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**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE  
MORPHOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF CLASSICAL  
ARABIC AND MODERN STANDARD ARABIC:  
STABILITY AND FUNCTIONAL CHANGES**

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**Abstract:**

This article presents a comparative analysis of the morphological systems of Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic based on a dynamic-systemic approach. The study identifies the historical stability of the triliteral root model, pattern paradigms, verb forms, and noun derivation mechanisms. It also provides a scholarly explanation of the processes observed in the modern stage, including semantic expansion, changes in frequency of usage, and terminological renewal.

**Keywords:** Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, morphological system, triliteral root, pattern model, verb paradigm, linguistic stability, semantic expansion, terminological integration, evolutionary dynamics.

**MUMTOZ ARAB TILI VA ZAMONAVIY ADABIY ARAB TILI  
MORFOLOGIK TIZIMINING QIYOSIY TAHLILI: BARQARORLIK  
VA FUNKSIONAL O'ZGARISHLAR**

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### Annotatsiya:

Mazkur maqolada mumtoz arab tili va zamonaviy adabiy arab tili morfologik tizimi dinamik-tizimli yondashuv asosida qiyosiy tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda uch undoshli ildiz modeli, vazn paradigmalari, fe'l boblari hamda ism yasalish mexanizmlarining tarixiy barqarorligi aniqlanadi. Shuningdek, zamonaviy bosqichda kuzatilayotgan semantik kengayish, qo'llanish intensivligining o'zgarishi va terminologik yangilanish jarayonlari ilmiy jihatdan asoslanadi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** mumtoz arab tili, zamonaviy adabiy arab tili, morfologik tizim, uch undoshli ildiz, vazn modeli, fe'l paradigmasi, lingvistik barqarorlik, semantik kengayish, terminologik integratsiya, evolyutsion dinamika.

### INTRODUCTION

Arabic is one of the few languages in linguistic history distinguished by the stability of its morphological system. The systems of nahw and sarf, theoretically grounded by the Basran and Kufan grammatical schools in the eighth and ninth centuries, have preserved their structural core for centuries. This linguistic model, formed on the basis of the Qur'anic text, hadiths, and classical literature, was consolidated as a normative standard and recognized in scholarly literature under the name "Classical Arabic." However, language, as a social phenomenon, is always in motion. As a result of the intellectual awakening of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Modern Standard Arabic emerged and adapted itself to new communicative, scientific, and political needs.

Within this process, a central question arises: to what extent has Modern Standard Arabic preserved the classical morphological system? Do the triliteral root model, pattern paradigms, and verbal system of Arabic maintain their structural stability, or have modern needs generated new morphological changes? This study aims to answer these questions through a dynamic-systemic approach. Morphology is

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analyzed not as a static set of grammatical rules, but as a system whose internal core remains stable while its external layer demonstrates functional adaptation.

### MAIN PART

In order to understand the morphological relationship between Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, it is appropriate to consider morphology as a two-layered system:

1. structural core (invariant layer)
2. functional-peripheral layer (dynamic layer)

The structural core consists of the trilateral root system (jizr), the pattern model (wazn), and the paradigms of verb forms. This mechanism functions in almost the same way in Modern Standard Arabic as it did in the classical period. For example, the root k-t-b produced such forms as “kataba,” “kitāb,” “maktūb,” and “kātib” in classical texts, and the same generative mechanism is preserved in modern texts as well.

This demonstrates the historical stability of the morphological core. Since word formation in Arabic relies not on an external affixal system but on internal vowel alternation and pattern structure, its formal model is less prone to change. For this reason, morphological structure appears as the layer least subject to transformation in linguistic evolution.

In Classical Arabic, the verbal system is classified on the basis of fifteen forms. These forms (fa‘ala, fa‘‘ala, fā‘ala, tafā‘ala, istif‘āla, and others) constitute strict paradigms carrying both semantic and grammatical functions. In Modern Standard Arabic, the same paradigmatic system continues to be used as a normative foundation.

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Morphological element	Classical Arabic situation	Status in the modern literary language	Stability Level	Nature of change
Three-consonant root system	Generative basic mechanism	Completely preserved	Very High	Unchanged
Pattern model	Has a strict semantic function	Formally preserved	High	Semantic expansion
Verb chapters (I–X, etc.)	Paradigmatic system is stable	Preserved as a normative basis	High	Changed frequency of use
Broken compound (compound at-taksīr)	Active and widely used	Preserved, but relatively less	Medium-High	Decreased intensity
Sound compound (compound as-sālim)	Existing but limited	More widely used	High	Functional expansion
Noun formation model	Weight-based strict system	Preserved and used in new terms	Very High	Terminological expansion
Arabization process	Limited (mostly internal)	Phonetic mastery expanded	Medium	Lexical integration
Morphological complexity	High	Formally preserved	High	Practical simplification

### Comparative description of the morphological system of classical Arabic and modern literary language

However, the analysis shows that the frequency of use of certain verb forms has changed in the modern period. For example, Form X (istafʿala) is actively used in scientific-technical and political terminology: “istathmara” (to invest), “istakhdama” (to use). Whereas in the classical period this form more often expressed meanings of request, desire, or pursuit, in the modern stage of the language it has expanded to denote abstract and institutional actions.

The noun-derivation model is another important indicator of the morphological stability of Arabic. In Classical Arabic, such patterns as fāʿil, mafʿūl, mifʿāl, and tafīl had fixed semantic functions. These models also remain actively used in Modern Standard Arabic. For example, on the basis of the root ʿ-l-m: ʿālim (scholar), maʿlūm (known), taʿlīm (education), iʿlām (information/media).

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At the same time, the development of science and technology in the modern era has led to the emergence of new terms. What is noteworthy is that many of these new terms are formed on the basis of existing pattern models: “ḥāsūb” (computer), “barmaja” (programming), “ma‘lūmāt” (data).

This process demonstrates the elasticity of the morphological system. Arabic absorbs new concepts through its internal generative mechanism, which ensures lexical expansion while preserving structural stability.

In Classical Arabic, there are two main types of plural formation: the sound plural (jam‘ as-sālim) and the broken plural (jam‘ at-taksīr). The broken plural system is based on complex morphological changes. Although this system has been preserved in Modern Standard Arabic, in actual usage the relative predominance of sound plural forms can be observed.

This indicates a tendency toward morphological simplification, yet the system itself does not change. In normative grammatical manuals, broken plural forms are also fully retained. On this basis, it can be argued that the change is not the loss of the system, but rather a redistribution of intensity in usage.

In the process of adopting international terminology, Modern Standard Arabic employs two methods:

1. forming a new word on the basis of an existing root;
2. direct borrowing through phonetic adaptation.

For example, the words “dīmuqrāṭiyya” (democracy) and “tīknūlūjiyā” (technology) belong to the second model. Although these units are not fully integrated into the classical root-pattern system, grammatically they adapt to Arabic morphology; for instance, their plural forms are created with Arabic endings. Therefore, lexical-level renewal does not undermine the morphological foundation.

Several factors have contributed to the preservation of the morphological system in Arabic:

- the normative role of the Qur’anic text

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- the primacy of classical grammar in the educational system
- the high prestige of the literary language
- diglossia between dialect and literary language

As a result of diglossia, changes in everyday speech do not directly affect the morphology of the literary language. This, in turn, helps preserve the structural core.

In the transition from Classical Arabic to Modern Standard Arabic, the morphological system has not undergone radical transformation. The triliteral root model, pattern paradigms, and verbal system retain their invariant character. The changes are manifested mainly in the peripheral and functional layer.

### CONCLUSION

The relationship between classical Arabic and modern literary Arabic is based not on a break or abrupt transformation, but on the principle of evolutionary continuity. The morphological core of the Arabic language - the three-consonant root system, weight paradigms and verb parts - has remained historically stable. This structural mechanism also functions as a generative basis at the modern stage, and new terms are often created on the basis of the same model.

Changes are mainly manifested in the peripheral layer: semantic expansion, redistribution of the intensity of use, phonetic adaptation of international terms and practical simplification of some complex forms are observed. However, these processes do not violate the internal invariant structure of the morphological system.

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