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Passive verb morphology in Arabic and Faifi dialect

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Abstract

The formation of passive verbs in Arabic is uniquely challenging due to its complex structure and dialectal variations. While Classical Arabic (CA) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) adhere to non-concatenative rules of internal vowel modification of the active stem, some dialects use different strategies such as affixation or reflexive pronouns with no modification to the stem. However, despite previous studies on Arabic verbs, the passive verb construction remains insufficiently explored. This paper aims to participate in addressing this gap by detailing the passive verb morphology in the Faifi dialect (FD) and comparing it with CA/MSA. The properties of passive verbs in FD have not been explored before. While CA/MSA uses /-u-/, FD uniquely uses /-i-/ to mark its passives. The study introduces previously undocumented verb patterns and passive forms such as (tiC1aC2C3aC3) for colors and (t(i)C1ayC2aC3-) for an agent pretending to perform an action.

Keywords: Passive verbs, Faifi dialect, Arabic morphology

الملخص

يشكل الفعل المبني للمجهول في اللغة العربية تحديًا واضحا بسبب بنيته المعقَّدة واختلاف بنائه في اللهجات المتنوعة للغة العربية. فاشتقاق الفعل المبني للمجهول في اللغة العربية الفصحى يتم بتغيير حروف العلة والحركات داخل جذر الفعل المبني للمعلوم. أما بعض اللهجات العربية المتحدثة فتتضمن طرقا أخرى لصياغة المبني للمجهول كالسوابق أو الضمائر الدالة، دون تغيير داخلي في جذر الفعل المبني للمعلوم. ولا زال موضوع الفعل المبني للمجهول في اللغة العربية يحتاج إلى مزيد من البحث والاستكشاف، وعقد المقارنات اللغوية.

لذا، يهدف هذا البحث إلى المشاركة في معالجة هذه الثغرة البحثية من خلال وصف تفصيلي لاشتقاق الفعل المبني للمجهول في لهجة فيفاء العربية وعقد المقارنات بين صيغة الفعل المبني للمجهول في اللهجة الفيفية واللغة العربية الفصحى. ففي حين أن الفصحى تستخدم (الضمة) لتمييز الفعل المبني للمجهول، فاللهجة الفيفية تستخدم (الكسرة) لذلك. يكشف هذا البحث أوزانًا جديدة تستخدم في اللهجة الفيفية لم يتم بحثها من قبل، كصيغة (تِفَعلَلَ) للألوان، و(تِفَيعَلَ) للإشارة إلى الفعل ادعائي وليس الحقيقي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأفعال المبنية للمجهول، اللهجة الفيفية، الصرف العربي

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1. Introduction

Arabic morphological derivation is known for its unique and complex structure, characterized by a root-based system known as "root and pattern" morphology, a type of non-concatenative morphology (McCarthy, 1979; 1981; 1993; Yip, 1988; McCarthy & Prince, 1990; Ratcliffe, 1998; Watson, 2002; Holes, 2004, among others). Unlike many languages like English and other Indo-European languages that often use affixes added to a base word, Arabic builds its words from often three-letter roots that convey a core semantic meaning. These roots are then inserted into various morphological patterns (or templates) that modify the meaning to create different words, such as verbs, nouns, and adjectives. For example, the root /k, t, b/ conveys the meaning of 'write,' and it is used to drive many words such as [kita:b] 'book,' [maktabah] 'library,' [maktu:b] 'written,' and so on.

This system allows for high productivity and creativity, enabling the formation of numerous words from a single root. Additionally, Arabic morphology includes intricate vowel changes that further enhance its complexity. For example, in Arabic, whether Classical Arabic (hereafter CA) or Modern Standard Arabic (hereafter MSA), the passive verb of [katab-a] 'wrote-3msg' is [kutib-a] 'was written-3msg' which is formed by changing the internal vowels from /CaCaC-/ to /CuCiC-/ with no change to the consonants. This rich morphological structure poses significant challenges for learners and linguists who must master the interplay between roots, patterns, and phonological changes.

The Faifi dialect (hereafter FD), similar to CA and MSA, exhibits a rich and unique root and pattern morphological system. One of the distinguishing features of FD is its passive morphological system, which utilizes an internal vowel system akin to that of CA/MSA but specifically marks its passives with the internal vowel /-i-/, which is different from CA/MSA. FD is an Arabic variety spoken by approximately 50,000 Faifi people (Alfaife, 2018; Alfaifi, 2020) as a native and indigenous dialect in the Faifa mountains located in southwestern Saudi Arabia and as a heritage dialect in other Saudi cities.

1.1 Statement of the problem regarding Arabic passive morphology

The formation of passive verbs in Arabic presents a unique linguistic problem due to its complex and morphologically rich structure and various dialects. Its complexity arises from different factors:

First, the variation across different Arabic dialects compounds the issue of passive verb formation. While MSA adheres to classical rules of internal vowel modification, some regional dialects may exhibit significant deviations from internal passives, relying instead on active constructions with reflexive pronouns or affixations to convey passivity (Holes, 2004). This variation necessitates a deep understanding of CA/MSA and regional dialects to fully grasp the

mechanisms and usage of passive verbs in Arabic, posing a significant challenge for linguists studying the language.

Second, the diglossic nature of Arabic is that a distinct divide exists between the formal MSA and the various colloquial dialects spoken daily (Ferguson,1959, 1991; Fishman, 1967; Badawi, 1973; Mitchell, 1986; Kaye, 1994; Albirini, 2016, among others). MSA is used in formal settings such as literature, news broadcasts, and official documents, and it retains standardized grammar and vocabulary. In contrast, colloquial dialects vary significantly across different regions and are used in everyday conversation, social interactions, and informal media. This diglossic split means that Arabic speakers are typically proficient in both MSA and their local dialect, switching between them based on context. This also means that a speaker may possess two or more passive form constructions in their grammar and use them based on the context, whether social, cultural, literary, or other contexts.

Third, the root modification differs in some dialects that still exhibit internal vocalic structure for passive verbs. While MSA utilizes the internal vowel /-u-/ for passive, such as in the verb [katab-a] 'wrote-3msg' and [kutib-a] 'was written-3msg,' a dialect such as FD utilizes the internal vowel /-i-/ such as in the verb [katab-a] 'wrote-3msg' and [kitb-a] 'was written-3msg." This vowel patterning can be challenging for learners and linguists alike due to the need to recognize and apply the correct vowel changes within diverse root structures in the correct dialect of Arabic they use in a certain situation.

Despite several papers addressing Arabic passive verbs, as the literature review section will show, the topic remains insufficiently studied. Previous papers did not comprehensively analyze and compare the passive system in MSA and the dialects to offer an integrated understanding of the subject. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis and comparison of the passive systems in CA/MSA and FD. Furthermore, the FD forms passives using internal vocalic melodies like CA and MSA, with some differences that this paper will highlight. Therefore, a significant gap in the literature needs to be addressed to grasp the complexities and nuances of Arabic passive verb usage fully. Furthermore, the analysis in this paper is essential to bridge this gap and develop a more holistic view of passive verbs in Arabic.

1.2 Data

A 40-year-old male native speaker of FD, who is also a linguist, utilized his native language repertoire and notes from previous fieldwork in the FD region to generate the data sets for this study. Furthermore, another non-linguist native speaker of FD was consulted to review the data sets, ensuring their intuition and acceptability. Any words or phrases the consultant was uncertain about were excluded from the paper. The native speaker consultant, a 35-year-old male, was born and raised in the town where FD is spoken, majors in environmental studies, and speaks English as a second language.

2. Verb morphology in FD and CA/MSA

This section primarily focuses on FD verb morphology. It includes a brief overview of verb morphology in CA/MSA, emphasizing the patterns of morphological affixation and derivation most relevant to the FD discussion. The objective is to demonstrate how FD has remarkably preserved a complex system for gender and number distinction, closely resembling the old Arabic system.

2.1 Verb morphology in FD: Inflections

Verb stems in CA and MSA are identified for person, gender, and number using affixes. A number of these morphological affixes are typically applied at the same time and take different shapes based on whether they are attached to a suffix-stem (e.g., [**katab**-tu] 'wrote-1sg') or prefix-stem (e.g., [ʔa-**ktub**] '1sg-write'), whether they are nominative (e.g., [katab-**tu**] 'wrote-1sg') or accusative (e.g., [ʔakal-tu-**hu**] 'ate-1sg-3msg'), and whether they are bound (e.g., [katab-**tu**] 'wrote-1sg' or free (e.g., **[ʔana** katab-tu] 'I wrote-1sg'), (see Al-Hamlawi, 2006; Holes, 2004; Ibn Hishām 1967; Ryding, 2014; Watson, 2002; for a full description of the CA/MSA verb inflectional categories). CA and MSA distinguish most affixation categories, including 1st, 2nd, 3rd person, feminine and masculine gender, and singular, dual, and plural number.

FD preserves many CA/MSA features within its morphology. Among the previous research on FD (Alfaifi A. M., & Behnstedt, 2010; Alfaifi M., 2014; Alfaifi A. H. J., 2016; Alaslani, 2017; Alfaife S., 2018; Davis & Alfaifi A. H., 2019; Alfaifi E., 2020; Davis & Alfaifi A. H., 2022; Alfaifi A. H., & Davis, 2022; Alfaifi A. H., 2022; Alfaifi A. H., 2024), some have primarily focused on FD verb inflectional morphology (Alaslani, 2017; Alfaife S., 2018; Alfaifi E., 2020; Alfaifi A. H., 2022) while derivational morphology has received little attention except from a few studies (Alfaife S. 2018; Alfaifi E., 2020). Additionally, passive constructions have not been thoroughly examined in previous literature on FD despite being a distinguishing feature of this dialect. Section 3 details passives in FD.

Concerning inflections, the verb stems in FD resemble CA/MSA in everything except for the dual affixation because FD does not mark for dual in verb form. All verbs in FD are marked for the person and, more importantly, the number and gender of the second and third persons, which is also a distinguishing feature of this dialect. FD verb stem, whether active or passive, is directly inserted into the corresponding affixes listed in Table 1 and Table 2 below, as demonstrated in the preliminary examples shown in (1).

(1) Preliminary examples of verbs and suffixes of FD

[daxal-**a**] 'entered-3msg' vs. [daxal-**an**] 'entered-3fsg'

[daxal-**ta**] 'entered-2msg' vs. [daxal-**ti**] 'entered-2fsg'

[daxal-**u**] 'entered-3mpl' vs. [daxal-**næ**] 'entered-3fpl'

Table 1. Verbal affixes for person, number, and gender in FD

	P-stem		**S-stem**	
	Number		**Number**	
Person/Gender	**Sg.**	**Pl.**	**Sg.**	**Pl.**
1m.	ʔ- ...	n- ...	... –t	... –nɑ
1f.	ʔ- ...	n- ...	... –t	... –nɑ
2m.	t-	t- ... u:n	... –ta	... –tim
2f.	t- ... i:n	t- .. **næ**	... –ti	... –tinn**æ**
3m.	y-	y- ... u:n	... –a	... –u
3f.	t- ...	y- ... **næ**	... –an	... –n**æ**

Table 2. Verbal Affixes for Person, Number, and Gender in FD (accusative)

Person/Gender	**Number**	
	Sg.	**Pl.**
1m.	... -ni:	... -nɑ
1f.	... -ni:	... -nɑ
2m.	... -t^ha	... -t^him
2f.	... -t^hi:	... -t^hinn**æ**
3m.	... -u	... -him
3f.	... -ha	... -hinn**æ**

The patterns in the aforementioned tables reveal three noteworthy aspects of FD's phonological and morphophonological characteristics, briefly discussed below but worthy of future research investigation.

The first aspect is the innovation of the morpheme [–an] '3fsg'. FD does not exhibit the commonly used feminine marker in Arabic /-t/. Instead, FD uses a new suffix /–an/ '3fsg' usually attached to the s-stem, e.g., [daxal-an] 'entered-3fsg'. This morpheme is distinctive to FD. Based on similar behavior in other Arabic varieties, the suffix /-an/ '3fsg' in FD seemed to be 'extended by analogy' (Behrens, 2017), especially to the feminine plural marker /-næ/ '3fpl', as /-an/ '3fsg' is the only option left from /a/ and /n/ combination in FD suffix system. Consider the examples in (2).

(2) Illustration of the suffix /-an/ '3fpl' extension by analogy

[daxal-nɑ]	'entered-1pl'
[daxal-næ]	'entered-3fpl'
[daxal-**a**]	'entered-3msg'
[daxal-**an**]	'entered-3fsg'

Therefore, it seems natural that FD resorts to the consonant /-n/ and adds it to the default masculine marker /-a/ to mark the '3fsg' category, as seen in [daxal-a] vs. [daxal-an] in (2) as an extension by analogy. This pattern of attaching an additional consonant to the masculine marker to indicate the feminine is quite common and is reminiscent of the MSA feminine marking system, which adds the consonant /-t/ to the masculine marker /-a/, e.g., [daxal-a] 'entered-3msg,' and [daxal-at] 'entered-3fsg'.

The second noteworthy aspect is the use of the post-alveolar [t^h] in place of [k] in FD accusative suffixes (see Table 2). For example, the MSA suffixes [la-ka] 'to-you.msg' and [la-ki:] 'to-you.fsg' are attested in FD as [la-t^ha] 'to-you.msg' and [la-t^hi:] 'to-you.fsg', with variations in articulation among FD subvarieties (see Alfaifi A. H., 2024). The [t^h/k] variation, as well as [$\widehat{st}$/$s^ʕ$], is common in FD and is attributed to diglossia, a phenomenon that has been addressed in previous literature on the dialect (see Alfaifi E., 2020). Furthermore, this variation is common across other Arabic dialects, particularly Jordanian Arabic, Kuwaiti Arabic, Iraqi Arabic, and Najdi Arabic, each with different pronunciations in different dialects such as /k/ to /sh/ or /k/ to /ts/, and it is known in the classic Arabic literature as *Kashkasha* and in the contemporary linguistic literature as [k] affrication/fronting (see Holes, 1991; Al-Azraqi, 2007; Al-Rojaie, 2013).

The third noteworthy aspect is that FD has maintained highly specified morphological categories, particularly regarding 3rd person gender distinction in nominative and accusative cases akin to the CA/MSA marking system, as the examples in (3) illustrate.

(3) Correspondences of suffixes in CA/MSA and FD

CA/MSA	**FD**	**Gloss**
[ʔadxal-na:-hunna]	[ʔadxal-nɑ:-hinnæ]	'made someone enter-1pl-3fpl'
[ʔadxal-na-hunna]	[ʔadxal-na-hinnæ]	"made someone enter-3fpl-3fpl'
[ʔadxal-na-hum]	[ʔadxal-na-him]	"made someone enter-3fpl-3mpl'
[ʔadxal-at-hunna]	[ʔadxal-an-hinnæ]	"made someone enter-3fsg-3fpl'
[ʔadxal-a-hunna]	[ʔadxal-a-hinnæ]	"made someone enter-3msg-3fpl'

The following section provides a brief overview of the derivational morphology in FD, which is best described as root and pattern morphology.

2.2 Verb morphology in FD: Derivation

FD, Arabic, and other Semitic languages are known for their non-concatenative morphology (see, for example, McCarthy, 1979; 1981; 1993; Yip, 1988; McCarthy & Prince, 1990; Ratcliffe, 1998; Watson, 2002; Holes, 2004, among others). Considering the root-based morphological nature of FD (Alfaife S., 2018; Alfaifi E., 2020), new words can be derived through internal modifications of a stem by mapping out the consonantal roots on patterns; see the illustration in (4) from FD and the subsequent analysis. The consonantal root (or C-root), which holds the abstract semantic meaning, is considered a separate morpheme and an indispensable part of word formation. Most content words' stem typically consists of three discontinuous morpheme tiers: a C-root, a vocalic melody, and a template pattern, in addition to affixation (if any).

(4) Illustration of root-and-pattern morphology in Upper Faifi

Pattern	$C_1VC_2VC_3$-/ basic verb		/$C_1VC_2C_2VC_3$-/ causative	
V-Melody	/$C_1aC_2VC_3$-/ active verb		/$C_1aC_2C_2VC_3$-/ active verb	
Affixation	/-a/ 3msg		/-a/ 3msg	
C-root	/d-x-l/ enter	/r-g-d/ sleep	/d-x-l/ enter	/r-g-d/ sleep
Surface	[daxal-a]	[ragad-a]	[daxxal-a]	[raggad-a]
form	entered-3msg	slept-3msg	caused.to.enter-3msg	caused.to.sleep-3msg

Take the verb [daxal-a] ‘entered-3msg’, illustrated in (4), as an example to explain how root and pattern morphonology works. In this analysis, the verb [daxal-a] ‘entered-3msg’ consists of four parts (or morpheme tiers). The first part is the pattern / $C_1VC_2VC_3$-/, the

common pattern for the basic perfective verb. Other verbs appear in this pattern in their basic perfective form e.g., [katab-a] 'wrote-3msg', [falat-a] 'fell-3msg', [fataħ-a] 'opened-3msg', …etc. The second part of [daxal-a] 'entered-3msg' is the vocalic melody (V-melody). The first vowel [a] in [daxal-a] /CaCVC-/ denotes that the verb is active. The passive, for example, has a different V-melody, the vowel [i] as in [dixl-a] 'was entered-3msg' with the second vowel being absent in the passive form due to the typical deletion process in FD. The third part is the C-root. The C-root of the verb [daxal-a] is /d-x-l/, which carries the abstract meaning of 'entering.' When the same C-root /d-x-l/ is used in different words/patterns, the semantics of these words will generally be related to 'entering', e.g., [madxal] 'entrance', [da:xil] 'someone entering', [duxu:l] 'the action of entering', [daxli] 'my income' (lit. money entering your position), [tadaxxal] 'involves in else' business (lit. entering someone's personal life)', and so on. The fourth part of the verb [daxal-a] 'entered-3msg' is the affixation, which is the suffix [-a]. These parts (or morpheme tiers) are illustrated in (4) with two different roots (/d-x-l/ 'entering' and /r-g-d/ 'sleeping') and two different patterns for comparison (basic vs. causative verbs).

After the aforementioned essential overviews on FD verb morphology, which are crucial for understanding the subsequent analysis, the next section delves into passive constructions in FD, comparing them with those in MSA and various spoken Arabic dialects.

3. Passive construction in FD

The CA and MSA are known for the internal passive, i.e., the internal vocalic quality of the passive stem is different from the one of the active. This is a common feature of classical Semitic languages, although they differ in the degree of productivity (see Weninger, 2011). Similarly, the passive form in FD undergoes internal vocalic modification. However, as detailed in this paper, it shows variations in vowel quality and some morpho-semantic representations compared to CA and MSA. Section 3.1 briefly introduces the structural formation of passive verbs in CA/MSA. Section 3.2 focuses specifically on passive formation in the FD and how it differs from any other Arabic variety.

3.1 The passive formation in CA/MSA

It is well documented (see McCarthy, 1981; Holes, 2004; Ryding, 2014; Versteegh, 2014, among others) that the vocalic melody of the CA and MSA passive structurally parallels the vocalic melody in the active verbal stem. The multi-tier representation in (5) demonstrates the active and passive vocalic melody.

(5) Representation of the vocalic melody in the active-passive verb stem

Active	→	**Passive**
$C_1VC_2VC_3$	→	$C_1VC_2VC_3$

C_1**a**C_2**a**C_3	→	C_1**u**C_2**i**C_3	
[k**a**t**a**b] 'wrote.3msg'	→	[k**u**t**i**b] 'was written.3msg'	**(s-stem)**
Active	→	**Passive**	
-$VC_1C_2VC_3$	→	-$VC_1C_2VC_3$	
-**a**C_1C_2**u**C_3	→	-**u**C_1C_2**a**C_3	
[y**a**kt**u**b] 'writes.3msg'	→	[y**u**kt**a**b] 'is written.3msg'	**(p-stem)**

The pattern of the passive forms in MSA can be summarized as follows:

a) In the s-stem, the vowel melody of the active verb changes to /-u-i-/ or /u-u-i/ depending on the verb form to derive the passive. For example, the passive form [k**a**t**a**b] 'wrote.3msg' is [k**u**t**i**b] 'was written.3msg', and the passive form [ʔ**i**st**a**qb**a**l-a] 'welcomed-3msg' is /u-u-i/ vowels [ʔ**u**st**u**qb**i**l-a] ‘was welcomed-3msg’.

b) In the p-stem, the vowel melody of the active p-stem changes to /-u-a/ or /u-a-a/ depending on the verb form to drive the passive. For example, the passive form [y**a**kt**u**b] 'writes.3msg' is [y**u**kt**a**b] 'is written.3msg', and the passive form [y**a**st**a**qb**i**l-a] 'welcom-3msg' is [y**u**st**a**qb**a**l] “is being welcomed.3msg'.

However, it is important to note that the concept of the passive verb in Arabic is not solely recognized by modern linguists; its origins can be traced back to the eighth century, where it was extensively studied by early Arabic grammarians, most notably Sibawayh. He defined the passive *al-fiʿl alladhī shughila bi-al-mfʿūl* (the verb that is occupied by the object) (Sībawayh, 1988). Sibawayh illustrated this with examples such as *kusya ʿabdullāhi althwba* (Abdullah was dressed with thobe) and *ʾuʿṭiya ʿabdullāhi al-māla* (Abdullah was given money). Other prominent early grammarians, including Al-Farra', Ibn Jinnī and Ibn Hishām, also described passive verb constructions in their works. The study of the passive verb continued into modern times, with scholars like Al-Hamlawi addressing the topic in his book and making it more accessible to learners of Arabic grammar (Al-Hamlawi, 2006).

In modern vernaculars, the story differs. A number of Arabic dialects have lost the internal passive voice and instead rely on affixation to denote passives, often with the prefixes /ʔit-/ or /ʔin-/ (e.g., [kasar] 'broke.3msg' → [ʔin-kasar]/[ʔit-kasar] ‘was broken.3msg’), depending on the specific dialect. (see Holes, 1998, 2004; and Versteegh, 2014). However, the formation of passive verbs in modern vernacular Arabic lies beyond the scope of this paper.

3.2 The passive formation in FD

The vowel [-i-] marks the passive in FD, not [–u-] like CA/MSA. The internal passive in FD is fully functional and is a linguistic feature that distinguishes native speakers of this community. Forming passives in FD resembles the CA/MSA system, where the internal vowel melody in s-stem and p-stem verbs is modified to denote active and passive voice. Table 3 below summarizes the passive formation in FD across verb stems. Examples for each form will follow the table.

Table 3: Vocalic melody across active and passive verb stems in FD.

	s-stem		**p-stem**	
Verb form	**active**	**passive**	**active**	**passive**
I	CaCaC-	CiCCa	-aCCiC-	-iCCaC
II	CaCCaC-	CiCCiC-	-iCaCCiC-	iCaCCaC
III	Ca:CaC-	Ci:CiC-	-iCa:CiC-	-iCa:CaC-
IV	ʔaCCaC-	ʔiCCiC-	-iCCiC-	-iCCaC-
V	t(i)CaCCaC-	t(i)CiCCiC-	-itCaCCaC-	itCiCCiC
VI	tiCa:CaC-	tiCi:CiCa	-itCa:CaC-	-itCi:CiC
VII	**---**	---	---	----
VIII	ʔiCtaCaC-	ʔiCtiCC-	-iCtaCiC-	-iCtiCiC-
IX	**---**	---	---	----
X	ʔistaCCaC-	ʔistiCCiC-	-istaCCiC	-istiCCiC

Table 3 presents a summary of the most common verb patterns in FD. Let's illustrate each form with some examples for better understanding. Each set of examples includes an s-stem followed by a p-stem in the active and passive forms.

Form I is the unaugmented verbal form in FD. It is the base form and undoubtedly the most frequent in FD, for example,

[daxal-a] ‘entered-3msg’ → [dixl-a] ‘was entered-3msg’

[yadxul] ‘enters.3msg’ → [yidxal] ‘is being entered.3msg’

Form II is the doubled verb for intensive and extensive action, and it is similar to doubled verbs in CA/MSA, for example,

[laffat-a] ‘gathered-3msg’ → [liffit-a] ‘was gathered-3msg’

[yiħawwiz] ‘arranges.3msg (place)’ → [yiħawwaz] ‘is being arranged.3msg (place)’

Form III is for achieving the action with efforts and purposively doing the action to achieve the maximum results, for example,

[ʃa:xam-a] ‘scratched-3msg’ → [ʃi:xim-a] ‘got scratched.3msg’

[yiħa:wis] ‘messes up.3msg (place)’ → [yiħa:was] ‘(place) is being messed up.3msg’

Form IV is mainly causative, similar to its function in CA/MSA. Many spoken dialects of Arabic have likely lost this pattern and replaced it with pattern III, denoting the same meaning. In FD, form IV is fully functional. For example,

[(ʔa)ħradahim]	→	[(ʔi)ħrid-u]
‘made.3msg them.mpl angry’		‘were made angry-3mpl’
[yiħridhim]	→	[yiħradu:n]
‘is making.3msg them.mpl angry’		‘they.mpl are being made angry’

Form V is typically intransitive in FD, but it rarely occurs as transitive. This is unlike CA/MSA and spoken dialects in which form V occurs transitive most often, for example,

[t(i)warred-a fi:him]	→	[t(i)wirrida fi:him]
ran-3msg quickly toward them.mpl		were approached quickly them.mpl
'he ran toward them quickly'		'they were approached quickly'
[yitwarrad fi:him]	→	[yitwirrid fi:him]
run.3msg quickly toward them.mpl		are approached quickly them.mpl
'he runs quickly toward them'		'they were approached quickly'

The vowel /i/ in the active form is optional, and the verb can freely be pronounced as [tiwarrad-a/twarrad-a] 'ran-3msg quickly'.

Form VI is reflexive, continuous, and sometimes stative, for example,

[tida:war-u: θamma]	→	[tidi:wira θamma]
walked around-3mpl there		had been walking around there
'they walked around there'		'there have been walking around there'
[yitda:war-u:n θamma]	→	[yitdi:wir θamma]
‘walking around-3mpl there’		have been walking around there

'they are walking around there' 'there have been walking around there'

Form VIII is reflexive and denotes the middle voice (more details about this verb form specifically are in Section 4), for example,

[ʔigtaʕad-a lahim]	→	[ʔigtiʕda lahim]
way blocked-3msg their.mpl		way was blocked their.mpl
'he blocked their way'		'their way was blocked'
[yigtaʕid lahim]	→	[yigtiʕid lahim]
way blocks.3msg their.mpl way'		way is being blocked their.mpl
'he blocks their way'		'their way is being blocked'

Form X is reflexive and benefactive, which is similar to its function in CA/MSA, for example,

[ʔistatˁħan-a ʔim-ħabb]	→	[ʔistitˁħina ʔim-ħabb]
grinded-3msg the-grains		have been grinded.3msg the-grains
'he has the grains grinded'		'the grains have been grinded'
[yistatˁħin ʔim-ħabb]	→	[yistitˁħin ʔim-ħabb]
grind.3msg the-grains		are being grinded.3msg the-grains
'he is having the grains grinded'		'the grains are being grinded'

3.3. Other unique FD morphosemantic patterns of active and passive verbs

FD has some rare morphosemantic patterns that are frequently used and not found in CA/MSA. First, the pattern ($tiC_1aC_2C_3aC_3$) is used with consonantal roots that denote colors, as the examples in (6) show. However, the pattern does not have passive forms. In comparison, CA/MSA patten IX ($ʔiC_1C_2aC_3C_3$) denotes colors, e.g., [ʔiħmarr] 'turns red' and [ʔiswadd] 'turns black'.

(6) Examples of the pattern ($tiC_1aC_2C_3aC_3$) for colors in FD

root [ħmr] 'red'	→	[tiħamrara] 'turns red'
root [xfr] 'green'	→	[tixafrara] 'turns green'
root [swd] 'black'	→	[tisawdada] 'turns black'

Second, the pattern (t(i)C_1ayC_2aC_3-) semantically denotes that the agent is pretending to perform an action they are not actually doing. The passive of these forms contains the internal vowel /-i-/, as the examples in (7) illustrate.

(7) Examples of pattern (t(i)CaiCaC-) in FD

Root	**Active**	**Passive**
/wd͡ʒʕ/ ‘illness’	[t(i)waid͡ʒaʕ-a] 'acted ill-3msg'	[twi:d͡ʒiʕa] 'it was acted ill'
/ʕbl/ 'dumb'	[t(i)ʕaibal-a] 'acted dumb-3msg'	[t(i)ʕi:bila] 'it was acted dumb'
/ħrf/ 'skill'	[t(i)ħairaf-a] 'acted skillful-3msg'	[t(i)ħi:rifa] 'it was acted skillful'

3.4 Passives with internal /-u-/ in FD

FD internal passive is marked with the vowel /-u-/ when adjacent to the emphatic consonants /tˤ/, /sˤ/, and /ðˤ/. Emphatic consonants influence vowels in Arabic, often causing them to shift to a more back position or become more rounded. (McCarthy, 1994; Kalaldeh, 2019). There seems to be no other explanation for the occurrence of the internal /-u-/ in those limited passive verb lexicons, as the examples in (8) illustrate.

(8) Example of passives with internal /-u-/ adjacent to emphatics

Active	**Passive**
[watˤtˤ-a] ‘put-3msg’	[w**u**tˤtˤiy-a] ‘was put-3msg’
[ʕatˤaf-a] 'twisted-3msg'	[ʕ**u**tˤf-a] 'was twisted-3msg'
[tˤabaʕ-a] ‘printed-3msg’	[tˤ**u**bʕ-a] ‘was printed-3msg’
[ʔawtˤ-a] ‘went down-3msg’	[ʔ**u**tˤiy-a] ‘was made to go down-3msg’
[ʔistawtˤ-a] ‘pulled down-3msg’	[ʔist**u:**tˤiy-a] ‘got pulled down-3msg’
[wasˤsˤ-a] ‘recommended-3msg’	[w**u**sˤsˤiy-a] ‘was recommended-3msg’
[sˤawwar-a] 'took a picture-3msg'	[sˤ**u**wwir-a] 'was pictured-3msg'
[waðˤðˤf-a] 'employed-3msg'	[w**u**ðˤðˤif-a] 'was employed-3msg'

4. Patterns VII and VIII in FD

Let us first consider the semantic component of pattern VII in CA/MSA. It usually denotes the action with an implied causative agent. The form /ʔinfaʕala/ in CA/MSA is the middle voice, traditionally referred to as *ʔal-mutˁawaʕah* (Al-Hamlawi, 2006), as the examples in (9) illustrate.

(9) Pattern VII in CA/MSA

Root & meaning	**Pattern VII**
/ngl/ 'move'	[ʔintaqal-a ʔal-ʔid͡ʒtimaaʕu]
	moved-3msg the-meeting
	'the meeting moved'
/gṭʕ/ 'cut'	[ʔinqaṭaʕ-a ʔal-ħablu]
	got cut off-3msg the-rope
	'the rope got cut off'
/glb/ 'overturn'	[ʔinqalab-at ʔatˁ-tˁaawila]
	turned upside down-3fsg the-table
	'the table turned upside down'

The semantic emphasis in these verbs is on the action rather than the agent. This form overlaps with the passive voice, as seen in [ʔinqaṭaʕa ʔal-ħablu] 'the rope got cut off'. According to Holes (2004), various Arabic dialects have recycled this form, employing the affix /ʔin-/ as a marker of true passivation. Holes' justification appears plausible, especially regarding spoken varieties that use the prefix /ʔin-/ or its variations for true passivation, such as [nkasar] 'it was broken' in Najdi Arabic (Albedaiwi & Albaty, 2024).

Notably, pattern VII with the prefix /ʔin-/ does not exist in FD. This absence may explain why FD has not developed or simplified prefixed passives like some other spoken Arabic dialects, i.e., using /ʔin-/ as a marker of true passivation. While several verbs in FD begin with /ʔin-/, these should not be mistaken for pattern VII, as /ʔin-/ in these lexicons is part of the stem (i.e., root) and not a prefix, as the examples in (10) illustrate.

(10) FD verbs with the initial /ʔin-/ as part of the stem

Active	**Passive**
[ʔintas͡taʕa-u] 'he drank it.3msg (at once)'	[ʔintis͡tʕa] 'it.msg was drunk (at once)'
[ʔintaʃara lau] 'he went to him (evening)'	[ʔintiʃra lau] 'he got visited (evening)'
[ʔintafala-u] 'he stole it.1msg'	[ʔintifla] 'it.1msg was stolen'
[ʔintaʕaʃa-u] 'he lifted it.1msg forcefully'	[ʔintiʕaʃa] 'it.msg was lifted forcefully'

These verbs belong to pattern VIII, which inserts /–t-/ after the first consonant of the root. In the examples given in (10), the initial consonant of the root happens to be /n/, with the roots being: /nst͡ʕ/ ‘drink at once’, /nʃr/ ‘go in the evening’, /nfl/ ‘steal’, and /nʕʃ/ ‘lift’. These verbs carry a reflexive sense, but all express the direct agent.

However, the absence of pattern VII in FD seems to be compensated for by the extended use of pattern VIII, which has become very common in this dialect. Pattern VIII in FD is used interchangeably to (a) denote an action with an implied causative agent and (b) to emphasize the agent performing the action. The examples in (11) illustrate the first function, denoting an action with an implied causative agent.

(11) Pattern VIII in FD denoting an action with an implied causative agent

Root	**Passive**
/ngl/ ‘move’	[ʔintaqal-an ʔim-gumra]
	moved-3fsg the-rock
	‘the rock moved’
/glb/ ‘overturn’	[ʔigtalab-an ʔim-sayya:ra]
	overtuned-3fsg the-car
	‘the car overturned (accident)’
/gtˤʕ/ ‘cut’	[ʔigtatˤaʕ-a ʔim-ħabil]
	was cut-3msg the-rope
	‘the rope was cut’

Notice that these examples (stems) were previously used in this section to illustrate pattern VII in CA/MSA. Pattern VIII has now been adapted in FD as an alternative to pattern VII to express the middle voice. This prompts the question of why FD hasn't adapted this form to indicate the passive voice, as is often done in other spoken Arabic dialects. The reason is that this pattern is still predominantly employed in its transitive and causative forms, hindering it from conveying a 'true' passive sense, which would inevitably lead to ambiguity, as illustrated below.

The second function of pattern VIII in FD is to express an action emphasizing the agent. The examples in (12) illustrate this semantic property which is very common in FD.

(12) Pattern VIII in FD express an action with emphasis on the agent

Root	**Passive**
/ngl/ ‘move’	[ʔintaqal-t bu:]

	talked privately-1sg to.3msg
	'I talked to him (aside) privately'
/glb/ 'overturn'	[ʔigtalab-a ʔim-raba]
	turned-3msg the-baby
	'the baby turned himself over'
/gtˤʕ/ 'cut'	[ʔigtatˤaʕ-t-u]
	cut-1sg-3msg
	'I cut it'

While pattern VIII seems like a strong contender to substitute the internal passive system in FD, its frequent transitive and causative nature can cause confusion. This characteristic hinders it from conveying a 'true' passive sense, which could result in significant ambiguity. In fact, the dual morphosemantic usage of pattern VIII in FD can sometimes be a source of this confusion. Take, for example, the verb [gatˤaʕ] 'cut' shown in (13).

(13) Examples of pattern VIII ambiguity due to dual morphosemantic usage

	Active	**Passive**
(a)	[ʔigtatˤaʕa ʔim-ħabil]	[ʔigtitˤʕ-a ʔim-ħabil]
	cut.3msg the-rope.msg	cut-3msg the-rope.msg
	'he cut the rope'	'the rope was cut (by someone)'
(b)	[ʔigtatˤaʕ-a ʔim-ħabil]	
	cut-3msg the-rope.msg	
	'the rope got cut (by itself)'	

The surface structure of active forms in sentences 13a and 13b are identical, but the underlying semantics information differs. In sentence 13a, the speaker means that he/she truly saw someone cutting the rope. In contrast, sentence 13b indicates that the rope got cut somehow, without mentioning a causative agent. Therefore, since sentence 13a includes a direct agent, the passive form can be derived by omitting the morpheme /-a/ '3msg,' which denotes the direct agent. The suffix /–a/ 'msg' in the passive form is only an agreement marker attached to the passive form as an inflectional agreement with the indirect object [ʔim-ħabil] 'the rope.msg'. Other examples of this inflectional agreement are the suffix /-u/ 'mpl' in [ʔigtitˤʕ-**u** ʔim-ħaba:l] 'the ropes.**mpl** were cut', the suffix /-an/ 'fsg' in [ʔigtitˤʕ-**an** ʔim-haid͡ʒ-a] 'the tree.**fsg** was cut.fsg', and the suffix /-an/ 'fsg' in [ʔigtitˤʕ-**an** ʔim-hiya:d͡ʒ] 'the trees.**fpl** were cut.fsg'.

The ambiguity in the earlier active sentences (i.e., active forms in sentences 13a and 13b) is typically resolved in discourse context, as the examples in (14) illustrate.

(14) Pattern VIII typical ambiguity resolution

Active

(a) [ha:ʃ-a ʔigtatˁaʕ-a ʔim-ħabil]
went-3msg cut-3msg the-rope
'he went to cut the rope'

(b) [sˁaddigni: ʔigtatˁaʕ-a ʔim-ħabil]
trust me.2msg, cut-3msg the-rope
'trust me, the rope cut itself'

Ambiguity is often clarified in context by providing additional information to emphasize the underlying meaning of pattern VIII. In an ambiguous sentence with an included agent (e.g., sentence 13a), the speaker may add a verb to indicate that another agent caused the action (compare the active forms of the ambiguous sentences 13a and 14a in which the ambiguity is resolved). Another way to resolve ambiguity is demonstrated in sentence 14b, where a verb emphasizing the action is added (compare sentences 13b and 14b).

5. Conclusion

After providing the necessary background on FD verb structure morphology and inflectional morphology, the paper delves into passive verb morphology's unique and complex structure in this Arabic dialect. All active verb patterns in FD have passive forms by mapping the active form consonants onto patterns with the vowel /-i/ marking the passive form. FD also has passives with the internal vowel /-u-/ (similar to CA/MSA), conditioned and predictable by the proximity of the emphatic consonants /tˁ/, /sˁ/, and /ðˁ/. The paper presents new verb patterns in FD not found in CA/MSA, such as (ti$C_1aC_2C_3aC_3$) for colors and (t(i)$C_1ayC_2aC_3$-) for an agent pretending to perform an action they are not actually doing. The passive forms of these unique verb patterns in FD are similar to typical verb patterns. The paper also compares verb morphology in FD, CA, and MSA to understand the data better.

The morphological patterns of FD, both those discussed in this paper and others, provide an excellent foundation for psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic experimental research. This includes studies targeting the acquisition stages of these patterns, generational changes in inflected forms among FD speakers, and the impact of social pressure on language use. Examples of such research might explore morphological code-switching among FD, MSA, and dominant spoken dialects such as Najdi in the speech of young students in schools where FD is spoken, as well as the historical development of these morphological systems, such as through analogy and leveling.

List of abbreviations and symbols used in this paper

Abbreviation/symbol	Definition
P-stem	Prefix-stem, usually termed imperfective verb
S-stem	Suffix-stem, usually termed perfective verb
CA	Classical Arabic
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
FD	Faifi Dialect
-1,-2,-3	1st , 2nd , 3rd person
fsg	Feminine Singular
msg	Masculine Singular
fpl	Feminine Plural
mlp	Masculine Plural
/tʰ/	Voiceless post-alveolar affricate
/s͡t/	Voiceless reverse affricate dental

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معلومات عن الباحث

د. **عيسى سلمان الفيفي**، أستاذ مساعد في اللغويات بقسم اللغة العربية في كلية الفنون والعلوم الإنسانية بجامعة جازان، المملكة العربية السعودية. حاصل على درجة الدكتوراه في اللغويات في لغات الشرق الأوسط، من جامعة أريزونا عام 2020م. وتتمحور اهتماماته البحثية حول اللسانيات العربية عموما، وبالتحديد علمي الأصوات والصرف.

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