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

Samia Naïm

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 varieties¹ (Lebanon, Palestine) and in Yemeni varieties (Ṣanʿā, Zabīd).²

I. The basic perfective~imperfective distinction

The two basic verbal paradigms in Classical Arabic and the dialect varieties are marked by suffixal and prefixal inflections,³ and are founded on an underlying perfective~imperfective aspectual opposition. In speakers' minds this aspectual

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 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.

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-muḍāri‘u*, is associated with a non-completed tense (“un temps non révolu”).⁴ Thus, in the absence of any specific context, the two basic forms of the verb (√zbʒ) ‘joke’ in the Ṣan‘ānī dialect are located by speakers in the past and in the general (non-referenced, generic) present:⁵ *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.⁶ The Yemeni dialect of Zabid has not undergone 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 Ṣan‘ā, 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) | <i>nizil</i> | <i>ʕa</i> | <i>s-sūq</i> | <i>jijtri</i> | <i>xəḍra</i> | (PEA) |
| | Descend.PERF.3SGM | PREP | the-souk | buy.IMPERF.3SGM | vegetables | |
| | ‘He went to the souk to buy vegetables.’ | | | | | |
| (2) | <i>daxal</i> | <i>l-barik</i> | <i>ħaggi-h</i> | <i>jijtsil</i> | | (SYA) |
| | enter.PERF.3SGM | the-tub | RP-3SGM | wash.IMPERF.3SGM | | |
| | ‘He entered his tub to wash.’ (narrative context) | | | | | |
| (3) | <i>təstiri</i> | <i>thāki</i> | <i>bi</i> | <i>ṣ-ṣan‘ānī?</i> | | (SYA) |
| | know.IMPERF.2SGF | speak.IMPERF.2SGF | PREP | the-ṣan‘ānī | | |
| | ‘(Is it that) you know how to speak ṣan‘ānī (dialect)?’ | | | | | |

⁴ It is moreover in these terms that the medieval grammarian Al-Zamaxṣarī defines the two verbal forms, in his treatise on Arabic grammar, *ʿunmūḍaq fi al-naḥw* taking the time of speech for reference point: *Al-māḍī* “...refers to a process/event which took place in a time before yours...”. *Al-muḍāri‘u* “...which includes the present and the future...” (Kouloughli 2007: 133-142).

⁵ (Naïm 2009: 67)

⁶ Cf. (Cohen 1989: 187-89).

- (13) *ʔiza fattit m-nʔagzil⁷ l-miʃwār* (LEA)
 if raining.PERF3SGF delay.b-IMPERF.1PL the-walk
 ‘If it is raining we can take the walk later.’ (b-IMPERF V₂ apodosis).

In contrast, in the ʃanʿānī dialect, the prefixed imperfective implies anchoring in a referential situation (14). Consequently, it can also denote a process concomitant with the time of speech (15), or link a process to a related event, depending on the context (16).

- (14) *ʔab-ī jzī / bi-jzī ʔalāθ sāʃāt kull jawm* (SYA)
 father-1SG come.IMPERF.3SGM / come.b-IMPERF3SGM three hours each day
 ‘My father comes’ (to visit me) / ‘He comes (to see me) three hours every day.’
- (15) *bajn-ʔasabbir al-yaḏāʔ* (SYA)
 prepare.bi-IMPERF.1SG the-lunch
 ‘I am preparing lunch.’
- (16) *w baʃda hum fī d-dukkān b-jiʃtəylu*
 and after them in the-store work.b-IMPERF.3PL
l-ʃaʃī daxal-ha sāriḡ
 the-evening 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 ʃanʿānī dialect, the marked imperfective is never found in the apodosis of conditional or hypothetical clauses:⁸

- (17) *lā zā xū-f ʔagul-l-u ʔinn-ij nājme* (SYA)
 if come.PERF3SGM brother-2SGF say.IMPERF1SG-TO-3SGM 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 ʃind-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 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 ʔəsm duxxān jabdī* (ZYA)
 NEG want.IMPERF.1SG INDEF name smoke appear.IMPERF.3SGM
 ‘I do not want there to be any smoke whatsoever.’

⁷ The /b-/ assimilates to the following nasal consonant: b-+n > m-+n

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

which can be either stative or dynamic, and which are often known as “middle verbs” (especially perception and experience verbs (36, 37), as well as movement and displacement verbs (38-40)). The participial form expresses a process which can be located in the present, past or immediate future, depending on the reference frame.

- (36) *ʔanti dārje mā huw l-bint?* (SYA)
 2SGF know.PTCP.SGF INT 3SGM the-girl
 ‘Do you understand what ‘girl’ means?’
- (37) *hī mkārfah maṣā-ha* (ZYA)
 3SGF argue.PTCP.SGF with-her
 ‘She got into an argument with her.’
- (38) *sājreh s-sūg* (SYA)
 go.PTCP.1/2SGF the souk
 ‘I/you am/are going to the souk’
- (39) *ʔana 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) *mmaṣṣis* (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.¹²

PERFECTIVE + PERFECTIVE

- (42) *kunt sabbart l-yada / sabbart l-yada* (SYA)
 AUX.PERF.1SG prepare.PERF1SG the-lunch / prepare.PERF.1SG the-lunch
 ‘I had prepared lunch.’ / ‘I prepared lunch.’
- (43) *ħaḏḏart yada bas kēnu ?akalu* (EA)
 prepare.PERF.1SG lunch but AUX.PERF3PL eat.PERF3PL
 ‘I prepared lunch but they had eaten.’

PERFECTIVE + IMPERFECTIVE

- (44) *kān dājman jāze jzūrn-na* (EA)
 AUX.PERF/3SGM always come.PERF/3SGM visit.IMPERF/3SGM-1PL
 ‘He always came to visit us.’
- (45) *?ams kunt je?* (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) *?ælāḏi s-sinīn marra w kān-ik tinzæ?i-ni* (ZYA)
 after the-years all and AUX.PERF3SG-2SGF harry.IMPERF2SGF-1SG
?ælæ m-fšej?a wæ m-ħrēm 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 attention¹³. 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

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.

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).

Comments

- When the auxiliary is in the imperfective, modal meanings related to the context and semantics of V_1 are grafted onto the temporal marking: the association $V_{2\text{IMPERF}} + V_{1\text{PERF}}$ encodes what is probable; the $V_{2\text{IMPERF}} + V_{1\text{IMPERF}}$ alignment expresses what is possible.

- With the volitional verb ‘want’, the association $V_{2\text{PERF}} + V_{1\text{IMPERF}}$ in a discourse situation (I - you) is the equivalent of a conditional used for polite requests:

<i>kunt</i>	<i>ʔəfti</i>	<i>ʔariħ-l-i</i>	(SYA)
be.PERF/1SG	want.IMPERF/1SG	go.IMPERF/1SG-DAT-1SG	
‘I would like (would have liked) to leave.’			

II. External markers: auxiliaries and particles

Auxiliaries and particles belong to two distinct grammatical categories. Auxiliaries show the same behavior as full verbs, *i.e.* they may be inflected in the two basic verbal conjugations, and can be modified by tense, mood and aspect particles (*b-*, *raħ*, *ʃa/ʃa* for the future, *gad* etc.). Some particles have verbal origins. They generally correspond to the 3rd person singular of the suffixal conjugation (perfective form), frozen and eroded, depending on the degree of grammaticalization in the various dialects.

Auxiliaries and particles express different aspectual meanings. Here they are grouped following their compatibility with the perfective and/or imperfective, as the perfective does not have its own particles nor preverbs.¹⁷ In this study, I have given precedence to the auxiliaries and particles, which contribute to the expression of the main aspectual notions, and for which I had a sufficiently large corpus to be able to vary the contexts.

2.1. Auxiliaries

Some aspectual auxiliaries stem from spatial expressions. These are mostly movement and displacement verbs, which have retained their regular use as “full” verbs. As auxiliaries, their syntactic scope is reduced to the modified verb (predicative core). Like the tense auxiliary *kān* (1.4.), these auxiliaries agree in gender and number with the subject of the modified verb but do not necessarily bear the same (prefixed and suffixed) inflections. However, contrary to

¹⁷ (Naïm 2009: 80).

constructions with *kān*, when the auxiliary is in the imperfective, the modified verb cannot be in the perfective.

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/ʔeṣid*, *ḡalas/ḡilis* (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 rawwah el-walad ṣa d-dār w ṣāf-e(h)* (PEA)
 when leave.PERF3SG the-child DIR the-home and see.PERF3SGM-
 3SGM
mijit qaṣad jṣajjit
 death AUX.PERF3SGM cry.IMPERF.3SGM
 ‘When the child went home and saw him dead, he started crying.’
- (53) *ʔeṣid jḡhki ʔuṣṣas* (LEA)
 AUX.PERF3SGM speak.IMPERF3SGM stories
 ‘He started telling stories.’
- (54) *gassu jabku* (ZYA)
 AUX.PERF3PL cry.IMPERF3PL
 ‘They started crying’
- (55) *ḡalsit tadrīs* (SYA)
 AUX.PERF.3SGF read.IMPERF3SGF
 ‘She started reading the Koran.’
- (56) *tḡlisi 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) *ḡissī 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) *ḡilis* and *ʔeṣid* (in the participial form) have come to mean ‘stay, reside’.

include an adverb in brackets within the translation, or as commentary between parentheses following the translation (66), depending on the context.

- (63) *kān* *ʕam-jihki* *maʕ-u* *ʔām*
 EXT.PERF3SGM ʕam-speak.IMPERF3SGM with-him AUX.PERF3SG
ɖarab-u
 hit.PERF3SGM-3SGM
 ‘He was talking to him, [suddenly] he hit him.’
- (64) *kenna* *kel-na* *wāqfīn* *ħadd* *el-ʕrīs* *b-iqūm*
 EXT1PL all-1PL standing.PTCP near the-groom b-AUX3SGM
 jeqʕod *ʕa* *l-kerse*
 sit.IMPERF.3SGM on the-chair
 ‘We were all standing beside the new bridegroom, and [suddenly] he sat on the chair.’ (Féghali)²¹
- (65) *gad-i* *məftaʕʕa* *la* *jgūm* *juloʕʕa-ha* (SYA)
 PART-3SGF scared PART AUX.IMPERF3SGM strangle.IMPERF3SGM-3SGF
 ‘She was afraid he might [in one go] strangle her.’
- (66) *lamma* *kabir* *qām* *xatāb-l-o* (ZYA)
 WHEN grow.PERF3SGM AUX.PERF3SGM betroth.PERF3SGM-DAT-3SGM
 ‘When he was grown, he betrothed him’ (without delay)
- (67) *qāmu* *liʕbu* *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 border* and *interval* (Desclés 1989, Culioli 1990). Thus one can represent (67) using a diagram where the closed final right borders of the two events coincide.

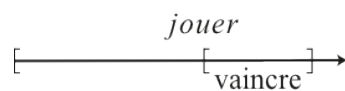


Diagram 1

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’:

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).

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

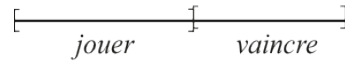


Diagram 2

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/?awām* (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.²²

- (68) *ʃa-gūm* *?arah-li* (SYA)
 PART/FUTURE-AUX.IMPERF1SG leave.IMPERF1SG-DAT-1SGM
 ‘I’m leaving.’
- (69) *?ūm* *rūh* (EA)
 AUX.IMP2SGM leave.IMP2SGM
 ‘Leave (now)’

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 Egyptian²³) whereas *zā* (*?aza*, *?əza*) is found in a greater number of eastern dialects.

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

– *rāh* is only found before finite verbs

- (70) *txēna?u* *sawa* *rāhit* *baʕʕalit* *tilʕab* (LEA)
 argue.PERF1PL together AUX.PERF3SGF renounce.PERF3SGF play.IMPERF.3SGF
 ‘They got into an argument, he stopped playing.’ (immediately)

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

²² As an auxiliary, *?ām* 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’ (Naïm 2009: 87, and 2011). I will not further dwell on this subject, as it is beyond the scope of this paper.

²³ Cf. Woidich (2006: 331).

- (71) *l-ḥūt fataḥ tamm-u ʔaʒa ʔaʕan-u* (PEA)
 the-dragon open.PERF.3SGM mouth-3SGM AUX.PERF.3SGM stab.PERF.3SGM-3SGM
fi l-ḥarbe
 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, *ʔaʒa* 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) *darab-u kaff ʔaʒa mlaʔʔaḥ 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 ʒā wāqeʕ b el-bīr* (LEA)
 jump.PERF3SGM and PREP jump-3SGM AUX.PERF.3SGM fall.PTCP in the-well
 ‘He jumped [there he went] fell in the well.’ (Féghali)²⁴



Diagram 4

In (70-71) one could replace *rāḥit* and *ʔaʒa* 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 *rāḥ* ‘go’ is the origin of the imperfective prefix *raḥ-* (variants *rāḥ-*, *laḥ-*), which is used in future conjugations in various dialects.²⁵ Depending on the context, *raḥ-* + 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-nʕūf lamma jšīr ʕumr-ak ʕifrīn sane* (PEA)
 see.b-IMPERF1PL when become.IMPERF3SGM age-2SGM twenty year
ʕu raḥ-tiʕmal
 INT do.PART-IMPERF2SGM
 ‘We will see what you will do when you are twenty.’

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

²⁵ The particle used to express the future varies from dialect to dialect: in *ʕanʕā*, one finds *ʕa-* (*ʕa-* in the 1st p.), with two possible etymologies, *ʕāda* ‘come back’ and *ḥatta* ‘until’, and in *Zabid* 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.

- (75) *ʔana raħ-ʔiqtaʃ l-majj ʃan-kum* (PEA)
 me cut.PART-IMPERF1SG the-water PREP-2PL
 ‘Me, I’m going to cut your water off.’
- (76) *raħ-tʃatte* (LEA)
 PART-rain.IMPERF3SGF
 ‘It is going to rain/it will rain.’
- (77) *rawweʒ raħ-ʃsīr aq-dəhr* (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*: “*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: *qaʃad* (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: *ballaʃ* ‘begin’ and *ʃār* ‘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 jəkðilu 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, beʔe*) and *qall* (*qəll*). 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* *fiǧæra* *ðællæn* *t̪t̪il* *t̪t̪il* *t̪t̪il* (ZYA)
 grow.PERF3SGF tree AUX.PERF3SGF grow.IMPERF3SGF grow.IMPERF3SGF grow.IMPERF3SGF
 ‘A tree grew, then continued growing, growing, growing.’
- (81) *ha* *ʃ-ʃabe* *beqe* *jirdaʃ* *ta* *ʃār*
 this the-boy AUX.PERF3SGM suckle.IMPERF3SGM until become.3SGM
ʃomr-u *sabʃ* *snin*
 age-3SGM seven years
 ‘This child continued to suckle until he was seven years old.’ (Féghali)²⁶
- (82) *dallit* *təbke* *la* *ʃ-ʃəbħ* (LEA)
 AUX.PERF3SGF cry.IMPERF.3SGF until the-morning
 ‘She continued crying until morning.’
- (83) *bʔina* *wəʔfin* *ta* *nkasar* *dahr-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 *ʔad* and *rəziʔ* ‘come back’, and in SYA by a third auxiliary *jzid* ‘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. Rəziʔ/rəziʃ ‘come back’

In the eastern dialects and in SYA, the verb *rəziʃ* 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) *rəħna* *w* *rəzəħna* (LEA)
 leave.PERF1PL and come back.PERF1PL
 ‘We left and we came back.’ (Féghali 1928:7)
- (85) *ʔasir* *aʃrɔf-ɔħ* *w* *asir* *li* *al-funduk [...]* (SYA)
 go.IMPERF1SG cash in.IMPERF1SG-3SG and go.IMPERF1SG to the-hotel [...]
w *arzaʃ*
 then come back.IMPERF1SG
 ‘I am going to cash it in then I am going to the hotel [...] then I will be coming back.’

²⁶ Féghali translates *beqe jirdaʃ* 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 argaʕi ħfi-hæ ħænīnu* (ZYA)
 shear.IMP2SGF the-tail-3SGM and AUX.IMP2SGF stuff.IMP.2SGF-3SGF cotton
 ‘You shear its tail and then you stuff it with cotton.’

2.1.4.2. *ʕād* ‘come back’

Contrary to the verb *rəʕiʕ*, the verb *ʕād* (regional variant *ʕāwad*) is not (no longer in EA) used as a ‘full’ verb. In EA, it serves as an aspectual auxiliary expressing iteration, like the verb *rəʕiʕ*, 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 *ʕād* (*ʕad*, *ʔad*) which also serves as a copula in nominal predication (2.2.1.). In the synchrony of the eastern dialects, *ʕād* 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 wʕedt-ne fi-h ʔaf b-āk* (LEA)
 you INT promis.PERF.2SGM-1SG in-3SG INT PREP-2SGM
ʕedt yajjart fikr-ak
 AUX.PERF2SGM change.PERF2SGM opinion-2SGM
 ‘You had promised me, why have you once again changed your mind?’ (Féghali)
- (94) *ʕāwadin ʔalabin majj* (PEA)
 AUX.PERF.3PLF ask.PERF.3PLF water
 ‘They asked once again for water.’
- (95) *mā ʕād fataħ tamm-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 Šan’āni 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, *zid*), 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_1 is of feminine gender (agreement in gender only) and can bear the imperfective prefix b- (98) and the future particle *ʕa-* (*ʕa* 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 ʔajn zīd ʕāʔ*
 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.’

- (105) *ʕād-u ʕa-jgoʕ tabīb* (SYA)
 PART-3SGM become.ʕa-IMPERF3SGM doctor
 ‘He is just about to become a doctor.’ (imminent future)
- (106) *ʕād-u ʕa-jhaddif* (SYA)
 PART-3SGM score a goal.ʕa-IMPERF3SGM
 ‘He is just about to score a goal.’ (imminent future)

In the eastern and Yemeni dialects, *ʕād* 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) *ʕād ʔin ʕān bidd-eh jōčil rās ʕbīr* (PEA)
 PART if EXPT.PERF3SGM want-3SGM eat.IMPERF3SGM head big
b-iqūl iḏbaḥi-l-na dič
 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) *ʕād fəreqtēn θalāθ min hōn θalāθ 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 tāʕeb gāl ʕād* (SYA)
 say.PERF3SGM me PART be.PERF1SGM tired say.PERF3SGM PART
gull la-na ʔanna-ka tāʕeb nzi nzūr-ak
 say.IMP2SGM to-1PL that-2SGM tired 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.’

2.2.2. The particle *gad* (gad)

The particle *gad* is found in SYA only.²⁹ As with *ʕād*, it is compatible with perfective, imperfective and participial forms. Contrary to *ʕād* however, before a finite verb, it is usually not followed by an independent or suffixed subject pronoun,³⁰ 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.³¹ 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.

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 Yaḥf region (Vanhove 1996).

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

³¹ (Naïm 2009: 197-200).

- (110) *ʔillā llī hī marat-ih gad-ī tigul-l-ih* (SYA)
 except RLTV 3SGF wife-3SGM PART-3SGF say.IMPERF3SGF-to-3SGM
maf hū dāri 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 ʔaniy gawiy* (SYA)
 PART 1SG rich a lot
 ‘I am very rich.’
- (112) *saʔ man gad-i gad-i kabīre ʔawla ʔād-i ʔyīre* (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.³²

- (113) *gad gulta-l-if mā hij l-ʔināze* (SYA)
 PART say.PERF1SG-to-2SGF CONJ 3SGF the-burial
 ‘I already told you what [the word] *jinaze* (burial) means.’
- (114) *wa gad ʔiftī jaʔnī wlād jamanī mäh ?* (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?’
- (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 ʔum-ha makke thizz w* (SYA)
 go.PERF.3SGF mother-3SGF Mecca pray.IMPERF.3SGF and
ʔabū-ha gad mā
 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 ʔstayalt ʔa-ddī-l-if fulūs* (SYA)
 SUB 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 ʔini wāhad al-ʔensān ma ʔād* (SYA)
 when PART make rich.PERF.3SG IND the-man NEG PART
ʔjfgir-f aḷḷah
 impoverish.IMPERF-NEG God
 ‘When he [God] has made a man rich, God no longer impoverishes him.’

³² J.-P. Desclés p.c.

- (119) *gālit gad bnajt fī nafs-ī min hūn fuft-ak* (SYA)
 say.PERF.3SG PART decide.PERF.1SG LOC person-1SG of when see.PERF.1SG-2SGM
ənn gad-gult l-ah fa ħurimt ʕalajj-i
 if PART say.PERF.2SGM DAT-3SGM then 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 ʔabgāf ʕind-ak* (SYA)
 if PART say.PERF.2sg-3SGF to-3SGM NEG PART 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 tajjib w gad-u ɔalħin* (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 tabīb* (SYA)
 PART-3SGM ʕa-fall.IMPERF.3SGM doctor
 ‘He will soon be a doctor.’
- (123) *gad ʕa-jzannin* (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 ʔann-ak tāʕīb* (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 zā*), 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-tuxruʕi ?* / *gad* *?axruʕ*
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 ʕanʕānī dialect?

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 *ʕam*. 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 ʕanʕānī dialect, the aspect particle *ʕād* expresses continuation of an already ongoing process (2.2.1).

Uses and meanings	IMPERF	b-IMPERF	ʕam + 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

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

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 taʕan-u* ‘He ran it through’ (AUX+stab.PERF) encodes a dynamic process; in (72) the construction with the participial form, *ʔaʒa mlaʔʔaħ* (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).

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