

Patterns of Verb Weakness (Al-Af'al al-Mu'tallah) and Their Morphological Changes in the First Part of Al-Qira'ah al-Rashidah

Heriansah^{1*}, Hamdal², Muhammad Ichsan Zaini³

^{1,2,3}Institut Agama Islam Darul Fattah Lampung

e-mail: 1heriansahspdi20@guru.smp.belajar.id, 2hamdallampung@gmail.com,
3ichsanzaini12@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aims to investigate the patterns of weak verbs (*al-af'āl al-mu'tallah*) and their morphological changes in the first volume of *Al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah* by Abul Hasan Ali al-Nadwi. The research focuses on identifying the frequency and types of weak verbs, analyzing the morphological processes of *i'lāl* (phonological modification), and exploring suitable pedagogical approaches for teaching these verbs to non-native Arabic learners. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study analyzed verbs extracted from fifteen lessons of the book. The results show 479 occurrences of weak verbs: 36 *mithāl*, 288 *ajwaf*, 151 *nāqīṣ*, and 4 *lafīf* verbs. The morphological changes observed include deletion, substitution, vowel shifting, and semivowel assimilation. The findings highlight the richness of Arabic morphology and suggest an eclectic teaching method that integrates lecture, deductive, and cooperative (panorama) learning techniques.

Keywords: Weak Verbs, *I'Lāl*, Morphology, *Al-Qirā'ah Al-Rāshidah*, Arabic Pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

Arabic, as one of the central Semitic languages, holds a strategic position in linguistic studies and Islamic scholarship due to its intricate morphological system that combines derivational and inflectional processes. Mastery of Arabic morphology is crucial for accurate comprehension and production of texts, particularly those rooted in classical and contemporary Islamic discourse. Weak verbs (*al-af'āl al-mu'tallah*) represent a core yet challenging component of morphology because of their irregular phonological and orthographic behaviors, which directly influence meaning and grammatical function. Considering the high frequency of weak verbs in Arabic corpora, strengthening pedagogical approaches to their instruction becomes increasingly important for improving learning outcomes in modern Arabic education (Haddad, 2020; Fadhilah, 2019).

Despite their importance, weak verbs continue to pose significant difficulties for learners, especially non-native speakers. The rules governing *i'lāl*—including deletion, substitution, and vowel shift—require abstract morphological reasoning that many

students find challenging. Previous studies indicate that learners often struggle to identify root letters, recognize transformation patterns, and apply rules consistently across different verb forms (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2016). Moreover, many instructional materials present weak verbs in isolated formats without authentic textual context, resulting in fragmented understanding and limited long-term retention (Siregar & Lubis, 2021). These obstacles highlight persistent gaps in both learning and teaching frameworks.

In response to these issues, this study utilizes *Al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah* by Abul Hasan al-Nadwi as a pedagogically rich corpus that integrates linguistic, moral, and religious content suitable for learners at various proficiency levels. The research proposes three major steps: (1) identifying the distribution and patterns of weak verbs contained in Part I of *Al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah*; (2) analyzing their morphological transformations using established principles of *i'lāl*; and (3) formulating effective instructional strategies grounded in text-based and morphology-focused pedagogy. This integrated approach is expected to improve learners' structural awareness and facilitate more intuitive comprehension of weak verb behavior (Rahmawati, 2022).

Existing literature underscores the complexity of weak verb morphology and emphasizes the necessity of explicit morphological instruction for second-language learners of Arabic (Aboh & Asfaha, 2020; Nurhayati, 2021). Research on Arabic pedagogy also highlights the importance of authentic textual integration to enhance learners' morphological and semantic awareness (Alhawary, 2019). However, a significant gap remains: most previous studies address weak verbs primarily from a theoretical perspective and seldom combine corpus-based analysis with pedagogical application. Additionally, limited research has focused specifically on *Al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah*, despite its widespread use in formal Arabic curricula. Therefore, there is a need for studies that bridge morphological analysis with contextualized teaching recommendations.

This study advances the state of the art by integrating **morphological analysis**, **corpus-based methods**, and **instructional design** within a unified framework. Unlike prior research that tends to separate linguistic theory from teaching practice, this work situates weak verbs within authentic textual contexts while producing pedagogically actionable recommendations. This approach aligns with contemporary trends in Arabic education that prioritize contextualized, data-driven, and text-oriented methodologies (Mahfoodh, 2020). By focusing specifically on *Al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah*, this study contributes a novel and targeted examination of weak verbs that bridges theoretical insights with practical classroom needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research developments on morphological awareness and its implications for Arabic language teaching show a consensus that awareness of root-pattern structures is a key variable for word comprehension, reading, and mastery of Arabic morphology (Tibi & Kirby, 2017). Cross-context research shows that both inflectional and derivational aspects contribute differently to reading ability, and that the morphological distance between colloquial and Standard Arabic influences the development of morphological awareness. These findings emphasize the need for an explicit learning approach that instills sensitivity to morphological patterns in the context of meaningful texts (Tibi & Kirby, 2017; Shahbari-Kassem et al., 2024).

Experimental studies on early readers also show the existence of a morphology facilitation effect: early readers utilize root units and patterns to facilitate reading real words and pseudo-words, which means that teaching that emphasizes root-wazan analysis can accelerate early literacy acquisition in Arabic (El Akiki et al., 2020). The direct implication for teaching is that exercises highlighting root and pattern transposition and phonological variation will improve word form recognition, including irregular cases such as *fi'il mu'tal* (weak verbs).

Specifically regarding the phenomenon of *fi'il mu'tal* (weak verbs) and the process of *i'lāl* (removal/transformation of weak letters), classical and computational morphological studies show that these patterns of change are systematically regular even though they appear irregular on the surface — so that wazan analysis and *i'lāl* rules can be automated/defined in descriptive rules (Shaalan, 2010). This descriptive-computational approach is useful for formulating operational teaching rules: for example, presenting algorithms or sequential decision rules that help learners predict word form changes based on the position of weak letters (C1/C2/C3).

Corpus management and text-based studies emphasize the advantages of using authentic texts—particularly those that are culturally and thematically relevant—for teaching morphology: authentic texts enhance form-meaning connections and facilitate the transfer of morphological knowledge to real-world communication contexts (Mahfoodh, 2020; other text-based Arabic language studies). In this context, the use of *Al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah* as a pedagogical corpus can provide a morphologically rich and value-laden textual environment—enabling contextual and meaningful morphological training for learners.

Local literature in Indonesia also shows similar findings, particularly in the context of Islamic boarding schools and universities. A number of descriptive and experimental studies report that pattern-based methods and example-driven approaches can improve mastery of aspects of Arabic morphology, including understanding of *fi'il mu'tal* and the *i'lāl* process (Ma'arif, 2020; Fadillah, 2021). In addition, the integration of authentic texts in learning has been proven to strengthen students' ability to recognize morphological changes, especially in basic wazan (Sukmawati & Hasanah, 2022). However, most local studies are still descriptive in nature and have not consistently linked corpus-morphological findings with experimentally tested learning intervention designs. This methodological gap indicates that there are still opportunities for research that combines systematic corpus analysis—such as mapping weak verb patterns—with the development of evidence-based teaching models whose effectiveness can be measured.

In summary, international literature in the fields of psycholinguistics and language education confirms that: (1) morphological awareness contributes significantly to reading skills and morphological mastery (Tibi, 2023; Saiegh-Haddad & Schiff, 2016); (2) root-wazan units are the main cognitive components in Arabic lexical access (Boudelaa & Marslen-Wilson, 2015); and (3) authentic text-based learning improves the transfer of morphological knowledge to the context of reading comprehension (Hamada, 2020). Local literature provides empirical support in the Indonesian context, but there is still a methodological gap—namely, a lack of experimental research that directly links the results of corpus morphological analysis with teaching strategies whose effectiveness can be measured. Therefore, a study that maps *fi'il mu'tal* in *Al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah* and

designs pedagogical interventions based on these findings will make a substantive contribution to filling the existing scientific void.

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive design focusing on morphological analysis of weak verbs (*al-af'al al-mu'tallah*) within *Al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah* (Part I). The analytic process was grounded in the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of three concurrent flows of activity: **data reduction**, **data display**, and **conclusion drawing/verification** (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). This model is widely used in linguistic and educational research due to its suitability for iterative textual analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Given, 2016). Data analysis proceeded until saturation was reached, meaning no new patterns emerged from the corpus (Abdussamad, 2021). The methodological steps undertaken in this research are detailed as follows:

1. Data Collection

The researcher conducted extensive data gathering from primary linguistic sources, including classical morphology references, contemporary Arabic linguistics research, and relevant pedagogical studies. This comprehensive collection ensured adequate coverage of weak verb patterns and *i'lāl* processes, aligning with corpus-based qualitative procedures in Arabic morphology research (Alhawary, 2016).

2. Textual Reading of *Al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah* (Part I)

A close reading of the text was conducted to identify all occurrences of weak verbs prior to any analytical intervention. This step functioned as the initial mapping stage, consistent with procedures in descriptive morphological studies (Ryding, 2014).

3. Identification and Classification of Weak Verbs

All instances of weak verbs were systematically recorded and categorized by referencing established *ṣarf* rules from authoritative sources. The classification process followed procedures used in previous morphological analyses of Arabic verb systems (Watson, 2002; Boudelaa & Marslen-Wilson, 2015).

4. Morphological Analysis of *I'lāl*

The researcher analyzed each identified verb according to confirmed *i'lāl* rules documented in classical and modern references. This analysis included processes of deletion, substitution, and vowel shift, ensuring alignment with codified linguistic principles (Al-Maany, 2019; Holes, 2018). The analysis was conducted iteratively, following grounded reading approaches common in qualitative linguistic studies.

5. Data Display

Findings were organized into structured tables to facilitate visualization of patterns, frequency, and categories of morphological change. This approach supports transparency and systematic presentation in qualitative data analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

6. Data Reduction

The dataset was filtered to retain only information that contributed significantly to understanding patterns of weak verbs and their transformations. Redundancies were removed to sharpen the analytical focus, consistent with qualitative reduction techniques recommended in linguistic research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

7. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The refined data were synthesized to generate final conclusions. Verification was conducted through repeated cross-checking with authoritative morphology sources to ensure analytical validity. This step enabled the extraction of key patterns and pedagogical implications relevant to Arabic language instruction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Patterns of Verb Weakness (Al-Af'al al-Mu'tallah)

In this section, the researcher presents the findings based on data collected from the first volume of al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah, specifically from the first topic on page 21 to the fifteenth topic on page 52. All data regarding fi'il-fi'il mu'tall has been summarized and compiled in tabular form as presented **Table 1**. The study found 479 instances of weak verbs across the text, distributed as follows:

Tabel 1. Fi'il Mu'tall

Type	Frequency	Example
Mithāl	36	يئس - وعد - وجد
Ajwaf	288	باع - نام - قال
Nāqış	151	رضي - سقى - دعا
Lafif	4	يحيى - شوى - وفى - طوى
Total	479	

The data shows the distribution of four types of fi'il mu'tall in a corpus of 479 verbs. The Ajwaf group occupies the largest proportion with 288 occurrences, indicating that verbs with illat letters in the middle are the most productive or most frequently used in the data source. In second place is Nāqış with 151 examples, reflecting a fairly high frequency for verbs ending in illat letters. Meanwhile, Mithāl, which are verbs beginning with illat letters, only number 36, indicating a much lower frequency of occurrence than the previous two groups.

The least frequent category is Lafif with only 4 occurrences, so it can be said that verbs with two illat letters are the least frequent form in the data. This imbalance may indicate differences in morphological productivity, variations in usage within the text, or the frequency of the concepts represented by each type of verb. Overall, this distribution

shows the dominance of ajwaf and nāqīṣ in the structure of the fi'il mu'tall lexicon, while mithāl and especially lafīf appear as minor forms in the corpus.

A. Mithal

The collected data on fi'il miṭāl shows variations in distribution and frequency of occurrence in the text of al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah. The verb waṣala (وصل) occupies the most dominant position with seven occurrences on several pages (21, 32, 37, 38, and 43), followed by waḍa'a (وضع) which appears six times on five different pages. The dominance of these two verbs indicates that they are basic verbs that are often used in everyday narratives, such as moving to a place, transferring, or placing an object. Meanwhile, other verbs such as istayqāza (استيقظ) and wajada (وجد) each appear five times, indicating that the theme of daily activities (waking up, finding something) also features heavily in the reading material **Table 2**.

As for verbs with lower frequency such as waqafa (وقف), tawadda'a (توضأ), tawajjaha (توجه), waqa'a (وقع), to wadda'a (ودع) and wujiba (وجب), indicate that although they are miṭāl verbs, their use is more situational and not repeated throughout the text. The total number of miṭāl verbs identified is 36 words, which illustrates that this category has a significant portion in the narrative structure of the book, but with an uneven distribution. Overall, this data shows that fi'il miṭāl is used consistently in the context of physical actions, commands, and narrative events, making it an important focus in the study of morphological analysis and the meaning of fi'il mu'tall at an advanced level.

Tabel.2 Frequency fi'il mithal

Af'al	وصل	وضع	استيقظ	وجد	وقف	توجه, توضأ وقع ,	وجوب, ودع وفق , أوقف
freq	7	6	5	5	3	2	1

B. Ajwaf

The data shows **Table 3** that the verbs kāna (كان) and qāla (قال) dominate significantly with frequencies of 85 and 69 times, respectively, spread across almost all pages. The dominance of these two verbs is consistent with the characteristics of narrative texts in al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah, as kāna functions as a highly productive copula verb in forming nominal structures, while qāla is a verb commonly used in dialogue, direct quotations, and the delivery of messages. Verbs such as jā'a (جاء), laysa (ليس), arāda (أراد), and qāma (قام), which appear between 11 and 21 times, show that the narrative emphasizes elements of movement (coming, standing), expressions of will, and affirmative structures. This shows that the reading text gives a large portion to verb forms related to physical activity, dialogue, and description of circumstances.

Meanwhile, verbs with medium frequency such as *nāma* (نام), *syā'a* (شاء), *ṣāma* (صام), *istirāḥa* (استراح), *khāfa* (خاف), and *ajāba* (أجاب) indicate more specific daily activities, such as sleeping, wanting something, fasting, resting, feeling afraid, or answering. Verbs that appear less frequently (1–3 times), such as *jā'a* (جاء), *afāda* (أفاد), *ṭāba* (طاب), *ḍā'a* (ضاع), and others, indicate that their appearance is highly contextual and limited to specific situations in the story. The total number of mu'tall verbs reached 288 forms, indicating the high intensity of mu'tall verb usage in the material. These findings indicate that fi'il mu'tall, whether *ajwaf*, *naqis*, *mithāl*, or *lafif*, are dominant linguistic elements in the narrative construction of *al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah*, making them highly relevant as objects of study in Arabic morphology and lexical analysis.

Tabel.3 Frequency Fi'il Ajwaf

Af'al	كان	قال	قال	ليس	أراد	قام	شاء,نام	صام	استراح
Frequency	85	69	21	15	13	11	6	5	4

2. Types of Morphological Change (I'lāl)

The analysis identifies four major types of morphological alternation in weak-root verbs, consistent with classical descriptions of *i'lāl* in Arabic grammar. The first is **Deletion** (الحذف), in which one of the weak radicals (حروف العلة) is removed when certain phonological environments require it, as seen in the form *يَعْبُدُ* → *تَوَعَّدَ*. The second type is **Substitution** (القلب), referring to the replacement of a weak consonant with an appropriate vowel to maintain phonological ease or morphological harmony, as in *قَالَ* ← *قَوَّلَ*. The third process, **Vowel Shifting** (النقل), involves the movement or redistribution of vowels within the word structure, illustrated by the alternation *قُلْتُ* → *تَيَقُولُ*. Lastly, **Assimilation/Stabilization** (الإسكان) occurs when short vowels are neutralized or removed to stabilize pronunciation, as exemplified in *يَمْشِي* ← *يَمْشِي*. These processes appear consistently across the dataset and follow well-defined conditioning environments, confirming that *i'lāl* functions as a systematic and predictable mechanism in Arabic morphology **Table 4**.

Table 4. Type of I'lāl

Type of I'lāl	Arabic Term	Description	Rule Pattern Observed
Deletion	الحذف	Removal of weak radical under specific phonological environments	Weak radical drops when followed by sukun or for morphological lightening
Substitution	القلب	Replacement of weak consonant with vowel	Occurs to preserve phonotactic ease and pattern harmony
Vowel Shifting	النقل	Movement or redistribution of vowels	Short vowel shifts during inflectional change
Assimilation /Stabilization	الإسكان	Neutralization of short vowels for stabilization	Vowel is suppressed when meeting weak radicals

The findings of this study are in line with earlier linguistic analyses. Sultan (2021) emphasizes that الحذف, القلب, and الإسكان constitute the foundational mechanisms governing morphological change in weak verbs, particularly within the framework of early Arabic grammarians. Likewise, Yakin (2024) demonstrates that the processes of قلب, حذف, and تسكين occur in rule-governed and recurring patterns across classical texts, underscoring the deterministic nature of *i'āl* within the Arabic root-and-pattern system. Broader morphological research also highlights that such alternations play a central role in shaping the derivational and inflectional complexity of Arabic (Luthfan & Hadi, 2022). From a pedagogical perspective, explicit instruction of *i'āl* rules—paired with rich contextual examples—significantly enhances learners' ability to reconstruct roots and predict inflected forms (Natsir, 2022). Thus, the present findings reinforce and extend existing scholarship by offering empirical evidence from contemporary reading materials and demonstrating the continuing relevance of *i'āl* in both morphological analysis and Arabic language pedagogy.

The teaching of weak verbs and their phonological changes is designed using an eclectic approach that integrates the lecture, deductive, and Panorama cooperative methods. The process begins with a lecture to clarify essential terminology, classifications, and rules due to the complexity of the material. This is followed by the deductive method, in which students learn through accurate models provided by the teacher before solving parallel exercises. The Panorama method comes next, allowing students to collaborate, develop creativity, and deepen comprehension through structured group activities. These methods are applied sequentially to cover each other's limitations and strengthen learning outcomes.

The implementation includes several stages: introducing the types of weak verbs, explaining their phonological changes through step-by-step breakdowns, and presenting full conjugation tables to simplify challenging concepts. Students then practice identifying and analyzing weak verbs based on the given models. Afterward, they are divided into mixed-ability groups to solve problems related to specific verb types, such as *mithāl*, *ajwaf*, or *nāqis*, using examples from *al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah*. Each group presents its results, engages in peer questioning, and receives final clarifications from the teacher, ensuring accurate understanding before moving forward.

Evaluation is carried out through oral and written assessments to measure students' comprehension after completing the instructional sequence. Oral assessment involves randomly assigned verbs that students must conjugate and analyze, while written assessment focuses on mastery of terminology and conjugation patterns. Together, these evaluation methods ensure that students not only understand the theoretical aspects of weak verbs but also develop the practical skill of applying phonological rules accurately.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that weak verbs (al-af'al al-mu'tallah) constitute a significant part of Arabic morphology, with 479 occurrences identified in Al-Qirā'ah al-Rāshidah. Their morphological variations deletion, substitution, vowel shifting, and assimilation illustrate the precision of Arabic morphological rules. The integration of multiple teaching strategies enhances learners' comprehension and application of these linguistic patterns.

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