

Grammaticalized vs. Lexicalized Aspect: A Comparative Study of the English and Arabic Aspectual Systems and Their Pedagogical Implications for Arabic Learners of English.

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الطور (الجهة) وابعاده النحوية والمعجمية: دراسة مقارنة لانظمة
الطور (الجهة) في اللغتين العربية والإنكليزية وانعكاساتها
التعليمية على متعلمي الإنكليزية الناطقين بالعربي.

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ABSTRACT

Since the term Aspect tends to be less familiar to students of linguistics than other grammatical terms, like Tense and Mood, the present study has tried to investigate the syntactic and semantic description of aspect in English and Arabic. This unfamiliarity is particularly acute for Arabic-speaking students, given that Aspect was never genuinely studied, named, or introduced into Arabic grammatical tradition as an independent category — the sole notable attempt being a single section in Tammam Hassan's al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya Ma'nāhā wa-Mabnāhā, where Hassan proposed al-jiha (الجهة) as an Arabic equivalent of Aspect — and has remained entirely absent from Arabic language curricula and pedagogical methodologies to this day. Following the recommendation of Dr. Nasser Hajjaj, founder of Vernacularism (2024), this paper proposes al-tawr (الطور) as a more precise and pedagogically accessible Arabic equivalent, on the grounds that the root t-w-r consistently denotes the internal condition of a process in itself — independently of external clock time — which is precisely the conceptual core of Aspect, while the root j-w-h carries competing meanings that undermine terminological precision.

To achieve this aim, it is hypothesized that Arabic and English differ in expressing aspect. The present study aims for grammatically describing the aspects in both languages, and identifying the similarities and differences between them to find out which type of aspect is more problematic than the other that many Arabic-speaking students of English suffer from. The researchers has revealed that there are two grammatical marked aspects in English: progressive and perfective aspect. Progressive aspect is clearly aspectual in its semantics, but perfective aspect appears to have a dual nature, being aspectual in some uses but a kind of past tense in others, while Arabic has no specific aspectual verb morphology — it uses two simple forms (perfect and imperfect) to express the basic grammatical distinction. Progressive aspect in English is grammaticalized, while in Arabic it is lexicalized.

الخلاصة

نظراً لأن مصطلح "الجهة" (Aspect) يميل إلى أن يكون أقل شيوعاً لدى طلاب اللسانيات العربية مقارنةً بغيره من المصطلحات النحوية كالزمن والأسلوب، سعت هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في الوصف التركيبي والدلالي لـ "الجهة" في اللغتين الإنكليزية والعربية. وتتجلى هذه الغرابة بشكل خاص لدى الطلاب الناطقين بالعربية، إذ لم تُدرّس "الجهة" كما درست سائر الظواهر اللسانية الأخرى، ولم تُسمَّ ولم تُقدَّم في التراث النحوي العربي بوصفها فئة مستقلة في دراسة الحدث الفعلي — ولم تكن المحاولة الوحيدة الجديرة بالذكر سوى مبحث موجز في أحد فصول كتاب الدكتور تمام حسان "اللغة العربية معناها ومبناها" (1994) حيث اقترح حسان مصطلح "الجهة" مقابلاً عربياً لـ (Aspect) — وظل هذا المصطلح غائباً كلياً عن المناهج الدراسية والمنهجيات التعليمية للغة العربية حتى اليوم. واتباعاً لتوصية الدكتور ناصر الحاج، تقترح هذه الدراسة مصطلح "الطور" بدلاً أدق وأيسر من الناحية التعليمية، على أساس أن جذر ط. و. ر يدل باتساق على الحال الداخلية للعملية في ذاتها — بمعزل عن الزمن الخارجي — وهو بالضبط الجوهر المفاهيمي لـ (Aspect)، في حين يحمل جذر ج. و. ه دلالات متنافسة تُخل بدقة المصطلح العلمي. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، يُفترض أن العربية والإنكليزية تختلفان في التعبير عن (الطور . Aspect). وتهدف الدراسة إلى وصف "الطور" نحويّاً (قواعدياً) في كلتا اللغتين، وتحديد أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بينهما، للكشف عن أي نوع من أنواع "الطور" يُشكّل عقبةً أكبر أمام الطلاب الناطقين بالعربية الدارسين للإنكليزية. وقد كشف الباحثان عن وجود نوعين من "الطور" النحوي القواعدي الموسوم في الإنكليزية: "الطور الاستمراري" و"الطور التام". ويتسم الطور الاستمراري بطابع "طوري" واضح في دلالاته، في حين يبدو الطور التام ذا طبيعة مزدوجة، إذ يكون طورياً في بعض استخداماته وضرباً من الزمن الماضي في استخدامات أخرى، بينما لا تمتلك العربية صرفاً فعلياً طورياً محدداً — إذ تعتمد على صيغتين بسيطتين هما الماضي والمضارع للتعبير عن التمييز النحوي الأساسي. والطور الاستمراري في الإنكليزية قواعدي التصريف، في حين هو في العربية معجمي التعبير.

Keywords الكلمات المفتاحية		
الطور، (الجهة) الطور القواعدي النحوي، الطور المعجمي، الطور الاستمراري، الطور التام Aspect, al-ṭawr, Arabic grammar, English grammar, progressive aspect		
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1. INTRODUCTION

Aspects are defined by Comrie (1976) as "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation. It is important to distinguish it from tense. Tense is concerned with location in time, i.e. when something occurred, rather than how long it occurred for, whereas aspect is concerned with the way the event is temporally distributed within the time frame it occurs in, irrespective of when the event is takes place. This means that aspect is concerned with way the event is viewed as taking place" (Finch 2000, 85).

For this definition it is irrelevant how the aspect is coded whether lexically, morphologically, grammatically, or any other way. Aspect is viewed as a semantic phenomenon, which can have grammatical reflexes or can be morphologically coded. (Lindstedt 1985, 58) reserves the term aspect to cover grammaticalized aspectual distinctions, and uses the aspectuality in the semantic sense. This may be useful, since, a semantic perfective may at times be coded with an imperfective form (ibid)

There are several ways of how the view of the internal temporal constituency situation can differ. The expression can be bounded or unbounded within the scope of predication. An example of a bounded expression is the lexeme *kill*. There is a certain result that has to be reached for killing to have taken place. In other words, bounded expressions have a limit that has been reached. This aspect is **Perfective**, which indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases, which make up that situation. An example of an unbounded expression is the lexeme *swim*. There is no inherent limit to be reached for the action of swimming to be fulfilled. In other words, once started, it can be stopped at any moment and still swimming took place this aspect is **Imperfective** pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation (Saeed 1997, 111) the perfective and imperfective aspects in the above examples are called the **Telic** and **Atelic** aspects respectively (Smith 1991, 3-4). Telic refers to those processes, which are seen as having a natural completion e.g., *Harry was building a raft*. Atelic means not telic *Harry was gazing at the sea*.

One difference between telic / atelic concerns interruption. If the action of building is interrupted at any point then one cannot say *Harry built a raft*. But can necessary say *Harry gazed at the sea*.

A situation may not change within the predicated time frame and it may not require any activity to continue unchanged. Such situations are **Stative** (Crystal 1988, 83). Stative verbs like (*be*, *have*, *know* and *love*). These verbs allow the speaker to view a situation as a steady state, with no internal phases or changes. Moreover the speaker does not overtly focus on the beginning or end of the state. Even if the speaker uses a stative in the past, e.g.

(1) A- *Mary loved to drive sports cars*.

No attention is directed to the end of the state. This sentence contrasts with sentence (2-1b) below contains a dynamic verb like *learn*:

B- *Mary learns to drive sports cars*.

A situation or process that lasts for a period of time, is called a **Durative**, while **Punctual** describes an event that seems to instantaneous and involves virtually no time. For example:

(2) A- John coughs.

B- John slept.

What matters of course is not how much time an actual cough takes but the typical cough is so short that conventionally speakers do not focus on the internal structure of the event.

Semelfactive verbs in English would include (*flash*, *shoot*, *knock*, and *sneeze*). One interesting fact is that in English a clash between a semelfactive verb and a durative adverbial can trigger an **Iterative** interpretation, i.e. where the event is assumed to be repeated for the period described: e. g.

(3) A- Fred coughed all night.

B- The drunk knocked for ten minutes.

C- The cursor flashed until the battery ran down.

In each of these examples the action is interpreted as being iterative (3a) is not understood to mean that Fred spent all night uttering a single drawn out cough.

Aspect differs from tense in that it doesn't place an event before, simultaneous with, or after a point of reference as tense does; it is not a deictic (pointing) category. It simply expresses the manner of action or event, whether it is long, short, continuous, incomplete, etc. Thus it denotes how the speaker views an event or an action. The same event may be viewed by a speaker as a non-durative as in (4a) a long duration one as in (4b) below:

(4a) I went to the door and **opened** it.

(4b) As I **was opening** the door, I heard some music.

The researcher, through continual discussions with many teachers and scholars, has noticed that the choice of using the correct type of aspect has always been a serious problem encountered by Arabic-speaking students of English irrespective of the stage of the study, i.e., whether they are at the secondary stage or their final undergraduate year at the university level. Moreover, when aspect is combined with the two tenses, past and present, it results in different combinations that can be misleading to the students. The examples below illustrate these combinations:

(5) We are studying. (Present tense, progressive aspect)

(6) We were studying. (Past tense, progressive aspect)

(7) I have written my lessons. (Present tense, perfective aspect)

(8) I had written my lessons. (Past tense, perfective aspect)

The progressive and imperfective aspects may be combined yielding perfective aspect in the present or past.

(9) I have been writing my lessons.

(10) I had been writing my lessons.

In Arabic, however, the aspect concept (*al-tawr*)

¹ is assumed to be different. The same verb forms that are used to express tense are used to express aspect. Two aspects are recognized in Arabic: the imperfect and the perfect:

(11) صديقي الرواية الآن يقرأ

My friend is reading the novel (now). (Imperfect aspect)

(12) المكان لقد غادرت

She has just left the place. (Perfect aspect)

We have hypothesized that most types of aspect are similar in both languages from a semantic point of view but the two languages vary in the use of the main categories of aspect.

Due to difficulties previously stated, the present study aims at:

1. Grammatically describing aspect in both languages, i.e., Standard English (SE) and Standard Arabic (SA) and identifying the similarities and differences between them in relation to this respect.
2. Finding out which type of aspect is more problematic than the other, i.e., that of progressive or perfective.

2. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The previously stated aims clarify the methodology of the study with the help of which the problematic types of aspect that many Arabic-speaking students of English suffer from will be predicted depending on the contrastive analysis. As a result, syllabus designers, text book writers, teachers of English and students of English as well can benefit from this study and pay more attention to such problematic areas. Thus, it is of great benefit for the whole language teaching process.

The investigation that will be carried out in this study will be as follows:

¹ Terminological Note:

The linguistic concept of Aspect presents a unique pedagogical and terminological challenge in Arabic. Unlike tense, mood, and case — categories that Arabic grammatical tradition developed with extraordinary sophistication from Sībawayhī onward — Aspect was never genuinely studied, named, or introduced into Arabic grammatical scholarship as an independent category. The sole notable attempt was a single section in Tammam Hassan's *al-Lughā al-'Arabiyya Ma'nāhā wa-Mabnāhā*, where he proposed *al-jiha* (الجهة) as an Arabic equivalent — an effort that was essentially a translation of a Western modern linguistic term rather than an organic development from within the Arabic grammatical tradition. The term never entered Arabic language curricula, teaching methodologies, or standard grammatical reference works. As a result, Arabic-speaking scholars, researchers, and learners — including native speakers studying their own language — have never been formally introduced to Aspect as a grammatical concept in Arabic. This means that English-speaking learners of Arabic face a compounded difficulty: they arrive with prior knowledge of Aspect from their own linguistic education, only to find the category entirely absent from Arabic pedagogical tradition.

This paper therefore introduces *al-ṭawr* (الطور) as the Arabic equivalent of Aspect, following the recommendation of Dr. Nasser Hajjaj, founder of Vernacularism (2024). The choice of this term over Hassan's *al-jiha* (الجهة) rests on clear grounds: the root *j-w-h* is semantically overloaded in Arabic — *wajh*, *wijha*, *ittijāh*, *al-jiha allatī* — generating ambiguity that disqualifies it as a precise scientific term. The root *ṭ-w-r*, by contrast, carries a single consistent meaning across all its derivatives: the internal condition of a process in itself, independent of external clock time — which is precisely the conceptual core of Aspect. This meaning is anchored in the Quranic *وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُمْ أَطْوَارًا* (Sūrat Nūḥ: 14), where *aṭwār* denotes internally-defined developmental phases, and it is alive in contemporary Arabic usage: *fi ṭawr al-numuw* (in the growth phase), *fi ṭawr al-takwīn* (in the formation phase), *fi ṭawr al-iktimāl* (in the completion phase). The root further yields a coherent and productive aspectual terminology: *al-ṭawr al-tāmm* (perfective), *al-ṭawr al-jārī* (imperfective), *al-ṭawr al-nāshī'* (inceptive), and *al-ṭawriyya* (aspectuality as a grammatical property).

Because *al-ṭawr* is simultaneously rooted in classical Quranic Arabic, transparent in modern standard usage, and natural in the living vernacular, it is the term most likely to be accepted and adopted across the full range of Arabic scholars, researchers, and learners — including those encountering the concept of Aspect in Arabic for the very first time.

3. Investigating the nature of aspect in both languages mainly as a grammatical concept. Semantics will be touched upon where necessary.
4. Discussing the types of aspect that are equivalent in both languages.
5. Adopting a variety of language for the analysis of Arabic version based on artificial examples from Modern Standard Arabic as well as some verses of the Glorious Qur'an.

3. ASPECTS AND TENSEA

From a semantic point of view, (Biber et al. 1999, 460) state that both tense and aspect are related to time distinction in the verb phrase. Whereas tense mainly refers to past and present time orientations, aspect relates to considerations such as the completion or lack completion of state described by a verb (ibid).

According to (Hirtle 1975, 49), tense refers to distinctions concerning universe time while aspect refers to distinction in regard to event time. That is, tense is mainly concerned with situating an event in its place in a universe time and is thus related to the distinction of time with reference to past, present or future. In contrast, aspect involves distinctions of time without reference to past, present or future. This characteristic is fulfilled by event time (i.e. time of the event) through which distinctions of time can be made in the verb system independent of any reference to the three times–spheres.

To Comrie (1976) tense locates a situation in relation to some other time (such as speech time); therefore it is a category that signifies temporal deixis. Aspect, on the other hand, is concerned with relating a situation to some other time (i.e. it is not deictic), but rather characterizes "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation" as illustrated in the following examples given by (Trask 1993, 21):

- (13) A- I did it. (Past tense / perfect aspect)
 B- I was doing it. (Past tense / progressive aspect)
 C- I used to do it. (Past tense / habitual aspect)

All verbs in sentence (13) are in the past tense, but they express different aspect: perfective, progressive and habitual respectively, as shown in table (1) below:

TABLE I. SHOWS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TENSE AND ASPECT

		Tense	
		<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
Aspect	None	I do	I did
	<i>Progressive</i>	I am doing	I was doing
	<i>Perfect</i>	I have done	I had done
	<i>Perfect Progressive</i>	I have been doing	I had been doing

Tense / aspect functions are related to the sense that they both express relations to the event (Yule 1998, 10).

Comrie (1976) sees a combined tense / aspect system in Arabic. He rightly finds this double – pronged opposition questionable, since neither tense nor aspect is clearly the central feature with the other merely accessory. Having developed the notion of "relative tense", by which one is to understand a process relative to another process rather than to the speech situation, Comrie (ibid) cites a typical instance of a subordinate clause with اذا "when", when only the perfect is possible

(14) أحبيك إذا احمرَّ البسرُّ

I shall come to you when the unripe date ripen.

The clearly temporal reference of the perfect احمرَّ "ripen" is a consequence of the knowledge of the season, but it is nonetheless "past" relative to the expected arrival. Comrie concludes that the perfective indicates both perfect meaning and relative past time reference, while the imperfective indicates everything else (i.e. imperfective meaning or relative non-past tense).

The Arabic opposition imperfective / perfective incorporates both aspect and (relative) tense, (Comrie, 1991) reiterates his position suggesting again that the usual interpretation of the perfect encodes past tense and perfective aspect, while the imperfect encodes present (or more generically nonpast) tense and imperfect aspect. (Messaoudi 1985, 241-243) agrees partially with Comrie's analysis but adds that "only compound tenses present some symmetry for they equally express tense and aspect.

The aspect / tense claim is similarly found in much recent work. (Fassi Fehri 1993, 150), for instance, argues that Arabic inflected verbs alternate Tense and Aspect uses, and does (Fischer 1997, 207) "both perfect and imperfect refer to time and aspect". In the same vein, (Bateson 2003, 23) states that Arabic perfect refers to past time (or completed action).

(Chung and Timberlake 1985, 256) assert the close relationship between tense and aspect on the basis that both categories make reference to a point in the temporal dimension tense characterizes the location of an event with respect to a point in

time and aspect characterizes the dynamicity or closure of an event with respect to a point or interval in time (called the "event frame" (ibid). Thus, to Chung and Timberlake tense and aspect differ only in their reference points where for tense, the "tense locus" is usually fixed at the speech time, while for aspect the "event frame" is variable. On the basis of the similarity, Chung and Timberlake (ibid.) suggest that both 'tense and aspect' characterize the relationship between an event and salient points to the temporal dimension.

This tense/aspect duality in Arabic is addressed directly by Ryding (2005, 439–440), who clarifies that while Arabic verbs display a range of tense forms, two are fundamental: past and present. These are frequently termed perfect and imperfect, or perfective and imperfective — though Ryding cautions that the latter pair are more accurately labels of aspect than of tense. She describes tense and aspect as two distinct ways of looking at time: tense deals with linear points on a timeline in relation to the speaker, whereas aspect is concerned with the degree of completeness of an action or state — whether it is completed, partial, ongoing, or yet to occur. Ryding further observes that Classical Arabic was theorized to be more aspect-specific than tense-specific, though in practice many linguists and teachers find it more pragmatic to describe Modern Standard Arabic verbs in terms of tense. Importantly, she notes that the terms "perfect" and "imperfect" can be misleading for learners of Arabic whose reference point is a European language such as French, where "imparfait" carries a specific meaning of past continuous or habitual action — a meaning that does not map directly onto the Arabic imperfect.

From within the Arabic grammatical tradition, Tammam Hassan (1973, 257–260) offers a richly systematic account of aspect (الجهة) that complements and enriches the Western frameworks surveyed above. For Hassan, aspect is the specification (تخصيص) of the meaning of the verb and related forms, either in relation to time or to the nature of the event itself. He identifies three types of aspect in Arabic. The first is temporal aspect, realized through grammatical particles and auxiliaries — among them *طفق*, *كاد*, *ظل*, *ما زال*, *كان*, *سوف*, *سين*, *سوف*, *كان*, *لما*, *لم*, *قد*, *ان*, — as well as through temporal adverbials (*الآن*, *متى* *امس*, *غداً*, *منذ*, *اذا*, *متى* and others), which fix the temporal reference of the verb and establish co-temporal relationships between two events. Hassan highlights the particular importance of temporal adverbials in Modern Standard Arabic newspaper headlines, where the imperfect form is used freely to refer to past, present, or future events, and only the accompanying adverbial or contextual circumstance disambiguates the time reference. The second type is eventive aspect, expressed through morphological structures internal to the verb form itself — such as the intensive pattern (*فَعَّلَ*, expressing amplification), root reduplication for iterativity (e.g. *زَلَزَلَ*, *دمدم*), the causative (*أَفْعَلَ*), the desiderative (*اسْتَفْعَلَ*), and related derivational patterns. The third type is predicative-relational aspect, which governs the relationship between the predicate and its subject, and is realized through syntactic categories such as the direct object, the adverbial of cause, the *hal* (circumstantial), the *tamyiz* (specification), and prepositional phrases. Hassan thus demonstrates that Arabic encodes aspect not solely through verb morphology but through an integrated system spanning morphology, particles, adverbials, and syntactic relations — a significantly broader and more distributed framework than the binary perfect/imperfect opposition that dominates most Western accounts.

4. NATURE OF ASPECT

Although both aspect and tense are concerned with time, the aspectual properties of sentences that involve a completely different ways of looking at time. The difference between the temporal relations expressed in a sentence can be illustrated with examples (2.5a) and (2.5b) showing different time relations, but the same aspect structure. (Baker 1989, 474). For example:

(15) A- Joan wrote a sonnet.

B- Alfred will eat a peach.

Joan's writing a sonnet and Alfred's eating a peach are placed in different positions relative to the time of utterance by virtue of the past tense in the first sentence and the modal *will* in the second. However, the aspectual properties of these two sentences are exactly the same. Both assert the existence of an event that progresses through a series intermediate stages and has a natural endpoint. In (2.5a) the natural endpoint occurs when the fourteenth line of the sonnet is written down in; in (2.5b) the natural end point is when the last bite of the peach disappears. If we justified the truth of these two sentences by showing movies of them, we would see these successive stages quite clearly as both the unwritten portion of the sonnet and the uneaten portion of the peach got smaller (ibid: 475).

The aspectual structure of the two verb phrases are represented by showing a group of the portion of the task that has been completed at successive time with (percent) at the end of the interval (ibid). Sentences (2.6a) and (2.6b) below exhibit identical time relations (both being earlier than the time of utterance), but quite different aspectual properties:

(16) A- Joan wrote a sonnet.

B- Roger had a rash.

Sentence (16a) asserts the existence of an event that progresses rough a sequence of stages to a natural endpoint sentence (16b), by contrast, asserts the existence of a certain state, one that does not involve an idea of steady progression or successive stages. Although Roger's doctor might as a matter of fact notice different stages associated with Roger's rash, there is nothing inherent in the meaning of the sentence that would imply a succession.

5. GRAMMATICAL ASPECT VS. LEXICAL ASPECT

The term aspect, unlike tense, is used by some linguists to represent both the grammatical category of the verb and the type of the meaning characteristically expressed by that category. Other linguists, however, employ two distinct terms (i.e., make a terminology distinction) to distinguish between the formal category of aspect and the meanings expressed by such category. Such as grammatical aspect vs. semantic aspect or aspectual meaning Freed, (1979) and Huddleston (1988); aspect vs. aspectual distinction Comrie (1976) aspect vs. aspectual distinction (Lyons 1977). Aspectual distinctions (or form), usually described as binary, include: perfect (completed) vs. imperfective (incomplete), progressive vs. non - progressive, durative vs. nondurative (punctual), semelfactive vs. iterative, and the like.

Grammatical aspect (also termed viewpoints aspect (Smith 1991, 7) or simple *aspect* (Binnick 1991, 135-214) on the history of the terms) encompasses the ways in which the temporal characteristics of a situation is viewed independent of its relation to any reference time (Robinson 1995, 345). Grammatical aspect is expressed by different markers on the verb (i.e. suffixes, auxiliaries, or a combination of the two, as in the English progressive form). However these aspects are not necessary grammaticalized in exactly the same way in all languages. It need not to be claimed that Arabic perfective and imperfective are equivalent to Slavic, nor that the Arabic perfect matches the English perfect, for these terms to be used . It must only be shown that the meanings of these Arabic forms conform to general linguistic definitions of these aspects (ibid).

Lexical aspect or Aktionsart (also known as situation aspect Smith (1983, 1986, 1991) and, "semantic aspect" Comrie (1976) refers to the inherent temporal make - up of the verbs and predicates (Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds 1995, 107), or more specifically, "to features inherent in a particular conception of a situation as expressed by an unmarked predicate, independent of any grammatical marking or time frame" (Robinson 1995, 346) for example, live is inherently stative, while, jump is inherently punctual. It is possible for a single verb to show contrasting grammatical aspect, but its inherent lexical aspect does not change,

For example:

- (17) A- John sang. (Simple past)
 B- John was singing. (Past progressive)

The verb sing in (17a) and (17b) shows a contrast in grammatical aspect (progressive non progressive), but its intrinsic duration (lexical aspect) is the same whether in the simple past or past progressive. Lexical aspect is a property of verbs, but rather is determined compositionally by properties of the verb phrase as a whole Verkuyl (1972, 1993, 1999) and Tenny (1987, 1994). Thus; the separation of the verb meanings from their complementation is artificial. For example, the verb *sing* occurring in isolation cannot be classified because it can be used in a predicate designating an ongoing activity as in (7b) and in a predicate designating an activity for which a goal or objective is implied (Quirk et al 1985, 200)

- (18)- John was singing a song.

We find a number of attempts to characterize the various aktionsart categories that verbs and sentences may fall into. Perhaps the most influential system has been that of Vendler (1967) (ultimately derived from Aristotle). Vendler hypothesises four main (classes of verb: *states, activities, accomplishments and achievements*. based on three semantic features: Stative / dynamic (process), durative / punctual bounded / unbounded or (telic /atelic) as illustrated below:

States: stative, durative and bounded (be polite, be American, love)

Activities: dynamic, durative and unbounded (sing, dance)

Achievements: dynamic, punctual and bounded (shatter, reach the summit)

Accomplishments: Dynamic, durative and bounded (cross the street, read the book) These distinctions are often relevant syntactically. For example, states and activities, but not achievements, can be used with prepositional *for* - phrase describing time duration (Dik 1997, 109).

Shirai and Anderson (1995, 744) stress the fact that grammatical aspect and inherent lexical aspect are linguistic properties which should not be confused with the properties of an actual situation. That is, in referring to an actual situation in the real world (or in the conceptual world in then speaker's mind), the speaker makes linguistic choices. The two levels of aspectual choices, inherent lexical aspect and grammatical aspect even though the range of such choices is limited by the real world situation. Consequently, "... actual situations are distinct from language; they merely serve as bases for the linguistic choices made by the speaker" (ibid).

The distinction between lexical aspect and grammatical aspect rests upon the more general distinction of lexicalization and grammaticalization i.e. the grammaticalization (aspect) and / or lexicalization (Aktionsart) of the various aspectual meaning (Lyons 1977, 700). (Friedrich 1974, 54) and (Dahl 1985, 26) assert that all languages lexicalize aspectual meanings or distinctions i.e. in all languages there exist many sets of verbs with features of inception, completion, and the like, as part of their inherent meaning that fall into numerous and theoretically infinite sets, of which on (small) subset is normally of frequency and importance in any particular language " (Frierich, ibid). However, only some languages grammaticalize some of the aspectual distinctions. In English and in Arabic, aspectual meanings are lexicalized. But the question of whether English grammaticalizes such aspectual meanings or not is a matter of dispute. Some linguists, (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 40-73), exclude aspect from the categories of English grammar and argue that English only lexicalizes and does not

grammaticalize aspectual meanings (i.e. express aspectual meanings by grammatically distinctive dependents), thus, English has grammatical aspect (Hockett 1958; Palmer 1988; Comrie 1976; Quirk et al. 1985).

6. GRAMMATICAL ASPECT

The term **grammatical aspect** refers to the possibility of using special grammatical forms (more specifically: verb forms) to express various meanings that have to do with how the speaker wants to represent the internal temporal structure of a situation.

Semantically aspects are different ways of viewing the internal constitution of an actualizing situation these different ways are

expressed by different markers on the verb (i.e. suffixes, auxiliaries or a combination of the two as in English progressive form although not all languages have a marker (e.g., Arabic language). In principle a speaker may use a special verb form to refer to situation in its entirety **perfective aspect** (see section 2.6.1) or he may use forms which represent it as beginning (**ingressive** or **inchoative** aspect) or as going (**progressive** aspect), or as ending (**egressive** aspect) the latter three options represent the possibilities of **imperfective** aspect the speaker may also used a form which specifically represents the situation as actualization once **semelfactive** aspect or a form which represents the situation as a hypersituation consisting of a repetition of the same situation **iterative** or **repetitive** aspect.

The speaker may in principle also make use of a form that expresses **habitual** aspectual meaning (a habit is a situation type that is characteristic of the referent of the subject NP over extended period of time). Sentences like the following receive a habitual interpretation:

- (19) A- John smokes a pipe.
 B- Bill can be very clever.
 C- She [will / would] often go to church.
 D- Karen used to like toads.

In English progressive and nonprogressive aspects are systematically expressed by special verb markers, for example:

- (20) I am writing a book. (Progressive aspect)
 (21) I go to the office by car. (Nonprogressive aspect)

In sentence (20) the situation is represented as ongoing, i.e. as being in its middle while in sentence (21) the reference is to a situation (in this case: a habit) as a whole.

In sum, what we are concerned with when we speak about grammatical aspect in English is the pairing of the progressive form with progressive meaning and the pairing of nonprogressive form with nonprogressive meaning. Compare:

- (22) I wrote an essay last night.
 (23) I was writing an essay last night when Henry came in.

In the sentence (22), the use of the nonprogressive form wrote indicates that the speaker views the situation of writing an essay as complete. In the sentence (23) the use of the progressive auxiliary **be** (and the suffix -ing) indicates that the speaker wants to represent the situation of writing an essay as ongoing (rather than complete) at the time referred to by the when-clause, which functions as **vantage time** (appoint in time or a time interval from which the actualization of a situation is viewed as ongoing by the speaker referring to that progressive situation).

Since grammatical aspect is the grammatical expression of a particular meaning, an aspectual label can be applied to both a particular meaning and to grammatical form expressing it. Thus, in (John was walking home) the **progressive form** express the **progressive meaning**, while in (John walked home) the **nonprogressive form** expresses **nonprogressive meaning**. In the following subsections we will give a brief overview of the different aspectual meanings that can be expressed grammatically in naturally language.

6.1. Perfective Aspect

In English, there is **perfective aspect** when the verb form used reflects the fact that the speaker wants to refer to the actualization in its entirety, i.e. that he views the situation as if it were a temporally unstructured whole (Declerck 2006, 30). This means that he does not refer to the situation as having an internal structure (with beginning, middle and end) for example:

- (24) I wrote an essay last night.
 (25) I will write an essay tomorrow.

In these sentences, (wrote) and (will write) convey a perfective meaning. However, in the same way, a nonprogressive forms do not always express perfective meaning. Thus, (wrote) does not receive a perfective interpretation in sentence (24).

- (26) They decided to write a letter, Jane dictated while Mary wrote.

In the sentence (2.102) wrote will be referred as a **nonprogressive** verb form (Declerck 2006, 30).

Perfective meaning is often defined in terms of reference to a **complete** situation. There is nothing wrong with this as long as one is aware of the fact that **complete** is a term which applies to telic situations only, and which does not necessarily

mean the same as **completed** (i.e. finished). The two notions only coincide for telic situations that are completely over at the time of speech and are referred to as a whole for example sentence (27a)

(27) A- he crossed the street.

B- Here comes the winner.

C- Owen races toward the goal.

D- I will write a novel.

In sentences (27b, c and d) the situations are not yet completed at the time of speech, but they are referred to in their entirety.

6.2. Habitual Aspect

There is **habitual** aspect when the verb takes on a special form (suffix or auxiliary) to describe the situation as characteristic of the referent of the subject NP over a certain period of time. English has a special form to express habituality in the past: The semi auxiliary *used to*, the auxiliary *would* can also express this meaning but it can express various others besides this. Both *used to* and *would* can create the idea of a past habit involving repeated actualizations of a dynamic situation, but only *used to* can refer to a past habit which does not involve dynamic substitutions, for example:

(28) He [would often come / used to come] and talk to her when he had finished working.

(28) As a child Mary [used to be / * would be] afraid of mice.

Will can be used similarly to refer to a present repetitive habit, constituting characteristic behavior for example

(29) This is our precious beagle Fletcher. (.....) On the weekends, he will sleep until 11:00 am and he will actually make little huffing noises at us if we try to wake him up sooner.

Can and **could** are other auxiliaries which can express something like a habitual meaning, but they are mostly used for quite different purposes. For example:

(30) John can be very tired when he comes home from work.

(31) When I was young, winters could be much colder.

The auxiliaries **will**, **would**, and **used to** are the only fully grammaticalized expressions of habitual aspect (which is a pairing of form and meaning). In English, otherwise, habitual meaning is normally expressed by a nonprogressive verb form, often in combination with a repetitive adverb like **habitually**, **usually**, **normally**, etc. for example:

(32) At the time I wasn't yet attracted by girls, I simply ignored them.

(33) I don't drive to work. I take the bus or walk.

(34) John [habitually, mostly, usually] skips breakfast because he gets up too late.

Sentences (33) and (34), the habit referred to is located at too and is not represented as restricted in time, so that it is interpreted as a **permanent habit**. However, a habit including too can also be represented as restricted in time (i.e. as temporary) by the use of the progressive form. In that case the accompanying adverbial, if any, is a durative time adverbial rather than a repetitive one, for example:

(35) We *aren't eating* any beef these days because pork is exceptionally cheap.

(36) She's *sleeping* on the veranda while this hot weather lasts.

The use of a progressive form in sentences (35) and (36) leads to habitually reading of a particular kind, the situation is conceived of as forming **temporary habit** (this does mean, however, that the progressive itself is a marker of habitual aspect). In the above examples, it still expresses imperfective aspect and the repetitive habit interpretation arises largely through common sense reasoning and knowledge of the world. For example, we know that people do not normally eat uninterruptedly for several days.

A habit is a state (characteristic) which may or may not involve repetition for example sentence (37) versus (38).

(37) I used to love that kind of music.

(38) I used to go to the cinema three times a week.

Because a habit is a state and states are homogeneous, none of the instantiations of a **repetitive habit** need actually be in progress at the time at which the habit as a whole is located. Thus, both sentences (39a) and (116 b) can be uttered (to express a habit) at any moment of the day for these sentences to be true it is not necessary that the speaker should actually be walking at speech time.

(39) A- We take a walk after breakfast.

B- We're taking a walk after breakfast these days.

Sentences (2.116 a and b) can be uttered (to express a habit) at any moment of the day: for these sentences to be true it is not necessary that the speaker should actually be walking at speech time.

6.3. Repetitive vs. Semelfactive Aspect

There is *repetitive* (or *iterative*) grammatical aspect when the verb takes on a special form (suffix or auxiliary) to describe a situation as repeating itself in one or more occasions or as consisting of a number of substitutions of the same kind. In English, which does not have a special verb - marking for this meaning, and thus does not have formal iterative aspect, repetitive meaning is expressed by other means, such as the use of a repetitive adverbial (e.g., *repeatedly*, *over and over*), a frequency adverbial (e.g., *sometimes*, *often*) or a plural or collective subject or complement NP accompanied by a nonprogressive tense form. For example:

(40) The murdered *repeatedly* cowshed his victim on the head.

(41) I *sometimes* see her off at the station.

(42) Betty writes [*poems / poetry*].

(43) *Over 1,000 people* have visited the exhibition so far.

However, when the reference is to punctual (nonduration) situation, an iterative reading can arise through the use of a progressive verb form. (This does not mean that the progressive itself is a marker of iterative aspect.) For example:

(44) All the time I was speaking John was nodding assent.

(45) Someone was tapping on the window.

(46) He was jumping up and down.

The mechanism used here to represent a punctual situation as repeating itself is to use a form (the progressive) that requires the situation to be durative. The only means of resolving the apparent contrast between punctuality and durativeness is to assume that there is a durative *hypersituation* consisting of a number of repeated punctual situation *substitutions* (Declerck 2006: 36). The same meaning of repetition in one occasion can be expressed by a repetition of an intransitive verb.

(47) He jumped and jumped and jumped.

The opposite of repetitive meaning is *semelfactive* or *nonrepetitive* meaning. There is a semelfactive meaning when the reference is to a single individual actualization of a situation. (Smith, 1991). This can either be referred to as a whole or (provided it is durative) as ongoing. For example:

(48) A- I had a walk last night.

B- I was having a walk.

The term *iterative* is sometimes used in a narrower sense than repetitive. Iterativeness is then defined as the descriptions of a situation as repeating itself in a particular occasion, i.e. the representation of a situation as consisting of the successive occurrence of several instances of identical substitutions. Sentence (49) allows this interpretation (as well as a semelfactive one).

(50) Bill knocked at the front door.

This sense only represents one type of repetitiveness. There is a repetitive meaning not only if a situation repeats itself in the same occasion - in which case the repetition causes the instances of the situation to be substitutions of a single hypersituation, but also if there is repetition of the same kind of situation in different occasions, for example:

(51) A- I have only been in this town three times.

B- I sometimes called on her when I needed help.

The repetitive situation leads to the idea of *repetitive habit* if the actualization of the situation is seen as characteristic of the referent of the subject NP over an extended period of time, as in sentence (52).

(52) A- My sister spends her holidays at the seaside.

(53) B- Sharon is paying her bills on times these days.

Sentence (53) represents the situation referred to as progressive form, repetitive and forming a temporary habit. This is, the progressive form implies that the durative situation consists of repeated instances of the punctual situation of Sharon paying a bill on time.

7. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS AND RESULTS BETWEEN ENGLISH AND ARABIC ASPECT

In both Arabic and English the studies of aspect recognize two kinds of aspect: *lexical aspect* and *grammatical aspect*.

Lexical aspect, Aktionsart expresses the inherent temporal properties of the predicate. Telic predicates, which involve logical end - points, can be found in accomplishment predicates such as *build a house*, بني بيتا or achievement predicates such as *fall* سقط or *die* مات. Stative predicates such as *love* حب or *know* عرف, and activity predicates such as *run* ركض or *walk* مشى are called atelic predicates because they exclude logic and end points. In both languages aspectual meanings are lexicalized.

Grammatical aspect mark temporal viewpoints of an event by utilizing linguistic devices, such as inflections. In English, for instance, the present perfect (*have* + past participle) indicates perfective aspect as in (5.1):

(54) A- I wrote a letter

B- I found my glasses.

And (**be + ing**) specify imperfective aspect; for instance,

(55) A- He walks.

B- He is walking.

Arabic, on the other hand, has no specific aspectual verb morphology, it uses two simple forms: perfect (الماضي) and (imperfect المضارع) to express the basic grammatical distinction. For example:

(56) كتبت فاطمة رسالة لأمها

Fatima wrote a letter to her mother. (Perfect)

(57) فاطمة رسالة لأمها تكتب

Fatima is writing a letter to her mother. (Imperfect)

English perfective **have** is perhaps the most semantically complex of the English verb forms. It has two distinct readings, an embedded past tense reading and an aspectual reading. All tenses of the perfect have aspectual readings, but the past and future perfect have tense readings because the present perfect has only aspectual readings. As shown below.

(58) If he got in, Jones must have broken the lock. (Past tense)

The tense perfect contains (semantically) both modality and past tense, and modal verb always occupy the position, leaving the past tense to be expressed by *have*.

While the perfect in Arabic is found in a broad range of contexts. It appears that this verbal form is not temporally restricted, it may occur with a clear temporal indication, with past, present and future interpretations.

Contextual Meaning

Past time

Present time

Future time

Examples

(وصل) أمس

He arrived yesterday.

اتفقت

I agree

إن درست نجحت

If you study, you will succeed.

English has a special form to express habituality in the past: The semi auxiliary *used to*, the auxiliary *would* can also express this meaning. Both *used to* and *would* can create the idea of a past habit involving repeated actualizations of a dynamic situation, but only *used to* can refer to a past habit that does not involve dynamic substitutions, for example:

(59) A- He [would often come / used to come] and talk to her when he had finished working.

B- As a child Mary [used to be /* would be] afraid of mice.

While in Arabic habitual aspect is expressed by using the [*verb* كان + *imperfect*], for example:

(60) A- كانت زوجته تعمل في مخزن كبير

His wife used to work in a large store.

B- كنت اعود من المدرسة وقت الغروب

I used to return from school at sunset.

Both English and Arabic have not a special verb - marking for the repetition aspect, and thus do not have formal iterative aspect, repetition meaning is expressed by other means, such as the used of a repetitive adverbial (e.g., *repeatedly*, *over and over*) (مراراً وتكراراً), a frequency adverbial (e.g., *sometimes*, *often*) (أحياناً، في) (أحياناً، في) أغلب الأحيان). For example:

(61) I *sometimes* see her off at the station.

أحياناً أودعها في المحطة أنا.

(62) *Over 1,000 people* have visited the exhibition so far.

زاروا المعرض حتى الآن أكثر من 1,000 شخص

In English the progressive aspect is clearly aspectual in its semantics, and it is used to designate those verb constructions in which the **-ing** form of the verb is preceded by a form of the verb **to be**:

(63) A- He is working.

B- He will be working.

C- He has been working.

In Arabic the progressive aspect is problematic because Arabic does not mark the verb for progressive aspect. It uses either the imperfect or active participle form of the verb. Consider the following example:

(64) A- رسالة الان تكتب

She is writing a letter now.

B- الى المدرسة الان ذاهب الولد

The boy is going to school now.

Progressive aspect in English is grammaticalized, while in Arabic is lexicalized. Progressive aspect expresses by using verbs such as **ما زال، ما دام، ما فتى، ما برح** followed by either imperfect or participle form. Consider the following examples:

(65) لا يزال جالسا \ ما زال جالسا-

He is still sitting.

There is no restriction on the use of the aspect in Arabic. The two forms (perfect and imperfect) are used with all kinds of verbs including those having stative sense, in English; however, this is not the case certain verbs can only be used to refer to a state. Such as

(feel, hear, see, believe, forget, hope, imagine, etc.). As in the sentence (66)

(66) *I was feeling something hard under my foot.

It is confined to dynamic verbs as in example (67)

(67) A- I am playing.

B- She is reading.

There are many verbs that are treated sometimes as **stative**, sometimes as **nonstative**, depending on the particular meaning they have. One such verb is verb *be*, as in example (68)

(68) A- Fred is silly.

B- Fred is being silly.

Sentence (5.15a) does not imply that Fred is doing anything silly at the moment, indeed in general he may be behaving quite sensibly at the moment, and the only claim is that in general he is silly. Sentence (5.15b) refers specifically to the way Fred is behaving at the moment, and makes no claim beyond this about his behaving at other times.

The perfect aspect in Arabic may refer to the future in certain subordinate clauses, for example:

(68) انْ درستِ نجحتْ

If you study, you will succeed.

(69) اجينك اذا احمر البسر

I shall come to you when the unripe date ripen (shall ripen)

While English makes use of a present tense, verbal form study and a future tense verbal form will succeed in hypothetical contexts, Arabic only uses the perfect verbal form to express both an actualized present hypothesis انْ درستِ, and a prediction نجحت with clear future time interpretation.

Possibilities and wishes are most often expressed with the perfect in Arabic while English uses the modal *may*. This is illustrated in (70)

(70) A- حفظك الله يا ولدي-

May God protect you, son

B- رحمك الله

May God bless you.

C- شفاك الله يا اخي-

May God cure you, my brother / have a good recovery.

The tense values in English is more transparent with reference to the speech situation, in Arabic tenses are more action-oriented and therefore fail to present the notion of the tense from a definite point of view. The time specification is then expressed through a multitude of lexical and syntactic means.

The primary feature of the perfect and the imperfect in Arabic is the expression of the perfective and imperfective aspects respectively. The verb in Arabic does not indicate the tense of the action, but only indicates whether the action is prior to the moment of the speaking or, in case of the imperfect, occurs simultaneously with the utterance or with the main verb of the utterance. Arabic demonstrates therefore a purely aspectual system with tense being contextually determined, while English is tense / aspect system.

The perfect in Arabic allows temporal conflation of the prior event and the adverbial *six o'clock* as in the example (70) below which represents both the time of the prior event and the onset of the relevant state. In contrast, the English perfect precludes overt reference to the exact time of the previous event itself it has syntactic restrictions that Arabic perfect does not. In English the specific time reference of the prior event may be not expressed. It requires time adverbials, which denote times or intervals that include the present. So, it is incompatible with adverbial like yesterday that denotes a completely past time. This is illustrated in (71) where today, this week; identify an interval containing both the reported event and the time of utterance.

(70) استيقظت اليوم الساعة السادسة

Today I have got up at *six o'clock*.

(72) A- Have you read the paper *today / this week*?

B * Have you read the paper *yesterday / last week*?

In Arabic the present time interpretation of the perfect comes from the use of the present tense in English. Consider the following example in (73)

(73) A- هل تقبل عشرين ديناراً-

Do you accept 20 dinars?

B- بعثك اياها

I have sold it to you.

In Arabic the imperfect appears in contexts where future time is lexically specified. This compatibility is further illustrated in good *wishes* which are interpreted as projected to occur in the future such cases are shown in (74) and (75) respectively.

(74)- يغفر لك الله

May God forgive you.

(75)- يرحمك الله

May God have mercy on him.

A brief comparison with the English parallel construction of the imperfect in these contexts is fruitful, as it helps elucidate its basic values. As the translation of examples in (74) and (75) show it is clear that the imperfect is rendered by the '*may* + verb' construction, this construction is typically used to express all types of possible future events and processes, as shown in the following examples:

(76) A- The congress may pass this law very soon.

B- I may finish next month.

C- The ceremony may begin tomorrow.

The modal features that *may* represent in the "good wishes construction" are expressed by the imperfect in Arabic. The future time interpretation of the utterance results from the interaction between the imperfect and the construction in question.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The study has revealed the following conclusions:

1- both tense and aspect are related to time distinction in the verb phrase from a semantic point of view. Tense refers to distinctions concerning universe time while aspect refers to distinction in regard to event time. That is, tense is mainly concerned with situating an event in its place in a universe time and is thus related to the distinction of time with reference to past, present or future. In contrast, aspect involves distinctions of time without reference to past, present or future. This characteristic is fulfilled by event time (i.e. time of the event) through which distinctions of time can be made in the verb system independent of any reference to the three times-spheres. As illustrated in the following examples:

(77) A- I did it.

(Past tense / perfect aspect)

B- I was doing it.

(Past tense / progressive aspect)

C- I used to do it.

(Past tense / habitual aspect)

All verbs in sentence (77) are in the past tense, but they express different aspect: perfective, progressive and habitual respectively.

2- *State* and *event* are semantic rather than grammatical terms. A state is undifferentiated and lacking in defined limits. An event, on the other hand, has a beginning and an end; it can be viewed as entity, and can also make up one member of a sequence or plurality of happening.

The difference between the two is parallel to that between countable nouns (those that can be made plural such as *house / houses*) and mass nouns (those cannot be made plural, such as *milk*).the division in nouns, however, is more clear - cut, because it is grammatically indicated by plural ending.

3- In English tense *have* appears in verb phrases that contain two semantic tenses, either past - in - the - past or a past in - the - future. These are illustrated in (78)

(78) A- Leda rang up at three. She had arrived at noon and was

still trying to get lift to the lodge.

B- The car can't get to the station until three but Leda will have

arrived at noon, so she'll have to wait.

4- The progressive aspect in English and the imperfect aspect in Arabic are used for durative actions, incomplete events, temporary actions and what is happening (continuous actions) at a certain moment, as in the examples (79) and (80) respectively

(79) John is walking. (Progressive aspect)

(80) يكتب علي (imperfect aspect)

Ali is writing.

5- In Arabic the particle *QAD* is preceded to the perfect form to give it the meaning of near perfect *present perfect* as shown in the example below:

(81) قد وصل

He has arrived (not he arrived).

However, this particle may also make the verb *pluperfect* (past perfect), so that the verb given might also mean *he had arrived* according to the context.

6- The temporary meaning of progressive has the notion that state is *actual* and *particular*. For example:

(82) The ceiling is leaking.

(83) The ceiling leaks.

Sentence (82) means an actual event and even now the water is escaping while sentence (83) means a permanent quality of the ceiling.

7- In the compound perfect where the auxiliary *kaana* "was" is used along with the main verb, the particle *QAD* usually used to derive the equivalent of the English past perfect. Consider (A and B):

(84) A- ما حدث كان ذكّر خالد

Khalid (has) mentioned what happened.

B- ما حدث كان قد ذكّر خالد

Khalid has mentioned what happened.

8- The presence of *QAD* before the perfect is basically to add emphasis and stress the occurrence of the action, and it would equate with the English emphatic *DO*, which also expresses a degree of "certainty" that comes nearest to factual assertion, as shown in examples in (85).

(85) A- قد ابتسم زيد

Zayd smiled.

B- لقد ابتسم زيد

Zayd did smile.

9- Arabic verb has no tenses in the European sense; instead of the triple division of the action and state in relation to time into past, present, and future the Arabic uses a double division according to *complete* and *incomplete* action. It is convenient to call them the *perfect* and the *imperfect*, where the perfect indicates a finish and therefore past act while the imperfect denotes unfinished and therefore present or future act. As shown in the example below:

(86) A- درس (perfect)

He studied

B- يدرس (imperfect)

He studies

10- The perfect aspect in English and in Arabic is used for completed action, for example:

(87) A- جئت

I have come.

11- The progressive aspect generally has the effect of surrounding a particular event or moment by a "temporal frame", which can be diagrammed simply: that is within the flow of time, there is some point of reference from which the temporary eventuality indicated by the verb can be seen as stretching into the future and into the past. With the progressive, the point of orientation is normally identical with "now", the present moment of real time.

12- State verbs generally have a temporal frame reading in nonprogressive form as illustrated in (88)

(88) A- Generally when Lucas arrives home it is dark.

B- When Lucas opened the door the light was on.

13- In English, the perfect that is an expression of the perfective aspect, poses several semantic puzzles. It has an *existential* use, locating the event somewhere in the indefinite past. There is also a *universal* use involving the predicate holding over an entire period, as in (89)

(89) John has lived in Boston.

14- In Arabic the perfect aspect expresses actions which have been completed in the past but whose results extend up to the present time. It may thus correspond to the English present perfect.

(90) جئت لوداعك

I have come to say goodbye.

(91) لم انسها حتى الان

I haven't forgotten her up today.

15- In Arabic an imperfect often has a past time meaning when it occurs in a clause, which is subordinate to a clause with a perfect verb. The action or event expressed by the perfect. Consider the following examples:

(92) A- يقرأ صديقي الرواية الان

My friend is reading the novel now.

B- التقيت به في المفهى وهو يقرأ جريدة

I met him in the café he was reading a newspaper.

16- In Arabic the structure (perfect + قد كان) is equivalent to the English past perfect. As in the example below:

(93) كانوا قد انتهوا من الاكل

They had finished eating.

17- With *منذ*, "since, for" the imperfect aspect corresponds to the English present perfect progressive, e.g.

(94) أعرفها منذ اعوام

I have known her for years.

(95) هو يعلم الاولاد منذ شبابه

He has been teaching children since his youth.

18- The most important semantic difference between the present perfect and the past tense is that the former expresses ‘current relevance’ the past situation is still relevant at temporal zero point, while the past tense does not. This claim usually leads to the further claim that the present perfect is not a tense but an aspect: ‘current relevance’ is said to be equivalent to the perfect aspect which is some time narrowed down to ‘resultant state’ for example:

(96) John has arrived.

19- The choice between the simple past and the present perfective is associated with time orientation, and therefore with the choice and interpretation of time adverbials. Adverbials associated with the past tense: (*Yesterday, a week ago, earlier this week. Last Monday, the other day*) are incompatible with the present perfect for example:

(97) A- *I have arrived here last week.

B- I arrived here last week.

20- The completely past reading for a state perfect is like the result state reading for an event perfect. With an event perfect like sentence (98):

(98) Jones has read Erehwon.

The result state of Jones having read Erehwon holds at the time of speaking, and the reading event is completely in the past. Similarly, on the completely past reading of a state perfect as in example () the result state of Donna having a job at Romero’s holds at the time of speaking, but the state of affairs of Donnas having a job is past.

(99) Donna has had a job at Romeros.

(100) Within the progressive aspect verbs can be classified in to the following:

A – **Momentary verbs** (*hit, kick, knock, nod, tap, etc*). These verbs refer to happenings so momentary that it is difficult to think of them as having duration. Consequently, the progressive form, in attributing to them, forces one to think of a series of events, rather than of a single event. Compare:

(101)- He nodded.

(102)- He was nodding.

B- **Transitional event verbs** (*arrive, die, stop, etc.*). Event verbs denoting transition into a state are used with progressive to indicate an *approach* to the transition, rather than the transition itself:

(103)-The train was arriving.

(104)-The old man was dying.

C- **Activity verbs** (*drink, write, play, read, etc.*).

(105)- I am writing a letter.

D- **Process verbs** (*change, deteriorate, widen, etc.*).

(106)- They are widening the road.

(107)- The whether is changing for the better.

Most difficulties over the use of the progressive aspect arise with classes of verbs are normally incompatible with the progressive. The most important of these verbs the verb *to be*: it is possible to say”

(108) A- He is ill

But not normally.

B- *He is being ill.

A further difficulty is that many of the verbs so classified can occur with the progressive aspect in special contexts. Such exceptional uses can usually be explained by postulating the verbs’ membership (perhaps through a special transfer of meaning) of more one verbal category.

1- verbs of inert perception (*feel, hear, see, smell, taste*)

(109) A- I could *feel /felt* something hard under my foot.

B- *I was *feeling* something hard under my foot.

2- Verbs of inert cognition (*believe, forget, hope, imagine, know, and understand*)

(110) A- I think that they are coming.

B- *I am thinking they are coming.

3- State verbs of having and being (*be, belong to, contain, consist of, cost, depend on, deserve, have, own*)

(111) A- This carpet belongs to me.

B- * This carpet is belonging to me.

4- Verbs of bodily sensation (*ach, feel, hurt, tingle*)

There is apparently a free choice, without change of meaning between examples (6.38A and B)

(112) A- *I feel hungry*

B- *I am feeling hungry.*

Verb feel can be used to indicate not only ‘inert perception’, but also ‘active perception’. For example:

(113) A- I (can) feel the ground. (Inert)

B- I’m feeling the ground. (Active)

9. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study carry a direct and urgent implication for Arabic language education that extends well beyond the scope of comparative linguistics. Given that Aspect has been entirely absent from Arabic grammatical tradition as an independent category, and has never been introduced into Arabic language curricula or pedagogical methodologies at any level of instruction, this paper calls upon Arabic curriculum designers, syllabus writers, and language teaching specialists — both in the Arab world and internationally — to take immediate steps toward formally introducing Aspect into Arabic language education. This applies equally to programs designed for native speakers of Arabic and to programs designed for non-native learners. Native speakers of Arabic, despite their intuitive mastery of aspectual distinctions in daily speech, have never been given the grammatical framework to understand, describe, or reflect on what they are doing when they make these distinctions — a gap that limits their capacity for grammatical awareness, linguistic analysis, and cross-linguistic comparison. Non-native learners of Arabic, on the other hand, typically arrive with prior knowledge of Aspect from their own linguistic education, only to encounter a pedagogical tradition that offers them no corresponding framework in Arabic, leaving a conceptual void at the heart of their grammatical understanding of the language.

It is further recommended that Arabic curriculum designers adopt *al-tawr* (الطور) as the standard Arabic equivalent of Aspect in all future curricula, textbooks, and reference grammars, following the terminological proposal advanced in this paper on the recommendation of Dr. Nasser Hajjaj, founder of Vernacularism (2024). The term *al-tawr* is simultaneously rooted in classical Quranic Arabic, transparent in modern standard usage, natural in the living vernacular, and productive as the basis for a complete and coherent aspectual terminology. Its adoption would provide Arabic language education with a stable, precise, and culturally grounded framework for teaching Aspect — one that is accessible to learners across all levels and backgrounds, and consistent with the internal cognitive and linguistic tradition of the Arabic language itself. Future research is also encouraged to develop dedicated pedagogical materials, exercises, and assessment tools built around the *al-tawr* framework, in order to support its practical implementation across Arabic language programs worldwide.

Conflicts Of Interest

The paper explicitly states that there are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Dr. Hajjaj's paradigm of Vernacularism further provided the theoretical lens through which this paper approaches Contemporary Standard Spoken Arabic (CSSA), a living linguistic reality long underserved by formal grammatical scholarship. Arabic grammarians across both classical and modern periods have tended to privilege written standard forms while overlooking or mischaracterizing the natural linguistic phenomena operating in contemporary spoken Arabic. Aspect is among the most consequential of these neglected phenomena: it governs the internal temporal constitution of verbal actions in ways that native speakers intuitively enact daily, yet which no Arabic grammatical framework has systematically described. The author is grateful to Dr. Hajjaj for his generosity and clarity of guidance throughout the preparation of this work.

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