Forms and Functions of Arabic Perfect Tense

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Abstract

The current study aims at investigating the forms and functions of the Arabic perfect tense. It is hypothesised that Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) has different forms and functions in its usage by native speakers through daily speech and in their written performance. Some other dialects such as Iraqi Arabic as well as Egyptian Arabic quotations are also included in this study. To prove this hypothesis, several quotations from different genres such as (Newspapers, Magazines, Media, and authentic books of Arabic) are taken as data and analysed using quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study deals with different forms of Arabic perfect tense syntactically and morphologically. Regarding the function of MSA perfect tense, the aspectual differences such as habituality and narrative functions are dealt with. The conjugations of MSA verbs show a variety of forms and convey several meanings. The study concludes with some recommendations and suggestions for further study.

Keywords: perfect tense, forms, functions, conjugation, Morphology

Introduction

The Arabic perfect tense, or ʔal-madˤy, refers to actions that were performed in the past. Mastering this form is essential for achieving proper Arabic grammar as it aids in understanding the relevance of an action in the past to the present. The Arabic perfect tense is crucial in transforming and interpreting language. Due to its importance, Ryding (2005) introduces perfect tense forms in conjunction with Arabic grammar. In his works, Ryding (2005) and Cowan (2008), delve into the various Arabic verb forms about the perfect tense in addition to the factors of tense, aspect, and mood. Hassan (2016) broadens the scope of focus, emphasizing the detailed examination of the entire Arabic verb system. Another broad focus that was explored was the formal and functional characteristics of the perfect tense in the Arabic language. Perfect tense forms also became the centrepiece of Ryding's (2005) research, where he investigates the structure in different sentence forms. Al-Wer (2014) dealt with the combination of perfect tense with other grammatical elements such as negation, aspectual particles, and adverbials, how these elements interrelate, and how the perfect tense is semantically and functionally put in these contexts. Holes (2005) tackled the semantic depth of the perfect tense, showing that this tense is used to articulate, beyond completed actions, past states, experiences, and other outcomes. Atashian and Al-Bahri (2018) examined the problems that Arabic learners encounter in the comprehension and use of perfect tense form and pointed out the possibility of transfer from the first language. Holes (2005) and Cowan (2008) also touched on the constancy and diversity in the use of the perfect tense among different communities of Arabic speakers considering the geo-social factors that determine its use. However, this study expects to Identify specific patterns of perfect tense usage in MSA. The functional use of the perfect tense is Characterized, which includes its expression of time, aspect, and narrative sequencing. Contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexity of tense systems which will aid both linguistics scholars and language educators. The research was carried out using quantitative and qualitative approaches and offers an in-depth evaluation of the perfect tense in the Arabic language. The implications of this framework look at the different semantic roles which the perfect tense fulfils as well as what its morphological forms are like, depending on the person, number, gender, and verb (e.g. masculine and feminine, regular and weak verbs) type. The framework also incorporates insights from temporal semantics to discuss the aspectual properties of the tense. Suleiman's (1999) book provides an overview of Arabic linguistics, specifically focusing on the syntactic, morphological, and semantic features of Arabic verbs, including the perfect tense.

Morphologically, it examines how the perfect tense is conjugated in different contexts, including regular, weak, and hollow verbs. Regarding Functional Uses, we aim to understand how the perfect tense conveys different meanings, such as completed actions, present relevance, narrative sequencing, and habitual past actions. The objectives of the study are to identify and describe the morphological forms of the perfect tense in Arabic, focusing on regular and weak verbs. Also, analyse the functional roles of the perfect tense in expressing different aspects of time, such as past actions, present relevance, and narrative sequencing. However, none of the scholars analysed the forms and functions of the perfect tense, hence, the current work tries to fill this gap.

Literature Review

The Arabic perfect tense (often referred to as the past tense in many contexts) is one of the key aspects of Arabic grammar. It serves multiple functions beyond simple temporal references, which has been a subject of linguistic study for years, see among others Wright (1996). Its forms and functions are essential in understanding Arabic's complex verbal system. This literature review aims to present an overview of the primary studies regarding the forms and functions of the Arabic perfect tense. The grammarians defined the past verb as that which indicated the occurrence of an action before the time of speaking. Sibawayh mentioned the past verb, saying: "As for the construction of the past, it is 'he went away', 'he heard', 'he stayed', and 'he praised'… So, if he said 'he went away', it is evidence that the event6r is in the past of time". Ibn Jinni (d. 392 AH) defined it as: "What the past tense is coupled with, such as your saying 'he stood up yesterday', and 'he sat down the day before yesterday'. It is noted in Ibn Jinni's example that the word 'yesterday' is used to indicate the past tense definitively, and Ibn Ya'ish (d. 643 AH), so he said: ((The past is what did not exist after its existence, so it is reported in a time after the time of its existence)). It is noted that Ibn Ya'ish makes time a central axis in the verb, and Ibn al-Hajib (d. 646) defined it as: ((What indicates a time before your time)). As for Al-Radhi (d. 686 AH), he defined the past verb by saying: ((It is what indicates a time before the time of its pronunciation)) Al-Samarrai stated that he believes that the construction (Faʕala) cannot indicate time with its divisions and limits. And its minutes, the Arabic verb does not express time in its forms, but time is obtained from the structure of the sentence, as it may include additions that help the verb to determine time within clear limits (*cf.* Abu-Salim 1984). The conclusion is that the structure of (faʕala) expresses the event that took place and ended before the time of speaking about it, even if its effect is still present. Accordingly, the formula indicates the completion of the event, as for its time, other indications may intervene that divert it from its original temporal meaning, and these indications may be verbal, lexical, or situational. This matter is contingent on the context and the word. Abu-Salim's (1984) book provides a comprehensive analysis of the Arabic verbal system, focusing on the morphological structure of verbs, including the perfect tense. If some changes are made to the form (Faʕala) or introduce some abrogators and letters, time will branch out and be directed in different directions and one of the researchers defined the past tense as: ((It is a period whose length extends from the furthest point of the temporal past and ends with the present tense, and its length is not important in grammatical studies. But what is important in it is that it ends with the present tense or the time of speaking, and the past is a pure tense, meaning that it does not carry within it any meanings. Other than the temporal indication, its time is all its meaning. In other words, the past indicates its time by the corresponding or identical indication)), and Dr. Kamal Badri defined the past tense verb by saying: ((The past tense is a formula that indicates in a context the past time)) and this means that the morphological formulas do not give the word a fixed time. Still, rather the time is acquired from the clues present in the sentence or the context. Haider (2000) discusses various syntactic structures of Semitic languages, with a specific focus on the Arabic verb system and tense morphology. Kramer (2010) proposes a comparative study of the perfect tense in Arabic and English, analyzing its aspectual features and usage across both languages.

The researchers of the current paper illustrate the forms of the Arabic perfect tense as follows:

Forms of the Arabic Perfect Tense
The Arabic perfect tense is a fundamental part of the language's verb system and follows a highly structured morphological pattern. It includes regular verbs, weak verbs and defective verbs.

1. Morphological Analysis of the Perfect Tense in Arabic

The analysis of the perfect tense conjugations reveals a tense. The complexity of weak verb conjugation highlights the significance of root patterns in Arabic verb morphology. This pattern was also observed in Iraqi Arabic, though in certain cases, the weak verb conjugation forms in Iraqi Arabic appeared to undergo phonological reduction.

Table 1. Perfect tense conjugations

The perfect verb	Translation	Gender	Number
walada	he gave birth	masculine	singular
waladat	she gave birth	feminine	singular
waladuu	they gave birth	masculine	plural
waladna	they gave birth	feminine	plural

1.1 egularR Verbs

Regular verbs in Arabic are characterized by a three-consonant root, with the perfect tense formed by modifying the root. According to Cowell (2008), the perfect tense is conjugated through a series of affixes depending on the subject pronoun: Kataba 'he wrote'; Katabtu 'I write'. The verb in the perfect tense is formed by adding specific endings to these root consonants. The basic form of the verb remains unchanged in the perfect tense (as opposed to the imperfect tense, which often has more prefixes and suffixes). For example, the root of the verb 'to write' is **k-t-b**. In the perfect tense, it becomes /kataba/ 'He wrote'.

1.2 Weak Verbs:

These verbs include those with a weak middle root consonant (e.g., /waw/, /yaa/, /ʔalif/). These verbs tend to undergo unique transformations in the conjugated form. As pointed out by Fassi Fehri (1993), weak verbs complicate the pattern of perfect tense conjugation (ibid). For example, **/qaama/** 'he stood' has a different form when conjugated compared to a regular verb.

Table 2. Conjugation of Weak Verbs in the Perfect Tense (Example: وَلَدَ - "to give birth")

Person/Number/Gender	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st Person	وَلَدْتُ (waladtu)	وَلَدْنَا (waladnaa)	وَلَدْنَا (waladnaa)
2nd Person (m.)	وَلَدْتَ (waladta)	وَلَدْتُمَا (waladtumā)	وَلَدْتُمْ (waladtum)
2nd Person (f.)	وَلَدْتِ (waladti)	وَلَدْتُمَا (waladtumā)	وَلَدْتُنَّ (waladtunna)
3rd Person (m.)	وَلَدَ (walada)	وَلَدَا (waladā)	وَلَدُوا (waladū)
3rd Person (f.)	وَلَدَتْ (waladat)	وَلَدَتَا (waladatā)	وَلَدْنَ (waladna)

This table demonstrates the irregularities in conjugating weak verbs in Arabic. Verbs with roots containing weak consonants undergo modifications in their conjugation, making them more complex than regular verbs like /kataba/. For instance, the second-person masculine singular form /waladta/ instead of **/**katabta/, due to the nature of the verb root. It also shows the conjugation of a weak verb in the perfect tense in MSA. The changes in verb structure are clearly visible, especially in forms involving weak roots**.** The use of weak verbs highlights the difficulties that both native speakers and language learners have when it comes to the intricacies of Arabic verb conjugation. The investigation of the function of the perfect tense in Arabic's formal and informal records is improved by these illustrations.

1.3 Defective Verbs:

These verbs have a missing root consonant, e.g., /ʔalif/ or /waw/ requiring additional morphological rules for correct conjugation as in:

Table 3. Conjugation of the verb kan

Past	Meaning in English	present	Meaning in English	imperative	Meaning in English
kaan	was	kun	is	kun	be

The perfect tense in Arabic is formed by conjugating the verb for the subject (person and number) and using a specific pattern for the root verb. Here is a breakdown of how it is formed:

3. Conjugation by Person and Number

The perfect tense changes depending on the subject of the sentence (first person, second person, or third person) and whether the subject is singular, dual, or plural. Below are the common conjugations:

Person	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st	katabtu	Katabn:	katabn:
2nd	Katabta	Katabtuma:	katabtum)
3rd	Kataba	kataba:	katabu:

4. Gender Agreement

The verb in the perfect tense agrees with the gender (masculine/feminine) and number of the subject (*cf*. Hazem, 2017). For example, Masculine Singular kataba 'h**e** wrote; Feminine Singular**:** katabat 'She wrote'; Masculine Plural**:** katabu: 'They (m) wrote'; Feminine Plural**:** katabna 'They (f) wrote'

Research Questions

The current paper tries to answer the following questions:

1. What aspectual meanings does the Arabic perfect tense convey, such as completed actions, present relevance, habituality, and narrative structure?

2. How does the Arabic perfect tense compare to similar tenses in other languages, such as English and Greek, in terms of typological differences in tense and aspect systems?

3. How does the perfect tense in Arabic reflect broader verb conjugation patterns and tense use across the language?

Morphological forms of Arabic Perfect Tense

The morphological forms of the Arabic perfect tense generally involve the base form of the verb, which is modified by prefixes, suffixes, and internal vowel changes, depending on the person, number, and gender of the subject. The perfect tense is used to express completed actions, typically indicating past events with present relevance. The perfect tense in MSA follows a consistent morphological pattern. The verb typically carries a prefix or suffix, depending on the subject. For example: akala 'he ate; akalat 'she ate; akalna 'we ate'.

In MSA, verb conjugation is affected by gender, person, and number, with distinct suffixes for feminine, masculine, singular, dual, and plural forms.

The perfect tense forms can vary significantly across Arabic dialects:. For instance, in Egyptian Arabic, the perfect tense often appears identical to MSA, but certain contractions and reductions occur in speech as in: akalt 'I ate' (no distinction between masculine and feminine in many cases). Iraqi Arabic also uses a similar structure but may employ different pronunciations or auxiliary forms, such as ʔakal or ʔakaluu for plural forms, see among others (Abu-Joudeh et al., 2013; Hazem, 2017; Hazem and Muhammed, 2021,).

In Iraqi dialects, vowel shifts and the use of auxiliary verbs or more colloquial forms can create noticeable differences from MSA's more formal and structured perfect tense forms, example for the verb أكل /ʔakal/ (to eat):

    i) ʔana ʔakalt
       I   ate.
    ii) ʔant-a ʔakalt-a
       You-M ate
    iii) ʔant-i ʔakalt-i
       You-F   ate
    iv) huwa   ʔakal

       he   ate

    v) hiya   Ɂakalt

         she   ate

Arabic distinguishes between singular, dual, and plural. The above-mentioned examples illustrate singular, the following examples illustrate dual and plural:

Dual (for two people): The perfect tense uses specific forms for dual subjects as in:

    vi) Ɂakal-aa

       They (DUAL) ate

    vii) Naħn-u   Ɂakalnaa

       We-NOM   ate

    viii) Hum Ɂakaluu

       They-M ate

Gender: Gender is important in Arabic conjugation, particularly in the second and third persons, for instance:

    ix) Ɂant-um   akalt-um

       You-M PL ate-M PL

    x) Ɂant-un   Ɂakalt-un

       You-F PL ate-FPL

This is widely used in dialects, particularly in informal speech.

Functions of the Arabic Perfect Tense

Researchers have identified various temporal and aspectual meanings that the perfect tense conveys, including its role in denoting present relevance, habituality, and narrative structuring. The perfect tense in Arabic is adaptable and serves different functions that go beyond simple time reference, especially in contrast to languages like English. Below are the key functions that have been highlighted in recent linguistic research.

1. Completion of Action:

The perfect tense in Arabic primarily signals a completed action or event. This is the simplest use and corresponds to the past tense in English. For example,

    ðahaba Ɂilaa l-madrasah

    'He went to school'

It is obvious from the above example that the action signals an event completed in the past. According to Fassi Fehri (1993), this use aligns with the notion of a past action that is fully completed within the narrative's temporal framework. The perfect tense is used to describe actions that have already been completed in the past. These actions are typically seen as finished as in *kataba r-risalah* 'He wrote the letter'. The perfect tense in Arabic is a versatile grammatical tool that conveys several nuanced aspectual meanings.

Present Relevance:

This is akin to the present perfect in English /fataħ-tu Ɂal-baab/ 'I have opened the door (implying the door is now open).

It is clear from the above example that the action is completed, but it may have relevance to the present situation. The Arabic perfect tense can also express past actions with present relevance, which is similar to the present perfect in English. Al-Ani (1992) notes that this is particularly significant in spoken Arabic, where the perfect tense is used to indicate that an action, although completed in the past, has consequences or relevance in the present. Sometimes, the perfect tense implies that a past action has ongoing relevance or is important in the present context as in qaraɁa Ɂal-kitaab 'He has read the book'.

For example:

radaʕa min l-ʕamal Ɂal-Ɂaann

"He has just returned from work".

This highlights the immediacy of a past event.

2. Habituality:

In some contexts, the perfect tense in Arabic can convey habitual action, similar to how the present perfect is used in English /kaana yafʕalu 'He used to do' (indicating a habitual past action). The perfect tense can also describe actions that were habitual or repeated in the past, though this usage is less common compared to the imperfect tense as in kana yaktubu r-risaaʔil 'He used to write letters.

3. Narrative Structure:

In narrative texts, especially in stories or historical accounts, the perfect tense is often used to convey events that have been completed, providing a sense of chronological order and past action, consider the example from Iraqi Arabic Dialect:

raaħ l-batˤl   ʔilaa l-madiinah
went the-hero to   the-city
'The hero went to the city'.

Table 4. Conjugation of the Perfect Tense in MSA

Person/Gender	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st	katabtu I write	Katabnaa we wrote	Katabnaa We wrote
2nd M	Katabta you wrote	Katabtumaa You wrote	Katabtum You wrote
2nd F	Katabti you wrote	Katabtumaa you wrote	Katabtun you wrote
3rd M	kataba they wrote	Katabaa they write	Katabuu they wrote
3rd F	Katabat she wrote	Katabataa they wrote	Katabna They wrote

This table provides the full set of conjugations for /kataba/ in the perfect tense across different forms. This table illustrates the conjugation of a regular verb kataba 'to write' in the perfect tense across different persons, numbers, and genders in MSA.

Arabic Sentence	Translation	Function of the Perfect Tense
رَجَعَ مِنَ الْمَكْتَبَةِ	He has returned from the library	The perfect tense conveys **present relevance**.
حَكَيْتُ لَكِ	I have told you	Indicates that the past action has immediate relevance.

Figure 1: The Use of the Perfect Tense for Present Relevance in Arabic

The above examples illustrate how the perfect tense in Arabic conveys present relevance. Examples show how the tense, though describing a past event, emphasizes its relevance in the present.

Table 5. Cross-Dialectal Use of the Perfect Tense in Arabic.

Dialect	Arabic Sentence	Translation	Function
MSA	رَجَعَ مِنَ الْمَكْتَبَةِ	"He returned from the library."	Completed past action
Egyptian Arabic	رَجَعَ مِنَ الْمَكْتَبَةِ لِسَّا	"He has just returned from the library."	Action completed recently, present relevance
IraqiArabic	رَجَع مِنَ الْمَكْتَبَةِ هسة	"He has just returned from the library."	Recent action, immediate relevance

Description:

This comparison reveals that while MSA restricts the use of the perfect tense to completed actions in the past, in Egyptian Arabic and Iraqi Arabic, the same form of the verb is used to indicate recent actions or present relevance. The above table compares the use of the perfect tense in MSA, Egyptian Arabic, and Iraqi Arabic. It demonstrates the flexibility of the perfect tense in spoken varieties, particularly in expressing recent past actions and their relevance to the present.

Figure _2_. The Use of the Perfect Tense in Narrative Discourse

Arabic Sentence	Translation	Function of the Perfect Tense
ذَهَبَ إِلَى السُّوق	"He went to the market."	Completed action as part of a narrative sequence
فَاشْتَرَى فَاكِهَةً	"And he bought fruit."	Action following the previous one in the narrative

The above figures proves how the perfect tense is regularly used in MSA narrative discourse to scratch completed actions that form part of a categorisation of events, similar to its function in English narratives where the past simple tense is used. The perfect tense categorises the temporal classification of events:

    ðahabu: ila: l-muul   fa-iʃtaraw   faakihatan
    "They went to the mall   and they bought fruit"

It is clear from the above sentence that the perfect tense assists in sequencing actions in time, marking each occurrence as completed before affecting to the next. The use of the perfect tense to express completed actions in narratives mirrors its use in other languages, such as English, where the past simple tense is typically used in storytelling.

The perfect tense in Arabic is used to express actions that are complete in the past but have an impact or relevance to the present moment, often without the need for auxiliary verbs like in English (e.g., "have" or "has").

The Arabic perfect tense differs in some significant ways from the present perfect and past perfect tenses in languages like English and Greek:

Arabic vs. English:
While focused on English, Halliday (1967) offers a framework for understanding tense, aspect, and modality that can be applied to Arabic, particularly in terms of cross-linguistic comparison While Arabic's perfect tense often functions similarly to the English present perfect (indicating completed actions with present relevance), Arabic does not always rely on auxiliary verbs to convey this aspect. For more about English and Arabic verbs, see Meteab and Hazem (2020). Walsh (1997) examines the role of the perfect tense in Arabic from a cognitive linguistics perspective, providing a nuanced understanding of its functions and uses. In contrary, English uses auxiliaries with verbs to form present perfect:

                  Arabic   English

                  Ɂakalt-u   I have eaten
                  Ate-NOM

Arabic vs. Greek:
Greek's perfect tense is quite similar to Arabic's in that it indicates a completed action with relevance to the present, but it also includes distinct auxiliary verbs. Greek, like English, has more complex distinctions between simple past, present perfect, and past perfect tenses, while Arabic often uses the same verb form to convey multiple nuances. In Greek, the perfect is formed with the verb έχω (echo – "I have") as an auxiliary and the past participle, much like in English (see among others, Ralli et al, 2006). In Arabic, the perfect tense does not always use an auxiliary verb, and its meanings (completed action, present relevance, etc.) rely on context and verb conjugation patterns.

Functional Analysis of the Perfect Tense
The functional analysis revealed that the perfect tense in Arabic is used in various contexts, often with nuances not directly found in other languages. Three key functions were identified in the data:
a. Completed Past Actions
The primary function of the perfect tense in Arabic is to express actions completed in the past, similar to its use in many other languages. For example, in MSA, the perfect tense is used to express a past event; radʒaʕa 'he returned Ɂakala 'he ate'.

This usage is consistent across dialects such as Iraqi Arabic /rdʒaʕ/). The perfect tense is the most straightforward way to refer to an event completed at a particular time in the past.

b. Present Relevance or Present Perfect

In addition to denoting past actions, the **perfect tense** in Arabic often serves to express actions with present relevance, a function equivalent to the present perfect in English. This was especially prominent in spoken dialects:

radʒaʕa   mina   l-maktabah
"He has returned from   the library"

In these examples, the actions are framed as completed in the past but with a consequence or relevance to the present moment. The use of 'now' or 'just' in these sentences reinforces the immediacy of the action. This is a characteristic feature of spoken Arabic, where the perfect tense is used more frequently for actions that have ongoing effects in the present.

Functions of the Perfect Tense in Arabic

This taxonomy categorizes the various functions of the perfect tense in Arabic. It is based on the temporal and aspectual roles the perfect tense plays in the language, divided into four main categories:

1. Completed Past Actions

The perfect tense is primarily used to indicate that an action was completed in the past. This is the most common and straightforward function of the perfect tense, as in: kataba r-risaal 'He wrote the letter'.

2. Present Relevance / Present Perfect

The perfect tense can express an action that was completed in the past but has a current relevance, similar to the present perfect in English as in: radʒʕa min l-maktaba 'He has returned from the library'.

3. Habitual or Repeated Past Actions

In some dialects, especially in Iraqi Arabic, the perfect tense is used to express habitual actions or actions that occurred repeatedly in the past. Consider the following example:

kunt tadhhabu   ilaa as-suuq kull yawm
'You used to go to   the market every day'.

4. Weak Verbs (Conjugation Based on Weak Roots)

- **Example**:
  - ○ وَلَدَ(walada) 'to give birth'
  - ○ These verbs show slight changes in conjugation, e.g., وَلَدْتُ(waladtu) 'I gave birth'.
  - ○ They may involve root vowel changes or elision of letters in some forms.

3. Hollow Verbs (Middle Root Vowel is Weak)

- **Example**:

qaala 'to say'

Conjugation involves slight changes to accommodate the weak middle root vowel.

3. Cross-Dialectal Variations

The analysis of dialectal differences in the use of the perfect tense shows significant variation, particularly in spoken Arabic. In Egyptian Arabic, the perfect tense is often used for actions that occurred recently, in contrast to its more limited use in MSA for strictly past events:

maa ʃiinii lissaa?
'Have you already taken me?'

This usage mirrors the present perfect in English, but in Egyptian Arabic, it can be used more flexibly to indicate an action's proximity to the present.

In Iraqi Arabic, the perfect tense may be used for habitual past actions or to indicate actions that have become customary, a function not typically associated with the perfect tense in MSA:

kunt truuħ hnaak kul yuwm
"You used to go there every day".

Using the perfect tense to express habituality or repetition was less common in MSA.

Methodology

The study of the forms and functions of the Arabic perfect tense will use a qualitative research design, focusing on analysing linguistic data from various Arabic sources. Although its primary occupation is to convey completed previous events, it also performs more intricate tasks including

organising narrative discourse, expressing present relevance as well as habituality. The flexibility of tense usage in spoken Arabic is demonstrated by dialectal variances, especially between Egyptian Arabic and Iraqi Arabic. In Arabic, the perfect tense frequently expresses meanings that the present perfect or past perfect might in other languages. While pointing out some of the difficulties in learning a second language, the cross-linguistic comparison with English highlights the distinctive qualities of the Arabic tense system. From its morphological structure to its temporal roles and dialectal variations, the perfect tense in Arabic has been the subject of much research. Even though its conjugation patterns and main applications have been well established, there is still a need for more research given the cross-dialectal variance, especially in spoken Arabic, and the comparative studies with other languages.

Data Collection

The data will be collected from two primary sources: literary texts, academic sources, and conversational Arabic. This multi-source approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of the perfect tense's forms and functions in both formal and informal settings.

1. Classical and Modern Literary Texts:
Extracts from classical Arabic literature, e.g., classical poetry as well as MSA texts (e.g., newspaper articles, novels, and academic publications) is analysed to identify how the perfect tense is used in formal, narrative, and descriptive contexts.

2. Linguistic and Grammatical References:
Relevant linguistic and grammatical references, such as textbooks and articles, will be used to support theoretical aspects of the Arabic perfect tense such as: Ryding's *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic* (2005), Cowell's *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic* (2008) and Fassi Fehri's *Topics in Arabic Syntax* (1993).

Data Analysis

The data are collected from different genres and analysis will consist of both qualitative content analysis, i.e., Identification of Forms: The morphological forms of the Arabic perfect tense found in the texts and speech, focusing on verb conjugations and identifying patterns of use in different contexts (e.g., regular vs. irregular verbs, weak verbs, and defective verbs) will be categorized. After identifying the forms, the functions of the perfect tense will also be categorised. The categories may include:

- o Completion of action (past tense use)
- o Resultative aspect (present perfect use)
- o State or condition (perfect as a state)
- o Narrative use (historical or storytelling function)
- o Modal/emotional use (intensifying certainty or emotional content)
- o Conditional or hypothetical use (counterfactual statements)

Model Structure

The study's model structure follows a hierarchical approach to analyze the perfect tense's forms and functions. Below is the structure of the study model:

Level 1: Morphological Analysis

- • Regular Verbs: Conjugation patterns and examples. Verbs that follow a predictable conjugation pattern.
- • Weak Verbs: Special cases of conjugation involving root changes. Verbs with roots containing weak letters that undergo modifications.
- • Hollow Verbs: Variations in conjugation for verbs with weak middle roots.

Level 2: Functional Analysis

• Present Relevance: Expressing actions completed in the past with current relevance. Describes actions that have relevance or consequences in the present.
• Narrative Sequencing: Using the perfect tense in storytelling to sequence events. Used to sequence events in stories.

• Habitual Past Actions: Expressing repeated or habitual actions in the past, particularly in dialects. Expresses actions that occurred regularly or habitually in the past.

• Recent Past: Emphasis on actions that have just been completed. Expresses actions that were completed just recently.

Analysis of Arabic Perfect Tense in Poetry:

In this section, in the lines of the poem entitled "If you desire glory" by Al-Mutanabbi, the poet consistently uses the perfect tense to recount past triumphs and accomplishments, underscoring their lasting importance.

"إِذا شِئْتَ فَخْراً فَاسْأَلِ الْعَذْرَاءَ عَنِّي ***** وَاسْأَلِ الذِّئَابَ الْوَحْشِيَّةَ عَنْ جَسَدِي"

Ɂiðaa ʃiɁta fasɁal l-ʕaðraaɁa ʕany   w ɁsɁal ð-ðiðaab l-waħʃiyata ʕan dʒasaady

"If you desire glory, ask the virgin about me, And ask the wild wolves about my body".

Another poem entitled "Identity Card", by Mahmoood Darwiish, which uses the perfect tense to describe past experiences of displacement and deficiency, prominence their continuing influence on his identity.

"وَقَالُوا لِي مَا هِيَ جِنْسِيَّتُكَ؟ ***** فَقُلْتُ لَهُمْ: لَاجِئٌ"

wa qaluu lii ma dʒinsiyatuka? fa qultu lahum: laadʒiɁ

"And they asked me, 'What is your nationality'? / And I said to them, Refugee".

The perfect tense is used to express and emphasises the stability of the refugee experience, suggesting that it has become an essential part of the poet's identity.

Analysis of Arabic Perfect Tense in Prose:

In prose, the perfect tense is used to narrate past events, create a sense of atmosphere, and suggest specific emotions. In "One Thousand and One Nights", the perfect tense is used widely to transport the reader to a by gone era of Arabian folklore and mythology.

"وَفِي يَوْمٍ مِنَ الْأَيَّامِ، خَرَجَ الْفَقِيرُ إِلَى الْبَحْرِ، فَرَأى طَائِرًا عَجِيبًا، فَطَرَدَهُ حَتَّى وَقَعَ فِي الْبَحْرِ، فَأَخَذَ مِنْهُ مِصْبَاحًا مِنَ النُّحَاسِ"

wa fii yawmin min l-Ɂayaam xaradʒ l-gaqiiru Ɂilaa l-baħri fa raɁa tˤaaɁiran ʕadʒiiban fatˤaradahu ħataa waqʕa fi l-baħr faɁaxaða minhu

"And one day, the poor man went to the sea, and he saw a strange bird, and he chased it until it fell into the sea, and he took from it a lamp of brass".

In other area, the perfect tense is used to determine history, memory and uniqueness as they hired in the works of Ghasan Kanafani and Najeeb Mafoodh in his work entitled "The Cairo Trilogy" which uses the perfect tense to elect the social and political changes that happened in Cairo during the beginning of 20ᵗʰ century, making a logic of historical wisdom and awareness.

"كَانَتِ الْقَاهِرَةُ فِي هَذِهِ الْفَتْرَةِ تَشْهَدُ تَحَوُّلًا كَبِيرًا، فَقَدْ بَدَأَتِ الْحَضَارَةُ الْغَرْبِيَّةُ تَتَسَرَّبُ إِلَيْهَا، وَبَدَأَتِ النِّسَاءُ يَطْلُبْنَ التَّعْلِيمَ، وَبَدَأَتِ الْحَرَكَاتُ الْوَطَنِيَّةُ تَتَشَكَّلُ"

kaanat l-qahira fii haðihi l-fatra taʃhadu taħulan kabiiran faqad badaɁt l-ħaðˤðˤat lxarbiya tatasarabu Ɂilayhaa wa badaɁt n-nisaaɁ yatlubna t-taʕliim wa badaɁt ħarakaat l-watˤaniya tataʃakal

"Cairo during this period was witnessing a great transformation, as Western civilization began to infiltrate it, women began to seek education, and national movements began to form".

Some writers uses perfect tense to show the mistaken of characters as did by Al-Maarri in his play entitled "The Comedy of Errors".

"ظَنَّ الْأَخُوَانِ أَنَّهُمَا لَقِيَا أَبَوَيْهِمَا، فَسَرَّا بِذَلِكَ سُرُورًا عَظِيمًا، لَكِنَّهُمَا كَانَا خَطِئَيْنِ" .

dˤan l-Ɂixwaan Ɂanahumaa laqiyaa Ɂabawayhima fasar biðaalika sururan ʕaðˤiiman lakinahumaa kana xatˤiiɁiin

"The brothers thought that they had met their parents, and they rejoiced greatly, but they were mistaken".

Here, the irony of the situation, highlighting the contrast between the characters' expectations and the reality of their circumstances are emphasized.

Tawfiiq Al-Hakim uses perfect tense to show the image of the hero as in his work entitled The Fate of a Cockroach" which resembles his childhood period.

" تَذَكَّرَ الْجَرْدَانُ يَوْمَ ضَرَبَهُ أَبُوهُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ، فَشَعَرَ بِالْأَلَمِ الشَّدِيد، وَبَدَأَ يَبْكِي "

taðarak l-dʒirdaan yawma dˤarabahu ʔabuuhu ʕalaa raʔsihi faʃaʕra bilʔalami ʃ-ʃadiid w badʔa yabkiia

"The cockroach remembered the day his father hit him on the head, and he felt great pain, and he began to cry".

Conclusion

The present study aimed to answer the following questions: What aspectual meanings does the Arabic perfect tense convey, such as completed actions, present relevance, habituality, and narrative structure? How does the Arabic perfect tense compare to similar tenses in other languages, such as English and Greek, in terms of typological differences in tense and aspect systems? How does the perfect tense in Arabic reflect broader verb conjugation patterns and tense use across the language? To answer these questions, it has been shown that the Arabic perfect tense is used to express and show completed actions in the past either through written works especially in the poets' works, or in the everyday speech of native speakers of Arabic. Regarding the differences between Arabic and other languages, it has been stated that English is uses perfect tense to indicate past tense but has a recent effect. Greek's perfect tense is quite similar to Arabic's in that it indicates a completed action with relevance to the present, but it also includes distinct auxiliary verbs. Greek, like English, has more complex distinctions between simple past, present perfect, and past perfect tenses, while Arabic often uses the same verb form to convey multiple nuances. In Arabic, the perfect tense does not always use an auxiliary verb, and its meanings (completed action, present relevance, etc.) rely on context and verb conjugation patterns. The analysis of the perfect tense conjugations reveals a tense. The complexity of weak verb conjugation highlights the significance of root patterns in Arabic verb morphology. This pattern was also observed in Iraqi Arabic, though in certain cases, the weak verb conjugation forms in Iraqi Arabic appeared to undergo phonological reduction. On of the prominent aspect of the Arabic is conjugation which varies through verbs as in regularity of the verbs, weak, hollow, etc. This case is not studies or appeared in other languages. The authors of this paper suggest that conjugation of verbs in varieties of MSA and other languages is an interesting topic to be studies for future research.

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