



## الاستخدامات الخاصة غير المضارعة للزمن المضارع البسيط في اللغتين العربية والانجليزية (دراسة مقارنة)

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### ملخص البحث:

تتناول هذه الدراسة بشكل أساس الاستعمالات الخاصة غير الحاضرة للزمن المضارع ووظائفه في اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية والتي لها أهمية حيوية في كلتا اللغتين. تحاول هذه الدراسة الإجابة عن التساؤلات البحثية التالية: ١- ما دلائل الاستخدامات غير المضارعة للزمن المضارع في اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية؟ ٢- ما دلائل الزمن المضارع في اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية؟ ٣- ما أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين الاستخدامات الإنجليزية والعربية للاستخدامات غير الحالية؟.

ويهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة استخدامات المضارع البسيط التي تشير إلى أزمنة مختلفة، كما تحاول توضيح أوجه التشابه والاختلاف في اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية. ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف تم افتراض ما يأتي: (١) تشير استخدامات المضارع إلى الحاضر والمستقبل والماضي باللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية. (٢) الاستخدامات الحالية لها وظائف مختلفة مثل: الاعتياد والاستمرارية في اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية. (٣) هناك بعض أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية في استخدام الاستخدامات غير الحالية.

بيانات هذا البحث هي نصوص الإنجليزية والعربية التي تحتوي على استخدامات غير مضارعة ودلائلها. فضلا عن ذلك، تقوم هذه الدراسة بإجراء مقارنة بين اللغتين لاستكشاف أوجه التشابه والاختلاف في الاستخدامات غير المضارعة للزمن المضارع.

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# Special Non Present Uses of the Present Tense in English and Arabic (Contrastive Study)

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**Abstract:**

This paper deals mainly with the special non present uses of the present tense and its functions in English and Arabic that is of vital importance in both languages. This study tries to answer the following research questions: 1-What are the references of present uses in English and Arabic? 2- What are the functions of present uses in English and Arabic? 3- What are the similarities and differences between English and Arabic uses of non present uses?. This study aims at investigating the present simple uses that refer to different times as well as it tries to illustrate the similarities and differences in English and Arabic. To achieve the aims of this study, it is hypothesized that:(1) Present uses refer to present, future and past in English and Arabic. (2) Present uses have various functions such as: habituality and continuity in English and Arabic. (3) There are certain similarities and difference between English and Arabic in using non present uses.

The data of this research are English and Arabic contexts that have present uses and their functions. Besides, this study makes a comparison between the two languages to explore the similarities and differences in non-present uses of the present tense.

## 1- Introduction

The present tense is a verb that describes an activity or situation that occurs in the present, is true at the moment of speaking, and is habitual, characteristic, or always or necessarily true. It can also be used to denote actions that will occur in the past and future.

In both languages (English and Arabic), the origin of the present tense indicates the occurrence of an event or a remedy in the present or future time. It indicates the possibility of the occurrence of the event in the near or distant future that refers to the shortening of time and the predicting another time. If the present has no adverbs of time, it often refers to both the present and the future. As it is obvious, the present simple is used to refer and express: a- A repeated action (a habit). b- An unchangeable truth. c- A long-lasting truth.

Present tense has a great position in English and Arabic since the present tense can refer not only to present event but also to future and past. Thus, the main purpose of this research is to show these uses and functions in both languages.

## 2. Special Non Present Uses of the Present Tense in English Language

Present tense is defined as unmarked category that refers to a present state. It includes forms as well as the functions which present tense is used for. One may argue that 'time' is best understood as a (infinite) line. Referential interpretations of "past," "present," and "future" are feasible. Thus, the "present" can be defined as something that existing right now; additionally, the present can span both the past and the future<sup>1</sup>.

*1-Paris stands on the River Seine<sup>2</sup>.*

The present tense can be described as the current situation, even though it has also existed for a considerable amount of time in the past and might continue for an indefinite amount of time in the future.. Semantically, The term 'present' is the most general and unmarked category , it is common and it can be applied to present, past, and future, it is different from 'past' which is a more limited and specified statement:

1 Leech, G.N. Meaning and the English Verb (Taylor & Francis, 2013), 5.

2 Quirk, R. et al., Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language (united kingdom: Longman Group UK Limited, 1985), 175.

2-*Albatrosses are large birds.* [ true for past, present, and future]

3-*Albatrosses were large birds.* [true for past only]

Present tense verbs is used to express repeated, customary, and habitual actions. They also express general truths:

4-*Water runs downhill*<sup>3</sup>.

5-*Nurses look after patients in hospital*<sup>4</sup>.

### 2.1. Simple Present Referring to the Past

Verb forms relate to time indirectly. Verbs that indicate the receptive (passive) end of the communication process, such as comprehend, hear, and learn, are also included in the vocabulary of communication verbs:

6-*I think that you have traveled to Paris.*

In the holly books, the present verb can also be used to refer to the past in another way:

7-*The Book of Genesis speaks of the terrible fate of Sodom and Gomorrah*<sup>5</sup>.

In spite of the numerous centuries ahead the writing of the Book of Genesis, It still alludes to the current era. The idea that the past might still exist in the present also demonstrates the present tense's optional usage when referring to authors, artists, composers, etc<sup>6</sup>..:

8-*In The Brothers Karamazov, Dostoevsky draws/drew his characters from sources deep in the Russian soil.*

Besides, the present helps the author to talk to us through his works generally, without respect to any special work:

9-*Brahms is/was the last great representative of German classicism.*

It is worth to note that the writer should report the biographical details of his life through the past tense. So, the interesting contrast between the present and the past can be shown as follows:

10- a: *Murasaki writes/ wrote of life in 11th century Japan.*

10- b: *Murasaki wrote in 11th century Japan*<sup>7</sup>.

3 Praninskas, Jean. Rapid Review of English Grammar (united states, 1975), 19.

4 Murphy, Raymond. English Grammar in Use (Cambridge: University Cambridge Press, 1994), 4.

5 Quirk et al., Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language, 181.

6 Leech, Meaning and the English Verb, 6.

7 Leech, 6.

Newspaper headlines usually use the present tense to show new events:

11- *Trade unions back merger; 'No sell-out' says P.M.; Economic think-tank seeks assurances.*

There are two other minor applications of the historic present: (i) in captions for photographs. , the present verb can be replaced by the–ing participle:

12- *The Queen arrives/ arriving for the State Opening of Parliament.*

And (ii) in the historical summaries or the tables of dates:

13- *1876-Brahms completes his first symphony.*

The benefit behind the use of the present perfect is to link completed and finished events with the present:

14- *I can't go on holiday because I have broken my leg<sup>8</sup>.*

15- *It's the first time I've ever had to write such a long assignment<sup>9</sup>.*

## 2.2. Functions of Non Present Uses Referring to the Past.

The past is referred to in the present tense, especially in fictional narratives, its functions are summarized as follows:

### 2.2.1. Past Historic Events

In fictional narratives, the historic present of the past connects with the simple present deeply. The historic present is different from the fictional historic present only in that the former narrates the real events, whereas the latter narrates the unreal ones:

16- *The crowd swarms around the gateway<sup>10</sup>.*

Besides, it refers to the historical events summaries:

17- *1945: the war in Europe comes to an end.*

Moreover, this past represents the so-called historic present that is considered as a property of the popular narrative style. The past is described by the historic present as if it's happening right now, it demonstrates the striking immediacy of an eyewitness report., as well as, the present tense is used differently in reference to the past as it is obvious with communication verbs<sup>11</sup>:

8 Michael Swan, Practical English Usage (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 438.

9 Diana Hopkins and Pauline Cullen, Grammar for IELTS (Oxford: Cambridge Books: Kamae Design, 2007), 21.

10 Quirk et al., Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language, 183.

11 Leech, Meaning and the English Verb, 183.

18- *They say that he's going to be here.*

### 2.2.2. Story Telling Past

With the exception of employing the present tense in stage directions, the past tense convention for storytelling is not stylistically indicated in contrast to fictional narratives:

19- *Mallinson enters, the girls immediately pretend to be working hard*<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the present represents the idea that the play events are being achieved before the script is read. It is also possible to discuss the past in the present tense. The best way to understand the use of what is sometimes referred to as the "historic present" is as a storyteller's license, in which historical events are imagined or depicted as though they are currently occurring. The clearest example is when the present tense appears to be out of sync with an expression that denotes a past tense<sup>13</sup>.

### 2.2.3. Past Summaries of Narratives

A same convention is included in past summaries of narratives. The purpose of using the present simple tense in narratives is to show plot summaries (real stories, books, films etc.)<sup>14</sup>:

20- *So I walk into this shop, and I see this man with a gun in his hand. And like... everybody's looking at him. Then he says...*

21- *At the end of the story, Luke becomes a Jedi and defeats Darth Vader.*

In the above example, the present simple refers to basic and primary events and the present continuous represents the background and secondary events.

### 2.2.4. Jokes

22"- *Doctor Watson and Sherlock Holmes go camping. As they lie in their sleeping bags in the morning, Holmes says, 'Watson, gaze up at the sky and tell me what you deduce.' Thus, Watson predicts that the day will be clear because the sky is salmon pink. It must be around five a.m., as the moon is just setting. Since there are no clouds, it is unlikely to rain. Watson, you moron!' yells Holmes. Our tent has been stolen by someone*<sup>15</sup>."

12 Leech, 183.

13 Leech, 15.

14 Leech, 18.

15 Quirk et al., Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language, 181.

### 2.3. Simple Present Referring to the Future

Future situations or occurrences may be referred to as the "simple present" in this context. This is clearly shown by the use of adverbials to focus on the definitely occurrence of events in advance as if it occurs in the present:

23- *I retire from work next month*<sup>16</sup>

Generally, the simple present is used to allude to the future, particularly in temporal and conditional sentences:

24- *If you pay him, he'll do it.*

25- *I'll let you know as soon as I hear from her*<sup>17</sup>.

In conditional clauses, the simple present refers to a state in future:

26- *If you like it, I'll give it to you*<sup>18</sup>.

The future may be alluded to when the simple present is employed in instructions with a second person subject:

27- *You turn on the right past the bank.*

When using the simple present in instructions with a second-person subject, there may be hints to the future:

28- *Wherever she goes, I'll go.*

29- *He tries to come early before the match will start.*

Generally, the simple present differs from the modal in its reference to a proposed future actual situation, so, the simple present can be used instead of the modal but with a distinct implication:

30- *If you don't arrive before six, I can't meet you. ['in the event of your arrival aftersix']*<sup>19</sup>

Since the relative clauses' antecedents and those of the adverbial clauses have comparable relationships, the present in these sentences may be interpreted as referring to the future.:

31- *I'll speak to her the first opportunity I have.*

Appositive that-clauses, therefore, alter the appropriate noun phrase head:

32- *He'll travel next week on the assumption that it doesn't rain.*

16 Leech, Meaning and the English Verb, 14.

17 Leech, 14.

18 Swan, Practical English Usage, 5.

19 Swan, 5.

33- *I see Peter tomorrow*<sup>20</sup>.

The present simple may refer to timetables, programmes etc.:

34- *The train leaves Plymouth at 11.30 and arrives in London at 14.45*<sup>21</sup>.

### 3-Special Non present Uses of the Present Tense in Arabic Language

In Arabic, verb conjugation is complex at first, and yet it is highly simplified by this main rule: The conjugated verb includes the subject, who is the agent of the verb's action. Because of this, subject pronouns in verb phrases are frequently removed. Given that the Arabic verb contains all of the subject's information, they are neither significant nor superfluous<sup>22</sup>.

#### 3.1. The Uses of the Present Verb

The process of conjugating a verb in Arabic includes:

- (1 Identifying the tense that is being conjugated for.
- (2 Determining who the subject is.
- (3 Adding the proper suffix/prefix combination to the base verb.

In Arabic, absolute and open time can refer to past, present and future:

35- "*And surely, it is We who give life and make to die. We are the Inheritor.*" *وإنا لنحن نحي* *وإنما لنحن نحي* *وإنما لنحن نحي*, the verbs (give and make) are present in pronunciation but in meaning they refer to past, present and future.

36- "*The sun rises and sets*", *الشمس تشرق وتغرب* the verbs "shines, and sets" are present in their pronunciation, but they refer to the tenses of past, present and future.

Here, there are two notes:

Note 1: There is a rule that says: when two times associate together, they may refer to the near and distant act at the same time, it is important to consider the near:

37- *Zaid studies* *زيد يدرس*, the verb "studies" likely indicates the case and the future; because of the absence of the presumption of differentiation between them, the first must be the case.

Note 2: And many of the grammarians illustrate, if there is not any presumption that specifies a special time, the present must be the time of the case and

20 Swan, 5.

21 Murphy, English Grammar in Use, 38.

22 Qurfa, Z. The Temporal Significance of the Past and Present Tense in the Qur'anic Text (Muhammad Al-Bashir Al-Ibrahimi University Press, 2017), 35.



state; when it disengages from the clues, it refers to the past time and when it disavows the clues, it refers to the future time; and it is the first to specialize the present time with the presenter when it deviates from the clues that determine its time.

## 3.2. Functions of the Present Time

### 3.2.1. Significance of Status

38- (*he eats*) and (*he walks*). (هو ياكل), (هو يمشي)

The present verb indicates the present state if it is combined with one of the following:

a- When the present verb is followed by what refers especially to the moment of speaking to ensure the present and current state such a (الان)(now):

39- (*he is eating now*) and (*he is walking now*). (هو يمشي الان), (هو ياكل الان)

b- When present verb is preceded by (لام الابتداء) that is similar to (to+ infinitive) in English, - on the opinion of the Kufians, it refers to the matter of disagreement:

40- (*Nay! Verily, man does transgress all bounds*) (كلا ان الانسان ليطغى)

(العلق:6)

c- When the present verb is negated by (ما , ليس ):

41- (*Khalid doesn't write*) (ما خالد يكتب) and (*Ali doesn't read*) (ليس علي يقرأ)

### 3.2.2. The Present Verb Indicates Continuation

The present may not indicate a certain time if it indicates continuation, when it refers to a common matter or wisdom or scientific rule<sup>23</sup>:

42- *fire melt iron*. النار تذيب الحديد

43- *Indeed, We subjected the mountains [to praise] with him, exalting [Allah] in the [late] afternoon and [after] sunrise.*

انا سخرنا الجبال\* يسبحن بالعشي والاشراق .

44- *God grabs and simplifies* الله يقبض و يبسط

The significance of the truth in terms of time-bound:

45- *And from the stones when the rivers burst out of them and that when they break the water out of it.* وان من الحجارة لما يتفجر منها الأنهار وان منها لما يشقق فيخرج منه الماء

(سورة البقرة: الآية ٧٤)

### 3.3. Non Present Reference to Future

a- When the present verb is followed by what refers to the future:

46- *God will judge among his slaves on the Day of Resurrection.*

يقضي الله بين عباده في يوم القيامة

There are the clues that refer to the future<sup>24</sup>:

a- , (قد) (may) . It indicates the possibility of the event occurrence in the near or distant future, it is used to reduce the time and predicted another time:

47- *The child may get sick.*

b- (السين) , (will) . It indicates the occurrence of the act in the near future: 48- *No! They are going to know.* (كلا سيعلمون) (Surah An-Naba:5)<sup>25</sup>

Will: indicate the occurrence of the act in the distant future:

49- *I will be back in the coming summer vacation.*

(سأعود في عطلة الصيف المقبلة)

c- (ان) It is a letter of the reception:

50- *Didn't he know that God sees.* (Al-Samaraee: 27)

ألم يعلم بأن الله يرى (العلق:14)

d- (لن) , will not: It is used to negate, receive and erect:

51- *The intelligent person will not (never) fail*<sup>26</sup>. لن يخيب مجتهد

e- (كي) , (to + base) . It is used for reception and justification:

52- *Study to succeed.* ادرس كي تنجح

f- (اذن) , So: li is the letter of an answer, a reward and a reception:

53- *He said: I will visit you, I said: So I honor you.*

هو قال: سأزورك, قلت: إذن أكرمك

g- (غدا) , Tomorrow:

54- *Ahmed will visit his aunt tomorrow.* يزور احمد خالته غدا

55- *And the day the sky cracked with a cloud.* <sup>27</sup>

ويوم تشقق السماء بالغمام (الفرقان: 25)

h- (في الأسبوع القادم, في العطلة القادمة, قريبا) , Next week, next holiday:

24 Qurfa, 40.

25 Qurfa, 42.

26 Abd-Al-Hameed, M. Sunni Masterpiece Explaining the Introduction of Alajrumia (Beirut, 1970), 68.

27 Fadhil Al-Samaraee, S. Meanings of Grammar (Dar Ehia Al- Tourath Al-Arabi, 2007), 20.

56- *We go back home next week.* نعود إلى الوطن في الأسبوع القادم

57- *I travel to Tunisia in the next holiday.* أسافر إلى تونس في العطلة القادمة

58- *The gift comes soon.* تصلك الهدية قريبا

### 3.4. Functions of Non Present Reference to Future

#### 3.4.1. Prayer (الدعاء)

59- *May Allah have mercy on the martyrs.* يرحم الله الشهداء

#### 3.4.2. Display:

It is the request to do something gently and kindly:

60- *If you facilitate questions, Professor.* لو تسهل الأسئلة, يا أستاذ

**3.4.3. When the present verb is preceded by an instrument of a firm or non-assertive condition:**

61- *If you study, you succeed.* ان تدرس تنجح

#### 3.4.4. (التوكيد), emphasis:

62- *To stay with you.* لأبقيين معك

#### 3.4.5. When the present verb is preceded by the form of hope:

(لعل, عسى) (perhaps, may):

63- *Perhaps the traveler returns.* لعل المسافر يعود

#### 3.4.6. (لام) : It refers to command, erect and receive:

64- *To act with your father's advice.* لتعمل بنصيحة أبيك

#### 3.4.7. (لا الناهية), (never), it is used to forbid:

65- *And do not throw your hands into destruction*<sup>28</sup>.

و لا تلقوا بأيديكم إلى التهلكة. (البقرة: 195)

### 3.5. Non Present Reference to the Past

The present verb indicates the past time other than the original, but a pre-  
sumption or evident are required to refer to the past<sup>29</sup>:

#### 3.5.1. When the present verb is preceded by another verb in the past form:

66- *The child returned smiling* عاد الطفل يتسّم

#### 3.5.2. (لم) (not)

It is a letter of negation and conversion, which fluctuates and changes the  
present tense to the past tense:

28 Al-Samaraee, 27.

29 Qurfa, The Temporal Significance of the Past and Present Tense in the Qur'anic Text, 42.

67- *It doesn't rain.* لم ينزل المطر

If (لم) is preceded by a condition, it will refer to the future:

68- *If you don't read well, you fail in the exam.* (zero condition)

إن لم تجتهد ترسب في الامتحان

### 3.5.3. (لما): It is a letter of negation and conversion

The negation continues from the past to the time of speaking and the action can be happened sooner or later:

69- *The door hasn't been opened.* لما يفتح الباب

### 3.5.4. When the present verb is preceded by (كان)

In this case, the verb indicates that it was happening for some time in the past:

70- *I was working with my father last February.*

كنت اشتغل مع أبي في شهر فبراير الماضي

### 3.5.5. The obligation of the union of two verbs that differ in time

71- *And a party [of messengers] you denied and another party you kill<sup>30</sup>.*

قال تعالى (ففرقاً كذبتهم و فريقاً تقتلون) (البقرة: 87)

Qurfa<sup>31</sup> shows that verbs gain their temporal significance

from the context in which they are contained, not just from their morphological structure, and there is often a rhetorical meaning behind their conjugation into past and future.

## 4. Contrastive Analysis

According to James (1980), for language instructors and students, nothing appeared to have more potential value than a description that contrasts and compares the native language and the target language.. From the presented information that deals with non present uses of the present tense in English and Arabic languages, the following comparative findings can be resulted:

1. English and Arabic languages have the same functions of the present time:

a- Significance of Status

b- Significance of habituality

c- Significance of continuation

30 Al- Mutalibi, Malik. Time Forms in Arabic Language (Baghdad: Dar of the General Cultural Affairs, 1986), 86.

31 Qurfa, The Temporal Significance of the Past and Present Tense in the Qur'anic Text, 43.

2. In English, semantically, 'Present' is the broadest unlabeled category, it is common and it can be applied to present, past, and future.
3. In Arabic, absolute and open time can refer to past, present and future.
4. In English, the past can be described by the historic present as if it is occurring now.
5. In Arabic, the present refers to past:
  - a- when the present verb is preceded by another verb in the past form.
  - b- When the present verb is preceded by letters of negation and conversion: ((لما, لم) و . (كان)
- 6- In English, the indication of present to future is clearly shown by the use of adverbials to focus on the definitely occurrence of events in advance as if it occurs in the present as well as the present refers to future in conditional and temporal clauses.
7. In Arabic, The present tense indicates the occurrence of an event in the future only if it is preceded by certain tools, including: ( السين, ان, لن, حتى , لام التعليل, كي ) , ( لام الامر , لام القسم , لام الناهية , لكي ,

English and Arabic languages are similar in non present uses of the present tense, but each language has its own details in this topic.

## 5. Conclusions

Overall, the aim of this research, which was investigating other uses of the present simple that refer to different times, has been achieved. The considerable description of the present time uses in English and Arabic that presented in this research reveals that there is a great similarity between English and Arabic in using the present tense and shows how the present time has the same meanings in both languages.

According to the present study, the two languages have the same properties in their uses of the non present uses of the present time:

- 1- In both languages (Arabic and English), context is the decisive criteria by which one can determine the reference of time not the structure. That is, the present time may refer to both future and past if it is preceded or followed by specific indicator. While the historic present portrays the past as though it is currently occurring, the simple present only refers to the past. In this case, the event is unquestionably predicated on the future and is as certain as it will be

accomplished and completed.. As for functions, Arabic language uses more strategies to indicate present time for non-present meaning. For instance, the future reference is used. Thus, the first research question "What are the references of present uses in both languages?" is answered. Besides, the first hypothesis "Present uses refer to present, future and past" is verified.

- 2- Present time can express the habitual events. Besides, it refers to the state and continuity of the verb. On the other hand, the present simple typically denotes the habitual present connected to a dynamic verb sense. Furthermore, the verb denotes a single action that began and ended almost at the spoken moment in the immediate present tense. Thus, the second research question "What are the functions of the present time?" is answered and the second hypothesis "Present uses have various functions such as: habituality and continuity" is verified.
- 3- The obtained results show that Arabic and English are comparable in that both languages allow the present to be used without reference to a particular period and have no real restrictions on the state's expansion into the past or future. The phrase "state present" alludes to broad, ageless claims. A full series of recurring events is referred to as the "habitual present.". Thus, the third research question, "What are the similarities and differences between English and Arabic uses of non present uses?" is answered and the third hypothesis "There are certain similarities and difference between English and Arabic uses of non present uses." is verified.

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