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relegated to the other elements of the sentence, including the verb. The following example obviously express open conditional, although لو is used.

وسيتم هذا الامل لو وفق قادة السياسة . . . وهذا ما لا بد ـ عاجلا او اجلا ـ ان سيكون .

(Amin, Fayd, 111, p.112)

. Conclusion

In Classical Arabic, the two verb forms, the imperfect and the perfect refer basically to the manner of the verb action ; hence they may be regarded as aspects.

In Modern Arabic, on the other hand, there is a tendency to associate the two verb forms with specific time : the imperfect is often projected into the present, the perfect into the past. As a result of these attempts by the modern writer to introduce tense into Arabic, (a) new constructions have come into existence, (b) some Classical structures have gained greater currency and (c) others have lost ground. Purists would consider some of these constructions, especially the newly–formed ones, just plain wrong. However, since they are widespread in all types of style, including the works of some of the best modern writers, I believe they have important grammatical significance. They mark new developments in Modern Arabic, which contribute to the enrichment of the language.

<div dir="rtl">

فسأله اذا كان يعرف الشاب   (Nu ʿayma, Akabir, p.104)

فتساءل اذا كانت هذه حياته   (Jabra, Surakh, p.47)

وسئل الوزير اذا كان قوله يعني   (Jarida, 27–5–64, p.2)

</div>

Classical Arabic draws no distinction between direct speech and reported speech as far as the verb (form or mood) is concerned (Wright, III, 306). Modern Arabic, on the other hand, often uses كان in reported speech in an attempt to project the clause into to the past. This is perhaps most common in sentences whose main verb refers to the past, as the examples above show.

3. Other Implications

I have so far confined my argument to the temporal changes in the function of the verb. But the process is actually more complex than it appears at first sight. For it involves other elements of the sentence besides the verb. Mention should be made here of the change in the function of the negative, the interrogative and the conditional particles هل , لا , لن and اذا . In Classical Arabic, each of these particles may be said to consist of two components, when it used with the imperfect.

لن + Neg / + Interr   لا + Neg / + Interr   هل + Interr / + Future

اذا +Cond / + Future [4]

In Modern Arabic, the function of the second cmoponent in each of these particles is being taken over by the verb. They are acquiring a simple nature ; لن and لا are becoming particles for mere negative, هل for interrogative and اذا for condition.

This is also true of سوف and ـس which in Classical Arabic are markers of futurity as well as certainty They may be represented as

سوف + Future / + Certainty   ـس + Future / + Certainty

In modern writings, the first component has gained considerable prominence; and as aresult of this, the two articles are considered the main markers of futurity.

This trend may be further illustrated by examining the conditional sentence in Modern Arabic. In Classical Arabic, the meaning of such sentences, open (likely, probable, possible, etc) or rejected (hypothetical, unlikely, improbable, impossible) is determined by the particle; اذا , ان being used for the first type, and لو for the second. The use of the imperfect and the perfect is neutralized after these particles, and the temporal value of the clause is determined by other elements. (See the examples under 1.2.a)

In modern writings, these particles have often become mere signs of condition–rather similar to the English «if»; their other functions, temporal and semantic, are being

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(4)*This is also true when اذا is used with the perfect*

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<div dir="rtl">

اذا تدرس تنجح
ان تدرس تنجح } more common in modern Arabic
لو تدرس تنجح

</div>

(b) Exclamations

<div dir="rtl">

كذبت (more common in Elassical Arabic)
تكذب (more common in Modern Arabic)

</div>

(c) wishes

<div dir="rtl">

عاش الوطن
سامحك الله } more common in Classical Arabic

يعيش الوطن
الله يسامحك } more common in Modern Arabic

</div>

(d) Mental Verbs and Verbs of Emotion

<div dir="rtl">

فهمت ماتقوله
علمت هذا
عرفت مقصدك
احببت هذه الفتاة } more common in Classical Arabic

افهم ماتقوله
اعلم هذا
اعرف مقصدك
احب هذه الفتاة } more common in Modern Arabic

</div>

2. 3. past

The past is normally considered by modern Arabic writers to be the domain of the perfect form. This is most distinctly seen in the frequent use of (كان) for the purpose of projecting the sentence or part of it into the past.

<div dir="rtl">

وانما كان يعنيه من حياتها ونفسها ومن الجو الذي كانت تعيش فيه انها كشفت له دنيا رحبة

الافق غنية المدى على ماكان فيها من شر و سوء

</div>

(Idris, 77, p. 16)

<div dir="rtl">

ان تلك الحجة كانت تصلح لو كنت تشك في عاطفتي نحوك

</div>

(Idris, 77, p. 88)

In Classical Arabic the imperfect or the nominal (verbless) clause may indicate past time if (a) it is subordinated to a perfect verb denoting the past, رأيته يكتب or (b) the

time is appropriately denoted by an adverbial element, بالأمس تقاتلون . In the above, examples would as often as not be suppressed in Classical Arabic.

The ferquent use of كان in Modern Arabic is especially significant in reported speech, e.g.

10

(b) هل ـــ ، هل سوف used for interrogative future.

ونظر اليها متسائلاً : هل ستهاجرين حقاً ؟   **(Mahfuz, 73, p.129)**

هل تراها ستأتى ؟   **(Idris, 77, p.18)**

هل ستقوم الحرب من جديد ؟   **(Mahfuz, 73, p.27)**

(c) ـــ *or* سوف and the imperfect used in the main clause of لوto denote hypothetical condition in the future.

لو ضربت القاهرة فستقوم القيامة   **(Mahfuz, 73., p.24)**

فان الموت نفسه سيكون رحيماً بهم لو جاءهم   **(Idris, 77, p. 105)**

وسيتم هذا الامل لو وفق قادة السياسة   **(Amin, Fayd, 111, p.112)**

لو وقعت المصيبة ؛سوف يمتلئ بيتك ليلة الزفاف بعمال المطابع   **(Mahfuz, , p.318)**

لو جمعنا من السواعد الافا مولفة تجر عربة المادة الى الامام

فسوف تثقل بنا دائماً الى الوراء تلك العربة الاخرى الروحية   **(Zaki, Arabi, 3–61 ,p.9)**

In the other types of sentences, these particles have gained greater currency.

انها مصرة على القول بأن رزقه سوف يأتى معه ، وانه سيملا البيت فرحة ، وانها ستجد فيه عزاء من غبته طوال النهار وانها ستربيه تربية صالحة ، وانها ستبدأ من الغد في تدبير امر ملبسه .. احل يا بارعة وسوف تكسب حياتنا معناها المفقود وسنعرف لماذا نناضل . . . .
(Idris, 77, pp. 57–58).

وسيبدأ بناء محطة الطاقة الكهربائية في العام القادم ، وسيكون ثلث الطاقة متوفراً في غضون عام ١٩٦٧ ، وستتمكن المحطة في النهاية . . . **(Hayat, 6–5–64, p.3)**

In contrast with the frequent use of ـــ and سوف in sentences indicating the future, a decline in the use of the bare imperfect and even more of the perfect may be noticed in such sentences. This is illustrated by the examples under (a), (b) and (c) quoted above : in the first two, Classical Arabic uses the bare imperfect, in the last both the perfect and the imperfect are possible, although the former is more common in Classical Arabic.

2.2. Present
Since the imperfect is associated with the present in Modern Arabic, it has gained ground in sentences referring to present time, usually at the expense of the other form, the perfect. Thus it often replaces the perfect of Classical Arabic in

(a) Conditional and semi-conditional sentences referring to the present

اذا درست نجحت

ان درست نجحت   · more common in

لو فعلت هذا ندمت   **Classical Arabic**

من سعى بلغ مراده

9

احببت هذه الفتاة (I love this girl)

جاء القطار ! (The train is coming)

سافر قبل يومين (He left two days ago)

c. Past :

اجتمع وزراء خارجية العرب (Arab foreign ministers met in

ببغداد قبل اسبوعين Baghdad two weeks ago)

Perhaps it is necessary to clarify a point here : aspect is not completely divorced from time ; all actions and states occur within a time framework, and aspect as a means of expressing the manner of the verb action *is* associated with time. However, unlike tense, aspect is not associated with a *specific* time.

The modern Arabic writer, through his contact with European languages and cultures, has become linguistically time conscious. This consciousness is often reflected in his use of the verb in his own language. In his attempt[3] to express temporal relationships more precisely by means of the verb, the modern writer has developed new linguistic constructions or given greater currency to older ones ; thus enriching the language considerably. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is to examine these constructions with regard to the main divisions of time : future, present and past.

2. 1. Future

As stated in the previous section, the bare imperfect and the perfect are sometimes used in Classical Arabic to denote the future; although of the two the former is probably more frequent owing to the very nature of the action (or state) it expresses.

In Modern Arabic, on the other hand, these two forms are often regarded as more appropriate for expressing the present and the past.
In his search for a means to express the future distinctly, the modern writer has hit upon the obvious solution, the particles ـ, and سـوف used in Classical Arabic for the emphatic future. Thus, in modern writings these two particles have almost acquired the status of modal auxiliaries for the future. New constructions have come into existence of which these particles are the basic element. These constructions are :

(a) سوف لن ، سوف لا used for negative future

ان نضالنا سوف لا يتوقف اذا ما خسرنا معركة واحدة (Thawra, 28–3–79, p.7)

ولكن سوف لاتعود اوربا الى الدين القديم (Amin, Fayd, 17, 168)

المديرية سوف لن تتوانى في سحب هوية اي مستورد (Arabi, 30–6–64, p.1)

ان تشكيل هذه الجبهة سوف لن يستغرق اكثر من ايام (Hayat, 13–5–64, p.4)

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3   *Some western orientalists, including Monteil (p.251) and Cantarino (p.58) have casually referred to these attempts, but no explanations or examples are given The whole question is dismissed with one or two brief casual remarks.*

Modern grammarians essentially follow the same argument. Some of them confuse aspect with tense and ascribe unjustifiably much temporal value to the two forms (Hassan, 1966, I, pp.45-61).

In this paper I shall argue that there is a tendency in Modern Arabic to regard the two verb forms as having an actual temporal function, that the prefix set is usually associated with the present, the suffix set with the past. Thus fine linguistic distinctions are often drawn between the uses of the imperfect and of the perfect in order to project them to specific time.

2. Modern Arabic and the Sense of Time.

The quotations by western orientalists cited above are basically true of Classical Arabic : the two verb forms, the imperfect and the perfect, express aspects of the verb action or state. The former denotes an unfinished action (or state), the latter a finished one. They may refer to any of the three divisions of time, future, present or past. Thus with regard to the imperfect it is possible to say

a. Present   يكتب الآن : (He is writing now)
b. Future   يكتب غدأ : (He will write tomorrow)
c. Past   دخلت عليه بالامس : (When I visited him yesterday,

وهو يكتب   he was writing)

Here is another another example from al-Aqd al-Farid (I, 216–17) :

فلما نظر حوثرة الى اهل العراق قال : يا اعداء الله : انتم بالامس تقاتلون معاوية لتهدوا من

سلطانه . واليوم تقاتلون معه لتشدوا سلطانه

(Hawthara looked at the army of Iraq and said : O enemies of God ! Yesterday you were fighting Ma'awiya to overthrow his rule. Today you are fighting on his side to strengthen his rule)

where the temporal value of the imperfect (تقاتلون) is determined by the adverbs (بالامس)and (اليوم) ; the first refers to the past, the second to the present.

The same is true of the perfect, e.g.

a. Future :

والله لااقمت بمكة(I shall certainly not remain in Mekka)
اليتلاخامرتيالخمر(I swear that wine shall not make me intoxicated, as long as my soul
ما علقت روحى بجسمى remains in my body) (Wright, III,2)
اذا رأيته غدأ اخبرك بالامر(If (when) you see him tomorrow, he will tell you
لو فعلت هذا ندمت (If you did this, you would be sorry)

b. Present :

اختلف المورخون في (Historians differ concerning
هذه المسألة this matter)

7

Le verbe arabe est basé non sur le temps, mais sur l'aspect... L'arabe, langue à aspect, s'attache au degré de réalisation de l'événement–du procès, comme disent les linguistes. Il fait une part spéciale à la considération de l'action achevée et de l'action inachevée. Il exprime la première par sa forme à suffixes : *qatala*, denomée «accompli»; la seconde par sa forme à prefixe : *yaqtulu* , l' «inaccompli».

Concerning Modern Arabic one may quote A.F.L. Beeston, who writes in his *Arabic Language Today* (1970, p.76) :

> The semantic contrast between suffix and prefix set lies in the value of the predicate element. This has little to do with the time contrasts which are generally felt in European languages to be a fundamental feature of the verb; very few Arabic verbs embody a wholly unambiguous time signal. More important than time is a factor which can be called «aspectual» : this depends on whether the predicate is envisaged dynamically as depicting a change, from one situation to another, or statically as depicting a single , ideally frozen , situation... In these, only contextual considerations will determine the appropriate aspectual value, and in the case of static aspect, the time value.

Vicente Cantarino basically believes the same thing, althought he speaks of tense when discussing the Arabic verb in his *Syntax Of Modern Arabic Prose* (1974, p.58) :

> Neither in past nor in present usage has the one tense been the temporal counterpart of the other. Each tense rather may be considered as modal, that is to say, each tense describes a type of action. The perfect, for example, refers to action deemed complete, while the imperfect, on the other hand, refers to action not completed, or still enduring at a certain given time.
>
>   The tenses then are not a projection of the action to a definite time; they are rather, a subjective approach to the action, which is stated by the perfect and described by the imperfect. Both tenses can express the verbal idea in any of the three temporal stages : future, present, or past. It is with this meaning that we shall use both tense denominations, as they actually reflect the real function of the verbal tenses : expressing completion *versus* incompletion of the verbal action.

This view is also held by Vincent Monteil, who basically repeats the arguments of Louis Massignon and Henri Fleisch, in his book, *L'Arabe Moderne* (1960, p.250–51) :

> La grammaire arabe ne concoit pas les temps verbaux comme des etats ; en principe d'ailleurs, elle ne connait que des aspects verbaux : l'accompli (madi) et l'inaccompli (mudarie), qui marquent, hors de notre temps, le degré de réalisation de l'action.

  Thus orientalists generally agree that the two Arabic verb forms express aspects of the verb action and not tenses.

  Ancient Arab grammarians did not say much about the relation of the verb form to the concept of time. They termed the prefix form, *yaktubu,* al–mudhari' because it resembles the noun in that it has end inflection (Ibn Ya'ish, VII,6). The suffix form, *kataba,* was called al–madhi because it refers to an action which is finished and done with.

IS TENEST A CATEGORY OF MODERN ARABIC VERB?

Yowell Y. Aziz

1. Introduction

Tense is a linguistic category which refers the verb form to one of the three divisions of time : past, present and future (Quirk et al, 1972, p.84). Thus the verb forms write and wrote in English basically refer to present and past time respectively. When used as finite verb elements of a sentence, e.g.

The boy writes legibly; The boy wrote legibly
they are termed the present tense and the past tense.

Another important category of the verb in some languages is aspect. Aspect denotes the manner of the verb action, i.e. whether it is regarded, for instance , as finished or unfinished (Quirk et al, 1972, p.90). Thus , in English

The boy is writing legibly ; The boy has written legibly
denote aspectual contrasts and are usually called the progressive and the perfective aspects.

Arabic[1] has two verb forms, يكتب and كتب commonly termed the imperfect (المضارع) and the perfect (الماضي) . Do these two forms refer to temporal relations, tense: or do they express the manner of the verb action, aspect ?

It has become customary for orientalists discussing the Arabic language to state that aspect and not tense is a category of the Arabic verb. Thus one reads in W. Wright's *Grammar of the Arabic Language* (Third Edition, revised by W. Robertson Smith and M. J. deGoeje, 1971, 11, p.51)

> The temporal forms of the Arabic verb are but two in number, the one expressing a finished act, one that is done and completed in relation to other acts (the perfect); the other an unfinished act, one that is just commencing in progress (the imperfect).
> The names Preterite and Future, by which these forms were often designated in older grammars do not accurately correspond to the ideas inherent in them. A Semitic Perfect or Imperfect has, in and of itself, no reference to temporal relations of the speaker (thinker or writer) and of other actions which are brought into juxtaposition with it. It is precisely these relations which determine in what sphere of time (past, present, or future) a Semitic Perfect or Imperfect lies, and by which of our tenses it is to be expressed.

This view is generally held whether the subject of discussion is Classical Arabic or Modern Arabic.[2] Of the former Henri Fleisch writes in L'Arabe Classique (1968, p.112) :

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[1]. Here I am concerned with Standard Arabic.

[2]. Classical Arabic here means the Arabic language used from the earliest time up to the end of the eighteenth century, the basic structure of which is found in the language of l-Qur'an. Modern Arabic begins with Modern Arab Awakening (beginning of 19th century) and extends to the present time.