CHAPTER FIVE

VERBAL FUNCTION—INDICATIVE VS. SUBJUNCTIVE MOODS

Word-limit considerations proclude an exhaustive analysis of the function of all the various verbal forms of ANA. Nevertheless, in this section I shall enumerate and give examples of the functions of indicative and subjunctive moods in the present tense.¹

5.1 Indicative Mood

5.1.1 Present Indicative² (k-qaṭəl)

The present indicative is negated with la,³ i.e. la k-qaṭəl.⁴ It is the unmarked tense for actions or states in the present, that is to say, for progressive actions, events and states (i.e those which are perceived by the speaker to be occurring, current, at the time of the speech act.) For example:

\[ \text{kma tore } \text{gəbetun? } \text{‘How many bulls do you (pl.) want?’} \]
\[ \text{la k-exəl ʾawa bas ʾana k-әxlan } \text{‘He is not eating, but I (f.) am eating.’} \]
\[ \text{ṭamá g-mṭašṭta gyanux mən qami? } \text{‘Why are you (m.) hiding from me?’} \]

¹ Hoberman, in the context of a more general discussion of verbal function gives a number of examples of usages of the present indicative (1989: 42–51) and subjunctive (ibid.: 58–71). Indeed, my findings agree to a large extent with his. However for the reasons given in the introduction to this thesis, I prefer to present my findings as an independent data set, with my own brief analysis.

² As discussed in the previous section, these names for tenses are purely for convenience of reference and should not be taken as a reference to function. For clarity, the form of each tense in the 3rd person m.s. is given, using the root q-t-l as exemplary.

³ This same very construction is used to negate the simple future. la k-qaṭəl is thus ambiguous in that it may mean ‘he does not kill’ or ‘he will not kill’.

⁴ It is not uncommon for la to attract the stress: lā-k-qaṭəl. With verbs I-’, the -k- is often realised as a geminate, with the concomitant shortening of the preceding a-vowel, e.g [lā-kk-exəl] ‘he does not eat’, but I transcribe this form phonologically, i.e. lá-k-exəl, as the gemination is not phonemic in any way.
This verbal form is also used to express habitual states or universal truths, such as the inherent or usual properties or typical actions of an object or a person. For example:

- *mošalmane la k-šate* ‘Muslims do not drink [alcohol].’
- *kšeta d-hoya ‘aqla twọrta la k-xašox dabhila* ‘It is forbidden to slaughter any chicken which has a broken leg.’
- *dän g-odät ‘araqin rexa k-fayor kullu maḥalle, kullu ša’uta rexa g-ezal* ‘When you (m.) make raki, the smell wafts through the whole area, it permeates the whole neighbourhood.’

In this sense, a special form of the verb ‘to be’ (i.e. *kawe*) is employed, and not the standard copula. A distinction is thus always preserved between phrases such as *molxa ʾaš-mézile* ‘The salt is on the table [at the moment]’, which implies that the salt is currently to be found there, and *molxa ʾaš-méz kawe* ‘The salt is [usually] on table’, which implies that the salt is kept there, or, at least, generally to be found there. On the other hand, a phrase which contains a different verb would be ambiguous. For example *k-šame* ‘qalat brate* could be taken to mean either ‘He hears his daughter’s voice [now]’ or ‘He [generally] hears his daughter’s voice.’

Further examples of the usage of the distinct habitual forms of the verb ‘to be’ in context are given below:

- *gemәr he wolla mopolqi xa ‘araqin, ta-xzi! ta-łmo!* *tad maxzәnnux ma kawe ʾaraqin ʾaš.* He said, “Yes, by G-d I (m.) have made some great raki. Come and see! Come and taste [it], so that I (m.) can show you what good raki is!”

- *ṭela b-lele palgәdlel, ša’a trešәr b-lele kullu kawe dnxixe, ṭela g-maxya l-tar’a tāx tāx tāx!* ‘She came at night, at midnight—at twelve o’clock at night [when] everyone is asleep—she came and knocked on the door: bang, bang, bang.’

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5 Note that when the habitual vs. present action distinction is not obvious from the context and he feels it necessary, the speaker has a number of devices at his disposal to disambiguate these two senses. He may do so by employing the present continuous tense, which is formed by using the copula, which, as described above, has distinct forms for the habitual and present action meanings respectively. Although the present subjunctive continuous is not encountered in the text corpus, it is freely given as a form by all informants. Thus *wәlle bәšma ʾa qalәt brate* ‘He hears his daughter’s voice [now].’ is clearly distinct from *kawe bәšma ʾa qalәt brate* ‘He [usually/often] hears his daughter’s voice.’ The present action meaning can be expressed unambiguously by periphrastic means, such as the addition of an adverb: *ʾatta k-šame* ‘qalat brate* ‘He hears his daughter’s voice now.’, as can the habitual meaning: *kudyom k-šame* ‘qalat brate* ‘He hears his daughter’s voice every day.’