



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Analysis of Tense System in Jibbali (Shehri) Language

Amir Azad Adli Alkathiri<sup>1\*</sup>, Badri Abdulhakim Mudhsh<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Preparatory Studies Center, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Apr 24, 2024	Jibbali (Shehri) is an endangered Modern South Arabian language spoken by 50,000–70,000 people in the Dhofar region of the Sultanate of Oman. The absence of a writing system and the absence of school instruction contribute to its endangered status. It exhibits distinctive linguistic features, including a dual-number system and internal verb modifications. The language is rich in traditional knowledge, preserved through oral traditions like proverbs and poetry. Therefore, the current analysis endeavors to analyze the verb system in Jibbali. The qualitative method, reliant on Rubin's (2014) book and additional data gathered from native speakers, forms the foundation of this analysis. The analysis indicates that the imperfective signifies the doer who performs an action in the present tense, or who has done it in the past in narrative contexts, or in the habitual past. On the other hand, the perfective indicates the end of the event if the formula is devoid of any precedent. The past tense can only signify the near future in specific contexts, and the context reveals the meaning of the future. If the letter d-/ precedes the past tense, it may indicate the immediate present that occurs at the moment of speaking (which indicates the meaning of the active participle). Finally, the future tense is formed by adding a prefix to the verb ha-/ or a-/. But sometimes the future tense may be used in the context of the past tense, as in /šā'k dé 'or ḥa-ysexənt/.
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<p><b>*Corresponding Author:</b></p> <p>amir.alkathiri@utas.edu.om</p>	

## INTRODUCTION

The Sultanate of Oman, with Muscat as its capital, is an Arab country situated on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, overlooking the mouth of the Persian Gulf. Oman, like other Arab countries, is linguistically diglossic. The official language for administration, education, mass media, and all formal domains is Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). People use the colloquial Arabic varieties for everyday informal communication. Moreover, in Oman, the linguistic landscape is remarkably diverse, featuring several minority languages alongside Arabic. These include Indo-Iranian languages (e.g., Kumzari, Lawati, Balochi), Modern South Arabian languages (e.g., Mehri, Jibbali), and Bantu languages (Swahili) (Al-Jahdhami, 2015). While Arabic and English dominate formal education and administration (Al-Issa, 2020), endangered languages like Jibbali and Mehri persist in informal domains, though they are facing a gradual shift towards Arabic (Al-Amr, 2022). Jibbali is an endangered Modern South Arabian language with a branch of Semitic spoken in Oman's Dhofar region by 50,000–70,000 people (Castagna, 2022). It lacks a writing system and is not taught in schools (Al Aghbari & Ourang, 2017). The Jibbali language, exhibits a complex verbal morphology system. It features a unique tense system where certain imperfect forms lack the t-prefix, typically marking 2nd and 3rd persons in Semitic languages (Johnstone, 1980). The language employs both affixes and internal changes to express grammatical contrasts, including number, person, and tense (Al Aghbari & Ourang, 2017). Jibbali verbs exhibit phonologically triggered allomorphy, in which

different morphological patterns correspond to inflectional cells based on root characteristics (Kathiri & Dufour, 2020). The language also presents a phonetically "unnatural" class of consonants (/b m y/ and historical \*w) that pattern together in various phonological processes (Watson & al-Kathiri, 2022). Despite its linguistic richness, Jibbali is endangered due to a lack of a writing system and official status (Al Aghbari & Ourang, 2017; Castagna, 2022).

The absence of a written system in the Jibbali language has resulted in a scarcity of publications, particularly in the tense system. The current analysis tries to dig into this gap, aiming to analyze the verb system in Jibbali. This analysis is predicated on the qualitative method, which is exclusively reliant on Rubin's (2014) book titled "*The Jibbali (Shahri) Language of Oman: grammar and texts*", in addition to other data obtained from native speakers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review covers various aspects of Jibbali and other Semitic languages. Modern South Arabian languages, particularly Jibbali/Shehret, are explored in terms of grammar, syntax, and lexical influences (Castagna, 2018). These studies collectively highlight the complexity and diversity of Jibbali and related languages, as well as the challenges in their preservation, teaching, and computational processing.

In 1981, Johnston's dictionary had the first short records about the tense of the Jibbali verb. These records were less than one page long and talked about how adding some antecedents changed the verb's case in the central dialect of the Jibbali language. For example, the present tense verb means that the action is normal if it does not have a vowel. If the signifier precedes the verb, it signifies continuity (Johnston, 1981). Rubin (2014) elaborated on the Jibbali verb tenses, relying mainly on recorded and written texts that Johnston collected but did not publish, although most of these texts were not a recording of spontaneous speech but rather the narrator's reading of written texts, which makes the narrator stumble sometimes and correct himself. Furthermore, the narrator's mother tongue is Mahri, and he learned Jibbali after that. Rubin also relied on a number of young narrators and collected some data from them, most of whom spoke the central dialect of Jibbali.

Lenchuk & Ahmed (2024) investigated the degree of multilingualism in the Dhofar region and how it is manifested in educational environments. The study employed a case study technique, in which five female university students who were proficient in multiple languages and attending a private institution in Dhofar, were selected. These participants were asked to record their everyday contacts, both on and off campus, for a duration of two hours. Additionally, two of the participants were interviewed in a semi-structured manner to get further information. The study's findings indicate that participants extensively utilize their diverse language abilities in their daily interactions. However, the existing educational approaches do not adequately acknowledge or incorporate this aspect of reality. The findings also indicate that participants possess an understanding of the discrepancy between the extent of multilingualism and the educational methods employed in the area. The key finding of the study is that shared indigenous language(s) predominantly indicate the informal and intimate nature of the interaction's setting.

Alrashoudi et al. (2024) explored the utilization of transfer learning approaches to construct an Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) model for this language that lacks sufficient resources. The researchers obtained a collection of Shehri (Jibbali) voice data and employed transfer learning to refine pre-trained Automatic voice Recognition (ASR) models on this dataset. The models used for fine-tuning included Wav2Vec2.0, HuBERT, and Whisper. The performance of the fine-tuned Whisper model was assessed using word error rate (WER) and character error rate (CER), and it was found to be satisfactory. On the Shehri (Jibbali) dataset, Whisper-medium model demonstrated superior performance compared to other models, achieving the best results with a Word Error Rate (WER) of 3.5%. This demonstrates the effectiveness of transfer learning in tasks with limited resources, showcasing the strong performance of pre-trained models without any additional training.

Al-Aghbari & Ourang (2017) specifically examined distinct morphological characteristics that distinguish these languages. The researchers have identified some unrecorded language patterns in Jibbali and Lari, which warrant further investigation. Unlike other Iranian languages, Lari does not have an auxiliary verb

in the progressive tense. Instead, it predominantly relies on morphemes for expressing the progressive aspect. Jibbali has linguistic characteristics that include the presence of a pronoun that refers to the speaker and another person involved in the conversation, indicating exclusivity. Jibbali is distinguished by a multitude of verbs that display internal modifications, together with a small number of affixes. When applicable, characteristics of the verbal morphology of both languages are described using examples obtained through fieldwork and personal communication. The findings indicated that Lari mostly functions as a linear language, where affixes attach to bases to indicate grammatical distinctions. In contrast, Jibbali is highly inflectional, characterized by alterations in morphophonology and verbal affixes such as number, person, and tense. Furthermore, it was discovered that affixes have a significant impact on indicating tenses and mood in Lari, whereas Jibbali utilizes a dual system to indicate numbers.

Finally, a recent research on the Jibbali language, an endangered Modern South Arabian language spoken in Dhafar governorate in Oman, highlights its linguistic complexity and cultural significance. Studies have examined its use in educational settings (Lenchuk & Ahmed, 2024), domains of usage (Al-Amr, 2022), and preservation of traditional knowledge through proverbs (Castagna, 2022). Jibbali has some unique features, such as a dual number system and internal verb changes, which can be seen in detailed grammatical descriptions (Rubin, 2014) and analyses of verbal morphology (Al Aghbari & Ourang, 2017). Hayward et al. (1988) noted the language's phonetic and phonological complexity, indicating the need for further investigation. Research emphasizes the need for proactive measures to protect and revitalize Jibbali, such as incorporating it into educational settings and creating linguistic corpora (Al-Amr, 2022). These efforts are crucial for maintaining linguistic diversity and preserving the cultural heritage of the Dhofar region.

The current analysis reviews the verb tenses stated in Rubin's (2014) book. This analysis relies on narrators who speak the eastern dialect of Jibbali. Therefore, some discrepancies may be attributed to the differences in Jibbali dialects, a matter that requires further verification in future studies.

### **Analysis of tense system in Jibbali (Shehri) language**

In this section, the researchers provide a detailed analysis of tense in Jibbali language. The researchers analyzed the three main tenses which are (Imperfective, Perfective, and Future). The analysis is based on Rubin's (2014) book titled "*The Jibbali (Shaḥri) Language of Oman: grammar and texts*", in addition to other data obtained from native speakers.

#### **1. The Imperfective**

In Jibbali language, the imperfective is expressed by adding prefixes and suffixes to the verb (Rubin, 2014). In addition, it can be used in different contexts to refer to any time or aspect (complete or continuous) as shown in the following usage (Rubin, 2014, p. 140).

- As a general present tense, it indicates performing the present action without any distinction of the duration of time or the completion and continuation of the action.
- As a habitual present tense, meaning that the subject usually performs the action without a specific indication of the time.
- As immediate present, meaning that the subject is now performing the action at a time equal to the moment of speech.
- In addition to its use as a habitual past, meaning that the subject usually performed the action in the past or future.
- The continuous and progressive in the past and present, i.e. an action performed by the subject for a certain period and not yet finished in the past or present.
- It can also be used as a narrative past, meaning the present tense is used as a reference to the past in the context of a dialogue or narration contexts.

The following examples illustrate the above mentioned usage (Rubin, 2014, p. 143).

*"bīrdém ḏ-ɔl yōd lɔ".*

"A person who does not lie".

*“tağórəb kəl sé kelš her iréž”*

“She knows absolutely everything about illness”.

*“kəl gəmə‘át taşəh őrš şágət”.*

“Every week jewelry appears on it”.

*“het sərbər tağélb”.*

“You always refuse”.

*“əl əkódər əl-ħī(l)k lə”*

“I cannot carry you”.

*“yəsət ərşót bə-yəsət egátš”.*

“He hits the boys and he hits his sister” (habitually)

*“he a‘ágób bə-títi, bə-títitə‘ágób bi”*

“I love my wife and she loves me”.

The following are examples of the present tense used as regular past, continuous past, or imperfective (aspect represents the state of the verb in terms of completeness and continuity) (Rubin, 2014, p. 143):

*“agás yəša‘ásrs”.*

“Her brother loved her”.

*“agéyg əl-‘ód yəgəsər yəxétər ħallét lə”.*

“The man didn’t yet dare go down to town”.

*“her hē ħáši őr embéř, tənúgəf ‘āš egátš ħáši”*

“Whenever dirt fell on the boy, his sister would brush the dirt off of him”.

*“her ínét fəlók šítár, əşrək ũs ε-ī b-əħzéz šítár”.*

“Whenever the women let out the kids, I would steal my father’s razor and slaughter the kids”.

*“yə‘élf enúf, bə-yəkól əl dé əl-ħés šε lə. yəród bə-xčrókš bə-yší‘ ed yəšékkəs”*

“He could fend for himself, and he thought there was no one like him. He would throw his stick and run to catch it”.

*“agéyg yəməzéz”*

“The man smoked”. (Habitually)

*“đín eyát, əl-ša‘srs bē ... b-əl əkódər l-éfsəħ bes lə”.*

“This camel I loved very much ... and I could not give it up”.

As we can see in the above examples, the present tense can be identical with the use of the auxiliary verb “would” not as a condition (e.g., if I was rich I would eat fish every day) but as a regular past (e.g., last year, I would get up early in the morning every day). It can also refer to the use of “would” in the context of the past relative future (meaning referring to the future from a point in the past, (e.g., I did not know whether she would love me), meaning I did not know in the past whether something would happen in the future. Although the future tense often has this function (Rubin, 2014). See the following examples (Rubin, 2014, p. 143):

*“əl éd‘ak lə yəħóşəl sé mən lə”.*

“I did not know (if) he would get something or not”.

*“guzúmk əl-‘ód əħzéz šítár zeyd”.*

“I swore I would not slaughter kids anymore”.

*“ebkǎ‘ eréš ‘aḳ rékəb ε-ūt mən tél dé ɔl yəḳǒdər yəlhóm lǒ”.*

“He put the head onto a ledge of the house, where no one would be able to jump up to”.

The future can be expressed in the present tense, and the future tense can also be used without preferring one form over another, and all of them convey the meaning clearly, as in the following examples:

*ḳlaš‘ ešerǒk ‘ǎk tǒš.*

Leave it... I will do it for you.

It is also acceptable to say in the future tense to express this sentence:

*ḳlaš‘ ḥal-šárək ‘ǎk tǒš.*

Leave it... I will do it for you.

In addition, below are examples of the present tense used as simple or usual future (Rubin, 2014, p. 144):

*“ḥaš ε-shé(l)k ḏénu, ézmək ēšágər”.*

“When you have finished with this, I will give you the other”.

*“her ɔl kisk tǒk lǒ, ɔl əǵórəb ɔrəm lǒ”.*

“If I do not find you, I will not know the road (you took)”

*“ɔl əkín hek tətəl-fǒt, her ɔl edúrk len əl-‘éni lǒ”.*

“I will not be a wife for you till I die, if you do not come back to us this evening”.

*“her ḳél‘ak tǒš ‘aḳ šəḥálét, yəmtése’ bə-yəkín míh”.*

“If you leave it in a bowl, it will melt, and it will be water”.

*“yəktélét bi eḳəl her ḳélá‘k tǒk bə-flótk”.*

“The tribes will talk (badly) about me if I leave you and run away”.

In narrative contexts, the present tense can also be used as a simple past tense. Below are some examples (Rubin, 2014, p.144):

*“yəfrér ḏírš eḳézər”.*

“The leopard jumped on it”.

*“yəzhóm taṭ mən əǵág bə-yəḏórəm tit mən iyél”.*

“One of the men came and slaughtered one of the camels”.

In Jabbali language, the present tense is usually used to indicate the progressive in the past or present with the letter d-/ḏ-, but the letter d-/ḏ- is not usually used in front of the prefix t, which does not make a distinction between the regular present and the present continuous. See the following example (Rubin, 2014, p.144-145):

*“kǒ hət tǒk”.*

“Why are you crying?”

## 2. The perfective

Perfective category is distinct from other aspectual categories in that it establishes a connection between the situation and its preceding situation, rather than conveying any information about the internal temporal structure of a case (Comrie, 1976). He states that “a perfect expresses the continuing present relevance of a past situation” (Comrie, 1976, p. 52). The perfective expresses the situation as a whole,

single, unanalyzable unit. There is a beginning and an end, but the imperfective aspect does not refer to either (Mudhsh, 2021, Mudhsh et al., 2023).

In Jibbali language, all perfects are expressed using the following suffixes to the verb (Rubin, 2014):

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	-(ə)k	-(ə)š <i>i</i>	-ən
2m	-(ə)k	-(ə)š <i>i</i>	-(ə)kum
2f	-(ə)š		-(ə)kən
3m	—	-ó	—
3f	-ót	-tó	—

(Rubin, 2014, p.139)

“The basic and most common use of the perfect is as a past tense”. See the following examples (Rubin, 2014, p.140):

*“xaṭarét sfɔrk kin sékənite éšələk dəbéy, bə-žimk ‘aḳ ‘askérít. bə-skófk ‘ónut trut”.*

“I traveled from my settlement until I reached Dubai, and I enlisted in the police. And I stayed two years”.

*“ōr heš, “het žəḥákək len”.*

“They said to him, “you tricked us”.

*“ɔl ġarób tɔ lɔ”.*

“He did not recognize me”.

*“aġád bə-ksé ‘amḳás xōš aḥróf bə-ḥilóhum”.*

“He went and he found in it five (gold) coins, and he took them”.

*“zum ešférót izírét bə-təxóts”.*

“He gave the bird to the servant-girl and she cooked it”

*“tum ðə-šerókkum elín ... ɔl šerókan tɔs lɔ”.*

“You are the ones who stole our cow ... we did not steal it”.

*“šed l-iršóhum b-aġád”.*

“They loaded their camels and they went”.

*“a‘šés, b-ɔl ‘aššót lɔ”.*

“They roused her, and she did not wake up”.

*“zaḥám šhalét ġigeníti sibrúti bə-kéb ‘aḳ eġōr. bə-xanít xaṭóḳésən”.*

“Three girl ghosts came and went down into the well. And they took off their clothes”.

“We also find the perfect at least with the verb “aġád” meaning “go” used as an immediate future, as appears in the following example” (Rubin,2014, p.140):

*“he aǧádək”.*

“I am off”.

Moreover, this case is not specific to the verb *“aǧád”* meaning “go”, but rather it is general in all verbs:

he skóək.

I will sit down.

he ‘éšk.

I will stand up.

“The perfect also appears regularly after a variety of particles, including the conditional particles *her*, *(ə)ǧə*, and *(ə)ǧə kun* the temporal conjunctions *mit*, *her*, *əd*, *hes* and *ħaṣ* ε- and *d-‘əd ɔl* ‘before’” (Rubin, 2014, p.140):

The word *“māskín”* (from *“miskin”* in Arabic) can be used as an adjective or noun meaning poor, but it can also be used in a phrase that expresses some will or hope (such as *“I wish”* in classical Arabic or *“I wish”* in many Arabic dialects), and this use is preceded by the letter *d / ǧ*. This word does not appear in this sense in Johnston's texts, but there is a proverb in Johnston's dictionary and Rubin's assistants mention this word several times. It is interesting that the verb that follows a mask (if) is in the past in the third person masculine singular. For the phrase *“I hope that so-and-so does something”* what follows the letter *“dha”* is a noun or pronoun and is followed by a past tense verb (Rubin, 2014).

See the following examples (Rubin, 2014, p. 321):

*“māskín ε-šíník kéréb”.*

“I hope to see you soon”.

*“māskín ε-šfók ǧabǧót ǧúhun”.*

“I hope to marry that girl”.

*“māskín ε-šé zəħám t”.*

“I hope he comes to me”.

*“māskín ǧ-‘ōi ǧdōr li”.*

“I wish my grandfather would come back to me”.

### 3. Future

The future tense may be employed to indicate an event that occurs subsequent to the moment of discourse (Bybee et al., 1994; Comrie, 1985; Mudhsh, 2021). Desire, intention, willingness, prediction, and intention comprise the future (Bybee et al., 1994). Till now, the question of whether the future belongs in the mood category or the tense category is up for debate (See, Comrie, 1985, Mudhsh et al, 2023; Mudhsh et al., 2024; Laskar, 2012). In Jibbali language, future tense in Johnston's texts consists of the morpheme (*dħa*), or (*ħa*), plus the verb. In current usage (spoken or written), this particle often has the reduced form (*a*) (Rubin, 2014).

In 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century sources (such as Müller's texts), this morpheme has the form *dħar* or *dhar*. Below are some examples of the future tense (Rubin, 2014).

*“mit ħa-l-əšnék”.*

“When will I see you?”.

*“ħa-l-ǧgzəm”.*

“I will swear”.

*“dħa-l-ǧád kərəre”*

“I’ll go tomorrow”.

*“mǧóre’ dħa-l-ǰklətheš bə-xáfi”.*

“Then I will tell him about my foot”.

*“dħa-təsné yəǧrəb t̄roh”.*

“You’ll see two ravens”.

*“dħa-tərházan ‘ak egōr”.*

“They’ll wash in the well”.

*“a-nǧád tel iyél”.*

“We’ll go to the camels”. (Rubin, 2014, p. 150).

The researchers met men born in the last century who did not use dħar or dhar to indicate the future. Maybe Mueller misheard.

If there are two future tenses used in one sentence, the morpheme (*dħa*) is used only with the first verb, unless another phrase intervenes. This is what Robin gave as an example from the words of one of the young men, which is the last example here, for example (Rubin, 2014, p. 150):

*“mūn mənhum dħa-yít bə-yǰkəla‘ aǧág ðə-šés”.*

“(to see) which [lit. who] of them would eat and let down his friends”.

*“he dħa-l-ǧád bə-l-əhbés”.*

“I will go and push him off [lit. make him fall]”.

*“ħa-nkəlá‘k ‘ésər ēm, ħa-netbék bə-nəškék, əm-mən ðírš ħa-nəhézək”.*

“We’ll leave you ten days, we’ll feed you and give you drink, and afterwards we will slaughter you”.

There are examples in which the use of the future morpheme appears with both verbs together, and the morpheme is (*ħa*), for example:

*he ħa-lǧád bə-ħa-lə‘már hés*

The future tense can also be used in the context of the past tense to indicate a relative future, usually corresponding to the English “would” (Rubin, 2014, p. 151).

*“šā‘k dé ‘ōr ħa-yšéxənt”.*

“Did you hear somebody say he will [or: would] leave?”

*“thúmk tǰš ar ħa-yħǰšəl”.*

“I thought he’d surely get (something)”.

*“guzúm ar ħa-yəhézəš”.*

“He swore he would kill her”.

*“šérék enúf dħa-yəðhól”.*

“He pretended that he was going to urinate”.

The future tense is also often used in the answer to apodosis (usually with the morphemes: *her / ə ðə*). In Johnston’s texts, the future is used in the answer slightly more than the present tense. Here are some examples (Rubin, 2014, p. 151):

*“íné ħa-(t)zī-tə her kəlót̄k hiš b-əbrés”.*

“What will you give me if I tell you about your son?”.



“her ‘ágiš bi, ھا-tǵíd ši. b-ol ‘ágiš bi lo, ھا-tískif”.

“If you love me, you will go with me. And (if) you don’t love me, you’ll stay”.

“her aǵadót bə-zhám ebrí b-ol ksés lo, dḥa-yəfót”.

“If she goes away and my son comes back and doesn’t find her, he will die”.

Let us first examine the use of d-/& ḏ-/with the present tense. Johnston (1981) claims that “when d-/& ḏ-/ precedes a present tense verb the verb indicates the present continuous, as opposed to the present general. This covers only part of the use of this morpheme. In fact, the combination of d-/& ḏ-/ and the present tense can refer to the past, present continuous or circumstantial clause” (pp. 158-159).

In fact, there are many syllables in which it is difficult to determine whether ḏ-/ in addition to the present tense actually functions as a relative clause or a circumstantial progressive. Consider the following examples (all of which I prefer to translate adverbially) (Rubin, 2014, pp. 158-160):

“ksé ǵeyg ḏə-yəbǵód”.

“They found a man who was walking’ or ‘they found a man walking”.

“šā‘ eǵéžər bə-kób ḏə-yəntōḥən”.

“They heard the leopard and the wolf that were fighting’ or ‘they heard the leopard and the wolf fighting”.

“ksé yɔ ḏə-ykōr šxarét ḏə-xargót”.

“He found people who were burying an old woman who had died’ or ‘he found people burying an old woman who had died”.

“síni yɔ mékən ḏə-yóǵaḥ ‘aḵ but ḏ-túžər”.

“He saw many people who were going into a rich man’s house’ or ‘he saw many people going into a rich man’s house”.

“skɔfk šīn ḏ-əštī‘an əl-yó ḏə-yəhórg”.

“I stayed a little while listening to the people who were speaking’ or ‘I stayed a little while listening to the people speaking”.

“sínk ī ḏə-yōk”.

“I saw my father who was crying’ or ‘I saw my father crying”.

Now consider the following example, where ḏ can be considered an addition to a present tense verb, a relative clause, an adverbial clause, or just a main verb (Rubin, 2014, p. 150):

“xaṭarét ǵeyg ḏə-yəbǵód”.

“Once there was a man who was going’, or ‘once there was a man going’, or ‘once a man was going”.

### **d-/ḏ- + Imperfect**

Some other examples of d-/ḏ- in addition to the present tense indicating the present continuous. See below examples (Rubin, 2014, p. 160):

“zəḥám ǵeyg túžər bə-ḏə-yhódén šáǵət kɔl ḏ-ol šes šáǵət lo”.

“A rich man has come and he is giving out jewelry to everyone who doesn’t have any”.

“kɔ še embére’ ḏə-yōk”.

“Why is the boy crying?”.

The use of the /ḏ/ before two present tense verbs: ḏə-yhódén / ḏə-yōk is inaccurate. Here the /d/ should be used.

Most common in texts are examples of d-/ð- as well as a present tense verb indicating the past continuous. The below examples illustrate this (Rubin, 2014, p. 160):

*“aǵéyǵ ðə-yaššétən leš”.*

“The man was listening to him”.

*“ð-əhérg k-εđí-ilín”.*

“I was speaking with so-and-so”.

*“ī ðə-yōd bek”.*

“Father was lying to you”

Using the ð-/ before present tense verbs is inaccurate. Here the d-/ should be used.

In general, the simple present tense refers to a general present, imperfective, past, or regular present, while an imperfect verb plus d/ð indicates progressive or continuous action in the past or present. The whole situation is complicated by the fact that the morpheme d-/ð- does not usually occur before the prefix t-, that is, before most third-person and third-person present tense verbs. This means that sometimes what sounds like the present tense refers to the situational, present or past continuous (Rubin, 2014).

### **d-/ð- + Perfect**

One sentence can describe almost all cases of the present tense with the prefix d-/ð-. But unfortunately such an easy description of the past cannot be given with the prefix d-/ð-.

Actually it is not always clear why there is this prefix d-/ð- with the past. One possibility to use the past with d-/ð- is to refer to (circumstantial): which means something or someone was in a state, as appears in the following sentence (Rubin, 2014, p. 161):

*“ksé iyát ðə-ħizzót”.*

“They found the camel slaughtered [lit. having been slaughtered]”.

The researchers think that there is confusion in the examples that Rubin presented of inserting: the d-/ or ð-/ before the past verb. We asked the elder people and they confirmed that d-/ comes before the present tense more than /ð/ and the meaning does not differ whether the verb is with d-/ or ð-/. But the ease of pronunciation and the lack of concavity in extending the movements is what sometimes necessitates the choice of d-/ or ð-/. Sometimes it is permissible to use the verb with the d-/ or ð-/ together without this having any effect on the difference in meaning. There is a preference for using the d-/ more than the ð-/ in general. For examples:

kés-k gég da-ltíg.

kés-k gég ða-ltíg

I found a man murdered.

While the present tense is used with d-/ & ð-/ to indicate that the two verbs in a sentence of this type are taking place at the same time. The past tense with d-/ & ð-/ indicates that one of the two actions occurred before the other. Sometimes a sentence like this can be translated as perfect participle (Rubin, 2014, p. 161):

*“ksé iyát ðə-ħizzót”.*

“They found the camel slaughtered [lit. having been slaughtered]”.

*“kisk ēmí b-aǵáti əd-šéf”.*

“I found my mother and my sister asleep [lit. having fallen asleep]”.

*“aǵadót ðer emíh ð-əftwržót”.*

“She went to the water very happy [lit. having become happy]”.

“(t)zḥōn ḏ-télf”.

“They come back hungry”.

As with d-/ & ḏ-/ added to the present tense, these adverbial constructions overlap with relative clauses in their meaning. It is not always clear what is meant. For example, the syllable works equally well if we assume a relative clause, and translate “They found a camel that had been slaughtered”. However, when the adverb refers to the subject of the verb, rather than the object, as in the last sentence, it is clearly not a relative clause (Rubin, 2014).

The following can be said: d-/ & ḏ-/ is used with the present tense to indicate something similar to the English present perfect, i.e. a previous action that continued until the present. Here are some examples, in contrast to the simple perfect (Rubin, 2014, p. 162).

“aḡabḡt ḏa-féḡét lebs ḏ-ambére”.

“The girl was dressed in [or: had put on, and is still wearing] boys’ clothes”.

“aḡéyḡ ber ḏ-erḡín”.

“The man has already been tied up”.

“he ḏa-ḡáḡrḡk hérúḡ ḏénu”.

“I have been guarding this tree”.

We can see that the d-/ in the above verbs: ḏa-féḡét / ḏ-erḡín / ḏa-ḡáḡrḡk is better than the ḏ-/.

## CONCLUSION

The current study analyzed the verb system in Jibbali language. According to the analysis, the imperfective may denote the doer who performs an action in the present tense, as in /mbērā dī-kótāb/ ‘the boy writes’. It also denotes the one who has done it in the past in narrative contexts, e.g., /aḡás yasa’ásars/, ‘her brother loved her’ or the habitual past, e.g., /aḡéyḡ yamzéz/, ‘the man smoked (habitually)’. In addition, the perfective indicates the end of the event if the formula is devoid of any precedent, e.g., /skóf ḏér sammāt/, ‘sit on the mat’. Also, it can only signify the near future in specific contexts, and the context reveals the meaning of the future, e.g., /aḡádak aḡádak/, ‘I went, I went, meaning I will go’. The past tense may indicate the immediate present that occurs at the moment of speaking (which indicates the meaning of the active participle) if the past tense is preceded by the letter d-/ , e.g., /da-skófak mbērā/ ‘sitting with a boy’. Lastly, the future tense is formed by affixing a prefix to the verb ha-/ or a-/ , for example, /ḡa-yḡád mḡóra/, ‘He will go later’. However, there are instances where the future tense can be employed in the context of the past tense, such as in the example /šā’k dé ḡr ḡa-ysexant/ ‘did you hear somebody say he will [or: would] leave?’.

## Authors’ Contributions

All authors contributed equally.

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