Conditional constructions in Damascus Arabic

Form and meaning

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“What in the world are conditionals about?”

(Barwise 1986, p. 21)
Abstract

This paper treats the relationship between form and meaning in conditional constructions in Damascus Arabic (DA). More specifically, it treats two, main formal categories of DA conditional constructions: the conditional marker and the verb morphology and, further, how these are related to various degrees of conditional hypotheticality. Apart from the introductory section (Introduction, Aim, Method and Classification of DA), the paper consists of three larger sections: Section 2 gives a basic, theoretical background of crosslinguistic conditional constructions as well as what previous scholars have said about the crosslinguistic relationship between conditional form and meaning. It is found that many of these scholars tend to describe form, but neglect deeper discussions of meaning. This section also provides a general background of the verbal system in DA and the primary TAM (Tense-Aspect-Mood) categories of DA verb forms. The main analysis of this thesis is found in section 3. In this section, I first suggest a method of analysis called ‘the hypotheticality continuum’ which is then employed in the following sub-sections, following Comrie (1986). Thereafter, attention is first paid to DA protasis markers and how the choice of marker is related to hypotheticality. Thirdly, I deal with verb morphology and how the choice of verb form together with a given protasis marker contributes to creating even more fine-grained distinctions of hypotheticality in DA conditional constructions. Lastly, a presentation of results and final discussion in section 4 conclude the paper.
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4 Results and final discussion

Bibliography
List of abbreviations

A    Apodosis
CA   Classical Arabic
DA   Damascus Arabic
IPA  International Phonetic Alphabet
MSA  Modern Standard Arabic
P    Protasis
TAM  Tense-Aspect-Mood

Transcription

The sources vary in the way they transcribe Damascus Arabic. I have made no adjustments to their transcriptions, except that I write the protasis markers consistently as 'əza and 'ən, rather than ʾiza and 'in (as in Bergsträsser 1924). In the transcription of Damascus Arabic, the letters correspond to their IPA values, other than the following:

IPA

ā  [aː]
ḍ  [dˤ]
ē  [eː]
ə  [i ~ ə ~ ʊ]
ğ  [dʒ]
ġ  [ɣ]
ḥ  [ħ]
ī  [iː]
ō  [oː]
š  [ʃ]
ṣ  [sˤ]
ṭ  [tˤ]
ū  [uː]
x  [x ~ χ]
ẓ  [ðˤ]
ʿ  [ʕ]
ʾ  [ʔ]
1 Introduction

To say that conditional constructions are complex would be an understatement. Conditionals have an extensive variety of linguistic forms, and an even greater variety of interpretations – for this reason, they have been a puzzle to philosophers since Aristotle (Dancygier 1998, p. 2). Indeed, conditionals “interact so extensively with other domains that they pose enormous difficulties for analysis” (Xkrakovskij 2005, p. 4). They are an object of study in numerous disciplines, including philosophy, mathematics, psychology and linguistics. What this seems to imply for linguistics is that it is nearly impossible to provide a full account of conditionals in a narrowly formal manner, neglecting the almost infinite arrays of interpretations that may follow.

According to Traugott et al (1986a, p. 5), all natural languages are assumed to have at least some types of conditional sentences. However, due to their complexity, many models of grammar are unable to make provision for them, tending to keep the discussion of conditionals on a trivial level. What constitutes a conditional construction in a given language still has no reasonable theoretical answer in linguistics today, and conditionals continues to be one of the least explored areas of linguistic research (Traugott et al 1986a, p. 5). Nevertheless, present-day linguistics is witnessing a growing interest in the investigation of conditionals, as researchers do begin to recognize them as more than just a linguistic phenomenon, but also as a “key to certain mysteries of human speech and thought activities” (Xkrakovskij 2005, p. 3). In other words, focus is gradually beginning to shift from focusing mostly on the form of conditionals to attempting a more in-depth understanding of also their meaning. According to Dancygier, the semantic interpretation of conditionals should be an integral part of their description (1998, p. 1). This is highlighted also by Traugott et al (1986a, p.3):

Conditional (if-then) constructions directly reflect the characteristically human ability to reason about alternative situations … and to understand how the world would change if certain correlations were different … [conditional constructions provide] basic insights into the cognitive processes, linguistic competence, and inferential strategies of human beings.

With this knowledge in mind, what is needed in order to acquire a deeper understanding of the relationship between form and meaning are adequate descriptions of conditional constructions in
a range of individual languages and language varieties. This account of conditional constructions in Damascus Arabic (DA) is intended to be one such study.

1.1 Aim

The aim of this study is to describe some basic formal features of conditional constructions in DA, more specifically conditional markers and verb morphology, and to investigate how these two categories of grammatical form are related to conditional meaning. Concerning conditional meaning, I distinguish between impossible and possible conditions, and, even more fine-grained, between various levels of hypotheticality (high, open or low). In writing this thesis, I have been particularly influenced by the work of Comrie (1976; 1985; 1986) and Dancygier (1998), due to their rich accounts on the crosslinguistic typology of conditionals.

1.2 Method

The first-hand source material used for this study has mainly been transcribed oral texts of DA, particularly Bergsträsser (1924) and Bloch and Grotzfeld (1964). Both works consist primarily of the authors’ discussions and interviews with DA native speakers. The authors have then transcribed the natives’ speech. Due to the time and space restrictions of these paper, I have chosen to analyze these transcribed texts rather than to conduct my own interviews with native speakers. My chosen method, however, has its limitations – for one, both works were published several decades ago, and so the speech presented in them may not be representative of how Damascus natives talk today. Secondly, the texts consist mainly of a native subject giving an account of a certain way of life in the Damascus community, such as going to the market, getting married or cooking a typical Syrian dish. Conditional constructions thus often appear in the form of accounts given by only one person. The use of conditional constructions in natural dialogues between two or more people would have been valuable in this analysis, but they are less frequent.

The data collection for this study was conducted by firstly searching through all the texts, a total of approximately 250 pages, with the specific purpose of finding various DA conditional constructions. I was able to detect approximately 165 constructions (Bergsträsser 1924: ca. 90, Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964: ca. 75) which contained a protasis marker, followed by a verb or a non-verbal grammatical unit such as a noun, although the texts likely include even more conditional constructions than what I could find. A number of the found examples were then, however, excluded from the analysis – particularly those in which ʾəza seemed to function as a non-
conditional ‘when’ rather than the conditional conjunction ‘if.’ Then, the possible combinations (protasis marker + verb form) were organized into a Word-document, with referring page numbers. It should be noted that, in my study, I have not provided a list of all conditional constructions that I have found, but rather a number of examples that add value to my analysis. To acquire a deeper understanding of the found conditional constructions, the descriptive grammars of especially Cowell (1964) and Bloch (1965) have also been useful. A few DA conditional constructions presented in Cowell’s work have also been used in this study.

This paper will first provide a classification of DA and its geographical location as well as a general, theoretical background on crosslinguistic conditionals. Thereafter, a basic overview of the verbal system in DA will be presented in order to lay a foundation for the analysis of DA conditional constructions in subsequent sections. Then, the main body of this study will attempt to describe how protasis markers and verb morphology (form) are related to various layers and degrees of hypotheticality (meaning). Lastly, a presentation of results and a final discussion will conclude the study.

Again, due to the time restrictions of this research (and, naturally, the complexity of conditional constructions, in DA as much as in any other language) some aspects have been intentionally left out. Most importantly, this paper will only deal with prototypical conditional constructions, that is, ‘if $P$, then $A$’. Thus, categories such as quasi-conditionals (sentences that express conditions without the use of conditional markers) or the potential of the marker ʾəza to have a non-conditional function ‘when’ (rather than ‘if’) will not be discussed here.

Also, while this study goes into depth about DA protasis markers and verb morphology, the analysis of other grammatical categories which may also contribute to the meaning of conditional constructions – such as order of the protasis and the apodosis clauses – have likewise been left out. The choice to discuss only markers of protasis and verb morphology is based on the hypothesis that these are two main formal aspects which contribute to meaning in DA conditional constructions.

### 1.3 Classification of DA

Many linguists (e.g. Cuvalay-Haak 1997, p. 3; Cowell 1964, p. xvii) note that the Arabic language is rich – a richness that on the one hand refers to the extensive vocabulary and grammar of (e.g. Classical) Arabic, on the other hand to the innumerable dialects and varieties that belong to the
Arabic language group, *al-‘arabīyatū l-ʿāmiyya* ‘colloquial Arabic.’ DA belongs to the large group of Syro-Lebanese Dialects, sometimes also called the ‘Central Syrian Family’ (Cowell 1964, p. xvii). In this paper, the term DA refers to the dialect that is spoken in the city of Damascus. DA is thus also an urban dialect, as opposed to rural dialects or the speech of Bedouins.

Other than Maltese, the Arabic dialects do not have the status of an independent language. The dialects are normally not used in writing, and as a result, they lack a standardized form (Cuvalay-Haak 1997, p. 3). Cuvalay-Haak notes that there are even many native speakers who still today tend to think of their mother dialect as an “impure variety” (ibid, p. 3) in comparison to Classical Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Also, the fact that DA (and other Arabic dialects other than Maltese) is oral (as opposed to written), certainly presents difficulties when attempting to provide linguistic descriptions of the dialect’s various grammatical aspects. However, as Cowell notes, “the grammatical structure of the [Arabic dialects] is autonomous, and must be described in their own right, without prejudice from Classical frames of reference” (1964, p. xvii).

# 2 Theoretical background

## 2.1 Crosslinguistic conditional constructions

Due to the complexity of conditional constructions, most linguists are able only to assign it a very broad definition. On a general level, it can be said that conditional constructions consist of two clauses – first comes the conditional *if*-clause, namely the protasis (P). The conditional clause is then followed by the main clause, or the apodosis (A) (Traugott et al 1986a, p. 5). The prototypical (English) conditional construction looks as follows:

(1) If *P*, then *A*.

In some languages the clause order can also be reversed, with the apodosis coming first and the protasis second (Comrie 1986, p. 83):

(2) *A*, if *P*.

## 2.2 Types of conditionals

The various categories of conditionals that exist in a given language are typically mentioned by grammars merely in terms of semantic oppositions such as ‘real versus unreal’ or ‘real versus
hypothetical versus counterfactual’ (Comrie 1986, p. 88). However, such a ‘one solution fits all’ kind of approach is not adequate when talking about conditionals in linguistics – indeed, the linguistic analysis should not fail to notice the great differences between types of conditionals (Dancygier 1998, p. 4). Unfortunately, while most descriptive grammars do tend to mention the types of conditionals that exist in a language (most often in terms of real versus unreal), the definitions of these types are often vague or may not be included at all. On the one hand, this certainly reflects the difficulties of classifying conditionals, and on the other, it may certainly bring about a great deal of confusion for any reader.

Comrie, in his work about the typology of conditionals (1986, p. 88), takes a seemingly unconventional approach to the types of conditionals that may exist in a language. He rejects the black-and-white-tendency of grammars to assume strict divisions, in which a clear-cut boundary between, say, ‘real’ versus ‘unreal’ is often assumed. Instead, he highlights that hypotheticality is rather a continuum with no clear-cut divisions, the “choice of form often being determined by subjective evaluation rather than by truth-conditional semantics” (ibid, p. 88). He talks of conditionals as indicative of varying degrees of hypotheticality – conditionals of ‘greater hypotheticality’ means ‘lower probability’ while conditionals of ‘lower hypotheticality’ imply ‘higher probability’ (ibid, p. 88). Unlike many other grammars or linguistic studies, Comrie’s proposed parameters for the classification of conditionals recognize the subjective nature of conditionals, that they are in fact part of unpredictable human behavior, and that they are also often much more complex than what most grammars tend to reveal. Later in this study, Comrie’s approach to the types of conditionals that may exist will serve as inspiration for the analysis of conditional form and meaning in DA.

2.3 Form and meaning

Most linguists seem to agree that it is not possible to speak of grammar in isolation from meaning (e.g. Dancygier 1998, p. 1). Traugott et al (1986b, p. 247), for instance, note that in describing the system of conditionals in a given language, “the linguist must identify both the basic formal (i.e. morphosyntactic) aspects, as well as the basic semantic categories employed by that language.” Furthermore, they state that “only by reinstating the connection between form, meaning, interpretations and actions may we hope to gain an improvement in understanding how we learn from experience” (1986a, p. 19). Danks, in his work about the form and meaning of the Arabic
verb (2011, p. 5), expands this theory further by emphasizing that the linguist should start with form and go from there to meaning, and not the other way around.

In the case of conditional constructions, however, it seems that while a majority of grammars tend to describe grammatical form, they reduce the analysis of meaning to a minimum (Dancygier 1998, p. 2f). Dancygier notes that much of the material existing on conditionals (in English) are focused mainly on revealing the formal difference among three major types of sentences (ibid, p. 3), such as:

(3) If I catch/caught/had caught the 11.30 train,  
    I will get/would get/would have gotten to the meeting on time.

According to this model, grammars would typically mention that different verb forms, such as the Perfect or the Pluperfect, mark temporal reference and reality versus unreality of condition. The patterns of form are the main concern. However, other data or arrays of interpretation are not addressed at all. Examples of other conditionals which have less typical verb forms are neglected (ibid, p. 3). But, as has been noted before, conditionals deserve to be studied in a manner that is not reduced to mere form. In her work, Dancygier emphasizes that every aspect of the form of the conditional construction is considered to make a contribution to its overall interpretation (ibid, p. 1). These formal aspects may include e.g. clause order, conditional markers of protasis and/or apodosis, and verb morphology. While Dancygier in her work discusses the full range of formal aspects (1998), the following sections will briefly introduce the two that will be the focus in this study: conditional markers and verb morphology.

2.3.1 Conditional markers

A language may employ a single conjunction which marks prototypical conditional sentences in that language (Traugott et al 1986a, p. 6). English, for instance, marks prototypical conditional constructions with if, Swedish with om, and Latin with si (Harris 1986, p. 266ff). All are markers of protasis. Some languages may, however, mark the apodosis instead, or both the protasis and apodosis, or neither (Comrie 1986, p. 87). Furthermore, while it is common for many languages to use one single conditional marker (of protasis), other languages may in fact use a number of

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1 See for instance Bloch’s work about the typology of DA conditionals (1965), in which he provides a rich account of the formal aspects, yet almost entirely leaves out the correlations between these forms and their meaning.
markers. In Classical Greek two distinct markers are employed, namely *ei* and *án*. The former is the most common word for ‘if’ and introduces the protasis, whereas the latter “indicates some degree of hypotheticality” and may occur in both the protasis and the apodosis (Greenberg 1986, p. 249). Thus, it can be seen that in languages such as Classical Greek, the use of several conditional markers may reveal which type of conditional is at hand.

### 2.3.2 Verb morphology

When turning our focus to verb morphology in conditional constructions, it is particularly necessary to first talk about verb forms and their basic and secondary meanings. Comrie, in his in-depth work on verb forms (1985, p. 19), distinguishes between context-independent meaning of grammatical categories, also called prototypical definitions, and interpretation created by certain contexts. In other words, a verb form may be ambiguous in the sense that it may have a basic meaning as well as a number of secondary meanings or uses. More specifically, the basic function of a given verb form may be time reference, however the possible secondary meaning may in fact even be contradictory to this prototypical relationship between form and temporal reference.

In conditional protases in some languages, it can be argued that the principle secondary function of the verb form is to indicate the level of hypotheticality of the condition. In other words, verb form in many conditional constructions is not unambiguously or necessarily indicative of time, but rather of hypotheticality. According to Comrie (1986, p. 93), a frequent phenomenon crosslinguistically is that conditionals of high hypotheticality usually are formed with a verb in the past form. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as ‘backshifting’ (e.g. Comrie 1986, p. 96, Dancygier 1998, p. 37). Fleischmann (quoted in Comrie 1986, p. 96) renders it a ‘linguistic metaphor of temporal distance’ in which the use of a past form of the verb marks cases of non-actuality, particularly ‘counterfactuality’ and reference to imaginary worlds. In order to avoid confusion later in this paper, however, and to follow the parameters that Comrie proposed in his work (1986), the term ‘counterfactuality’ will from hereon be avoided and instead replaced with the terms ‘impossible conditions’ or conditions of ‘high hypotheticality’ (with the same meaning).

Based on the available source material for this study, it appears that these impossible conditions with a backshifted form of the (protasis) verb may be further divided into mainly two sub-
categories: past impossible conditions and non-past/present impossible conditions. The first mentioned type, past impossible conditions, are those conditions that could have occurred in the past but did not. Thus, their fulfilment is impossible with respect to the present or the future. In the sentence below, we see that the condition – if it had rained yesterday – indeed could have occurred yesterday but ultimately did not:

(4) If it had rained yesterday, the flowers would not have died.

The second type of impossible conditions are non-past/present and refer to an impossibility in the present moment, such as sentence (8) below. Here, it is apparent that the use of the English Simple Past indicates an impossibility with reference to the real, present state of things – ‘I’ will never be ‘you’. The past form of the verb ‘were’, therefore, is not indicative of past time reference but rather of a high level of hypotheticality in the present:

(5) If I were you, I’d stay at home today.

To sum up, Dancygier (ibid, p. 39) holds that it is particularly the contrast between backshifted and non-backshifted verb forms that distinguishes between different classes of conditionals, whose conditional relationship is to be interpreted in different ways. Ultimately, we see that the form of the verb in conditional constructions may be related to a variety of semantic interpretations, in particular temporal reference and/or hypotheticality. However, it should finally be noted that there are other instances where the distinction between basic and secondary meaning of verb forms is not as clear-cut as the example sentences that have been presented in this section.

2.4 Overview of the verbal system in DA

Before turning the focus to conditionals in DA, a brief overview of some main aspects of the DA verbal system relevant to this paper is in order. The content of this section has received inspiration from Cowell’s grammatical description of the DA verb (1964, p. 319-331). In some places,

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2 A third use of a past (English) verb exists also, as described by Comrie (1985, p. 19f.). The past form of the protasis verb may be used in polite requests, such as ‘if you did this for me, I’d be very happy.’ As we can see, the past verb ‘did’ is unlikely to be interpreted as “a report on the speaker’s desires in the past”, but rather as a wish that you’ll do something for me (the speaker). The secondary function of the past verb here is thus to indicate politeness, however, unlike Comrie, I have chosen not to include this in the category of impossible conditions with backshifted verbs, since the condition ‘if you did this’ clearly is not an impossibility with respect to the present or future.
however, Cowell’s descriptions have been modified with the aid of Comrie’s discussion of categories of aspect (1976) and tense (1985) to be more aligned with modern linguistics.

2.4.1 Basic verb forms and their TAM categories

As seen below in tables I and II, the verb in DA comes in two main forms: the Perfect (or al-māḍī), and the Imperfect/non-past or (al-muḍāria’). The Perfect verb is inflected with suffixes, whereas the Imperfect verb is inflected with prefixes as well as suffixes, as seen in Table I. The primary function of the Perfect is to indicate that an event or state is in the past (to review primary and secondary functions/meanings of verbs, see section 2.3.2 above). However, the Perfect is ambiguous in the sense that it does not imply anything about the current relevance of that event or state. For instance, the English equivalency of ʾakal could be translated either to the simple past as ‘he ate’ or the present perfect, ‘he has eaten.’ The primary function of the Imperfect, moreover, is to express states or events that are not past.

Table I: Suffix conjugation of the Perfect verb

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3p.</td>
<td>Masc.</td>
<td>ʾakal</td>
<td>‘he ate’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fem.</td>
<td>ʾakl-et</td>
<td>‘she ate’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td>ʾakal-u</td>
<td>‘they ate’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2p.</td>
<td>Masc.</td>
<td>ʾakal-t</td>
<td>‘you ate’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fem.</td>
<td>ʾakal-t-i</td>
<td>‘you ate’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td>ʾakal-t</td>
<td>‘you ate’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1p.</td>
<td>Sing.</td>
<td>ʾakal-t-u</td>
<td>‘I ate’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td>ʾakal-na</td>
<td>‘we ate’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II: Prefix conjugation of the Imperfect verb

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3p.</td>
<td>Masc.</td>
<td>y-ʾākol</td>
<td>‘he eats’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fem.</td>
<td>t-ʾākol</td>
<td>‘she eats’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td>y-ʾākl-u</td>
<td>‘they eat’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2p. Masc. t-ākol ‘you eat’
Fem. t-ākl-i ‘you eat’
Pl. t-ākl-u ‘you eat’

1p. Sing. ʾākol ‘I eat’
Pl. n-ʾākol ‘we eat’

2.4.2 Other verb forms, constructions and their TAM categories

The Imperfect Verb, and to a lesser extent also the Perfect Verb, in DA can be further modified in various ways, giving it different functions depending on its time reference, aspect and mood (TAM categories). All TAM categories are presented in Table III and IV below.

Firstly, there is the bare form of the Imperfect, the Ø-Imperfect: yəftah ‘he may open.’ Secondly, there is the b-Imperfect form. However, while both the Ø-Imperfect and the b-Imperfect indicate that events, states and dispositions are not in the past, their functions may change depending on the context or if they are formed in combination with a particle marking aspect, such as raḥa or ’am.

To explain this further: For instance, the b-Imperfect may express habituality (Comrie 1985, p. 25). Cowell calls this a generalization (such as the statement ‘hens lay eggs’) – byəftah here becomes ‘he opens (every day)’ (reoccurring event). The b-Imperfect may also indicate a potentiality, ‘can’/’will’/’would.’ In this sense, byəftah could mean, for instance, ‘he can open’ or ‘he would open.’ Furthermore, the b-Imperfect can refer to assumed future events, i.e. what is assumed will take place in the future, however with no particular emphasis on immediacy – byəftah would in such a context thus be interpreted as ‘he will (probably) open.’ It should be borne in mind that it is often only the context, or circumstances of the utterance, which make the meaning of this simple form of the b-Imperfect (and often also the Perfect) explicit.

Whereas the simple b-Imperfect may be used only to express ‘assumed’ future time reference, the use of the particle raḥa (the ‘particle of anticipation’) in combination with the Ø-Imperfect is
used to indicate definite future time reference, ‘going to.’ This is the prospective aspect, which generally expresses that what the verb refers to is unambiguously impending in the future, i.e. raḥa yəftaḥ, ‘he is going to (/will open’ (Comrie 1976, p. 64f). Similarly, the use of the particle ʿam (the ‘particle of actuality’) expresses a progressive aspect, designating that an activity is going on in the present moment – the ‘true present’ – ʿam bəftaḥ ‘he is opening (right now)’. The particle ʿam may be followed either by a verb in the Ø-Imperfect or the b-Imperfect, with the same TAM values. According to Cowell (2005, p. 320), in the DA first person singular, ʿam + b-Imperfect is more common than ʿam + Ø-Imperfect ʿam bəftaḥ ‘I am opening.’ For all other persons, ʿam + Ø-Imperfect appears to be the standard.

Lastly, the Imperative in DA is used in commands or requests and expressed by the Imperfect stem without a person-prefix. In the DA conditional protasis, the Imperative rarely occurs after the protasis marker – it is more often seen in the apodosis. The Imperative as a verb form in the protasis will not be dealt with in this study.

**Table III: TAM categories of the DA verb**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAM Category</th>
<th>Verb Stem</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>fataḥ</td>
<td>‘he opened’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø-Imperfect</td>
<td>yəftaḥ</td>
<td>‘he opens/he may open’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b-Imperfect</td>
<td>bəftaḥ</td>
<td>‘he opens/will open/would/could open’ etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raḥa + Ø-Imperfect</td>
<td>raḥa yəftaḥ</td>
<td>‘he will open/he is going to open’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿam + Ø-/b-Imperfect</td>
<td>ʿam bəftaḥ</td>
<td>‘he is opening’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Imperative ftāḥ! ‘Open!’ [3MSG])

The various verb forms presented above may also be used in combination with the auxiliary verb kān. In such cases, kān is followed by a second verb (any of the above mentioned forms, except the Imperative). Such verb combinations occur in accordance with the principle of tense

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3 There are several other variants of this particle existing in DA which may be used as well: rah-, laḥ-, laḥa, in addition to the full word rāyeḥ.

4 Occasionally, this particle also comes in the forms of ʿamma-, ʿamm, as well as the full word ʿammal.

5 In DA, much like in CA/MSA or other varieties of Arabic, the verbal system also includes the active participle – however, while it does play a role in the DA verbal system, I have chosen not to include it in this paper.
subordination: for instance, as seen in Table IV below, the Perfect *fataḥ* ‘he opened’ becomes, in combination with *kān; kān fataḥ* ‘he had opened.’ The DA possible combinations *kān* + second verb are presented in table IV below.

Table IV: Further TAM categories, with *kān*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>kān</em> + Perfect</td>
<td><em>kān fataḥ</em></td>
<td>‘he had opened’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kān</em> + Ø- / b-Imperfect</td>
<td><em>kān byəftaḥ</em></td>
<td>‘he used to open’ / ‘he would open’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kān</em> + ‘am’ + Ø-Imperfect</td>
<td><em>kān ‘am- yəftaḥ</em></td>
<td>‘he was opening’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kān</em> + raḥa + Ø-Imperfect</td>
<td><em>kān raḥa- yəftaḥ</em></td>
<td>‘he was going to open’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bikūn</em> + ‘am’ + Ø-Imperfect</td>
<td><em>bikūn ‘am- yəftaḥ</em></td>
<td>‘he’ll be opening’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bikūn</em> + Perfect</td>
<td><em>bikūn fataḥ</em></td>
<td>‘he will have opened’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Analysis

3.1 The hypotheticality continuum

Inspired by Comrie’s approach to the types of conditionals that exist (1986, pp. 88-93), this study of DA conditionals seeks to avoid binary oppositions such as the commonly seen ‘real’ versus ‘unreal.’ However, due to the complex nature of conditional constructions in natural language – including DA – one shall not ignore the difficulty that comes with classifying the degrees of hypotheticality to which the formal aspects, such as conditional markers and verb morphology, correspond. One approach is to, in line with Comrie’s proposed parameters, visualize a continuum of hypotheticality. In doing so, binary oppositions are (at least partly) avoided and one may get a little closer to understanding the meaning of DA conditionals, whilst at the same time acknowledging that there exists no clear-cut formula of systematization.

This study distinguishes between two types of conditions – impossible and possible. Furthermore, whereas impossible conditions are always of high hypotheticality, possible conditions may be either open or low (see Diagram I below). The hope is that, while some extent of categorization is inevitable in a linguistic study such as this one, the use of these categories may nevertheless recognize the complex nature of DA conditional constructions. In other words, it should be borne in mind that the categories belong to a semantic continuum rather than being
distinct categories, and that at times conditional statements may fall within them exactly, whereas at other times they may be somewhere ‘in-between.’ In Diagram I below, for the sake of clarity, this notion of a continuum has been visualized as an arrow moving along and above the categories.

Diagram I: The hypotheticality continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impossible</th>
<th>Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High hypotheticality</td>
<td>Open hypotheticality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past imposs.  Present imposs.

DA conditionals of high hypotheticality (left end of spectrum) are impossible, i.e. there is no chance of fulfillment of the condition at the moment of utterance (present) or in the future. Looking at the examples found in my data, it appears that most DA conditionals of high hypotheticality are past impossibles:

(6)  *law ʿalt-ʾilli kənt ṛəḥt maʿak*

‘If you’d told me, I’d have gone with you’ (Cowell 1964, p. 336)

However, DA conditionals of high hypotheticality may also be present impossibles:

(7)  *waššabb yəllı byaštāgēl byadfaʿ ʿan nafṣo law kān ʾabū mawžūd*

‘Der junge Man, der arbeitet, zahlt für sich selber, auch wenn sein Vater am Leben ist’ (Bloch & Grotfeld 1964, p. 114f)

‘The young man who works pays for himself, even if his father is [were] alive [right now]’

In contrast with these impossible conditionals, which are distinguished through their element of impossibility, there are the DA conditionals of so called open and low hypotheticality (middle and right end respectively on Diagram I). They are both possible, i.e. there is a chance that they may occur in the present moment or in the future.

Open conditionals are called ‘open’ precisely because, while it is possible that they may occur, they do not necessarily imply a clear likelihood to do so. In other words, they are more or less
neutral with respect to fulfillment or nonfulfillment of the condition. Sentence (8) below may be considered a conditional construction of open hypotheticality, as it does not seem to imply any degree of expectancy or fulfillment. Here, the condition ‘if they invite me’ may happen or it may not:

(8)  \( \text{m\o mken r\u0111h 'zza 'azam\u011fini} \)
\( \text{‘I might go, if they invite me’ (Cowell 1964, p. 331)} \)

Conditional constructions of low hypotheticality (on the right side of the continuum) differ from open conditionals in that there may exist a hint of positive expectancy, often from the side of the speaker. See for instance:

(9)  \( \text{n\u0131lla m\u0131 f\u0131 m\u0131ne‘ 'andak 'zza br\u0131h \u0131lla} \)
\( \text{‘I hope you don’t mind if I go now’ (Cowell 1964, p. 332)} \)

Here, there appears to be a relatively high chance of fulfillment of the condition, that is, that the speaker is intending to leave. The speaker seems to have already decided that he or she is going regardless of if the other person minds or not. Hence, the hypotheticality of the statement can be said to be low. In this study, these are the terms that will be used – high, open and low hypotheticality.

### 3.2 Conditional markers

DA employs three different conditional markers: ‘\( \text{\'zza} \), ‘\( \text{\'an} \), and \( \text{law} \). All three are markers of protasis. According to Bloch, the markers ‘\( \text{\'zza} \) and ‘\( \text{\'an} \) are identical in their meaning and may be used interchangeably; he mentions that the choice of marker is most often merely a question of aesthetics (1965, p. 11). Other scholars such as Stowasser and Ani (1964, p. 121) also place ‘\( \text{\'zza} \) and ‘\( \text{\'an} \) under the same category. Bloch classifies ‘\( \text{\'zza} \) and ‘\( \text{\'an} \) as realis whereas \( \text{law} \) is considered as irrealis (1965, p. 11, p. 21). However, he – again as in many other grammars – focuses merely on the formal aspects, but offers no justification to the use of this terminology. In this paper, the terms ‘realis’ and ‘irrealis’ will be avoided. Instead, the three markers are classified as either impossible or possible.
Diagram II: The hypotheticality continuum with conditional markers

<-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------->

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impossible</th>
<th>Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>law</td>
<td>ʾəza, ʾən</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of my data collection and works of previous scholars (e.g. Bloch 1965, 11ff.; Cowell 1964, p. 331ff.), it appears that the markers ʾəza and ʾən are employed to introduce possible conditions. To illustrate this theory, one may look at sentences (10) and (11) below, one with ʾən and one with ʾəza, in which it seems that the conditions in each protasis indeed indicate a possibility to occur in the present or future:

(10) ʾən kān fī ḥəlw byāklu mn əlhəlw ʾawwal
‘Gibt es Süßes, dann beginnt man damit [das Süsse zu essen]’ (Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 96f)
‘If there are sweets, (then) one begins to eat them (the sweets)’

(11) ʾəza btəstannāni šī yōmēn yəmken ʾəṭla’ ma’ak
‘If you’ll [/you] wait for me a couple of days I might [/it is possible that I will] go up with you’ (Cowell 1964, p. 332)

Looking toward the above examples, it thus seems reasonable to say that while ʾəza and ʾən are two different particles, they more or less have the same semantic meaning in the conditional protasis. By contrast, the DA marker law has shown to be used only for impossible conditions, and further, mostly as past impossibles, i.e. conditions that could have been fulfilled in the past but were not:

(12) law ʾəlt-əlli kənt rəht ma’ak
‘If you’d told me, I’d have gone with you’ (Cowell 1964, p. 336)

(13) lu [law] mā laḥha na ḥālna w-rakadna mən waššon – ʾəlla kānu tabasu biʿalbna
‘wenn wir uns nicht aufgemacht hätten und vor ihnen weggelaufen wären, dann wären sie auf uns getreten’ (Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 14f)
Sentences (12) and (13) illustrate that prototypical conditional protases with law are impossible in terms of present or future fulfillment, regardless of other formal aspects – such as choice of verb form – used in a conditional construction with this marker. Thus, in DA law is exclusively used for these types of conditionals and may never be used for conditions of open or low hypotheticality, where 'ən or 'əza are employed. In my data, I found no examples where law-clauses appeared to have other semantic functions than that of past or present impossibles.

### 3.3 Verb morphology

The primary focus of this section is to see which different DA verb forms may be combined with each of the three protasis markers, and further, how a certain combination constructs the hypotheticality of the condition. As we have seen in the previous section, the DA protasis markers express either possible or impossible conditions. In Diagram III below, we see that the verb forms contribute to even more fine-grained distinctions of hypotheticality – namely high, open or low. In this section, it will be seen that in most cases the DA protasis verb form is not used in its primary meaning, that is, as an indicator of temporal reference. In fact, only in few instances does the employed verb form in a DA conditional construction seem to correlate with time (such as the use of the Perfect verb with 'əza to refer to a possible condition in the past).

![Diagram III: Hypotheticality continuum with location of verb forms](image)

The following sections are thus be organized as follows: Each conditional clause with 'əza, 'ən and law is treated independently. The attested verb forms that may be combined with each marker
are presented in a table in the beginning of the section. Thereafter, each possible combination is analyzed further with the aid of transcribed examples from the source material.\footnote{The apodosis will be included in most examples, however in this study only for the sake of providing contextual meaning to the protasis, not as a determinant of function.}

### 3.3.1 The inflected and uninflected uses of kān with protasis marker

Before commencing the analysis of verb morphology, a note about the usage of kān in the DA protasis is in order. When any of the three protasis markers ‘əza, ‘ən, and law are used in combination with kān, kān may be either inflected or uninflected. When it is inflected, it may be in the Perfect form – e.g. kānet (3rd person feminine singular) or the Imperfect form, e.g. bɔtkūn. In its inflected form, moreover, the protasis marker may be separated from kān by the subject or by a negative particle (Cowell 1964, p. 334).

When uninflected, the protasis marker and kān act as one, inseparable particle, such as ‘əzakān or ‘ənkān. Here, kān remains in the same form at all times – e.g. ‘əzakān bɔddak ‘if you want’ or ‘əza kān bittibibu ‘If you would like’. It appears here that kān has undergone a process of grammaticalization: “hier hat kān keinen selbständigen Wortwert mehr, sondern ist mit ‘əza bsw. ‘ən zur Worteinheit verschmolzen” (Bloch 1965, p. 12).\footnote{Eng.: ‘here, kān has no independent word value anymore, but has together with ‘əza and ‘ən respectively merged into one word unit.’} While some linguists (such as Cowell 1964, p. 334) still write protasis marker and the uninflected kān separately, e.g. ‘əza kān, it may be more suitable in this study to conjoin the two into one single word ‘əzakān to clearly demonstrate it as the uninflected version.

However, while the inflected and uninflected uses of kān in the DA conditional protasis do differ in form, they mostly do not appear to differ in their meaning (see e.g. Bloch 1965, p. 13f). The only instance in which the inflected form appears to be favored over the uninflected form is when the protasis does not contain a second verb, such as ‘əza kānu ‘uŋnja ‘if they are rich’ (Bergsträsser 1924, p. 66). As an alternative, if a non-verbal protasis contains an uninflected kān, a pronoun is often inserted between ‘əzakān and the noun, e.g. ‘əzakān hɔnne ‘uŋnja ‘if they are rich’ (Bloch 1965, p. 14) to make clear the person of the subject. Since the meaning of the inflected
and uninflected versions of *kān* seems to be roughly the same, this study will use the two variations interchangeably.

### 3.3.2 Semantic functions of *kān* in the protasis

It is further necessary to clarify the function of *kān* in DA conditional constructions, particularly in relation to hypotheticality. Firstly, it appears that the insertion of *kān* between conditional marker and main verb normally does not change the semantic meaning of the protasis. In other words, this means that the existence of *kān* has no visible effect on the hypotheticality of the protasis; it seems to merely ‘exist’ as a formal unit between marker and main verb. This hypothesis is supported by Bloch, who also claims that *kān* is “ohne jede Wirkung auf die Bedeutung des Konditionalsatzes” (1965, p. 14). To exemplify, it can be seen that both of the sentences (14) and (15) below are expressed with a main verb in the Perfect form, however one sentence contains an additional *kān*, whereas the other one does not. Both sentences nevertheless represent open hypotheticals, i.e. conditionals that are purely hypothetical, with no real indication that they are leaning more toward high hypotheticality (impossibility) nor low hypotheticality (expectancy of fulfillment):

\[ 'əza + Perfect: \]

\[
(14) \quad 'əza 'məltə 'byəftəker 'ənno tdāya 'na mən lə̌lə̌mto
\]

‘wenn ich das tue, dann glaubt er, daß wir in Not geraten sind durch das bißchen, das er ißt’ (Bloch and Grotzfeld, p. 128f)

‘if I do that, then he will think that we are in need [/in distress/suffering] because of how little he eats’

\[ 'əza + kān (+ negation marker mā) + Perfect: \]

\[
(15) \quad 'əza kān mā mətt bəddi 'ə 'tə rās hal-kazzāb
\]

‘If I don’t die, I intend to cut that liar’s head off’ (Cowell 1964, p. 334)

Secondly, the sentences above seem to indicate that *kān* in the conditional context does not appear to serve its primary TAM function of creating tense subordination when it is used in

---

8 Eng.: *kān* has ‘no effect on the meaning of the conditional sentence.’ There are a few, rare exceptions to this, however, but they will not be mentioned here.
combination with the main verb (for a review on primary TAM categories with *kān*, see section 2.4.2). If this had been the case, the protasis in sentence (15) would have been translated to ‘if I had not died’ since, normally, the Perfect verb ‘died’ would in combination with *kān* become ‘had died.’ Here, however, both sentences are interpreted as present/future, regardless of the existence of *kān*. Again, *kān* seems to only change the form of the protasis, but not the meaning.

Exactly why, then, *kān* exists in conditional constructions and what its function is will be left unsaid in this time-restricted paper – for now, it suffices to recognize that *kān* in a majority of cases does not seem to have an effect on the level of hypotheticality of DA conditional constructions. Due to these findings, in the analysis of verb forms in the sections below *kān* has mostly been put in parentheses to show that it may be inserted to change the form of the protasis, but not the function: e.g. *ʾəza (+ kān) + Perfect*.

### 3.3.3 The negated protasis with *mā*

The form and function of the DA negated conditional protasis will not be brought up into detail in this study. Nevertheless, it deserves to be mentioned in short, since it will occur in some examples in the subsequent sections. The corpus suggests that most, if not all, of DA protases are negated with the proclitic negation marker of *mā* – no matter which conditional marker or verb form is employed with it. In other words, each time a protasis has been negated in the source material, it has been done so with *mā*. To exemplify, we may turn our focus to the sentences below:

*ʾəza + kān + mā + Perfect:*

(16) ʾəza kān mā mātt ʾbəddi ʾə ′u rās hal-kazzāb
‘If I don’t die, I intend to cut that liar’s head off’ (Cowell 1964, p. 334)

*ʾəza + mā + quasi-verb:*

(17) ʾəza mā ʾando hūwe badle ʾzdīde
‘Wenn er keinen neuen Anzug hat […]’ (Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 112f)
‘If he doesn’t have a new suit […]’

---

9 Quasi-verbs: e.g. *bədd* ‘want’ or *fī* ‘there is’.
Conditional Constructions in Damascus Arabic

Although the data has not provided negated versions of all existing protasis verb combinations, it seems reasonable to assume that most DA protases are indeed negated with mā.\(^\text{10}\) This is largely due to evidence found in Lucas’ article about Jespersen’s Cycle (2007, pp. 397-428): DA is one of several Arabic dialects which employs the stage I construction – that is, a single preverbal negation marker of mā – to negate most constructions, conditional or not. This theory is supported further by Bloch (1965, p. 18), who in his work also does not mention the use of any other negation markers than mā in the DA protasis.\(^\text{11}\)

### 3.4 The ‘\(ən\)- and ‘\(əza\)-clauses

According to both Bloch (1965, p. 11) and Cowell (1964, p. 335), the only verb form that may follow the protasis marker ‘\(ən\) is the Perfect – neither author acknowledges the existence of any other verb combination with ‘\(ən\) other than this verb form. In fact, Bloch holds that while the two markers ‘\(ən\) and ‘\(əza\) are equal semantically, they differ formally in that only the Perfect may follow ‘\(ən\), whereas other verb forms may follow ‘\(əza\) (1965, p. 11). However, while it appears that the Perfect is the most common verb form to follow ‘\(ən\),\(^\text{12}\) the data shows that it is certainly not the only possible verb form. Rather, the analysis detected examples in which ‘\(ən\) may also be followed by the b-Imperfect, a quasi-verb, or a noun/adjective/adverb, even if these are less frequent. It is particularly note-worthy that neither scholar mentions much about the use of quasi-verbs (e.g. \(bədd\)- ‘want’, \(fī\) ‘there is’, and ‘\(and\)- ‘to have’ followed by a grammatical subject, e.g.

\(^{10}\) Another variant of mā is māl- when used in combination with a personal pronominal suffix such as: ‘\(əza\) kont mālak muharrer bəddak ṭada’ ‘an tā ‘\(ən\’ Wenn du kein Journalist bist, must du doppelt zahlen’ (Eng. ‘If you are not a journalist, you have to pay double’: Bloch and Grotzfeld, p. 186f).

\(^{11}\) The negated protasis should not be confused with the negated apodosis, which may use other negation markers as well.

\(^{12}\) The data collection showed some 10+ instances of ‘\(ən\ (+ kān)\) + Perfect, however oftentimes 5 or less instances of ‘\(ən\ + other verb combinations.

\[\text{ʾənkān + mā + Perfect:}\]

\[(18) \quad w- ʾənkān mā šərbu lʾahwe \]

‘wenn sie keinen Kaffee getrunken haben [...]’ (Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 100f)

‘[and] if they have not drunk any coffee [...]’
fī mayya ‘there is water’), which are very high-frequency in many dialects (Lucas 2007, p. 421), including DA – conditional and non-conditional constructions alike.

It has previously become clear that ʾən and ʾəza as conditional markers of protasis have the same semantic function (representing possible conditions). However, within this group of possible conditions, protases may additionally be of either open or low hypotheticality (see Diagram III above). This is where the verb form plays a role – to make finer distinctions in the hypotheticality of the condition. Based on my data collection, it seems that a verb form that follows ʾən or ʾəza also has an unchanging semantic function, regardless of which of the two markers precede this particular verb. In other words, for instance the use of the Perfect verb in the ʾəza-clause is seen to indicate the same degree of hypotheticality as the Perfect verb in the ʾən-clause. Thus, in the tables below, although the possible verb forms in the ʾən- and ʾəza-clauses have been presented in separate tables (for a clear overview), the analysis of each verb form and their semantic characteristics will mostly include examples of both ʾən- and ʾəza-protases.

Table V: Attested verb forms in the ʾən-clause

ʾən (+ kān) + Perfect
ʾən + kān + b-Imperfect
ʾən (+ kān) + quasi-verb
ʾən (+ kān) + noun/adjective/adverb

Table VI: Attested verb forms in the ʾəza-clause

ʾəza (+ kān) + Perfect
ʾəza (+ kān) + b-Imperfect
ʾəza (+ kān) + quasi-verb
ʾəza + kān + noun/adjective/adverb
3.4.1 The Perfect

As can be seen in tables V and VI, the first possible verb form that may be combined with any of the two markers ‘ən and ‘əza is the Perfect. It should be noted again, however, that the Perfect form appears to be more frequently used with ‘ən (the data collection reveals at least 10 examples of this combination) rather than with ‘əza (app. 5 examples).

The Perfect verb may be one of the most interesting verb form in DA conditional constructions, due to the common use of a past verb form crosslinguistically to mark cases of high hypotheticality and its existence in clauses with all three markers ‘ən, ‘əza and law (however with another semantic meaning in the law-clause compared to these first two markers; see further down in this section). Cowell notes that the Perfect verb in ‘ən- and ‘əza-clauses is “definitely hypothetical … presumably not fulfilled at present and may or may not be fulfilled in the future” (1964, p. 331). In other words, his theory is that the Perfect together with ‘ən or ‘əza represents open conditions, i.e. those conditions with no element of expectancy of fulfillment. Looking at a variety of example sentences found in the transcribed texts, the fact that the Perfect verb represents open conditions appears to be largely justified. See for instance sentences (19) and (20) below:

‘ən + Perfect:

(19) w- ‘ən zād šwayye ḏohn – mənhattolha yāhon [- hayye ‘əsmha 'anna kəbbe blabanīye nəhna]

‘Und wenn ein bisschen Fett übriggeblieben ist, tun wir es dazu [Das heißt bei uns kəbbe blabanīye]’ (Bloch and Grotfeld 1964, p. 124f)

‘And if there is a little bit of grease left, we add it [we call that kəbbe blabanīye]’

‘əza + Perfect:

(20) mnəsəl la-natāyeż ‘ahsan ‘əza ttaba ‘na haṭ-ṭarī’a

‘We’ll get better results if we follow this method’ (Cowell 2005, p. 331)

Further, looking back at the initial background discussion of verb forms and hypotheticality (see section 2.3.2), as well as the example sentences above, it can be seen that some sort of ‘backshifting’ with the Perfect verb applies also in the ‘ən- and ‘əza-protases. While the use of a past verb in crosslinguistic conditional constructions typically indicates a high level of
hypothesicality, i.e. impossible conditions, it seems that the DA Perfect verb in combination with these two markers may also represent a higher level of hypotheticality, however within the open-low category that the markers ʾən and ʾəza belong to. To clarify: conditional protases with these two markers may be open or low, of which open conditions are the ‘less possible’ (hence more hypothetical) ones. The Perfect verb is used to indicate this slightly higher (i.e. open) level of hypotheticality, as contrasted with conditionals of low hypotheticality, in which e.g. the b-Imperfect is employed, as will be discussed further down in this paper.

Second, it thus also becomes clear that the Perfect verb in DA conditional constructions (with ʾən and ʾəza, but also with law) has lost its primary function of temporal reference and rather acquired a secondary function, that is, representing a higher level of hypotheticality. To prove this, it may be seen in some of Cowell’s examples of conditionals with ʾəza that this open degree of hypotheticality with the Perfect verb stretches across all points in time – past, present and future alike:

Past - ʾəza + Perfect:
(21) ʾəza sāfar mbārḥa byəṣal l-yōm
‘If he left yesterday, he’ll arrive today’ (1964, p. 333)

Present - ʾəza (+ mā) (+ kān) + Perfect:
(22) lāzem tkān bala ḥōss ʾəza mā kənt btətʿassar b-hal-manzar
‘You must be devoid of feeling if you’re not moved by that sight’ (ibid, p. 334)

Future - ʾəza (+ kān) + Perfect:
(23) ʾəza kān laʾet wāḥed ʿat-ṭarī halli l-lak sʿīnī xallī yəḥšrab
‘If you [you’ll] meet someone on the road who says to you “give me water”, let him drink’ (ibid, p. 334)

3.4.2 The b-Imperfect

The second attested verb form with ʾən and ʾəza that was found in the corpus is the b-Imperfect. This is first and foremost noteworthy because, as we have seen previously, the Imperfect normally comes in two forms – the b-Imperfect and the Ø-Imperfect. Bloch, however, emphasizes continually in his work that it is always the former that is used in conditional constructions with
ʾəza (and also, as we have seen in this study, ʾən), never the latter (1965, p. 11; p. 17). Bloch’s theory is supported by the findings in my data collection, where both markers were found in combination with the b-Imperfect, but never the Ø-Imperfect.\(^\text{13}\)

Furthermore, it appears that while the Perfect form of the verb is more common with ʾən, the opposite is true for the b-Imperfect, which in the transcribed texts occurs most frequent with ʾəza (\(~ 15\) instances) compared to with ʾən (\(~ 5\) ). Additionally, instances of ʾəza + b-Imperfect as well as the combination with kān, ʾəza + kān + b-Imperfect were found – however, protases with ʾən + b-Imperfect were only found with an inserted kān between, never without. In Table V above, kān has thus not been placed within parentheses, indicating this ‘obligatory’ use of kān between ʾən and the b-Imperfect.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{'ən + kān + b-Imperfect:} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[(24)\] \text{w- ʾənkān mā bta ʾref ʾənno btārkez ma ʾhon ʿlʾahwe bṣt ʿūm ʿlʾəmm bṭgliḥa}

‘Und wenn sie nicht weiß, ob ihnen der Kaffee gelingt, dann kocht ihn die Mutter’ (Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 90f)

‘And if she doesn’t know if the coffee will work out for them [if they will manage themselves/succeed in making coffee], then the mother will [get up and] brew it’

\[(25)\] \text{ʾən kunt bitḥīḥb ṣana rfiʾak wēn mā bitrīḍ (Bergsträsser 1924, p. 93)}

‘Wenn du möchtest, so bin ich dein Reisgefährte, wo immer du (hin)willst’

‘If you like, I’ll be your travel companion, wherever you want (to go)’

Versus ʾəza + b-Imperfect:

\[(26)\] \text{yxallṣak mēn nār ʾəzzahannam ya flān ʾəza bṭxalles ḥalī ʾərne mənhon}

‘Gott möge dich vor dem Höllenfeuer bewahren, wenn du diese Frau von ihnen befreist’

(Bloch and Grotzfeld, p. 46f)

‘May God save you from the hellfire, if you free this woman from them’

And ʾəza + kān + b-Imperfect:

\(^{13}\) Cowell, however, notes that ʾəza may be followed by the Ø-Imperfect, in combination with the prospective particle raha-, i.e. ʾəza + raha + Ø-Imperfect (1964, p. 334). However, I have chosen not to include this combination in my analysis, since no sentences with the Ø-Imperfect in an ʾən- or ʾəza-clause were found in the transcribed sources.
Now that we have discussed the form of the \textit{b}-Imperfect and its occurrence in conditional protases with \textit{ʾəza} or \textit{ʾən}, we may turn to its meaning in terms of hypotheticality. As we have seen before, the Perfect verb with these two markers seems to imply the higher degree of hypotheticality within the open-low category that the markers belong to, i.e. open hypotheticality. By contrast, Cowell states that the \textit{b}-Imperfect is distinguished from the Perfect in that there sometimes exists an expectancy of the condition to be fulfilled, “as contrasted with the perfect, which implies no particular expectations one way or the other” (1964, p. 332). The key word here, however, is sometimes, meaning that while the \textit{b}-Imperfect may indicate some degree of positive expectancy, it appears that this is not necessarily the only function of the \textit{b}-Imperfect in DA conditional protases. To clarify: While Cowell holds that conditional protases with the \textit{b}-Imperfect indicate expectancy of fulfillment/low hypotheticality, this need not always be the case. In fact, the corpus seem to show instances where the \textit{b}-Imperfect is used for conditions of both low and open hypotheticality. This theory is illustrated by the example sentences below:

\textit{ʾənkān} + \textit{b}-Imperfect (open):

(28) \textit{w- ʾənkān mā bta ʿref ʾonno b.tarkez ma ʿhon ʿalʿahwe baṭʿūm ʿalʿənm bṭəḡliha}
‘Und wenn sie nicht weiß, ob ihnen der Kaffee gelingt, dann kocht ihn die Mutter’ (Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 90f)
‘And if she doesn’t know if the coffee will work out for them [if they will manage themselves/succeed in making coffee], then the mother will [get up and] brew it’

\textit{ʾəza} + \textit{b}-Imperfect (open):

(29) \textit{ʾəza bṭəξod mən bərra ʾaḥsan?}
‘Wenn du (ein Mädchen) von außerhalb (zur Frau nimmst) – ist das besser?’ (Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 44f)
‘If you take a girl from the outside (to be your wife) – is that better?’

\textit{ʾəza} + \textit{b}-Imperfect (low):

(30) \textit{ʾəza bṭəḏūnī ʾaŋa mā bṭəξod halbənt – ʾəza bṭəḏūnī ʾənhəbəs wəlla ʾətwə ʾaf wəlla ʾənhān – tmānəʾu ʾən ḥašši}
'Wenn ihr also wollt, daß ich das Mädchen nicht nehme, wenn ihr wollt, daß ich eingesperrt oder verhaftet werde und verächtlich dastehe, dann lehnt diese Sache ab!' (Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 42f)

‘So, if you want me not to take this girl, [and] if you want me to be imprisoned or arrested or despised, then reject this thing!

(31) ʾəzakān mā btə ra ʾənte fransāwi ʾarriḥa lawāḥed yaʿref fransāwi

‘Wenn du selber nicht Französisch lessen kannst, laß es jemanden lesen, der Französisch kann’ (Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 174f)

‘If you can’t read French yourself, let someone who knows French read it’

We may thus say that while the semantic function of the Perfect in DA conditional protases with ʾəza or ʾən seems to be to indicate a higher level of hypotheticality (open hypotheticality with these markers – not a positive expectancy), the b-Imperfect is less strained in its usage, in that it can be used for conditions of both open and low hypotheticality.

3.4.3 Quasi-verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs

Other verb combinations that were frequently found with ʾən and ʾəza in the transcribed texts are quasi-verbs and non-verbal predicates (i.e. nouns, adjectives, adverbs – the data revealed around 25 protases with these combinations). This is a particularly interesting finding since, as mentioned before, while Bloch (1965, p. 11) and Cowell (1964, p. 332) do briefly mention the existence of ‘non-verbal’ protases and present examples of ʾən- and ʾəza-clauses with both nouns, adjective, adverbs and quasi-verbs, neither author specifically distinguishes or discusses these possible combinations, particularly that of protasis marker + quasi-verb. Rather, these are simply grouped together under the same category, labelled as ‘non-verbal’.15 While this is not necessarily a false observation, it may at least be helpful to know exactly what is meant by ‘non-verbal’ and, as this study has found, ‘non-verbal’ may in fact indicate several things.

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14 In this protasis, it seems that we may talk about a negative expectancy rather than the prototypical positive expectancy. In other words, there exists an expectancy from the side of the speaker – however, he/she appears to believe that the subject of the condition does in fact not speak French.

15 Even when kān is inserted between a protasis marker and e.g. a quasi-verb, these protases are still labelled simply as ‘non-verbal’.
Concerning the hypotheticality of ən and 'əza-protases with nouns, adjectives, adverbs or quasi-verbs, Bloch stops after merely mentioning the formal aspects, while Cowell at least in part mentions something about their hypotheticality. He holds that they have a similar function as the b-Imperfect in that they may – sometimes – indicate some degree of expectancy (1964, p. 332). According to the terminology used for this study, this means that the hypotheticality of these grammatical units used together with ən and 'əza may be open or low. Judging by examples found in the transcribed texts, this argument seems to be largely justified:

Open – 'əza + quasi-verb:

(32) hayye 'akle məstaṭfe - 'əza 'ando dyūf
‘Es ist feines Essen, wenn man Gäste hat’ (Bloch and Grotzeld 1964, p. 124f)
‘It’s good food, if one has guests’

Open - 'əza (+ kān) + adjective:

(33) 'əza kānu 'uğna [...] (Bergsträsser 1924, p. 65)
‘If they are rich [...]’

Open – 'ən (+ kān) + quasi-verb:

(34) w- 'ən kān fi šaḥn bəthott ḥṣḥan 'awwal
‘Und wenn es eine Untertasse gibt, stellt sie diese zuerst hin’ (Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 90f)
‘And if there is a saucer, she puts this one [the saucer] first’

Low – 'əza + noun:

(35) 'əza t-taqrīrēn byətnūqaḍu lā tsadde ' lā hād u-lā hād
‘If the two reports conflict, don’t believe either one’ (Cowell 1964, p. 332)

Note, moreover, that kān at the bottom of Table VI has not been placed within brackets between protasis marker and noun/adjective/adverb. This is because in the source material these three categories were only found with 'əza when kān was inserted between (e.g. Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 48 and p. 111 and Bergsträsser 1924, p. 65), unlike the 'ən-clause with noun/adjective/adverb, where examples were found also without kān (e.g. Bergsträsser 1924, p. 102). This is similar to the previous finding of the b-Imperfect occurring with 'ən only with an
inserted kān (see Table V), whereas several instances without kān were detected with ʿəza. Perhaps these findings may point to a possible semantic function of kān in DA conditional protases which have not been brought up in this study. Here, however, that discussion will be left out. For now, it suffices to mention the formal differences.

Ultimately, what we may conclude from the analysis in this section is (at least) that while the b-Imperfect differs formally from quasi-verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs, their conditional meaning appears to be the same as that of the b-Imperfect – to indicate either open or low hypotheticality.

3.4.4 Generic constructions

Lastly, while it has been seen that ʿən and ʿəza are mostly followed by the same verb forms, there exists also another function of certain verb forms that may be attributed to the ʿəza-clause, but not the ʿən-clause – the so-called generic constructions (Dancygier 1998, p. 63). Generic constructions constitute a separate group of conditions which may be classified as belonging to the category of open hypotheticality. Cowell also mentions these types of conditionals in his work, however he calls them ‘generalizations’ (1964, p. 333). They are conditional statements which refer to generally occurring events, outside of a specific time reference. Cowell notes that these generic constructions may be constructed with the b-Imperfect, but the source material shows that ʿəza may in a generic construction also be followed by by the Perfect, as seen below:

ʿəza (+ kān) + b-Imperfect:

(36) šī rāsī ʿəza kān byəštağel mnīkh
‘That’s cheap, if he does good work’ (Cowell 1964, p. 333)

ʿəza + Perfect:

(37) ʿəza tār bāsama bișr bətlət žnāhāt – w-ʿəza məši l-ˈard byəmṣi ʿala təl rəžlēn – šu hāda?
‘Ein Vogel, wenn er am Himmel fliegt, fliegt er mit drei Flügeln, und wenn er auf der Erde läuft, läuft er auf drei Füssen – was ist das?’ (Bloch and Grotfeld 1964, p. 196f)
‘A bird, if it flies in the sky, it flies with three wings, and if it walks on the earth, it walks with three feet – what is that?’
Since the b-Imperfect and the Perfect primarily have other meanings in DA conditional protases with ʾəza (as seen previously) than that of generic constructions, it is likely that these constructions are mostly understood contextually.

3.5 The law-clause

Table VII: Attested verb forms in the law-clause

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{law} + (kān) + \text{Perfect} \\
\text{law} + (kān) + \text{b-Imperfect} \\
\text{law} + (kān) + \text{Ø-Imperfect} \\
\text{law} + (kān) + \text{adjective}/(\text{noun/adverb})^{16} \\
\text{law} + (kān) + \text{quasi-verb}
\end{align*}
\]

The protasis marker law may be combined with almost exactly the same verb forms as in the ʾən- and ʾəza-clauses – however, in combination with law these verb forms exclusively represent impossible conditions, or conditions of high hypotheticality (with ʾən and ʾəza, the verb forms may indicate possible conditions of either low or open hypotheticality). Furthermore, according to Cowell, the verb of a law-clause is generally in the Perfect form (1964, p. 335), a theory that is likely based on the crosslinguistic paradigm of the use of a (backshifted) Perfect verb to represent impossible conditions. Bloch, however, is freer in his analysis, stating that the law-clause is “an keine bestimmte Form gebunden”\(^{17}\) (1965, p. 20). He presents a variety of combinations, holding that the protasis with law may be constructed with nouns, a quasi-verb, the Perfect, the b-Imperfect, and even the Ø-Imperfect. In the transcribed sources, law-protases with each of these combinations except for nouns and including adjectives were found.

Concerning the hypotheticality of the law-clause: as mentioned before, the law-clause is always of impossible/high hypotheticality. However, depending on the choice of verb form together with law, this clause may additionally be either a past impossible (could have occurred in

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\(^{16}\) Whether or not adjectives or adverbs may be combined with law will remain unknown for now – in the transcribed texts, only examples with nouns were found.

\(^{17}\) Eng.: “not bound to any particular form [of the verb]”
the past but did not, e.g. ‘If we would not have done that’) or a present impossible (a state contradictory to the ‘real’ world, e.g. ‘If I were you’). It should be noted, however, that law-clauses generally seem to be less common than ’ən- and ʾəzɑ-clauses in the source material (in the data, only around five protases with law were found in total), and thus there are fewer examples below to support the analysis of this section.

3.5.1 The Perfect

In the law-clause we see the use of the DA Perfect verb, mostly (if not only) to indicate past impossibles:

\textit{law} + (\textit{mā}) + Perfect:

\begin{equation}
\textit{law} \ mā \ laḥḥa \ na \ ḥālna \ w-rakadna \ mən \ wəššon \ – \ ‘\textit{alla} \ kānu \ tabasu \ bi’albna
\end{equation}

‘wenn wir uns nicht aufgemacht hätten und vor ihnen weggelaufen waren, dann wären sie auf uns getreten’ (Bloch and Grotfeld 1964, p. 14f)

‘If we had not got up and ran away from them, they would have stepped on us’

Interestingly, however, no protases with the use of a backshifted Perfect verb to express a present impossible were found.

3.5.2 The b-Imperfect

The b-Imperfect in protases with law seems to, unlike the Perfect verb, be able to indicate present impossibles:

\textit{law} + (\textit{kān}) + b-Imperfect:

\begin{equation}
\textit{wəššabb yəllı byəstəğel \ byədfə}’ \ ‘\textit{an nafso} \ \textit{law} \ kān \ ‘abū \ mawžūd
\end{equation}

‘Der junge Man, der arbeitet, zahlt für sich selber, auch wenn sein Vater am Leben ist’

(Bloch & Grotfeld 1964, p. 114f)

‘The young man who works pays for himself, even if his father is [/were] alive [right now]’

The use of the b-Imperfect in combination with law is particularly interesting since, as we have seen previously, this verb form is also used in protases with ’ən or ’əzɑ to indicate either open or low hypotheticality. However, in the law-clause the b-Imperfect represents impossible conditions,
or conditions of high hypotheticality. One should remember that the $b$-Imperfect is not normally used to indicate high hypotheticality, in which mostly the Perfect verb is used, at least according to the crosslinguistic paradigm of backshifting in conditional constructions. Here, however, Comrie’s theory of a formal past verb (the Perfect) with present time reference does not seem to apply. So why, then, is the $b$-Imperfect used in a DA protasis of high hypotheticality? In fact, this seems to be more a question of temporal reference than hypotheticality.

As has been noted before, the primary (non-conditional) function of the $b$-Imperfect is to express states and events that are not past. In the (conditional) ʾən- and ʾəza-clauses, moreover, the $b$-Imperfect indicates either open or low hypotheticality, however always in a non-past sense, in that the condition may be fulfilled in the present or the future. Similarly, as we see in sentence (39) above, while the $b$-Imperfect in the law-clause is indeed part of a high hypotheticality-condition, it is also a present impossible, as opposed to a past impossible, for which the Perfect verb is used. Ultimately, this seems to be one reasonable explanation to the ambivalent use of the $b$-Imperfect in each three clauses – ʾən, ʾəza and law alike. This finding may also express something about a more interconnected relationship between temporal reference and hypotheticality in DA conditional constructions than what is being discussed in this study. A deeper analysis of this relationship may be saved for future research.

3.5.3 The Ø-Imperfect

The Ø-Imperfect in the law-protasis also seems to, similar to the $b$-Imperfect, be employed for present impossibles:\(^{18}\)

\[law + Ø-Imperfect:\]

\[(40)\]  
\[mā bənḥəʾen law ʾa ref ḥāli bəddi mūt\]

‘Ich lasse mir keinen Einlauf machen, auch wenn ich wüßte, daß ich sterben muß!’

(Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 176f)

‘I will not have an enema done, even if I knew that I will die!’

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\(^{18}\) However, in the source material only one sentence with the combination protasis marker + Ø-Imperfect was found, and thus it remains unclear as to whether the Ø-Imperfect always is used for present impossibles, or past impossibles as well.
The possible existence of the Ø-Imperfect in combination with *law* is particularly interesting due to the fact that – at least based on the evidence found in the data collection – it does not occur at all in protases with ‘ən or ‘əza.

3.5.4 Adjectives

The combination *law* + adjective likewise appears to represent present impossibles:

*law* (+*kān*) + adjective:

(41)  

\[
\text{wəššabb yəlli byəśləgel byədfla‘ ‘an nafso *law kān ‘abū mawzūd*}
\]

‘Der junge Man, der arbeitet, zahlt für sich selber, auch wenn sein Vater am Leben ist’

(Bloch and Grotzfeld 1964, p. 114f)

‘The young man who works pays for himself, even if his father was/would have been alive’

3.5.4 Quasi-verbs

Only one instance of *law* (+*kān*) + quasi-verb was found in the source material, also as a present impossible:

*law* + (*kān*) + quasi-verb:

(42)  

\[
\text{law kān fī ṭalā‘ kunna ṭalla ‘na}
\]

‘Gäbe es die Scheidung, dann hätten wir uns bereits scheiden lassen!’ (Bergsträsser 1924, p. 99)

‘If divorce existed, we would have already separated!’

To sum up the findings in this section, it has become clear that not only the Perfect verb may be employed in conditions of high hypotheticality with *law*, but also the *b*-Imperfect, the Ø-Imperfect, nouns and quasi-verbs. However, the Perfect may be distinguished from the other four in that this verb form is used to indicate past impossibles – i.e. a condition that could have been fulfilled in the past but was not – whereas the combination *law* + *b*-Imperfect, the Ø-Imperfect, nouns and quasi-verbs are present impossibles.
4 Results and final discussion

The aim of this study has been to describe some basic formal features of conditional constructions in DA, more specifically conditional markers and protasis verb morphology, and to investigate how these two categories of grammatical form are related to conditional meaning. Concerning conditional meaning, I have particularly been influenced by Comrie (1986) and his discussion on degrees of hypotheticality. In my study, I have distinguished between impossible and possible conditions, and, even more fine-grained, between various levels of hypotheticality (high, open or low). Diagram IV below provides a summary of results from the analysis in the previous section. The diagram presents an extensive form-meaning continuum, showing how form (protasis markers and verb morphology) is related to meaning (particularly hypotheticality) in DA.

Diagram IV: The DA hypotheticality continuum with all protasis markers and verb combinations

<-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------->

Impossible       Possible

law               'əza, 'ən

High hypotheticality       Open hypotheticality       Low hypotheticality

Past imposs.:         Present imposs.:          Perfect          b-Imperfect\(^{19}\)      Obligatory kān
Perfect            b-Imperfect             b-Imperfect             Quasi-verbs
Ø-Imperfect       Quasi-verbs            Nouns/adjectives/adverbs
Adjectives       Nouns/adjectives/adverbs
Quasi-verbs

\(^{19}\) The two arrows in the diagram signalize that, in this analysis, the b-Imperfect was only found with 'ən, and nouns/adjectives/quasi-verbs only with 'əza, when an ‘obligatory’ kān was inserted between protasis marker and verb. This study has not gone into detail about possible semantic functions of kān in the DA conditional construction.
As summarized in Diagram IV, this study has found that DA conditional constructions may be either impossible (with law) or possible (with ʾən or ʾəza). Further, the choice of verb form indicates that conditions with these markers may be of an even more fine-grained hypotheticality – high, open or low. We have seen that not only do verb forms have a primary, non-conditional function (TAM categories), but many of them may often be further ambiguous in the sense that they also have a variety of secondary meanings in conditional constructions. For instance, the b-Imperfect with ʾən or ʾəza may be employed for conditions of either low or open hypotheticality, and sometimes even for generic conditional constructions (but then only with ʾəza). In the law-clause, however, the b-Imperfect functions as a representative of present impossibles. Similarly, it may be seen that the Perfect in the law-clause represents past impossibles, however, the Perfect together with ʾən or ʾəza is used to express possible conditions of open hypotheticality (the Perfect may also be used in generic constructions, but then again only with ʾəza).

There have also been other findings in this study which have not been discussed (sometimes only mentioned) in previous research of DA conditional constructions. This includes particularly the finding that the Perfect is not obligatory after ʾən, as previous scholars seem to have argued. As seen in the diagram, ʾən may also be followed by the b-Imperfect, nouns/adjectives/adverbs, or quasi-verbs to represent either low or open hypotheticality. Additionally, the existence of quasi-verbs in DA conditional constructions has been almost entirely ignored by both Bloch and Cowell. Looking at the verb analysis in the previous section, it appears that quasi-verbs as well as (nouns)/adjectives/adverbs may occur in conditional protases with all markers, representing either high, open or low hypotheticality.

Moreover, concerning the impossible law-clause, scholars such as Comrie (1986) have generally pointed to the crosslinguistic use of a formal past verb (backshifting) to express present impossibles such as ‘If I were you (right now), I’d …’. However, in this paper it has become evident that, in DA, a slightly different type of verb form-high hypotheticality system is in use. Most importantly, this study found that DA indeed does use a past verb form – the Perfect – for conditional protases of high hypotheticality, however still in a past sense, i.e. past impossibles ‘If you had gone yesterday, ….’. In other words, in DA we do not see the typical use of a past verb

20 As noted before, present versus past impossibles with law also indicate some relevance of temporal reference as a layer of meaning in DA conditional constructions, however it is not discussed into detail in this study.
form to indicate impossibility with present time reference, equivalent to e.g. ‘If I were you (right now)’. For such conditions of high hypotheticality with present time reference, rather, the combination law + b-Imperfect/Ø-Imperfect/adjective/quasi-verb is employed. Here, the occurrence of the Ø-Imperfect with law is also particularly worth pointing out, since it does not seem to occur in any protasis with the other two markers, where the use of the b-Imperfect appears rather to be the norm.

Naturally, despite the many findings of this study, it also has a number of limitations. For instance, as we have seen, conditional constructions in any language – including DA – may be extremely complex and difficult to describe or understand fully. Many scholars have not even attempted to discuss conditional constructions, and if they have done so, they have often not moved beyond the rather vague terms of real and unreal conditions. Source material for this study has thus been limited and has consisted mostly of transcribed texts from the first half of the 20th century (the latest work being Bloch, published in 1965). It would not be surprising if DA has gone through some processes of change since this time. It is likely that the use of first-hand sources, such as discussions with DA natives or recordings of their speech, would provide an even deeper understanding of DA conditional constructions. Another limitation of this thesis is that it has focused only on the grammatical categories of protasis markers and verb morphology as contributors to conditional meaning. An analysis of other aspects, such as order of protasis and apodosis (formal) or the causal/correlational relationship between these two clauses (semantic), would likely provide deeper insight to conditional constructions in DA.

One great difficulty of this study has turned out to be the distinction between conditions of open and low hypotheticality. To explain this further, how the meaning of a condition is interpreted (how hypothetical it appears to be) seems often not to be based on an ‘objective truth’, but rather a subjective choice of the speaker. For example, I – the one who presents a condition to a listener – may not expect fulfilment one way or the other (i.e. open hypotheticality), whereas the listener may detect a hint of positive expectancy, that the condition is likely to or should occur (i.e. low hypotheticality). A similar subjectivity applies when analyzing conditional constructions from an outside perspective – I (as the author of this paper) may classify a DA conditional protasis found in the transcribed sources as low, whereas a reader might disagree. Indeed, it may at times be very difficult to see which of these degrees of hypotheticality conditional constructions belong more to,
seeing as they – in reality – belong to a continuum rather than distinct categories. The human factor in conditional constructions is difficult, if not impossible, to classify fully in linguistic terms.

Nevertheless, the results of this study show that the linguistic analysis of conditional constructions – in any language as much as in DA – should not fail to acknowledge the complex relationship between form and meaning. Indeed, if the various formal aspects in this study had been presented without also discussing in detail their relationship with conditional hypotheticality, an integral part of the analysis would surely have been lost. Ultimately, more research is likely required on conditional constructions in DA (and other languages) than the time and space restrictions of this thesis have allowed. Suggestions for future research include the possible semantic function of kān in the conditional protasis and the relationship between hypotheticality and temporal reference (of which the latter has only been mentioned briefly in this study) as categories of conditional meaning. In an extended study, it would also seem necessary to not only emphasize on the role of the protasis in DA conditional constructions, but also to discuss the role of the apodosis. Ultimately, continued research of DA conditional constructions might lead us to acquire a greater understanding of the relationship between form and meaning in this particular dialect, but also of the mysteries of natural language as a whole.
Bibliography


