

L 1

Introduction

Definition of Tasreef

In the Arabic language, Tasreef/Sarf means to spend, change, to use and so on. For linguistics, it is the **process of changing the patterns and forms of words in order to derive different meanings**. It is also called **morphology**. The study of Tasreef involves the study of the hundreds of patterns and forms of words found in the Arabic with regard to their **origin, derivation, construction and meaning**.

The majority of words in Arabic can undergo a prolific process of derivation whereby one root word can become the source of literally hundreds of derivative words. These derivative words have their own particular pattern and form which distinguish them from their respective root words. To exemplify the point, the rules of Tasreef can be applied to produce the following forms of verbs from the root word: 'عِلْم' (knowledge):

(He knew) عَلِمَ

(He knows) يَعْلَمُ

(Know) اَعْلَمِ

(it was known) عَلِمَ

(it is known) يُعْلَمُ

(be it known) لِيُعْلَمَ

Most of these forms of verbs also can be further conjugated according to the subject and number. In the final analysis more than 76 other forms of these verbs can be derived from these six verbs alone.

This process of derivation also occurs in the noun, although to a less extent. For example, the word 'رَجُلٌ' (a man) can be changed to plural, dual and the diminutive:

(two men) رَجُلَانِ

(men) رِجَالٌ

(a little man) رُجَيْلٌ