows can be divided into different categories according to their nature. Five categories have been distinguished: headlines, live dialogues, live reports, news and recorded reports. Among these sets, it has been found that newsreaders usually tend to drop case markers during their presentation of live dialogues and live reports, whereas they show their adherence to Arabic case marking system on most of the structural functions that occur during the broadcasting of news and recoded reports.

The findings of this study have some significant implications on the industry of TV news presentation. They can form a solid basis which TV channels decision makers can rely on to integrate Arabic special courses in training programs for their newsreaders. Moreover, Arabic newsreaders will find this study beneficial in that it reveals the common structural functions where they tend to drop case endings so that they become more accurate during speech. It also attracts their attention to the types of different TV programs during which this phenomenon mostly occurs so as to help them be more careful while speaking.

After conducting this study, the researchers can confidently suggest some related topics to be investigated in further research projects. For example, some other aspects, like morphology or phonology, of the structural functions could be the foci of other studies. Moreover, other genres of TV shows, such as sports and economics, would make a fertilized area for conducting research projects. Another promising research area is the relationships between different Arabic varieties to which the newsreaders belong and their tendency to drop case endings during their presentation of connected speech in TV shows.

Key of transcriptions

Let.	Rep.	Let.	Rep.	Let.	Rep.	Let.	Rep.	Let.	Rep.
ا	ā	ب	b	ت	t	ث	th	بُ	bu
ج	j	ح	h	خ	ẖ	د	d	بَ	ba
ذ	dh	ر	r	ز	z	س	s	بِ	bi
ش	sh	ص	ṣ	ض	ḍ	ط	ṭ	بِ	bb
ظ	ḍh	ع	ʿ	غ	gh	ف	f	ء	ʾ
ق	q	ك	k	ل	l	م	m	الـ	al-
ن	n	هـ	h	و	ū	ي	ī	وْ	w
يَ	y	وُ	ūw	عُ	o	ءَ	ʾa	ءِ	ʾi

Note: Let.= Letter, Rep.= Represented by

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دراسة نحوية لتسكين أواخر الكلمات لدى مقدمي الأخبار التلفزيونية العرب

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الملخص

مسترشدةً بالجهود المتواصلة للمحافظة على النمط السليم للغة العربية، تستكشف هذه الدراسة ظاهرة تسكين أواخر الكلمات لدى مقدمي الأخبار التلفزيونية العرب. وبشكل أساسي، تركز الدراسة على الوظائف التركيبية لهذه الكلمات في البنية النحوية وكذا على العلاقة بين هذه الظاهرة ونوع البرامج التلفزيونية التي ترد فيها. وهي دراسة استكشافية تجمع بين الكم والنوع بناءً على مجموعة من التسجيلات من برامج تلفزيونية مختلفة عبر قنوات مختلفة تبث باللغة العربية. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن بعض الوظائف التركيبية تُردُّ أكثر من غيرها خلال هذه البرامج، وأن بعض هذه الوظائف تفقد حركتها الإعرابية أكثر من غيرها؛ فالصفات تستخدم بدون حركاتها الإعرابية في أغلب الأحيان وبالذات الصفات المزدوجة وصفات المضاف إليه وصفات الاسم المجرور. كما أظهرت النتائج كذلك أن البرامج المباشرة، والتي يرتجل فيها مقدمو الأخبار، تشهد إهمال الحركة الإعرابية للكلمات أكثر مما تشهده البرامج المسجلة. وخُصِّصت الدراسة إلى أن هذه الظاهرة تحدث في الغالب، وبشكل غير مبرر، في وظائف تركيبية ذات حركات إعرابية لا تتغير بتغير موقعها في التركيب النحوي.

معلومات البحث

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الكلمات المفتاحية

النحو، تسكين الحركة الإعرابية،

مقدمو الأخبار العرب