

Mood and Aspect in Standard and Syrian Arabic

Peter Hallman
Austrian Research Institute for Artificial Intelligence

Workshop on Formal Arabic Linguistics
Nantes University

25-27 Sept., 2024

Benmamoun (2000:31): “Returning to the mood endings in Standard Arabic, it is not clear at this point what their semantic interpretations are.”

I claim that the moods (indicative, subjunctive, jussive) have no meaning of their own, though they interact with their syntactic environment in ways that obscure this fact.

Background on the state/event distinction

Vendler (1957), Leech (1971), Vlach (1981), Dry (1983), Partee and Bach (1984), Löbner (1989), Condoravdi (2002), Kamp and Reyle (1993), Stowell (2007), Altshuler (2016), etc.:

- Eventive predicates occur in a different repertoire of contexts than stative predicates.
- Progressive and habitual predicates pattern together with stative predicates.

Only stative predicates are natural in the simple present (in English):

- (1) a. *Mary drinks a cup of coffee.
b. Mary knows the answer.

Progressive and habitual predicates pattern like stative predicates:

- (2) a. Mary is drinking a cup of coffee.
b. Mary drinks a cup of coffee every morning.

Condoravdi (2002): Only stative predicates license the simultaneous/epistemic temporal-modal profile of modal verbs:

- (3) a. Mary is likely to know the answer.
[simultaneous/epistemic or future shifted/metaphysical]

b. Mary is likely to drink a cup of coffee.

[future shifted/metaphysical only]

Progressive and habitual predicates pattern like stative predicates:

(4) a. Mary is likely to be drinking a cup of coffee.

[simultaneous/epistemic or future shifted/metaphysical]

b. Mary is likely to drink a cup of coffee every morning.

[simultaneous/epistemic or future shifted/metaphysical]

What do progressive and habitual construals of eventive predicates have in common with stative predicates?

- $\llbracket \text{Mary know the answer} \rrbracket = \lambda s . \text{know}(\text{mary, the answer, } s)$
- $\llbracket \text{Mary drink a cup of coffee} \rrbracket = \lambda e . \exists x \text{ cup-of-coffee}(x) \ \& \ \text{drink}(\text{mary, } x, e)$
- $\llbracket \text{PROG} \rrbracket = \lambda P \lambda s . \exists e P(e) \ \& \ \tau(s) \subset \tau(e)$
- $\llbracket \text{HAB} \rrbracket = \lambda P \lambda s . \exists e \forall e' \text{ ATOM}(e', e) \rightarrow P(e') \ \& \ \tau(s) \subset \tau(e)$
- $\llbracket \text{be likely} \rrbracket = \lambda P \lambda s .$
 - if P is eventive: there is a likely possible event e such that $P(e) \ \& \ \tau(s) < \tau(e)$
 - if P is stative: there is a likely possible state s' such that $P(s') \ \& \ \tau(s) \circ \tau(s')$
- “ $\tau(\alpha)$ ” = the run time or ‘temporal trace’ of α
- “ \subset ” = is temporally included in
- “ $<$ ” = temporally precedes
- “ \circ ” = temporally overlaps

The Arabic moods, for the imperfective stem *ktub* ‘write’:

	Indicative	Subjunctive	Jussive
3MS	jaktubu	jaktuba	jaktub
3FS	taktubu	taktuba	taktub
3MPL	jaktubūna	jaktubū	jaktubū
3FPL	jaktubna	jaktubna	jaktubna
2MS	taktubu	taktuba	taktub
2FS	taktubīna	taktubī	taktubī
2MPL	taktubūna	taktubū	taktubū
2FPL	taktubna	taktubna	taktubna
1S	?aktubu	?aktuba	?aktub
1PL	naktubu	naktuba	naktub

Uses of the indicative:

- (5) l-ʕālam-u jaḥtāzu l-ʔān-a ʔakḥar-a min ʔajj-i waqt-in
 the-world-NOM need.IND the-now-ACC more-ACC from any-GEN time-GEN
 maḍā ʔilā ʔiʕlāʔ-i qijam-i t-taʔāxi
 pass.PERF to promotion-GEN values-GEN brotherhood.GEN
 wa-t-tafāhum-i.
 and-the-understanding-GEN
 ‘The world needs now more than ever the promotion of the values of brotherhood
 and mutual understanding.’
- (6) wa-ʔakkada l-maʕdar-u ʔanna-hu jaʕrī l-ʔān-a
 and-confirm.PERF the-source-NOM that-it be.in.progress.IND the-now-ACC
 ʕard-u l-maʕmūʕāt-i l-musallāḥat-i ʔilā d-dāxil-i
 expulsion-NOM the-groups-GEN the-armed-GEN to the-outside-GEN
 s-sūrijj-i.
 the-Syrian-GEN
 ‘And the source confirmed that the expulsion of armed groups out of Syria is cur-
 rently in progress.’
- (7) wa-jakfī ʔanna jaʕqūb kull-a ʔusbūʕ-in jadfaʕu l-ʔaʕrat-a
 and-suffice.IND that Jakob every-ACC week-GEN pay-IND the-wage-ACC
 li-l-ʕummāl-i
 to-the-workers-GEN
 ‘[Mohammad convinced the workers that] it is enough that Jacob pays the workers
 their wage every week.’

Uses of the subjunctive:

- The subjunctive mood is selected by the particles *ʔan* ‘that’ (or ‘to’ per Habib 2009), *lan* ‘not.FUT’, *ḥattā* ‘until’, *li / likaj* ‘in order to’, and a few others.
- The particle *ʔan* is selected by certain modal verbs or participles.
- The interaction with a modal verb will tell us what kind of aspectual interpretations are available to subjunctive verbs.

- (8) min l-muḥtamal-i ʔan taḥtawija ʕalā ʔakbar-i rawāsib-i
 of the-likely-GEN that contain.SUB on largest-GEN deposits-GEN
 l-liḥijūm fi l-ʕālam.
 the-lithium-GEN in the-world
 ‘[the region] is likely to contain the largest deposits of lithium in the world.’
- (9) lākinna min l-muḥtamal-i ʔan taḥtāʕ-a ʕ-ʕarikat-u ʔilā s-saʕj-i
 but of the-likely-GEN that need.SUB the-company-NOM to the-endeavor

li-l-ḥuṣūl-i ṣalā daʿm-in mālijj-in min l-ḥukūmat-i ʔiḏā
 to-obtain on support-GEN financial-GEN from the-government-GEN if
 tawāṣalat l-ʕuqūbāt-u li-fatrat-in taṭwīlat-in
 continue.PERF the-sanctions-NOM for-period-GEN long-GEN
 ‘However, the company is likely to need to endeavor to obtain financial support
 from the government if the sanctions continue for long.’

- (10) wa-ʔawḏaḥa d-duktūr-u l-ʔibrāḥīm ʔanna-hu min l-muḥtamal-i ʔan
 and-clarify.PERF the-doctor-NOM alibrahim that-it of the-likely-GEN that
 tunāqiṣa l-qimmat-u mawḏūf-a ʔiṣādat-i ʔiṣmār-i
 debate.SUB the-summit-NOM topic-ACC redoing-GEN construction-GEN
 ʔafyānistān.
 afghanistan
 ‘And Dr. Ibrahim clarified that the summit is likely to debate the issue of the
 reconstruction of Afghanistan.’

- (11) min l-muḥtamal-i ʔan jaqūma l-ʔamīr-u nājif bin ʕabdu l-ʕazīz
 of the-likely-GEN that undertake.SUB the-prince-NOM nayif bin abul aziz
 bi-zijārat-in qarībat-in li-l-jaman.
 in-visit-GEN soon-GEN to-the-yemen
 ‘Prince Nayif bin Abdulaziz is likely to undertake a visit to Yemen soon.’

Auxiliary support in subjunctive contexts:

- (12) min l-muḥtamal-i ʔan jakūna l-ʕāmilūna fī ʕ-ʕarikat-i
 of the-likely-GEN that be.SUB the-workers.NOM in the-company-GEN
 jamurrūna bi-waqt-in ʕaṣīb-in ḥalijj-an.
 pass.IND in-time-GEN critical-GEN current-ACC
 ‘The workers of the company are likely to be going through a critical time right
 now.’

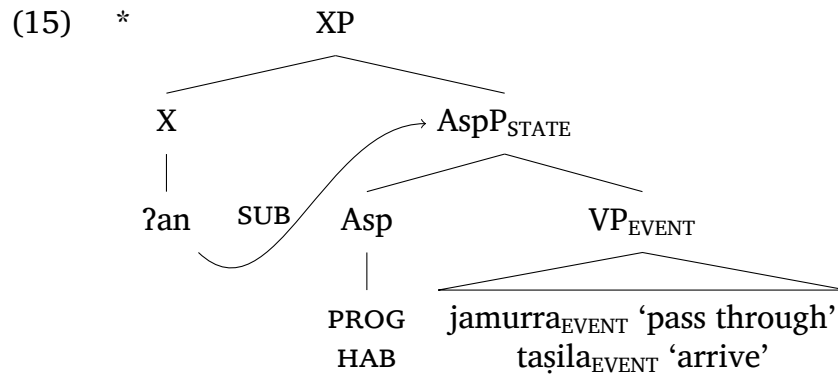
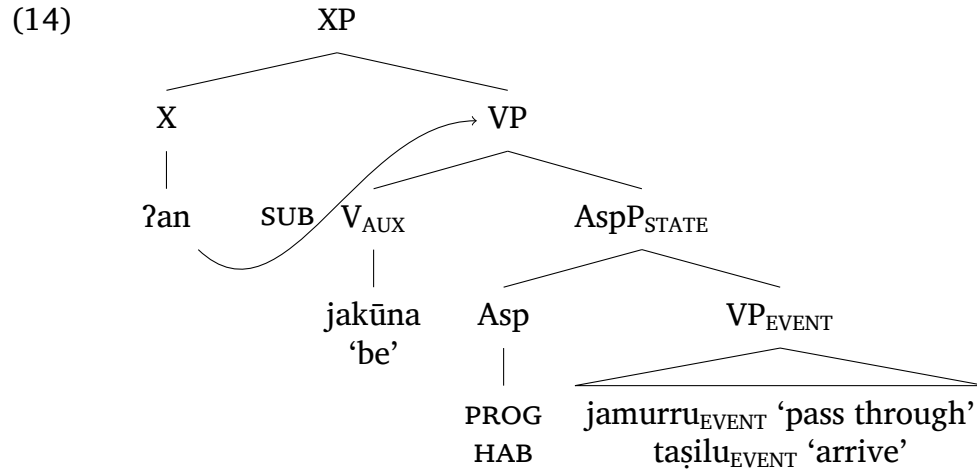
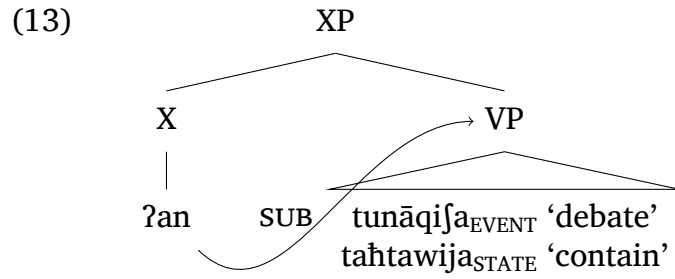
min l-muḥtamal-i ʔan takūna ʔasliḥat-un taṣīlu min s-sūdān ʔilā
 of the-likely-GEN that be.SUB weapons-NOM arrive-IND from the-sudan to
 qiṭāf-i yazza.
 strip-GEN Gaza
 ‘Weapons are likely to arrive [regularly] from Sudan to the Gaza Strip.’

In the subjunctive:

- A stative verb patterns like a stative verb; an eventive verb patterns like an eventive verb.
- For an eventive verb to get a progressive/habitual reading in a subjunctive context,

it must be supported by an auxiliary.

- The subjunctive mood makes no semantic contribution of its own.

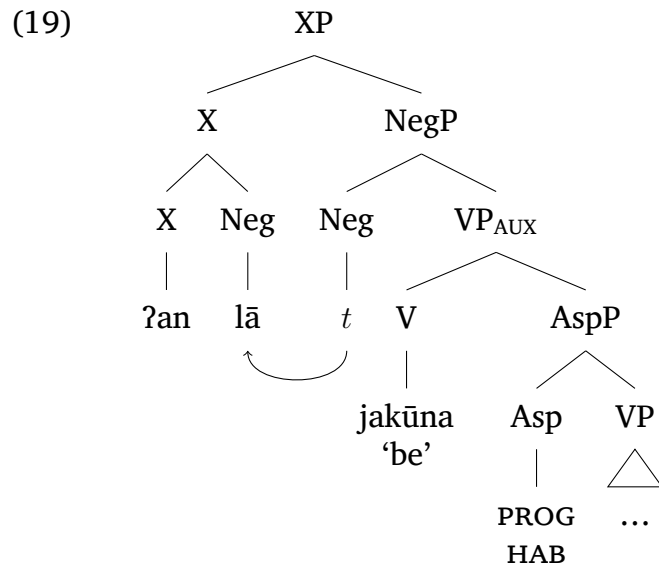
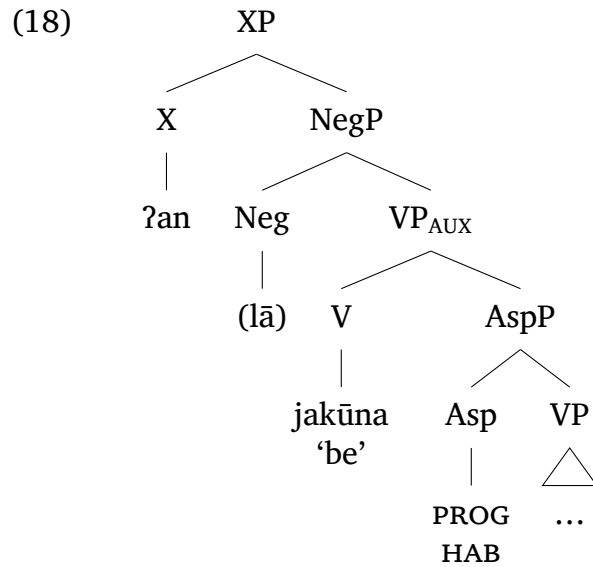


Remark on negation:

- (16) fa-min l-muhtamal-i ?allā (= ?an lā) tataṣāwana d-duwal-u
 so-of the-likely-GEN that-not cooperate.SUB the-nations-NOM

l-ʕarabijjat-u
the-arab-NOM
‘so the Arab nations are likely to not cooperate.’

- (17) min l-muhtamal-i ʔallā (= ʔan lā) jataʔaθθaru l-muʔtamaʕ-u
of the-likely-GEN that-not be.affected.SUB the-society-NOM
l-ʔamīrkijj-u miθla d-duwal-i n-nāmijāt-i
the-american-NOM like the-nations-GEN the-developing-GEN
‘American society is likely to not be affected like the developing nations’



The subjunctive with *lan* ‘not.FUT’:

- (20) *lākinna l-ḥajāt-a lan taʿūda kamā kānat ʿalaj-hi sābiq-an*
 but the-life-ACC not.FUT return.SUB as be.PERF on-him before-ACC
 ‘But life will not go back to the way it was for him before.’
- (21) *ʿamalijjat-u t-tabarruʿ-i lan tusabbiba ḥālat-a faqr-i*
 procedure-NOM donation-GEN not.FUT cause.SUB condition-ACC lack-GEN
dam-in li-l-marīḍ-i.
 blood-GEN in-the-patient-GEN
 ‘The donation procedure will not cause anemia in the patient.’
- (22) *lan taḥtāʿa li-banāʾ-i xazānāt-i.*
 not.FUT need.SUB to-build-GEN storage.tanks-GEN
 ‘You will not need to build storage tanks.’
- (23) *lan tastaʿīfa ʾan taṣmuda ṭawīl-an fī sāḥat-i l-munāfasat-i.*
 not.FUT be.able.SUB to endure.SUB long-ACC in field-GEN competition-GEN
 ‘She will not be able to endure long in the field of competition.’
- (24) *lan jakūna jaqifu jantaḏiru-nā bi-l-ʾasfal-i.*
 not.FUT be.SUB stand.IND wait.IND-us in-the-below
 ‘He will not be standing waiting for us downstairs.’
- (25) *lan jakūna jabḥaθu ʿan waḏifat-in muʿajjanat-in.*
 not.FUT be.SUB search.IND for job-GEN specific-GEN
 ‘He will not be looking for any particular job.’
- (26) *lan jakūna jasraḥu ḏ-ḏiʿb-u maʿa l-xurūf-i.*
 not.FUT be.SUB graze.IND the-wolf-NOM with the-sheep-ACC
 ‘The wolf will not graze [HAB?] with the sheep.’
- (27) *lan jakūna jastaxdimu ʿihāz-a ʾaman-i d-dawlat-i ʿidda*
 not.FUT be.SUB use.IND apparatus-ACC security-GEN the-state-GEN against
l-muwāṭinīn.
 the-citizens-GEN
 ‘He will not use [HAB?] the state security apparatus against citizens.’

The jussive

- (28) *wa-naʿāh-u dawlat-i l-ʾimārāt-i lam jabdaʾ xilāla*
 and-success-NOM state-GEN the-emirates-GEN not.PAST begin.JUSS during

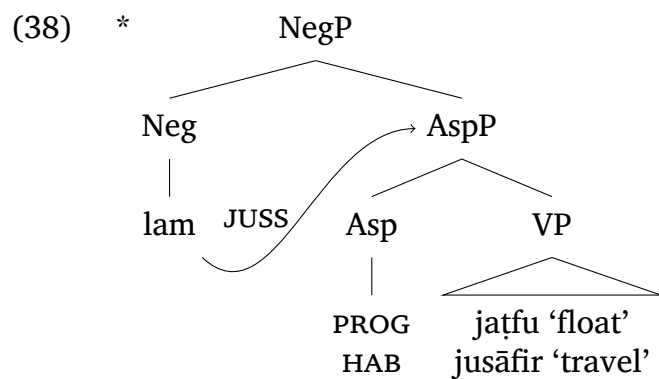
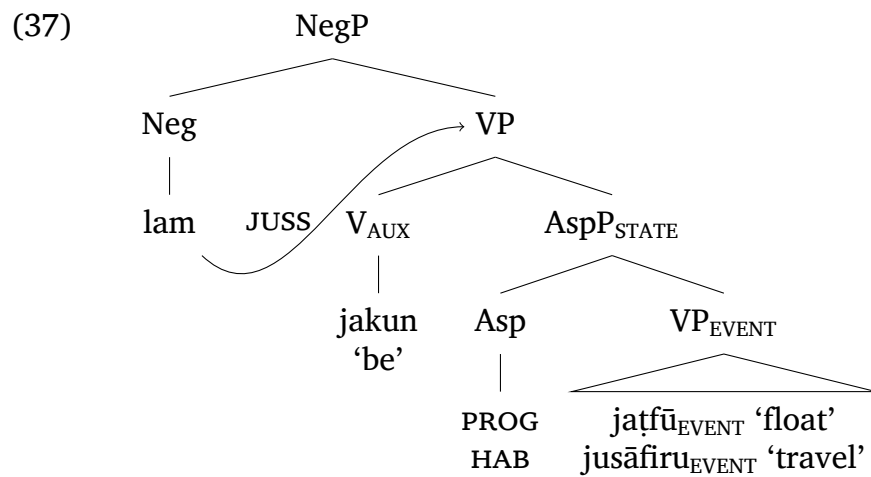
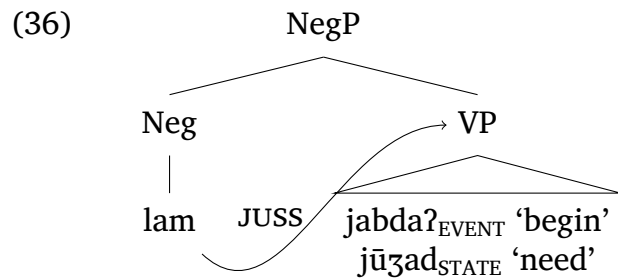
l-ʔazmat-i l-hālījjat-i bal badaʔa qabla ʔālik bi-kaθīr-in
 the-crisis-GEN the-current-GEN, but begin.PERF before that by-much-GEN
 ‘The success of the Emirates didn’t begin during the current crisis, but long before that.’

- (29) lam jatawaqqaf t-taʔlīm-u aw l-ʕamal-u jawm-an.
 not.PAST stop.JUSS the-instruction-NOM or the-work-NOM day-ACC
 ‘Neither school nor work stopped for a single day.’
- (30) hal nahnu mustaʕiddūna li-waḏāʔif-a lam tūʔad baʕdu?
 Q we ready.NOM for-jobs-GEN not.PAST exist.JUSS yet
 ‘Are we ready for jobs that never existed before?’
- (31) lam jastaʔīʔū ʔiqnāʕ-a ʔaḥad-in bi-waʔāhat-i
 not.PAST be.able.JUSS convincing.ACC someone-GEN of-plausibility-GEN
 ʔarḥ-i-him.
 expulsion-GEN-their
 ‘They were not able to convince anyone of the plausibility of their expulsion.’

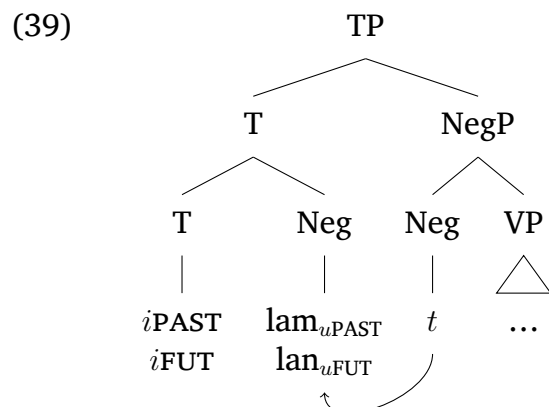
Auxiliary support in jussive contexts:

- (32) ʔadraktu faʔʔat-an ʔanna ḥuṭām l-qawārib lam jakun jaṭfū
 realize.PERF sudden-ACC that wreckage the-boots not.PAST be.JUSS float.IND
 ʔalā n-nahr, wa-baʕḍ-u-hā yāliq-un fī n-nahr-i.
 on the-river, and-some-NOM-it sinking in the-river-GEN
 ‘I suddenly realized that the wreckage of the boats was not floating on the river, and some of it was sinking.’
- (33) wa-baʕda l-murāʔaʕāʔi d-dāxilījjat-i tabajjana ʔanna ʕ-ʕaḥīd-a
 and-after the-reviews-GEN the-internal-GEN clarify.PERF that the-martyr-ACC
 lam jakun juxaṭṭīṭu li-ʔajj-i huʔūm-in
 not.PAST be.JUSS plan-IND for-any-GEN attack-GEN
 ‘And after internal reviews, it turned out that the martyr was not planning any attack.’
- (34) lam jakun jaqūm-u bi-ʔajj-i ʕamal-in juḍājiq-u-hā ʔaw
 not.PAST be.JUSS do-IND any-GEN work-GEN bother.IND-her or
 juyḍību-hā.
 annoy.IND-her
 ‘He did not do any of the work that bothered and annoyed her.’
- (35) wa-kānū jaḥsubūna-hu ʕalā s-saʕūdījjat-i ʕilm-an bi-ʔanna-hu
 and-be.PERF credit-him to the-saudi-GEN knowing-ACC in-that-he

lam jakun jusāfiru ?ilaj-hā ?illā qalil-an
 not.PAST be.JUSS travel.IND to-it but little-ACC
 ‘They thought he was from Saudi Arabia, even though they knew that he did not
 travel there very much.’

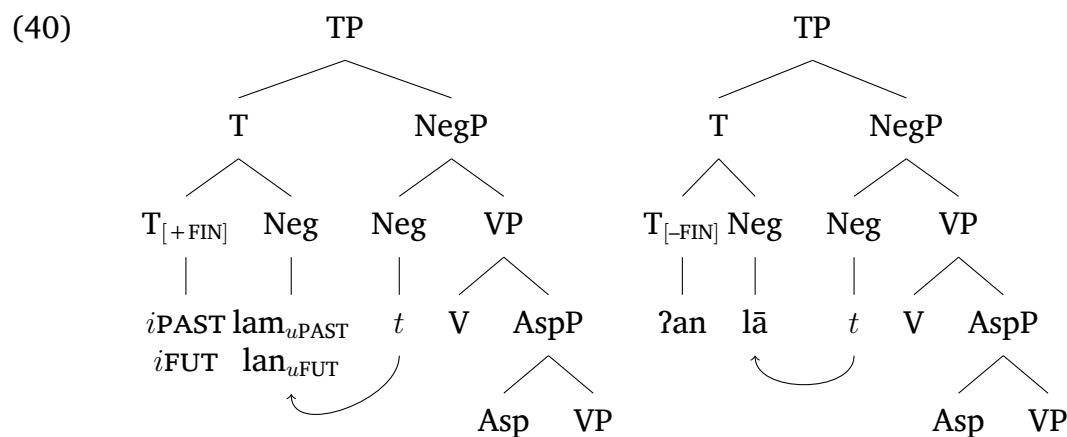


Benmamoun (2000):



Habib (2009): “*?an* ...is a functional head analogous to the infinitival *to* in English. ...It heads a TP complement [to a lexical verb], occupying T.”

This completes a parallel between finite and non-finite clauses in Arabic.



There are examples with auxiliary support that do not seem to strongly require a progressive or habitual interpretation, and examples of auxiliary support for stative verbs.

- (41) wa-ftataha ?injīzū mārīnīz t-tas3īl-a bi-hadaf-in ?awwal-a
 and-claim.PERF Inigo Martinez the-score-ACC with-goal-GEN first-GEN
 wa-huwa llaḏī lam jakun jusa3zīlu hadaf-an fī l-līyā munḏu
 and-he REL not.PAST be.JUSS score.IND goal-ACC in the-league since
 ʕām-in kāmīl-in
 year-GEN entire-GEN
 ‘Inigo Martinez took the first goal, and he is the one who didn’t score a goal in

the league for the entire year.’

- (42) ʔillā ʔanna ḏālika lam jakun jaqḏī ʔalā šīyat-i taqāsum-i
but that that not.PAST be.JUSS settle.IND on form-GEN division-GEN
s-sulṭat-i l-ʔidārijjat-i bajna-humā.
authority-GEN the-administrative-GEN between-them
‘However, that did not settle the matter of the form of the division of adminis-
trative authority between them.’
- (43) lākinna l-ʔārūrī lam jakun jadri ʔanda iʔtiqāl-i-hi
but the-Aruri not.PAST be.JUSS know.IND at arrest-GEN-his
li-ʔawwal-i marrat-in ʔanna-hu sa-jumḏī s-sanawāt-i l-xams-a
for-first-GEN time-GEN that-he FUT-spend-IND the-years-ACC the-five-ACC
ʔaʔarat-a l-lāhiqat-a dāxila ʔaswār-i s-siḡn-i l-ʔisrāʔilijj-i
ten-ACC the-following-ACC inside fences-GEN the-prison-GEN the-Israeli-GEN
‘But Aruri did not know, the first time he was arrested, that he would spend the
next fifteen years inside the walls of the Israeli prison.’
- (44) lam jakun jaʔlamu ʔajʔ-an ʔan ʔihāz-i l-kumbjūtir.
not.PAST be.JUSS know.IND something-ACC about device-GEN the-computer
‘He didn’t know anything about computers.’
- (45) rubbamā lan jakūna judammiru furaṣ-a-ka l-waḏīfijjat-a,
maybe not.FUT be.SUB destroy.IND chances-ACC-your the-occupational-ACC
lākinna-hu saufa juʔaθθiru salbijj-an ʔalā ...
but-it FUT effect.IND negative-ACC on ...
‘Maybe it won’t destroy your job chances, but it will negatively impact ...’
- (46) sadād-u dujūn-i l-maʔāʔāt-i li-ʔālīh-i ʔanādīq-i
repayment-NOM debts-GEN the-pensions-GEN to-benefit-GEN funds-GEN
t-taʔmīnāt-i lan jakūna jatahaqqaqu ʔillā qabla taḥqīq-i
the-insurance-GEN not.FUT be.SUB realize.IND but before realization-GEN
fawāʔiḏ-a ʔawwalijjat-in bi-mawāzanat-i d-dawlat-i
surpluses-GEN primary-GEN in-budget-GEN the-state-GEN
‘Repayment of pension debts to insurance funds will not be realized until primary
surpluses are achieved in the state budget.’
- (47) lan jakūna jasrahu ḏ-ḏiʔb-u maʔa l-xurūf-i.
not.FUT be.SUB graze.IND the-wolf-NOM with the-sheep-ACC
‘The wolf will not graze with the sheep.’
- (48) lan jakūna jastaxdimu ʔihāz-a ʔaman-i d-dawlat-i ḏidda
not.FUT be.SUB use.IND apparatus-ACC security-GEN the-state-GEN against

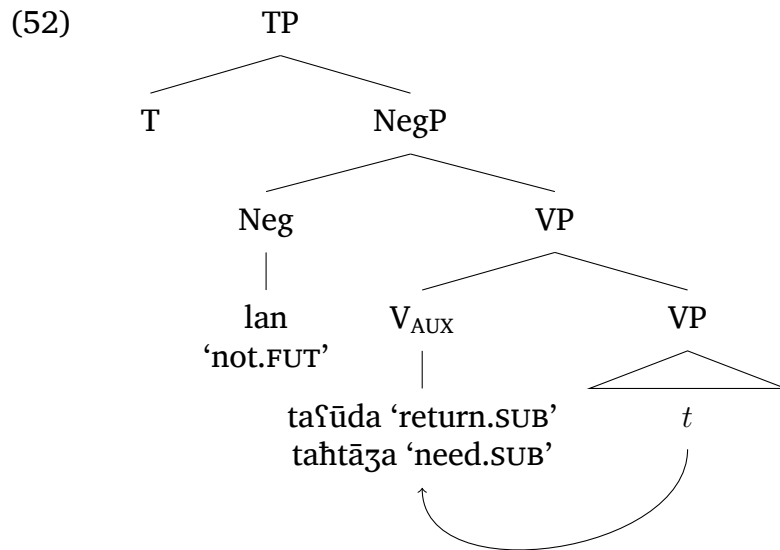
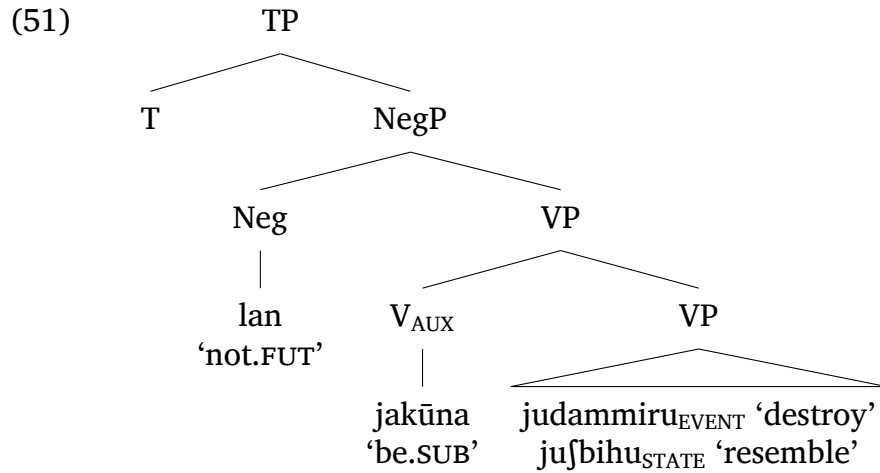
l-muwāṭinīn.

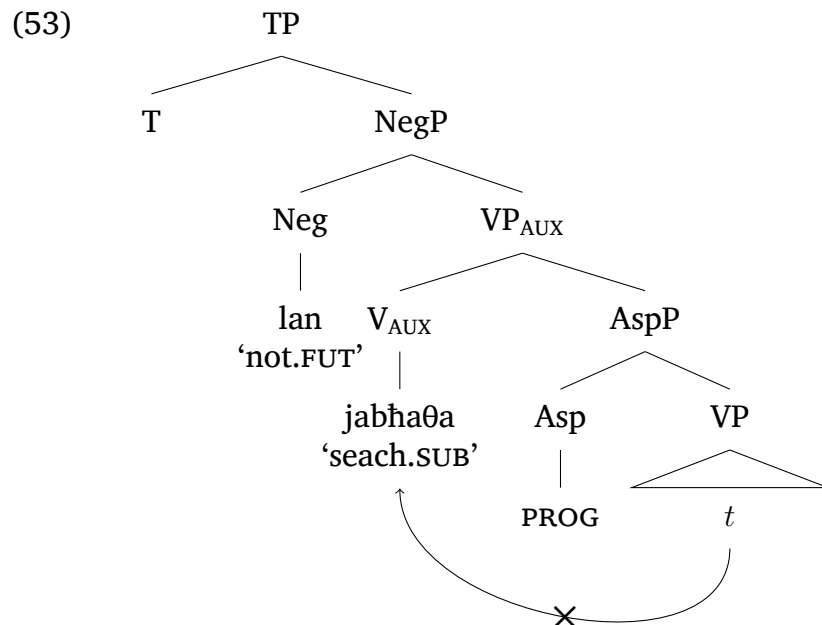
the-citizens-GEN

‘He will not use the state security apparatus against citizens.’

- (49) lan jakūna jumkinu l-wuṣūl-u ʔilaj-hi min ʃ-ʃafhat-i.
not.FUT be.SUB be.possible.IND the-arrival-NOM to-it from the-page-GEN
‘It will not be possible to access it from the page.’

- (50) wa-lākin fawra xuruʒ-i ʔisrāʔil-a min hunāka tabajjana ʔanna
and-but after departure-GEN Israel-GEN from there seem.PERF that
l-qiṭāʕ-a lan jakūna juʃbihu sinṡāfūra, bal binyāzī
the-strip-ACC not.FUT be.SUB resemble.IND Singapore, but Bengazi
‘But once Israel left, it became clear that the Strip would not resemble Singapore,
but Benghazi.’





Summary:

- The basic phrase structure template is:
[TP [NegP [VP_{AUX} [AspP [VP]]]]]
- NegP and AspP are optional.
- Features assigned to V_{AUX} (namely SUB, JUSS) must be supported by an overt V, *jakūn* by default.
- V moves optionally to V_{AUX}.
- There is no Asp-to-V_{AUX} raising, so V-movement to V_{AUX} is blocked by Asp, necessitating auxiliary-support in V_{AUX}.
- Mood is assigned by T, sometimes in combination with Neg:
 - T_[-FIN] assigns subjunctive.
 - T_[+FUT] + Neg assigns subjunctive.
 - T_[+PAST] + Neg assigns jussive.
- Subjunctive and jussive mood do not contribute anything to the aspectual profile of the underlying verb.
- Asp stativizes.

Returning to the indicative:

- It looked at first like indicative is correlated with progressive or habitual interpretations of eventive verbs.
- But stative verbs also appear in the indicative, which doesn't make sense if the functional role of the indicative is to derive progressive or habitual readings of eventive verbs.

- Eventive verbs in the indicative may have an eventive (non-progressive or habitual) interpretation when supported by an auxiliary.
- This makes it look like the indicative is a default mood. Like the subjunctive and jussive, it has no meaning contribution of its own.

What explains the impression that indicative is associated with progressive and habitual readings of eventive verbs?

- The present tense demands a state description:

$$\llbracket \text{PRES} \rrbracket = \lambda P \lambda s. \exists s' P(s') \ \& \ \tau(s') \circ \tau(s)$$
- The apparent connection between indicative mood and stativity is an epiphenomenon of the fact that only stative predicates occur in the present tense and present tense assigns no mood morphology, triggering default indicative.

Mood in contemporary Arabic

Shlonsky and Ouhalla (2002), their gloss:

- (54) maha kēn-it ʕam b-ti-lʕab basketbol.
Maha be(PERF)-3FS PROG HAB-3FS-play(IMPERF) basketball
‘Maha was playing basketball.’ [Palestinian]
- (55) maha b-ti-lʕab basketbol.
Maha HAB-3FS-play(IMPERF) basketball
‘Maha plays basketball.’

Benmamoun (2000), his gloss:

- (56) bi-yi-drus
hab-3m-study
‘He studies.’ [Egyptian]
- (57) kan b-i-drus
be.past.3ms prog-3m-study
‘He was studying. / He used to study.’
- (58) xarag bi-ḏhak
leave.past.3ms asp-3m.laugh
‘He left laughing.’

Cross-dialectal distribution of *b-* per Al-Jallad (2009)

Dialects with *b-* augment:

- Cypriot Arabic: *pitaklu* ‘you (pl.) eat’
- Fellahi Palestinian: *bticitbu* ‘you (pl.) write’
- Damascus Arabic: *byešrabu* ‘they drink’
- Bišmizzen: *byišrabu* ‘they drink’
- Cairene: *biyiktibu* ‘they write’

Dialects lacking *b-* augment:

- Gulf: *yitirsūn* ‘they fill’
- Muslim Baghdadi: *yitirkūn* ‘they leave’
- Najdi: *yasmafūn* ‘they hear’
- Mardin: *yektebūn* ‘they write’

The Syrian Arabic moods per Cowell (1964)

	Indicative	Subjunctive
3MS	byiktub	yiktub
3FS	btiktub	tiktub
3PL	byik ^ʔ tbu	yik ^ʔ tbu
2MS	btiktub	tiktub
2FS	btik ^ʔ tbi	tik ^ʔ tbi
2MPL	btik ^ʔ tbu	tik ^ʔ tbu
1S	baktubu	(a)-ktub
1PL	mniktub	niktub

The subjunctive

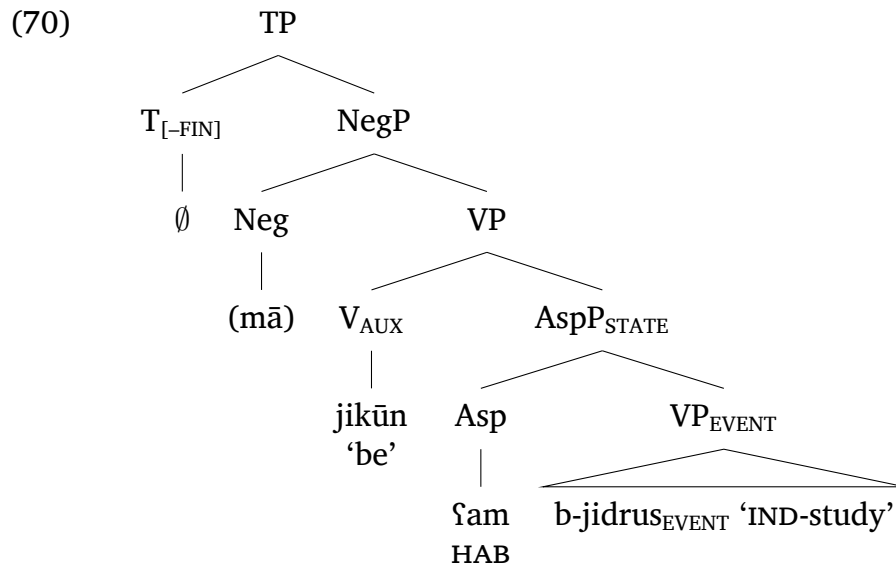
- (59) ant jimkin tinsa l-wuḏūh, z-zakarijjāt, l-mawāʔif, bass mā rah
you can forget.SUB the-faces, the-memories, the-situations, but not FUT [I]
asmaḥ-lak tinsa zunūb-ak.
let-you forget.SUB sins-your
‘You can forget the faces, the memories, the situations, but I will never let you forget your sins.’
- (60) halla? jimkin jixfu l-ʔadille iza sallamnā-hun
now [they] might hide.SUB the-evidence if [we] present.PERF-them [to]
jāhun
them
‘They might hide the evidence if we give it to them.’

- (61) hatta lō ?il-tī-lun halla? jimkin jifakkr-ū-ki ?am t-yaṭṭi ?alē-ha
 even if tell-you.F-them now might think-3PL-you.F PROG F-cover for-her
 u-mā jisidd?-u-ki
 and-not believe-3PL-you.F
 ‘Even if you tell them now they might think you are covering for her and not
 believe you.’
- (62) lāzim jistawṣib kill ?ī.
 must investigate every thing
 ‘He has to investigate everything.’
- (63) lāzim jitzakkar l-mawḍūf mā ?ād xajjār b-n-nisbe ?il-u.
 need remember.SUB the-matter not remain.PERF choice in-the-relation to-him
 ‘He needs to remember that he no longer has any choice in the matter.’
- (64) waḍṣ-u xaṭīr u-lāzim jiḍall b-l-mustaḥḥa.
 condition-his serious and-must stay.SUB in-the-hospital
 ‘His condition is serious and he must stay in the hospital.’
- (65) lēf ?am b-jiṣraḥ l-bēbē?
 why PROG IND-cry the-baby
 ‘Why is the baby crying?’
 a. jimkin / lāzim jikūn ?ōṣān.
 might / must be.SUB hungry
 ‘It might / must be hungry.’
- (66) wēn muna?!
 where Muna
 ‘Where is Muna?!’
 a. *mā b-a-ṣrif, jimkin / lāzim ti-mzaḥ maṣ-na.
 not IND-1S-know might / must F-joke.SUB with-us
 (‘I don’t know, she might / must joke with us.’)
 b. mā b-a-ṣrif, jimkin / lāzim t-kūn ?am b-ti-mzaḥ maṣ-na.
 not IND-1S-know might / must F-be.SUB PROG IND-F-joke with-us
 ‘I don’t know, she might / must be joking with us.’
- (67) lēf muna ?ind-a ?alāmāt mniḥa ha-l-?add b-l-madrassa?
 why Muna at-her grades good that-the-extent in-the-school
 ‘Why does Muna have such good grades in school?’
 a. *mā b-a-ṣrif, jimkin / lāzim ti-drus ktīr.
 not IND-1S-know might / must F-study.SUB a lot
 (‘I don’t know, she might / must study a lot.’)

- b. mā b-a-ʃrif, jimkin / lāzim t-kūn b-ti-drus ktīr.
 not IND-1S-know might / must F-be.SUB IND-F-study a lot
 ‘I don’t know, she might / must study a lot.’

- (68) jimkin mā ʃir imm bass mā raḥ a-trūk ʒōz-i.
 might not become.SUB mother but not FUT 1S-leave.SUB husband-my
 ‘I might not become a mother, but I will not leave my husband.’

- (69) lāzim ni-baṭṭil ni-ḥiss, lāzim mā ni-tʔassar.
 must 1PL-stop.SUB 1PL-feel.SUB must not 1PL-be.effected.SUB
 ‘We must stop feeling, we must not be effected.’



Summary:

- The basic phrase structure template is:
 [TP [NegP [VP_{AUX} [AspP [VP]]]]]
- NegP and AspP are optional.
- Features assigned to V_{AUX} (namely SUB) must be supported by an overt V, *jikūn* by default.
- V moves optionally to V_{AUX}.
- There is no Asp-to-V_{AUX} raising, so V-movement to V_{AUX} is blocked by Asp, necessitating auxiliary-support in V_{AUX}.
- Mood is assigned as follows:
 - [-FIN] T assigns subjunctive mood (no morphological reflex).
 - Indicative mood (*b-* prefix) is default.
- Mood does not contribute anything to the aspectual profile of the underlying verb.
- Asp stativizes (progressive *ʃam*, covert HAB).

b-marking in the Shami corpus (Syrian)

morpheme combination		occurrences
ʕam + b-IMPF	=	46
ʕam + j...	=	2034
ʕam + t...	=	2255

morpheme combination		occurrences
kān(it) + b-IMPF	=	22
kān + j...	=	506
kānit + t...	=	355

kān + SUBJUNCTIVE in the Syrian corpus

- (71) kān-it t-hibb malāmiḥ-u l-manḥūte.
be.PERF-F F-love.SUB features-his the-chiseled
'She loved his chiseled features.'
- (72) mara?-u arbaʕ sinīn dājman kān-it t-āxud.SUB ḥubūb manʕ
pass.PERF-PL four years always be.PERF-F F-take pills prevention
ḥaml.
pregnancy
'For four years she was always taking birth control pills.'
- (73) iʕa ʕōt min warā-j u-kān jinādi b-ism-i.
come.PERF voice from behind-me and-be.PERF call.SUB in-name-my
'A voice came from behind me and was calling my name.'
- (74) ḍall ab-i jidi??-lu la-jiʔul-lu jizī
keep.PERF father-my knock.SUB-him_{DAT} to-tell.SUB-him_{DAT} come.SUB
jirmi ʕalē-j jamīn ʔ-ṭalā? u-mā kān jiradd ʕalē-na.
throw.SUB on-me oath the-divorce and-not be.PERF answer.SUBJ to-us
'My father kept calling him to come and give me the divorce, but he didn't answer [?] us.'
- (75) mā kān jihkī-ni b-ḍ-ḍabṭ ʕan l-ḥubb u-r-rūmansijje
not be.PERF tell.SUB-me in-the-precision about the-love and-the-romance
u-t-tafāhum u-l-axlā?
and-the-understanding and-the-morals
'He didn't tell [?] me in detail about love and romance, and understanding an morals.'

Conclusions

- The moods do not have any semantic contribution; they are like case markers in this respect.
- Indicative appears by default, subjunctive and jussive are assigned by specific mood assigners.
- The association of indicative with stativity is indirect: the present tense requires a stative predicate, but does not select a mood, triggering default indicative.
- The syntactic conclusions largely align with previous research, though many questions remain, esp. regarding the perfective, nominal (verb-less) sentences, and conditionals.

References

- Al-Jallad, Ahmad. 2009. The etymology of the indicative augment *b-* in some neo-arabic dialects. In *Afroasiatic studies in memory of Robert Hetzron: Proceedings of the 35th annual meeting of the North American Conference on Afroasiatic Linguistics*, ed. by Charles G. Häberl, 209–231. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Altshuler, Daniel. 2016. *Events, states and times*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Benmamoun, Elabbas. 2000. *The feature structure of functional categories*. Oxford University Press.
- Condoravdi, Cleo. 2002. Temporal interpretation of modals: modals for the present and for the past. In *The construction of meaning*, ed. by David Beaver, Stefan Kaufmann, Brady Clark, and Luis Casillas, 59–88. CSLI Publications.
- Cowell, Mark. 1964. *A reference grammar of Syrian Arabic*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Dry, Helen. 1983. The movement of narrative time. *Journal of literary semantics* 12:19–53.
- Habib, Rania. 2009. The syntax of Standard Arabic *ʔan* and *ʔanna*. In *Selected papers from the 2006 Cyprus syntaxfest*, ed. by Kleanthes Grohmann and Phoevos Panagiotidis, 159–194. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Kamp, Hans, and Uwe Reyle. 1993. *From discourse to logic*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Leech, Geoffrey. 1971. *Meaning and the English verb*. London: Longman.
- Löbner, Sebastian. 1989. German *schon – erst – noch*: an integrated analysis. *Linguistics and philosophy* 12:167–212.

- Partee, Barbara, and Emmon Bach. 1984. Quantification, pronouns, and VP anaphora. In *Truth, interpretation and information*, ed. by J. Groenendijk, T. Janssen, and M. Stokhof. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Shlonsky, Ur, and Jamal Ouhalla. 2002. Introduction. In *Themes in Arabic and Hebrew syntax*, 1–43. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press.
- Stowell, Tim. 2007. Sequence of perfect. In *Recent advances in the syntax and semantics of tense, mood and aspect*, ed. by Louis de Saussure, Jacque Moeschler, and Genoveva Puskas, 123–146. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Vendler, Zeno. 1957. Verbs and times. *The Philosophical Review* 66:143–160.
- Vlach, Frank. 1981. The semantics of the progressive. In *Syntax and semantics, vol. 14: tense and aspect*, ed. by Philip Tedeschi and Annie Zaenen, 271–292. New York: Academic Press.