

Identifying the Functions of Tenses and Verb-forms: Comparative Study between
English and Arabic Languages

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ABSTRACT

This paper entitled the functions of tenses and verb-forms in English and Arabic language. It aimed at pinpointing how tenses and forms of verbs act in the two languages. For the purpose of this paper, the researcher has employed descriptive-analytical method because it is appropriate with the nature of study. A number of results were reached; some of the most important ones were: tenses in English language are the main approaches to express time, while tenses in Arabic language function as large modules for the verbal patterns and verbal single units to indicate different time variations. Verb-forms in both languages operate differently. With reference to the study's results, the researcher recommends that further studies should be conducted by other researchers. Likewise, more concern should be given to investigate the functions of verb-forms in Arabic language particularly.

Key words: Al-Haal - lexeme verbs - Time Regions

المستخلص

جاءت هذه الورقة بعنوان وظائف الأزمنة الفعلية وصيغ الافعال في اللغتين الانجليزية والعربية، وهدفت الدراسة الي معرفة الكيفية التي تعمل بها الأزمنة الفعلية وصيغ الافعال في الدراسة قيد النظر. إستخدم الباحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي بحيث انه ملائم لطبيعة الدراسة. توصل الباحث الي عدد من النتائج من اهمها: الأزمنة الفعلية في اللغة الانجليزية هي الوسيلة الاساسية للتعبير عن الزمن، بينما الأزمنة الفعلية في اللغة العربية تعمل كاطر للانماط الفعلية النختلفة للإشارة للزمن في اللغة العربية. كما أن صيغ الافعال في كل من اللغتين تعمل بصورة مختلفة. وعلية يوصي الباحث باجراء المزيد من الدراسات ذات الصلة والتركيز علي دراسة وظائف صيغ الافعال خاصة في اللغة العربية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحال - مكونات فعلية دلالية - كونات زمنية

INTRODUCTION

All languages have verb tenses, but they do not all have the same verb forms or usage. They vary in the construction of tenses to express time, since time stands for a concept that almost human beings are not identical in comprehending time aspects. Tenses are forms of verbs that express time, state of an action or event. Time and tense, in many languages, are considered two sides of the same coin as time indications communicate in verb tenses. For instance, in Indo-European languages, tenses are the main markers of temporality (K.M. Jaszczolt 1908:82). Meanwhile, tenses in some other languages indicate an event or state of affairs, as happening in the past, present or future. However, that depends on how languages approach tenses.

Having encoded the thought of time, tenses are common means to express time. On the other hand, time is not only communicated by forms of verb tenses, but also is shown regularly by the use of some words. The latter according to Atto Jespersen (1963:254) is more exact methods to express time than the former. As grammatical classes, tenses are combinations of meanings and grammatical morphemes. They are fundamental features of verbs. Their functions have relevance with the linguistic expression: concept of time; particularly in languages that recognize various set of tenses.

It could be argued almost there is no a human language that does not have its own ways to refer to entities or to predicate states. Be that as it may, verb is the most important part of speech which describes a sense of action or a state of being.

It can take several different forms. Each has a primary function, for which it is formed. The category of verbs among languages based on grammatical classification is differently termed.

Theoretical Frame Work

2. Tenses in English language

Tense is a linguistic concept and concerned with the ways through which speakers can specify the location of a particular action or situation in time. The change made morphologically by the verb reflects the distinction between English tenses. This is on the ground that tenses use the inflectional morpheme to mark the present or the past realization. As stated by Laurie E. (2003:60) English language has six verb tenses; each has two patterns: basic simple forms and progressive ones. Basic simple forms involves present tense, past tense, future tense, present perfect tense, past perfect tense, and future perfect tense, while the progressive forms include present progressive, past progressive, future progressive, present perfect progressive, past progressive and future perfect progressive tense. The latter refer to actions characterized by temporariness and incompleteness.

Concerning the simple forms, the present tense according to Douglas Biber et al. (2002:151) has three primary meanings relates to the present time: it indicates state present which is a state that currently exists. Furthermore, the present tense describes a habitual action or an action of recurrent nature which refers to an activity that happens in a particular time. It points to an action that takes place at the present time as in conversational settings. On the other hand, this tense also illustrates long term general facts or statements referring to states that exist now, already have existed and likely will exist. Additionally, the meant tense shows a single action of little or almost with no length of time which takes place at time of speaking or writing;

thus, the referred action marks no duration (W. Stannard 1974:66 & Sidney et al. 1991:48). In short, the present tense is considered to be referred to when the time of action effect indicates the present time.

On the other hand, the present progressive covers a length of time that incorporates time periods which come as before, during and after the time of speaking. It basically refers to unfinished action or temporary situation which is in progress at the time of speaking. Also, it shows state of affairs happening in around the now of time; that is to say, the action is not necessarily being in progress at the time of speaking. Additionally, it demonstrates a predetermined future action that based on a present plan. The present progressive tense can express the meaning of near future when the post present time of realization is neither stated clearly by a time adverbial nor by the context.

Basically, the present perfect brings up the effect of an event that occurred in time earlier than now to the utterance time without covering a part of it. In other words, it does not focus on the event itself but it points to or at its effect at current time. Furthermore, it refers to an event that has occurred at unspecified point of time which indicates neither present nor past time. So to speak, this tense is not used to express an event that carries a past time marker or implies any notion that indicates a past time because it bears correlation with the present time. In the same context, Ron Cowan (2008:368) stated that the present correlation is considered when the speaker views the action as a significant one; while the present perfect progressive shows an action that began in the past and continues until now. The previously mentioned tense according to Thomsom and Martinet (1986:126) denotes the length of a continued activity or action that extends up to the utterance time.

As far as future time is concerned, English language makes use of modal auxiliaries [shall/will] to show aspects of future time, though they are not future inflectional tenses. Yet, they show that the action will take place in future time. It provides information about the future based on facts or predications. Other forms such as [be going to+ infinitive] and [be about to + infinitive] are also commonly used to express future time. The former is used to talk about something that the speaker believes it will happen as a result of fulfillment of present intention whereas the latter is simply used to refer to future planning, where the time distance which accounted as starting point and ending point between utterance time and time of realization indicates near future (ibid. 1991:57).

In contrast, future progressive tense expresses an action that will be in progress at a time in the future. It also points to action that will occur in the ordinary course of events or things usually happen. Moreover, it is used to predict someone's actions or feelings in the future time. Basically, the nature of the action expressed the future progressive indicates a length of time. On the other hand, the tense termed future perfect refers to a completed action in some time later than the present moment and earlier than another time. Using the tense in question means that the doer projects himself ahead in time and looks back at an action that will be completed or achieved by a particular point in time later than now (Anthony Hughes 2001:176). Similarly, the future perfect progressive tense denotes that an action will happen over time until another future action occurs. It is worth mentioning to emphasize that the meant tense marks duration since the action will continue up until something in the future happens as might be anticipated or predicated by the speaker.

The simple past tense is most commonly used to indicate past time. It expressed a past event that no longer exists at present time, which clearly means that the action ended in the past whereas the progressive form of past tense refers to an event which continues up at a time in the past that precedes the present time. It mainly explains the duration of an event that was in progressive state. Yet, the past perfect tense indicates an event that completed before another past event took place (Barbara Deykes 2007:123). It can be said that this tense basically takes the interlocutors another step back in time. Correspondingly, the past perfect progressive shows that something started in a segment of past time and continued until it interrupted by an occurrence of past nature. Above all, this tense gives consideration to the event itself as a process.

2.1 Verb Forms in English Language

According to Bybee (1985:11-47) that English language inflectionally classifies verb forms. English verb takes a variety of forms. Inflection in verb occurs in form of affixes that adds to the stem or bare infinitive. Verbs in English can be divided into regular and irregular verbs. Verbs in English have four inflectional forms. These are referred to as: (base form), (-s form), (-ing present participle) and (-ed form). In a similar vein, the majority of verbs are regular which form their inflected parts by adding the typical ending, namely (ed-/d-/t-) whereas irregular verbs have various forms. Some of their parts are changed according to different patterns. The verb (to be) is considered one of the most important forms of the irregular verbs. It includes eight classes, namely base form (be), which represents the present tense (am, is, are); (was/were) express the past tense, (being) refers to tenses of duration and (been) marks perfect tenses.

On the other hand, English language also has a significant verb class that known as modals. They neither take inflection to express agreement nor mark tense. Modals are words that express modality. Modality is differently classified. According to Halliday (2014:177-178) modality has two types, viz. modalization and modulation. The former is usually referred to as modality and it deals with two types of intermediate possibility that involves degrees of probability and usuality to which the term modality strictly belongs, whereas the latter expresses the levels of obligation and inclination. As grammaticalized expressions, modals enable the speaker to express various kinds of attitudes towards a situation. Functionally, only one form of the modal verbs can be used in the English sentence.

3. Tense in Arabic Language

It is normal that Arabic language which descends from different language family to have its own approach to express time. In Arabic, tenses are used to express time according to its own ways of framing time. Arabic language shares other Semitic languages, the feature of having two tenses (C. Brockelmann 1977:113). Both grammarians of the Basris and the Kufis agreed upon that Arabic almost has two basic tenses, namely tense of present and past tense. Tenses that relate actions to time in Arabic are introduced by present form (يفعل = do) /jefælu/ which termed in Arabic (fi'alu al-Mudārae) and the past form (فعل = did) /feæle/ which termed (fi'alu al-Madhi) (Reishaan and Ja'far 2008:107). The former presents the present tense, while the latter forms the past tense.

The present tense denotes atemporal realities that are referred to, without considering their relations to time. Also, it indicates events that repeatedly occur (Abu-Chacra 2007:106). Two time dimensions are diversified out of that present tense: temporary time dimension and a gradual time one. The first one is often formed by

the combination of the form of the present verb with adverbs that express current time. The same dimension of time is understood as referring to a deictic situation without having used adverbs of time. The gradual time dimension which branches out of the present tense attaches with some particles to refer to time of occurred event which partially covers a segment of past time and it goes to rotate about time of enunciation.

The past tense shows an event that took place and finished in past time. In other words, the past tense speaks about a completed event. It also denotes a finished established fact (Abd Al Aziz 2005:3). Additionally, it shows a relevant state of past time; it indicates the reality of past event as when emphatic particles attach with the form of past verb. Moreover, the past tense uses to show a sequence of two events or states that marked past time by using a time marker to indicate that an event or state happens during or after another.

One way to express future time in Arabic is made through pre-fixing the particle /سَ/ /sa-/ with the present verb. It is worth mentioning that the term future time called in Arabic language [Al Mustaqbal /əlmust'ka:bəl/]. Future time is conceptualized as a time to be materialized. However, the particle /سَ/ /sa-/ refers to action that will happen in near or within a short future time. Correspondingly, another way to show another future time aspect is using the particle /سَوْفَ/. It converts the present verb to indicate that an action will happen in time to come (Alrihani 1998:98). In another sense, the time distance separating the time of speaking and the time of action is almost long. Both particles mainly used to express a time of non-certainty nature (Al Ghiliyeni 1944:198). That is, the present verb in another context without being assigned by any of the previously mentioned particles, expresses future time aspect that is called [Al Aistiqbal /əli:st'ka:bəl/].

3.1 Verb-Forms in Arabic Language

Verbs constitute important components of the Arabic sentence and discourse. Linguistically, verb is a word that denotes action, but from the views of the grammarians, it is a word that expresses meaning and points to either past, present or future time (Abdul Hameed 1994:7). In Arabic language, the verb is of a great value since its forms change to reflect the linguistic time. For the most part, the Arabic scholars and grammarians agreed upon that time has three divisions, but they disagree with the process of relating verb-forms to divisions of time. As stated by Brookliman (cited in Al Hudithy 2001:204) there are different schools of grammar, namely Basris School, Al Kufa School, and Baghdadi School. Accordingly, verb-forms are differently classified by each school.

Generally speaking, the Basris School considers the founder of Arabic grammar and its scholars made every effort to lay the foundations and principles of grammar. Similarly, Ibn Al Nadeem pointed out that the knowledge of the Arabic language was firstly taken from the scholars of Basris (Shawgi Dhaef 1999:20). One of the influential linguists and grammarians of the Basris School, Seebawayh introduced tripartite verb-forms classification which is considered being the most important classification. Consequently, it is described by Seebawayh (1988:121) that verb has three forms: (فعل = **did**) /feaele/, (يفعل = **do**) /jefaelu/ and (افعل = **imperative form**) /ifa'al/. It is evident that Seebawayh marked three different time indications in terms of verb-forms. Therefore, the variations in time are created by the morphological shifts in the form of verb (Jahfa 2006:46). In addition, the idea of time expressed in Seebawayh's verb-forms classification is not drawn on the notion of time (philosophical time). Instead, it is adopted according to the concept of indicating time, based on morphologically shifted verb-forms. Thus, no verb-form

referring to future time is adopted by Seebawayh as a result of non-existence of a separate lexeme verb to indicate future time.

The present verb in Arabic is formed by the formula (يفعل = **do**) /jefaelu/ which linguistically termed الفعل المضارع (fi'alu al-Mudārae). It has three moods: indicative, subjunctive and jussive. Mood is a meaning shown by the grammatical verb form that indicates the subject's attitude or intention Al-Jarf (2008:94). In the indicative mood, the present verb acts without using any subjunctive or jussive particles which have different functions in terms of meanings. The present tense verb acts mutually to express **Al-Haal** and **Al Aistiqbāl** respectively. Both Al Haal and Aistiqbāl in Arabic language are different frames of time. Al Haal is a time lapse that lies in between the "nows"; it represents the present time. Al Aistiqbāl as defined by Al Jarjani (2004:18) is observing an occurrence of action more effectively in time to come. Therefore, the present tense verb acts differently in indicative mood with reference to each time frame. In the same context, the subjunctive of the present tense verb according to Wright (1898:22) has variably a future sense after the adverb **لن** (not), and the conjunctions **أن** (that), **لا** or **ألا** (that not), **كي** and **لكي** (that) **كيلا** and **لكيلا** (that not), **حتي** (till), (until) and **ل** (that). With respect to jussive mood, the case comes when the present tense verb is preceded by one of the jussive particles such as or **لما** /lammaa/ or **لم** /lam/. Semantically, jussive particles with respect to meaning somehow add shades of meanings to the present verb. The former, for instance, indicates actions started in the past and not completed but comprehended as continuing to exist in their consequences (Cantarino 1974:130); it is also used to express the denial of an act which might be going to transpire in the future (Al-Suyuti 1368H.:173).

It, furthermore, carries a meaning in which a possible action is looked forward to take place but the precise time of the action is not known. The latter occurs with the jussive to indicate negation in the past. Though, both of them are time indicators they show time differently.

The past verb mainly is used to show a past time, except when its time indication in some cases, is shifted to refer to Al Haal (present time) or future time. To this point, it refers to present time as when the context includes some adverbials that express the sense of present time (Al Bashir Jalol (2011:6). In that case, the focus is on the state being established by the past verb because the time indication of the verb is shifted from past time to refer to present time. The past verb can also be used to refer to some conceived situations in future time. As it were, the shifted time indication of the meant verb considers being additional functions of the basic form. The third verb-form is /ifa'al/ افعال (= imperative form) is derived from the present verb and used to express an order and mark command or request after the time of speaking.

Having lingu-time functions, some particles operate with the present and past verb to form verbal patterns that are characterized by distinctive features of time orientation and different senses of time. For instance, the particle ظل /ḍa'ala/ (= continue to do) forms with the present verb a verbal pattern to denote an uninterrupted state that exists before the time of enunciation. Similarly, the particle قد /qad/ is used with the past verb to form a verbal pattern to visualize the time of a completed event as approximating to the vicinity of the enunciation time though the event has nothing to do with the present time.

The verb كان /kāna/, equally, combines with the present and the past verbs to construct two verbal patterns: كان فعل [kāna + past verb] and كان يفعل [kāna + present verb]. The verbal pattern [kāna + past verb] refers to a completed event which has already

occurred in a point goes back in time, while the verbal pattern [kāna + present verb] indicates an event of frequent occurrence in past time since the verb كان /kāna/ shifts the time setting of the present verb. Furthermore, the Arabic language makes use of verbal patterns to construct extra verbal single units to express series of actions of different time variations in past time or to refer to sequence of intentions in future time. For instance, the verbal single كان قد فعل [kāna + qad + past verb] shows an event which previously completed in a time that no longer exists around the time of enunciation. The verbal single unit قد فعل + سيكون [sa- yakun + qad + past verb] means that time is likely to be perceived by the speakers. This formula is used to predict the realization of an action by a particular future time. The focus is on the perception of time by which the predicated action is expected to be actualized (Ghadur. A 2008:261-262). This approach is asserted by Bergstrasser's statement (2003) (cited in Kadhim and Ja'far 2008:11), who stated that what distinguishes Arabic from other Semitic languages is the specialisation and the variation of meanings in its verbal forms by using two methods: one of the two ways, namely is the use of auxiliaries such as قد /qad/ in constructions like قد يفعل [qad + present verb] (= may do), قد فعل [qad + past verb] (= transpired a short time ago), and سيفعل [sa- + present verb] (= will do).

Methodology

The researcher employed descriptive-analytical method to describe and analyze the phenomenon under study, since it is compatible with the nature of this study.

Questions of the Study

The following questions will be used to collect the data relevant to the current study.

- 1- To what extent do tenses in English and Arabic have different functions with respect to time?
- 2- What are the various functions of verb forms in both languages?

Hypotheses of the Study

The present study postulates the following hypotheses:

- 1- Tenses in English and Arabic language have different functions with respect to time.
- 2- Verb forms in Arabic and English language differently function.

Aims of the Study

The primary concern of this paper is to identify how tenses and verb forms act in each language.

The study is also hoped that the explanation and description of tenses and verb forms in each language will contribute to a better understanding of the two grammatical categories in question. It, moreover, intends to show that such comparative study may prove to be more useful and practical in the comprehending of the differences in functions of tenses and verb forms in various languages.

Discussion and Analysis

English tenses can be classified into categories: absolute tenses and relative ones. The absolute tenses belong either to the present or past time division. The researcher believes that English tenses are formulated to express analogously two different notions of time, namely absolute and relative notion of time. The terms analogy signifies the nature of two different fields of application. However, analogy as defined by Peter Aurbsson et al (2009:200) is an approach of identifying the similarities between two concepts; the recognized one is named analog and the known science concept is called targeted. Concerning, absolute tenses include present simple, present perfect, past simple and future simple tense. Functionally, they simulate event as phasing in the combination of spacetime. Yet, considering the process of event from the view point of analog concept referring to Theory of Relativity will clarify how the English tenses act by analogy.

According to Stephen Hawking (1988:25) that event from the perspective of the Theory of Relativity is an instantaneous occurrence that relates with a point in spacetime which acts as combination is so significant for event occurrence. The light emits from the event forms a three-dimensional cone in a setting of four dimensional spacetime. A cone formed by this process is called future light cone of event. Similarly, past light cone by the same process comes into being; it is a set of events from which a pulse of light can reach the destination of the event. In other words, single amount of light from somewhere in the past light cone that called jumper area gets there to the spot of a pointed event as a sign indicating that the event does not vanish or fully getting to be past knowledge.

In another sense, the occurrence of event establishes a timeless position. The process as a result of the occurrence of event does not come to an end but forming event effect position in someplace in the past position, which is series of events. The event effect position considers being a sign of current relevance with the spot of the event, which indicates that the process exists. Typically, the unknown action position by the occurrence of event also comes into existence as an indicator that shows the event was a future action before phasing in other positions respectively. Therefore, the event gets different forms in every time position as accordingly to its location in timeless position where the event does not reflect any duration. The event conceives as a matter of fact in terms of the timeless position.

From a linguistic point of view, the reference point of absolute tenses under which the time of event can be measured is the utterance time, since it refers to the present moment only. Accordingly, absolute tense relates time of event directly with the utterance time.

The simple present tense is authentic since it acts as a reflection point for the coincidence of utterance time with the time of event. Specifically, this tense relates directly to the reference point (utterance time) and bears by analogy the quality of the timeless position, although it does not come in the same entity. Moreover, no duration is marked by the present simple tense. On the other hand, the present perfect tense analogously expresses the meaning of event effect position. This is on the ground that the relationship between the occurrence and event based the meant tense gradually ceases to exist until the occurrence thoroughly vanishes, where the event and its effect sticks in a time background of mid-state point which hooks in between present and past time to the utterance time.

The simple past tense acts subsequently to the utterance time and it does not include it. The real distance between the utterance time and time of event within the frame of simple past and past perfect tense is irrelevant. That is, the notion of past perfect as occurred in time order before the simple past serves as a reference to demonstrate two events in terms of earlier-later relationship. On the plus side, English language lacks an inflectional tense to express future time. It uses modal auxiliaries, modal idioms, and semi-auxiliaries to refer to future time which can only be predicated, anticipated or expressed in terms of modal notion with more or less success. Modal auxiliaries appear with the bare infinitive without showing any morphological affixation. Yet, they act as future markers to indicate a normal pure future. So to speak, the absolute tenses are understood as forming time regions that referred to as being in some way analogous to time positions of the event respectively. The set of relative tenses which contains progressive tenses shows a relationship in time regions established by absolute tenses.

A relative tense connects the time of event with some other times rather than the utterance time. The reference point of the relative tenses which underlines the time of the event is the present moment and some other times (Laimutis and Janina 2003:77). The relative tenses basically account duration of an event. There are three marked types of durations: inaccurate, accurate and non-static durations. Among the three, the accurate duration is indicated by progressive tense and that is connected to a particular instant. In this case, a short or relatively long time span may be indicated with reference to instant that progressive form relates to.

On the other hand, English verbs can be described as regular and irregular. Regular verbs take several forms in their grammatical function based on inflectional system. Verbs mark different tenses and indicate tenses as well. The base form of verb is not inflected by any endings, as a type of verb that commonly used with the simple present in first and second person. The (-s form) is used with third person singular to mark simple present tense too. The inflection (-ing form) expresses a length of time with some forms of relative tenses. The (-d/-ed,-t forms) indicate the past time as well as including the (past participle). The inflection (-ed) is often used to show the past tense.

That is to say, inflections are used to show grammatical category, namely tenses that merges with the base form to identify the right syntactic and semantic properties. What means, if the identical syntactic inflection combines with bare infinitive, the result will invariably be the same semantic meaning. Additionally, English verb forms can be categorized into finite and non-finite. Focusing on this point, Sidney et al. (1991:25) stated that verb forms have various functions as marking finite or non-finite verb phrases.

A finite verb makes distinction in tense between the present and the past. Regarding, (the -s, and -ed forms) are invariably finite, while (the -ing and the -ed participle) are always non-finite. The non-finite verb forms do not indicate tense because they do not express when action takes place. The base form has no inflection; therefore, it is very often finite or non-finite. On the other hand, irregular verbs do not follow the normal rules in the process of changing the verb form to show tense. They are either internally inflected, remained identical in their three forms or only have (-en marker). Similarly, the verb (to be) is one of the most significant English irregular verbs, for it has several irregular forms. It conjugates distinctively in every tense. It has three conjugations in the simple present and two conjugations in the past tense. Its meaning can change in terms of context. The (-ing) of the verb (to be) forms continuous tenses. The past participle (been) refers to perfect aspects as well as passive tenses. Furthermore, the verb (to be) functions as an auxiliary verb in progressive tenses or in passive forms when followed by a present or past participle.

Joan and Suzanne (1992:2-5) pointed out that the notion of modality in language expresses through various ways such as morphological, lexical, and syntactic means or via intonation. The common categorization of modals is made into epistemic and deontic. The same form can express both kinds of modality. Be that as it may, modals in English language are so important because they have variety of semantic features, since they act as epistemic or deontic modality. For instance, the modal [*may*] can either show deontic permission or epistemic possibility, while [*must*] can express deontic obligation as well as inferred probability. Functionally, deontic modals frequently occur in legal discourse to express obligation, prohibition or give permission. Yet, it can be said that

modals not only function as auxiliary verbs but also add to, define or focus on the meaning of the full verb.

In contrast, the present tense verb (الفعل المضارع *fi'al Al Mudārae*) in Arabic language has different semantic values. It mainly refers to sense of general time. Also, it acts as lexeme verb to diversify temporary and gradual time dimensions. The former indicates accurate time of temporary nature when followed by time markers, whose meanings express the current time. Identically, the same notion of temporary time can be shown without using any adverbs of time which express the meaning of now, but it is understood as a deictic expression. Therefore, the validation of the temporary time in the two cases is made with reference to time of speaking or time of enunciation respectively. The second form of time which happens and continues to the time of enunciation, is made by specific particles such as مايزال (= continue to exist) that validate the prolong of event's time. So to speak, the present tense in Arabic language considers being a distinctive lexeme because it expresses different semantic values.

Similarly, the indicative of the colorful past events and recounting the phenomena that form the consciousness of humans past time in Arabic language is the past tense verb (الفعل الماضي). The past tense may indicate near or far past event, based on the time distance that separates the time of event and time of reporting it. Arabic language forms several combinations to express different time variations such as قد كان + يفعل [= [qad + kan + present verb] which is used to indicate past event which is done many times in the past. This construction points to the repeated past event within the time frame that is so close to the present time in some situations, while in other cases the same pattern denotes the past event as happening repeatedly in far past.

In this regard, the form of past verb is distinctive in Arabic verb system. Because it has, as stated by Vendrayes (1950:137), the property of shifting its temporal indication to express future time. It is evident that time in Arabic language is not expressed through tenses but also through different verbal patterns and verbal single units.

In fact, Arabic language has no independent future form to indicate the future time that is termed in Arabic Al Mustaqbal /əlmust'ka:bəl/. Instead, the future form is a derived from the present verb. It is made by either attaching the prefix /سَ /sa/ or the particle /سَوْفَ /sawfa/ to the present verb. The future forms with the present verb makes a clear cut-point between the concept of future time and the concept of time that called Al Aistiqlal /əlist'ka:bəl/; particularly when the context includes future time markers. That to say, this distinction removes the semantic-pragmatics of the present verb referring to different time dimensions.

As far as the verb form is concerned, early Arabic grammarians have placed emphasis on the classification of verbs with respect to time. Concerning the point in focus, the grammarians seem to believe that analysis of time is crucial to a better interpretation of the relationship between tense construction and the verb-forms that indicate time. However, Seebawayh classified verb into three categories: present, past and imperative forms. They respectively show time as referring to what has transpired, what had elapsed and what will happen. What distinguished Seebawayh's classification; he marked the imperative form to express future time. Using the imperative form can be justifiable by saying that he has taken the linguistic functions of the future forms into

consideration as alternatives to shorten the gap of non-existence of independent lexeme verb to express future time. What is more, he linguistically classified the verb-forms to express time. Accordingly, Seebawayh has not by any means taken the notion of philosophical time into account by moving out of time-verb correspondence model.

The Results

- English tenses express time.
- English inflectional verbs mark tenses.
- The formulae فعل (*fe'ele* = **did**) and يفعل (*jefaelu* = **to do**) in Arabic language are lexeme verbs.
- The two forms combine with some particles to construct several verbal patterns and verbal single units to show different time variations.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This paper analyzed the functions of tenses and verb-forms in English and Arabic separately. The main conclusion to be drawn from this study is that tenses differently constructed in each language. Therefore, they express time differently. The purpose for which verbs are formed in each language is varied.

Finally, the researcher hopes that this paper has presented a clear description for the nature of tenses and verb-forms in the concerned languages; likewise, the study suggests:

- More efforts to be paid on studying the grammatical categories, namely tenses and verb-forms as the two languages in question descend from different language families.
- Further researches are required to be conducted in contrastive and applied linguistics to highlight other different problematic areas.

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