

| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Peculiarities of The Progressive, Perfect and Future Formation in Colloquial Arabic

Prof. Reima Al-Jarf

King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**Corresponding Author:** Prof. Reima Al-Jarf, **E-mail:** [reima.al.jarf@gmail.com](mailto:reima.al.jarf@gmail.com)

| ABSTRACT

Arabic has three tenses: past, present and future. The past tense refers to actions that took place in the past (كتب kataba He wrote). The present tense pertains to habitual actions, or those that are currently ongoing (يكتب /yaktubu/ He writes). The future signifies actions expected to occur in the future by adding the prefix *س* /sa/ or the particle *سوف* /sawfa/ to the present tense form of the verb (سيكتب sa-yaktubu He will write). Arabic also has a perfect and an imperfect aspect, an active participle (كاتب /ka:tib/ writer) and a passive participle (مكتوب /maktu:b/ (written)). Stretches of discourse containing the progressive markers *عمل عم* and active participle forms of sense, motion, and volition verbs as *امشي* walk, *تعال* come here, *قوم* get up; *جالس* sitting, *قاعد* sitting, *اروح* go, *سامع* hearing, *شايف* seeing and others were collected from informants and social media posts in order to find out how the aforementioned particles, lexical verbs and participles are used to express the progressive and future aspects in spoken Colloquial Arabic dialects and the grammaticalization process they went through (desemanticization, decategorization, extension and erosion). Data analysis revealed that the particles *باش/ماش* (will) and *هيا* (let's), verbs as *خلينا* , *قوم* *هيا,امشي* (let's), express futurity. Other aspectual particles as *عمل عم* (are), and verbs of motion, posture, volition and sense and active participles express the Progressive Tense. In some cases, active participles of verbs of motion, posture and volition are ambiguous denoting multiple tenses and aspects as Present Progressive, Past Progressive, Present Perfect depending on the context and availability of adverbs of time. In some case active participles undergo a grammaticalization process where they change from a lexical verb to an aspect marker. Results of the study are given in detail.

| KEYWORDS

Tense-Aspect formation, Progressive Tense, Future Tense, Colloquial Arabia, Arabic dialects, grammaticalized verbs, active participles, verbs of motion, verbs of posture, verbs of volition, Aspect markers.

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### 1. Introduction

According to Al-Asbahy & Aleemuddin (2016), Eades & Watson (2013), Al-Jarf (2015), there are three tenses<sup>1</sup> in Arabic: the Past, Present and Future Tense. These tenses<sup>2</sup> are fundamental in expressing actions and events occurring in the past, present and future. The Past Tense refers to actions that took place in the past (كتب kataba He wrote, لعبوا /laʔibu:/ (they played). The Present Tense pertains to habitual actions occurring in the present or those that are still going on (يكتب /yaktubu/ He writes), يلعبون /yalʔabu:n/ They play). The present tense signifies various aspects, including habituality, necessity, capability, and probability. Although not a separate tense, the Future Tense is indicated by adding the prefix *س* /sa/ or the particle *سوف* /sawfa/ to the Present Tense form of the verb. Thus, it signifies actions expected to occur in the future (سيكتب sa-yaktubu He will write), سيلعبون /sa-yalʔabu:n/ they will play).

<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic\\_verbs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_verbs)

<sup>2</sup> <https://talkpal.ai/grammar/all-tenses-overview-in-arabic-grammar/>

The expression of the present, past and future times cannot be considered separately from aspect, which is whether the verb action as beginning, in progress, or completed. Arabic has a perfect and imperfect aspect. The perfect refers to completed action (past time), and the imperfect refers to present or non-past time. In Standard Arabic, aspect-tense is shown by the addition of an aspect-tense prefix to the base form of the verb, which is the past third person singular masculine form used with كتب he wrote). To convert a verb into the active imperfect, an imperfect tense-aspect prefix or one of its variants *?a-, na, ta-, ya-* is added to the third person masculine singular base form (يكتب تكتب أكتب نكتب) (Al-Jurf, 2002; Al-Jurf, 1995a; Al-Jarf, 1992).

The Past Tense often (but not always) has the meaning of a Past Perfective, i.e. it expresses the concept of 'he did' as opposed to 'he was doing'. The latter can be expressed using a combination of the Past Tense of the verb (كَانَ *kāna* was) with the Present Tense or Active Participle, e.g. كَانِ يَكْتُبُ *kāna yaktubu*. In addition, there are "compound verbs" that can express many grammatical aspects such as the inchoative, durative and so on as in *بَدَأَ يُلْفِتُ النَّظَرَ /badaʿa yalfitu an-naẓara/* means (he started to attract attention) in which *badaʿa* conveys the meaning of "started doing something (in the past)".

The Arabic Imperative or Command is formed by adding the prefix *{?u-}* or its variant *{?i-}* to the base form of the perfect verb together with an internal vowel change. The Imperative is marked for number and gender as in the masculine singular (?u-kttub, ?i-shrab), feminine singular (?u-ktubii, ?i-shrabii), dual (?u-ktubaa, ?i-shrabaa), masculine plural (?u-ktubuu, ?i-shrabuu), feminine plural (?u-ktubna, ?i-shrabna) and so on (Al-Jarf, 2015; Al-Jurf, 1995a; Al-Jarf, 1994).

Moreover, every verb has a corresponding Active Participle as in كاتب /ka:tib/ (writer) & مدرس /mudarris/ (teacher), and most have Passive Participles as مكتوب /maktu:b/ (written). Each verb has verbal noun form as well.

A variety of tense, aspect, and mood forms exist in Arabic as it a diglossic language, with a Standard Arabic (SA) form and many Colloquial Arabic (CA) forms (dialects). The SA form used in formal situations such as conferences, lectures, TV news channels and print materials (books, magazines, and newspapers), and a non-standard, Colloquial Spoken Arabic (CA) form used in daily communication with family members, friends, when shopping, in T.V. talk shows and so on. Each Arab country has its own dialect (colloquial form) such as Egyptian, Jordanian, Tunisian, Syrian, Lebanese, Moroccan, Iraqi and Sudanese and Saudi Arabic, and there are also regional sub-dialects within each Arab country such as Najdi, Hijazi, Alexandrian, and Cairene Arabic (Al-Jarf, 2023; Al-Jarf, 2021; Al-Jarf, 2016; Al-Jarf, 2011).

Being a diglossic language, issues related to aspect, tense and action in Standard as well as some spoken Arabic dialects have been of interest to many researchers for decades such as: the verb in literary and colloquial Arabic (Watson, 1999); the Arabic imperfective (Hallman, 2015); imperfect verbs in various Arabic dialects in comparison with the SA habitual tense (Alshorbaji, 2016); Arabic dialects of Chad and Nigeria (Owens, 1985); aspect, tense and action in the Arabic dialect of Beirut (Bruweleit, 2015); modality, mood and aspect in spoken Arabic (Mitchell, 2013); tense and aspect in the Arabic of the Omani Sharqiyya and the Mehri of Dhofar (Eades & Watson, 2013); tense, aspect, and modality in diglossic speech in Cairene Arabic (Moshref, 2012); time reference, tense and formal aspect in Cairene Arabic (Eisele, 1990); modality, mood and aspect in spoken Arabic (McLoughlin, 1996), modality, mood and aspect in spoken Arabic with special reference to Egyptian and Levantine Arabic (Abu-Haidar, 1996); and others.

A second line of research investigated the structure of tense and aspect in some spoken Arabic dialects. For example, Petrova (2014) examined compound tense forms in Egyptian Arabic formed by the auxiliary verb *kān*<sup>3</sup> in a corpus of modern literary plays by Egyptian writers, a Bible dialect translation, and folk tales recorded in the late 19th and early 20th century, their classification, functions, various meanings and relation with MS analogues. The researcher found that-most common compound tense forms in modern Egyptian Arabic follow the structure *كان يفعل /ka:n bi-yifʿal/*, *كان فعل /ka:n yifʿal/*; *كان يفعل /ka:n faʿʿal/*; and *كان هيفعل /ka:n ʔa-yifʿal/*. In another study, El-Sadek (2014) confirmed that verbs in Egyptian Arabic carry both tense and aspect. In compound tense forms, the verb tense is overwritten by the auxiliary tense. The auxiliary verb */kaan/* marks the tense in compound forms, while the lexical verb marks aspect. The auxiliary */yikuun/* add a subjunctive meaning. */bikuun/* has a modal interpretation in the examples analyzed in the study. The bare imperfective form of the lexical verb is the most restricted among the forms used. In its perfective form, it only occurs following the auxiliary. The auxiliary */kaan/* constitutes a distinct predicate that shares the same subject with the following lexical verb forming its non-finite clause embedded within another clause in **Lexical-Functional Grammar** terms.

Based on findings of some studies in the literature, Alshorbaji (2020) compared Present Continuous and Future Tense prefixes in SA with those in seven Arabic dialects to show the similarities and differences among them. He concluded that in SA, the imperfect verb expresses actions that are currently occurring, i.e., the Present Progressive as in *لا بد من تفسير منطقي لما يدور الآن* (There must

<sup>3</sup> As transcribed in Petrova's (2014) study.

be a logical explanation for what is happening). In CA, four prefixes are used to produce the present Continuous (Progressive): b-, k-, da- and qa-, with b- as the most common prefix. It is used in Palmyra Arabic as in بكتب /buktub/ (he is writing), in the Levantine dialect, بيكتب /byuktub/ (he is writing), in Saudi Arabic, بيحاربوها /biyHaarbuuha/ (they are fighting her), in Egyptian Arabic, الولد /الولد /biyaykil-weled bi-yakul dilwaʔtii/ (the boy is eating now), بيكتب bitiktib (she is writing), in Gazan urban Arabic, /b-/ in the Present Progressive/Continuous Tense (بغسل /baʕsil/ washing clothes, بنحاول /binHaawil/ we are trying), بجلي /baʕli/ (washing dishes). d- is used in Moroccan Arabic, as in ديدرس deyudrus (he is studying) and k- and t- are used to express the Progressive Tense as well. Some Iraqi dialects use the prefix d- as in /de-yudrus/ ديدرس (He is studying), /de-ashrab shaay/ داشرب شاي (I am drinking tea). The prefixes /qad-/ and its variants /qat-/ and /qa-/ are also used in Baghdad Arabic as in قدامشي /qadamʕi/ & قأمشي /qaʔamʕi/ (I am walking), قاتمشي /qattemʕi/ & قاتمشي /qatemʕi/ (she is walking), قيمشي /qayemʕi/ & قيمشي /qayemʕi/ (he is walking).

Another study by Persson (2008) re-analyzed the role of prefix b- in Gulf Arabic spoken dialects where the prefix is inserted before the p-stem (prefix form) of the verb as a marker of the future, intent and/or irrealis. He indicated that the b- prefix is used in Gulf Arabic today as a generalized marker of the irrealis mood rather than being limited to function as a future or intensive marker. They suggested rāh, as a future marker in some sub-dialect of the Gulf area.

Similarly, Ouali (2022) confirmed the use of bi- in Egyptian and Levantine Arabic dialects, and ka- in Moroccan Arabic, and b-imperfective in Saudi Najdi Arabic (Altamimi, 2021) as Progressive Aspect markers. Ouali indicated that even though bi and ka do not have a clear grammatical function, they are considered grammaticalized Progressive Aspect markers.

The same prefix ta- is used in Central Asian Arabic dialects to form the Complex (Immediate) Future by adding it to the imperfective verb to convey the future (*ta-noḡdi* let's go immediately, *ta-nōkul* let's eat immediately), *ta-iktub* let him write immediately). The Immediate Future is also formed by means of the prefix rāh (*rāh iktub* (he will write quickly), سوف يكتب فوراً). In other cases, the future is produced by *xalli*: *xalli nušrub šāy* (Let's drink tea) (Chikovani, 2017).

Regarding the future markers b(a)-, ha- and ta- (will) in Jordanian and SA, Alshboul, Al Shaboul & Asassfeh (2010) mentioned that the future tense can be realized by these three prefixes, when attached to the beginning of the imperfective indicative verb as in -bukrah ba-shuufak fil-matar (I shall see you tomorrow in the airport); bukraha ha-shuufak fi-l- mataar (I shall see you in the airport tomorrow); xabbirni ilyawm ta-shoufak bukraha (Just tell me today in order to see you tomorrow). The researchers hypothesized that the future marker Ha- has developed from the lexical word ra(a)Ha (went) and rayiH (to go) in showing futurity based on evidence that both forms are attached to the beginning of the verb and have the same inflectional position within the word. They added that the two particles ra (a) Ha and rayiH have the same root, but from two different derivations. They concluded that the prefix Ha- has developed from the particles ra(a) Ha or rayeH. It is noteworthy to say that the verb راح /raHa/ and رايح /rayeH/ (meaning go and going) are used in colloquial, not SA. They do not mean "go" in Standard Arabic as claimed by Alshboul, Al Shaboul & Asassfeh (See راح in Almaany Online Dictionary)<sup>4</sup>. The researchers did not justify the clipping of the initial syllable and maintaining the final syllable of /raHa/ and /rayeH/. If they were suffixes in راح /raHa/ and رايح /rayeH/, they should be suffixes when attached to the new verbs.

In the same study, Alshboul, Al Shaboul & Asassfeh (2010) made a conclusion that Futurity is expressed by the particle Hatta —to+ future form verb, and its equivalent free particle ta- —to+ future form before the imperfective indicative verb as in Xabbirni ilyawm Hatta ?shoufak bukraha (Just tell me today in order to see you tomorrow). They claimed that they found no difference between Hatta and ta- in terms of structure and meaning, that both forms are followed by imperfective indicative verbs and that both indicate futurity. They assumed that the grammaticalized form ta- (to)+ future form has developed from the lexical item Hatta —to+ future form through the phonological process which reduced the future particle Hatta to the form ta- and the decategorization process which rendered the grammaticalized form meaningless separately. Here again, it should be noted that this is inaccurate interpretation. In the example given by Alshboul, Al Shaboul & Asassfeh, /Hatta/ حتى<sup>5</sup> is a purpose particle which means "in order to". The source of futurity in the given example is the adverb bukra, not he particle + verb Hatta ?shoufak.

In an extensive study, Sellami (2022) described and compared the strategies used in 25 Arabic dialects to encode the Progressive Aspect and to explore the similarities and differences in grammaticalizing the Progressive Aspect.—She classified Arabic dialects into three different categories in terms of their PROG-marking: (i) Zero-PROG where the dialect has no specific way of encoding the Progressive Aspect and the EVENT-IN-PROGRESS as in Ḥassāniya, Wādi Ḥaḍramawt, Lahej, Aden, Ḥabbān, Abyan, Cypriot Arabic, Cairo Arabic, Juba Arabic, Najdi Arabic, and Mardin Arabic. (ii) Emergent-PROG where the dialect has (a) specific way(s) of encoding the Progressive Aspect as in Salt Arabic (Jordan) where the active participle of the verb *g' d* 'to sit' is used as an auxiliary

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar/راح/#:~:text=3%20%النهج%مصدر,20%زخ,20%أوخ,20%زخت,A-%20%3A-%20%عندهم>

<sup>5</sup> <https://shamela.ws/book/17801/759>

before an Imperfective Verb to express ongoing actions at the time of the utterance (*/Biğūz əb-kull šahar b-tittaşil ma'ā-na θalaθ arba/* She calls us maybe three or four times a month). (iii) Categorical-PROG where the dialect has a way of encoding the Progressive Aspect that is always used in those contexts as in Tunis Arabic, Oman, Maltese, Libya: Tripoli, Benghazi, Khuzestan, Šawi, Uzbekistan, Iraqi, Levantine, Hijazi, Bahrain, Mardin Arabic.

Further studies showed that in some Arabic dialects, the Progressive Tense is rendered by the active participle. For example, Odilavadze (2010) mentioned that the use of active participles to render tenses applies only to some contexts as in: المؤتون الزكاة (those who 'and those who pay the poor-rate<sup>6</sup>); القاتل الناس (one who killed, has killed, had killed, or shall have killed people). Likewise, Ouali (2022) indicated that grammaticalized participles of the verbs 'sit' and/or 'work' are used to mark the Progressive Aspect and that these grammaticalized aspect markers appear in full and in truncated forms.

The grammaticalized motion verb "raḥ" as a prospective future particle (marker) in Syrian Arabic, Jarad (2014) asserted, has developed out of the SA verb "rāḥ" (go<sup>7</sup>) as in */l-madrasə ḥa- təlīn n-nətāyij bukra/* (The school is going to announce the results tomorrow). The grammaticalization process from the SA verb "rāḥ" to a prospective future particle involved a semantic shift (desemanticization), morphological shift (de-categorialization), phonetic shift (erosion), and morphophonological shift (cliticization) respectively.

The grammaticalization of lexical verbs into Progressive and Future markers in Saudi Najdi Arabic was analyzed by Altamimi (2021). He pointed out that the active participle of posture verbs *jaalis/qaʿaid* 'sitting' and *gaayem* 'standing', the motion verbs *raḥ* 'he went', and the b-imperfective have undergone semantic extension, semantic bleaching, and de-categorialization, but not phonological reduction (erosion) during the grammaticalization process from their original function as lexical verbs to tense, mood, and aspect markers of progressivity or futurity.

In Bukhara and Qashqa-darya Arabic dialects in Uzbekistan, the active participle *gā'id* conveys continuity of an action in the present tense when used with an imperfective verb as in *ibki gā'id* (is crying). The same structure is found in the Iraqi dialect as in *anā akūl gā'id* (I'm eating now), and in Qashqa-darya's Jeinau sub-dialect *anā okul gā'id*. In most cases, the participle *gā'id* is placed in a postposition following the imperfective verb *işrub gā'id* (he drinks [tea] now). In these dialects, *gā'id* is rarely found in a preposition *gā'id inşūf* (looks). *gā'id* can rarely be replaced by the verbal form *ga'ad* and the following verb can stand in the perfective. In this case, the action takes place in the past in a certain, definite time specified by context as in *zōka i ḥama gufur ḡa' ga'ad* ([Meanwhile] he came to the well). Sometimes, the same structure can convey the Immediate Future as well. It mainly happens when *gā'id* is found in the pre-position: *gā'id iktub* 'Let him write immediately!' In Literary Arabic, one of the meanings of *qa'ada* is 'to start', 'to begin': *قعد يتكلم* (started talking) (Chikovani, 2017).

It is worth noting that there is a misinterpretation of the use of *qa'id*. *gā'id iktub* does not mean 'Let him write immediately, rather it means "he is writing". *qa'ada* and *qa'id* are not used in Literary Arabic as a tense marker. Rather, an inchoative verb as *ʔaxatha yaktubu* (he started to write) is used. We also find the postposition of *gā'id* in *anā okul gā'id*, as claimed by the researcher, to be counter-intuitive, at least in the Iraqi dialect, where it should be prepositioned. His claim is contrary to the placement of *qa'id* in many Arabic dialects in which it is placed before the Present Tense verb.

The above literature review shows that Arabic dialects use many prefixes to form the Progressive Tense (b-, b(a)-, bi, k-, ka-, da-, ha-, qa-, and ta-). They have also developed various strategies to encode the Progressive Aspect and have grammaticalized some lexical verbs as *raḥ*, *ga?id*, *qaad* so that they assume a grammatical function as aspect markers. This development is actually responsible for the current tense-aspect-mood systems of some Arabic dialects today, since the integration of the auxiliaries to mark finer aspectual distinctions has led to the reorganization of those systems. The grammaticalization of the Progressive Aspect led to the current states of the dialects today. Despite that, the grammaticalization of lexical items into grammatical elements to express the Progressive and Future Tenses is still under-researched and there are some misinterpretations in the source of some aspect markers and the meaning of some grammaticalized forms as *raḥ* and *ga?id*.

Therefore, this study aims to explore how imperative verbs as *امشي* walk, *تعال* (come here) and its clipped forms *تعا, تعي, تعوا* (let's), *خلينا* (let's), and *قوم* (get up); lexical verbs and active participles derived from motion, posture, volition and sense verbs are used to express the Progressive, Perfective/Imperfective and Future Tenses; whether and how they have been grammaticalized in Spoken Arabic dialects; and which universal principles and mechanisms of their grammaticalization process (desemanticization, extension, de-categorialization, or erosion) are involved when verbs change from their original function as lexical verbs to tense, mood, and aspect markers of Progressive and Future. Focus will be on the following verbs: as *أروح* (go), *رايح* (going), *أخذ* take, *جاي*

<sup>6</sup> The correct translation is those who give zakat (alms).

<sup>7</sup> Misinterpretation as in the comment on Alshboul, Al Shaboul & Asassfeh above

coming, مسافر travelling, داخل coming in, خارج going out, واصل arriving, راجع returning/coming/going back, نازل (going to); طالع going to/going up; مسافر (travelling), ماشي (go/wall), واصل arriving, حاضر present, نايم sleeping, جالس sitting, قاعد/قاعد/كاعد sitting, قايم qayem (getting up), واقف standing, جايب brought, بشاري buy, سامع hearing; شايف seeing; شامم smelling; ذايق tasting; حاسس feeling/sensing, the vocative particle هيا come on, let's, the vocative/imperative verb تعال (come on), and the Progressive markers عم عمال (are) باش/ماش (will).

The aspectual markers (b-, k-, da-, ha, qa-, ha-) and using verb to be كان for forming complex verbs expressing the past will not be part of the current study as they were extensively analyzed by prior studies reported above.

This study is significant for translation students as it will raise their awareness of the aspectual marker system of spoken Arabic dialects since the Spoken Arabic aspect-tense markers serve as indicators for the students as listeners to recognize the Present Continuous and Future Tenses, in particular. It shows them how the Progressive and Future are produced in spoken Arabic dialects and introduces them to the grammaticalization processes which some forms go through, from being lexical verbs to becoming grammatical categories.

## 2. Definition of Terms

Grammaticalization<sup>8</sup> is a linguistic process where words develop into grammatical elements over time. It often involves a shift from a lexical to a grammatical function, and the words typically undergo semantic, phonological, and syntactic changes. According to Hopper and Traugott's (2003), there are four universal grammaticalization principles and mechanisms that include the following:

- *Desemantization* in which a word or construction loses some of its original meaning or semantic content and becomes more abstract and grammatical. In English, the word "like" originally means similarity or preference (I like bananas). Over time, it has undergone desemantization and now it is also used as a marker of comparison (The baby is like an angel).
- *Extension* which refers to the widening of a word's usage or application. During grammaticalization, a word may extend its meaning to cover additional contexts or functions. For instance, the word "since" initially denoted a specific point in time "Since Monday, I've been busy", but it has extended its usage to indicate cause or reason "Since it's raining, we'll stay indoors".
- *Decategorialization* which involves the loss of morpho-syntactic properties that define a word's category as a noun, verb, or adjective and loses its specific category features. In English "to" is a preposition (go to school) but in infinitives (to read), it has been decategorized.
- *Erosion* or phonetic reduction that occurs when a word undergoes gradual simplification in its pronunciation. During grammaticalization, phonetic features may erode, leading to shorter, less distinct forms. For instance, the word "going to" is reduced to "gonna" in casual speech.

## 3. Data Collection and Analysis

Stretches of discourse containing امشي walk, تعال come here, خلينا let's, قوم get up; هيا come on, let's, جالس sitting, قاعد sitting, go أروح, أخذ take, جاي coming, مسافر travelling, داخل coming in, خارج going out, رايح going, واصل arriving, راجع coming/going back), active participles forms derived from sense verbs as سامع hearing; شايف seeing; شامم smelling; ذايق tasting; حاسس feeling/sensing and the Progressive markers عم عمال & باش were collected from 20 undergraduate student informants majoring in translation and from posts and comments posted in Colloquial Arabic on social media platforms as Facebook and X.

For each lexical item, the data were sorted out and classified as to whether the resulting tense and aspect are Present Progressive, Past Progressive, Present or Past Perfect or Future. The data, classification and analysis were verified by two professors of Arabic and English-Arabic translation. Results of the analysis are reported qualitatively.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 The Future

Data analysis has shown some strategies for expressing futurity in Colloquial Arabic. For example, in Tunisian Arabic, the particle ماش/ماش which means سوف /sawfa/ (will) in Standard Arabic is inserted before the imperfect (present) verb نسافروا. Thus, it implies the future tense as in باش نسافروا غدوة (we will travel tomorrow).

In addition, in numerous spoken Arabic dialects as Hijazi, Egyptian and Syrian Arabic, the vocative particle (هيا) and the underivable vocative verb تعال are used before an imperfect (present) verb هيا نخرج (let's go out) & تعال نشرب شاي (let's drink tea); تعال أقول (come! Let me tell you something), تعال ساعدني (come and help me). The clipped/shortened forms تعوا, تعي, تع, تع, تعالي from تعالي

<sup>8</sup> [grammaticalization - wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammaticalization)

used with different pronouns and masculine and feminine genders as *let's drink coffee* (تغ/تعا/تعني/تعوا نشرب قهوة) are commonly used in some Arabic dialects such as Jordanian, Palestinian and Syrian Arabic to denote futurity.

Other common imperative verbs (امشي & قوم) used before the imperfect (present) verb imply the future tense as in امشي (let's sit for a while); قوم نشرب شاي (let's drink tea); امشي & قوم (go sleep). Each is followed by another lexical verb to denote the future. Since امشي & قوم are verbs of motion meaning "walk & get up" and خلينا is a verb of volition meaning "let's", these verbs are prone to grammaticalize into tense, mood and aspect markers. Lexically speaking, امشي means "walk", قوم "stand up/get up" and خلينا means "leave us", but the grammaticalization process has altered their meaning and function over time from a lexical status to a grammatical status as future markers.

A third strategy for expressing futurity is by using the active participle of motion verbs as رايح (going), راجع (returning, coming back), نازل (going to), طالع (going), مسافر (travelling) as in نازلين/ رايحين جدة بكرة (going to Jeddah tomorrow), طالعين الرياض بكرة (travelling to Riyadh tomorrow), راجعين من الحج بعد يومين (returning from pilgrimage in two days), راجع لاسبوع الجاي (travelling to London next week), ماشيين للسوق (are going/walking to the market), راجع اليوم (coming home today), رايحين السوق (we are going shopping). Here, the context has an adverb of time referring to the future. Semantically, the motion verbs as رايح (going), راجع (returning, coming back), نازل (going to), طالع (going to), مسافر (travelling) have not undergone semantic extension, semantic bleaching, nor phonological reduction (erosion), but have changed their grammatical function from being an agentive noun to a Present Progressive Tense and aspect marker.

However, رايح اصلي (I am going to pray) and رايح اعمل شاي (I am going to make tea) consist of the active participle رايح (going to) or رايح قايم (getting up) + an imperfect verb. They imply the immediate or near future. Here, the active participle forms رايح قايم are used as future markers before imperfective verbs to express the immediate or near future at the time of utterance. The grammaticalization path from the Arabic active participle رايح & قايم to a prospective future particle in spoken Arabic resulted in a semantic shift (desemanticization) from the participle meaning (getting up) and (going), and a morphological shift (decategorialization) from a lexical verb to a future tense marker respectively.

#### 4.2 The Present Progressive

Data analysis in the current study has revealed that the Progressive Aspect is formed by the particles عم and عمال (is/are) that are used in Egyptian and Levantine Arabic dialects as in عمال يمشي (he is walking), عم يجري بسرعة (he is running fast). Both precede the Imperfect Verb, thus yielding the Present Progressive (Continuous) Tense which means that the action is ongoing.

Active Participles derived from sense verbs as سامع hearing; شايف seeing; شامم smelling; ذايق tasting; حاسس feeling/sensing in أنا سامع صوت غريب (I am hearing a strange sound), أنا شايف خيال من بعيد (I am seeing a shadow in the distance), أنا حاسس اني مسخن (I am feeling that I have fever), أنا ذايق طعم مر (I am tasting something bitter), أنا شامم ريحة حريق (I am smelling something burning) express the Present Progressive/Continuous Tense which shows that the action is still going on. These Active Participles of sense verbs have been cross-linguistically prone to grammaticalize into tense, mood, and aspect markers. During the grammaticalization process from an agentive noun to aspect markers, they have undergone extension, i.e., widening of the word's usage. They have extended their meaning to cover additional functions, vis the Present Progressive. They have not undergone **any** desemanticization, decategorization or **erosion** (phonetic reduction).

Similarly, the participle forms of motion and posture verbs as جالس sitting, قاعد sitting, رايح going, آخذ taking, جاي coming, مسافر travelling, داخل coming in, خارج going out, واصل arriving, راجع coming/going back, حاضر present, نائم sleeping, واقف standing, قايم getting up, طالع (going to/going up), are used to express the Present Progressive as in واقفين بالباب (standing in front of the door), لسه نايمين (still sleeping), آخذين معهم شنت كثير (they are taking with them many suitcases), جايين في الطريق (we are coming (on our way)), راجعين البيت (coming home); انتو خارجين؟ انتو راجعين؟ (Are you leaving/are you coming); طالعين السلم (we are going upstairs). As in sense verbs, motion and posture verbs have undergone extension, i.e., widening of their usage). They have extended their meaning to cover additional functions, vis the Present Progressive. They have not undergone **any** desemanticization, decategorization or phonetic reduction.

In another set of examples, progressiveness is expressed by the active participle forms of motion and posture verbs followed by a present tense verb, i.e., a combination of verbs is used as in جالسة اتفرج على التلفزيون (I am watching T.V.), جالسين ناكل (we are eating), قاعد يمشي (he is walking), قاعدين نتمشّ (we are walking), قاعدين نلعب شطرنج (we are playing chess), قاعدة تدرس (she is studying), كاعد اتغدى / أمشي (am having lunch) in Iraqi spoken Arabic. When active participle forms of motion and posture verbs are followed by a present tense verb, the active participles are grammaticalized from an agentive noun to a Present Progressive Tense marker especially. They have undergone desemanticization and decategorization from an agentive noun to a Present Progressive Tense marker, but no phonetic reduction (**erosion**) was involved.

Progressiveness is also formed by a combination of active participle forms of motion and posture verbs followed by the Progressive prefix b- or m- which is an allomorph of b- through assimilation, or the Progressive marker عم /ʔam/ (is/are) followed by present Tense verb as in *تعبت وأنا قاعد بمشي* (I got tired of walking); *شو عم تعملوا؟ قاعدين عم نمشي* (Q: what are you doing? A: we are walking); *قاعدين منمشي* (we are walking). The participle + Progressive prefix/marker + present verb show that the action is ongoing. In these cases, the active participle forms of motion and posture verbs *قاعد/قاعدا qa:ʔd/ ka:ʔd* & *جالس ja:lis* have been grammaticalized from lexical verbs to Progressive markers. They have undergone desemanticization (change in meaning), decategorization (have become a marker rather than a verb), but they have not undergone phonetic reduction (erosion).

### **4.3 The Past Progressive**

In the examples *شفتهم خارجين من البيت* (I saw them leaving the house), *قعد يمشي* (started walking, he was walking) *عليه قعد يدور* (started looking for him, he was looking for him), the context shows that the participle forms of motion and posture verbs imply the Past Progressive when they are used alone as in the first example, or followed by a Present Progressive verb in the second and third examples. These are equivalent to participles derived from inchoative verbs in Standard Arabic as *آخذ* which means (started) as in *اخذ يقرأ* (he started to read) & *آخذ في التحسن* (starting to improve). No desemanticization, decategorization, and no phonetic reduction (**erosion**) are involved in such cases. Progressiveness is understood from context.

### **4.4 The Present Perfect**

In the examples *لسة واصل* (I have just arrived), *توي شاربه الفستان* (I have just bought the dress), the participle forms of the verb, whether it is a motion verb or otherwise express the Present Perfect tense as the Present Perfect markers *لسة* & *توي* are used in both sentences. On the other hand, Present Perfect markers are used in *طلعوا شاريين تفاح* (I discovered that they have bought apples), *رجعوا البيت* (they came home with many things they have bought), *وهم شاريين حاجات كثير* (I found that they have slept early), yet the active participle forms of motion and posture verbs imply the Present Perfect tense. This depends on the preceding context which might contain a preceding past tense verb that requires a Present Perfect expressed by the participle or a tense marker such as *توي* (just). No grammaticalization is involved in the active participle which has not undergone semantic extension, semantic bleaching, decategorialization, nor phonological reduction (erosion), but have changed their grammatical function from being an agentive noun to a Past Perfect tense.

### **4.5 Multiple Tenses**

In certain cases, the participle forms of motion & posture verbs are ambiguous, implying multiple tenses and aspects as the Future Progressive, Present Progressive, Present Perfect and Past Simple as in *أكيد حاضرين المباراة* (for sure, they are attending the game). The context clarifies which aspect is meant by the expression. No grammaticalization is involved in this example. In *جايين هدايا* (they are bringing/have brought presents for everybody), the Present Progressive and/or the Present Perfect tense can be implied by the participle form. *رايحين جدة* (we are going to Jeddah) either expresses the Present Progressive or the future. Here again, this depends on the surrounding context.

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

Data analysis in the current study has revealed different ways of expressing the future and Progressive Tenses and the perfect and imperfect aspects in Colloquial Arabic. The particles *باش/ماش*, *هيا*, *عمال عم*, the imperative verbs *قوم* & *خلينا امشي* used before the imperfect (present) verb and the active participle of motion verbs as *رايح* (going), *راجع* (returning, coming back), *نازل* (going to), *طالع* (going), *مسافر* (travelling) especially with an adverb of time, and the active participle *رايح* (going to) or *قايم* (getting up) + an imperfect verb all imply the immediate or near future. Active participles derived from sense verbs as *سامع* hearing, *شايف* seeing, *شمم* smelling, *ذايق* tasting, *حاسس* feeling/sensing), and motion and posture verbs as *جالس* sitting, *قاعد* sitting, *رايح* going, *آخذ* taking, active participle forms of motion and posture verbs followed by a progressive prefix b- or m- or followed by the Progressive marker عم /ʔam/ + a present tense verb express the Present Continuous Tense. The participle forms of motion and posture verbs denote that the Past Progressive when they are used alone or when followed by a Present Progressive verb. Sometimes, they imply the Present Perfect Tense depending on the surrounding context which might contain a preceding past tense verb or a tense marker such as *توي* (just) that require a Present Perfect. Sometimes, they are ambiguous implying multiple tenses and aspects as the Future Progressive, Present Progressive, simple perfect and past simple depending on the context. In this case, the Active Participle forms of motion, and posture verbs *قاعد/قاعدا qa:ʔd/ ka:ʔd* & *جالس ja:lis* have been grammaticalized from lexical verbs to progressive markers. They have undergone desemanticization and decategorization. In the case of sense verbs, they undergo extension only.

Findings of the current study are consistent with findings of prior studies conducted on other prefixes and lexical verbs and Active Participles. The use of *باش/ماش*, *هيا*, *تعال* and its clipped forms *تع تعي تعوا* to express the future as similar to the use of prefixes b(a), ha- and ta- (will) and particle *Hatta* + imperfective indicative verb are used as future tense markers in Jordanian Arabic (Alshboul, Al Shaboul & Asassfeh, 2010); the use of prefix ta- in Central Asian Arabic dialects to form the Complex (Immediate)



Future by adding it to the imperfective verb to convey the future (Chikovani, 2017). ra(a)Ha (went), rayiH (going) and raḥ (go) show futurity in Jordanian and Syrian Arabic (Alshboul, Al Shaboul & Asassfeh, 2010; Jarad, 2014).

Use of the particles عمال عم (is/are) to express the Present Progressive in Spoken CA in the current study is similar to the use of prefixes b-, k-, da- and qa- as Progressive Aspect markers in Levantine, Saudi, Gazan, Moroccan, Iraqi, Gulf, Najdi Arabic in producing the Present Continuous (Progressive), with b- as the most common marker (Alshorbaji, 2020; Persson, 2008; Ouali, 2022; Altamimi, 2021; Sellami, 2022).

In addition, the utilization of active participles to denote the Future and Progressive Aspects in the current study is consistent with findings of prior studies by Sellami (2022), Sellami (2022), Ouali (2022) and Odilavadze (2010). However, Prior studies limited their investigation to few active participles (jaalis/qaaḥaid 'sitting' and gaayem 'standing'), whereas the current study explored more sense, motion, postures and volition verbs (سامع hearing; شاييف seeing; شامم smelling; ذايق tasting; حاسس feeling/sensing. امشي walk, تعال come here, خلينا let's, قوم get up; هيا come on, let's, جالس sitting, قاعد sitting, اروح go, اأخذ take, جاي coming, مسافر travelling, داخل coming in, خارج going out, رايح going, واصل arriving, راجع coming/going back and others). In prior studies, as well as the current study, these participles have undergone a grammaticalization process. When used alone, they only go through decategorization from being lexical verbs to becoming Progressive markers. But when followed by another present verb, they undergo desemanticization (change in meaning), decategorization (becoming a marker rather than a verb) and extension (widening of usage).

Interestingly, the current study has shown that in some cases, active participles of motion and posture verbs are sometimes ambiguous and convey multiple tenses and aspects as the Present Progressive, Future Progressive, Present Perfect, Past Perfect and Past Simple depending on the context in which they are used.

The issue of tense, aspect and mood in Standard as well as Spoken Arabic dialects is very broad and there always remains something new to examine and explore. Despite the numerous prior studies that investigated the use of active participles for expressing the Progressive and Future in SA and numerous Arabic dialects, this topic has not been investigated in the Holy Quran and it is still open for further investigation by researchers in the future.

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**ORCID ID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6255-1305>

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