



**HAL**  
open science

## On interaction between external and internal markers in expressing aspect in Arabic dialect varieties.

Samia Naïm

### ► To cite this version:

Samia Naïm. On interaction between external and internal markers in expressing aspect in Arabic dialect varieties.. Zlatka Guentcheva. Aspectuality and Temporality: Empirical and Theoretical Issues., 172, John Benjamins Publishing, pp.325-354, 2016, Studies in Language Companion Series, 9789027259370. 10.1075/slcs.172.10nai . halshs-01802634

**HAL Id: halshs-01802634**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01802634>**

Submitted on 5 Jun 2018

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# John Benjamins Publishing Company



This is a contribution from *Aspectuality and Temporality. Descriptive and theoretical issues.*

Edited by Zlatka Guentchéva.

© 2016. John Benjamins Publishing Company

This electronic file may not be altered in any way.

The author(s) of this article is/are permitted to use this PDF file to generate printed copies to be used by way of offprints, for their personal use only.

Permission is granted by the publishers to post this file on a closed server which is accessible to members (students and staff) only of the author's/s' institute, it is not permitted to post this PDF on the open internet.

For any other use of this material prior written permission should be obtained from the publishers or through the Copyright Clearance Center (for USA: [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)).

Please contact [rights@benjamins.nl](mailto:rights@benjamins.nl) or consult our website: [www.benjamins.com](http://www.benjamins.com)

Tables of Contents, abstracts and guidelines are available at [www.benjamins.com](http://www.benjamins.com)

# On interaction between external and internal markers in expressing aspect in Arabic dialect varieties

Samia Naïm  
LACITO-CNRS

Themes, preverbs and particles partake in expressing aspectual notions. In this paper we will study the distribution of these markers and their grammatical and semantic compatibilities (when it is possible to retrace their etymology) with the two aspects inherent to the themes upon which the Arabic verbal system rests: the perfective and the imperfective. To what extent does the analysis of the affinities and incompatibilities between these external markers and the perfective and imperfective contribute to the definition of these very same notions? How to distinguish between constraints linked to verbal semantics (lexical aspect) and those which fall under one or the other of these two notions? This paper will also explore, from a crossdialectal and typological angle, which notions are encoded specifically and which belong to broader categories, so as to extrapolate the aspectual system dynamics in the dialects under study.

**Keywords:** Auxiliarity; affixation; grammaticalization; dynamic of aspectual systems in arabic dialects; syntax of basic aspectual notions; lexical semantics

Themes, particles and auxiliaries are all used in expressing aspectual notions. This study will look at their distribution and their grammatical and semantic compatibility with the two aspects which are inherent to the verbal bases of the Arabic verbal system, *i.e.* perfective and imperfective. To what extent does analyzing the affinities and incompatibilities between these external markers and the perfective and imperfective contribute to defining these same notions? How can one tease apart the constraints linked to verbal semantics (lexical aspect) and those linked to inherent aspect? We will also examine specifically encoded notions and those which are subsumed within broader notions, from both cross-dialect and typological perspectives, in order to shed

light on the dynamics of aspectual systems in the eastern dialect varieties<sup>1</sup> (Lebanon, Palestine) and in Yemeni varieties (Ṣanʿā, Zabīd).<sup>2</sup>

## 1. The basic perfective~imperfective distinction

The two basic verbal paradigms in Classical Arabic and the dialect varieties are marked by suffixal and prefixal inflections,<sup>3</sup> and are founded on an underlying perfective~imperfective aspectual opposition. In speakers' minds this aspectual distinction is closely linked to temporal distinctions. In its absolute use, the suffixed inflection (perfective), termed *al-māḍī* 'which is past, over', is automatically included in the sentence referential enunciative frame of reference and sets it in a past time frame. In contrast, the prefixed inflection (imperfective form), *al-muḍāriʿu*, is associated with a non-completed tense ("un temps non révolu").<sup>4</sup> Thus, in the absence of any specific context, the two basic forms of the verb (√zbʒ) 'joke' in the Ṣanʿānī dialect are located by speakers in the past and in the general (non-referenced, generic) present:<sup>5</sup> *zabaʒ* (PERF.3SGM) 'he joked'~*jizbiʒ* (IMPERF.3SGM) 'he jokes'.

### 1.1 Imperfective forms

In a large number of dialects, changes in the verbal system have led to the inclusion of a referential marker in the verb form corresponding to one or both of the basic forms, the perfective and the imperfective.<sup>6</sup> The Yemeni dialect of Zabīd has not undergone

1. Unless specified, examples are taken from my fieldwork corpus collected in Yemen, Lebanon, and Palestine. I have chosen to transcribe the examples taken from my corpus phonetically, so that dialectal variation be clearer for specialists of Arabic.

2. Henceforth (LEA) and (PEA) for the eastern dialects (EA) and (SYA) and (ZYA) for the Yemeni dialects.

3. Their traditional labels, which makes reference to where clitic pronouns are placed within the verb form. However, this label is not entirely accurate, as far as the "prefixal" inflection is concerned, because the person markers are discontinuous, and are both prefixed and suffixed.

4. It is moreover in these terms that the medieval grammarian Al-Zamāḡarī defines the two verbal forms, in his treatise on Arabic grammar, *ʿunmūḍāʒ fī al-naḡw* taking the time of speech for reference point: *Al-māḍī* "...refers to a process/event which took place in a time before yours...". *Al-muḍāriʿu* "...which includes the present and the future..." (Kouloughli 2007:133–142).

5. (Nāim 2009:67).

6. Cf. (Cohen 1989:187–89).

such a change, *i.e.* it has retained the basic perfective~imperfective distinction without any additional marker. In contrast, in the eastern sedentary dialects (EA), more specifically the urban varieties, and in the Yemeni dialect of Ṣanʿā, changes in the verbal system have given rise to two imperfective forms, one bearing the prefix *b-* and one “bare” form. The meanings of these two forms do not entirely overlap from one dialect to another, especially as concerns the marked form, where the meanings are system-dependent.

### 1.1.1 *The unmarked imperfective*

The unmarked form is found in both EA and SYA.

a) in dependent constructions:

(1) *nizil*                      *sa*    *s-sūq*    *jiftri*                      *xadra*                      (PEA)  
Descend.PERF.3SGM    PREP    the-souk    buy.IMPERF.3SGM    vegetables  
‘He went to the souk to buy vegetables.’

(2) *daxal*                      *l-barik*    *ħaggi-h*    *jiytsil*                      (SYA)  
enter.PERF.3SGM    the-tub    RP-3SGM    wash.IMPERF.3SGM  
‘He entered his tub to wash.’                      (narrative context)

(3) *tastiri*                      *thākī*                      *bi*    *ṣ-ṣanʿānī?*                      (SYA)  
know.IMPERF.2SGF    speak.IMPERF.2SGF    PREP    the-ṣanʿānī  
‘(Is it that) you know how to speak ṣanʿānī (dialect)?’

(4) *b-taṣərfe*                      *təħke*                      *ṣarabe?*                      (LEA)  
know.b-IMPERF.2SGF    speak.IMPERF.2SGF    Arabic  
‘Do you know how to speak Arabic?’

b) with modal values, in optative, jussive and exhortative constructions:

(5) *jxallī-k!*                      (LEA)  
preserve.IMPERF.3SGM-2SGM  
‘(God) preserve you!’

(6) *jirħam*                      *wāldaj-k!*                      (SYA)  
save.IMPERF.3SGM    parents-2SGM  
‘(God), take pity on your parents!’

The two varieties, SYA and EA, differ in how they encode conditional clauses (7), descriptions of procedure (9), definitions and general truths (8). In these sentences, it is the “bare” imperfective which must be used in SYA, whereas in EA it is the prefixed imperfective (*cf.* 1.1.2).

(7) *law tuxruṣī*                      *la*    *tuxruṣ*                      *kabid-ī*    *la*    *mūt* (SYA)  
if    exit.IMPERF.2SGF    then    exit.IMPERF.3SGF    liver-1SG    then    die.PERF1SG  
‘If you go, I will be deeply sad, I will die.’



with the time of speech (15), or link a process to a related event, depending on the context (16).

- (14) *ʔab-ī jʔī / bi-jʔī ʔalāʔ sāʔāt* (SYA)  
 father-1SG come.IMPERF.3SGM / come.b-IMPERF3SGM three hours  
*kull jawm*  
 each day  
 ‘My father comes’ (to visit me)/‘He comes (to see me) three hours every day.’
- (15) *bajn-ʔasabbir al-ʔaʔāʔ* (SYA)  
 prepare.bi-IMPERF.1SG the-lunch  
 ‘I am preparing lunch.’
- (16) *w baʔda hum fī d-dukkān b-ʔiftāyly l-ʔaʔī*  
 and after them in the-store work.b-IMPERF.3PL the-evening  
*daxal-ha sārīg*  
 enter.PERF.3SGM-3SGF thief  
 ‘Then, while they were working in the store in the evening, a thief entered her house.’ (The process rendered by ‘enter’ is secant to that of the subordinate clause).

In addition, contrary to what one finds in EA, in the ʔanʔānī dialect, the marked imperfective is never found in the apodosis of conditional or hypothetical clauses:<sup>8</sup>

- (17) *lā ʔā xū-f ʔagul-l-u* (SYA)  
 if come.PERF3SGM brother-2SGF say.IMPERF1SG-TO-3SGM  
*ʔinn-if nājme*  
 that-2SGF sleep.PTCP2SGF  
 ‘If your brother comes, I will tell him that you are sleeping.’
- (18) *ʔin gad gult-a la-h mā gad* (SYA)  
 if PART say.PERF2SGM-3SG to-3SGM NEG PART  
*ʔabgā-f sind-ak*  
 stay.IMPERF1SG-NEG at-2SGM  
 ‘If you already told him, I will not stay at your place.’

### 1.1.3 Absence of the marked~unmarked distinction

The Zabīd dialect, located in western Yemen, did not undergo reorganization and redistribution of the meanings of the imperfective into “bare” or absolute form~prefixed form. In the absolute form, the imperfective is found in all contexts where it is found

8. On the relation realis~potential in SYA, see (Naīm 2009: 167–170).

in EA and SYA (19–23) as well as in the contexts where EA and/or SYA have recourse to the prefixed form (24–25).

- (19) *ma fā fī ʔasm duxxān jabdī* (ZYA)  
 NEG want.IMPERF.1SG INDEF name smoke appear.IMPERF.3SGM  
 ‘I do not want there to be any smoke whatsoever.’
- (20) *tahni tfārgī banī-kʔ* (ZYA)  
 be able.IMPERF2SGF separate.IMPERF2SGF daughters-2SGF  
 ‘Can you leave your daughters?’
- (21) *ʔata l-malik jaxtab ʔind-u* (ZYA)  
 come.PERF3SGM the-king ask the hand of.IMPERF.3SGM at-3SGM  
 ‘The king came to him to ask for the hand of (his) daughter.’
- (22) *mā tehabī?* (ZYA)  
 INT do.IMPERF3SGF  
 ‘What are you doing?’ (right now)
- (23) *kalbit ʔamm-ī ʔabbās tanbuʔ-ik min furreh* (ZYA)  
 bitch uncle-1sg Abbas bite.IMPERF3SGF-2SGF PREP bottom  
*ma m-raʕ*  
 PREP the-head  
 ‘(That) the bitch of my uncle Abbas bite you from your bottom to your head.’
- (24) *natyassal w nʕallī w nalbas w* (ZYA)  
 wash.IMPERF1PL and pray.IMPERF1PL and dress.IMPERF1PL and  
*natkī w ninʕar*  
 sit.IMPERF1PL and visit.IMPERF1PL  
 ‘We wash, we pray, we dress, we take qât and we visit each other.’
- (25) *tyaddeʰ / ʔərfaḥ / tnaʔʔis* (ZYA)  
 lunch.IMPERF.1SG / sweat.IMPERF.1SG / be sleepy. IMPERF3SGF  
 ‘I am eating lunch’/‘I am sweating.’/‘She is sleepy.’ (habitual or concomitant)

## 1.2 The perfective

In the three dialect varieties, the perfective has not split and has only one form. It is found in independent clauses, in subordinate clauses (with exceptions, e.g. subordinate clauses expressing a goal which are in the imperfective (26–28)) and in hypothetical clauses: counterfactual hypotheticals usually have a perfective in both protasis and apodosis (29, 30). In EA (30), one notes the presence of the temporal marker *kān* ‘be’ (1.4) at the head of the apodosis, instead of the *la* particle found in SYA (29).

- (26) *nīsidd az-zinīn sasibb nətgāšam-hin* (SYA)  
 count.IMPERF.1PL the-fabric SUB share.IMPERF.PL-3PL  
 ‘We count the fabrics to divide them up.’
- (27) *bākan taṭlub thaššil-ha rəzq allah(zYA)*  
 go.PERF3SGF beg.IMPERF.3SGF obtain.IMPERF.3SGF-3SGF good God  
 ‘She went to beg, in the hope of help from God.’
- (28) *staʔzart sajjārah la rəṭlas sa ʔ-ʔabal* (LEA)  
 rent.PERF.1SG car PREP ascend.IMPERF.1SG PREP the-mountain  
 ‘I rented a car to go up the mountain.’
- (29) *law ʔitī ʔams la* (SYA)  
 if come.PERF2SGF yesterday then  
*ddajta-l-ik ḥanneh*  
 give.PERF.1SG-DAT-2SGF henna  
 ‘If you had come yesterday, I would have given you some henna.’
- (30) *law ʔəft-ī kante* (EA)  
 if see.PERF2SGF-3SGM be.PERF.2SGF  
*dayre ʔəft-ī*  
 right away recognize.PERF2SGF-3SGM  
 [lit. if you saw him you were right away you recognized him]  
 ‘If you had seen him, you would have recognized him right away.’

The perfective is also found in performative sentences. These meanings result from interaction between the sentence’s semantic and formal properties on the one hand, and discourse and pragmatic factors on the other hand. Verbs which produce this type of meaning, alongside verbs with performative scope (judicial sentences for example),<sup>9</sup> mostly refer to the speech act itself: ‘say, recount, tell, warn, prohibit...’ They are used in daily conversation.<sup>10</sup>

- (31) *kallamt-if hāḏa l-kalām mā jitkarrar-f* (SYA)  
 say.PERF.1SG-2SGF DEM the-words NEG repeat.IMPERF.3SGM-NEG  
 [lit. I have told you these words not they repeat themselves]  
 ‘I forbid you to repeat these words.’
- (32) *sallaft-ik* (SYA)  
 give credit.PERF.1SGM-2SGF  
 ‘You can put it on your tab.’

9. Verbs with performative scope partially overlap with those most usually found crosslinguistically, such as ‘repudiate’, ‘marry’, ‘swear’, ‘conclude a sale’... (Benveniste 1966; Austin 1970; Searle 1976; Récanati 1981).

10. (Naïm 1993).



- (39) *zana wārde la l-bēt* (ZYA)  
 1sg return.PTCP.SGF PREP the-house  
 ‘I’m going back home.’
- (40) *fjān bājke?* (ZYA)  
 INT go.PTCP.2SGF  
 ‘Where are you going?’

The participial form is used in the eastern and Yemeni dialect varieties. However, the list of verbs which may be used in this type of expression varies from dialect to dialect. Taking the verb ‘be sleepy’ for example, in ZYA the verb is in the imperfective (25) whereas in SYA and EA it is in a participial form (41).

- (41) *mnaʕʕis* (SYA)  
 be sleepy.PTCP.3SGM  
 ‘He is sleepy.’

#### 1.4 Temporal anchoring

As we saw above, the temporal dimension is never entirely absent from the aspectual system’s two basic forms. Moreover, in their absolute use, the perfective and imperfective (as well as their participial forms) are localized by speakers in relation to the time of speech ( $T_0$ ). The grammatical expression of linguistic verbal tense uses the auxiliary *kān* ‘be’, placed to the left of the verbal core ( $v_1$ ). The auxiliary ( $v_2$ ) locates processes in relation to each other, or to any other reference point. It follows the  $v_1$  subject, gender and number agreement markers, and can be modified by a tense-aspect particle.

Depending on the desired temporal localization,  $v_1$  and  $v_2$  align on the same prefixed or suffixed inflection, or differ, PERF + IMPERF, IMPERF + PERF. To present these combinations, we have chosen sentences where both the main verb and the auxiliary are in their “bare” form, *i.e.* not associated with any collocational particle specifying mood, tense or aspect (with the exception of the indicative prefix b-IMPERF). In other words, the issue being addressed here is not how compound and multiple compound tenses are formed based on possible equivalents expressed *e.g.* by French *passé antérieur*, *plus que parfait*, *futur antérieur*, etc.<sup>12</sup>

##### PERFECTIVE + PERFECTIVE

- (42) *kunt sabbart l-yada /* (SYA)  
 AUX.PERF.1SG prepare.PERF.1SG the-lunch /  
*sabbart l-yada*  
 prepare.PERF.1SG the-lunch  
 ‘I had prepared lunch.’ / ‘I prepared lunch.’

12. Because the combinations between the meanings of the perfective and imperfective and various TAM particles also play a role in expressing compound and multiple compound tenses.

- (43) *ħadḏart yada bas kēnu ʔakalu* (LEA)  
 prepare.PERF.1SG lunch but AUX.PERF3PL eat.PERF3PL  
 ‘I prepared lunch but they had eaten.’

**PERFECTIVE + IMPERFECTIVE**

- (44) *kān dājman jəʒe jzūr-n-na* (LEA)  
 AUX.PERF/3SGM always come.PERF/3SGM visit.IMPERF/3SGM-1PL  
 ‘He always came to visit us.’
- (45) *ʔams kunt feʔ* (ZYA)  
 yesterday AUX.PERF1SG want.IMPERF.1SG  
 ‘Yesterday I wanted to.’
- (46) *kānæt tabūk* (ZYA)  
 AUX.PERF.3SGF go.IMPERF/3SGF  
 ‘She was leaving/would leave (in the morning).’

In the Zabīd dialect, when used as an auxiliary, *kān* has two perfective forms: the first form is regularly inflected, and the second form is only found frozen in the third person singular and bearing the nominal suffix (accusative or genitive marker) representing the subject of the modified verb. Because of its specific morphology (frozen form + nominal suffix) the fixed form, also much rarer than the regular form, is more akin to an aspect particle than to an auxiliary. I have only found it in a corpus of stories in the 2nd person perfective (47).

- (47) *ʔælæði s-sinīn marra w kæn-ik tinzæʔi-ni* (ZYA)  
 after the-years all and AUX.PERF3SG-2SGF harry.IMPERF2SGF-1SG  
*ʔælæ m-fʃejʔa wæ m-ħrēʔm m-ħūt*  
 PREP the-bread and the-crumbs the-fish  
 ‘After all these years, [(and) here you go/you come to] you harry me [again] with the bread and the bits of fish.’

This phenomenon is sufficiently specific to merit attention.<sup>13</sup> According to Rossi (1938:250) it is (would have been?) attested in all Highlands dialects, including the Ṣanʿā dialect, but in his description of Ṣanʿā Arabic, it is only mentioned in a note in a collection of military songs (Rossi 1939: 115). I have not personally encountered it in Ṣanʿā. In addition, in Rossi’s corpus, *kān-ak* (*kān* + 2 SGM) is used as a copula in nominal sentences: *kānak mugaddameh ‘un tempo eri capo’*. M. Cohen (1924: 125) shows the form *kān* ‘be’ bearing a nominal suffix used as a copula in Mehri. In referring to this,

13. Because indeed it is not about the use of *kān* as a fixed or partially fixed particle as it is the case in other yemenite dialects (Behnstedt 1987:41; Watson 1993:154; Werbeck 2001:277–279).

he uses the term “nominal conjugation”. However, in the Mehri dialects today, it seems that this type of construction is not or no more in use.<sup>14</sup>

In the Zabīd dialect, it is not a nominal sentence because the augmented particle *kān-ik* is followed by a verb in the imperfective (prefixed inflection). It is thus not easy to translate (47). In this context, should it be translated as ‘you are still harrying me’ with continuative/durative meaning, or instead as ‘here you go’ with ingressive meaning, as well as serving as a clause linker<sup>15</sup> given the presence of the coordinator /w/ before *kān* [after all these years, you come and harry me?]? It is difficult to decide as the other examples attested in my corpus show little contextual variations.<sup>16</sup>

#### IMPERFECTIVE + PERFECTIVE

(48) *jkūn*                      *māt*    (SYA)  
 AUX.IMPERF.3SGM    die.PERF.3SGM  
 ‘He will be dead.’ (probably)

(49) *b-tkūn*                      *ʔakalit*    (LEA)  
 b-AUX.IMPERF.3SGF    eat.PERF/3SGF  
 ‘She will have eaten.’ (probably)

#### IMPERFECTIVE + IMPERFECTIVE

(50) *ʔaḥjānan*    *tikūn*                      *an-nuḡūf*    *mā*    *tināsib-na*                      (SYA)  
 sometimes    AUX.IMPERF/3PLF    the-drawings    NEG    agree.IMPERF.3SGF-1PL  
 ‘Sometimes, the drawings do not suit us.’ (possible)

(51) *b-tūšalū*                      *bi-kūnu*    *ʕam-jēklu*    (LEA)  
 b-arrive.IMPERF.3PL    b-AUX.3PL    eat.ʕam-IMPERF.3PL  
 ‘[When] you arrive, they will be eating.’ (possible)

14. In the Mehri dialects spoken in Yemen and Oman, *kān* with suffixed inflection cannot be used as a copula (M.-C. Simeone-Senelle, personal communication; Watson 2012).

15. In the dialect of Ṣanʿā, *kān*, frozen in the 3rd person singular, is used as a discourse marker (change or break of topic) and to denote temporal distance, which serves to encode the passing of time (Nāim 2009:79–80).

16. For example:

*mæjjæt-ik*                      *w*    *dæbbæʔt-ik*    *w*    *kæ̃n-ik*  
 kill.PERF1SG-2SGF    and    get rid of.PERF.1SG-2SGF    and    AUX.PERF3SG-2SGF  
*təsʔali*                      *ʔala*    *m-fšejʔa*    *w*    *m-hrēʔm*    *m-hūt*  
 ask.IMPERF2SGF    PREP    the-bread    and    the-crumb    the-fish  
 ‘I killed you, I got rid of you and here you go, you ask/you continue to ask for the bread and the bits of fish.’



The main aspectual notions encoded are the inchoative, ingressive, iterative and continuative. The lexeme (serving as auxiliary) modifying a given aspectual meaning can vary from dialect to dialect. Most often however, such variation is strictly lexical and has no bearing on the meaning conveyed.

### 2.1.1 *The inchoative*

By inchoative I mean the triggering of a process which will evolve. In this, it is distinct from the ingressive (2.1.2) which marks the suddenness of an event or entry into a state. The inchoative is mainly encoded by a posture verb, *i.e.* with no displacement, *qaṣad/zeṣid, zalas/gilis* (with cross-dialect phonological and lexical variation), equivalent to ‘sit’.

Depending on the sentence’s temporal setting, the auxiliary *qaṣad* (and its variants) is in the perfective (52–55, narrative) or imperfective (56, discourse), while the modified verb is always in the “bare” imperfective.

- (52) *lammin rawwaḥ el-walad ṣa d-dār w* (PEA)  
 when leave.PERF3SG the-child DIR the-home and  
*fāf-e(h) mījit qaṣad jṣajjit*  
 see.PERF3SGM-3SGM death AUX.PERF3SGM cry.IMPERF.3SGM  
 ‘When the child went home and saw him dead, he started crying.’
- (53) *zeṣid jīḥki zuṣṣas* (LEA)  
 AUX.PERF3SGM speak.IMPERF3SGM stories  
 ‘He started telling stories.’
- (54) *gassu jabku* (ZYA)  
 AUX.PERF3PL cry.IMPERF3PL  
 ‘They started crying’
- (55) *zālsit tādriṣ* (SYA)  
 AUX.PERF.3SGF read.IMPERF3SGF  
 ‘She started reading the Koran.’
- (56) *təḡlisi tahdiri inti w jḡāhe* (ZYA)  
 AUX.IMPERF2SGF chat.IMPERF2SGF you and her  
 ‘[...] you start chatting with her.’

In jussive constructions, the auxiliary and modified verb are in the imperative mood:

- (57) *gissī sarrigī* (ZYA)  
 AUX.IMP2SGF light the candles.IMP2SGF  
 ‘[...] start lighting the candles.’

Moreover, one notes other contextual meanings of the auxiliary which indicate a shift in meaning, from a movement-posture spatial meaning to an aspect-tense meaning denoting ‘duration’. In (58, 59) *zilis* and *zeṣid* (in the participial form) have come to mean ‘stay, reside’.

- (58) *zilis                    ʕindi-him jimkin    ʕisbūr* (SYA)  
 sit.PERF3SGM LOC-their perhaps week  
 ‘He stayed at their house perhaps a week.’
- (59) *l-bajj            b-jʕtyil                    w    l-ʕamm            ʕēʕde* (LEA)  
 the-father work.b-IMPERF3SGM and the-mother sit.PTCP.SGF  
*bi l-bajt*  
 in the-home  
 [lit. the father he works and the mother sitting at home]  
 ‘The father works and the mother is a housewife.’

In various eastern dialects, the inchoative is also expressed by the auxiliaries *ballaf* ‘begin’ or *šār* ‘become’, followed by a modified verb in the “bare” imperfective.<sup>18</sup>

- (60) *bas    ʕēʕit            l-ħarāme ballaʕit            ʕšarrix* (LEA)  
 when see.PERF1SG the-thief AUX.IMPERF3SGF scream.IMPERF3SGF  
 ‘When she saw the thief, she began to scream.’
- (61) *b-ašīr                    ʕabki                    ʕala ħāl-ī* (PEA)  
 AUX.b-IMPERF1SG cry.IMPERF1SG over myself  
 ‘I began to cry over myself.’
- (62) *šāru                    jʕūlu                    la l-malik* (PEA)  
 AUX.PERF3PL say.IMPERF3PL to the-king  
 ‘They began to tell the king.’

In (60, 61), the auxiliaries *ballaf* ‘begin’ and *šār* ‘become’ are interchangeable, unlike the auxiliary *ʕēʕid* ‘sit’ which is not deemed acceptable here. In (62), the auxiliary *šār* permutes with *ballaf* and less fittingly with *ʕēʕid* (without however being entirely unacceptable). The distribution of the three auxiliaries expressing the inchoative in EA is thus subject to semantic constraints related to the elements the auxiliary can combine with.<sup>19</sup>

### 2.1.2 *The ingressive*

The ingressive expresses the sudden advent of an event.<sup>20</sup> It is encoded by three verbs: the motion verb *qām* ‘get up’, used this way in the four dialect varieties, and the displacement verbs *rāh* ‘go’ and *zā* ‘come’, only used this way in EA.

18. For Lebanese dialects, Féghali also mentions verbs equivalent to *take*, *descend* and *cling* (1928:46–50).

19. In the absence of any specific investigation into this matter, one can only note that the speech verbs ‘say’ and ‘scream’ are difficult to reconcile with motion verbs (e.g. ‘sit’).

20. As defined by Desclés: “[...] *Each occurrence of an event is a single whole viewed without regard to what happens before or after this occurrence. Each event is represented by a closed interval*” (1989:173).

2.1.2.1 *qām*, *ṛām* or *gām* ‘get up’. Depending on the dialect, one finds *qām*, *ṛām* or *gām* (phonological variants of the word initial consonant) to render the equivalent of ‘get up’. As an auxiliary, the verb is found in the perfective and imperfective (with or without the prefix /b-/, depending on the dialect), the modified verb being in the imperfective or perfective, but the latter only if the auxiliary is also in the perfective. It is difficult to translate the ingressive, even though in most cases it has the same meanings as the adverb ‘suddenly’. In the examples provided below, I have chosen to include an adverb in brackets within the translation, or as commentary between parentheses following the translation (66), depending on the context.

- (63) *kān*                    *ṣam-jihki*                    *maṣ-u*                    (LEA)  
EXT.PERF3SGM ṣam-speak.IMPERF3SGM with-him  
*ṛām*                    *ḡarab-u*  
AUX.PERF3SG hit.PERF3SGM3SGM  
‘He was talking to him, [suddenly] he hit him.’
- (64) *kenna kel-na wāqfin*                    *ḡadd el-ṣrīs*                    *b-iqūm*                    (LEA)  
EXT1PL all-1PL standing.PTCP near the-groom b-AUX3SGM  
*jeqṣod*                    *ṣa l-kerse*  
sit.IMPERF.3SGM on the-chair  
‘We were all standing beside the new bridegroom, and [suddenly] he sat on the chair.’ (Féghali)<sup>21</sup>
- (65) *gad-ī*                    *māftaṣṣa la*                    *jgūm*                    *juloyya-ha*                    (SYA)  
PART-3SGF scared that AUX.IMPERF3SGM strangle.IMPERF3SGM-3SGF  
‘She was afraid he might [in one go] strangle her.’
- (66) *lamma kabir*                    *qām*                    *xaṭab-l-o*                    (ZYA)  
when grow.PERF3SGM AUX.PERF3SGM betroth.PERF3SGM-DAT-3SGM  
‘When he was grown, he betrothed him’ (without delay)
- (67) *qāmu*                    *lisbu*                    *qāmat*                    *yalabat-ih*                    (PEA)  
AUX.PERF3PL play.PERF3PL AUX.PERF3SGF beat.PERF3SGF-3SGM  
‘They played, she beat him.’

Example (67) is composed of two juxtaposed clauses. The two successive events, ‘play’ and ‘beat’ are presented (from the narrator’s perspective) as almost simultaneous, two parts to a single whole: the occurrence of the event ‘beat’ (perfective) partakes in the final phase of the event ‘play’ (perfective). To describe the ingressive more precisely, I will use the topological concepts open or closed *boundary* and *interval* (Desclés 1989;

21. In the examples taken from Féghali, I modified the transcription conventions and at times the translations provided by the author. For Féghali, example (64) is an “Inchoative” (1928: 50).

Culioli 1990). Thus one can represent (67) using a diagram where the closed final right boundaries of the two events coincide.

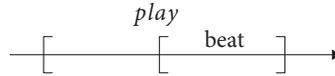


Diagram 1.

To describe things by order of their occurrence, one would simply remove the auxiliaries *qāmu* and *qāmat* from example (67) and replace them with two juxtaposed coordinated clauses. In (67'), the facts are presented in chronological order, 'beat' follows 'play'. In the diagram representing (67'), the right boundary of the event 'play' coincides with the left boundary of the beginning of the event 'beat':

- (67') *lišbu w yalabat-ih* (PEA)  
 play.PERF3PL and beat.PERF3SGF-3SGM  
 'They played and she beat him.'

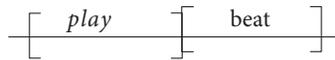


Diagram 2.

The notion of immediacy (imminence) or the lack of any clear delimitation between two events appears to be integrated in the notion of ingressive. It is present in the frozen and grammaticalized adverbial forms, such as *q/zawām* (EA), *gijām* (SYA) 'quickly, right away', and is strongly felt in the auxiliary's modal uses: in (68) *gām* preceded by the future particle /*ʃa-*/ expresses imminent future; in (69) the auxiliary and modified verb are in the imperative, and the auxiliary adds a meaning of imminence to the injunction.<sup>22</sup>

- (68) *ʃa-gūm ʔarah-l-i* (SYA)  
 PART/FUTURE-AUX.IMPERF1SG leave.IMPERF1SG-DAT-1SGM  
 'I'm leaving.'

- (69) *ʔūm rūh* (EA)  
 AUX.IMP2SGM leave.IMP2SGM  
 'Leave (now)'

22. As an auxiliary, *ʔām* is also used to express other modal meanings such as the prohibitive and exhortative. It is also used as a narrative and discursive conjunction, in EA as well as in SYA and ZYA with the meaning 'then, so' (Nāim 2009: 87, and 2011). I will not further dwell on this subject, as it is beyond the scope of this paper.

2.1.2.2 *rāh* ‘go’, *zā* ‘come’. The pair of verbs which encode the basic displacement notions ‘go’ and ‘come’ are used to express the ingressive in EA. Used this way, *rāh* is mostly found in Lebanese dialects (and Egyptian)<sup>23</sup> whereas *zā* (*ʔaʔa*, *ʔaʔa*) is found in a greater number of eastern dialects.

In the Lebanese dialects, the choice of one or the other auxiliary *rāh* or *ʔaʔa* depends on the nature of the modified verb:

– *rāh* is only found before finite verbs

- (70) *txēnaʔu sawa rāhit* (LEA)  
 argue.PERF1PL together AUX.PERF3SGF  
*baʔʔalit tilsab*  
 renounce.PERF3SGF play.IMP.F.3SGF  
 ‘They got into an argument, he stopped playing.’ (immediately)

– *ʔaʔa* is compatible with finite verbs and participial forms. Before a finite verb, *ʔaʔa* expresses the sudden advent of an event (71), illustrated in diagram 3.

- (71) *l-ħzūt fataħ təmm-u* (PEA)  
 the-dragon open.PERF.3SGM mouth-3SGM  
*ʔaʔa ʔasan-u fi l-ħarbe*  
 AUX.PERF.3SGM stab.PERF.3SGM-3SGM with the-spear  
 ‘The dragon opened its mouth, [all of a sudden] he ran it through with his spear.’



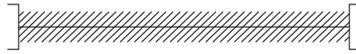
Diagram 3.

Preceding a participial form, *ʔaʔa* emphasizes the result or the consequences of the occurrence, *i.e.* it indicates entry into a state (72, 73) as illustrated in diagram 4.

- (72) *ḍarab-u kaff ʔaʔa mlazzaħ ʕa l-ʔard* (LEA)  
 hit.PERF3SGM slap AUX.3SGM lay out.PTCP3SGM on the-ground  
 ‘He slapped him, [**there he was**] flat out on the ground.’
- (73) *fazz wu min fazzt-u zā wāqes* (LEA)  
 jump.PERF3SGM and PREP jump-3SGM AUX.PERF.3SGM fall.PTCP  
*b el-bīr*  
 in the-well  
 ‘He jumped [**there he went**] fell in the well.’ (Féghali)<sup>24</sup>

23. Cf. Woidich (2006: 331).

24. The translation I propose for this example is not that of Féghali, who translates it as ‘He jumped so high that he fell in the well’ (1928: 104). It is true that the prepositional phrase



**Diagram 4.**

In (70–71) one could replace *rāhit* and *ʔaʔa* by the auxiliary *ʔām* (2.1.2.1) but this is impossible in examples (72–73), i.e. with a modified verb in the participial form.

Moreover, the verb *rāh* ‘go’ is the origin of the imperfective prefix *rah-* (variants *rāh-*, *lah-*), which is used in future conjugations in various dialects.<sup>25</sup> Depending on the context, *rah-* + IMPERF conveys prospective (75), intentional (74) or imminent future meaning (76–77). The meaning of imminence, as we saw for the modal uses of the auxiliary *get up* (2.1.2.1), is included in the semantics of the aspectual ingressive.

- (74) *bi-nfūf*                      *lamma jšīr*                                      *ʕumr-ak*    *ʕifrīn*                      (PEA)  
 see.b-IMPERF1PL    when    become.IMPERF3SGM    age-2SGM    twenty  
*sane fu*    *rah-tiʕmal*  
 year    INT    do.PART-IMPERF2SGM  
 ‘We will see what you will do when you are twenty.’
- (75) *ʔana rah-ʔiqʕas*                      *l-majj*                      *ʕan-kum*                                      (PEA)  
 me    cut.PART-IMPERF1SG    the-water    PREP-2PL  
 ‘Me, I’m going to cut your water off.’
- (76) *rah-tʕatte*    (LEA)  
 PART-rain.IMPERF3SGF  
 ‘It is going to rain/it will rain.’
- (77) *rawweʒ*                      *rah-jšīr*    *ʔd-ʔəhr*                                      (LEA)  
 hurry.IMP2SGM    become.PART-IMPERF3SGM    the-noon  
 ‘Hurry up it will soon be noon.’ (Féghali, 52)

**2.1.2.3 Inchoative and ingressive.** In the literature, the inchoative and ingressive notions are at times considered synonymous. Thus in Bussmann’s dictionary (1996), under *inchoative*:

‘because of his jump’ (*min fazzt-u*) is not in my translation, but Féghali’s ignores the ingressive meaning of the auxiliary *ʕā* and of the participle ‘fell’.

25. The particle used to express the future varies from dialect to dialect: in ʕan<sup>ʕā</sup>, one finds *ʕa-* (*ʕa-* in the 1st p.), with two possible etymologies, *ʕāda* ‘come back’ and *hatta* ‘until’, and in Zabīd one has *ʕa-* (conceivably from the modal *fāʔa* ‘want’). We will not explore here how the ‘future’ as such is expressed, nor the various modal meanings of the verb corresponding to ‘go’, which are beyond the scope of this paper.

*Aspect of a verb or verb phrase. Inchoatives belong to the non-duratives (durative vs. non-durative) and indicate the inception or the coming into existence of a state or process [...]. Occasionally the term inchoative is also used synonymously for ingressive, which denotes the sudden beginning of an action [...].*

In the dialect varieties under study here, those notions are clearly distinguished: *qasad* (and its lexical and phonological variants) ‘sit’ marks the inchoative (process), *qām* (and its phonological variants) ‘get up’ marks the ingressive (event).

The eastern dialects differ in that they have two other auxiliaries to mark the inchoative: *ballaf* ‘begin’ and *šār* ‘become’ depending on the semantics of the modified verb, and two other auxiliaries to mark the ingressive: *rāh* ‘go’ and *zā* ‘come’, depending on the viewpoint adopted by the speaker-narrator. However, the frontier between the inchoative and the ingressive can be very hazy: in (78) the auxiliary *qām* followed by the verb ‘moan’ does not express sudden entry into an action. In context, the three girls did not burst into tears (sudden event) but ‘began to moan’; the auxiliary *gilis* ‘sit’ as in example (54) reproduced here as (79) works just as well.

(78) *qāmu jəḳḏilu aθ-θalāθa l-banāt* (ZYA)  
 AUX.PERF3PL moan.IMPERF.3PL the-three the-girls  
 ‘The three girls began moaning from the pain.’

(79) *gassu jabku* (ZYA)  
 AUX.PERF3PL cry.IMPERF3PL  
 ‘They began to cry.’

Therefore there are semantic contexts where the distinction between *qām* (ingressive)~*gilis* (inchoative) is neutralized because of the limited possible semantic combinations with the modified verbs (2.1.1).

### 2.1.3 *Continuative*

To express a process which has already begun or is ongoing, there are two auxiliaries in (EA): *baqa* (*beqe, beze*) and *ḍall* (*ḍall*). The two verbs are synonymous. They have the meaning *continue* and either one may be used in the same context. The auxiliary is in the perfective or imperfective, and the modified verb in the “bare” imperfective or participial form, namely when it is a “middle” verb as in (83).

(80) *rəbjæn fɪgæra ḏællæn* (ZYA)  
 grow.PERF3SGF tree AUX.PERF3SGF  
*tṭūl tṭūl tṭūl*  
 grow.IMPERF3SGF grow.IMPERF3SGF grow.IMPERF3SGF  
 ‘A tree grew, then continued growing, growing, growing.’

- (81) *ha ṣ-ṣabe beqe jirḏas ta ṣār*  
 this the-boy AUX.PERF3SGM suckle.IMPERF3SGM until become.3SGM  
*ṣomr-u sabṣ snīn*  
 age-3SGM seven years  
 ‘This child continued to suckle until he was seven years old.’ (Féghali)<sup>26</sup>
- (82) *ḏallit tḁbke la ṣ-ṣobḥ* (LEA)  
 AUX.PERF3SGF cry.IMPERF.3SGF until the-morning  
 ‘She continued crying until morning.’
- (83) *bṛīna wēṛḏfīn ta nkasar ḏahr-na* (LEA)  
 AUX.PERF1PL standing.PTCP1PL until break.PERF.3SGM back-1PL  
 ‘We remained standing until our backs were broken.’

#### 2.1.4 Iterative

Iteration is expressed by two synonymous displacement verbs *sād* and *rāzīṛ* ‘come back’, and in SYA by a third auxiliary *jzīd* ‘increase, multiply’. The displacement verbs did not evolve along the same lines in the eastern and Yemeni dialects, thus we will look at each in turn.

2.1.4.1 *Rāzīṛ/rāgīṛ* ‘come back’. In the eastern dialects and in SYA, the verb *rāzīṛ* continues to function with its basic spatial meaning alongside its use as an auxiliary expressing iteration (84–86). As an auxiliary, it is never found in negative sentences (see under 2.1.4.2). Depending on the context, it can correspond to the prefix *re-* (‘re-*v*’) (87), to the adverb ‘once again’ (resumption of an interrupted action) or to the connectors ‘then, after’, namely when preceded by the coordinator /w/ ‘and’.

- (84) *rāḥna w rṣṛna* (LEA)  
 leave.PERF1PL and come back.PERF1PL  
 ‘We left and we came back.’ (Féghali 1928: 7)
- (85) *ṛasīr aṣṛḏf-ḏh w asīr li* (SYA)  
 go.IMPERF1SG cash in.IMPERF1SG-3SG and go.IMPERF1SG to  
*al-funduk [...] w arṣas*  
 the-hotel [...] then come back.IMPERF1SG  
 ‘I am going to cash it in then I am going to the hotel [...] then I will be coming back.’
- (86) *bafūf-ak bas ṛarṣas* (PEA)  
 see.b-IMPERF1SG-2SGM when come back.IMPERF1SG  
 ‘I will see you upon my return.’ (lit. when I come back)

26. Féghali translates *beqe jirḏas* by a preterit ‘this child suckled until...’ which, in my view, does not convey the auxiliary’s meaning (1928: 75).



- (92) *šūfi* *m-səbl-u* *w* *argaʔi* (ZYA)  
 shear.IMP2SGF the-tail-3SGM and AUX.IMP2SGF  
*ħfi-hæ* *ħænīnu*  
 stuff.IMP.2SGF-3SGF cotton  
 ‘You shear its tail and then you stuff it with cotton.’

2.1.4.2 *ṣād* ‘come back’. Contrary to the verb *rəʔiʔ*, the verb *ṣād* (regional variant *ṣāwad*) is not (no longer in EA) used as a ‘full’ verb. In EA, it serves as an aspectual auxiliary expressing iteration, like the verb *rəʔiʔ*, with which it can combine in negative clauses (95). In the eastern and Yemeni dialects, this verb is the origin of the tense-aspect and mood particle *ṣād* (*ṣad*, *ʔad*) which also serves as a copula in nominal predication (2.2.1). In the synchrony of the eastern dialects, *ṣād* shows two degrees of grammaticalization: syntactic grammaticalization with a shift in meaning and reduction of the verb’s scope (from full verb to auxiliary), and radical grammaticalization with a change in category (from verb to particle).

- (93) *ʔint ma wʔedt-ne* *fī-h* *ʔaf b-āk* (LEA)  
 you INT promis.PERF.2SGM-1SG in-3SG INT PREP-2SGM  
*ʔedt* *yajjart* *fīkr-ak*  
 AUX.PERF2SGM change.PERF2SGM opinion-2SGM  
 ‘You had promised me, why have you once again changed your mind?’  
 (Féghali)
- (94) *ṣāwadin* *ʔalabin* *majj* (PEA)  
 AUX.PERF.3PLF ask.PERF.3PLF water  
 ‘They asked once again for water.’
- (95) *mā ṣād* *fataħ* *təmm-u* (LEA)  
 NEG AUX.PERF3SGM open.PERF3SGM mouth-3SGM  
 ‘He didn’t open his mouth again.’

2.1.4.3 *jzīd* ‘increase, multiply’. In the Šanʿānī dialect, the status of the iterative *jzīd* is ambiguous, between particle and auxiliary: like particles, it is frozen in the 3rd person singular but can have two forms, with one, *jzīd*, preceding verbs in the imperfective (96), and the other, *zīd* (which also has a variant with a short vowel, *zīd*), preceding verbs in the perfective (97). The form *jzīd* corresponds to the 3rd person of the prefixal conjugation, but the variant *zīd* can only be a shortened variant of *jzīd*, which means that it does not correspond to the 3rd person of the suffixal conjugation. At the same time, *jzīd* differs from particles in that it takes the feminine marker /t-/ (irregularly) when the subject of V<sub>1</sub> is of feminine gender (agreement in gender only) and can bear the imperfective prefix *b-* (98) and the future particle *ʔa-* (*fa* in the 1st person) (99).

- (96) *jiddow-l-ha zanne jzīd jiddow-l-ha zanne*  
 give.IMPERF.3PL-DAT-3SGF dress AUX give.IMPERF.3PL-DAT-3SGF dress  
 ‘They give her a dress, they give her another dress [again].’
- (97) *gālu hāḏa madrī rajn zid zā?*  
 say.PERF.3PL this one NEG where AUX go.PERF.3SGM  
 ‘They said: “This one, who knows where he is off to now [again]?”’
- (98) *madrī mā huwa llī bitzīd tuwarr-ī*  
 NEG INT 3SGM RLTV b-AUX3SGF show.IMPERF.3SGF-3SGM  
 ‘I don’t know what she’s shown him this time [again].’
- (99) *ʕa-tzīd tsawwī hākaḏa ?*  
 FUT-AUX.2SGF do.IMPERF.2SGF like this  
 ‘Are you (F) going to do the same thing [again]?’

One should also note that the shortened form *zid* combines with the negative particle *lā* to indicate that an event has ceased: *lā zid xaraʒ* ‘He no longer went out’/‘He never went out again.’

## 2.2 Particles

We will examine two particles, *ʕād* and *gad*, which convey at once aspectual, temporal and modal meanings. The particle *gad* is found in SYA. The particle *ʕād* does not have the same status in all dialects.

### 2.2.1 The particle *ʕād*- (*ʕad*-, *ʕad*-)

In SYA, the particle *ʕād*- (2.1.4.2) is found before verbs in the imperfective (96) (or, as we shall see below, in the perfective (104)), and before participial forms (101). It is followed by a cataphoric pronoun (either suffixed or independent) representing the subject, except in negative sentences (103). Before verbs in the imperfective, participials, and in its copular uses (102), *ʕād* denotes the continuation of an already ongoing process. Depending on the frame of reference, it can also denote concomitance (100).

- (100) *ʕād-u b-jiftarī* (SYA)  
 PART-3SGM buy.b-IMPERF3SGM  
 ‘He is in the process of buying.’ (= he is still in the process of)
- (101) *ʕād-i zālisa fi bajt el-ʕazamij ḏalhīn?* (SYA)  
 PART-3SGF sit.PTCP2SGF LOC home the-Ajami now  
 ‘Are she still living at the Ajami’s?’
- (102) *ʕād-i marat-ak* (SYA)  
 PART-3SGF wife-2SGM  
 ‘Is she still your wife?’

- (103) *mā řād albas hawla l-lada* (SYA)  
 NEG PART wear.IMPERF.1SG these the-clothes  
 ‘I will no longer wear these clothes.’

Before verbs in the perfective (104), *řād* serves to express quasi-contiguity between a prior perfective event and the speech event.<sup>28</sup> Inversely, when *řād* is followed by an imperfective bearing a “future” marker (prefix *řa-*), it is the event to be realized that is presented as imminent (105–106).

- (104) *řād-ani bsart-eh* (SYA)  
 PART-1SG see.PERF.1SG-3SG  
 ‘I just saw him.’
- (105) *řād-u řa-jgoř řabīb* (SYA)  
 PART-3SGM become.řa-IMPERF3SGM doctor  
 ‘He is just about to become a doctor.’ (imminent future)
- (106) *řād-u řa-jhaddif* (SYA)  
 PART-3SGM score a goal.řa-IMPERF3SGM  
 ‘He is just about to score a goal.’ (imminent future)

In the eastern and Yemeni dialects, *řād* also serves as a discursive and narrative marker (especially after a pause), used to pick up the threads of a story after a shift in topic (in particular in Palestinian varieties). It differs from the verbal particle in that it is very seldom followed by a pronominal affix.

- (107) *řād řin řān bidd-eh jōčil řās řbīr* (PEA)  
 PART if EXPT.PERF3SGM want-3SGM eat.IMPERF3SGM head big  
*b-iqūl iđbaħī-l-na đič*  
 say.b-IMPERF3SGM slit throat.IMP2SGF-DAT-1PL rooster  
 ‘So if he wants to eat a big head (of onion) he said behead a rooster for us.’
- (108) *řād řareqtēn řalāθ min hōn řalāθ min hōn* (PEA)  
 PART 2.teams three PREP here three PREP here  
 ‘So two teams, three over here, three over here.’
- (109) *gāl ana gad kunt tāřeb gāl řād* (SYA)  
 say.PERF3SGM me PART be.PERF1SGM tired say.PERF3SGM PART  
*gull la-na řanna-ka tāřeb*  
 say.IMP2SGM to-1PL that-2SGM tired  
*nřī nřūr-ak*  
 come.IMPERF1PL visit.IMPERF1PL-2SGM  
 ‘He said: I was tired. He answered: but then you should have told us, so that we would visit you.’

28. On the manifestations of the notion of concomitance in verb forms (inherence~adherence), see D. Cohen (1989:92–142).

### 2.2.2 The particle *gad* (*gad*)

The particle *gad* is found in SYA only.<sup>29</sup> As with *sād*, it is compatible with perfective, imperfective and participial forms. Contrary to *sād* however, before a finite verb, it is usually not followed by an independent or suffixed subject pronoun,<sup>30</sup> except for pragmatic reasons of subject emphasis: in example (110), the pronoun /-ī/, suffixed to /*gad*/, highlights the role of the wife in learning women's slang.<sup>31</sup> In noun phrases however, the particle *gad* is regularly followed by a pronoun representing the subject (111). If the subject is lexically represented, it is never found between the particle and the predicate.

- (110) *zillā llī hī marat-ih gad-ī tigul-l-ih* (SYA)  
 except RLTV 3SGF wife-3SGM PART-3SGF say.IMPERF3SGF-to-3SGM  
*maḥ hū dārī mā bnithāka*  
 NEG 3SGM know.PTCP CONJ speak.b-IMPERF1PL  
 'Except if it is his wife who is already teaching him, he does not understand what we are saying.'

- (111) *gad ana ḡaniy gawiy* (SYA)  
 PART 1SG rich a lot  
 'I am very rich.'

- (112) *saḥ man gad-i gad-i kabīre ḡawla sād-i ḡyīre* (SYA)  
 how INT PART-3SGF PART-3SGF big or PART-3SGF small  
 'What is she like? Is she [already] big or is she still little?'

Preceding a verb in the perfective, *gad* expresses assertive modal meaning by actualizing a truly completed event. In other words, it is a 'non-imperfective' form, to adopt a proposal by J.-P. Desclés.<sup>32</sup>

- (113) *gad gulta-l-if mā hij l-ḡināze* (SYA)  
 PART say.PERF1SG-to-2SGF CONJ 3SGF the-burial  
 'I already told you what [the word] *jinaze* (burial) means.'
- (114) *wa gad fiḡī jaḡnī wlād jamanī maḥ?* (SYA)  
 and PART PERF.2SGF i.e. birth Yemeni no?  
 'You have already attended an end-of-lying-in ceremony in Yemen, haven't you?'

29. I.e. it is never found in the eastern varieties examined here nor in the Zabīd dialect. It is found elsewhere in Yemen however, for example in the Yaḡīf region (Vanhove 1996).

30. In the 2nd p. one notes alternation between the tonic forms and the affixes, with both the particles *sād* and *gad*, however the form affixed with *sād* predominates: *gad ant-ḡad-ak*, *gad anti-ḡad-if*; *sād-if* (2SGF), *sād-ak* (2SGM), *sāda-kum/kin* (PL.M/F).

31. (Naīm 2009: 197–200).

32. J.-P. Desclés p.c.

- (115) *gad sabbart l-yada* (SYA)  
 PART prepare.1SG.PERF the-lunch  
 'I have already prepared lunch.'

In the following examples, *gad* serves to indicate that the marked process happened prior to another.

- (116) *sārt zumha makke thi33 w* (SYA)  
 go.PERF.3SGF mother3SGF Mecca pray.IMPERF.3SGF and  
*rabū-ha gad māt*  
 father-3SGF PART die.PERF.3SGM  
 'Her mother had already been to Mecca to fulfill her duty and her father was already dead.'

- (117) *kamā gad ftayalt fa-ddī-l-if fulūs* (SYA)  
 when PART work.PERF.1SG give.PART-IMPERF.1SG-DAT-2SGF money  
 'As soon as I have worked I will give you some money.'

- (118) *kama gad yini wāhad al-ʔensān ma sād* (SYA)  
 when PART make rich.PERF.3SG IND the-man NEG PART  
*jifgir-f allāh*  
 impoverish.IMPERF-NEG God  
 'When he [God] has made a man rich, God no longer impoverishes him.'

- (119) *gālit gad bnajt fī nafs-ī min hīn* (SYA)  
 say.PERF.3SG PART decide.PERF.1SG LOC person-1SG of when  
*fuft-ak ʔann gad gult l-ah fa*  
 see.PERF.1SG-2SGM if PART say.PERF.2SGM DAT-3SGM then  
*hurimt salajj-i*  
 forbid.PERF.2SG PREP-1SG  
 'She said: As soon as I saw you I made the decision (I said to myself) that if you had already brought it back to him, I no longer would have been able to marry you.'

Before a verb in the imperfective (bare or preceded by the prefix /b-/), the particle *gad* conveys various modal meanings. Depending on the context, it can express assertiveness, as in (120, 121):

- (120) *ʔinn gad gult-a la-h mā gad* (SYA)  
 if PART say.PERF.2SG-3SGF to-3SGM NEG PART  
*ʔabgāf ʔind-ak*  
 stay.IMPERF.1SG-NEG LOC-2SGM  
 'If you have told him, I will not stay at your place.' (you can be sure of it)

- (121) *al-wald hu ʕajjib w gad-u ʕalḥin* (SYA)  
 the-boy 3SGM good and PART-3SGM now  
*bi-ʕallī w xājjif min alla*  
 pray bi-IMPERF.3SGM and fear.PTCP PREP God  
 ‘This boy is good; now he prays and he fears God.’

When *gad* is followed by an imperfective preceded by the future marker (prefixes *ʕa-/ʕa-*), it anchors the sentence in quasi-certainty and encodes the imminent future. In such constructions, I find it difficult to determine the difference between the particle *gad* and the particle *ʕād* (2.2.1., 105–106).

- (122) *gad-u ʕa-jgaʕ ʕabīb* (SYA)  
 PART-3SGM ʕa-fall.IMPERF.3SGM doctor  
 ‘He will soon be a doctor.’
- (123) *gad ʕa-jʕannin* (SYA)  
 PART ʕa-IMPERF.3SGM  
 ‘He is just about to go crazy.’
- (124) *gad kabd-ah ʕa-tuxruʕ ʕala l-mare* (SYA)  
 PART liver-3SGM go out.ʕa-IMPERF3SGF PREP the-woman  
 ‘He was going to die (of love) for this woman.’

Before a verb in the imperative, *gad* expresses softened orders

- (125) *gad gull la-nā ʕann-ak tāʕib* (SYA)  
 PART say.IMP.SGM DAT-1PL CONJ -2SGM tire.PTCP.SGM  
 ‘You should have told us you are ill.’

Inversely, examples (126–127) are difficult to analyze. According to comments from my consultants, both sentences convey the “possible” notion. But this needs further study, as on the one hand, the meaning of the construction *kān. IMPERF + PERF (jukūn ʕā)*, as seen above, anchors the sentence in the ‘probable’ domain (1.4. ex. 48), and, on the other hand, the construction with *gad*, as commented upon by my consultants, gives the particle a value that no longer corresponds to what was determined above (120–125).

- (126) *ʕa-tuxruʕī? / gad ʕaxruʕ*  
 ʕa-go out.IMPERF.2SGF / PART go out IMPERF.1SG  
 ‘Will you be going out?’ / ‘Maybe I will be going out.’
- (127) *gad jukūn ʕā*  
 PART EXPT IMPERF.3SGM come.PERF3SGM  
 ‘Maybe he came.’

Based on the data I have and until further research is carried out on the subject, one notes that *gad* precedes a motion verb (‘come’, ‘go out’) in both (126) and (127). Is there

a link between the value attributed to *gad* in these constructions and this semantic category of verbs? More generally speaking, I wonder about the link between ‘possible’ and ‘probable’: are these two notions specifically marked in the Şanʿānī dialect?

### 3. Conclusion

The current configuration of the basic verbal system in the eastern and Yemeni dialects is presented in the table below. We have included a row which does not belong to the syntactic distribution of the perfective and imperfective paradigms, whether “bare” or prefixed, since it serves to express concomitance. However, specific marking for a relation of concomitance is one of the typological characteristics of the Arabic dialects: it embodies a specific type of change within the basic verbal system of Arabic dialect varieties. It would thus appear that among the varieties under study, only the eastern dialects specifically mark concomitance, using the particle *šam*. In the Yemeni dialects, it is the context which may express that a process has the aspect-tense characteristics of being concomitant with the speech event or with another process. Thus in the Şanʿānī dialect, the aspect particle *šād* expresses continuation of an already ongoing process (2.2.1).

**Table 1.** Basic verbal system of eastern and Yemeni dialects

Uses and meanings	IMPERF	b-IMPERF	šam+b-IMPERF	PERF	PTCP
Dependent constructions	SYA-ZYA-EA			SYA-ZYA-EA	
Modals: optative, jussive, exhortative. Performative	SYA-ZYA-EA			SYA-ZYA-EA	EA
Conditionals (apodosis and/or protasis), procedural descriptions, definitions, general truths	SYA-ZYA-EA	EA		SYA-ZYA-EA	
Habitual	ZYA	SYA			
Concomitant	ZYA-SYA		EA		SYA-ZYA-EA

In this study, we broached separately the issue of the temporal auxiliary *kān* ‘be’ (1.4). This is because this auxiliary differs from aspectual auxiliaries, both in scope and in combinatory possibilities. *kān* has scope over the entire sentence, and provides temporal anchoring; aspectual auxiliaries have scope only over modified verbs. Moreover, temporal *kān* enters into more grammatical and syntactic combinations with the verbal predicate: alignment or crossing of  $v_1$  and  $v_2$  conjugations; the possibility of inserting a lexical subject between  $v_1$  and  $v_2$ . Aspectual auxiliaries are subject to semantic (lexical) and syntactic constraints (2.1).

Moreover, the present work shows that the participial form plays a role in encoding various aspectual meanings. Indeed, the participial form is in complementary distribution both with the perfective and the imperfective, not only to express concomitance with so-called ‘middle’ verbs (1.3) but also in performative sentences (1.2), with ingressive aspect (2.1.2.2) and continuative aspect (2.1.3., 2.2.1). This complementarity is in keeping with the possible semantic combinations between the auxiliary and aspectual particles. But it also depends on the viewpoint expressed by the speaker-narrator, as we noted on the subject of the ingressive.

To understand the ingressive aspect meaning encoded by *qām* ‘get up’ (2.1.2.1), we compared two possible constructions, the first using juxtaposition, the second coordination. This comparison highlights the ‘suddenness’ characteristic of the ingressive aspect: the juxtaposition of events introduced by the auxiliary *qām* contributes to blurring the frontier between two events, presenting them as simultaneous; coordination serves to render a sequential representation, where events each follow in turn.

Moreover, expressing the ingressive by the auxiliary *ʔaʒa* (2.1.2.2) raises another issue in connection with the speaker-narrator viewpoint. As we saw above, the eastern dialects have two other auxiliaries, in addition to *get up*, to express the ingressive, *rāh* ‘go’ and *ʔaʒa* ‘come’. These auxiliaries do not combine with the same elements, as *ʔaʒa* is compatible both with finite verbs and participial forms. Depending on the perspective adopted by the speaker, the state of affairs is represented either dynamically or statically. In (71), the construction *ʔaʒa ʔaʒan-u* ‘He ran it through’ (AUX+stab.PERF) encodes a dynamic process; in (72) the construction with the participial form, *ʔaʒa mlaʔʔah* (AUX + PTCP) ‘[there he was] flat out’, expresses entry into a state.

Moreover, the ingressive~inchoative distinction can be ambivalent in some semantic contexts, even when the two aspectual notions each have their own specific markers. This is the result, as we saw in (2.1.2.3), of interaction between grammatical and lexical aspect. What is shared by the ingressive and inchoative is that they mark the beginning of a process (represented by a closed left interval). However, with the inchoative, the process is represented as covering a certain temporal interval with the initial instant being marked (represented by an open right boundary), whereas with the ingressive, what is expressed is the sudden advent of an event (represented by a closed interval).

## References

- Austin, John Langshaw. 1970. *Quand dire c'est faire*. Paris: Seuil.  
 Benveniste, Émile. 1966. *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Vol. 1. Paris: Gallimard.  
 Behnstedt, Peter. 1987. *Die Dialekte der Gegend von ʕaʔdah (Nord-Jemen)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

- Bussmann, Hadumod. 1996. *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*. London: Routledge.
- Cohen, David. 1989. *L'aspect verbal*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
- Cohen, Marcel. 1924. *Le système verbal sémitique et l'expression du temps*. Paris: Ernest Leroux.
- Culioli, Antoine. 1990. *Pour une linguistique de l'énonciation*. Paris: Ophrys.
- Desclés, Jean-Pierre. 1989. State, event, process, and topology. *General Linguistics* 29(3): 159–200.
- Féghali, Michel. 1928. *Syntaxe des parlers arabes actuels du Liban*. Paris: Paul Geuthner.
- Kouloughli, Djamel Eddine. 2007. *Le résumé de la grammaire arabe par Zamakšarī*, Paris: ENS éditions.
- Naïm-Sanbar, Samia. 1993. Les performatifs explicites et le “présent” d’allocution. *Paroles yéménites. Langage et société* 66: 41–61.
- Naïm, Samia. 2009. *L'arabe yéménite de Sanaa*. Leuven: Peeters. DOI: 10.3406/lso.1993.2633
- Naïm, Samia. 2011. La grammaticalisation de quelques verbes de mouvement et de posture dans des dialectes arabes. *Workshop: Grammaticalisation in Semitic*. Salford: The University of Salford.
- Recanati, François. 1981. *Les énoncés performatifs*. Paris: Minit.
- Rossi, Ettore. 1938. Appunti di dialettologia del Yemen. *RSO* 17: 230–472.
- Rossi, Ettore. 1939. *L'arabo parlato a Saḥā'*. Roma: Istituto per l'orientale.
- Searle, John 1976, A classification of illocutionary acts. *Language in Society* 5: 1–23.  
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404500006837
- Vanhove, Martine. 1996. Les particules *qad* et *raʿ* dans un dialecte arabe de la région de Yaḥīʿ (Yémen). In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference of AIDA*, 243–252.
- Watson, Janet. 1993. A syntax of Saḥāni Arabic. *Semitica Viva* 13. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Watson, Janet. 2012. *The Structure of Mehri*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Werbeck, Wolfgang. 2001. *Laut- und Formenlehre des Nordjemenitisch-Arabischen Dialekts von Manāḥa*. Münster: Arabica Rhema.
- Woidich, Manfred. 2006. *Das Kairenisch-Arabische*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.