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**Republic of Iraq**

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**Department of English**

**Simple Past Tense in English**

**and Arabic:A Compartive Study**

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**A.D2025 A.H 1446**

**الاية القرانية**

**Quranic verse**

**بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم**

**In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful.**

ﭐﱡﭐ ﳑ ﳒ ﳓ ﳔ ﳕ ﳖ ﱠ النجم: ٣٩

**)And man can have nothing but what he strives for)**

**An-Naim: 39**

**Dedication**

To my family

**Acknowledgments**

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**Abstract**

This study explores the comparative aspects of the simple past tense in English and Arabic, highlighting similarities and differences in structure, usage, and meaning. English employs a fixed verb form to indicate past actions, relying on regular and irregular conjugations (e.g., walked vs. went). In contrast, Arabic uses a root-based system with patterned conjugation that changes based on subject pronouns. While both languages express completed actions, Arabic distinguishes gender and number in past-tense verbs, unlike English. Additionally, Arabic does not require auxiliary verbs like did for negation or questions. The findings suggest that Arabic learners of English may face challenges due to structural differences, particularly in verb conjugation and negation. Understanding these contrasts helps improve language learning and translation accuracy.

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**1.Introduction**

Simple past tense is essential elements in both languages It plays a pivotal role in determining the time of events, actions, and Processes It is one of the basic times in both the English and Arabic languages, and it expresses the events that and events that happened occurred in a specific time in This paper aims to compare the use of the simple past tense in both languages.

The study addresses. similarities and differences in how to form this time and use it to construct grammatical to provide a deeper understanding of how the two Languages express the past tense, which contributes to promoting language learning and improving Communication skills between English and Arabic speakers the paper, has bendvided into several sections, Including analysis of rules illustrative examples, and conclusions. about cultural differences that affect the use of this time in both languages.

1. preliminaries about Simplo Studies Poft then past tense in English have in the Past almost always been Comparative in that, for example, the uses and functions of the past tense have been compared with those of the present perfect or Present tense. The observational data that were Considered most revealing in this respect were the collocability Hocability of the various tenses with the adverbials. Ther study of these regularities very soon revealed that the demain of the past tensiis the true past,ie, does not include the moment of speech. The demain of the present perfect, in contrast, is also that of the past but includes the moment of speech. Early studies expressed this idea by saying that. the past time referred to by the past tense must be separated from the moment of speaking by a time gap, ie must be definite» past time with boundaries in the past. The time involved in the present perfect on the other hand was an indefinite" past time, ie, had no right-hand boundaries and, therefore,included speech time (Schopf, A.1987, pp. 1, 177-2205)
2. **Errors that happen in using simple past tense**

This research was conducted to determine the types of errors had been made by students in writing the sentence of simple past tense in English subjects. The low level of student understanding of simple Past material is one o of the reasons which influnce the mistakes in matking The sentence of simple past tense.

It could be proven through the results of Pra-test, Where four types of errors Error

1-using verb suffix (-ed-d) in regulare verb words

2-Error using simple verb forms past tense irregular verb.

3-errorusing the help word in negative

4- Sentences Error using to be. However, after the teaching and learning process. was carried out, the error was reduced, including in the use of the suffix on the verb (-ed) (d) in the regular verb of the previous 15 students had been reduced to 5 people. while errors in the use of simple past tense verb forms (irregular verb) from the previous 14 Students become 3 students. Furthermore-errors in the use of the help word in negative sentence were carried out. By 13 students into 2. students, then errors in use to be in the simple past tense carried out by 15 people decreased to 2. People. Keywords: simple past tense, Error Analysis (Eka Resty Novieta sari) English Educationi Journal of English (teaching and Research 4 (1), 39-44 ,2019)

**Types of Errors in simple Past Tense.**

\* Misformation. The most frequent error, when students in correctly form the past tense of verbs, accounting for approximately. 78.45% of errors in one study (Suhartini 1 & Nurlaili, 2024(

\* omission: Missing past tense markers, which constituted about 12.93% of errors (Suhartini & Nurlaili, 2024)

\*Addition and selection errors: Less common with addition errors 2.59% and selection errors at 5.17% (Suhartini & Nurlaili,2024)(Sazali et al., 2024)

**1.1.1 Formation of the past tense"**

(Regular verbs: Formed by adding "-ed" to the base form for instance, (e.g., "walk" becomes "walked»

Irregular verbs): These verbs do not follow a set pattern and must be memorized (e.g., "go" becomes went") (Tungkaburana, ch. 2019)

\* Neggative Form, The simple past is negated using "did not followed by the base form (e.g. "did not work" (Team, 1 January 2018)

\* Regular verbs

Formation: Regular verbs typically form the simple past by adding "ed to the base form.

- EX// "Walk" becomes" walked"

pronunciation variations: The "-ed" ending Can be pas pronunced in three ways! /t/ d/ or /id/, depending on the pot final Sound of the verb.

EX: "Hoped" (/t/), "played" (/d/), "wanted"(ed)

Negative and introgative forms

\* The auxilary verb "did" is used to form negative and questions.

-Negative; "did not" or "didn't" is used before the base form of the verb.

EX/ "didnot go" or "did not gos (Tung Kaburana, 2009)

- Interrogative: "Did" is placed at the beginning of the sentence.

EX: Did you go?” (Tungkaburana, 2019(

)Page 26) from the same book

-Forms of the Simple Past: regular verbs

-Statement 1-you-she- He-It -we-They - worked yesterday.

-Negative 1. you-she-He-It-we-They-did not (didn't) work yesterday.

-Question Did 1-you-she-He-It-we-they Work yesterday?

- Short answer Yes 1. You she-he-it

we- they- did

No.1-you- she he -it

We-hey -didn't

1. Statement 1- She-he-It was in Class Yesterday

-we-you-They were in class yesterday.

2. Negative 1. she-He it was nol(wasn't) in class yestelly

we-you-they werenet (weren't) in class gestaly

3. Question Was I-she-He-It in class yesterday. weve-we-you-they-in class yesterday.

4-short answer, yes - She-lle-It was -Yes, we, you-they were.

No, I she he, it wasn't. No we you, they weren't-

**Regular and Irregular**

The distinction between regular and irregular verbs is fundamental to understanding the formation of the Simple past tense in English. Regular verbs typically follow a predictable. pattern, wherein the addition of the suffix "-ed" serves to denot the past tense, as seen in verbs like" talk" be coming "talked." in contrast, Irregular verbs do not adhere to this uniform structure. often resulting in unique and sometimes unpredictable forms that must be memorized (e.9, "go" changing to went") unpredictable forms that must be memorized (e.g., "go" changing to" went"). This variance Complicates the acquisition and usage of past tense among learners of English, as evidence suggest that the Cognitive processing of these verbs involves different mental pathways (Cite 5). Furthermor, the challenges faced by seconed - language learners regardling tense formation can Provide-insight into the linguistic structures across languages, as demonstrated in studies. examining the development of analogous structures in othe languages like French (https:// www. jenni ai)

**1.1.2 Usage of Simple Past** **Tense**

- The usage of the simple past tense is essential for effectively. Conveying Completed actions or events that occurred at a Specific time in the Past. This grammatical structure aids not only in narrative Clarity but also in establishing a clear temporal Framework for readers, Research indicates that Proficiency in utilizing Various tense forms, including the simple Past, is Critical in second Language acquisition, Particularly among Learners who often engage with English & through media, such as films and music which reinforces their understanding of grammar in context (Albiansyah et al.). moreover Pedagogical efforts to demystify grammar have aimed to enhance the teaching of the •Simple, Past tense in TESOL Classrooms, addressing the Common misconceptions surrounding its used and encouraging more effective Communication Practices (Kettle ,L.2020)

**1.1.3 The Key characteristics of the simple past tense**

in The simple past tense in English is Characterized by it's specific grammatical structure and usage, which Conveys Completed actions or states in the past.

This Tense is essential for effective Communication, Particularly in narrative Contexts.

The following sections outlines it's Key characteristics.

-Grammatical structure

• The simple past tense typically employs the base form of the verb with the addition of "-ed" for regular verbs (e.g. walkedy and unique forms for irregular verbs (e.g."went").

\* It is used in affirmative sentences. negative Constructions, and questions often requiring auxiliary verbs like "did" for negation anet interrogation (Book languageteam 1 Jan 2018)

-usage contexts

\*The simple past tense is utilized to describe Specific events that occurred at a definite time in the past (e.g., "she visited Paris last year") (Grisot, 2016)

\* It can express habitual actions in the Past (eng., "He played soccer every saturday") and is often used in storytelling to provide a chronological sequence of events. (Adaje, 2019)

**1.1.4 Challenges in learning**

\* Learners, particularly those from non-tense-aspect languages, often struggle with the simple past tense due to irregular forms and contextual applications. (Tung Kaburana, ch. 01 Jan 2019)

\* Misuse of the tense can lead to grammatical errors, such as incorrect verb forms or inapproprite contexts for it's application

(Adaja, A.20194 sep)

**EXPRESSING PAST TIME**

A-Mary walked downtown yesterday.

B. I slept for eight hours Last night.

\* The Simple Past is used to talk about activities or Situations that began and ended in the Past (e-g, Yesterday, last night, two days ago, in 1999.(

C. Bob stayed home yesterday morning.

D our Plane arrived on time last night

\* most simple past verbs are formed by adding-ed to a verbs, as in (a) (c) and(d)

E- I ate breakfast this morning.

F- Sure took a taxi to the airport Yesterday

\* Some verbs have irregular Past forms as in (b), (e), and (fo See(

For instance, Car Came straight out of the side road, and the van went into the back of it. The van driver didn't have a chance. It was the car driver's fault. It is just as explanation about what happens in the past, we have some so many expamples one needed to be discussed.

**Examples**

The Past simple. is the same in all age Persons except in the past tenser of be.

I/he/she/it ← Was ex/ I was ill last week

you/we/they were ex / Those cakes were

**B-Negatives**

we use did in negative and questions

**Negative**

I

you

He did not stop .

she or didn't stop .

It

We

They

**C- Question**

I

you

He

DiD she Stop?

it

we

they

EX:

1- The Car did not stop.

2- The driver didn't look to his right.

3- what did you tell the police? wnothing

4- Did you ring home?~ yes, I did

We do not use a past form such as stopped or negatives and questions. rang in Not the car didn't stopped and Not Did you rang?

We also use **’’Was** ’’ and **’’** **were’’** in negatives and questions.

**Negative**

I

He

She was not or wasn't .

It

We

You where not or weren't .

They

EX/

1- I wasn't very well last week.

2- The gates weren't open.

**Question**

Was I ?

He

She

Were You ?

we

they

EX/

① Where was your friend last night?

② Was your steak nice?

**D/ use**

We use the past simple for something in the past which is finished.

EX/

1-Emma Passed her exam last year.

2- We went to the theatre on friday.

3-Presley died in 1977.

4. I knew what the problem was-

5- When did you buy this car?

About three years ago.

**Chapter Two**

**Simple PasT Tense in Arabic**

**2-Simple past tense in Arabic**

The simple past tense in Arabic is a a complex topic influenced by various linguistic factors, including verb morphology aspectual interpretation, and translation Challenges. Arabic verbs do not strictly mark tense: instead, they often convey aspectual information, leacting to ambiguity in tense interpretation. This Complexity is evident in the translation of English past tenses into Arabic

Where the simple past is frequently employed but may not fully capture the nuances of the original English tense.

Grammatical rules governing the formation of the simple past tense in Arabic

The formation of the simple Past tense in Arabic is governed by specific grammatical rules that reflect the languages unique Structure, the simple past tense, or Perfective aspect, is primarily formed by Using the root of the verb with appropiate morphological Charges to indicate the subjects gender and number, this tense is crucial for expressing Completed actions in the Past.

* **Formation Rules.**

Root and Pattern: Arabic verbs are based on trilateral roots, and the simple Past is formed by applying specific Patterns to these roots,.

For example: the Verb)Kataba( means "be wrote" and follows the Standard Past tense Pattem.

* subiect Argure Agreement: The verb Form Changes according to the subjects! gender and number, for instance (katabat) means "She wrote, in dicating a feminine subiect.
* Aspectual markers. The use of Particles like "5" (Gad) (an modify the aspectual meaning, indicating a near Past or Completed action, although thisis more relevant in the context simple Past itself (Farghal, 2018).

**2.2 Tense and Aspect in Arabic**

\* Arabic verbs can express both tense and aspect, with the perfective formtypically associated with the past tensel (anali, 2018).

\*The lack of explicit temporal morphology means that context Plays a crucial role in determining the intended meaning of a verb (Ouali, 2018).

**2.3Translation challenge**

\* Translating English past progressive and perfect tenses into & Arabic often results in the use of the simple past, Which may Compromise the original Meaning (Farghal, 2023, Mansoar, 2023)

\* The Preverbal particle qad" is used. in Arabic to and indicate a near past, Functioning similarly to the present Perfecto in English, but it's use is more about discourse cohesion than strict aspectual maak marking (Farghal, 2018)

**"lerner Patterns"**

\* Saudi EFL learners exhibit various alternative forms to the simple past, influnced by their first language, which can lead to inaaccuracies intense usage, (Almakrob, 2022)

while the simple past tense is anfant MA a fundamental aspect of Arabic grammar, it's application is nuanced and context-dependent, often leading to challenges in translation and language learning. Understanding these complexities is essential for effective communication and translation between English and Arabic.

**2.4 Tense and Aspect in Arabic verb (Morphology)**

Arabic verb morphology is characterized by a lack of explicit temporal markers, leading to debating on whether it marks tense or aspect. The perfective form, often linked to past tense, can also appear in non-past contexts, indicating that tense interpretation relies on additional syntactic and pragmatic cues (Quali, 2018)

• The imperfictive form, usually associated with present tense, similarly demonstrates flexbility appearing in past contexts under certain conditions, further complicating the tense-aspect relationship (Quali, 2018)

**2.5 Morphological Complexity and Semantic interpretation.**

-The Arabic verb system's nonlinear root and Patternderivational morphology suggests that Semantic Complexity, rather than morphological structure, guides early verb use in Children, This Complexity influences how tense is Perceived and used, Particularly in developmental language Contexts.

(Tallas-Mahajna et al., 2024).

-Neurocognitive Studies indicate that Arabic marphoto morphemes have distinct memory traces, with the abstract Consonantal root Conveying Semantic meaning and the vocalic Pattern Playing grammatical roles, This Supports the idea that morphological Processing is deeply embedded in the Ae neural language System, affecting tense interpretation (Boudelaa et al 2010).

**2.6 Implications for Language Acquisition.**

- Arabic Leamers of English demonstrate the influence of Lexical Semantics on Past tense playing grammatical roles. This supports the idea that morphological processing is deeply embedded in the neural language system, affecting tense interpretation (Boudelag et al., 2010)

-Arabic Learners of English demonstrate the influence of Lexical Semantics on Past tense acquisition, supporting the Aspect Hypothesis, This suggests that the understanding of tense in Arabic is closely tied to aspectual Cues, which Learners transfer to English (Zhao and Shirai, 2018)

while verb morphology in Arabic is associated with aspect, it's role in tense interpretation is significant, relying on a Complex interplay of morphological, Syntactic and Semantic factors, This Complexity is mirrored. in language acquisition, where Learners must navigate these intricacies to grasp tense in both Arabic and other language.

**2.7 Challenges do Learners face when mastering the simple Past tense in Arabic)**

-Mastering the simple Past tense in Arabic

•Presents unique Challenges for Learners, Particularly when Compared to more rigid Languages like English, The Complexities of Arabic grammar, in cluding its verb Conjugation and the interplay between i Colloquial and Standard Arabic, Contribute significantly to these difficulties, Below are key aspects that highlight these Challenges.

**2.8 Complexity of Arabic Grammar**

Arabic Grammar is intricate, with a vast array of rules that can overwhelm learners (Abdalla 2024).

• The conjugation of verbs in Arabic varies significantly, complicating the understanding of past tense usage.(Faraj and Zawawi, 2024)

**2.9 Differences in Tense Structure**

- Arabic has fewer tense than English, Leading to Confusion when Learners attempt to translate or apply English tense Structures to Arabic (Aaqil and Ra Zick 2022).

-The use of contextual Clues in Arabic to indicate tense Can be less straight forward than in more rigid Languages, making it harder for Learners to grasp the Correct usage (Aaqil Band Razick 2022)

-Linguistic and Non-Linguistic challenges.

• Learners often struggle with mixing Colloquial and Standard Arabic, which Can, affect their gras grasp of the Past tense (Faraj and Za wawi, 2024).

• Non-Linguistic factors, such as lack. of Practice environments and educational background, further hinder mastery of the Past tense (Lubis et al2024).

Conversely, Some Learners may find that the flexibility of Arabic allows for. Creative expression, which Can be beneficial in developing Language skills, However, this flexibility Can also Lead to inconsistencies in tense usage, Complicating the Learning Process - Pscispace.com

**Chapter Three**

**Simple Past Tense :A Comparative Study in English and Arabic**

**3. The difference Batween Simple Past in Arabic and English?**

-The difference between the simple past in Arabic and English is rooted in their grammatical structures, usage, and translational challenges. While both languages ​​utilize the simple past to deniale completed actions, the mechanisms and implications of these tenses vary significantly. The following sections outline these distinct verbs.

**\* Grammatical Structure:**

English: The simple past is formed by adding •\_ed to regular verbs or using the second form of irregular verbs (e.g., "walked," "went").

-Arabic: The simple Past is marked by specific verb forms that change based on the subject's gender and number, again reflecting a more complex inflectional system (Zainuddin, 2015).

The simple past tense in Arabic and English Adade exhibits notable differences in structure and usage, influenced by each language's grammatical post rules - while both languages ​​convey completed actions, the mechanisms and contextua applications diverge significantly Below are key aspects that highlight these differences.

**3.1Aspect and Cetegories in Arabic and English**

Categories in Arabic and English.

-Based on House aspect. the definition of tonse and this Paper grammar intends to compare and analyze the Similarities and differences betwan kense Arabic and English rense and aspect Categories in terms of their forms, Functions and this Moreover, in the Camat review Usage on Paper, 1 Propose Comparison and analysis that account for and aspect Categories in Arabic and English, The Comparison and analysis ave based on thi qualitative method which delenials Solely on the recent and Previous research. works. In additiony the comparison and analysis assume that there is a great/deat deal of differences in and aspect Categories in Arabic and English in term of their forms, functions and usage, Futhermore what do you Arabic views remporality through e aspectual distinctions of Perfective Category Versus imperfective Category on the other hand, English expresses Femporality. Through Various Verbal fense. Verbal tense and aspect Categories.

**3.2 Usage and Context**

English, The Simple Past is often used to describe actions that occurred at a specific time in the past.

Arabic, The simple past can also convey nuances of aspect and mood, influenced by the context and the use of particles like "qad" to indicate. hear Past (Farghal, 2018).

•Translating the English Simple Past into Arabic can lead to misunderstandings as the aspectual meanings may not align perfectly. For instance, the English Past Perfect may be rendered as simple Past in Arabic, which can obscure the original meaning (Obeidat, 2014). Conversely, while the simple Past serves a similar function in both languages, the complexities of Arabic verb forms and the influence of context on meaning Can present challenges for learners and translators alike. This highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of both languages' grammatical frameworks

**3.3 Explanations of the diffeerence between Simple past Tense in Arabic and English.**

\*Difference between simple past in Arabic and English languages.

The simple past tense is a fandamental grammatical structure used to denote actions Completed in the past. while both Arabic and English utilize the simple past, there are significant differences in their grammatical structures, usage, and the role of aspectual particles. This response will.

explore these differences, drawing on. insights from the provided research Papers.

.1-Grammatical structure and formation Englismatical English simple past In English, The simple past is formed 14 using the base form of the verb, often with addition of "-ed" for regular verbs (e.g., walked," "loved").

Irregular verbs have irregular forms. (e.g.." "went instead of "goed". The structure is stright forwards with a focus on the completion of an action in the past, For example:

1-Ex/ I walked to the park yesterday.

2-She ate dinner.

The simple past in English is used to describe actions that occurred at a specific time and are now completed. It is a tense that emphasizes the finality of the action without necessarily indicating any ongoing or repeated nature.

Arabic simple past.

In Arabic, the simple past is formeel differently. Arabic verbs are highly inflected, and person. The past tense in Arabic is marked by specific morphological patterns. For example:

* "(كَتَبَ) kataba)" - "He wrote""
* كَتَبَ) )Katabat)" "She wrote "

Arabic verbs also have a dual system. of tense and aspect. The simple past in Arabic can sometimes be nuanced by the use of particles like " " (ad), which can indicate near past or aspectual functions, though this is not always the case for the simple past.

2. Aspect and Tentse: The Role of Particles Aspect in English In English, the simple past tense is primarily a tense that indicates the time of the action (past). However, aspect can also play a role, particularly in how the action is viewed (e.g.( as part of a completed action or larger contect). The simple past tense can sometimes overlap with the past perfect or past perfect continuous in In terms of aspect, but it is generally used for completed actions

**3.4 Dialectal Variations and Translation Challenges**

\*Different Arabic dialects exhibit variations in negation, with some using dual elements and others simplifying the structure, such as in Algerian Arabic (Dendane and Dentame 2013) (Ouhalla, 2002).

• These variations pose challenges in translation, particularly for machine translation systems, which struggle with the complexity and variability of Arabic negation (Dendane and Dendane, 2013)

While English maintains a uniform approach to negation in the simple past, Arabic's rich and varied negation system reflects its syntactic complexity and dialectal diversity. This complexity can lead to challenges in translation and language learning, highlighting the need for nuanced understanding and adaptation in cross-linguistic contexts.

**3.5 Transitive and intransitive verbs differ in their Simple Past forms between Arabic and English ?**

-Transitive and intransitive verbs differ in their grammatical structure and function between Arabic and English, particularly in their simple Past forms. This section will explore these differences, drawing on insights from the provided research papers.

1- Definition of Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Transitive Verbs: These verbs require a direct object to complete their meaning. For example, in the sentence "she ate the apple," the verb "ate" is transitive because it acts upon the object "apple."

• Transitive verbs: These verbs do not require a direct object, for instance, in "she ran" the verb "van" is intransitive as it does not act upon any object.

2- Simple Past forms in English:

• Regular verbs: In English, regular verbs form the Past tense by adding -ed" or "d" (Ja), for example, "walk" becomes "walked", "Jump" becomes "jumped"

• Irregular verbs: Irregular verbs change their form gradually, such as "go" becoming "went".

3- Simple Past forms in Arabic!

• More Phological Complexity: Arabic verbs have more complex Past tense formations, with conjugations varying based on gender and number, for example, "he wrote" or "she wrote" have different endings in Arabic.

4- Transitivity and Past Tense Formation

English: The Past tense formation in English does not inherently depend on whether the verb is transitive or intransitive. The addition of "-ed" or "id" applies. Irregular verbs may vary.

Avabic: Arabic verbs can change from intransitive to transitive through specific inflections adding Complexity to their Past tase forms..

This. Plexibility is not typical in English.

5- structural Difference

English: Rett Relies on word order and auxiliaries to indicate tense and transitivity

• Arabic: uses morphological changes, such as different endings, to denote tense and transitivity.

6- Translation and Aspectual Considerations

•Translation Implications: The translation of Verbs between English and Arabic must Consider their transitivity and Past tense forms.

**. Conclusion**

- The Primary differences lie in the morphologica handing of transitivity, Arabic employs inflections to alter transitivity, whereas English relies on Structural elements understanding these differences is crucial for accurate translation and Language Learning, This analysis is supported by the insights from the rovided our Paper, which highlight the stractual and Arabic verbs in their past tense forms.with their compenison with English forms.

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