

Tense and Aspect in Translation from Arabic into English: *Azazeel* by Youssef Ziedan as a Case Study

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Abstract

The translation of tense and aspect between English and Arabic can be a challenge for translators because of the major differences in this respect between the two languages. In addition, there is lack in the translation literature of studies of authentic translations of tense and aspect from Arabic into English. The present study aims to fill this gap by examining the translation of tense and aspect from Arabic into English in a published translation made by a professional English translator. It also aims to clarify the evident confusion in understanding the categories of tense and aspect, particularly in languages that are as divergent as Arabic and English. In order to achieve these objectives, the researcher analyzed, compared, and explained examples drawn from selected chapters from Jonathan Wright's (2009) English translation of Youssef Ziedan's (2008) novel *Azazeel*. The researcher followed a descriptive analytical approach and, with the use of the quantitative approach, individually analyzed the English translations of the Arabic aspectual forms from Scrolls (chapters) One, Fourteen, and Twenty-four. The results of the study revealed that Wright's (2009) English equivalents of the Arabic aspectual forms in *Azazeel* were mostly accurate. The findings also showed through Wright's (2009) translation that there is not a standard approach to translate Arabic aspectual forms.

Keywords: aspect, imperfect, Modern Standard Arabic, perfect, tense, time

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Introduction

One aspect of difficulty in the translation process is that a translator has to simultaneously work at a variety of levels, including the syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels, trying to find equivalent words, phrases, and meanings that are acceptable in the norms prevalent in the target language.

In order to communicate the message of the source text, the translator changes the structures and patterns of the source language and resorts to different target language structures. This is especially true when the languages are highly discrepant, as is the case with Arabic and English. Many linguists (e.g., Comrie, 1985) agree that the most challenging part of learning a new language is learning how to handle its verbal system because verbs in any language can contain several meanings. For instance, in English, verbs can express, among other meanings, person, tense, number, mood, and voice.

This study explores how the meanings expressed by the Arabic aspectual forms are rendered into English, with special reference to Jonathan Wright's (2009) English translation of Youssef Ziedan's novel *Azazeel* (2008).

Significance of the Study

Most of the studies that have discussed the translation of tense and aspect in the English-Arabic language pair have been concerned with translation from English into Arabic. However, there is a clear lack of literature that focuses on the opposite direction—i.e., from Arabic into English. Similarly, there are few studies that examine the work of professional translators published in English. The current study attempts to fill this gap in the literature by analyzing the translation of tense and aspect from Arabic into English in an authentic translation made by a professional English translator.

Azazeel was chosen as the source language text not simply because it is an important Arabic novel that won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction in 2009, but also because, as a fictional narrative text, it makes use of the Arabic tense-aspect system to express a variety of meanings. *Azazeel* is infused with various Arabic aspectual forms. The novel's powerful influence lies in its employment of different tenses through the narrator's flashbacks and the rich portrayal of his thoughts.

Research Questions

This paper aims to answer the following questions:

1. What difficulties may translators face when translating Arabic perfect and imperfect aspectual verb forms into English?
2. What techniques did Wright use in translating Arabic perfect and imperfect aspectual verb forms into English?
3. To what extent were Wright's accurate in rendering the Arabic perfect and imperfect aspectual forms into English?

Methodology

To answer the above questions, the study adopts a comparative and explanatory approach to the study of the translation of tense and aspect from Arabic into English. Examples

representing different meanings are compared and explained in terms of the rules of tense-aspect systems in both languages. The researcher also uses the quantitative approach to analyze the English translations of the Arabic aspectual forms from Scrolls (chapters) One, Fourteen, and Twenty-four.

Limitations of Study

Some limitations of the study should be noted. The current study has been conducted mainly on Arabic and English tense-aspect systems as the scope of the investigation involved Youssef Ziedan's novel *Azazeel* (2008) and its English translation. Thus, the findings of this study should be considered in regard to Arabic and English. Results might vary when applied to other languages. In addition, the current research investigates an authentic English translation of a professional translator; therefore, the results might show differences when applied to students' translations of tense-aspect systems from Arabic into English, which falls outside the scope of this study.

Theoretical Framework

Tense

According to Seely (2006), tense in English is a verbal inflection, a different meaning that the reader achieves by altering the form of the verb. Jespersen (1933/2007) defined tense as "the linguistic expression of time-relations, so far as these are indicated in verb forms" (p. 180). Hockett (1958) agrees that tenses present different locations of an event in time. Similarly, Thornbury (2006) subscribes to Jespersen's and Hockett's views of tense as a verbal inflection. In the current research, tense follows the definition of traditional grammar in that there are 12 tenses in English, and these tenses are the formal indication of the notional temporal fields: past, present, and future. However, many Arabic grammarians (e.g., Haywood & Nahmad, 1965; Rev & Thatcher 1922; Tritton, 1943) have categorized Arabic as an aspect language. Thus, this present research deals with Arabic not as a tense language but as an aspect language that has only two aspectual forms: the perfect (more or less equivalent to the past) and the imperfect (the more or less equivalent of the present).

Aspect

Aspect in English refers to the viewpoints from which an action or situation is seen: being in progress, being complete, having a duration, having a beginning, having an ending, or being repeated. According to Smith (1997), "aspect traditionally refers to the presentation of events through grammaticized viewpoints such as the perfective and the imperfective" (p. 1). Thus, aspect in this current research subscribes to the view of the authors of the largest English grammar books (e.g., Binnick, 1991; Hatav, 1997; Quirk et al., 1985), which explains that aspect has to do with the completion or non-completion of the verb and is represented by the distinction between the progressive and non-progressive and the perfect and non-perfect verb forms (Kabakčiev, 2000).

Time

According to Declerck et al. (2006) time is a universal concept and an extra-linguistic category. In traditional English grammar, time is a notion that is related to our perception of reality. This current research follows English grammarians' view of time, which distinguishes three times in English: past, present, and future. As for Arabic, the present research deals with

time in Arabic as a temporal category that can be expressed in Arabic through two aspectual forms— i.e., perfect and imperfect, which are used to express past, present, and future times.

Literature Review

Most of the studies that investigated the translation of English tense and aspect into Arabic have been largely limited to—and revolved around—discussing students' difficulties in translating tense-aspect systems from English into Arabic and basing the findings on questionnaires. However, this study will only include previous studies that discussed the translation of English tense and aspect from a professional translator's point of view.

Obeidat (2014) criticizes the linguistic approach to translating the English past perfect aspect into Arabic adopted by translator Sameer Nassar (1988). Obeidat (2014) specifically examines the Arabic translation of the English novel *The Inheritors* by William Golding (1987). His study investigated five main strategies that the translator employed in rendering the past perfect aspect into Arabic, including the following: past perfect aspect into simple past; past perfect aspect into *qad* + simple past; past perfect aspect into simple past + *qad* + simple past (i.e., the Arabic verb *kāna* + *qad* + simple past); past perfect aspect into simple past + *qad* + simple present (i.e., the Arabic verb *kāna* + simple present); and past perfect aspect into quasi-nominalization (i.e., the Arabic verb *kāna* + a noun). The study concluded that the translation strategies that the translator adopted were not successful in rendering the appropriate aspect in Arabic, which is equivalent to the English past perfect aspect.

Gadalla (2006) proposes a model for translating Standard Arabic imperfect verbs into English based on their contextual references. His study provided an analysis of study results by discussing the various translations of Arabic imperfect verbs in the translations of two of Naguib Mahfouz's novels. The first novel was *as-Simmanwa l-Kharif* [*Autumn Quail*], translated by Roger Allen (1985), and the second novel was *Afrah Al-Qubbah* [*Wedding Song*], translated by Olive E. Kenny (1984). Gadalla randomly chose a corpus of 250 sentences from the two novels. Gadalla (2006) compared the translations with the original texts to highlight the different English renderings of the Arabic imperfect verbs, and he concluded by offering a model for translating Standard Arabic imperfect verbs.

Gadalla (2006) presents another study that discussed the translation of the English perfect tenses into Arabic. He compared the two Arabic translations of Pearl S. Buck's novel *The Good Earth*. The first translation was by Baalbaki (1988), and the second was by Iskandar (1999). Gadalla adopted Fayyed's (1994) 14 Arabic tenses for the structures used in his study to render the English tenses. He provided an approach to translating English perfect verbs into Arabic by comparing the two translations, and he concluded by presenting a number of Arabic translation equivalents for English perfect verbs.

Obviously, few studies targeted the problem of tense and aspect from a professional translator's perspective (e.g., Gadalla, 2006; Obeidat, 2014).

Difficulties in Translating Tense and Aspect

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and English have very disparate tense-aspect systems regarding both number and meaning. The traditional English tense-aspect system consists of 12 verb forms, while MSA has only the perfect and the imperfect aspectual forms, which are used to

express past, present, and future times. Although Arabic grammarians distinguish MSA with its aspectual nature, they note that MSA does not have an aspectual verb morphology. As a result, MSA uses two essential words that can be regarded as alternatives to form the Arabic aspect. These are the verb *kāna* and the particle *qad*. Consequently, the differences in tense-aspect systems between MSA and English are expected to show many discrepancies in translation between the two languages. Thus, the variances in translation of the aspectual forms from MSA into English—and vice versa—have always presented a difficulty for translators for many reasons.

The main reason is the divergence between tense-aspect systems in MSA and English. Accordingly, when translating from Arabic into English, the competent and experienced translator should search for certain Arabic keywords that work as clues helping him or her in deciding the appropriate corresponding English tense that successfully expresses the meaning of the Arabic aspectual form in the source text. For example, Arabic uses the imperfect verb form to express many meanings, including the simultaneous present, as in *يقراً زيد الكتاب الآن* (literally: Zaid is reading the book now). Subsequently, since Arabic employs the imperfect to denote the simultaneous present, the proficient translator should search for co-occurring temporal adverbials that can guide him in using the appropriate English tense. In the previous example, the temporal adverbial *الآن* indicates that the action is happening at the moment of speaking. Thus, it is rendered as present continuous in English.

Another important reason that causes a problem in translating tense-aspect systems is the translators' lack of sufficient grammatical and linguistic knowledge in the languages they translate from and into (e.g., MSA and English), which, accordingly, becomes a hitch that complicates the translation work. One example is the lack of awareness of the various implications of different Arabic particles, such as *qad*, *lan*, and *lam*. Thus, many translators mishandle these particles or use them loosely and inaccurately, regardless of the many indications from Arabic grammarians in terms of their specific uses. As noted, the misunderstanding and misemployment of such particles will definitely exert influence on the rendering of the meaning. As a result, understanding the grammar of MSA and English is an essential requirement for proper translation.

Particles in MSA

Particles play an essential role in MSA when combined with the imperfect MSA verb forms affecting their temporal indication in a number of ways. The differences in meaning among particles in Arabic are misleading. For example, *lam* converts the imperfect verb meaning from the present to the past, as indicated by the following Figure 1.

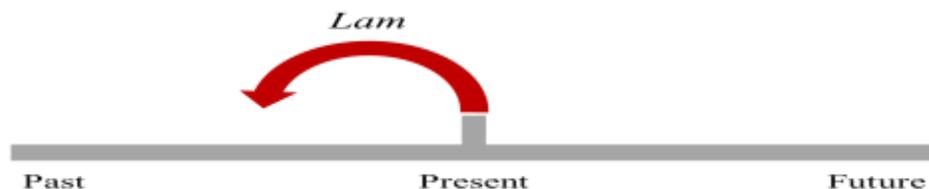


Figure 1. Lam+ imperfect in MSA temporal indication

In contrast, *lan* combines with the imperfect to signify its temporal meaning to the future, as illustrated in the following Figure 2.



Figure 2. Lan+ imperfect in MSA temporal indication

MSA Perfect and Imperfect Aspectual Forms in *Azazeel*

This section compares and analyzes the English tense and aspect translations of the MSA perfect and imperfect aspectual forms in *Azazeel*. Arabic perfect and imperfect aspectual forms in the novel are abundant, but this analysis will be restricted to 27 sentences from *Azazeel* that illustrate the MSA perfect and imperfect aspectual forms.

Basic Arabic Perfect Aspectual Forms Rendered as English Simple Past Tense

- 1 a. "سادت لحظة صمت طويلة، ممزوجة بالذهول.. وبعد إطراقة مقلقة، نظرت أوكتافيا نحوي" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 154)
- b. "A long moment of shocked silence passed. Octavia bowed her head, then looked towards me" (Wright, 2009, p. 97).

1a illustrates consecutive past actions in the Arabic example (passed and looked). One of the many uses of the Arabic perfect tense is to indicate a series of actions that occurred in the past. The English past tense is also used to narrate past events in chronological order. Thus, Wright (2009) chose in 1b the appropriate tenses in English to render the Arabic meaning.

Basic Arabic Perfect Aspectual Forms Rendered as English Present Perfect

- 2 a. "...بتدوين كل ما رأيت في حياتي" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 17)
- b. "Record what I have witnessed in it" (Wright, 2009, p. 6).

Wright (2009) translated the past meaning in the Arabic perfect form as a present perfect tense. In English, one of the functions of the present perfect tense is to express actions that happened in the past at an unspecified time. The example above does not indicate a specific time in the past. Another function of the present perfect in English is to describe an action that has occurred at least once during some time in the past up to the present and that is obvious. Thus, Wright (2009) accurately rendered the meaning by using the present perfect tense.

Basic Arabic Perfect Aspectual Forms Rendered as English Past Perfect

- 3 a. "أكثرنا من سؤالي عن البلاد التي مررت بها والصعاب، وعمّن التقيت بهم من القديسين، أو زرت مقابرهم من الشهداء" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 27)
- b. "They often asked me about the lands I had passed through and the hardships, and about the saints I had met or the martyrs whose tombs I had visited" (Wright, 2009, p. 13).

Wright (2009) rendered the Arabic perfect forms into English as the past perfect tense because the Arabic perfect denotes actions that were completed in the past before other actions or times in the past. English employs the past perfect when an action or situation happened before the events in the narrative described in the simple past. As seen in 3a, the perfect verbs زرت، التقيت، مررت (I had passed, I had met, and I had visited) were completed before the verb أكثروا (they often asked). Thus, Wright (2009) correctly preserved the original source's meaning by expressing these Arabic perfect verbs with the English past perfect verbs: (had passed, had met, and had visited).

Table 1

Frequency of Basic Arabic Perfect Different Translations in Scrolls One, Fourteen, and Twenty-four.

English Translation	Scroll One	Scroll Fourteen	Scroll Twenty-four	Total	%
Simple past	38	84	118	240	81.91
Past perfect	2	2	11	15	5.12
Past progressive	0	0	2	2	0.68
Present perfect	15	3	4	22	7.51
Simple present	2	1	0	3	1.02
Used to + infinitive	1	1	0	2	0.68
Would + infinitive	0	7	0	7	2.39
Negative could + infinitive	0	1	0	1	0.34
Total	58	99	135	292	100

Arabic qad + Perfect Aspectual Form Rendered as Present Perfect

- 4 a. "وقد استبطنت عفوك" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 16).
b. "I have bided my time for your forgiveness" (Wright, 2009, p. 6).

The perfect verb form is preceded by *qad* in 4a and expresses the meaning of an event that started in the past and continued to the moment of utterance. There is no specified time mentioned in the sentence. In English narrative discourse, memories appear in the forms of the historic present or present perfect. Because there is not a specified time in 4a, Wright's choice of rendering the constructions of *qad* + the perfect into English as present perfect is faithful to the meaning since it precisely expresses the writer's intended meaning.

Arabic qad + Perfect Aspectual Form Rendered as Simple Past

- 5 a. "همس وقد اقترب من أذني" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 78).
b. "He moved his head close to my ear ... and whispered" (Wright, 2009, p. 6).

Wright (2009) rendered the construction of *qad* + the Arabic perfect into simple past tense in English. The *qad* + perfect construction in 5a emphasizes the occurrence of an action, one of many meanings that such a particle can convey (Rev & Thatcher, 1922). The simple past in English conveys the meaning that an event started and finished at a specific time in the past. Sometimes, speakers may not actually mention the specific time. However, they do have one specific time in mind. Wright's choice is correct because the simple past tense is the standard

tense used in narratives and because such a construction denotes an action that occurred in the past. Nevertheless, there is not a specific time mentioned in the source text for when such an action took place in the past, so the researcher believes that employing the present perfect tense to render the construction of *qad* + the perfect verb in the previous example is accurate, as well.

Arabic qad + Perfect Aspectual Form Rendered as Past Perfect

- 6 a. "وقد أودع لها مالاً" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 116)
 b. "He gave her this house ... he had deposited some money for her" (Wright, 2009, p. 71).

In 6a, the construction of *qad* + the perfect conveys the meaning that an action was completed before another action or time in the past. Thus, Wright's choice to translate the construction into English as past perfect is faultless since the past perfect in English is used to express that an action occurred before another action in the past. Obviously, in 6a, the action of depositing the money happened before the Sicilian gave Octavia the house.

Table 2

Frequency of Qad + Perfect Different Translations in Scrolls One, Fourteen, and Twenty-four

English Translation	Scroll One	Scroll Fourteen	Scroll Twenty-four	Total	%
Simple past	0	0	1	1	12.5
Past perfect	0	3	0	3	37.5
Present perfect	4	0	0	4	50
Total	4	3	1	8	100

Arabic Kāna+qad + Perfect Aspectual Form Rendered as Simple Past Tense

- 7 a. "كان قد أهداه لي" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 20)
 b. "Which a rich man from Tyre gave me" (Wright, 2009, p. 8).

Wright (2009) rendered the construction of *kāna*+ *qad* + perfect into English using the simple past tense. The meaning that the construction signifies is that the action was completed in the past. 7a indicates that the action happened in the past, but a specified time is not mentioned. Thus, the present perfect can also be employed to render the same meaning since one of the present perfect functions in English is to express an action that happened at an unspecified time in the past.

Arabic Kāna+qad + Perfect Aspectual Form Rendered as Past Perfect Tense

- 8 a. "كانت ظلال المساء قد امتدت، فقامت لتنير السراج" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 154)
 b. "The afternoon shades had lengthened, so she rose to light the lamp" (Wright, 2009, p. 72).

In 8a, the perfect verb امتدت (had lengthened) expresses the meaning that this action was completed before the other action in the sentence. Therefore, Wright's choice to employ the past perfect tense to render the translation of this construction in English is ideal.

Arabic Imperfect Kāna+ qad + Perfect Aspectual Form Rendered as Future Perfect Tense

- 9 a. "فأكون قد تركت شيئاً مني هنا قبل رحيلي" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 20).
b. "I will have left something of myself here before I depart" (Wright, 2009, p. 8).

The form of the verb *kāna* for the first-person *akwn+ qad+ perfect* conveys the meaning that Hypa will leave something of himself before departing. Thus, in Arabic, the verb تركت (have left) will happen in the future before the actual action of departing. Wright (2009) precisely conveyed the meaning of the construction when he translated the Arabic construction as future perfect in English because the future perfect tense in English is employed to express that an action will happen before another action in the future.

Table 3

Frequency of Kāna+ Qad + Perfect in Different Translations in Scrolls One, Fourteen, and Twenty-four

English Translation	Scroll One	Scroll Fourteen	Scroll Twenty-four	Total	%
Simple past	1	0	1	2	50
Past perfect	1	0	1	2	50
Total	2	0	2	4	100

Basic Imperfect Form Rendered as Simple Present

- 10 a. "يدي ترتعشان رهبة وخيفة" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 15).
b. "My hands tremble in fear" (Wright, 2009, p. 12).

In 10a, MSA uses the imperfect tense of the verb to express a fact as in ترتعشان (tremble). English also uses the simple present to refer to facts or truths. Because *trembling* is usually associated with fear, Wright (2009) accurately rendered the meaning of the sentence.

Basic Imperfect Form Rendered as Present Continuous

- 11 a. "لماذا تنظر لي هكذا، يا أبت، ولاتقول شيئاً؟" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 366).
b. "Why are you looking at me like that, father, and saying nothing?" (Wright, 2009, p. 244).

In the 11a, the Arabic imperfect form تنظر (are you looking) expresses an action that is occurring (in progress) at the moment of speaking. Therefore, Wright's choice to render it into English as present continuous is exact because the present continuous in English is employed to denote an action that is happening at the moment of utterance.

Basic Imperfect Form Rendered as Present Perfect Continuous

- 12 a. "وأنا أتحدث إليكم وأعرف أنني أطلت جداً" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 172).

- b. “I have been talking to you and I know that I have gone on too long and tired you” (Wright, 2009, p. 110).

The verb أتحدث (I have been talking) in 12a conveys the meaning that the action of “talking” started in the past and has continued up until the moment of utterance, and that is exactly one of the functions of the present perfect continuous in English. Hence, Wright’s choice is meticulous in terms of preserving the meaning of the source text.

Basic Imperfect Form Rendered as Past Continuous

- 13 a. (Ziedan, 2008, p. 167) "الداخلون إلى القاعة كلهم يتكلمون اليونانية"
 b. “All those coming in for the lecture were speaking Greek” (Wright, 2009, p. 110).

In 13a, the Arabic verb يتكلمون (were speaking) implies that the action was continuous in the past. Accordingly, Wright (2009) employed the past continuous in English because it conveys the exact meaning of the Arabic imperfect verb—i.e., an action that was in progress in the past.

Basic Imperfect Form Rendered as Simple Past

- 14 a. (Ziedan, 2008, p. 171) "وانسى الأوهام التي تملؤني وتسير خطاي"
 b. “Forget the illusions which drove me and took my steps” (Wright, 2009, p. 110).

In 14a, the Arabic imperfect verb forms تملؤني (drove) and تسير (took) convey the meaning that these two actions happened in the past—i.e., before the moment of utterance. Thus, Wright’s choice to render them into English as simple past tense is ideal since they occurred and finished in the past and because the simple past tense is the standard tense used in narratives. Moreover, because a specific time is not mentioned in the source text, the two verbs تملؤني (drove) and تسير (took) can also be rendered using the present perfect tense, as one of the potential meanings of the present perfect tense in English is to express past actions that were completed without specifying the time.

Basic Imperfect Form Rendered as Would + Infinitive

- 15 a. (Ziedan, 2008, p. 265) "ويسعد حين أقرأ له شيئاً جديداً"
 b. “He would be happy when I read him something new” (Wright, 2009, p. 174).

According to Tawamah (1994), there are various cases in which the temporal indication of the present is converted to the past. One of these temporal indications that applies in 15a is when the imperfect Arabic form signifies a narrative action and state or what he calls "الحال الحكائي" (narrative state) (Tawamah, 1994, p. 93). This applies when the imperfect Arabic verb denotes a habitual action and state in the past, as in 15a when the abbot’s state has always been happy when Hypa reads a new poem to him. In English, the standard tense in narratives is the past. In 15b, Wright (2009) rendered the imperfect verb form يسعد as *would be happy* because the Arabic verb indicates a habitual action and state in the past. *Would* is an auxiliary verb that has modal and temporal functions, and one of its uses is to refer to repeated past actions. The habitual past in English is expressed most frequently by employing the semi-auxiliary verb *used to*, the auxiliary *would*, or the simple past tense of a verb. In 15b, Wright successfully conveyed

the meaning of the Arabic imperfect verb *يسعد* by using *would + be*. Likewise, the researcher believes that *يسعد* can also be rendered using *used to* or the simple past since they also indicate a habitual action or state in the past and will effectively convey the meaning.

Table 4***Frequency of the Basic Arabic Imperfect Translations in Scrolls One, Fourteen, and Twenty-four***

English Translation	Scroll One	Scroll Fourteen	Scroll Twenty-Four	Total	%
Simple past	7	26	3	36	22.78
Present progressive	2	2	0	4	2.53
Past progressive	0	3	1	4	2.53
Present perfect	1	0	0	1	0.63
Simple present	50	27	15	92	58.23
Present perfect progressive	1	0	0	1	0.63
Infinitive	1	0	8	9	5.70
<i>Would + infinitive</i>	1	5	2	8	5.06
Simple future	3	0	0	3	1.90
Total	66	63	29	158	100

Construction of lam + Imperfect (Jussive) Form

- 16 a. "لم يعرفوه، ولم يكثر ثوابي" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 163).
 b. "They did not know him, and took little interest in me" (Wright, 2009, p. 104).
- 17 a. "لم أطل استراحتي" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 164).
 b. "I did not rest long" (Wright, 2009, p. 105).

In the translations of the Arabic constructions of *lam + imperfect*, Wright's (2009) endeavor can be regarded as a successful attempt to remain faithful to the source text since he rendered the examples in English as negative past simple. Many Arabic grammarians note that *lam* is *adātqalb* (a particle of conversion), which means that it transforms the temporal indication of the present form to the past. Therefore, it is referred to as such because this construction influences the Arabic imperfect verb form and frequently implies the negation of past acts. More specifically, in 17b, Wright (2009) resorted to modulation—i.e., Wright (2009) turned the verb *أطل* in 17a into an adverb *long* in 17b and translated the noun object *استراحتي* as a verb *rest*. It is this verb that is the object in 17a that Wright (2009) turned into the past tense in English.

Table 5***Frequency of Lam + Imperfect Different Translations in Scrolls One, Fourteen, and Twenty-four***

English Translation	Scroll One	Scroll Fourteen	Scroll Twenty-four	Total	%
Negative simple past	1	5	13	19	82.6087
Negative past perfect	1	0	0	1	4.347826

Negative present perfect	3	0	0	3	13.04348
Total	5	5	13	23	100

Construction of *lan* (Subjunctive) + Imperfect Form

- 18 a. "لن أسخر بعد ذلك من عقيدة أحد أبداً" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 150).
 b. "From now on I'll never make fun of anyone's belief" (Wright, 2009, p. 95).
- 19 a. "لن أكل في اليوم واللييلة إلا بلحة واحدة" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 161).
 b. "Each day I will eat only one date" (Wright, 2009, p. 102).

Understanding the temporal indications of each MSA particle is vital for a proper translation. In 18a and 19a, the constructions لن أسخر (I'll never make fun) and لن أكل (I will eat only) denote negation of future actions. As mentioned previously, in MSA, the particle *lan*, when combined with the imperfect verb form, converts its temporal (present) meaning to the future. Wright (2009) rose to the occasion once again and achieved faithfulness to the exact meaning of the source text when he employed the negative simple future tense in English to translate the constructions لن أسخر and لن أكل. In 18b, he used the auxiliary *will* because two functions, among other functions, of *will* + infinitive in English are to express future promises and voluntary actions or decisions. 18a expresses a future promise, and 19a refers to a voluntary decision. Evidently, Wright (2009) utilized the modulation of negation once again when he employed the positive verb form *I will eat + only*, instead of using *will not*. The researcher believes that using the negative verb form—*I will not*—is also applicable.

Table 6

Frequency of *Lan* + Imperfect Different Translations in Scrolls One, Fourteen, and Twenty-four

English Translation	Scroll One	Scroll Fourteen	Scroll Twenty-four	Total	%
Negative simple future	0	5	2	7	77.77778
Negative <i>would</i> + infinitive	0	1	1	2	22.22222
Total	0	6	3	9	100

Construction of *sa* + Imperfect Form

- 20 a. "سأبدأ من الحاضر، من اللحظة الحالية" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 19).
 b. "I will begin with the present, from this very moment" (Wright, 2009, p. 8).
- 21 a. "سأتعرف إلى السيد الصقلي حين يأتي من سفره" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 171).
 b. "I would come to know the Sicilian master when he came back from his journey" (Wright, 2009, p. 110).

In MSA, the imperfect verb form is prefixed with the bound morpheme *sa* or the word *sawfata* indicate the future. To elaborate, Alsamarrai (1983) differentiated between the bound morpheme *sa* and the word *sawfa*, noting that *sa* is used for near-future actions, while *sawfa* is

used for far-future actions. In 20a, the construction سأبدأ (I will begin) expresses near-future decisions indicated from the clue اللحظة الحالية (this very moment). Thus, Wright's choice to render 20a into English as simple future tense using *will* + infinitive is accurate, as one of the potential meanings of *will* in English is to express a decision. As is evident, 20a signifies decisions at the moment of speaking. However, in 21a, the construction سأتعرف (I would come to know) conveys the meaning that it is a hypothetical/imaginary action in the future. Thus, Wright demonstrated his faithfulness as a translator when he rendered such a construction into English as present unreal conditional, which is used to express what a person would generally do in imaginary situations. *Would* in English is an auxiliary verb that has various functions: temporal and modal. One of its numerous functions is to express conditional/hypothetical situations. Comrie (1985) explained that the use of *would* can express the future in a past time, as it is employed in a narrative sequence in the past, but some actions are then described that fall outside this narrative sequence by expressing the future.

Table 7***Frequency of Sa + Imperfect Different Translations in Scrolls One, Fourteen, and Twenty-four***

English Translation	Scroll One	Scroll Fourteen	Scroll Twenty-four	Total	%
Simple future	5	0	2	7	87.5
<i>Would</i> + infinitive	0	1	0	1	12.5
Total	5	1	2	8	100

Construction of Sawfa + Imperfect Form

- 22 a. (Ziedan, 2008, p. 17) "سوف أروي بين الثنايا، حكايا عشتها"
 b. "I will tell of events I have lived" (Wright, 2009, p. 7).

In 22a, the Arabic imperfect verb أروي (tell) is preceded by the particle *sawfa*, which is employed to express the far future. In the previous example, Wright (2009) rendered the construction سوف أروي (I will tell) into English by using the simple future tense. He conveyed the meaning using *will* + the basic form of the verb because in 22a, the meaning of this construction signifies a future decision.

Table 8***Frequency of Sawfa + Imperfect Different Translations in Scrolls One, Fourteen, and Twenty-four***

English Translation	Scroll One	Scroll Fourteen	Scroll Twenty-four	Total	%
Simple future	3	1	1	5	83
<i>Would</i> + infinitive	0	0	1	1	17
Total	3	1	2	6	100

Construction of Kāna+ Imperfect Form

- 23 a. "كانت تشرح لنا بلغة يونانية راقية" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 171).
 b. "She was explaining to us in elevated Greek" (Wright, 2009, p. 107).
- 24 a. "هنا كانت تجلس أوكتافيا على ركبتيها" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 158).
 b. "This is where Octavia knelt" (Wright, 2009, p. 102).
- 25 a. "كان يسألني دوماً عن مرضاي" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 265).
 b. "He would always ask me about my patients" (Wright, 2009, p. 174).

In 23a, the construction كانت تشرح (was explaining) expresses the meaning of continuous past actions. Accordingly, Wright translated it in 23b as past continuous, and his choice is exact since, in English, the past continuous tense denotes an action in progress at a time in the past. However, in 24a, the construction signifies the meaning that an action happened and ended in the past and because the simple past is the standard tense in narratives. Thus, Wright's choice to translate it into simple past tense is accurate. Obviously, in 25a, the construction كان يسألني (he would always ask me) denotes an action that had frequently been repeated in the past, as the abbot used to ask Hypa about his patients whenever he saw him. Wright employed *would + always + ask* to render such a construction because one of the ways to express a frequent past action is by using the auxiliary *would*. Wright (2009) obtained a clearer picture of the semantic reference of the Arabic construction كان يسألني (he would always ask me) through observing the clue دوماً (always), which signified that the Arabic construction refers to a frequent action.

Table 9***Frequency of Kāna+ Arabic Imperfect Translations in Scrolls One, Fourteen, Twenty-four***

English Translation	Scroll One	Scroll Fourteen	Scroll Twenty-Four	Total	%
Simple past	0	4	1	5	21.73913
Past perfect progressive	0	1	1	2	8.695652
<i>Would + infinitive</i>	1	7	1	9	39.13043
<i>Used to + infinitive</i>	1	0	0	1	4.347826
Past perfect	1	1	0	2	8.695652
Present perfect	0	1	0	1	4.347826
Past progressive	0	3	0	3	13.04348
Total	3	17	3	23	100

Construction of qad + Imperfect Form

- 26 a. "وقد يجرنى إلى طرق الويل" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 15).
 b. "Which could have led me to the ways of woe and evil" (Wright, 2009, p. 5).
- 27 a. "أن رئيس الدير قد يأتي لزيارتي" (Ziedan, 2008, p. 386).
 b. "The abbot might come to visit me" (Wright, 2009, p. 257).

In MSA, when the imperfect is prefixed by the particle *qad*, it implies the meaning of present or future possibility, probability, or speculation. Thus, Wright (2009) translated the

meaning of possibility in 26a and uses *could + have + past participle* to indicate that the construction قد يجرنني (could have led me) is a past event, which refers to a specific possibility.

The experienced translator should be mindful of the diverse ways in which Arabic and English denote some modal meanings, such as tentativeness; the former employs particles, while the latter uses verbs. In 27a, *qad* combines with the imperfect يأتي (come) to function as a modal that signifies a past possibility. According to Tawamah (1994), the particle *qad* has a modal function, as it can be regarded as an equivalent to the English modal *may* in the sense that it denotes uncertainty and possibility when it precedes the Arabic imperfect. Wright (2009) rendered the construction قد يأتي as the modal verb *mightcome* because it expresses the meaning of past possibility—i.e., the possibility of the abbot's visit to Hypa. Accordingly, the translation precisely conveyed the intended source meaning.

Table 10

Frequency of Qad + Arabic Imperfect Translations in Scrolls One, Fourteen, and Twenty-four

English Translation	Scroll One	Scroll Fourteen	Scroll Twenty-Four	Total	%
Simple past	0	1	0	1	12.5
Past perfect	0	1	0	1	12.5
Modal + infinitive	2	2	2	6	75
Total	2	4	2	8	100

Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study has examined the English translation of Arabic aspectual forms in *Azazeel* and the differences between Arabic and English tense and aspect systems.

The study has examined the differences between Arabic and English in terms of tense, aspect, and time. It has also discussed the fact that English has verbal forms of the perfect and progressive aspects in all forms of references to time, while Arabic does not exhibit the verbal morphology of the perfect and progressive aspects.

The researcher has analyzed Wright's (2009) translation of *Azazeel*, particularly Wright's choice to employ some grammatical categories in English as equivalents to the aspectual forms in Arabic. The present study has shown that this can be achieved by means of several particles and adverbials, and the study has also highlighted the effect that such particles have on the temporal indications of the Arabic verbs.

The current study has explored some of the intricacies in translation between Arabic and English and based such intricacies on the fact that the lack of grammatical and linguistic knowledge on the translator's part of either or both languages he or she translates from and into (e.g., Arabic and English) can affect his or her ability to accurately render meaning. The current research has corroborated the fact that there is not a standardized approach to translate Arabic aspectual forms. For example, the current study has exhibited through Wright's translation of *Azazeel* that the translation of the construction of *qad + perfect* into English is not confined only to present perfect, as Wright (2009) has actually rendered such a construction into English as simple past and past perfect and the criterion he used was the meaning of the text.

Evidently, the present research reveals that translators should look for adverbial indications of duration or earliness as opposed to simultaneity when translating from Arabic to English. The translator should also be mindful of the diverse methods in which MSA and English designate some modal meanings like uncertainty—the former by employing particles and the latter by employing verbs.

The researcher hopes that the current study will shed light on some of the differences between Arabic and English tense-aspect systems. Furthermore, the researcher hopes to have shown through the analysis of an authentic translation that each context should be considered individually as there is not a unified approach to translate Arabic aspectual forms into English. Thus, the contextual meaning is the most important element that translators need to consider when translating Arabic aspectual forms into English.

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