

صيغة الزمن المستمر في اللهجة العراقية

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**The Progressive Aspect In Iraqi
Dialect**

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Abstract

This study investigated the use of the progressive viewpoint in child L2 English in an L1 Iraqi context. The focus was on the way in which various classes of predicates are used with the progressive in narratives: This allowed us to evaluate the Aspect Hypothesis according to which there is an early correlation between lexical aspect and tense-aspectual markers: language learners tend to use past tense markers with telic predicates (achievements and accomplishments) and imperfective markers, such as the English progressive, mainly with dynamic atelic predicates (activities) (Andersen & Shirai 1994).

الخلاصة

هذه الدراسة تبحث في استعمال صيغة الزمن المستمر من وجهة نظر الطلاب الذين لغتهم الثانية الانجليزية ولغتهم الام اللغة العربية (اللهجة العراقية). التركيز سيكون على الطريقة التي تستخدم فيها الانواع المختلفة (للخبر) مع صيغة الزمن المستمر. هذا يسمح لنا بتقييم المنهج او المبدأ لهذه الفرضية تبعاً للارتباط بين معجم صياغة الفعل وبين زمن صياغة الفعل. لغة المتعلمون تميل الى استخدام زمن الماضي مع انواع الخبر ليشير الى حدث تام (انجاز او اتمام)، وحدث غير تام مثل صيغة الاستمرارية في اللغة الانجليزية، بصورة رئيسية مع الديناميكية و الفعاليات.

The progressive Aspect in Iraqi dialect

1. Aim

In this study, I will discuss tense and aspect in Arabic. The focus will be on the Iraqi dialect (ID) since this is the one spoken by the participants to the study. I will describe the system of aspect in the Iraqi dialect with a view to answering the following two main questions:

- (i) Does the Iraqi dialect have overt grammatical markers for the progressive, similar to the English *-ing*?
- (ii) Does the progressive marker co-occur with all situation types?

Finally, I will describe the relevant data and explain what exactly the Iraqi dialect uses in order to convey the meaning of the progressive in English.

1.2. On the temporal-aspectual system of Arabic

1.2.1 Tense

In general, the Arabic verb has two basic parts: a stem (root) and prefix or suffix. The stem gives the lexical meaning of the verb and the prefix or suffix indicates grammatical meanings, which is the person, the gender,

and the number of the subject. For example, the past tense verb كتبت [katabat] (she wrote) consists of the stem كتب [kataba] (wrote) and the suffix ت [t] (she), and the present verb تكتب [taktubu] (she writes) consists of the stem كتب [kataba] (to write) and the prefix ت [t] (She) (Slal, 2009)

In Arabic, there are three main verb forms: past tense (الماضي al-mādhī), present tense (المضارع al-mudhriḍ) and imperative (الأمر al-āmur), but some linguists say that there are two main verb forms (past and present) such as Beeston (1968) and Wright (1981) who refer to these two forms as the (perfect and imperfect) (Al-Saleemi, 1987).

Most verbs in Arabic have a three letters root or stem, also called trilateral verbs, since the trilateral verbs (containing three consonant) are the most common. There are also verbs containing more than three letters in their root (stem) for instance بعثر [baṭṭhara] “rummage”. In Arabic we use a “masdar” “source” to show how a verb is conjugated and what forms it takes, normally for a three letters verb we use: The three letters (فعل) f-aḍ-l, for example, carry the basic meaning “do”. Various combinations of the letters always, are in the f-aḍ-l order and with vowels and other consonants produce verbs in the three verb forms. Sattar (2012) states that in the English, the verb is conjugated to reflect the subject of the verb. For example, “she did” and “they did.” Here, the pronouns “she” and “they” indicate the subject. In Arabic, verb is conjugated in the same way. In particular, the Arabic verb is conjugated to reflect three aspects of its subject:

1. Person (first, second, third)
2. Gender (masculine, feminine)
3. Plurality (singular, dual, plural)

He illustrates the conjugating of Arabic verb in past, as shown in the following (table 1):

PERS	GENDER	PLURALITY	BASE		SUFFIX	CONJUGATING
3 rd	Masculine	Singular	فعل /faḍl/			فعل /faḍl/ “He/It (S/M) did”
3 rd	Masculine	Dual	فعل /faḍl/	+	ا /a/	فعلا /faḍla/ “They (D/M) did”
3 rd	Masculine	Plural	فعل /faḍl/	+	وا /au/	فعلوا /faḍlu/ “They (P/M) did”

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3 rd	Feminine	Singular	فعل /faɔl/	+	ت /t/	فعلت /faɔlt/	"She/It (S/F) did"
3 rd	Feminine	Dual	فعل /faɔl/	+	تا /ta/	فعلتا /faɔlata/	"They (D/F) did"
3 rd	Feminine	Plural	فعل /faɔl/	+	ن /na/	فعلن /faɔlna/	"They (P/F) did"
2 nd	Masculine	Singular	فعل /faɔl/	+	ت /ta/	فعل /faɔlta/	"You (S/M) did"
2 nd	Masculine	Dual	فعل /faɔl/	+	تما /tuma/	فعلتما /faɔltuma/	"You (D/M) did"
2 nd	Masculine	Plural	فعل /faɔl/	+	تم /tum/	فعلتم /faɔltum/	"You (P/M) did"
2 nd	Feminine	Singular	فعل /faɔl/	+	ت /tee/	فعلت /faɔlte/	"You (S/F) did"
2 nd	Feminine	Dual	فعل /faɔl/	+	تما /tuma/	فعلتما /faɔltuma/	"You (D/F) did"
2 nd	Feminine	Plural	فعل /faɔl/	+	تن /tuna/	فعلن /faɔltuna/	"You (P/F) did"
1 st	Masculine and Feminine	Singular	فعل /faɔl/	+	ت /tu/	فعلت /faɔltu/	"I did"
1 st	Masculine and Feminine	Plural	فعل /faɔl/	+	نا /na/	فعلنا /faɔlna/	"We did"

Table 1: Arabic verb in past (modified from Sattar, 2012)

In the present tense, the pattern يفعل /yafaalu/ (he does) is used as a model for the active voice of the present tense verb. Depending on the particular conjugation, one of four letters (yā', tā', nūn, or hamzah) is always prefixed to the three base letters and the present tense verb is conjugated by adding suffix to the end of the verb. Like the past tense, these conjugations reflect three aspects of the verb's subject: person, gender, and plurality as shown in the following (table 2):

PERSON GENDER & PLURALITY			SUFFIX		BASE		PREFIX	CONJUGA TING
3rd	Masculine	Singular			فعل /faðl/	+	ي /ya/	يفعل /ya faðl/ He/It (S/M) does
3rd	Masculine	Dual	ان /ani/	+	فعل /faðl/	+	ي /ya/	يفعلان /ya faðlani/ They (D/M) do
3rd	Masculine	Plural	ون /una/	+	فعل /faðl/	+	ي /ya/	يفعلون /ya faðluna/ They (P/M) do
3rd	Feminine	Singular			فعل /faðl/	+	ت /ta/	تفعل /ta faðl/ She/It (S/F) does
3rd	Feminine	Dual	ان /ani/	+	فعل /faðl/	+	ت /ta/	تفعلان /ta faðlani/ They (D/F) do
3rd	Feminine	Plural	ن /na/	+	فعل /faðl/	+	ي /ya/	يفعلن /ya faðlna/ They (P/F) do
2nd	Masculine	Singular			فعل /faðl/	+	ت /ta/	تفعل /ta faðl/ You (S/M) do
2nd	Masculine	Dual	ان /ani/	+	فعل /faðl/	+	ت /ta/	تفعلان /ta faðlani/ You (D/M) do
2nd	Masculine	Plural	ون /auna/	+	فعل /faðl/	+	ت /ta/	تفعلون /ta faðlauna/ You (P/M) do
2nd	Feminine	Singular	ين /yena/	+	فعل /faðl/	+	ت /ta/	تفعلن /ta faðlyena/ You (S/F) do

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2nd	Feminine	Dual	ان /ani/	+	فعل /faðl/	+	ت /ta/	تفعّلان /ta faðlani/ You (D/F) do
2nd	Feminine	Plural	ن /na/	+	فعل /faðl/	+	ت /ta/	تفعّلن /ta faðlna/ You (P/F) do
1st	Masculine and Feminine	Singular			فعل /faðl/	+	أ /að/	أفعل /aðfaðl/ I do
1st	Masculine and Feminine	Plural			فعل /faðl/	+	ن /na/	نفعّل /na faðl/ We do

Table 2: Arabic verb in present tense (modified from Sattar, 2012)

The present tense verb may also describe a future event or action. For example, *يفعل* /ya faðl/ may be translated as, "he will do." Placing either the letter *س* /sa/ or the word *سوف* /sawfa/ before the conjugations of the present tense verb which explicitly indicates future meaning.

In the table above we notice that the past tense (الماضي al-madhī) is used to indicate actions, states and situations that have been completed. This conjugation involves adding suffixes to the "base" form of the verb. The following it uses :

- a. It completes with all types of acts before the present moments: long acts, which indicate particular past time.

عاشت هدى في لندن السنة الماضية (١)

[ðLmðdhiyah ðlsðnð London fi Huda ashat].

Huda lived in London last year.

- b. The actions in past refer to the indefinite past .They may be with present moments by means of their effect or result. Such action are usually expressed in English by the perfect aspect and the present

tense (قد) [qəd] is occasionally used with the perfect form, but its use is restricted to affirmative statements.

قد وصل القطار (٢)

[əLqitər wəsəl qəd]

The train has arrived (Al- Bazi, 2006)

The present tense (المضارع al-mudhri) is used to indicate actions that have not been completed yet. This conjugation requires the addition of prefixes and, in some cases, suffixes as well. This tense has the following uses:

- a. The present tense as in English may refer to the present in general, namely a regularly action, a fact or an ability in the present.

أذهب الى المدرسة كل يوم (٣)

[yaum kul əlmadrasah əl əðhabu]

I go to school every day.

- a. the Arabic present tense unlike the English present tenses, may often refer to the present moment.

أنه يكتب قصيدة طويلة (٤)

[təweal qəseeda jəktubu ənəhu]

He is writing long poem

The future tense can be formed from the same conjugations of the present tense verb by adding the prefixing س /sa/ or morpheme سوف /sawfa/ before the verb, which contrasts “will and shall” in English.

1.2.2 Aspect in Arabic

Context has been argued to play an important part: it is not enough to understand a separate vocabulary, but the context is very important and we must understand whether the verb is referring to the past or present, state or habitual, i.e. the aspects associated with the verb (Al-Khafaji, 1972).

According to some researchers, the Arabic language is not a tense language. Others say that it is an aspect language, while there are others who believe that the Arabic language has both tense and aspect

Comrie (1976) addresses the questions above with a focus on whether the distinction of the Arabic verb form is based on tense (the verb form refers to the time when the event took place) or on aspect, (the verb form refers to the completion or incompletion of the event or action). He says that “the Arabic verb forms refer to both tense and aspect and the verb form refers to past time if it refers to a completed action”, as in (5) below:

كتب الولد (٥)

[Al waladu kataba]

The boy wrote.

On the other hand, the verb form refers to present time if it refers to an incomplete action for example:

يكتب الولد (٦)

[Al waladu yaktubu]

The boy writes.

Comrie (1976:24) explains that there is a 'genuine aspectual opposition' in Arabic, and argues that the different subdivisions of "habitual - continuous" 'durative - habitual'... 'Do in fact join together to form a single unified concept, as is suggested by the large number of languages that have a single category to egress imperfectivity as a whole, irrespective of such subdivisions as habituality and continuousness".

O'Brien (2003:3) suggests that "the categorical grammatical meanings expressed by the continuous and perfect forms in English cannot be easily associated with clear cut expanded forms in Arabic". Arabic has two morphological forms of imperfective and perfective.

Arabic has one form for each of the two tenses. Thus, the eight combination above correspond to two simple forms in Arabic: ذهب [thahaba] "went" and يذهب [yathhab] "go":

(٧)

a. أنا أذهب [ana athhab] "I go" (Absolute tenses present)

b. أنا سوف أذهب [ana saufa athhab] "I will go, I went every day" etc. (Relative tense)

c. أنا ذهبت [ana thahabi] "I will have gone, I had gone." Aspect, perfect (combined with the absolute and the relative).

There are one restrictions on the use of tense in Arabic. with all kinds of verbs two forms are used including those having a stative sense.

The imperfect aspect in Arabic is used for durative action, incomplete events, temporary actions and what is happening (continuous) at a certain moment.

The perfect aspect in Arabic is used for completed actions in relation to the present moment.

1.3 Iraqi Dialect

1.3.1 Iraqi dialect vs. Standard Arabic

The situation of Arabic in Iraq is not considerably different from language situations across the Arab world. The coexistence of standard and dialect forms of Arabic characterizes the main linguistic scene in Iraq and other Arab countries. Standard Arabic (SA) is the official language of Iraq

and is widely used in a variety of formal domains, such as written and spoken media, education, governmental institutions, and when performing prayers. SA is not spoken in casual interaction; however, some of its forms are occasionally used by Iraqi speakers (Murad, 2007).

Al- Bazi (2006) states that the Iraqi dialect (ID) includes three distinguished sub dialects within the country. These sub dialects are:

(1) Baghdadi dialect (BD). It is spoken by the majority in the capital of Iraq, Baghdad

(2) The Southern dialect (SD). It is spoken by people in the districts south of Baghdad such as Hilla, A'maara, Nasiriya, and Basrah

(3) The Northern dialect (ND). It is spoken by the minority in Baghdad and in all districts in the Northern part of Iraq such as Mosul, Sharqaat, Kirkuk and the suburbs of Tikrit and Samarra.

On the syntactic level, there is a major difference between SA and ID in terms of subject-verb number agreement. When the order of the verbal sentence in SA is (VSO) i.e. verb → subject → object, the verb is always singular regardless of whether the subject is singular or plural. In ID, there is more restriction since the verb always agrees with the subject, i.e. it is singular when the subject is singular and plural when the subject is plural. (Murad, 2007). The following are two examples of SA and ID, which clarify the difference:

(SA)

كتب الولد القصة (٨)

[al qisa al ôwlad kataba]

The boys wrote the story

(ID)

كتب الولد القصة

[al qisa al ôwilid kitbaw]

The boys wrote the story. (Al- Bazi, 2006)

The two examples above show a syntactic difference between SA and ID. However, I should point out that the syntactic order of verbal sentences in SA is not only VSO. It can also take the order of SVO. When the order of verbal sentences is SVO, the verb agrees with the subject, similar to the case in ID.

1.3.2 Tense/Aspect in Iraqi Dialect

1.3.2.1 Tense

As the ID often relies on SA, tense in the ID does not differ significantly from the SA or gulf Arabic. Abu-Haidar (1991) states that the verb in ID has a root made up of three radicals (C-C-C) or four radicals (C-C-

C-C). ID verbs can be divided into four syntactically different forms, the perfective, the imperfective, the imperative and the participle. There are two basic morphological tenses in ID: past and present, also called perfective and imperfective, respectively. In dealing with the modern written language, many linguists and teachers find it more pragmatic to describe Arabic verbs in terms of tense, and the terms past/present (referring to time or tense) and perfect/imperfect (referring to aspect) are often used interchangeably. There is also a future tense, indicated by morpheme *راح* [raah] and *ح* [ha] which contrasts the prefixing *س* [sa], *سوف* [sawfa] in SA and “will and shall” in English (Ryding, 2005).

1.3.2.2 Aspect

ID has two aspects, the non-progressive and the progressive, corresponding to the perfective and the imperfective respectively (Abu-Haidar, 1991). The perfective expresses a completed action in an unspecified past time.

سمعت الأخبار (٩)

[al akhbaðr semaðt]

"I heard the news."

جاءوا لنا الأزهار (١٠)

[Al azhaar lna jabu]

"They brought us flowers".

قضت أختي الصيف في سوريا (١١)

[Suria fi Alsðef ðukhti qhadhðt]

"My sister spent the summer in Syria." (Abu-Haidar, 1991)

All actions (heard, brought and spent) in the examples (9, 10 and 11) above referred to unspecified past (perfective). It can be determined in specific time by adding a modifier (adverb).

سمعت الأخبار اليوم (١٢)

[al yðum al akhbaðr semaðt]

"I heard the news today."

"I heard the news."

جاءولنا ورد الباردة (١٣)

[Al abareha wared jabulna]

"Yesterday they brought us flowers".

من سنتين أختي قضت الصيف بسوريا (١٤)

[Suria bi Alsðef qhadhat ðukhti ðt sentian min]

"My sister spent the summer in Syria two years ago."

In (12, 13 and 14) the verbs are shifted from unspecified past to specified past time. Therefore, almost language and dialect need to use time indicators (not

only the verbs); the matter goes beyond the use of the adverbs that coincide with the verbs to determine the aspects.

1.4 The Progressive viewpoint in Arabic

In Arabic, both habitual and progressive situations are categorized as aspectually imperfective (Comrie 1976) but the nature of the imperfectivity differs. In the former, each situation is complete, and forms part of a non-completed series. Situations labelled as progressive are single incomplete events, viewed from an internal perspective and containing no reference to a boundary. Progressive perspectives on events are not differentiated from other imperfective situations. Both habituals and progressives are encoded as imperfective, depending on the adverb or adverbial phrase to disambiguate the two

يشرب قهوة كل يوم (١٥)

[yawm kul qahawah yshraab]

He drinks coffee every day

While:

يشرب قهوة الآن (١٦)

[Aðlaan qahawah yshraab]

He is drinking coffee now

However, it is possible to differentiate between progressive and non-progressive situations in some dialects. For example: the proclitic b- prefixed with the imperfective form of the verb is often used in Gulf dialects to indicate action in progress.

بيتكلم (١٧)

[b + yatkallam]

He is talking

ID has the particle /da/ (١٨) to refer to the progressive:

The progressive is formed by adding the prefix da- to the conjugated stem of the verb. This is likely a borrowing and adaptation from Persian into the early Abbasid-era Baghdadi (Al- Bazi (2006). The marker is (١٨) /da/ + (verb in present):

أني دا آكول (١٨)

[Agool da Ani]

I am saying

The progressive prefix *da* signals that the situation denoted by the predicate is happening at speech time. In this respect it is similar to the English *-ing*. The *da*-marked form differs from the simple form, which denotes exclusively habitual situations: *nishrab chaay* (we drink tea) vs. **da**-*nishrab chaay* (we are drinking tea).

The progressive prefix *da* can also express intent (as in the equivalent of ‘A person went to the hammam to take a bath/ with the intention of taking a bath’).

1.5.1 The progressive and states in the Iraqi Dialect

Stative verbs refer to an unchanging condition or state, as, for example, *to see, to believe, to contain, to love, to hear, to know, to hurt, to understand, to want*, etc.

هسه أني اعرف منو صديق ومنو عدو (١٩)

[aδdu wa menuu sadeeq menuu aδruf ani hassδ]

"Now I know who is a friend and who is a foe."

هسه (هاي اللحظة) هو فهم شنو أني اقصد (٢٠)

[aδqsud ani shenu faham huwa (allahzha hi) hassδ]

"Now (this moment) he understands, what I mean."

هسه اني شفت بعيني شلون هو يعاملها (٢١)

[yeeaδmelha huwa shloon ba aδyoni shefet ani hassδ]

"Now I see with my own eye(s) how he treats her."

In (19, 20 and 21) it is optional to use states with *da* and the verbs [aδruf (know), aδqsud (mean) and yeeaδmelha (treat)] can be (*da* aδruf, *da* aδqsud and *da* yeeaδmelha).

1.5.2 Activities

They are dynamic verbs like, *to ask, to work, to write, to read, to listen, to look at*, etc.

هسه دا أقره بالجريدة (٢٢)

[beljareedδ aqraδ da hassδ]

"Now, I'm reading the newspaper."

أنني أسف هو مو هنا، هسه دا يشتغل (٢٣)

[yeshtaghul da hassδ, hena mu huwa aδsef ani]

"I am sorry he is not here, now he is working"

In (22 and 23), it is clear and common of using *da* with activities. Here, we notice that there is an optional adverb هسه/hasa/, which means "now". Therefore, we can omit *hasa* especially when we answer the questions, for example:

شندسوي هسه؟ دا أقره بالجريدة (24)

[beljareedδ aqraδ da ?hasa sh da sawee]

"What are you doing now? I am reading the newspaper"

1.5.3 The progressive and achievements in ID

Achievements denote situations that take a short time (they are near instantaneous changes of state (Dowty 1979): *find, die, arrive, join, fall*, etc.

التلج دا ينوب (٢٥)

[yathoob da al thaleg]

The snow is melting

سألت بعد ما عرفت (٢٥)

[aḍurfat ma baḍd saḍlat]

She asked after she found out

In (25 and 26) the verbs in the sentences above (*melting* and *found out*) indicate to simultaneous event because it takes short time when it happened, which we cannot determine the initial and end point. Here, we can use *da* with achievement actions in progress at present and we cannot use *da* with achievement in past, but *da* can be used with the auxiliary [جان] *čān* for actions in progress at some time in the past. As in (27),

هو جان دا ياكل من أني وصلت (٢٧)

[wesalet ani min yagool da čān huwa]

He was eating when I arrived.

1.5.4 The progressive and accomplishments

Accomplishments denote dynamic acts, which have an outcome in a period of time, which represents as an extension of the initial and end point of the verb.

فاطمة دا تاكل تفاحة (٢٨)

[tufaha takul da Fatimah]

Fatima is eating an apple.

أحمد دا يرسم دائرة (٢٩)

[daḍerah yersem da Ahmed]

Ahmed is drawing a circle

علي دا يبني بيت (٣٠)

[bait yebni da Ali]

Ali is bulding a house

In (29, 30 and 31) the verbs in the sentences above (*eatin*, *drawing* and *building*) indicate to period of time with initial and end point. Here, the use of *da* is allowed.

أكلت فاطمة تفاحة (٣٢)

[tufaha Fatimah akalat]

Fatima ate an apple.

رسم أحمد دائرة (٣٣)

[daḍerah Ahmed rasama]

Ahmed drew a circle

بنى علي بيت (٣٤)

[bait Ali bana]

Ali built a house

In (٣٢, ٣٣ and ٣٤) the verbs in the sentences above are accomplishments, which take a period of time before achieving the outcome. We notice that all

sentence in past tense, so it is impossible to use *da* with accomplishments in this case. It is possible to use *da* with accomplishments in the case of using the auxiliary [جان] *čān* for actions in progress at some time in the past. Morphologically the verbs remain the same in past and present i.e. they have no change, but they indicate to the past when we use the Aux (*čān*). Like English, they became past due to verb to be (*čān*), as in (34, 35 and 36),

فاطمة جانت دا تاكول تفاحة (٣٤)

[*tufaha takul da čānat Fatimah*]

Fatima was eating an apple.

أحمد جان دا يرسم دائرة (٣٥)

[*daḍerah yersem čān da Ahmed*]

Ahmed was drawing a circle

علي جان دا يبني بيت (٣٦)

[*Bait yebni čān da Ali*]

Ali was bulding a house

In (34, 35 and 36) the use of *da* is allowed.

1.5.5 Semelfactives

The event denoted by a semelfactive verb is punctual (instantaneous, taking just a moment). Semelfactive verbs include ومض [*wamadha*] "blink", عطس [*aḍtasa*] "sneeze", and دك [*daqa*] "knock", for example:

الولد دا يدك على الباب (37)

[*al bab aḍl yadug da al waladu*]

The boy knocks at the door

In (37) there is a possibility to use semelfactive verbs with *da*.

1.6 Summing up

This study offered a brief presentation of the temporal-aspectual system of Arabic, with focus on the Iraqi dialect which I compared to Standard Arabic. Directly relevant to the present study is the fact that the Iraqi dialect has a marker for the progressive viewpoint: the prefix دا [*da*]. This progressive prefix can signal : (i) that a situation is on-going at a particular time; (ii) that a situation is recurrent or habitual; (iii) that a situation has recently become habitual; (iv) intent. - It can occur with all situation-types.

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