

# On Independent Adjectives: A Syntactic Analysis of Arabic Adjectival Nominals

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## Abstract

In this study, I aim to investigate the ambiguity on the category of the non-modifying Arabic adjectives that occur independently without a modified noun and to provide an account for the following questions: (1) are independent adjectives in Arabic nouns or adjectives?; (2) do they undergo a deadjectivizing process?; and (3) if they do, at which layer in adjectival phases does nominalization take place? I attempt to investigate the bi-categorical nature of independent adjectives in Arabic showing that they are internally adjectival but externally nominal. This analysis postulates that these adjectives have undergone category-change by moving A to the nominalizer D, which has the abstract affix NOM. Semantically, the adjective becomes referential (or +[indiv(iduated)]) naming entities of certain attributes, rather than denoting the attribute. However, DP is not the mere layer at which category-change takes place. The category-change is observed to occur earlier than the DP layers as indicated by the subregularities in the adjective form. The plural morpheme indicates three layers of nominality: the lower nP, NumP, and DP. Adjectives that undergo a-to-n change are nominalized having singular nominal form. Adjectives that are nominalized in NumP are pluralized with the nominal broken plural, yet having a singular adjectival form. Finally, adjectives that are nominalized in the highest functional DP projection are marked with an adjectival sound plural morpheme. This analysis provides a neat account for the diversity in the adjective number form and is favored over the alternative assumption that adjectives in pro-drop languages drop the head noun.

**Keywords:** Independent adjectives, Adjectival nominals, Nominalization, Category-change, NOM-af(fix), Plural morpheme.

## 1. Introduction

Arabic adjectives are commonly known for their ability to occur in argument positions resulting in constructions of adjectival nominals (see Al-Suhali 1992:164, Ibn Aqil 1964, Hamoda 1985, among others). Adjectival nominals (or adjectives that occur independently without modified nouns) can check nominal Case and D-features. To my knowledge, this phenomenon hasn't received enough attention in the literature. One important issue to address is whether adjectival nominals are true nouns or adjectives. In traditional Arabic grammars, adjectivehood refers to the word class that follows the noun it modifies (*al-sʿifat-u tatbaʿu l-mawsuʿa*). The full agreement with the (overt) noun (*al-tabaʿijja*) has been the main criterion to identify Arabic adjectives. The agreement pattern is illustrated below:

- (1) ʔal-nisa:ʔ-u            ʔal-jami:l-a:t-u  
the-women-nom        the-beautiful-pl-fem-nom  
‘the beautiful women’

Identifying adjectives is dependent on the presence of an (overt) head noun which raises an important question about independent adjectives, which occur without a modified noun as in (2).

- (2) ʔal-jami:l-a:t-u  
the-beautiful-pl-fem-nom  
‘the beautiful’

In the literature, adjective nominals are taken to belong to two classes: true nouns, that are homophonous with (but not derived from) adjectives, and true adjectives that drop the head noun as a result of the article and/or adjectival agreement (see Boror & Roy 2010, Hofherr 2006, among others). Arabic, in my view, is closer to the former than the latter. Romance adjectives, on the other hand, form one instance of the latter. The ability of the adjective to drop the head noun is argued to be dependent on two factors: pro must be licensed in the language, and pro must be identifiable through gender and number distinctions on the article and/or through the modifying adjectives (Bernstein 1993, among others). Little research in the literature has discussed the possibility of converting an adjective to a noun. Despite that Arabic adjectives seem to have agreement features that mirror those of Romance adjectives, the two agreement systems are not identical. As far as Gender and Number are concerned, both Arabic and Romance adjectives are the same. Arabic, however, has additional concord patterns that are not available in Romance. That is agreement in Case and, most importantly, in Definiteness. Arabic adjectives are DPs, unlike Romance adjectives. Do Arabic adjectival nominals have a different explanation from that of other languages (Romance, for example)? If the adjectival agreement is the mere explanation for dropping the head noun in pro-drop languages, it shouldn't be the case in Arabic. The current paper argues for a deadjectivalizing process that nominalizes the adjective base. Arabic adjective phrases, being DPs, have more freedom to occur in argument positions. A closer look at the internal structure of Arabic adjective phrases provides evidence that adjectives are nominalized at different levels

resulting in different degrees of nominality. Beside the agreed function of the adjectival D as ‘anaphoric’ (Fassi Fehri, 1999), we argue that it has an additional function as ‘referential’ when acts as a nominalizer.

Previous analyses have focused on the Arabic adjective phrase that is merged inside a noun phrase, in which case the features of the nominal D, including DEF, CASE, and the  $\phi$ -features are transferred to the adjectival D (see Kremers 2003, Al-shurafa 2006, among others). The current paper aims at analyzing the adjective that occurs independently having its own DEF, CASE, and the  $\phi$ -features. The paper is organized as follows: In Section 2, I investigate the categorial nature of Arabic adjectival nominals, and how they are derived. In Section 3, I identify various layers at which nominalization takes place. Section 4 concludes the paper.

## 2. Adjectival Nominals and Their Formation

### 2.1 Independent Adjectives as Typical Nouns

Adjectives (that occur independently) are syntactically typical nouns. Their form is identical to that of adjectives, but they have the external syntactic properties of true nouns. They occur where arguments occur, take articles, and carry Case. Arabic adjectival nominals exhibit a form that is equivalent to noun-ellipsis in English (or ‘the A-one’ construction like ‘the red one’) or A-pro constructions in languages with nominal and adjectival agreement and agreeing articles like French (*les jeune/s* ‘the young/s’) and Hebrew (*ca’ir/im* ‘youth/s’). No ‘A-one’ constructions exist in Arabic. Despite that Arabic seems to have A-pro constructions, we will argue later that Arabic adjectival nominals are not A-pro constructions. As pointed out by Fassi Fehri (personal communication), we assume, contra Boror & Roy (2010), that Arabic shows true cases of deadjectival nominals (i.e. nominals derived early from adjectives). In the Arabic traditional grammar, adjectival nominals have been treated as ordinary nominals as both have the same distribution. This is because ‘adjectives’ (*alsʔifa:t*) are defined as the modifiers of overt nouns, belonging to a category of *tawa:biʔ* ‘followers’, which occur in total agreement with the (overt) noun. Independent adjectives are explained differently cross-linguistically. One explanation suggests that some of these adjectives are true nouns, and others are adjectives licensing a null head noun. The ‘strong interpretation’ test, that Boror & Roy (2010) propose to distinguish Adj-pros from nouns, reveals that Arabic (independent) adjectives are true nouns. What is considered Adj-pros in Boror & Roy’s (2010) account is a noun in Arabic. Words like *faible* ‘weak’ and *raze* ‘thin’ are Adj-pros, which can only occur in strong environment in both French in Hebrew, respectively, can freely occur in both strong and weak environments in Arabic as exemplified in (3).

- (3) a. lam ʔajidu dʔaʕi:f-an/naʕi:f-an fi ʔal-qarja-ti <weak reading>  
       not I-found weak-acc/thin-acc in the-village-gen  
       ‘I did not find (any) weak (one)/thin (one) in the village’
- b. raʔaitu ʔal-dʔaʕi:f-a/ʔal-naʕi:f-a jatʔlubu ʔal-musa:ʕada-ta <strong reading>  
       saw-I the-weak-acc/the-thin-acc PRES-ask-3sm the-help-fem.acc

‘I saw the weak (one)/the thin (one) asking for help’

Because the weak environment is an exclusive property of nouns according to Boror & Roy (2010). Words like *ḍaʿī:f* ‘weak’ and *naḥī:f* ‘thin’ are, then, nouns. It is evident that Arabic adjectives have more freedom of interpretation in a way that they can typically occur as nouns. Accordingly, Arabic (independent) adjectives seem to have a different analysis from those of other languages. What leads traditional grammarians to treat adjectival nominals as ‘ordinary’ nominals is the syntactic distribution. Moreover, the morphological similarities between adjectives and nouns are strong enough to cause structural ambiguity between whether the construction is an adjective or a noun. Both lexical forms are dominated by a functional agreement level (including Num) and a higher D projection. So, both adjectives and nouns are morphologically indistinguishable. How, then, can we distinguish an adjective and a noun? Semantics appears to be the natural base for drawing the right distinction.

Adjectives and nouns contrast semantically. Whereas adjectives denote a property, nouns denote an individual. An adjective like *kabī:r* ‘big’ is describing a size, yet a noun like *ʿali* ‘Ali’ refers to an entity. An adjective, when merges inside the noun phrase, is attributive describing the noun it modifies, but is never referential. Adjectives that occur independently (or adjectival nominals), on the other hand, refer to entities of a specific property/state, yet are different from true nouns that refer to entities regardless of their internal state. The contrast between independent adjectives and nouns is illustrated when we consider the difference between using the same word as an adjective or as a noun. Whenever a word like *kari:m* ‘generous’ is used as an adjectival nominal, it will refer to someone who has the property of being generous. On the other hand, when the same word is used as a proper noun, it refers to someone who is not necessarily generous. Likewise, a common noun such as *ʔal-tilmi:ð* ‘the student’ refers to a male student regardless of his state unlike a word like *ʔal-ḍaki* ‘the-smart’ refers to someone who is smart. The question that is raised here is, how can we implement the semantic distinction?

The attribution vs. individuation draws a direct distinction between the semantics of adjectival nominals and ‘ordinary’ nominals. ‘Ordinary’ nominals are pure individuated bases, whereas adjectival nominals are individualized. Adjectives appear to be non-individuated, yet can individualize attributes of nationality, for example, by saying *al-ju:na:ni* ‘Greek’, *al-faransi* ‘French’ to refer to people through Ø-affixation. Attribution is, then, a source for deriving adjectival nominals, which are different from ‘ordinary’ nominals that are [+Indiv] (or [+Pers(on)] under, Longobardi’s (2006) account) in their basic form (see Fassi Fehri 2012). One way to implement the distinction between the two types of nominals is to assume that even adjectives can be individualized (being externally nouns, as will be shown). Individualizing an attribute can, then, account for the formation of adjectival nominals. The difference is that the input to affixation with adjectival nominals is an attribute (which I represent by attrib), whereas it is an Indiv with ‘ordinary’ nominals, as symbolized by the rules in (4)

(4) a. attrib → Indiv

## b. Indiv → Indiv

If this is true, the idea of a category-change is, then, born out. I assume (following Baker 2003, Dixon and Aikhenvald 2004, among others) that being attributive (or descriptive) is a semantic characteristic associated with the category A, whereas Indiv is associated with a nominal D (see Fassi Fehri 2012).

Two pieces of evidence support that adjectival nominals are adjectives undergoing a deadjectivizing process (rather than adjectives licensing a head pro). First is that there are some adjectival nominals that seem to be fully nominalized and can no longer be classified as adjective. They are incompatible with degree adverbs (\**ʔmriki jiddan* ‘very American’, *al-ḥa:fil-at jiddan* ‘very car’). Second is related to the features of D heading both the adjective and the adjectival nominal. Whereas the adjectival D (or  $D_a$ , as labeled by Kremers 2003) is ‘anaphoric’ and bound by the nominal D ( $D_n$ ), the D that heads adjectival nominals is non-anaphoric. If, on the other hand, adjectival nominals were adjectives licensing a null head noun, we would expect an anaphoric D bound by a null  $D_n$ . Yet, the situation proves otherwise: D heading an adjectival nominal seems to be  $D_n$ , specified as [+Indiv], rather than  $D_a$ , that is not specified for [Indiv]. The contrasts between adjectives and independent adjectives suggest that the latter are closer to nouns than they are to adjectives. My proposal complies with, but not identical to, the traditional grammar view that independent adjectives are not adjectives. Unlike the traditional view, we argue that the adjectival nominal is a syntactically derived entity (but not a basic one). It emerges in the lexicon as an adjective then nominalized in the syntax through a nominalizing affix.

Further evidence is provided when we investigate the categorial properties. A closer look shows that they are not adjectives (of null nouns). Rather, they are one instance of a category-change process, which is productive in Arabic. Derivational fixations may change verbs to adjectives (V>Adj) to form participles, verbs to nouns (V>N) to form ‘masʔdars’, and Adj>V to form verbs from stative adjectives such as *mari:dv* ‘sick’>*maridʔa* ‘getting sick’. Cases of non-ambiguous nouns derivationally formed from adjectives are, also, unquestionable in Arabic such as *sahl* ‘easy’ > ‘ease’ *suhula*, *ḏakar* ‘male’> *ḏakura* ‘masculinity’, *nazi:h* ‘impartial’ > *nazaha* ‘impartial’, etc. Categorial conversion is, then, a plausible candidate. A closer investigation at the dual natured categorial properties is evidence that adjectival nominals in Arabic undergo a deadjectivalizing process.

## 2.2 Categorial Properties

An examination of the distributional and case properties of adjective nominals and ordinary nominals suggests that they differ ‘internally’ but not ‘externally’. Adjectival nominals, unlike ordinary ones, exhibit a ‘dual’ categorial nature. Externally, they share with ordinary nominals the distributional property of occurring where arguments occur. They function as subjects, objects, prepositional objects, etc. They can carry determiners and Case. On the other hand, they are internally adjectival. Consider the following examples:

- (5) raʔajtu      ʔal-faqi:r-a      jiddan  
       saw.I        the-poor-acc    very-acc

‘I saw the very poor (one)’

- (6) *ʔahtarimu ʔal-ʃa:kir-a rabb-a-hu*  
 I-respect the-thanking-acc God-acc-his

‘I respect the (one) who's thankful to God’

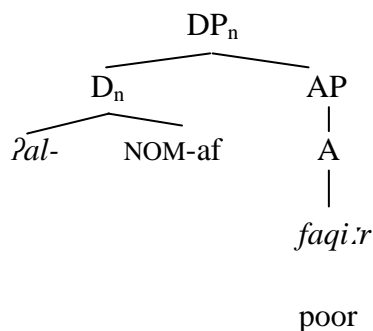
- (7) *ha ʕa: ʔal-muʕti bi-kaθrat-in*  
 This the-giving-nom with-abundance-gen

‘This is the (one) who is giving a lot’

In the above constructions the nominal expresses a state. In (5), it is modified by a degree adverb (like pure stative adjectives). The constructions (6) and (7) illustrate the fact that the nominal selects exactly the same accusative complement that a participle selects and can be modified by a manner adverbial. These properties are accounted for if the nominal is treated as an Adj. Gradability is a diagnostic for the adjectival nature (see e.g. Jackendoff 1977): degree expressions of the type of too or very combine with adjectives but not with other categories. As for the selectional properties and adverbial modification, I follow Fassi Fehri’s (1993) proposal that participles in Arabic are adjectives derived originally from verbs, the fact that explains the accusative object and the manner adverb. The occurrence of the objective case and the adverb in the nominal induce its adjectival nature.

The internal properties of adjectival nominals can be taken as evidence that adjective phrases have been converted to nominal DPs, being externally typically ordinary nominals. This ‘mixed’ behavior can only be accounted for if we suppose a nominalizing affix that nominalizes an adjective phrase. I label this affix NOM-af. The A is nominalized only ‘high’ in the tree, after it moves to merge with the NOM-affix heading a nominal projection, as diagram (8) shows for an adjectival nominal like *ʔal-ʃa:qir* ‘the poor’ in (5), irrelevant details are omitted:

(8)



In the above structure, the adjective phrase is headed externally by a nominal D. The A moves to D, which hosts the affix, to support the article. It is then crucial to assume that the affixation takes place high in the structure, at the inflectional level DP, enabling the adjectival nominal to have a ‘complete’ phrasal AP structure internally. Consequently, the adjectival nominal will have adjectival properties such as degree adverb modification. But externally, the adjectival nominal is converted to a nominal D, which is referential in nature, enabling

the adjectival nominal to occur in argument positions and carry Case. It is then the affix which is operating the conversion because if the AP is headed by the adjectival D, like the case in modifying adjective phrases, we would expect an anaphoric (non-referential) DP, yet the adjective phrase *ʔal-faqi:r* ‘the poor’ in (4) is referential. What changes the D from an adjectival D to a nominal D is the (abstract) affix NOM. The lexical entry of the NOM affix can be the following:

- (9) NOM-af: a. <af. <attrib>>  
b. (AP, DP<sub>n</sub>)

The (a) part of the entry specifies the semantic property of the affix, and the (b) part the categorial conversion property. We have to note that this nominalizer is a  $\emptyset$ -affix because no morphological change has taken place as a result of the conversion. The change is both semantic and syntactic. Semantically, the adjectival nominal does not denote an attribute yet names attributes (i.e. being indirectly referential referring to individuals by describing their attributes) unlike ordinary nominals that directly refer to (actual) individuals. Therefore, only the former is semantically [attrib(utive)]. Syntactically, an adjective phrase that can preserve adjectivehood characteristics, being internally an AP, changes to a nominal DP and share the same distribution and Case properties, being externally DP nominal. The category-change at an inflectional level is accordingly a logical hypothesis that can explain the external nominal nature of adjectival nominals that is internally adjectival. This makes the ‘ordinary’ nominal and the ‘adjectival’ one both are headed by the same nominal inflectional head except that the latter involves a nominalizer. The next question to ask is, can adjective be nominalized earlier than D? In other words, can NOM-af attach to other adjectival heads? Answers to both questions seem to be positive. More internal characteristics show that the nominalization process seems to take place at different levels.

### 3. Layers of Nominality

Assuming that (independent) adjectives are nominalized in an inflectional level explains why they are internally adjectives but externally nouns. In Arabic, APs in Arabic are dominated by (at least) two functional projections: a projection of AGR for [NUM] and [GENDER] specifications, and DP for (in)definiteness marking (see Fassi Fehri 1993, 1999, 2012, Kremers 2003). No morphological change occurs if the NOM affixation takes place in the ‘highest’ DP because both the adjectival and nominal articles are identical in form. We assume that the adjectival nominal *ʔal-faqi:r* ‘the poor’ in (5) is nominalized as high as DP since there is no evidence that the affixation takes place earlier. If, on the other hand, affixation takes place earlier (in AGRP, for example), we will expect a different morphological (plural) form. Arabic adjectives and nouns are not morphologically indistinguishable. The first difference between adjectives and nouns is in the plural form. Broken plurality is exclusively a nominal property (see Fassi Fehri 1993: 259). Thus, words such *ʕa:mi:l* ‘working/worker’ and *sʕa:ni:l* ‘making/maker’ that have both the broken and sound plural markings are taken as nouns if pluralized with the former but adjectives (or participles) if pluralized with the latter. Accordingly, *ʕummal* ‘workers’ and *sʕunna:l* ‘makers’ are nominal, marked with a broken plural whereas *ʕa:mi:lun* ‘working-pl’ and

*sʷa:niʃu:n* ‘making-pl’ are adjectival, marked with a sound plural. The second difference is that adjectives can always be pluralized whereas nouns, that are proper names, are not pluralized, referring to one specific entity such as Zayd. Further examinations on adjectival nominals reveal that they are of different plural forms, the fact that suggests a possibility of being nominalized earlier in the structure. Consider the following examples:

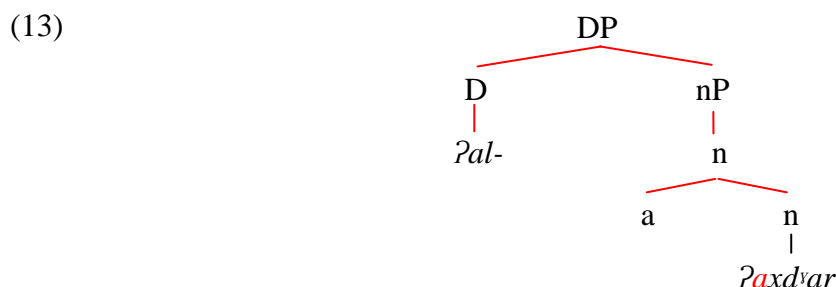
(10) *fa:za*    *ʔal-ʔaxdʷar-u/ \*ʔal-xudʷr-u/ ʔal-ʔaxdʷar-u:n*                    *bil-kaʔsi*  
 won    the-green-nom/the-green-pl.nom/the-green-pl.nom                    with-the-trophy  
 ‘The Green won the trophy’

(11) *ʔijtamaʃatu*    *bil-ʔanji/ bil-ʃaʔnija:ʔi/ \*bil-ʔanj-i:na/*  
 met-I                    with-the-rich-gen/with-the-rich-pl.gen/with-the-rich-pl.gen  
 ‘I met with the rich (person)/the rich (people)’

(12) *ʃa:raka*            *ʔal-ħa:dʷir-u/ ʔal-ħudʷu:r-u/ʔal- ħa:dʷir-u:n*  
 participated    the-attendant-nom/the-attendant-pl.nom/the-attendant-pl.nom  
 ‘The attendant(s) participated’

In the above constructions, the nominal expresses an attribute/state: a state of being green in color (10), a quality state of being rich (11), and a state of being attending (i.e. a stativized form) in (12). The three constructions differ (minimally) in the plural morphology. Whereas (10) cannot be pluralized, (11) can only form a broken plural, but cannot form a sound plural, and (12) can form both sound and broken plurals. This suggests that (10) is more nominal than (11) and that (11) is more nominal than (12). The adjective in (10) is nominalized in its singular form acting like a proper noun. (11) has a singular adjective form, that is pluralized with a nominal broken plural marker in a way that it behaves like a common noun such as *tilmi:ð* ‘student’ > *tala:mi:ð* ‘students’. On the other hand, (12) has an adjective singular form, which is either pluralized with a broken or sound plural. The existence of the dual plural forms entails the adjective *ʔal-ħa:dʷir* ‘the-attendant’ are assumed to be as a result of having one form that is nominal, which is the broken marker, and another that is adjectival, which is the sound plural (see Fassi Fehri, 1993: 259). *ħudʷu:r* ‘attendants’ behaves like the nominal *ʃumma:l* ‘workers’ and *sʷunna:ʃ* ‘makers’, whereas *ħa:dʷir-u:n* ‘attendants’ behaves like the adjectival *ʃa:milu:n* ‘working-pl’ and *sʷa:niʃu:n* ‘making-pl’.

The difference in the plural morphology suggests that the adjective head is not nominalized in the same level. In fact, the diversity indicates three types of adjectival nominals with three levels of nominality. The first type includes cases where the adjectival nominal is nominalized as early as the X<sup>0</sup> level such as *ʔal-ʔaxdʷar* ‘the-green’ (10), as illustrated in (13), regardless of irrelevant details:





The adjective *ʔal-ʔaxdʕar* ‘the-green’ that is used as a proper name does not project to an AP as indicated by the ungrammaticality to be modified by a gradable expression:

- (14)\* fa:za ʔal-ʔaxdʕar-u (\*jiddan) bil-kaʔsi  
 won the-green-nom very with-the-trophy  
 ‘The (\*very) Green won the trophy’

In these cases, the adjectival nominal is no longer used as a property (or an adjective) as also exemplified in (15), (16), and (17):

- (15) ʔal-junanij-u/ʔal-faransij-u/ʔal-ʔamri:kij-u jaħtarimu ʔal-qanu:n-a  
 the-Greek-nom/the-French-nom/the-American-nom respect the-law-nom  
 ‘The Greek respects the law’;  
 ‘The French respects the law’;  
 ‘The American respects the law’

- (16) ʔal-sa:kina / ʔal-ħa:fila / ʔal-qa:fila  
 the-population / the-car / the-train  
 ‘the population’ ‘the car’ ‘the train’

- (17) kahruba:ʔi: / maktabi: / masraħi: / xabba:z / etc  
 electrician / librarian / stage performer / baker  
 ‘electrician’ ‘librarian’ ‘stage performer’ ‘baker’

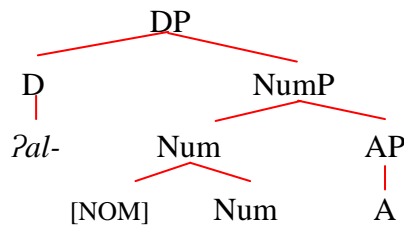
In (15), the ‘adjective’ is used as a name (or a noun), rather than a property (or an adjective). In (16), it has been fully nominalized so that *sa:kin-a* means simply ‘a population’ *ħa:fil-a* ‘a car’, etc. In (17), the adjectives are used for naming professions, rather than properties. This type of adjectival nominals is taken to be an adjective at the pre- $X^0$  level, and a noun at the  $X^0$  level. A deadjectivizing process converts *a* to *n*.

The second type includes cases like *ʔaħnia:ʔ* ‘rich-pl’ in (11) in which the category change occurs at the higher inflectional layer Num. The adjective is nominalized when marked with the nominal broken plural. Examples of this type are *fuqara:ʔ* ‘poor-pl’, *dʕuʕafa:ʔ* ‘weak-pl’, *buxala:ʔ* ‘stingy-pl’, *ʕuqala:ʔ* ‘wise-pl’, *ʕaba:qira* ‘genius’ etc. Unlike the first type, these adjectives seem to project to AP as they can be modified by a gradable adverb: *fuqara:ʔ jiddan* ‘very poor-pl (people)’, *dʕuʕafa:ʔ jiddan* ‘very weak-pl (people)’, *buxala:ʔ jiddan* ‘very stingy-pl (people)’, *ʕuqala:ʔ jiddan* ‘very wise-pl (people)’, *ʕaba:qira jiddan* ‘very genius-pl’ etc. Number clearly plays a role in nominality here. A plural noun phrase appears already nominalized early in the structure, whereas a singular noun phrase is still an adjective. Compare:

- (18) a. tas<sup>v</sup>addaq      ʕala:    ʔal-faʕi:r-i  
           give-2ms alms    on      the-poor-gen  
           ‘Give alms to the poor’
- b. tas<sup>v</sup>addaq      ʕala:    ʔal-fuqara:ʔ-i  
           give-2ms alms    on      the-poor-pl-gen  
           ‘Give alms to the poor (people)’

Unlike the singular form CaCiiC of *ʔal-faʕi:r* ‘the-poor’ that is adjectival, the (broken) plural form *ʔal-fuqara:ʔ* ‘the-poor-PL’ is nominal. This has one explanation: that plural form is nominalized earlier than the singular form. The number feature of the singular form is checked in an adjectival number projection whereas the plural feature is checked in the nominal(ized) projection (NumP). Since number motivates category-change, we assume that affixation takes place in NumP. I propose structure (19) where AP is dominated by the nominal NumP rather than an adjectival NumP (or AGRP):

(19)

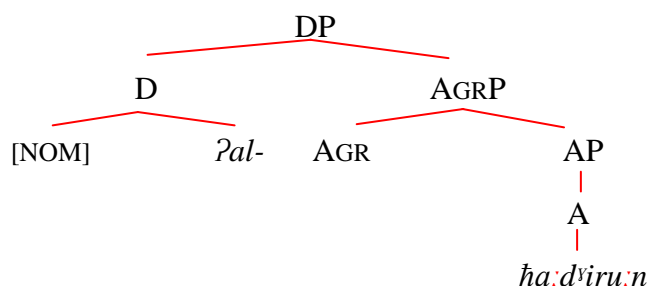


(19) shows that Num is a nominalizer. A moves to Num in order to check its number feature and to support NOM-af under which it is deadjectivized. In this type of adjectival nominals, the adjective is nominalized in the intermediate functional level NumP.

A third types of adjectival nominal includes cases that are, unlike the second type, carry an adjectival plural form. One can think of the difference between the singular adjectival form *ʔal-faʕi:r* ‘the-poor’ and the plural nominal form *ʔal-fuqara:ʔ* ‘the-poor-pl’ to simply be as a result of a different nominalization layer. Unlike the plural form, the singular one is nominalized later in the higher functional projection DP. The adjectival number of *ʔal-faʕi:r* ‘the-poor’ indicates that the number feature is checked in the adjectival projection AGRP, yet its nominal distribution indicates that the higher functional projection (DP) is nominal. An example of this type is *ʔal-ħa:dʕiru:n* ‘the attendants’ in (12). The singular adjective *ʔal-ħa:dʕir* ‘attendant’ exhibit both forms of plurality: the adjectival *ʔal-ħa:dʕiru:n* and the nominal *ʔal-ħudʕu:ru*. The duality can only be explained if we assume levels of the structure at which the categorial conversion takes place. Both forms are argumental DPs (i.e. externally nominals) but internally adjectival at a certain level. Whereas *ʔal-ħudʕu:r* ‘the attendants’ is taken to be of type-2 of adjectival nominal that is nominalized at NumP having a structure like (19) above, *ʔal-ħa:dʕiru:n* is nominalized at the higher functional level DP. We propose

structure (20) for this type of adjectival nominals:

(20)



Examples of this type are *ka:tibu:n* ‘writers’ *qa:riʔu:n* ‘readers’ *ja:hilu:n* ‘illiterates’ *ka:ʕiru:n* ‘unbelievers’. Despite that the ‘sound’ plural is not merely an adjectival feature (both adjectives and nouns can be marked with a sound plural), these forms are believed to be adjectival. This is because they can be pluralized with a nominal ‘broken’ plural: *kutta:b* ‘writers’ *qurra:ʔ* ‘readers’ *juhala:ʔ* ‘illiterate’ *kuffa:r* ‘unbelievers’.

The plurality contrasts suggest that the deadjectivizing process takes place at three different layers in the nominal structure: at n, at Num, and at D. At n, the adjectives that are used as a noun in their singular form do not project to a AP. Rather, the adjective converts to a noun as early as  $X^0$  that can neither denote a property nor accept gradable expressions. At Num, the adjective is nominalized and pluralized with the nominal (broken) plural (rather than the adjectival plural). At the highest D head, the adjective is nominalized after checking the plural marker in the adjectival projection AGRP. Thus, the adjective is marked with the adjectival (sound) plural marker. Despite that the (sound) plurality is not a mere adjectival characteristic, the fact that the adjective has another plural marker, namely a broken plural, is evidence that the sound plural is an adjectival feature. I conclude, then, that the NOM affixation operates at different levels in the tree structure, and it has different effects on the plural marking system, depending on the level of category conversion.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper, I have provided an account for the puzzling question about the category of adjectival nominals in Arabic. Unlike those of other languages such as English, Hebrew, French and Romance languages, Arabic adjectival nominals are neither true nouns nor adjectives that stay as such in their internal structure but benefit from a dp architecture at a later stage. Rather, I have argued that they are true cases of deadjectival nominals, i.e. nominals derived (early) from adjectives. The fact that they can freely occur in both strong and weak readings makes them typical nouns rather than adjectives modifying a head *pro* (or *Adj-pro*). I have investigated their categorial nature, and I have shown that they are internally adjectives, accepting gradable expressions, object, and manner adverbs, but externally nominal, having argument distribution and carrying Case. I propose that a NOM affixation causes a category-change. Nominalized adjectives have shown subregularities in the plural form. Thus, I suggest that the formation of adjectival nominals takes place at three layers: the

lower *nP*, *NumP*, and *DP*, depending on the form of the plural morpheme. This multi-layered nominalization analysis is superior to the *Adj-pro* because it can neatly account for the subregularities in the number form.

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## Glossary

nom : nominative

acc : accusative

gen : genitive

pl : plural

fem : feminine

3sm : third person singular masculine

2sm : second person singular masculine

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