

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56192

Title: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PAST TENSE VERB MORPHOLOGY IN ARABIC AND VIETNAMESE

Recommendation:

Accept as it is
Accept after minor revision
 Accept after major revision
 Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality				
Techn. Quality				
Clarity				
Significance				

Reviewer Name: Dr. Ishrat Fatima

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The paper undertakes a comparative linguistic analysis of past tense verb morphology in Arabic and Vietnamese, representing two typologically distinct language systems: Arabic as an inflectional (Semitic) language and Vietnamese as an isolating (Austroasiatic) language. The central aim is to demonstrate how subject information person, number, and gender is encoded morphologically in Arabic but expressed lexically and syntactically in Vietnamese. By examining twelve grammatical persons through the model verb “to write,” the study attempts to build a systematic framework that helps learners cognitively transition between morpho-grammatical and lexico-syntactic systems. The topic is academically relevant within comparative linguistics, contrastive grammar, and second language acquisition studies. The focus on past tense morphology provides a clear structural parameter for comparison. The paper is grounded in typological linguistics, particularly the distinction between inflectional and isolating language structures. It correctly identifies Arabic as a language that encodes grammatical categories through bound morphemes (suffixes attached to roots), while Vietnamese relies on independent lexical units such as pronouns and tense markers (e.g., “đã”).

The discussion of the Arabic root-and-pattern system is conceptually accurate, though it remains somewhat introductory. While the paper mentions the root K-T-B (كتب), it does not deeply engage with morphological theory (e.g., nonconcatenative morphology, templatic patterns, or morpho-phonemic alternations). A stronger theoretical anchoring in morphological typology (e.g., fusional vs. analytic systems) would have strengthened the analytical depth.

However, the framing around “morphological economy” versus “lexical transparency” is a compelling interpretative lens that runs consistently throughout the discussion. The study employs a descriptive and direct comparative method using the verb “to write” as a model. The choice of a regular trilateral root is appropriate because it represents the canonical Arabic morphological structure and avoids irregular complexities that might distort comparison.

The two analytical axes

- Morphological Axis (Arabic suffixes)
- Pragmatic Axis (Vietnamese address system)

provide a clear structural organization. The tabular presentation of each grammatical person enhances clarity and pedagogical accessibility.

However, the methodology remains primarily descriptive rather than analytical. There is no corpus-based evidence, frequency analysis, learner data, or empirical testing. The research would benefit from:

- Examples beyond a single verb
- Discussion of contextual variation

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- Empirical data from language learners

As it stands, the methodology supports theoretical contrast but does not provide empirical validation.

The introduction effectively outlines the typological differences between the two languages, emphasizing the Arabic root-and-pattern system and the invariant nature of Vietnamese verbs. The focus on the past tense (Al-Fi'l Al-Maadi) provides a clear grammatical framework for comparison. The paper establishes a strong foundational contrast: Arabic encodes grammatical categories directly into the verb through suffixes, whereas Vietnamese depends on pronouns and temporal markers such as “đã.” This framing is conceptually sound and provides a logical pathway for the subsequent analysis. Methodologically, the study adopts a descriptive and direct comparative approach. The selection of the triliteral root K-T-B (كتب) is appropriate because it represents a regular and widely recognized pattern in Arabic morphology. The organization of the analysis into twelve grammatical persons ensures systematic coverage. Each subsection clearly presents Arabic morphological structure alongside its Vietnamese lexical equivalent, often in tabular form. This structure enhances clarity and makes the discussion accessible, particularly for pedagogical purposes. However, the methodology remains descriptive rather than empirical; the study does not incorporate corpus data, learner performance analysis, or broader textual evidence beyond the single verb example. The core strength of the paper lies in its detailed breakdown of the twelve grammatical persons. The discussion of first and second persons demonstrates how Arabic suffixes such as -tu, -ta, -ti, and -na encode person, number, and sometimes gender simultaneously. In contrast, Vietnamese separates these grammatical meanings into distinct lexical components. The comparison of inclusive and exclusive forms in Vietnamese (“chúng ta” versus “chúng tôi”) is particularly insightful, as it shows that while Arabic emphasizes morphological compression, Vietnamese offers greater socio-pragmatic nuance at the lexical level. The treatment of gender marking in Arabic especially in second and third person forms successfully highlights a key typological distinction, since Vietnamese does not grammatically encode gender in verbs.

The analysis of the dual form is another strong aspect of the study. Arabic's morphological dual (e.g., -tuma, -aa/-ata) represents a grammatical category absent in Vietnamese, which instead relies on numerical expressions such as “hai.” This comparison effectively demonstrates how Arabic expresses quantity through inflectional morphology, whereas Vietnamese uses lexical quantification. Similarly, the third person forms illustrate how Arabic integrates gender and number distinctions directly into the verb, while Vietnamese maintains verbal invariability and depends on pronouns or contextual clarification. In its conclusion, the paper argues that Arabic employs an integrative morphological strategy, transforming the verb into a dense carrier of grammatical information, whereas Vietnamese adopts a disintegrative or analytic strategy, distributing meaning across separate lexical elements. This interpretative perspective is thoughtful and pedagogically valuable. The study successfully shows that learning Arabic requires sensitivity to morphological precision, while learning Vietnamese requires attention to contextual and social nuances embedded in pronoun choice.

Despite its strengths, the paper has some limitations. The theoretical framework is somewhat limited, as it does not engage deeply with broader linguistic theories of morphology, typology, or grammaticalization. The reliance on a single verb restricts the scope of the analysis, and the absence of empirical learner data reduces the strength of pedagogical claims. Additionally, the reference list is relatively brief and could benefit from the inclusion of contemporary linguistic scholarship, particularly in Vietnamese linguistics and cross-linguistic typology.

Overall, the paper is coherent, logically structured, and academically meaningful. It provides a clear and systematic comparative overview of past tense verb morphology in Arabic and Vietnamese. While primarily descriptive, it offers valuable insights for language learners and educators. With expanded theoretical grounding and empirical support, the study could make a stronger contribution to the field of comparative linguistics and second language acquisition research.