The Arabic Adjective and Attribute

Thesis

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Abstract

The noun, verb and particle are the three parts of Arabic speech. The student of Arabic learns words whose meanings resemble those of English adjectives. However, the words themselves possess every morphological feature of the noun. The student also learns that indefinite nouns can be described by adjectival sentences and that these sentences are translated as relative clauses. However, definite nouns need a relative pronoun in order to describe them with a sentence. The student learns that the adjective comes after the noun in Arabic. However, there are instances when the reverse applies. Then, the student learns two words for “adjective” in Arabic, ṣīfa and naʿ, and there doesn’t seem to be much distinction between their uses.

These features of the adjective caused the basis for this thesis. This study presents the treatment of the adjective from the perspective of three grammarians. They are Ibn as-Sarrāj (d. 928), az-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144), and ash-Shribīnī (d. 1570). Ibn as-Sarrāj’s work, al-ʿUṣūl fī n-Nahw, forms the basis of this study. He defines the adjective in terms of meaning and distinguishes it from the noun. He presents the rules for the attributive position and provides examples. Az-Zamakhsharī and ash-Shirbīnī serve to support the information found in al-ʿUṣūl and to show developments in the treatment of the adjective. Together, they provide answers to the problems above.
To the teachers of Arabic:

May we never forget that we are *still* mere students.
Vita

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Sībawayh (d. 798), one of the earliest and most respected grammarians of Arabic, divides speech into the three parts of noun, verb and particle.¹ This division may or may not be Greek in origin. No matter its origin, the tradition of this division of the parts of speech has endured more than twelve centuries. It will often occupy the first line of an Arabic grammatical work.

In English, the phrase ‘part of speech’ is “the traditional name for a lexical category.”² Lexical categories are classified under two broad divisions called major and minor. The major lexical categories of English are the Noun, the Verb, the Preposition, and the Adjective. The minor lexical categories are the rest (i.e. the Determiners, the Adverb, the Pronoun, etc.).³

The intermediate to advanced English speaking student of Arabic would recognize that prepositions are equivalent to particles in Arabic. Likewise, he or she would equate the verbs and nouns of each language to that of the other. However, would this student know where to situate the adjective that is considered one of the major lexical categories?

In the noun-adjective phrase, raʾīsun jadīdun, “a new president,” both noun and adjective share the same features. They both carry indefinite

³ R. L. Trask, Dictionary, s.w. “major lexical category,” “minor lexical category,” “part of speech.”
determination and independent inflection. They are both masculine and singular. Furthermore, they both are formed along the same morphological pattern, faʿīl. From this, the student would be inclined to think that the Arabic adjective is a type of noun.

This same student is likely to have studied Arabic from the series al-Kītaab fī Tāʾallum al-ʿArabīya, “The book in learning Arabic.” In this book, he or she learns in Chapter Eleven that indefinite nouns may be described by sentences.4 The first example given to the student is lī ṣadīqatun ismuḥā Laylā,5 “I have a friend, her name is Layla.” This sentence, used as an adjective, begins with a noun. The second example is lī ṣadīqun yadrusu tārīkha sh-sharqi l-ʾawsat, “I have a friend studying the history of the Middle East.” This sentence, used as an adjective, begins with a verb.

At this point, the student may find himself in deep thought about the following: “Arabic is divided into only three parts of speech, and none of those three parts are an adjective. I can use a word that has all the characteristics of a noun to describe another noun. Also, I can use any kind of sentence to describe an indefinite noun. And I’m looking for an answer to the question, ‘How does the adjective fit into Arabic?’”

The student knows that the noun (the ism) that is described comes before its adjective (the ṣifa). Also, the student knows that the noun-adjective phrase is called ism wa-ṣifa, “a noun and an adjective.” The sentence that is used as an

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5 ibid.
adjective is called *jumlatu ṣ-ṣifa*, “the adjective sentence.” Then, thought deepens when the student learns that the word *naʿt* also means “adjective.”

The student, striving to be all-knowing, is at a crossroads. Two words, *naʿt* and *ṣifa*, both mean “adjective.” There is *jumlatu ṣ-ṣifa* but there is no *jumlatu n-naʿt*. Two paths lie ahead. The first path will lead the student to one fact. This fact is that *naʿt*, *ṣifa*, and *jumlatu ṣ-ṣifa* exist in Arabic, and that’s it. However, acceptance of this fact is unfulfilling because it does not provide an answer to the question, “How does the adjective fit into Arabic?” The second path leads the student to a master’s thesis. This thesis, so the student hopes, will provide answers to his, or her, questions. “What is an adjective in Arabic?” “What is *ṣifa*?” “What is *naʿt*?” “And why, can I only describe an indefinite noun with a sentence?! Why not a definite noun?”

To answer these questions I have turned to three grammarians of Arabic. These grammarians distinguished the adjective from the noun. They illustrated that an adjective may come as a noun, an adjective, a verb, a noun phrase, or a sentence, and, this adjective need not come in any certain syntactic position in order to apply to its referent. They made a clear distinction between the Arabic adjective and the syntactic position of attribute. They also showed that an adjective that comes in a certain noun’s syntactic position of attribute need not apply to that noun. This study is an attempt to explain these concepts in a clear and concise method.

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6 ibid.
1.B Arabic Grammar and the Grammarians

The material that is presented in this study necessitates an introduction to Arabic grammar and those who are credited with establishing it as a field of study. In the early days of Islam, the Qurʾān was mainly passed down through memorization. There was a desire to keep to the Qurʾān pure and unaltered from the way it was uttered from the lips of the prophet Muḥammad.

The Islamic community after the prophet’s death was governed by a Caliph. Tradition states that the fourth caliph, ʿAlī (d. 661), requested Abū I-ʿAswad ad-Duʿalī (d. 688) to compose the first grammatical work of Arabic after “having heard Arabs and Persians making mistakes in reciting the Qurʾān.” The name of this science was termed nahw, “path” or “way.”

The material from which grammarians would base their study was drawn from pre-Islamic Arabic poetry and the Qurʾān. After roughly a century, it was compiled into two primary books. The first is that of Sībawayh and is known as the Kitāb. The second was of al-Farrāʾ. His was titled Kitāb Ḥudūd an-Nahw and did not survive.

Sībawayh and al-Farrāʾ are each associated with a school of thought. The schools were named after the cities in which they were established. The school of Sībawayh was the Baṣran school and that of al-Farrāʾ was the Kūfan school. In the ninth century, the two schools merged in the city of Baghdad where the

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8 ibid.
9 ibid.
Baṣran school became the dominant way of thought in terms of Arabic grammar. Thus, the *Kitāb* became the primary book.

Al-Mubarrad (d. 898) was the teacher of the *Kitāb* in Baghdad and helped establish Sībawayh’s thought as the dominant view of Arabic grammar. He presented a simplified version of the *Kitāb* in his book *Kitāb al-Muqtaḍab*. His student, Ibn as-Sarrāj (d. 928) wrote *al-ʿUṣūl fī an-Nahw*. This book “guaranteed the establishment of the Baṣran method in Baghdad.”

In this thesis I will discuss the treatment of the adjective by three grammarians ranging from the tenth to the sixteenth century. This first grammarian is Ibn as-Sarrāj. The *Kitāb* and *al-Muqtaḍab* may seem a more logical place to search for answers because they were written first. However, their organization, in terms of the adjective and description, is haphazard at best. In comparison to the organization of Ibn as-Sarrāj, it is lacking. Ibn as-Sarrāj distinguishes the adjective from the noun. He shows that an adjective need not some in the position of attribute in order to modify a noun. He uses separate technical terms to define the position of attribute and the adjective. He explains that nouns and sentences may take on the meaning of adjective, even though they are not adjectives themselves.

The next grammarian whose treatment of the adjective will be explained is Az-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144). He was a scholar of lexicography, philology, grammar, theology, ḥadīth, and Qur’ānic exegesis. He also studied the *Kitāb*.11

10 ibid.

His analysis of the adjective is included to show developments in the treatment of the adjective between his time and that of Ibn as-Sarrāj. Also, his distinction between naʿt and ṣifa contributes to the questions of this study.

This study concludes with the treatment of the adjective by Ash-Shirbīnī (d. 1570). He wrote a commentary on the elementary grammatical work of Ibn al-ʿĀjurrūm (d. 1323). This elementary work sets forth the rules of ʿīrāb, or desinential inflection, for the beginning learner. Both of these works show further developments in the treatment of the adjective. In the six centuries that pass between Ibn as-Sarrāj and ash-Shirbīnī, one can see that the focus of the adjective drifts from “what is considered an adjective” to “what are the rules for the agreement between the adjective and its antecedent.”

1.C The Parts of Speech

In the first chapter of his book, Sībawayh states that speech is “a noun, a verb, and a particle carrying a meaning which is neither noun nor verb.” Ibn as-Sarrāj, likewise, in his first chapter, writes that speech “is composed of a noun, a verb, and a particle.” Az-Zamakhsharī, also in the first chapter, writes that a


word is a “type” or “kind” (jins) of which there are three types; the noun (ism), the verb (fi’l), and the particle (harf).” Ibn al-‘Ājurrūm does the same. Among these grammarians it is unanimous that Arabic speech, or words, are of only these three kinds. They do not include the adjective.

Each noun in Arabic carries four identifiable markers that reveal a number, a gender, a determiner, and an inflection. Likewise, many adjectives do the same. It was customary for traditional English grammar to situate the adjective under the category of noun. Thus we have ‘nouns substantive’ and ‘nouns adjective’. However, in Arabic, this is not the case.

Ṣībawayh apparently distinguished between the noun, ism, and the adjective, ṣifa. Versteegh, in The Explanation of Linguistic Causes, highlights a number of occurrences of grammarians making this same distinction. The distinction is made just by calling the noun-adjective phrase ism wa-ṣifa.

Therefore, there should be no doubts that the Arabic noun is a distinguished from the Arabic adjective. Despite this distinction, the Arabic grammarians showed that a ṣifa can be an ism, and an ism can be a ṣifa.

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16 This is ‘in general’ and excludes those nouns, adjectives, etc. which are incapable of carrying all inflections.

17 Trask, Dictionary, 188.


Chapter 2: Ṣifa and Naʿt

The two primary terms used by the grammarians for “adjective” and the “art of description” are Ṣifa and Naʿt. Naʿt and Ṣifa may be translated as “adjective,” “attribute,” “epithet,” “quality” and “modifier.” The following definitions illustrate the function of these words in English.

**Adjective:** A lexical category, or a lexical item belonging to this category, found in many, though not all, languages, inflectionally and distributionally distinct from the categories noun and verb, with which it typically shares characteristics of being an open class whose members have real semantic content. Canonical adjectives typically have meanings expressing permanent or temporary attributes, such as big, old, green, happy, and dry, and indeed in some languages adjectives constitute a closed class containing only a dozen or so such items, but more typically the class contains a large number of items with meaning that may be more noun-like or verb-like, such as stony, shiny, dead, astonishing, and musical.

Among the grammatical characteristics often displayed by adjectives are attributive position (a big house), predicate position (That house is big), comparison (bigger, biggest) and inflection for gender, number, and case as required by agreement with, or government by, a head noun (not in English but consider French *un*...

Attribute: 1. An item which occurs in the attributive position. 2. More generally, any constituent, regardless of syntactic position, which serves to express some property of some entity, such as the predicate in an ascriptive sentence. 3. The property expressed by such a constituent.21

Epithet: An adjective indicating some quality or attribute which the speaker or writer regards as characteristic of the person or thing described.22

Quality: A personal attribute, a trait, a feature of a person’s character; (in later use esp.) an attribute considered desirable, a virtue.23

Modifier: Any category which serves to add semantic information to that provided by the head of the category within which it is contained, such as an adjective or a relative clause within a noun

20 Trask, Dictionary, 7-8.
21 Trask, Dictionary, 22.
22 OED, s.v. “epithet.”
23 OED, s.v. “quality.”
phrase or an adverbial within a verb phrase. Modifiers may be restrictive or non-restrictive.24 A modifier within a noun phrase is often called an attribute.25

There are other possible translations for these words as well, such as “descriptor,” “description,” “noun complementation,” etc. The definitions above reveal that these English words overlap. An “epithet” is an “adjective.” A “quality” is an “attribute.” A “modifier” can include any of the other defined words. Despite the similarities in their definitions, each word is used independently in a specific context.

Ṣifā (pl. ṣifāt) is a technical term for words that express a visible quality, an action,26 a characteristic that isn’t an action or a visible quality (i.e. intelligent, happy, sad), or a relative adjective. Ṣifā is also a technical term used for everything that distinguishes between two nouns that have the same name. Aṣ-ṣifāt al-mushabbaha, “the resembling ṣifāt,” is a technical term for adjectives which express a meaning that resembles the meaning of an active or passive participle. Naʿt, on the other hand, is a technical term that is reserved for a syntactic position. The word or phrase that occupies this syntactic position follows the inflection of the noun before it. Furthermore, this word or phrase must

24 Restrictive: the adjective is necessary to identify the referent (i.e. The American colonies). Non-restrictive: the opposite (i.e. my lengthy thesis). Lengthy is not necessary for the reader/listener to answer the question, ‘which thesis’. American is necessary to answer the question ‘which colonies’. Cf. Trask, Dictionary, s.w. “restrictive”, “unrestrictive.”


26 This action can only be an adjective in the present, present continuous, and future tense. If rendered in the past tense, it is a noun, as is explained by Ibn as-Sarrāj below.
either be a ṣifā, or take on the meaning of ṣifā. This is the distinction that is revealed by Ibn as-Sarrāj. It is supported by the treatment of the adjective by az-Zamakhsharī and ash-Shirbīnī. Therefore, the definitions of these words, like the English words defined before them, overlap even though each word is also used in a specific context. This point is made because some scholars and students believe that naʿt and ṣifā are used interchangeably. The treatment of these two words by the three grammarians reveals that they are not interchangeable.

Ṣifā comes the root waṣāfa, “to describe.” Naʿt comes from the root naʿata, “to attribute a quality to something.” The two verbs waṣāfa and naʿata are used interchangeably. This is because when one “attributes a quality to something,” he “describes” it. The verbal noun (maṣdar) of waṣāfa is waṣf. The verbal noun of naʿata is naʿt. The meaning of the maṣdar implies “the act of (verb).” Therefore, waṣf means “the act of describing” and naʿt means “the act of attributing a quality to something.”

The fact that naʿt and waṣf are used interchangeably can be found in most Arabic dictionaries. Ibn Fāris (d. 1004) is the author of ʾaṣ-Ṣāḥibī fī Fiqḥī ʾl-lugha.27 He writes:

An-Naʿt is al-waṣf, as our saying, “intelligent” and “ignorant.” It was related from al-Khalīl that naʿt does not exist except in praise, and that the waṣf may exist in it, and other than it. Naʿt occurs in two

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ways: the first of them is clarifying one noun from another [lit. a noun], as our saying, “Zayd, the perfumist” and “Zayd, the Tamīmī,” we have clarified by his naʿ from he who shares in his name. The other is along the meaning of praising and dispraising (al-madh wadh-dhamm) as in “the intelligent” and “the ignorant.” And, on this mode, are the names of God.28

This is the definition of the maṣdar of the verb naʿaṭa. Al-Khalīl is most likely al-Khalīl Ibn ʿAḥmad (d. 791, 786, or 776), the author of the first Arabic dictionary, Kitāb al-ʿAyn.29 Another lexicon, Lisān al-ʿArab states that naʿ is only used for things of beauty while waṣf is for the beautiful and the ugly.30 This evidence shows that for “describing something with a positive attribute,” naʿ and waṣf could be used synonymously. Although the verbs waṣafa and naʿaṭa may be used interchangeably, the terms ṣifa and naʿ cannot. Ibn as-Sarrāj only uses naʿ to apply to a word that 1) is, or takes on the meaning of, ṣifa and 2) follows the inflection of the word that immediately precedes it.

It is a fact that Ibn as-Sarrāj did not confuse “naʿ the verbal noun” with “naʿ, the syntactic position.” He states that the maṣdar is not made dual, plural, masculine, or feminine.31 “Naʿ the syntactic position” has the plural nuʿūṭ and, therefore, cannot be the maṣdar.

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31 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 419.
Ibn as-Sarrāj’s use of these words does overlap. A ṣīfa may occur as naʿt. He shows that a ṣīfa, a noun, a verb, a phrase, or a complete sentence may occur as naʿt. His examples show that when a noun, a verb, a phrase, or a complete sentence occurs in the syntactic position of naʿt, then it takes on the meaning of a ṣīfa, and can thus be called a ṣīfa. Furthermore, his explanation shows that something that is considered a ṣīfa need not come in the syntactic position of naʿt in order to qualify a noun. Ṣīfa and naʿt will remain untranslated in the text below.

The syntactic position of naʿt is one of five members of the tawābiʿ. The sole characteristic of the tawābiʿ is that they can only follow the inflection, ʾiʿrāb, of a preceding noun. The science of ʾiʿrāb concerns the change in inflectional ending on nouns. Each noun, depending on its function in a sentence, is given a certain inflection that, in turn, represents that function in the sentence. The governors are usually words (i.e. prepositions, particles, verbs, etc.) that cause a noun (preceding or succeeding) to occupy a syntactic position, or, the syntactic position itself could be considered the governor. The grammarians of Arabic devoted their works to explaining these inflections to the reader.

The independent inflection, also called the nominative case, is reserved for the agent of any verb, or topic of any sentence, and the simple predicate of a sentence without a verb. The dependent inflection, also called the accusative case, is reserved mainly for nouns of time and place, direct objects, adverbial nouns (and adjectives), circumstantial nouns (ḥāl), nouns of specification

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32 This may explain why ṣīfa is used for khabar, “predicate.”
(tamyīz), and others. This type of inflection embraces the largest number of constituents. The oblique inflection, also called the genitive case, is reserved mainly for the objects of prepositions and nouns showing possession.

Tābi’ has the plural tawābi’ in Arabic. It is the active participle of the verb tabi’a, “to follow.” It is translated in certain contexts as “to follow in inflectional form” and “to agree in case form.”

According to Wright:

The complements which are coordinated with, or placed in apposition to, the subject or predicate, are called by the Arab grammarians [at-tawābi’u], sequentia, followers, or appositives (sing. تابِع [tābi’un]), and the word to which they are placed in apposition is called [al-matbū’u], that which is followed (by some word in apposition). They are generally connected with a noun, more rarely with a verb.

Ibn as-Sarrāj wrote:

\[ at-Tawābi’u khamsatun: at-tawkīdu wan-na‘tu wa-ʾatfu l-bayāni wal-
badalu wal-ʾatfu bil-ḥurūfi, wa-hādhihi l-khamsatu: ’arbaʿatun tatbaʿu bi-ghayri mutawassitiṣin wal-khāmisu wa-huwa l-ʾatfu lā yatbaʿu ʾillā bi-tawassuṭī ḥarfin fa-jamīʿu hādhihi tajrī ṣalā th-thānī mā jarā ṣalā l-
ˈawwali mina r-rafʿi wan-naṣbi wal-khafḍī.\]

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The complements are five: the emphasis, the naʿt, the substitute, the classificatory conjunct, and the conjunct by particle. These five: four follow without an intermediary and the fifth, the conjunct, does not follow except by the intermediation of a particle. For all of these, the complement follows the inflection of the antecedent in independent, dependent, and oblique inflections.

ʾaz-Zamakhsharī wrote:

_Hiya l-ʾasmāʿu llatī lā yamassuhā l-ʾirabbitū ḵallā ῥabili t-tabyī tihayrihā_36

They are the nouns which are only inflected through following another.

These definitions show that these five types of _tawābiʿ_ follow the inflection of the noun they modify. _Naʿt_ is included among the _tawābiʿ_. The ḥāl and _tamyīz_ are distinguished from these categories because they are given dependent inflection only. Also, as illustrated by Ibn as-Sarrāj, when a _ṣifa_ does not follow the inflection of the noun it modifies, it is not _naʿt_.

There is some terminology associated with _ṣifa_ and _naʿt_ that will now be addressed. As noted above, the _matbuʿ_ is the word to which the _tābiʿ_ is placed in apposition. The _mawsūf_ and _manʿūt_ are “that which the _ṣifa_ describes” and “that to which the _naʿt_ is attributed,” respectively. In English, common terms are “antecedent,” “referent,” “described entity,” etc. In Arabic, it may also be referred to as _al-ismu l-awwal_, “the first noun,” just simply _al-ism_, “the noun,” and _al-

36 az-Zamakhsharī, _Mufaṣṣal_, 110.
The noun is referred to as the first because a ṣila may come for something semantically linked to the mawṣūf. In Arabic, this is termed ṣifatun li-shay in min sababihi, where the ‘hi in “sababihi” refers to the mawṣūf. This will be explained later.
Chapter 3: The Naʿt of Ibn as-Sarrāj and the Pure Ṣifāt

Ibn as-Sarrāj’s treatment of naʿt differs from that of az-Zamakhsharī and ash-Shirbīnī in that it is longer and much more in depth. Although he treats the agreement of inflection and determination, he does not elaborate on the agreement between gender and number to the extent of the other two. His primary focus seems to be to explain what a ṣifa is, and how it acts when it comes as naʿt.

He does not explicitly state that “these are the pure ṣifāt”, but the title of his next section is, dhikru ṣ-ṣifātī llatī laysat bi-ṣifātin maḥḍatin, “mentioning of the ṣifāt that are not pure ṣifāt.” His examples of those that are “not pure ṣifāt” come as nouns (i.e. numbers, nouns, noun phrases, and elatives). For them, he refers instead to as-ṣifā fī l-maʾnā, “the ṣifā within the meaning.”39 He shows that the pure ṣifāt are those which possess maʾnā ş-ṣifā “the meaning of the ṣifā.”

This meaning, it seems, is, as Versteegh quotes in Az-Zağğāği’s Theory of Grammar, refers to the categories of speech “which are connected with the state of mind of the speaker.”40 This state of mind is presumed to be that the speaker wishes to clearly identify one noun from the rest that share its name, as the definitions of Ibn as-Sarrāj and az-Zamakhsharī state below. This is the shared feature of the ṣifāt and it is reiterated by Ibn as-Sarrāj time and time again.

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40 Versteegh, Az-Zağğāği, 35.
This explains the drastic difference between his explanations of the *naʿt* of the indefinite noun, which contains mainly what the English speaker imagines as an *adjective*, and the *naʿt* of the definite noun, which includes demonstratives, nouns annexed to other nouns (i.e. your brother), and any common noun or *ṣifa* containing the definite article (i.e. that which is not typically thought of as an *adjective* by the English speaker). Ibn as-Sarrāj establishes a difference between the *naʿt* of a definite noun and the *naʿt* of an indefinite noun in his first paragraph. He states that the “basis of the *ṣifa* is to occur for indefinite nouns, not the definite; because the definite noun is self-sufficient and, only when subjected to a type of indefinite determination is it in need *ṣifa*. As for the indefinite noun, they are the ones deserving the *ṣifāt* so that they may draw nearer to the definite”41 He states that indefinite determination occurs when the listener does not know that to which he may refer it.42 Therefore, the listener knows that to which he may refer the definite nouns. This suggests that since the definite noun is “known,” there is no reason to differentiate it from others with its name.

He defines the *ṣifa* as *all* that distinguishes between any two *mawṣūf* that share the same utterance.43 This is his definition of *ṣifa* when it occurs as *naʿt*. He lists *naʿt* as one of the members of the *tawābiʿ* whose primary characteristic is the fact that the second (the *naʿt*) takes whatever “goes on the first (the *manʿūt*)

41 Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 409.
42 Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 419.
43 Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 409.
from the independent, the dependent, and the oblique inflections.” Ibn as-Sarrāj shows that there are certain kinds ṣifāt that usually occur as a naʿṭ. These are called the pure ṣifāt. There are other words, namely nouns, that can occur as naʿṭ. When these words come as naʿṭ he shows that they take on the meaning of ṣīfa.

In his next five sections he outlines the five pure ṣifāt. They are those words which express a visible quality, an action, an internal trait, are a nasab, or are a description with the word dhū. These words all have a meaning that corresponds to what is considered an adjective in English. These are the typical ṣifāt that occur as naʿṭ, thus they are the pure ṣifāt. This study presents the first two of the pure ṣifāt individually. The last three are presented together. Ibn as-Sarrāj’s section on the first two kinds of pure ṣifāt are much longer than the last three.

3.B The Ḥilya

The first pure ṣīfa is the ḥilya, “ornament.” The examples of ḥilya given by Ibn as-Sarrāj are all qualities which may be perceived by the eye (i.e. tall, short, one-eyed, squinty-eyed, beautiful, and ugly). This is in contrast to those which cannot be perceived by the eye, such as “intelligent,” and actions, such as “hitting.” The ḥilya is considered the first type of naʿṭ. Maintaining a distinction

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between *naʿ* and *ṣifā*, he refers to them in his explanation as *ṣifāt*: *fa-jamīʿu hādhihi ʿṣ-ṣifāti qad faraqat laka bayna r-rajuli l-ʿazraqa wa-ghayrihi...*“all of these *ṣifāt* have differentiated for you between the blue man and other than him.”*46 He clearly reiterates his definition of *ṣifā* as that which differentiates between any two nouns with the same name.

Ibn as-Sarrāj presents *ṣifatun li-shayʿ in min sababīhi*, “*a ṣifā* for something semantically linked to it” (i.e. the antecedent) in his paragraph on *ḥilya*. One of his examples of this is *marartu bi-rajulin ṭawīlin ʿakhūhu*, “I passed by a *tall-brothered* man” or “I passed by a man whose brother is tall.”47 The *ṣifā li-shayʿ min sababīhi* will be referred to in the present thesis as the *sabab* construction.

In this *sabab* construction, the semantically linked item contains a bound pronoun referring back to antecedent.48 In this example, the antecedent is *rajulin*, “a man.” The semantically linked item in Ibn as-Sarrāj’s example is *ʿakhūhu*, “his brother.” The bound pronoun is the *hu*, “his,” on the end of *ʿakhū*, “a brother.” This bound pronoun refers back to the antecedent, which in this instance is *rajulin*, “a man.”

The *ṣifā* in this phrase is *ṭawīl*. It is the word that differentiates between two nouns with the same name, which is why it is the *ṣifā*. Ibn as-Sarrāj classifies *ṭawīl* as a *ḥilya* because its meaning conveys a visible trait. The “*ṣifā* [*ṭawīl* in this example] occurs upon the first noun [i.e. *rajulin*] because it [the *ṣifā*, which is *ṭawīl*] distinguishes between it [the first noun, which is *rajulin*] and

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46 Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUsūl*, vol. 1, 410.
whoever has a name like its name [i.e. other things called rajul, “a man”].” The word here is both šīfa and na’t because it follows the inflection of this first noun (i.e. rajulin). It is in a sabab construction because it applies to ʾakhū. How can it apply to ʾakhū?

Ibn as-Sarrāj explains that each šīfa contains a concealed pronoun. Each noun, and many a šīfa, contain identifiable markers which reveal a number and a gender. Together, the number and gender equate to a pronoun. However, this does not explain why the sabab construction can apply to another noun. Furthermore, it does not explain why this other noun (in this case ʾakhū) is given independent inflection, especially since the independent inflection is reserved for subjects, topics, and simple predicates.

Ibn as-Sarrāj saw this problem coming. In his section on the šīfāt mushabbaha, “the šīfāt resembling the participles,” he states that these šīfāt resemble the active participles. Active participles, as he explains, are verbs (and may be šīfāt, “those which differentiate between two nouns with the same name, which may be nuʿūt, “those which follow the inflection of the noun they modify with a meaning of šīfa”). He then uses analogy to show that the šīfa mushabbaha can take a fāʿil, “subject” or “agent,” just as the active participle can when it is used as naʿt (and this will be explained in the section on the naʿt of action below).

49 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 410.
50 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 127.
51 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 130.
are verbs containing a concealed pronoun validates the statement that they are “equivalent to verb phrases (‘āqilun = yaʾqilu ‘he is intelligent’).”

The independent inflection governs the syntactic position of “subject.” Ibn as-Sarrāj shows in this first chapter on naʿt that when the ṣīfa mushabbaha has a subject that is written after it, and it (the ṣīfa mushabbaha) is used in the sabab construction (Cf. ṭawīlin ʿakhūhu above), then that subject will take an independent inflection. He notes that its annexation is improper, i.e., it does not follow the normal rules of nouns in construct.

In marartu bi-rajulin ṭawīlin ʿakhūhu, “I passed by a man whose brother is tall,” the pronoun within ṭawīl, “tall,” does not refer to rajulin, “a man.” He states that this is unique to those ṣīfāt “which can take the definite article, be made dual, be made plural by the ān suffix, and be made feminine.” By this, he means that if the concealed pronoun was contained in something that is not one of these ṣīfāt, then it cannot follow the inflection of the preceding noun, and, that it must be given independent inflection according to the rules of mubtadaʾ wa-khabar, “subject and predicate.” In other words, if the pronoun contained in the ṣīfa does not refer to the manʿūt (the word whose inflection is being followed) but refers to something else, and the pronoun is found in a word or phrase that is occupying the position of naʿt, and this word or phrase is not of that which can take the definite article, be made dual, plural, or feminine, then it (that which is

52 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ‘Uṣūl, vol. 1, 416; and Carter, Arab Linguistics, 245.
55 ibid.
occurring in the syntactic position of *naʿt* cannot follow the inflection of the *manʿūt* and it must be given independent inflection according to the government associated with the *mubtadaʿ wa-khabar*. Therefore, it cannot be considered *naʿt* although it is a *ṣīfa*. One such example is included in the *muḍāf* section below.

3.C The *Fiʿl*

The second pure *ṣīfa* is the *fiʿl*, “action” or “verb.” Ibn as-Sarrāj writes that “this is a *ṣīfa* that the *mawṣūf* earned by its action; for when he stood, it must be said of him that he is ‘standing/a stander.’”56 This will be called the *naʿt* of action. The *naʿt* of action may come as a verb or an *ism ṭāʾil*, “active participle.” He states that the *ism ṭāʾil* occurs just as a verb and is used when one has done, is doing, or is about to do an action.57 He adds that because the *ism ṭāʾil* occurs as a verb, it is okay to describe with a verb. His examples show that there are different modes of inflection for the entities that can occur within the *naʿt* of action. However, in each of his examples, the *naʿt* of action always comes directly after the *matbūʿ*, “that which is followed” (in terms of inflection).

His examples show that if the *matbūʿ* (or *manʿūt*) is the subject of the action, the *matbūʿ* itself may be included in the annexation. His example of this is marartu bi-rajuli qāṭili Bakrin as-sāʿāta, “I passed by a man killing Bakr now.”58 In this example, *rajuli*, “a man,” is both the *matbūʿ* and the subject of the action. Its

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56 Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 410

57 ibid.

58 Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 410-411
lack of tanwīn shows that it is included in the annexation. His examples also show that if the object of the action contains a bound pronoun referring back to the matbūʿ, then the matbūʿ itself may be included in the annexation. His example of this is marartu bi-rajuli mukhāliṭi badanihi dāʿun, “I passed by man, a disease infects his body.” In this example, badanihi, “his body,” is the object of the action mukhāliṭi, “infects.” The hi, “his,” in badanihi, refers back to rajuli, “a man.” Rajuli, “a man,” does not have tanwīn which shows its inclusion in the annexation.

Ibn as-Sarrāj further reveals that if the subject of the action is not the matbūʿ and there is no bound pronoun referring to it on the object (i.e. the naʿt occurs in the sabab construction) there are two methods of inflection for the entities involved. The first method is traditional. The action, occurring as naʿt, follows the inflection of the manʿūt. The subject of the action takes independent inflection while the object takes dependent inflection. His example of this is marartu bi-rajuln ḍāribin rajulan ʾabūhu, “I passed by a man whose father hits a man.” Ḫāribin, “hit,” is naʿt and follows the inflection of rajuln, “a man.” Rajulan, “a man,” is the direct object of Ḫāribin, “hit,” and takes dependent inflection according to its status as direct object. ʿAbūhu, “his father,” takes independent inflection because it is the subject of Ḫāribin, “hit.” The hu, “his,” of ʾabūhu, “his father,” is a bound pronoun referring back to rajuln, “a man,” which is the manʿūt, thereby making this a sabab construction. Lastly, Ḫāribin, “hit,” is one of those

59 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 411
60 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 411
which can take the definite article, be made dual, plural, etc., and is capable of following the inflection of a preceding noun while containing a concealed pronoun referring to something semantically linked. In other words, it can act as naʿt in a sabab construction.

The second method follows the inflection of annexation. He shows that the action may be annexed to its object while its subject comes afterwards. His example of this is marartu bi-rajul ʿabūhu. ʿabūhu, “he,” follows the inflection of the first rajul, “a man.” However, ʿabūhu, “he,” has no tanwīn which reveals its inclusion in the annexation. The second rajul, “a man,” does not take the dependent inflection given to the above rajul, but it is given oblique inflection according to its status as the muḏāf ilayh, “that to which something is annexed.” In both examples, the first rajul, “a man,” keeps its tanwīn and is not included in the annexation. Thus, if the manʿūt is the subject of the naʿt of action, or the object of the naʿt of action contains a bound pronoun referring to the manʿūt, then it may be included in the annexation. If, however, neither of these exist and the naʿt of action occurs in a sabab construction, the two methods of inflection illustrated above may apply to it.

The active participles above are shown governing a word with dependent inflection. Ibn as-Sarrāj, in his chapter on the ṣifāt mushabbaha, illustrates that they, like the active participles, may also govern a word with dependent inflection. He makes al-ḥasanu wajhan, “handsome faced,” analogous to aḍ-ḏāribu rajulan, “hitting a man.” Al-Ḥasanu, “the handsome,” carries definite determination and

61 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 410-411.
independent inflection. Thus, according to the rules of naʿt, it would be modifying a word with these two characteristics. Wajhan, “face,” is given dependent inflection due to tamyīz, “specification (i.e. the type of handsomeness).” Ad-Ḍāribu, “the hitting,” is analogous to al-hasanu. However, rajulan is given dependent inflection because of its status as mafʿūl bihi, “direct object.”62 He adds that most ṣifāt mushabbaha are intransitive verbs that do not take direct objects.63

His last paragraph of this section states that the tense of the verb plays a role in the inflection of the naʿt. He quotes Sībawayh who states that the future tense, the present tense, and the present continuous are the same. However, if the naʿt of action is rendered for something that has passed, its inflection will only be independent.64 His example is marartu bi-rajulin ḏāribuhu Zaydun ʿamsi, “I passed by a man, Zayd hit him yesterday.” In this example, ʿams, “yesterday,” places the action in the past tense. For this reason, the action ḏāribuhu, “hit him,” shows independent inflection instead of ḏāribihi, with oblique inflection. The oblique inflection would agree with the inflection of rajulin. Ḍāribu with the independent inflection does not agree.

I gather from this that actions rendered in the past tense cannot be considered naʿt because they do not follow the inflection of the noun they modify. Ibn as-Sarrāj states that “it has become a noun and will carry only independent

62 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUsūl, vol. 1, 130.
63 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUsūl, vol. 1, 130.
64 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUsūl, vol. 1, 411.
inflection.”\textsuperscript{65} This may related to the fact that all past tense verbs are in the indicative mood, i.e., \textit{marfu‘}.\textsuperscript{66} Therefore, the \textit{na’t} of action concerning the past tense is \textit{marfu‘}, i.e., carries independent inflection. Its status as noun, not \textit{ṣifa}, would mean that when it comes in the \textit{sabab} construction, it cannot follow the inflection of the first noun.

3.D Three more Pure \textit{Ṣifāt}

Ibn as-Sarrâj calls the third type of pure \textit{ṣifa}, \textit{mā kāna ṣifatan ghayra 'amalin wa-tahlīyatin}, “the \textit{ṣifa} that is not an action, nor an adornment.”\textsuperscript{67} The examples he provides are those which reveal a quality which may not be perceived by the eye (i.e. intelligent, learned, sad, happy, etc.). He shows they may occur as \textit{ṣifa} mushabbaha or \textit{ism fā'il} for the first noun, or for something semantically linked to it. This is a very short section in his work. However, it can be assumed that the reason behind it is that he has already explained all that would apply to this type of \textit{na’t} in his preceding sections.

He calls the fourth of the pure \textit{ṣifāt} the \textit{nasab}. He defines it as “when you relate to a father, a place, a trade, or a another type, it occurs just as the previous \textit{nu‘ūt} occur.”\textsuperscript{68} He shows that words such as \textit{fāris}, “knight,” \textit{dārī}, “armored,” and

\textsuperscript{65} Ibn as-Sarrâj, 'Uşūl, vol. 1, 411.


\textsuperscript{67} Ibn as-Sarrâj, 'Uşūl, vol. 1, 411.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibn as-Sarrâj, 'Uşūl, vol. 1, 411.
nābil, “noble,” are all *nasab* even though they have the form of the active participle. Additionally, he states that nouns of occupation such as *najjār*, “occupation,” *sarrāj*, “saddle maker,” *ʿattār*, “perfumist,” etc., are *mansūb*, “related,” to the matters they treat. These “became *ṣifāt* by what they possess of *maʾnā ʿ-ṣifa*.”69 He states that phrases such as *father of*, *son of*, *brother of* and the like “are *ṣifāt* that are not related to anything.”70 He does not include them among the *nasab*.

This fifth of the pure *ṣifāt* is the *waṣf* of *dhī*. When this occurs as *naʿt* it always comes in construct. He explains its rules of agreement for determination, and its morphological variations for agreement in gender, number, and inflection.

He states that the *dhū* of *ʿalladhī* is not the same as the *dhū* of this section.71 He adds that only the definite nouns can be described, *yūṣafu*, by *ʿalladhī*, “which.” He adds that the *dhū* of *ʿalladhī* is not the same as the *dhū* which is considered *naʿt*.72

Wright, in his section on relative sentences, includes both *jumlat aṣ-ṣifa*, “the adjective sentence,” and *jumlat aṣ-ṣila*, “the relative sentence.”73 The *jumlat aṣ-ṣifa*, as illustrated by Ibn as-Sarrāj, can be used for any indefinite noun. The *jumlat aṣ-ṣila* is used for the definite noun. The difference between the two is that the definite noun necessitates a “relative pronoun,” *ism mawsūl*, before

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69 Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 411.
70 Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 412.
71 Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 412.
72 Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 412.
attributing the descriptive sentence. According to the material presented by Ibn as-Sarrāj, the jumlat aš-ṣifa may be used as naʿt while the the jumlat aš-ṣila cannot. In any case, they both can be used to describe nouns, or yūṣafu bihā.

Ibn as-Sarrāj includes naʿt as a member of the tawābiʿ whose primary characteristic is that they follow the inflection of the preceding noun.74 These are five types of ṣifāt that typically occur as naʿt as presented by him. The first three nuʿūt reveal a visible quality, an action, or an internal quality. The fourth kind reveals relation to something which may be a trade, a place, a people, or something else. The fifth kind is a description using the word dhī faint.

Each type of naʿt takes on a meaning of ṣifa. He defines ṣifa as everything that differentiates between two nouns sharing in utterance.75 He shows that a ṣifa may come as naʿt and 1) directly modify the manʿūt; or, 2) directly modify something semantically linked to the manʿūt (i.e. the sabab construction). He shows that when the ṣifa occurs in the sabab construction, the phrase it creates with its mawṣūf modifies the manʿūt. However, the ṣifa in a sabab construction will only follow the inflection of that first noun if the ṣifa is one of of those words which can take a definite article, be made dual, plural, and feminine. If the word (or phrase) is not one of these, it cannot act as naʿt and is given independent inflection. It is given independent inflection and creates a mubtadaʾ wa-khabar with its following topic.

74 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 406.
75 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 409.
3.E The Not Pure Ṣifāt of Ibn as-Sarrāj

Ibn as-Sarrāj states that these Ṣifāt are able to begin a sentence, *tabtada‘,* as the nouns do.\(^{76}\) He adds that they do not carry the inflection of the first noun when they occur for in the *sabab* construction.\(^{77}\) This, as his examples reveal, is because they are not of those words which can take the definite article, be made dual, plural with the *ūna* suffix, or be made feminine. Each is outlined below.

Ibn as-Sarrāj makes a clear distinction between the noun, *ism,* and the Ṣifā by stating that the not pure Ṣifāt are able to begin a sentence, *tabtada‘,* as the nouns do.”\(^{78}\) He also, as shown above, distinguishes between Ṣifā and *na‘t.* (His definitions of Ṣifā and *na‘t* should remembered while reading the following sentence.) In the following examples, he reveals that a noun may occur as Ṣifā that is occurring as *na‘t.* He divides them into three sections; the *mufrad,* *muḍāf* and *mawṣūl,* or the “individualized,” the “annexed,” and the “connected.”

The *mufrad,* as its name suggests, is used alone without the aid of an annexation or a connection (prepositional phrase). His examples are those of numbers and nouns which do not express the qualities of the pure Ṣifāt in his earlier section. *Marartu bi-ḥayyatin dhīrā‘īn,* “I passed by a snake, an arm [in length].”\(^{79}\) In this example, the noun *dhīrā‘īn,* “an arm,” is distinguishing this snake from others (Ṣifā). It carries the same inflection as its preceding noun

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\(^{76}\) Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl,* vol. 1, 413.

\(^{77}\) Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl,* vol. 1, 413.

\(^{78}\) Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl,* vol. 1, 413.

\(^{79}\) Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl,* vol. 1, 414.
Marartu bi-thawbin sabʿin, “I passed by a robe, seven [its length].” In this example, the noun sabʿin, “seven,” is distinguishing this robe from others (ṣīfa). It carries the same inflection as its preceding noun (naʿt).

These words are not capable of being made plural by the ūna suffix. Therefore, if they occurred in a sabab construction, Ibn as-Sarrāj shows that they are to be given independent inflection. In marartu bi-ḥayyatin dhirāʿun ṭawluḥā, “I passed by a snake whose length is an arm,” dhirāʿun carries independent inflection. The same can be said of sabʿun in marartu bi-thawbin sabʿun ṭūluḥā, “I passed by a robe whose length is seven.” Thus the relative sentence of an indefinite noun is rendered.

The muḍāf only occurs annexed to another noun. His examples include the words kullu, “all” or “every,” ʾayyu, “which,” ʾayyumā, “whatever,” mithlu, “similar,” ghayru, “not,” etc. Also included are the superlative phrases constructed as “a best of any man,” ʾafḍal rajul, with the elative coming first. (He places ar-rajul al-ʾafḍal under waṣf al-maʿrifa, “the description of the definite noun.”) These, like the mufrad, when used in the sabab construction are given independent inflection. This, as Ibn as-Sarrāj has shown, is because they do not take the definite article, are not made dual and plural by ūna, or feminine, and cannot follow the inflection of the noun preceding them.

His examples of mawṣūl are phrases such as khayrun minka, “better than you,” ʾabun laka, “a father to you,” and the like. He notes that one may elide the

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80 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 414.
81 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 416.
82 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 420.
ṣila “and you say: Allāhu ʾakbaru, “God is greater,” and its meaning is greater than every big [thing] and each thing.”83 And, in closing, he distinguishes the naʿ from the ḥāl and the ṣifa from the ḥāl:

mā jarā naʿtan ʾalā n-nakirati fa-ʾinnahu manṣūbun fī l-maʿrifati ʾalā l-ḥāli.84

What occurs as naʿ when indefinite, takes dependent inflection as a circumstantial modifier (ḥāl) when definite.

His example of this is marartu bi-Zaydin ḥasanan ʿabūhu, “I passed by the good fathered Zayd.”85 In this example, ḥasanan, “good,” is given dependent inflection according to ḥāl. This is because in the example, marartu bi-rajulin ṣasanin ʿabūhu, “I passed by a man whose father is good,” ṣasanin is considered naʿ because it follows the inflection of its preceding noun. Further more, it is able to be naʿ because it can take the definite article, be made dual, plural with ūna, and feminine. Ibn as-Sarrāj states that what occurs as naʿ upon the indefinite, takes dependent inflection according to ḥāl in the definite.86

Ibn as-Sarrāj states that it is vile language, lugha radīʿa, to use a ḥāl when it is not naʿ in the indefinite. His example is of one saying marartu bi-ʿAbdi llāhi khayran minhu ʿabūhu, “I passed by the ʿAbdullah whose father is better than he.”87 He illustrates that this should only be khayrun with independent inflection

83 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 418.
84 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 418.
85 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 418.
86 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 419.
87 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 418.
because in the indefinite, it can only have independent inflection. This is because *khayr minhu*, “more handsome than him,” cannot take the definite article, be made dual, plural with *ūna*, and feminine and, therefore, it must take independent inflection when it occurs in a *sabab* construction.\(^88\)

Ibn as-Sarrāj states the rule that “that which is independent in the indefinite is independent in the definite.” He writes:

\[
\text{wa-mā kāna rafʿan fī n-nakirati ghayra ṣifatin fa-huwa fī l-maʿrifati rafʿun.}^{89}
\]

What has independent inflection for the indefinite that is not a *ṣifā* i.e. not of the pure *ṣifāt*] has independent inflection for the definite. His example is of one saying, *marartu bi-rajun sawāʿun mahyāhu wa-mamātuhu*, “I passed by a man, his life and death being equal.” This is just as the Qur’ān states *sawāʿun mahyāhum wa-mamātuhum* [al-jāthiya: 21], “their life and death being equal,” when referring to the definite *alladhīna ʾāmanū wa-ʿamalū*, “those who believed and did.”\(^90\)

Additionally, he illustrates that it is “vile language,” *lugha radīʿa*, to use *naʿt* where it is *rafʿ ghayr ṣifā fī an-nakira*. His example of this is when one says *marartu bi-ʿAbdī llāhi khayrin minhu ʿabūhu*, “I passed by an ʿAbdullah whose father is better than him.”\(^91\) This is “vile” because *khayrin* with oblique inflection should be *khayrun* with independent inflection. This is because *khayr minhu*,

\(^{88}\) Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 128.

\(^{89}\) Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 418.

\(^{90}\) Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 418-419.

\(^{91}\) Ibn as-Sarrāj, *ʿUṣūl*, vol. 1, 419.
“more handsome than him,” cannot take the definite article, be made dual, plural with ūna, and feminine and, therefore, it must take independent inflection when it occurs in a sabab construction.92

Ibn as-Sarrāj adds:

\[
\text{wa-qad yakūnu ḥālan mā lā yakūnu šifatan; li’anna l-ḥāla ziyādatun}
\]
\[
\text{fī l-khabari fa-ʿashbahat khabara l-mubtadaʿī lladhī yajūzuʿan}
\]
\[
yakūna šifatan wa-yajūzuʿan yakūna isman.93
\]

That which is not a šifa may be a ḥāl; the ḥāl is an addition in predication, [an increase] which resembles the predicate of a topic which may be a šifa or may be a noun.

His definition of šifa is “that which differentiates between two nouns.”94 He states that ḥāl “differentiates between the owner of the action (as agent or object) and itself at the same time.”95 He categorizes naʿ as one of the members of the tawābi; those noun complements which follow the inflection of the nouns they modify. His examples of naʿ occur as a šifa, a noun, and a noun phrase, all of which take on a meaning of šifa in their attribution to the noun they modify, and follow the inflection of that noun.

In his closing paragraph he describes other types of šifa for an indefinite noun. He includes the maṣdar in this category, stating that its meaning is analogous to that of “dhū + maṣdar” and, if the modified noun would be dual,

92 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol.1, 128.
93 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 419.
94 ibid.
95 ibid.
plural, etc., then dhū need be present because the maṣdar cannot be manipulated as such.\textsuperscript{96} He states that the “indefinite noun is described by (yūṣafu bī) sentences, topic and predicate and subject and verb, because every sentence is indefinite because it happens in that, to which the listener knows not to refer it.”\textsuperscript{97} He adds that if one wanted to use a sentence to describe a definite noun, ʿalladḥī, “that” or “which,” would need to be used.

3.F Describing Definite Nouns

Ibn as-Sarrāj clearly distinguishes between the naʿt of definite and indefinite determination. In his opening paragraph on naʿt (see above) he wrote, “the definite noun is self-sufficient and, only when when subjected to a type of indefinite determination is it in need of ṣifa.”\textsuperscript{98} He adds that “the ṣifa cannot be more precise than the mawṣūf.”\textsuperscript{99} He adds under this section of definite waṣṭ that the ṣifa and the mawṣūf are one entity, shayʾ wāḥid.\textsuperscript{100} He lists five types of definite nouns; the proper noun, that annexed to a definite noun, the definite

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{96} Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 419.
\item \textsuperscript{97} Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 419.
\item \textsuperscript{98} Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 409.
\item \textsuperscript{99} Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 421.
\item \textsuperscript{100} Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 420.
\end{itemize}
article, the demonstratives, and the pronouns. Pronouns, he adds, do not describe and are not described. He gives examples of how each is described.

The proper noun may be described by that which is annexed to a definite a noun. His example is marartu bi Zaydin ʾakhīka, “I passed by your brother Zayd.” In this example, ʾakhī, “brother” is given oblique inflection and annexed to ka, “your.” It describes Zayd, the proper noun. He shows that the proper noun may also be described by the definite article. His example is marartu bi-Zaydin at-ṭawīlī, “I passed by the tall Zayd.” He then shows that the proper noun may be described by the demonstratives. His example is marartu bi-Zaydin hādhā, “I passed by this Zayd.”

Ibn as-Sarrāj states that the noun annexed to a definite article may be described by the same three things. His is example of the noun annexed to a definite noun being described by a noun annexed to a definite noun is marartu bi-ṣāhibika ʾakhī Zaydin, “I passed by your friend, Zayd’s brother.” He then adds, bi-ṣāhibika at-ṭawīl, “by your tall friend,” and bi-ṣāhibika hādhā, “this friend of yours,” to show how it may also be described by the definite article and the demonstrative.

He shows that the definite article is described by that which contains the definite article. However, he shows that it may be described by that which is annexed to a definite noun. This latter example is marartu bir-rajuli dhī l-māli, “I passed by the wealthy man.” In this example, the word following dhī is definite.

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101 The definite article is usually shown with a šīla, but does occur with a noun. It is uncertain from his explanation if one may say Zaydun ʾl-ʾakhu, ‘Zayd the brother’, and it still be considered naʾt.
The demonstrative may be described by ٖیفَت and nouns with the definite article.\(^{102}\) He distinguishes between the ism and the ٖیفا again. The ٖیفا that occurs with a definite article and is ٖیت to demonstrative is said to occupy the position of a noun (i.e. syntactic position). This he relates from Sībawayh who said that one can say ٍهِذْهَا ٖیت-تَأْوِيل (lit. ‘this one tall masculine thing) “when there are not two tall things in your presence.”\(^{103}\) Thus, the ٖیفا can occupy the place of a noun when acting as ٖیت. These separations of ٖیفا and ٖیت are supported by az-Zamakhsharī.

\(^{102}\) Ibn as-Sarrāj, ٩عُل, vol. 1, 420.

\(^{103}\) Ibn as-Sarrāj, ٩عُل, vol. 1, 420.
Chapter 4: The Șifa of Az-Zamakhsharī

Ibn as-Sarrāj uses naʿt as the title of his section. Az-Zamakhsharī uses șifa as his title for this section. He uses naʿt only twice in this chapter of his book: both instances are in the same sentence; a sentence, twenty-five constituents in length, which occupies one entire section of his chapter. His explanation is much shorter in length than that of Ibn as-Sarrāj. In the first four lines he defines șifa including examples of Ibn as-Sarrāj’s first three types of pure șifāt. This is followed by nine sections of șifa elaboration totaling a mere fifty-eight lines of explanation. This is not to say it is lacking.

Az-Zamakhsharī defines șifa as “the ism indicating to one of the possessed conditions...that which is called “șifa” is the difference between two [things] sharing in name and it is said that it is for takhṣīš (“particularization”) in the indefinite and for tawḍīḥ (“clarification”) in the definite.” [Section 1] He states that it may come for praise (names of God), dispraise, and emphasis (as “yesterday gone-by”). [Section 2] He writes that, generally, it is of the active participle, passive participle, șifa mushabbaha, waṣf by dhū, nasab, or those expressing or “total exaggeration in its affair” (i.e. the muḍāf of Ibn as-Sarrāj).

104 Az-Zamakhsharī, Mufaṣṣal, 116. “Constituents” is used because words with attached pronouns and/or prepositions were treated as only one entity.

105 Az-Zamakhsharī, Mufaṣṣal, 114.

106 Az-Zamakhsharī, Mufaṣṣal, 114.

107 Az-Zamakhsharī, Mufaṣṣal, 114.
[Section 3] He adds that the *maṣdar* and those words expressing “similar to” or “sufficient of” are also used to describe.\(^{108}\) [Section 4] Then, he states that both true and false sentences may be used to describe the indefinitely determined.\(^ {109}\)

Section five states:

\[
\text{wa-qad nazalū na’ta sh-shay’i bi-ḥāli mā huwa min sababihi}
\]

\[
\text{manzilata na’tihi bi-ḥālihi huwa}^{110}
\]

And they have placed the *na’t* in the *sабab* construction in the place of its *na’t*.\(^ {111}\)

This is the only time that *na’t* occurs in his explanation. He shows that one distinguishing feature of the syntactic position of *na’t* is that it may contain an item which applies to something of a semantic link to its *manʿūt*. This is a unique characteristic of Arabic. It supports the argument that *na’t* is a syntactic position. This position is characterized by its filler following the inflection of the noun that immediately precedes it; that which fills this position takes on a meaning of *ṣifa* whether it is a *ṣifa*, a noun a verb, or a noun phrase. That which takes on the meaning of *ṣifa*, may or may not directly modify the noun that is followed. Therefore, that which is *na’t* is distinct from that which is *ṣifa*.

In section six, he elaborates more on agreement between the *ṣifa* and the *mawṣūf*. This is not done to the extent it is covered in ash-Shirbīnī’s


\(^{111}\) Lit: “They have descended the *na’t* of the thing, in the case of what is of its semantic link, in the place of descent of its *na’t*, in its case."
commentary, but more than what is elaborated on by Ibn as-Sarrāj. He states that the ṣifa agrees in number, gender, and determination just as inflection. However, he adds that when it occurs for something semantically linked, it only agrees in inflection and determination, something not covered by Ibn as-Sarrāj. Then, he states that some words will not agree in gender, particularly those cryptomasculine and cryptofeminine words, and those words that fall on the morphological pattern of faʿūl and faʿīl that take on the meaning of the passive participle, or mafūl. This last point was also not mentioned by Ibn as-Sarrāj in his chapter on naʿt.

In section seven, he reiterates the same points about waṣfi l-maʾrifati, “description of the definite,” covered by Ibn as-Sarrāj. In it, he distinguishes the difference between the ṣifa and the ism: wal-mubhamu yūṣafu bil-lāmi isman wa-ṣifatan, “and the demonstrative is described by the definite article on an article or on a ṣifa.”112 In section eight, he echoes that a mawsūf need be more particular than its ṣifa. In section nine, he states that the ṣifa should accompany the mawsūf unless “its matter is evidently evident” or ḥarāʾ amruhu ḥuhūra.113

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112 Az-Zamakhsharī, Muḥāṣṣal, 116.

113 Az-Zamakhsharī, Muḥāṣṣal, 116.
Chapter 5: The Naʿt of ash-Shirbīnī and Ibn al-Ājurrūm

Ash-Shirbīnī divides naʿt into two types; naʿt ḥaqīqī, “true naʿt,” and naʿt sababī, “semantically linked naʿt.” He defines naʿt ḥaqīqī as “that which follows the inflection of he who possesses it.” He defines naʿt sababī as “that which follows the inflection of other than he who possesses it.” The phrase naʿt li-shayʾ min sababihi shortened into naʿt sababī. This suggests that the two technical terms, naʿt ḥaqīqī and naʿt sababī, developed between the times az-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144) and ash-Shirbīnī (d. 1570).

His description of agreement is not the same as that of az-Zamakhsharī, but it brings about the same results. Az-Zamakhsharī said that the šifa should agree with its mawṣūf in inflection, singularity, duality, and plurality, definite and indefinite determination, and femininity. Ash-Shirbīnī uses the number ten to represent the three types of inflection, the two types of determination, the three types of numbers, and the two types of gender. He states that true naʿt will agree in four from ten, one from each respective category.

He writes, “You say in this true naʿt, the one that, in utterance, follows the inflection of he who possesses it, and, its pronoun has the ability to take a topic

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114 Carter, Arab Linguistics, 238.
115 Carter, Arab Linguistics, 238.
117 Carter, Arab Linguistics, 238, 240.
or predicate...” This recalls the sections of Ibn as-Sarrāj in which he explains that active participles and those resembling them (i.e. those which are capable of taking the definite article, can be made dual or plural with the ṭūna suffix, and may be made feminine) are capable of taking subjects and objects because they are verbs. Ibn as-Sarrāj also explained that when the šifa was not one of those that could take the definite article, etc., and it occurred in the sabab construction, it could only take independent inflection.119

Ash-Shirbīnī provides many examples, reiterating throughout that the “concealed pronoun” has maʾnā ṭ-rāfīʿ. After these, he adds, “In that, all of it, the concealed pronoun of the manʿūt has ṭāfīʿ [not ʿraf].”120 ṭāfīʿ, as an active participle, cannot be “that which is given independent inflection” [marfūʿ] nor can it mean “independent inflection” [raf]. Therefore, it must be “that which gives independent inflection” in the broadest sense of the word. This is supported by the examples from all of the grammarians where the pronoun within the adjective gives rise to either a subject or topic with independent inflection, or a predicate of any kind [i.e. prepositional phrase, direct object, agent, etc.] with its proper inflection. The concealed pronoun does have independent inflection, as noted by Carter.121

Ash-Shirbīnī then states, “As for an-naʿt as-sababī, which is ṭāfīʿ for an explicit noun that is connected to the [concealed] pronoun of the manʿūt, it must

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118 Carter, Arab Linguistics, 240.
119 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, 416-417.
120 Carter, Arab Linguistics, 244.
concord with its antecedent in two of five [i.e. not four of ten]; one from the three types of inflection and one from the definite and indefinite determinations.”122 These, of course, are dependent on that which is contained in the manūt, he adds. He illustrates in his examples that the remaining two out of five will depend upon the agent or topic of the naʿt. He concludes his commentary on the naʿt of Ibn al-ʿĀjurrūm with a lengthy analysis of definite and indefinite determination. Much of this analysis contains a thorough explanation of the pronouns in Arabic.

122 Carter, Arab Linguistics, 245-246.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

The information above explains the treatment of the adjective by three grammarians. Although the terms ṣifā and naʿt are said to be used interchangeably, I have found what appears to be Ibn as-Sarrāj’s attempt to make a distinction between two, and this distinction seems to be reflected in the works of az-Zamakhsharī and ash-Shirbīnī. Ibn as-Sarrāj saw an adjective in Arabic. His term for this was ṣifā. He saw five types of pure ṣifāt which reveal either a visible quality, an action, an internal trait, a ṣifā of relation, or a descriptive phrase through an annexation of the word dhū. Furthermore, he saw that nouns, noun phrases, verbs, and sentences could all be used as ṣifā. He states that indefinite nouns may be described by all sentences because sentences are indefinite. His examples show that these sentences do not need to follow the inflection of the noun they modify in order to be a ṣifā to them. He shows that definite nouns must be described by other definite items. If one wanted to describe a definite noun with a sentence, he would have to use alladhī (i.e. the relative pronouns). His definition of ṣifā is “all that distinguishes between any two mawṣūf that share in utterance.”123 This definition is echoed in the work of az-Zamakhsharī.

Ibn as-Sarrāj classifies naʿt as a member of the tawābiʿ whose primary characteristic is the fact that the second (the naʿt itself) takes whatever “goes on

123 Ibn as-Sarrāj, ʿUṣūl, vol. 1, 409.
the first from the independent, the dependent, and the oblique inflections.”

This is confirmed by the other two grammarians who limit its use to a strict syntactic context. It is shown by all three that a *ṣifa* may come as *naʿt*. In doing so, this *ṣifa* may directly modify the *manʿūt* or it may come in a *sabab* construction and apply to something semantically linked to the *manʿūt*. The *sabab* construction occurs when two entities take a share in a word with certain grammatical features (see above); this word is both *naʿt* and *ṣifa*; the first entity being the *manʿūt*, the second entity being the *mawsūf* of the word; the phrase created between this *ṣifa* and its *mawsūf* acts as *ṣifa* to the first entity, the *manʿūt*, thereby giving it the quality of being *mawsūf*.

This study began with several questions. “What is *ṣifa*?” “What is *naʿt*?” “Why are only indefinite nouns described with sentences? Why not a definite noun?” However, one question remains: “How does the adjective fit into Arabic and its three parts of speech?” The grammarians did not view the adjective as a part of speech. Instead, it is a linguistic occurrence in which a noun is given some sort of distinguishing characteristic. It is not done by “one type of word,” it is accomplished by a combination meaning, inflection, and syntactic placement of nouns, verbs, and particles. Unfortunately for the student of Arabic, the adjective cannot be summed up under “one part of speech.” Unfortunately for the student, it can’t even be summed up under “one chapter of a book.”

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