| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Grammaticalization of Modal Verbs in Bisha Colloquial Arabic

Dr. Fatema Alharthy
Assistant Professor, Department of English and Literature, University of Bisha, Bisha, Saudi Arabia
Corresponding Author: Dr. Fatema Alharthy, **E-mail**: fharthey@ub.edu.sa

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| **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates modality in Bisha Colloquial Arabic (BCA), examining how various modal forms interact with different tenses, including future, present progressive, past progressive, and present perfect. Data were collected from undergraduate and postgraduate students, social media content, and analyzed to identify modal verbs, particles, and grammaticalized forms conveying meanings of ability, necessity, possibility, and obligation. The findings highlight the grammaticalization of motion verbs, active and passive participles, and nominal forms as markers of tense and aspect, showcasing BCA's unique approach to modality. Notable findings include the use of *amda* (امدى) and *mada* (مدى) for present perfect tense and the transformation of sensory and postural verbs into markers of futurity and present progressive tense. Additionally, modal forms like *yigdar* (يقدر) and *lāzim* (لازم) exhibit versatility across multiple tenses, underscoring the flexibility and richness of the BCA modality system. Importantly, the study confirms that the emergence of grammaticalized forms does not eliminate the usage of their original lexical variants, allowing these forms to coexist and further enrich BCA's expressive range. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of modality in Arabic dialects and offers insights into the syntactic and semantic evolution within BCA.

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1. Introduction

Grammaticalization is a linguistic process through which lexical items evolve into grammatical markers over time, often losing their original meanings and gaining new, more abstract roles within a language (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). This process is evident across many languages, including Arabic, where various lexical verbs, particles, and expressions have undergone grammaticalization to perform functions similar to modal verbs in other languages. In Arabic, modality—expressing concepts like ability, permission, necessity, and possibility—is typically conveyed through a combination of lexical verbs, particles, and other constructions rather than through a distinct class of auxiliary verbs as found in English or other European languages (Aoun, Benmamoun, & Choueiri, 2010).

The study of modal verb grammaticalization in Arabic has gained increasing attention due to the language's rich morphological and syntactic structures. Modality in Arabic is expressed using verbs like يستطيع (yastaṭīʿ – "can" or "be able to"), particles like قد (qad – "may"), and phrases such as لا بدّ من (lā budda min – "must"), which fulfil the roles of expressing possibility, obligation, and necessity (Al-Jarf, 2001). These forms function differently across various Arabic dialects and registers, from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) to regional dialects, making the study of modality in Arabic particularly complex and varied.

This paper explores the grammaticalization of modal expressions in Arabic, focusing on how verbs and particles that originally had lexical meanings evolved to convey modal concepts. By understanding how modal expressions have grammaticalized in Arabic,

we can gain deeper insights into the structure and evolution of the language, especially in relation to its syntactic flexibility and semantic richness.

This study holds significant value for linguistics and translation students by deepening their understanding of the modality system in spoken Arabic dialects. Aspect-tense modal markers in these dialects enable listeners to distinguish between tenses, particularly Present Continuous and Future Tenses. The study also illustrates the usage of lexical verbs, nominal forms, and particles in spoken Arabic, while introducing students to the process of grammaticalization, through which lexical elements evolve into grammatical categories.

2. Literature Review

Grammaticalization has been extensively studied across various languages, including Arabic, where the evolution of modal and auxiliary verbs offers significant insights into the complexities of the language. While Arabic lacks modal auxiliaries in the same sense as languages like English, it uses a variety of verbs and particles to express modality. Over time, these elements have become more grammaticalized (Aoun, Benmamoun, & Choueiri, 2010). This literature review synthesizes key research on the grammaticalization of modal and auxiliary verbs in Arabic, with a focus on their syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic functions.

a) Essential Terminologies

Modal verbs in Arabic, though structurally different from their English counterparts, serve similar functions by expressing modality, such as ability, necessity, permission, and possibility. Modal-like expressions in Arabic are generally conveyed through lexical verbs, particles, or verb or nominal forms rather than distinct modal auxiliaries. The growing interest in modality within Arabic is due to its unique syntactic and semantic structures.

Grammaticalization refers to the process by which lexical items evolve over time to fulfill grammatical functions within a language. This transformation often involves a shift from a concrete, content-based meaning to a more abstract, functional role, such as marking tense, aspect, or mood (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). Over time, lexical elements may undergo semantic bleaching, where their original meaning diminishes, allowing them to assume new roles as grammatical markers.

Modality Grammaticalization: This process involves the evolution of verbs or phrases into modal markers that express necessity, possibility, permission, or obligation. For example, the verb will, which initially conveyed volition, later became grammaticalized as a modal auxiliary to indicate future tense in English (Bybee, Perkins, & Pagliuca, 1994).

Auxiliary Verb Grammaticalization: In this type of grammaticalization, verbs that were once independent transform into auxiliary verbs, expressing grammatical aspects such as tense, voice, or mood. An example is the verb *have,* which originally indicated possession but later became grammaticalized as an auxiliary verb in English, forming the perfect tense as in *I have eaten*.

b) Modality in Quranic Arabic

Another area of research is modality in Classical and Quranic Arabic, where modal expressions often have meanings distinct from Modern Standard Arabic or various dialects. Researchers have examined how modality is represented in religious texts, influencing the interpretation of commands, prohibitions, and permissive statements. For example, يجب (yajibu - "must") and لا (lā - "no") convey a strong sense of obligation and prohibition in Quranic verses, aligning with the authoritative context of the text. Additionally, قد (qad) is frequently used in Quranic Arabic to convey both epistemic possibility and certainty, adding complexity to its interpretation (Ahmed & Saleh, 2020).

c) Grammaticalization of Modal Verbs in Arabic

Modal verbs in Arabic have evolved to express a range of modality functions, including ability, necessity, permission, and possibility. For example, يستطيع (yastaṭī ʿ - "can") originally denoted physical ability but has since expanded to include broader meanings of capability and permission (Al-Jarf, 2001). Similarly, قد (qad - "may") has undergone grammaticalization, evolving from an indicator of certainty to expressing possibility or potential, depending on context (Al-Azmi, 2021).

A key area of research has been the distinction between epistemic and deontic modality in Arabic. Epistemic modality, which deals with possibility or necessity based on the speaker's knowledge, is often conveyed through particles like قد (qad) and verbs like يمكن (yumkin - "might/can"). Deontic modality, which refers to obligation or permission, is typically expressed through verbs such as يجب (yajibu - "must") and لا بدّ من (lā budda min - "must") (Hassan & Jones, 2022). Through frequent use, these modal expressions have become less lexically specific and more abstract, reflecting their grammaticalization over time.

d) Auxiliary Verbs in Arabic

Auxiliary verbs in MSA and various dialects play a crucial role in forming complex tenses, aspects, and moods. Unlike in English, where auxiliary verbs like *have* and *will* are distinct grammatical markers, Arabic uses a range of verbs that serve similar functions while also maintaining their lexical meanings. For instance, كان (*kaan* - "was") functions as an auxiliary verb in forming past

continuous or habitual past tenses, while retaining its original meaning of existence (Versteegh, 2001). Over time, **كان** has become more grammaticalized in various Arabic dialects to serve a purely auxiliary role, particularly in marking tense and aspect.

Research on auxiliary verbs in Arabic shows how these verbs often maintain their lexical meanings while developing auxiliary functions. Verbs like صار (ṣaar - "became") and راح (raaḥ - "went") have grammaticalized to express future tense in many Arabic dialects, such as Egyptian and Levantine Arabic (El-Masri & Zayed, 2020). These verbs, which originally denoted a change of state or physical movement, have evolved into auxiliary markers for tense and aspect, showing a clear trajectory of grammaticalization.

e)   Modality in Arabic Dialects

Research on Arabic dialects highlights how modality is expressed through various verbs, particles, and phrases, many of which have undergone grammaticalization over time. Elmasry (2020) examined Egyptian Arabic, focusing on how لازم(laazim - "must") and ممكن(mumkin - "possible") have developed grammaticalized uses to express obligation and possibility. Similarly, Al-Tamimi and Al-Amir (2021) explored modal expressions in Gulf Arabic, revealing that يقدر(yigdar - "can") has been increasingly used to express both ability and permission. Their study also showed that verbs like بيّن(bayyin - "seem") have become grammaticalized to convey epistemic modality, marking uncertainty or likelihood. These findings illustrate how modal verbs in Arabic dialects have evolved to reflect both syntactic flexibility and pragmatic nuance.

f)   Auxiliary Verbs in Arabic Dialects

The grammaticalization of auxiliary verbs in Arabic dialects has also been an important area of study. Abdel-Fattah (2022) explored Levantine Arabic, specifically Jordanian and Lebanese varieties, and found that كان(kaan) has evolved into a central auxiliary verb used to express past habitual actions and the past progressive tense. Similarly, Bennis and El-Mamouni (2023) analyzed Moroccan Arabic, where verbs like غادي(ghadi - "going") and بغى(bgha - "want") have been grammaticalized to express future tense and intention. These developments highlight the fluidity of auxiliary verbs in Arabic dialects.

g)   Cross-Dialectal Comparisons of Modal and Auxiliary Verbs

Cross-dialectal studies provide valuable insights into the grammaticalization process in different Arabic-speaking regions. Rahman and Saeed (2023) compared the use of modal verbs in Egyptian, Syrian, and Sudanese Arabic. They found that ممكن(mumkin) is commonly used to express possibility across all three dialects, though its frequency and syntactic behaviour vary. Egyptian Arabic, for example,ممكن mumkin in informal discourse, while Sudanese Arabic employs alternative particles like **يا ريت** ya rēt (can you). Similarly, Ali and Saleh (2023) explored auxiliary verbs in Yemeni and Libyan Arabic, showing how صار(ṣaar - "became") has evolved to mark tense shifts, further highlighting the regional flexibility of auxiliary verbs.

h)   Grammaticalization of Participles in Arabic

The grammaticalization of participles in Arabic dialects, involving their shift from agentive nouns to auxiliary and modal verbs, reveals a transformative syntactic and morphological pattern across regional varieties of Arabic. Holes (2020) provides a foundational analysis in *Dialect, Culture, and Society in Eastern Arabia*, detailing how Gulf Arabic participles have increasingly assumed auxiliary functions, facilitating the introduction of modal nuances. Supporting this trend, Lucas and Manfredi (2020) in *Arabic and Contact-induced Change* explore the influence of language contact on these grammatical shifts, particularly within multilingual zones where participles more readily adopt auxiliary functions. Their findings affirm that contact-induced change often accelerates the grammaticalization of participial forms, fostering both auxiliary and modal roles as seen in Arabic and other language systems. Additionally, Heine and Kuteva (2021) provide a cross-linguistic perspective in *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*, where they discuss the general tendency of agentive forms across languages to transition into auxiliary roles, underscoring a universal linguistic shift. This broader perspective is echoed by Owens and Dodsworth (2020) in *The Oxford Handbook of Arabic Linguistics*, where the authors illustrate consistent patterns of participle grammaticalization across Arabic dialects, noting the gradual adoption of auxiliary and descriptive functions in participial forms in BCA and beyond. Together, these studies underline a significant and cross-linguistically relevant trend in the grammatical evolution of Arabic participles.

Building on prior research, this study broadens the investigation of modality in Arabic dialects by examining BCA, an understudied dialect within Saudi Arabic. It further analyses the temporal impact on modal expressions in BCA, specifically assessing the extent to which grammaticalization has influenced these modal forms.

3. Methodology

Stretches of discourse featuring various modal forms in BA were collected from 15 undergraduate and postgraduate students majoring in English language and translation, as well as from some social media posts by influencers and comments from followers on TikTok and X. The modal forms include *kaan* ('was'), *yagdar* ('be able/permitted'), *yabaġa* ('want'), *naawi* ('intended'), *nafs-i* ('wish'), *widd-i* ('wish'), *nayti* ('intention'), *yaslaeḥ/yanfaʕ* ('can/be possible'), *yimkin* ('may'), *l-mafrūz* ('the supposed'), *momkin*

('possibility'), *zarūri* ('necessary'), *iḥtimaal* ('possible'), *laazim* ('must'), *mugbar* ('have to'), *waagib* ('must'), *z-zaahar* ('appear/seem'), and *mamnuʕ* ('forbidden').

The collected lexical items were categorised according to the tense in which each modal form was used: Past Perfect, Past Progressive, Present Progressive, or Future Tense. The data collection and classification process were validated by three professors specialising in Arabic language, English language, and English-Arabic translation. The findings of the study were reported qualitatively.

4. Data Description and Analysis

BCA like other dialects of Arabic, relies on a combination of modal verbs, particles, and structures to express modality. These modal expressions often function similarly to English modals, conveying meanings related to ability, necessity, possibility, permission, and obligation. However, the use of modals in BCA differs in both form and structure, with specific verbs and particles expressing modality across various tenses. The following review examines how BCA modals interact with the future, present progressive, past progressive, present perfect, and multiple tenses, providing a detailed look into their syntactic and semantic roles.

4.1 Modals Used with Present Tense in BCA

BCA uses some verbs and expressions with the imperfective form of the main verb to convey ability, necessity, possibility, and desire. The verb يقدر(yigdar) `can/able to' is used to express ability or capacity to do something, as in يقدر يسويها الحين yigdar yisawwīha alḥīn `He can do it now'. لازم(lāzim) `must'or `have to' is used to express necessity or obligation in the present Tense and other tenses, as in لازم تروح الحين lāzim tirūḥ alḥīn `You must go now'. ممكن mumkin `may/might'is used to indicate possibility or permission, as in ممكن يجي الحين mumkin yījī alḥīn `He might come now'. يبغى yibgha `want' is commonly used in BCA, and used to express desire or intention, equivalent to "wants" or "intends to in English, as in يبغى يروح الحين yibgha yarūḥ alḥīn `He wants to go now'. Additionally, the nominal formمحتاج miḥtāj `need to' is used in this dialect as a modal auxiliary combined with the main verb in the imperfective form to express necessity, as in محتاج اتكلم miḥtāj atkallam `I need to talk'. In BCA, modal expressions in the present simple are primarily built with auxiliary verbs or phrases that introduce the main verb in its imperfective form. These constructions convey a range of modalities—ability, necessity, possibility, desire, and suggestion, without standalone modal verbs.

4.2 Modals Used with Future Tense in BCA

In BCA, future actions, intentions, and possibilities are primarily expressed through specific particles and modal verbs. While MSA employs particles such as s*a-* and *sawfa* for future tense, BCA primarily uses *bi-* بـ or *raḥ* راح before the verb to indicate future actions, alongside modal verbs to express varying degrees of certainty, possibility, or obligation. The particles بـ *bi-* or راح *raḥ* are the most common markers of the future tense in BCA, functioning similarly to "will" in English, as in بروح السوق بكره *barūḥ as-sūq bukrah* `I will go to the market tomorrow'. The modal verbيقدر *yigdar* expresses the ability or permission for a future action, similar to "can" in English, as in يقدر يسويها بكره *yigdar yisawwīha bukrah* `He can do it tomorrow'. The verb لازم *lāzim* is used to indicate necessity or obligation in the future, similar to "must" or "have to" in English, as in لازم تجي بكره *lāzim tījī bukrah* `You must come tomorrow'. ممكن *mumkin* expresses possibility or permission, similar to "may" or "might" in English, often used to suggest potential future events, as in ممكن أجي بكره *mumkin ajī bukrah* `I might come tomorrow', and it can also appears in questions, as in ممكن أجي بكره؟ *mumkin ajī bukrah?* `Can I come tomorrow?'. These modal forms and particles interact with future events to convey nuances of certainty, ability, and obligation, showing how Saudi BCA speakers express different levels of probability or necessity regarding future actions. Additionally, BCA uses pseudo-verbs and active and passive participle forms as modal verbs that can be used in sentences that indicate future, as in ناوي اتعلم الماني من بكره *nāwi aʾtaʿallam almānī min bukrah* `I'm planning to learn German starting tomorrow'. The active participle form ناوي *nāwi* `intending/planning' is used as a modal followed by an imperfective form of the verb *aʾtaʿallam* `learn' to indicate an event that will take place in the future. The passive participle مصممه *muṣammimah* `determined' can be used in BCA as a modal followed by an imperfective verb, as in انا مصممه ادرس بامريكا ان شا الله *ʾanā muṣammimah adrus bi-ʾamrīkā in shāʾ Allāh* `I am determined to study in America, God willing'. The pseudo-verbs such as نفسي *nafsī* `wish/want' is used to express modality in this dialect, as in نفسي اسافر روسيا السنه الجايه *nafsī ʾusāfir rūsiyā as-sana al-jāyah* `I wish to travel to Russia next year'.

Another way to express the future tense in BCA is by using imperative verbs as helping verbs, such as هيا /خلينا `let us', امشي`walk', and قوم `stand up'. These are followed by the imperfective form of the main verb, as in امش نروح نفطر اليوم *imshī n-rūḥ n-faṭir al-yawm* `Let's go have breakfast today', خلينا نأخذ قهوه العصر *khallīnā n-ʾakhudh qahwa al-ʿaṣr* `Let's have coffee this afternoon 'or قوم نتمشى شوي *qūm n-timashshā shway* `Stand up, let's walk a bit'. These imperative verbs act as helping verbs that introduce a future action, making them a common and natural way of expressing future intentions in BCA. Additionally, BCA uses other active participle forms, such as قايم`standing/getting up' and رايح `going to', followed by an imperfect verb to express the near or immediate future, as in رايحه اسوي عشا *rāyiḥah ʾasawī ʿashā* `I'm going to make dinner' or قايمه اصلي الظهر *qāyimah ʾuṣallī al-ẓuhr* `I'm getting up to pray the noon prayer'. In BCA, moreover, active participle forms derived from motion verbs, such as رايح `going', راجع `returning', طالع`heading out', نازل `descending', مسافر `traveling, and ماشي `walking, are used in combination with time adverbs

placed at the end of the sentence to function as tense and aspect markers. This method of expressing the future tense in BCA involves using the active participle to replace both the modal and lexical verb. Examples include: راجع من الدوام بعد ساعتين rājiʿ min al-dawām baʿd sāʿatayn ʽI'm returning from work in two hours', مسافر الجنوب بكره musāfir al-janūb bukrah ʽI'm traveling to the south tomorrow', طالع ابها الليله ṭāliʿ Abhā al-laylah ʽI'm heading to Abha tonight', نازل بيشه بكره ان شا الله nāzil Bīshah bukrah ʽin shāʾ Allāh ʽI'm going down to Bisha tomorrow, God willing' or راجعين السعوديه السنه الجايه rājiʿīn al-Saʿūdiyyah al-sana al-jāyah ʽWe are returning to Saudi Arabia next year'. This usage of the active participle allows speakers to express future actions with a clear indication of time, replacing more complex verbal constructions. BCA also uses the phrase ليه ما lēh mā "why not", originally derived from لماذا لا in MSA, to express future suggestions or recommendations, as in lēh mā tʾgēl shway ليه ما تقيل شوي ʽWhy don't you take a nap a bit?. Moreover, the use of الأفضل 'had better' followed by the imperfective form of the verb expresses future suggestions or recommendations, as in al-afḍal (innak) tirūḥ maʿahum bukrah الأفضل (إنك) تروح معهم بكره ʽYou had better go with them tomorrow'. The lexical verb حاب ḥābb ʽwould like to 'is used as a modal verb to express future desires, wishes or intensions, as in *ḥābb arūḥ maʿakum bukrah al-ḥaflah* حاب اروح معكم بكره الحفله ʽI would like to go with you to the party tomorrow'. Lastly, the lexical verb يبغى ʽwant' (originally derived from بغى, meaning 'to aggress' or 'to oppress') combined with the imperfective form of the verb is used to express future intentions in BCA, as in *yibghā yarūḥ maʿakum bukrah in shāʾ Allāh* يبغى يروح معكم بكره، ان شا الله ʽHe wants to go with you tomorrow, God willing'.

4.3 Modals Used with Present Progressive in BCA

The present progressive in BCA, much like other Arabic dialects, is used to describe actions that are currently ongoing. The progressive aspect is typically formed by adding the particle قاعد gāʿid before the verb, which functions like "am/are/is ...ing" in English. Modals used with this form to highlight actions that are currently happening with varying degrees of possibility, ability, and necessity. The verb يقدر yigdar expresses the ability or permission for an action currently in progress, as in يكون قاعد يدرس الحين yakūn gāʿid yadris alḥīn ʽHe can be studying right now'. The adjective ممكن mumkin ʽmaybe/possible' implies that something is possibly happening at this moment, as in ممكن يكون قاعد يشتغل الحين mumkin yakūn gāʿid yashtaghil alḥīn ʽHe might be working right now'. The form لازم lāzim implies that an action should be happening at this moment, as in لازم يكون قاعد يكتب الحين lāzim yakūn gāʿid yiktib alḥīn ʽHe must be writing right now' or لازم يكون نايم الحين lāzim yakūn nāyim alḥīn ʽHe must be sleeping right now' or المفروض تكون راكبه الطياره الحين al-mafrūḍ takūn rākibah al-ṭayārah al-ḥīn ʽShe should be on the plane right now'. The particle قد qad in BCA is used similarly to "might" or "may" in English and can express uncertainty about an ongoing action and possibility/potential, قد يكون قاعد يسوي شي ثاني qad yakūn gāʿid yisawwī shay thānī ʽ He might be doing something else' or قد تكون طالعه qad takūn ṭāliʿah bath mubāshir alā al-TikTok al-ḥīn بث مباشر على التيك توك الحين ʽShe might be doing a live broadcast on TikTok right now'. Modals combined with the present progressive tense in BCA are crucial for expressing varying degrees of certainty, ability, or necessity regarding actions that are currently taking place. In addition, the suffix *ba-* is used in a subdialect of BCA to express Present Progressive Tense, as in الاولاد بيلعبون كوره الحين al-awlād ba-yalʿabūn kūrah al-ḥīn ʽThe boys are playing soccer right now'.

Additionally, BCA uses active participle forms derived from sensory verbs to express the Present Progressive tense. Examples of these forms include شايف ʽseeing', سامع ʽhearing', ذايق ʽtasting', حاس ʽfeeling', and شام ʽsmelling'. Sentences like the following illustrate this usage: **انا شايف شي يتحرك بالظلام** *anā* **انا سامع صوتها من فوق** *anā sāmiʿ ṣawtahā min fawq* ʽI hear her voice from upstairs.', *shāyif shayʾ yataḥarrak bi-al-ẓalām* ʽI see something moving in the dark.', **انا ذايق طعم مو كويس بالاكل** *anā dhāyiq ṭaʿm mū kuwayyis bi-al-ʾakl* ʽI taste something unpleasant in the food.', **انا حاس بدوخه** *anā ḥāss bi-duwakhah* "I feel dizzy.' Or **انا شام ريحه**
غريبه *anā shām rīḥah gharībah* ʽI smell something strange.' These active participles effectively convey ongoing sensory experiences in BCA. Furthermore, BCA employs active participle forms derived from motion and posture verbs such as آخذ ʽtaking', جالس ʽsitting', قاعد ʽsitting', نازل ʽdescending', طالع ʽheading out', خارج ʽexiting', داخل ʽentering', واقف ʽstanding', جاي ʽcoming', رايح ʽgoing', قاعد ʽsitting', and قايم ʽstanding up'. The following sentences illustrate this usage: **رايحيين عمره** *rāyiḥīn ʿumrah* ʽThey are going for Umrah.', **طالع رحله مع اخوياه** *ṭāliʿ riḥlah maʿ ʾikhwiyāh* ʽHe's going on a trip with his friends.', **واقفين بالبلكونه** *wāqifīn bi-al-balkūnah* ʽThey are standing on the balcony.', **انتوا طالعين اليوم؟** *intū ṭāliʿīn al-yawm* ʽAre you all heading out today?', **انتوا جايين بالطريق؟** *intū jāyīn bi-al-ṭarīq* ʽAre you all on the way?' or **انتوا داخلين مكه الحين؟** *intū dākhilīn Makkah al-ḥīn* ʽAre you all entering Mecca right now?'. These examples show how active participles derived from motion and posture verbs are commonly used to describe ongoing actions or states in BCA. Another way to express the Present Progressive tense in BCA is by using active participles as helping verbs followed by the imperfective form of the main verb. Examples include: **جالسه اتابع المسلسل** *jālisah ʾatābī al-musalsal* ʽShe is watching the series.', **جالسين نشرب قهوه** *jālisīn nashrab qahwah* ʽWe are drinking coffee.', **قاعد يسوق** *qāʿid yasūq* ʽHe is driving.' or **قاعدين يفطرون** *qāʿidīn yifṭurūn* ʽThey are having breakfast.'

4.4 Modals Used with Past Progressive in BCA

The past progressive in BCA describes actions that were ongoing at a certain point in the past. Like in English, when paired with modal verbs, these forms can express ideas related to possibility, permission, or obligation regarding past actions. The active participle forms of motion can be used alone to express Past Progressive in BCA , as in شفتهم وهم طالعين من السياره *shuft-hum wa-hum ṭāliʿīn min al-sayyārah* ʽI saw them as they were getting out of the car'. Posure verbs can also be used in BCA to express Past Progressive, as in قعد يذاكر الين الصباح *gaʿad yudhākir ʾilayn al-ṣabāḥ* ʽHe kept studying until the morning' or بدا يتحسن من ليلة البارح *badā*

yataḥassan min laylat al-bāriḥ `He started to improve since last night'. Additionally, the combination of كان *kaan* `was' + ممكن *mumkin* `possible' suggests that something might have been happening in the past, as in كان ممكن يكون قاعد يدرس *kaan mumkin yakūn gāʿid yadris* `He might have been studying'. The combination of كان *kān* + لازم *lāzim* implies that an action was required or expected to be happening in the past, as in كان لازم يكون قاعد يشتغل وقت ما وصلت *kān lāzim yakūn gāʿid yashtaghil waqt ma waṣalt* `He should have been working when you arrived'. The combination of كان *kaan* + ممكن *mumkin* suggests that something might have been happening in the past, as in كان ممكن يكون قاعد يدرس *kaan mumkin yakūn gāʿid yadris* `He might have been studying'. The combination of كان + لازم *kān* + *lāzim* implies that an action was required or expected to be happening in the past, as in كان لازم يكون قاعد يشتغل وقت *kān lāzim yakūn gāʿid yashtaghil waqt ma waṣalt* ` He should have been working when you arrived'. In BCA, modals used with the past progressive are essential for expressing speculation, permission, or obligation about ongoing actions that occurred in the past.

4.5 Modals Used with Present Perfect in BCA

The present perfect in BCA is often expressed with قد *gad* to indicate actions that have been completed but have relevance to the present. Modals paired with the present perfect can convey obligation, possibility, or assumptions about actions that have occurred. The use of قد *gad* + امدى `already' or امدى alone suggests that something has already done or occurred, as in قد امداه يكون خلص عمله *gad amdāh yakūn khallaṣ amaluh* `He might have had time to finish his work' or مداهم/امداهم جاوا *madāhum jāwā* `They have come'. Furthermore, قد *gad* + ممكن *mumkin* expresses that an action might have occurred, but there is uncertainty ممكن يكون راح *gad mumkin yakūn rāḥ* `He might have left'. BCA also uses لازم *lāzim* + *yakūn* + قد *gad* to express that an action was necessary or required and has likely been completed, as in لازم يكون قد خلص عمله *lāzim yakūn gad khallaṣ ʿamalah* `He must have finished his work'. The Present Perfect tense can also be expressed using participle forms combined with markers like توي/تْوني `I just', as in توي طالعه *tawī ṭāliʿah* `I have just left' or توني ماشيه *tawnī māshiyah* `I just started walking', حصلتهم توهم بادين الدرس *ḥaṣṣaltuhum tuwwahum bādiʿīn al-dars* `I found them just starting the lesson', لسه `still/just', as in لسه داخل البيت *lissah dākhil al-bayt* `I just entered the house', and دوبي/دوبني `I just', as in دوبي واصله المدرسه *dūbī wāṣlah al-madrasah* `I just arrived at the school'. Additionally, the Present Perfect can be implied through the preceding context, as in رجعوا السعوديه وهم شاريين هدايا من لندن *rajaʿū al-Saʿūdiyyah wa-hum shārīn hadāyā min Landan* `They returned to Saudi Arabia having bought gifts from London', طلعوا رايحيين مكه *talaʿū rāyiḥīn Makkah* `They left, heading to Mecca.' or حصلتهم كاتبين الواجب *ḥaṣṣaltuhum kātibīn al-wājib* I found them having written the homework.' In BCA, modals or equivalent forms used with the present perfect indicate actions that have already taken place but are still relevant in the current context, often reflecting varying degrees of certainty or obligation.

4.6 Modals Used with Multiple Tenses in BCA

In BCA, modals like يقدر *yigdar*, ممكن *mumkin*, لازم *lāzim*, and قد *gad* can be applied across multiple tenses, allowing speakers to express modality across past, present, and future contexts.

يقدر *yigdar* `can/able to'

- **Present:** يقدر يسويها الحين *yigdar yisawwīha alḥīn* "He can do it now."
- **Past:** كان يقدر يسويها أمس *kaan yigdar yisawwīha ams* "He could have done it yesterday."
- **Future:** يقدر يسويها بكرة *yigdar yisawwīha bukrah* "He can do it tomorrow."

ممكن *mumkin* `possible':

- **Present:** ممكن يسافر اليوم *mumkin yisāfir ilyawm* "He might travel today."
- **Past:** كان ممكن يسافر أمس *kaan mumkin yisāfir ams* "He might have traveled yesterday."
- **Future:** ممكن يسافر بُكرة *mumkin yisāfir bukrah* "He might travel tomorrow**."**

لازم *lāzim* `must':

- **Present:** لازم تروح الحين *lāzim tirūḥ alḥīn* "You must go now."
- **Past:** كان لازم تروح أمس *(kaan lāzim tirūḥ ams* "You should have gone yesterday."
- **Future:** لازم تروح بُكرة *lāzim tirūḥ bukrah* "You must go tomorrow."

قد *(gad):*

- **Present:** قد يكون قاعد يشتغل *gad yakūn gāʿid yashtaghil* "He might be working."
- **Past:** قد يكون خلص *gad yakūn khalla*ṣ "He might have finished."

- **Future:** قد يسويها بُكرة *gad yisawwīha bukrah* "He might do it tomorrow."

Additionally, the collected data reveals that, in certain cases, active participles and posture verbs can produce ambiguous readings, indicating multiple tenses and aspects. For instance, in the sentence أكيد طالعين بث مباشر *akīd ṭāliʿīn bath mubāshir* `They are definitely doing a live broadcast', the context clarifies the intended aspect. Similarly, in جايبين اكل للكل *jāybīn akl lil-kull* `We are bringing/have brought food for everyone' the active participle form allows for two interpretations: either the Present Progressive or the Present Perfect. In ماشيين مكه (māshīyīn – walking, Makkah – Mecca) meaning `We are heading to Mecca', the active participle form suggests either the Present Progressive or a future action, depending on the context. These examples illustrate the versatility of modals in BCA, enabling speakers to express modality with precision and nuance across past, present, and future actions. The following table summarizes the main modal verbs/forms used in BCA to express modality:

Table (1): Summary of the Main Modal Auxiliary/Expressions available in BCA

Modal Auxiliary / Expression	Transliteration	Meaning	Example Sentence (Arabic)	Transliteration	English Translation
يقدر	yigdar	can / able to	يقدر يسويها الحين	yigdar yisawwīha alḥīn	He can do it now.
يبغى	yibghā	wants / intends	يبغى يروح معكم بكره	yibghā yarūḥ maʿakum bukrah	He wants to go with you tomorrow.
لازم	lāzim	must / has to	لازم تروح الحين	lāzim tirūḥ alḥīn	You must go now.
ممكن	mumkin	might / possible	ممكن يسافر اليوم	mumkin yisāfir ilyawm	He might travel today.
ودّه	waddah	would like to	ودّه يزورهم	waddah yizūrahum	He would like to visit them.
حابّ	ḥābb	would love to / wants	حابّ يشوفك	ḥābb yishūfik	He would love to see you.
قد	gad	might / may	قد يكون قاعد يشتغل	gad yakūn gāʿid yashtaghil	He might be working.
خلّ	khall	let / allow	خلّنا نروح	khallinā nrūḥ	Let's go.
مفروظ	mafrūḍ	should / supposed to	مفروض نبدأ الحين	mafrūḍ nibdaʾ alḥīn	We should start now.
ممكن يكون	mumkin yakūn	may be / might be	ممكن يكون هنا	mumkin yakūn hina	He may be here.
كان ممكن	kān mumkin	could have	كان ممكن يسويها أمس	kān mumkin yisawwīha ams	He could have done it yesterday.
محتاج	miḥtāj	need to	محتاج تدرس	miḥtāj tadris	You need to study.
الافضل	al-afḍal	had better / best option	الافضل انك تروح معهم بكره	al-afḍal innak tirūḥ maʿahum bukrah	You had better go with them tomorrow.
الاحسن	al-aḥsan	better (suggestion)	الاحسن تسوي كذا	al-aḥsan tisawwī kadhā	It's better that you do it like this.
قايم	gāyim	about to (stand up / leave)	انا قايم الحين	anā gāyim alḥīn	I'm about to leave now.
جالس	jālis	currently doing	جالس اكتب	jālis aktib	I'm writing (currently).
قاعد	gāʿid	in the process of	قاعد يشتغل	gāʿid yashtaghil	He's working (in the process).
تو	taww	just (recently)	تو وصل	taww waṣal	He just arrived.
امداكم	imdākum	had enough time	امداكم تخلصون؟	imdākum tikhlūṣūn?	Did you have enough time to finish?
ليه ما	līh mā	why not	ليه ما تروح معه	līh mā tirūḥ maʿah	Why don't you go with him?
دوب	doob	just now	دوب خلص	doob khallaṣ	He just finished.

4. Results and Discussion

The data description and analysis in this study demonstrate that in BCA modality is expressed through various linguistic elements, including lexical verbs and nominal forms such as active participles and nouns. The findings highlight that certain modal verbs and forms, such as *raḥ* (راح) and the prefixes *ba-/bi-* (بـ), are employed to express future tense in BCA. Additionally, active participles like *rājiʿ* (راجع), *ṭāli* (طالع), *xārij* (خارج), *and rāyiḥ* (رايح) are used alongside temporal expressions that signal future time, such as *bukrah* (بكره), *al-laylah* (الليلة), *ba'd bukrah* (بعد بكره), and *al-usbuʿ al-jāy* (الأسبوع الجاي). The participle forms of motion have been grammaticalized, shifting from their original function as lexical verbs to become modal markers that indicate future tense. It has also been observed that passive participle forms, such as *muṣammimah* (مصممة) meaning "determined," have undergone grammaticalization processes, transforming them into modality markers that indicate future tense, thereby expanding their usage and expressing new meanings. The verb *lāzim* (لازم) has undergone grammaticalization over time, shifting from a lexical verb to an auxiliary verb used to indicate various tenses including Future. Additionally, certain nominal forms, often referred to as pseudo-verbs, such as نفسي *nafsī* ('wish/want') and ودي *wuddī* ('want'), have been grammaticalized and are now used as auxiliary verbs to express future wishes/desires in BCA. Since امشي 'walk' and قوم 'get up' are verbs of motion, and خلينا 'let's' is a verb of volition, these verbs are prone to grammaticalization, evolving into modality markers that indicate tense, mood, and aspect. Lexically, امشي means 'walk,' قوم means 'stand up/get up,' and خلينا translates to 'let us.' However, through grammaticalization, their meanings and functions have shifted from their original lexical roles to grammatical markers indicating future actions.

The data analysis shows that active participle forms derived from sensory verbs are used to express the Present Progressive tense in BCA, such as شايف `seeing', سامع `hearing', ذايق `tasting', حاس `feeling', and شام `smelling'. These forms went through grammaticalization processes that turn them into modality markers that indicate Progressive Present Tense. The Present Progressive data also indicates that some motion verbs such as رايح(going), راجع(returning), نازل(heading to), طالع(going to), and مسافر(traveling) have experienced a sort of grammaticalization processes turning them from active participles that function as agentive nouns into modality markers of tense and aspect. Moreover, research has shown that BCA uses the terms امدى(amda) and مدى(mada) `has/have' as modality markers to indicate the Present Perfect tense. Interestingly, the nominal form مدى(mada), originally meaning "extent" or "scope," has undergone grammaticalization over time, shifting from its function as a regular noun to serving as a helping modal verb and a tense and aspect marker for the Past Perfect in BCA. Additionally, the nominal noun تو which means ("just a little time") القليل من الوقت has been grammaticalized into a modal auxiliary verb, functioning as a tense and aspect marker for the Past Perfect in BCA. Furthermore, it has been found that the colloquial word لسه(lissah), meaning "not yet," has undergone grammaticalization, shifting from its original meaning in MSA للساعة (lissa'ah), meaning "up to this time," to various new meanings in BCA. One of these new meanings is "just now," where it functions as a modal auxiliary verb, serving as a tense and aspect marker for the Past Perfect. Another notable finding is that the verb دوب, originally derived from دأب (meaning 'to work hard' in MSA), has undergone a grammatical shift over time. It now functions as a modal auxiliary verb, acting as a tense and aspect marker for the Past Perfect. Additionally, the invariant modal forms in BCA include the active participle *lāzim* ('must'), the passive participle *l-mafrūz* ('the supposed'), and regular nouns such as *iḥtimāl* ('possible') and *l-wājib* ('must'). Moreover, nominalized *masdar* nouns, such as *taḥadi* ('challenge'), are also used as modal or auxiliary verbs in BCA. These nominal forms have undergone grammaticalization, transforming from lexical categories into grammatical categories that function as modal forms. It is also observed that the verb *kūn* ('should'), derived from *kān* ('was'), has undergone grammaticalization, altering its use and pronunciation to convey opinions or advice. Interestingly, it has been found that the phrase *lēh mā* (ليه ما) ("why not"), originally derived from لماذا لا in MSA, is used in BCA to express suggestions. For instance, in the phrase *lēh mā taʾkhudh ghaftwah shway* ليه ما تأخذ غفوه شوي ("why not take a little nap"), ليه ما suggests a gentle recommendation. Over time, لماذا لا ("why not") has evolved into ليه ما differing in both form and pronunciation, yet retaining the exact same use and meaning. This shift highlights how spoken Arabic dialects can modify formal expressions for ease of use while preserving their original intent. Interestingly, the nominal form محتاج *miḥtāj* `need to' has grammaticalized over time turning it into a modal auxiliary that expresses necessity in different tenses. Finally, BCA employs various modal verbs and forms to express multiple tenses. While some of these modal verbs and structures are shared with other Saudi and Arabic dialects, BCA also has unique expressions of modality, such as امدى(amda) and مدى (mada), meaning 'has/have'.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research by AlQahtani and AlArifi (2020), confirming that certain lexical verbs, such as *gaʕad, ʒalas, gam,* and *raḥ,* have evolved to function as auxiliary verbs within the language. Participle forms were found to be subject to grammaticalization over time turning them from agentive nouns into auxiliary or modal verbs. The grammaticalization of participle forms in BCA is part of a broader linguistic trend in Arabic and other languages where agentive nouns evolve into auxiliary or modal verbs. This syntactic shift from agentive to auxiliary roles reflects a general path of grammaticalization observed cross-linguistically. Recent studies provide insights from Arabic dialects and other languages, supporting this phenomenon such as AlArifi (2020), Holes (2020), Lucas & Manfredi (2020), Owens & Dodsworth (2020) and Heine & Kuteva (2021).The data also indicate that these grammaticalized forms coexist with their original lexical forms, aligning with Jarad's (2017) findings, which confirm that the emergence of grammaticalized forms does not eliminate the usage of the original lexical variants. Recent research supports this view, illustrating that grammaticalization often results in a coexistence rather than a

replacement of forms. For instance, Souag (2021) examines grammaticalization patterns in Arabic dialects and finds that auxiliary verbs frequently develop new functions without displacing their original uses, thereby enriching the language's expressive capacity. Furthermore, Lehmann (2015) explores cross-linguistic grammaticalization processes and highlights how newly developed auxiliary forms often complement, rather than replace, existing lexical meanings, which adds functional diversity to the language. Additionally, the current study indicates that قد gad meaning "may" has undergone grammaticalization, shifting from an indicator of certainty in MSA to one expressing possibility or potential. This transformation aligns with findings reported by Al-Azmi (2021). Also, the lexical verb راح raaḥ - "went" has grammaticalized to express future tense in BCA, which aligns with the findings reported by El-Masri & Zayed (2020). The nominal form حابّ ḥābb `would like to' has grammaticalized as well, turning its form and function into a modal verb that expresses desires/wishes in the future, which is in accordance with the findings reported by Al-Wer & de Jong (2020) The data also indicates that the lexical verb يبغى `want' (originally derived from بغى, meaning 'to aggress' or 'to oppress') has undergone grammaticalization to express future tense and intentions. This shift is similar to its modern usage in Moroccan Arabic, as noted by Bennis and El-Mamouni (2023).

5. Conclusion

This study has provided an in-depth analysis of modality in BCA, examining the various modal forms and their interactions with different tenses, including future, present progressive, past progressive, and present perfect. The findings demonstrate that BCA utilizes a rich array of linguistic elements—modal verbs, particles, and grammaticalized forms—to convey nuanced meanings related to ability, possibility, necessity, permission, and obligation. Notably, verbs, active and passive participles, and even nominal forms have undergone grammaticalization, expanding their roles from lexical items to modality markers that express tense and aspect.

The research highlights that BCA's modal system shares certain features with other Arabic dialects, but it also displays unique characteristics, such as the use of امدى (amda) and مدى (mada) to indicate the present perfect. Additionally, the grammaticalization of verbs like خلينا ('let's') and postural verbs like قوم ('get up') into future tense markers demonstrates BCA's linguistic innovation. Similarly, sensory and motion verbs have transformed into indicators of the present progressive tense, further illustrating the dialect's flexibility in expressing ongoing actions.

Moreover, the study has shown that BCA's modal expressions are not limited to a single tense; many forms, such as يقدر (yigdar), ممكن (mumkin), and لازم (lāzim), span multiple temporal contexts, making BCA's modality system highly versatile. This research contributes to a broader understanding of how modality is expressed in Arabic dialects, offering valuable insights into the syntactic and semantic mechanisms that underpin the expression of tense, mood, and aspect in BCA.

The grammaticalization of these forms reflects the dynamic nature of the dialect, as it adapts and evolves to meet the communicative needs of its speakers. Future research could explore how these modal forms are perceived and used across different social strata or regions, as well as investigate how these findings compare with modality systems in other Arabic dialects. By advancing the understanding of modality in BCA, this study paves the way for further linguistic exploration in both the Arabic dialectological landscape and the field of modality studies.

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ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9561-3388
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