TEAM NISREEN'S FUSHA TO SHAMI

Contents

Spelling etc

There are very few resources that discuss colloquial in anything other than an academic transliteration complete with intimidating dots, circumflexes and other unpleasant diacritics, and the ones that don't do that often try and adopt some kind of terrible system of representing colloquial sounds using Arabic letters and diacritics (or spell everything like fuSHa).

Both of these systems have problems – the former reflect a time when colloquial was almost never written, which thanks to social media is firmly in the past, and the latter is absolutely terrible at accurately representing the way that colloquial Arabic is actually pronounced in real life.

To try and get the best of both worlds, in this document all Arabic words and example sentences are given in both their original Arabic spelling and in a transliteration based on the *3arabiizi* occasionally used by native speakers to write Arabic when support for letters is not conveniently available. This has the downside of involving quite a lot of capital letters and numbers where an English speaker definitely doesn't expect them to be.

Because spelling is not standardised, colloquial words can be written in a variety of different ways ranging from slightly modified fuSHa (قايل or even قائل for *2aayel*) to the very phonetic (ئايل) to the unpredictable and weird (كون for *-kon*). Most speakers lean towards modified fuSHa spelling which reflects the usual pronunciation of those letters, alongside some odd conventions and phonetic spellings, which appear particularly in function words, suffixes etc. I've kept the sentences here mostly as they were where I found them, but I've got rid of some of the more bizarre spellings.

One particularly weird thing I have got rid of which you might encounter in real life is that in Syrian text-speak, الـ 'the' is often not written at all. When it is written it is sometimes separated from the word it's attached to: بال بيت *bélbeet* 'at home', هال بيت *halbeet* 'this house'. Even more weirdly, these 'separated' forms are sometimes written *alongside* الـ: هال البيت . I can't explain this, but I can warn you to watch out for it since it's very counterintuitive.

Consonants

Most of the Arabic consonants are pronounced basically the same in Shami as in newsreader-style MSA, but just to showcase the transliteration we'll list them all here;

b ب

t ت

kh خ

d د

r ر

z ز

s س

sh ش

3 ع

gh غ

f ف

k ك

m م

n ن

h ه

w و (when a consonant)

y ي (when a consonant)

You should be aware of the following sounds:

ث – usually transliterated and pronounced as *s* in more common words.

In [higher-register](#) words like ثقافه *saqaafe* 'culture' or ثورة *sawra* 'revolution' some speakers may have th (as in English **th**in) as in fuSHa. This seems to be more common in southern Levantine than in northern Levantine – many Syrians cannot pronounce ث consistently as th and even when reading fuSHa will pronounce it as s.

Note that a lot of common words which have ث in fuSHa have a ت *t* instead in colloquial: تلاته *tlaate* 'three', تنين *tneen* 'two', بعت *ba3at* 'he sent' – but this is not a rule you can generalise to just any word (حديث *7adiis* 'conversation').

ذ - usually transliterated and pronounced as *z* in more common words.

In [higher-register](#) words like ذهب *zahab* 'to go' some speakers may have dh (as in English **th**at) as in fuSHa. This seems to be more common in southern Levantine than in northern Levantine – many Syrians cannot pronounce ذ consistently as dh and even when reading fuSHa will pronounce it as z.

As with ث, a lot of common words which have ذ in fuSHa have a د *d* instead in colloquial: داق *daa2* 'he tasted', داب *daab* 'it melted', بولاد *buulaad* 'steel'. This is not a rule you can generalise to all words however (ذوق *zoo2* 'taste', حبذ *7abbaz* 'he was in favour of').

ح *7* – Generally pronounced as in fuSHa, but in Syrian is sometimes not pronounced word- finally in a few common words like صحي *Sa7ii*.

ج *j* – generally pronounced as in English plea**s**ure in northern Levantine and as in English **j**am in southern Levantine (although in southern Levantine both pronunciations occur).

J has a tendency to get confused with sounds produced in the same area of the mouth, and in a few common words like تجوز *tjawwaz* 'get married' and سداجة *saddaaje* 'carpet' it has switched places with other sounds, producing jumbled-up versions of the fuSHa equivalents.

ض *D* – in Levantine this is the emphatic equivalent of د, pronounced velarised (with the back of your tongue raised). This is probably the pronunciation you were taught in *fuSHa*, but if your teacher was Iraqi you may have learnt to pronounce it as an emphatic version of ذ *dh* instead.

Note that there are a few words which have ض in fuSHa which have an emphatic Z (ظ) in colloquial, at least for some speakers: ظابط *ZaabeT* 'officer', بالظبط *biZZab@T* 'exactly'.

Especially in Lebanese but to some extent elsewhere, some words with ض may actually be pronounced د.

ص *S* and ط *T* – Pronounced as in fuSHa with the back of the tongue raised. As with *D* these sounds are a bit confused with س and ت and some words appear with both in different areas or by different people (سفّط سفّت *saffaT/saffat* 'line up', فقص فقس *fa2aS/fa2as* 'hatch'). The most common word like this is صدّق *sadda2* 'believe', which is usually spelt as in fuSHa but pronounced with a normal s.

Z – depending on who taught you, you may have learnt the Levantine pronunciation in fuSHa – that is, as an emphatic version of z. If, however, you learnt this sound as an emphatic version of ذ – a more prestigious fuSHa pronunciation – you should change it to *Z* in Levantine.

There are a number of words with ظ in fuSHa which instead have ض in Levantine: ضل *Dall* 'he stayed', الضهر *éDDahr* 'noon', ضفر *Défr* 'fingernail'. But this is not a rule that can be generalised to all words: الظاهر *éZZaaher* 'it seems', ظريف *Zariif* 'nice'.

ق *q* – Probably the most well-known 'transformation' from fuSHa to colloquial is the change of *q* to a glottal stop *2*. Generally speaking, most more colloquial words undergo this change: بقي *bé2i* 'it remained', داق *daa2* 'he tasted', قال *2aal* 'he said'.

However, many words – especially higher-register ones – retain their q sound: ثقافة *saqaafe* 'culture', مقالة *maqaale* 'article'. There are some more common words that typically retain ق too: *wéqe7* 'rude'. (In Lebanese all q can become a glottal stop, however).

The glottal stop pronunciation is probably the most sensible for non-native speakers to adopt in any country. Although regional dialects exist which have *q*, *g*, or even *k* instead of a glottal stop, they are relatively marked. The one exception to this might be Jordan, where men studying Arabic might be expected to use g in at least some situations (here is an article discussing the complexity of the situation in Jordan).

ل *l* – Generally pronounced as in fuSHa. In a few words, particularly الله and its derivations, l is pronounced emphatic/velarised (with the back of the tongue raised).

ء *2* – Pronounced as in fuSHa as a glottal stop. However, most *fuSHa* hamzas have no equivalent in colloquial, being dropped and replaced by vowel lengthening or just going missing entirely.

Where the hamza appears in fuSHa conjugation patterns as a stand-in for vowels, they tend to be replaced by semivowels consistently, as in the active participle pattern *faa2il* (for hollow verbs), which in colloquial is replaced by *faayil*: دايق *daaye2* 'having tasted', سايق *saaye2* 'driving'.

Initial consonant clusters

Shami allows lots of consonant clusters that fuSHa does not, especially word initially (where fuSHa has none):

كلاب *klaab* 'dogs'

صحون *SHuun* 'dishes'

صغار *Sghaar* 'little kids'

ضروب *Droob* 'hit (it)'

It is often the case in common words (and patterns) that where fusha has an *a-* prefix or an unstressed short i/u in the first syllable, this will be dropped if it results in a cluster of only two consonants (so أولاد becomes *wlaad*, حدود becomes *7duud* etc). But this is again not a generalisable rule to all words and you should be careful not to over-Shamify higher register words!

Vowels

The actual exact pronunciation of the vowels in Levantine is, as in English, one of the many indicators of regional dialect. The most important thing for an initial learner is trying to approximate the sounds and keep the various different vowels distinct. You can worry about getting them closer to native pronunciation later when you have people to imitate.

Length

One of the most important things to worry about is length – you have to make your long vowels longer than your short vowels. The five long vowels are *aa ii uu ee oo* (*ee* and *oo* correspond to *ay* and *aw* in fuSHa and probably sound to you, if you are a native English speaker, like the vowels in 'late' and 'wrote' and should not be confused with our vowels in 'beet' and 'boot').

> كاتب *kaatab* 'he wrote to' and كتب *katab* 'he wrote' are distinct from one another.

> مين *miin* 'who' and من *min* 'from' are distinct from one another.

> دوق *duu2* 'taste (it)!' and دق *du2(2)* 'hit (it)!' are distinct from one another.

In fuSHa, there are almost no long final vowels that are not followed by a consonant. If you're pronouncing fuSHa right, then شهداء *shuhadaa2* should have a long vowel in its last syllable, but ذكرى *dhikra*, despite being written with one, has a final short vowel (unless you learnt Tajwiid or something, in which case good for you). The only exception is in words like مباراة *mubaaraa(h)* where there is a final taa marbuuTa that is not pronounced. This is mostly the same in Levantine, with one exception: when we attach the pronoun ـه 'he' to a final vowel, that vowel is lengthened and the *-h* is dropped.

> درسي *drési* 'study!' is distinct from درسيه *drésii* 'study it!'

> مصاري *maSaari* 'money' is distinct from مصاريه *maSaarii* 'his money'.

Finally, in Palestinian and Jordanian, long vowels which are not stressed are usually shortened: مفاتيح *mafatii7* 'keys' (not *mafaatii7* as in Syrian and as the spelling suggests).

Short vowel *é*

In Palestinian and Jordanian, short u/i are distinct at all times. In Syrian and Lebanese, however, short u/i/o/e do not commonly occur in stressed syllables, merging into a sound we write with *é* (بدرس *bédros* 'I study', كتبو *ktébu* 'write!', شغل *shégh@l* 'work'). This sound also occurs in some unstressed syllables (قدام *2éddaam* 'in front of').

This sound is pronounced in a variety of ways depending quite predictably on the sounds around it. The two most common realisations in Damascene are as what is called in linguistics a schwa (approximately the central-ish vowel sound in English 'but') and as a kind of short i (similar to in English 'pit'). This means that كنت 'I was' sounds like *kint,* whilst حط 'put (it)' sounds sort of like English 'hut'.

Note that this sound is being replaced in some words by its higher-register (fuSHa) equivalent. حب for example ('love') is pronounced both *7ébb* and *7ubb*.

Helping vowel @

Whilst initially Shami allows lots of consonant clusters, finally and across word boundaries it is less keen on them and usually breaks them up with a helping vowel @. This vowel cannot be stressed and the word takes stress as though it wasn't there (تعلمت *t3allam@t* 'I learnt', مشمشه *mésh@mshe* 'apricot'). Exactly which final consonant clusters are broken up depends on the speaker and the dialect, but here are some examples:

فيلم *fil@m* 'film'

كنت *kén@t* 'I was'

بحر *ba7@r* 'sea'

In Syrian and Lebanese this vowel is pronounced exactly like *é*. In Palestinian and Jordanian, where there is no *é* vowel, it is pronounced differently depending on the real (non-epenthetic) vowel before it. In verbs it is always *e*, but in nouns it is typically *e* after *a i e* and *o* after *o u*:

فلم *filem* 'film'

كنت *kunet* 'I was'

عذر *3uzor* 'excuse'

The helping vowel is typically inserted into final consonant clusters when they appear before a pause or if the next word begins with a consonant which creates an unpleasant consonant cluster:

الفيلم يلي شفتو *élfil@m yalli shéfto* 'the film I saw'

رحت لعندو *ré7@t la3éndo* 'I went to his house'

اخدت دوى؟ اي اخدت *akhad@t dawa? ee akhad@t* 'have you had some medicine? Yeah, I have

It can also be inserted in between words. This typically happens if the next word begins with a consonant cluster itself:

انبسطت كتير *mbasaTT @ktiir* 'I had a really good time'

كنت اشتريت *ként @shtareet* 'I had bought'

Vowel dropping

Unstressed *o e i u* in a final syllable are usually dropped when a suffix beginning with a vowel is added:

كاتب كاتبه كانبين *kaateb, kaatb-e, kaatb-iin* 'writer, writers'

شرب, شربت, شربو *shéreb, shérb-et, shérb-u* 'he drank', 'she drank', 'they drank'

قالت, قالتلكن *2aalet, 2aalt-élkon* 'she said', 'she said to you'

Unstressed *a* is not normally dropped, except when the third person singular feminine suffix -*et*, -*at* is added:

كتبت, كتبو *katb-et/katb-at, katab-u* 'she wrote', 'they wrote'

Vowel dropping can also occur across word boundaries when words are pronounced as part of a tight unit

شافت الفيلم *shaaf(e)t élfilm* 'she saw the film'

مدرسة محمد *madras(e)t @m7ammad* 'Muhammad's school'

Vowel shifting

Adding some suffixes results in a stress shift (according to the regular rules of stress). If this results in an unstressed *e o i u* becoming stressed, in Syr/Leb it changes into an *é*:

بيكتب بيكتبلك *byéktob, byéktéblak* 'he writes', 'he writes for you'

بتمسك, بتمسكها *btémsek, btémsékha* 'you grab, you grab it'

When the –*l*- suffixes are added to a hollow verb, its long vowel is shortened. If the long vowel is *ii* or *uu*, then in Syr/Leb it is shortened to *é:*

بقول, بقللك *bi2uul, bi2éllak* 'he says', 'he says to you'

When suffixes are added to nouns and adjectives ending in -*i*, it never drops (as in fuSHa ماشي ماشون *maashi maashuun* for example). Where the suffix is a *nisba* adjective suffix, it becomes -*iyy*-:

حلبي, حلبيّة *7alabi, 7alabiyy-e* 'Aleppan', 'Aleppans'

In most other cases it becomes -*y*-:

ماشي ماشيين *maashi, maashyiin* 'walking'

مستوي مستوية *méstewi, méstéwye* 'cooked'

There are a few exceptions, however, like form I defective passive participles:

مطفي, مطفية *méTfi, méTfiyye* 'switched off'

Stress

The stress system of Levantine is pretty similar to the one usually taught as the standard for fuSHa, with a few exceptions.

The placement of the stress depends on the 'weight' of the syllable. A syllable consisting of just a consonant and a short vowel (like *da*ras, *ka*tab etc) is 'light'. A syllable consisting of a consonant-short vowel-consonant sequence (like *da***ras**, *ka***tab**) is 'heavy'. Any other syllable is considered ~super-heavy~. These syllables are either a consonant followed by a long vowel (***maa****shi, wa****raa***), a consonant followed by a vowel and then a consonant cluster (***kalb***, *khaw****waft****ni*) or, more unusually, a combination of the two (***7aass****e*).

The rule is basically that if the final syllable of the word is super-heavy, then that takes the stress:

> وراه *wa****raa*** 'behind him'
> شايفتيه؟ *shaayéf****tii****?* 'do you see him?'

If not, then if the second-to-last syllable of the word is heavy or super-heavy, then that takes the stress:

> مدارس *ma****daa****res* 'school'
> درستو *da****rast****o* 'you studied it'

If not, then the third-to-last syllable automatically takes stress regardless of its weight.

> درسو *daraso* 'he studied it'
> طلبة *Talabe* 'students'

Note that the helping vowel is ignored when deciding where stress goes:

> خوفتني *khaw****waf****@tni* 'you scared me'
> اخدتنا *a****khad****@tni* 'you took me'

Since *é* and @ are pronounced the same, pairs like the following are only distinguished by stress:

> درستني *darra****sét****ni* 'she taught me'
> درستني *dar****ras***@tni* 'you taught me'

There are a few exceptions, mainly form VII verbs and related forms, where stress is not predictable in Syrian. In other dialects these forms are regularised:

> بيشتغل *byésh****tégh****el* 'he works' (Pal. ***bish****tghel*)
> منتدا *mun****tad****a* 'conference'

Pronouns, 'here', 'there' etc

Independent personal pronouns

The independent (منفصل) pronouns in Shami are as follows:

انا *ana*

انت *inta/inte*

انتي *inti*

هو *huwwe*

هي *hiyye*

نحنا, احنا *ni7na, i7na*

انتو *intu*

هنن, هنه, هن, هم, همه *hinnen, hinne, hin, hum, humme*

As you can see, most of the forms are pretty close to fuSHa. There are no dual pronouns and no plural feminine – the form *hin(ne)* is simply plural despite its similarity to the fuSHa feminine plural. The forms *i7na*, *hum* and *humme* are only used in Jor/Pal. Jordanian does not have the forms *hinnen, hinne, hin,* but Palestinian does.

Object pronouns

The object pronouns are pretty similar to fuSHa, especially if you've been taught the less literary variants used in many readings of MSA. They are also almost identical to the possessive pronouns:

ana: -ni
inte: -ak/k
inti: -ek/ki
huwwe: -o/h
hiyye: -(h)a
ni7na: -na
intu: -kon, -kum
hinne/hum: -(h)on, -hom

The forms *-hom* and *-kum* are only used in Jor/Pal, whilst *-hon* and *-kon* are not used in Jordanian. In Syr/Leb, *-ha* and *-hon* often lose their h.

-ak/k, *-ek/ki* and *-o/h* are found in all regions, but have two forms depending on what they are attached to. The first form is used following a consonant: تركتك تركتك تركتو *tarakt-ak tarakt-ek tarakt-o*. The second form is used following a vowel: بينساك بينساكي بينساه *byénsaak byénsaaki byénsaa(h)*. *-h* is not pronounced as an h, but has the effect of lengthening the final vowel of

the word and shifting the stress: *byénsa* 'he forgets' is pronounced with the stress on the first syllable, whilst *byénsaa* 'he forgets it' is stressed on the second syllable.

When suffixes beginning with vowels are added to a verbal form, they can trigger the expected vowel dropping:

بتشربو *btéshrbo* 'you drink it'

ضاربو *Daarbo* 'I've hit it'

Pronoun suffix and *la-*

Sometimes rather than just using a straightforward verb plus noun an object pronoun attaches to the verb and the object will instead follow *la-*:

ضربتو لاحمد *Darabto la-2a7mad*

This can even happen when the direct object is a pronoun:

ضربتو لالو *Darabto la-2élo* (or just *élo*)

This construction is sometimes used for emphasis, especially when the object is a pronoun, but often there is no clear reason why it is used as opposed to a simple direct object construction.

The *-la-* object pronouns

Completely unlike fuSHa, colloquial has a second set of suffixes derived from لـ 'to' which regularly appear attached to verbs and certain other expressions, usually in the meaning of 'to' or 'for':

> *ana: -li/élli*
> *inte: -lak/éllak*
> *inti: -lek/éllek*
> *huwwe: -lo/éllo*
> *hiyye: -élha, élla*
> *ni7na: -élna*
> *intu: -élkon, -ilkom*
> *hinne, hum: -éllon, élhon, ilhom*

The first four pronouns have alternative forms in *-éll-* which appear after consonant clusters: تركتلك *tarakt-éllak* but تركلك *tarak-lak*. When these four appear with hollow verbs, they (unlike normal object pronouns) cause a shortening of the long vowel:

> *ykuun-lak > ykén-lak*

> *bjiib-lak > bjéb-lak biira* 'I'll get you a beer'

The same thing happens with passive participles on the form *maf3uul* (where the long vowel is part of the pattern, not the root):

masmuu7-li > masmé7-li 'permitted to me'

The usage of these pronouns is very wide but it is basically analogous to the additional objects we see in English expressions like 'I got you a present' or 'I told you a story' or, when the person it references is the same as the subject, as in expressions like 'get you a guy who can do both':

طيب قولي اسمها وانا **بجبلك** الها صوره
Tayyeb 2uuli isma w2ana **bjéblak** *éla Suura*
OK, tell me her name and I**'ll get** a picture up of her **for you** [= I'll bring you of her a picture]

متل اللي **ميتلو** اخ
métl élli **mayyétlo** *2akh*
Like someone whose brother has died [= the one **for whom** a brother has died]

بظنلك بدون إبر أحسن خلينا طبيعي
bzénnéllek *biduun ébar a7san khalliina Tabii3i*
I think [for you] without needles is best, let's keep it natural

There are also a large number of verbs (like *2aal* 'say', *da22* 'ring' etc) which typically take objects with *la-* when they are nouns but take these pronominal forms when they are pronouns.

لما يقولولك بالمطار **مسمحلك** بشنطة وحدة بس
lamma y2éluulek bilmaTaar **masmé7lek** [< *masmuu7-lek*] *b-shanTa wa7de bass*
When they tell you in the airport you're only allowed one bag [= one bag is **permitted to you**][1]

بس تفضى **دقلي**
bass téfDa **dé22élli**
As soon as you're free **ring me** [= tap for me]

انا جايه **قللك** شغلة
ana jaaye **2éllak** *shéghle*
I've come **to tell** you something

There are also a few other functions of *la-* in which it occasionally ends up attaching to a verb, including as a 'verb' of possession (in which case it appears with *kaan* 'to be') and a few other miscellaneous cases:

عراسي أنا هون ناطرك لا **يكنلك** فكر
3araasi 2ana hoon naaTrak laa **ykénlak** *fék@r*
Of course, I'll be here [= I'm here] waiting for you, don't worry [= let there not **be to you/let you not have** thoughts about it]

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[1] This is a passive of a verb *sama7 la- b-* whose object takes a preposition, *b-*. As such the normal object follows *b-* and the participle is in masculine singular. For more explanation see the section on the passive.

اخدتلا كزا صورة بالشمس

2akhadtélla keza Suura bishsham@s

I **took** a few photos **of her** in the sun[2]

There are a limited number of non-verbs which take these suffixes, mainly comparative adjectives:

خليك بحالك اريحلك

khalliik b7aalak 2arya7lak

It's better for you to keep yourself to yourself [=more comfortable for you]

برأيي احسنلك ما تروح

b-ra2yi a7sanlak maa truu7

To me it's **better for you** not to go [= better for you]

The carrier *yaa-*

As in modern fuSHa it is impossible for a verb to carry two object suffixes at a time. When two object pronouns occur with the same verb, one of them must be carried by a 'holder', *yaa-* (clearly derived from إيّاه in fuSHa):

عطيني ياه *3aTiini yaa* 'give me it'

عطيتو ياها *3aTeeto yaaha* 'I gave him it'

This is also used to carry object pronouns for a range of 'semi-verbal' constructions, most commonly بدي, which already takes attached pronouns to mark its subject:

بدي ياها *béddi yaaha* 'I want it'

The *-l-* series of pronouns can also not, in Shami, coexist with suffixed object pronouns. Adding an *-l-* pronoun to a verb with a direct object pronoun forces the direct object off onto *yaa-*:

يا ريت تشفلي ياه

yaa reet tshéf-li yaa

could you please have a look **at it for me**?

The *yaa* forms are also used in conjunction with *w-* when coordinating *pronouns:*

منروح انا وياك *ménruu7 ana wiyyaak* 'you and me will go'

انا وياها *ana wiyyaaha* 'me and her'

Possessive pronouns

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[2] In this one a *la-* (see the section on prepositions or the example above) which is actually not directly related to the verb but to a noun – in this case 'of' in 'a picture of her' – is transformed into a suffix on the verb.

As well as being placed in iDaafe with other nouns, nouns can take possessive pronoun suffixes which attach directly to the end of the word. The suffixes are as follows:

> *ana: -i/yi*
> *inte: -ak/k*
> *inti: -ek/ki*
> *huwwe: -o/h*
> *hiyye: -(h)a*
> *ni7na: -na*
> *intu: -kon, -kum*
> *hinne/hum: -(h)on, -hum*

-hum and *-kum* are Jor/Pal, *-(h)on* and *-kon* are found everywhere except Jordan but are more common in Syr/Leb. The forms *-i, -ak, -ek, -o* are attached to nouns ending in consonants; *-yi, -k, -ki* and *-h* to nouns ending in vowels:

> كلبي كلبك كلبك كلبو *kalbi kalbak kalbek kalbo* 'my, your, your, his dog'

> مصاريي, مصاريك, مصاريكي, مصاريه *maSaariyyi, maSaariik, maSaariiki, maSaarii* 'my, your, your, his money'

The forms *-(h)a -(h)on* usually drop the initial h. This usually does not affect the stress (the word is still stressed as though the *h* were still there) but for many Syrians it does:

> ريحتها *rii7ét-ha, rii7ét-a, rii7t-a* 'her smell'

When a suffix beginning with a consonant is attached to the ة, it is stressed and becomes *–ét-*:

> دفعتكون *daf3ét-kon* 'your payment'

When suffixes beginning with vowels are added to any noun, they trigger the usual vowel dropping:

> كاتبو *kaatbo* 'its writer'

> مشيتو *mashito~mashyto* 'his walk, way of walking'

<u>Double object construction</u>

As with the objects of verbs, speakers often use a 'double possessive' where a pronoun appears on the possessed noun and the possessor is then preceded by *la-*. This seems to happen particularly frequently with personal relationships but also appears elsewhere. It is important not to mistake these constructions for two separate elements of the sentence ('her brother, to Nisreen' rather than Nisreen's brother):

> اخوا لنسرين *akhuwwa la-nisriin* – Nisreen's brother

> رفيقو لمجيد *rfii2o la-majiid* – Majeed's friend

<u>Demonstrative pronouns</u>

The demonstrative pronouns have a lot of regional variation. Here we will list only a few very common variants:

هاد هادا هيدا *haad haada heeda* – this (masc)

هي هادي هيدي *heyy haadi heedi* – this (fem)

هدول هول *hadool hool* – these (pl)

هداك *hadaak* – that (masc)

هديك *hadiik* – that (fem)

هدولاك هدوليك *hadolaak hadooliik* – those (pl)

The *hee-* forms and *hool* are Lebanese. *Hadooliik* is Leb/Syr, *hadolaak* Jor/Pal. All of these forms can be used on their own (meaning 'this one', 'that one' etc). They can also appear before definite nouns:

هي الفكرة *hayy élfékra* – this idea

In this position they can be contracted into هـ *ha-*, which can stand in for all of them and can only appear with nouns:

هالبيت *ha-lbeet* 'this house'

هالزلمة *haz-zalame* 'this guy'

Note that whilst *hal* is obviously a contraction of *ha-* and the definite article *l-* and assimilates just like *l-*, in Syrian it can prefix to things that *él-* cannot, particularly definite *iDaafe* constructions:

هالبيت المخدة *hal-beet lémkhadde* 'this pillowcase' (< *beet mkhadde*)

Using the full forms allows for emphasis and contrasting of different things, neither of which are possible with *ha-*. In the opposite direction, *ha-* sometimes carries additional nuance that the full forms do not. You don't need to worry about this for now, though.

Here and there

The most common forms are:

هون *hoon* – here

هناك هنيك *hunaak huniik~hniik* – there

Huniik is Leb/Syr, *hunaak* Jor/Pal. Note that whereas English 'here' and 'there' can also express motion to somewhere ('go there', 'come here') in Arabic these require the preposition *la-* (تعال لهون *ta3aal la-hoon*, روح لهنيك *ruu7 la-hniik*).

Question words

Who, what, which

شو, ايش *shu, eesh* 'what'

مين *miin* 'who'

Shu is used in all dialects. *Eesh* is largely Southern Levantine.

اي اية, انو اني *eyy eyyet; anu ani* 'which'

Anu and *ani* are originally (and in some dialects) masculine and feminine, but in Damascene are used freely for both genders. Whilst *eyy* can be used to mean 'any', *anu/ani* can only be used to mean 'which'.

Anu and *ani* can stand alone in the meaning 'which one', which *eyy/eyyet* cannot. However, all of these forms are usually, but not always, followed by *waa7ed* or *waa7de* in the meaning 'which (one)' (*anu waa7ed, ani waa7de* etc):

اني واحد بدك؟
ani waa7ed béddak?
which one do you want?

Prepositions referring to question words move to the beginning of the sentence rather than staying in place like in English:

لمين الجزدان؟
*la*miin éjjézjdaan
whose [= **to whom**] is the purse?

عن شو عم تحكي؟
3an shu 3am té7ki?
what are you talking **about**?

على شو عم تدور؟
3ala shu 3am @tdawwer?
what are you looking **for**?

How much, how many, how long etc

كام *kam* 'how many'

قديش *2addeesh* 'how many, how much, how long'

Kam is used with a following singular noun to mean 'how many':

كام ليرة؟
kam leera?
how many lira?

كام شخص؟
kam shakh@S?
how many people?

2addeesh usually (but not always) means 'how much':

بقديش الجزدان؟
b2addeesh éjjézdaan?
 how much is the purse?

Note that قديش is also the normal, idiomatic way of requesting any answer which contains a number, even in cases where in English we usually use 'what':

قديش مواليدك؟
***2addeesh** mawaaliidak?*
what year were you born in [= **what number** is your birth year]?

قديش رقم تليفونك؟
***2addeesh** ra2@m telefoonak?*
what's your phone number?

Where, how

وين *ween* 'where', منين *mneen* 'from where'

كيف, شلون *kiif, shloon* 'how'

Kiif is used everywhere. *Shloon* (originally a contraction of *shu loon* 'what is the colour of') is only used in Syria. Despite its origins, *shloon* is an all-purpose word for 'how':

شلون بدي افتح الباب؟
shloon béddi éfta7 élbaab?
how am I supposed to open the door?

Ween, *kiif* and *shloon* all very commonly take pronoun suffixes: *weenak* 'where are you', *kiifak* 'how are you', *shloonak* 'how are you'.

Why

ليش, ليه *leesh, leeh* 'why'

Leesh is the more common form (probably from *la-eesh* originally).

When

ايمت ايمتى *eemat eemta* 'when'

اي ساعة *eyy saa3a* 'at what time'

These can be combined with prepositions:

لايمتى رح نضل هيك؟

la2eemta ra7 @nDéll heek?

how long [= **until when**] are we going to go on [= stay] like this?

Heek

The form هيك *heek* (not exactly a pronoun but in that general area) has a variety of meanings. On its own it typically means 'in that way', 'in this way', etc. It is essentially the equivalent of fuSHa هكذا in this sense:

ليش؟ هيك

leesh? Heek

Why? – Just because.

نحنا هيك

né7na heek

That's just how we are.

بالمناسبة مين هيك بيتغالظ؟

bilmunaasabe miin heek byétghaalaZ?

And by the way – who [else] is rude like this?

تاغ لحدا بتحسو هيك

taag la7ada bét7ésso heek

Tag someone you think is like this

رفاع ايدك هيك

rfaa3 iidak heek

Lift up your hand like this[3]

It also appears in comparisons meaning 'that' (generically, referring for example to a situation):

ولا احلى من هيك

wala 2a7la mén heek

There's nothing nicer than that!

It also commonly appears in tag questions:

رحت امبارح **مو هيك**؟

ré7t @mbaare7 **muu heek**?

You went yesterday, **didn't you**?

It also appears in the set phrases لهيك *laheek* and مشان هيك *mishaan heek* 'thus, so, for that reason' and مع هيك *ma3 heek* 'nonetheless'.

It can also appear in front of nouns meaning 'such (a)', etc:[4]

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[3] In Jordanian you will hear *zayy heek*, but this does not exist in other dialects.

مين بحاجة **هيك** شي؟

*miin b7aajet **heek** shi?*

Who needs something **like this**/**such a** thing?

Someone, anyone; somewhere, anywhere etc

Generally the 'some' and 'any' element here is expressed with شي *shi* used as a kind of indefinite article which also appears with other nouns (i.e. there are no dedicated words for this purpose):

اذا **شي مرة** حبيت تلعب معي

*iza **shi marra** 7abbeet tél3ab ma3i*

if you want to play with me sometime [= **on some occasion**]

بشي مكان *bshi makaan* – someplace, somewhere

The only major exception is حدا *7ada* 'someone', 'anyone', which is always singular masculine:

حدا بيحكي انكليزي؟

7ada byé7ki ingliizi?

does anyone speak English?

ما شفت حدا

maa shéf@t 7ada

 you didn't see anyone

When it is the subject it is negated by ما:

ما حدا شافني

***maa 7ada** shaafni*

 nobody saw me

In certain limited circumstances   مين can also appear in a similar meaning:

عندي **مين** يساعدني

*3éndi **miin** ysaa3édni*

I have (**someone**, **people** etc) who can help me

في **مين غيرك** يحكي عنو

*fii **miin gheerak** yé7ki 3anno*

there are others [**someone other than you**] who will speak for him

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[4] You hear this sometimes in MSA – هكذا مشاكل for example – but this is probably actually a borrowed structure from colloquial rather than the other way around as the fuSHa structure is a recent innovation.

Nouns

Gender

Nouns can be either masculine or feminine. In the singular, most feminine nouns are distinguished by the presence of a ـة (a *taa marbuuTa*), as in fuSHa. Unlike fuSHa, this is pronounced as –*a* or -*e* depending on the preceding sound: generally, it is -*a* after ظ ض ص ط ر ء ه ع ح but -*e* after other consonants ق غ خ:

دبدوبة *dabduube* 'teddy-bear'

محكية *mé7kiyye* 'spoken'

ملعونة *mal3uune* 'naughty'

بوسة *boose* 'kiss'

طريقة *Tarii2a* 'way'

بيضة *beeDa* 'egg'

شوشرة *shooshara* 'fuss'

بطة *baTTa* 'duck'

There are a few exceptions to this rule, almost all of them with r. These have to be learnt.

ابره *ibre* 'needle' (also *ibra*)

شفرة *shafre* 'razor'

Most adjectives ending in -*iir* also follow this pattern:

كبيرة *kbiire* 'big'

صغيرة *zghiire* 'small'

But: اميرة *amiira* 'princess'

There is one other common feminine endings, invariable -*a*, which is found in words like ذكرى *zikra* 'memory' and the feminine of colour (بيضا *beeDa* 'white') and nouns of 'defect' (هبلا *habla* 'idiot'). A few words with this ending, like شتى *shita* 'winter' and دنيا *dunya* world, are usually pronounced with final -*e* in Damascene (*shéte, dénye*).

Unlike in MSA, many nouns that have final -*a* as a realisation of a final root vowel (like معنى *ma3na* 'meaning', مستشفى *mustashfa* 'hospital) are treated as feminine at least some of the time.

In some dialects, including most or all Palestinian dialects, words ending in *-aaye* elsewhere lose their final *-e* when not in construct state, producing forms like the following:

مراي *mraay* 'mirror' (Damascene *mraaye*)

كنباي *kanabaay* 'sofa' (D. *kanabaaye*)

عرباي *3arabaay* 'carriage' (D. *3arabaaye*)

As in MSA, there are a number of words with no ـة which are nonetheless feminine, but these words are not necessarily the same ones as in MSA (and vary by dialect – شاي is feminine for some people but not others[5] for example). This includes most place names, letters of the alphabet, body parts that come in pairs, and the following common exceptions:

أرض *arD* 'earth'

بلد *balad* 'town, country'

بلاد *blaad* 'country'

دقن *da2@n* 'beard'

حرب *7arb* 'war'

مي *mayy* 'water'

سما *sama* 'sky'

سكين *sékkiin* (also *sékkiine*) 'knife'

دكان *dékkaan* (also *dékkaane*) 'shop, stall'

شمس *sham@s* 'sun'

طيز *Tiiz* 'arse'

Definiteness

The definite article is *(@)l-* (Syr/Leb) or *(i)l-* (Jor/Pal) before single consonants. The initial vowel often drops, especially after other vowels:

البسة *él-bisse* 'the cat'

بالبيت *bi-l-beet* 'in the house'

As in fuSHa the *l* of the article assimilates to sun letters. The only difference is that ج *j* is (optionally) a sun letter in Shami:

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[5] This is probably limited to dialects with the *-aaye > -aay* thing mentioned above – so *shaay* then patterns with other words ending in *–aay*.

الجو *éj-joww* 'the weather'

Before consonant clusters, the article is *lé/li:*

الكتاب *lé-ktaab* 'the book'

الكبير *lé-kbiir* 'the big one'

As in fuSHa, the definite is used for both specific things that the speaker and the listener are expected to understand the reference of (i.e. the way it is used in English) and for generics, languages, some countries etc. The definite plural or singular are often used to make generalisations, sometimes causing ambiguities:

السوري شغيل
éssuuri shéghghiil
the Syrian is hardworking/Syrians are hardworking

بحب الكتب
b7ébb élkétob
I love books/I love the books

This general rule results in a few cases where an indefinite is used in English but a definite is required in Arabic:

واحد بيضحك متل الحمار وتاني بيضحك متل الدبابة
waa7ed byéD7ak métl lé7maar w taani byéD7ak métl éddabbaabe
One guy who laughs like **a donkey** and another who laughs like **a tank**!

لا عنا اتصالات متل العالم والخلق ولا بلد ولا مازوت ولا طرقات
lil2asaf laa 3énna ittiSaalaat métl él3aalam wélkhal@2 wala balad wala maazoot wala Tur2aat
Unfortunately we don't have phones [communication] **like normal people**, nor a country, nor diesel, nor roads...

بتحكي متل جماعة ضيعة ضايعة
bté7ki mét@l jamaa3et Dee3a Daay3a
You talk like **someone**/like **the guys from** *A Lost Village* [a TV series set in Latakia]

There are a few verbs/expressions however which always take indefinite objects where we would expect the definite, unlike fuSHa:

بحكي عربي
bé7ki 3arabi
I speak Arabic (not العربي)

هاد اسمو شغل
haad ésmo shéghl
this is what work is [= this thing's name is work, this is called work]

خلصت قراية
khallaSt @2raaye
I've finished reading

The dual

The dual is invariably formed with -*een* (there is no case variation):

كلبين *kalbeen* 'two dogs'

كاتبين *kaatbeen* 'two writers'

On feminine nouns with تاء مربوطة the suffix becomes -*t:*

مرتين *marteen* 'two women'

حبتين *7abbteen* 'two pills'

Unlike in fuSHa, the suffix does not drop its *n* in *iDaafe,* and is rarely used with pronoun suffixes. Certain body parts that come in twos have what appears to be a dual suffix: *éjreen* 'legs', *réjleen*, 'legs', *3eeneen* 'eyes'. But this suffix acts differently. It *does* drop its -n in iDaafe and is often followed by pronoun suffixes, and is the normal way to express 'someone's Xes':

رجليي *réjleyyi* 'my legs'

ايديي *iideyyi* 'my arms'

ربط ايدينا ورجلينا
rabaT iideena w réjleena
it's got us all tied up [= has tied our arms and legs][6]

These nouns also have a proper dual with -t- inserted which does not drop the *n*:

عينتين *3eenteen* 'two eyes'

رجلتين *réj@lteen* 'two legs'

Also unlike in fuSHa, the dual is not compulsory whenever two of a noun is meant and the plural can be freely used in these circumstances. It is possible, in fact, to use *tneen* just like any other number with the plural noun in place of the dual: تنين رجال *tneen @rjaal* 'two men'. Often the dual is used to introduce the idea of two Xes before switching to the plural thereafter.

The plural

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[6] Cowell thinks these forms are normal plurals, but since we use the singular when talking about the *single* body parts of *a number of people* (e.g. قلب الناس 'the hearts of the people'), it's not unreasonable to say these are duals referring to the *two arms* and *two legs* of a number of different people too.

In fuSHa nouns are usually pluralised in one of three ways: with the sound masculine -*uun/iin*, with the sound feminine -*aat*, or with some kind of broken plural pattern. This is largely the same in Shami. The sound masculine plural is invariably -*iin* (there's no case), the sound feminine is -*aat*, and there is a bewildering array of broken plural patterns which can be largely predicted from the shape of the singular noun. Some of these are the same as fuSHa:

مكتب مكاتب *maktab makaateb* 'office'

مفتاح مفاتيح *miftaa7 mafaatii7* 'key'

Some correspond to fuSHa patterns closely with minor adjustments in line with common correspondences:

درس دروس *dars druus* 'lesson'

كلب كلاب *kalb klaab* 'dog'

شهيد شهدا *shahiid shéhada* 'martyr'

Some seem to be unique to colloquial:

فرد فرودة *fard fruude* 'gun'

Also unique to colloquial is the formation of a number of plurals with the suffix ـة or ية (-*a/e* or -*iyye*) which is normally restricted in fuSHa to feminines. This applies to a number of nouns, most particularly many *nisba* nouns:

لبنانية *lébnaaniyye* Lebanese people

مسيحية *masii7iyye* Christians (there's also the weird plural إسلام *islaam* for مسلم *méslem/muslem*)

شوفرية *shooferiyye* drivers

حلبية *7alabiyye* Aleppans

لعيبة *la33iibe* 'players'

It's best just to learn nouns' plurals as you encounter them (though Cowell's Syrian grammar has an exhaustive list of patterns if you want to look it up).

Collectives and their singulars

Some nouns do not have a simple singular/plural distinction – they are collectives, which take singular agreement and refer to an undifferentiated mass of stuff:

ورق *wara2* 'paper'

بطاطا *baTaaTa* 'potatoes'

بندورة *banadoora* 'tomatoes'

So far so fuSHa. Like fuSHa, in order to refer to a single item (e.g. a piece), we need a 'singulative'. For most native nouns this is formed by addition of ـة, producing a feminine singular noun. In many cases generic noun حبة *7abbe* (which itself is the singulative of *7abb*) is typically used instead:

ورقة *wara2**a*** 'piece of paper'

حبة **7abbet** بطاطا *baTaaTa* 'a (single) potato'

Lots of speakers are actually perfectly happy to form singulatives from loanwords like بطاطا:

بطاطاية *baTaaTa**aye*** 'a (single) potato'

بندوراية *banadoora**aye*** 'a (single) tomato'

Of course, these singulatives can themselves be made into plurals and counted, usually with -*aat* but sometimes with a broken plural:

تلت بطاطا**يات** *tlett baTaaTa**ayaat*** 'three potatoes'

تلت **وراق** *tlett @**wraa2*** or تلت ورقات *tlett wara2**aat*** 'three pieces of paper'

Collectives (and some other abstract nouns) also often have their own plurals formed with ـات. The use of these is difficult to summarise nicely because it's very idiomatic, but here are some contexts in which they are used:

شو هالبرد**ات**
*shu hal-bard**aat***
it's so cold! = what is this cold we're experiencing?

شو بدك بهالتلج**ات**
*shu béddak b-hat-tal**jaat***
what are you doing with that snow? = that snow in your hands

كيف اللحم**ات** اليوم؟
*kiif élla7m**aat** élyoom?*
how's the meat today? = the meat in your shop

قهو**ات** مرتي كتير طيبين
*2ahw**aat** marti ktiir Tayybiin*
my wife's coffee is really tasty = the coffee she makes (the singular would imply the coffee that belongs to her, the coffee she is drinking as opposed to yours)

They can also have broken plurals, which often refer to large amounts or different kinds:

ميايا *mayaaya* 'waters'

زيوت *zyuut* 'oils'

Negation

Nouns and adjectives are typically negated with *mish* (Jor/Pal/Leb) or *muu* (Syr):

مو منيح *muu mnii7* – not good

مو رجال *muu réjjaal* – not a man

There are exceptions to these rules but at this point they are not very important.

There is also a construction using the semi-verb *maan-* (or *maal-*) which is used in Syr/Leb: *maani maanak maanek maano maan(h)a maanna maankon maan(h)on.*

مالي رايح *maali raaye7* – I'm not going

مانو مظبوط *maano maZbuuT* – it's not right

Adjectives

Masculine, feminine and plural

Adjectives typically only have three or four forms in colloquial – a masculine singular, a feminine singular, and a plural which does not distinguish gender. In most adjectives the feminine is formed through addition of *-a/e*, sometimes dropping an unstressed short vowel:

كبير كبيرة *kbiir kbiire* – big

شاطر شاطرة *shaaTer shaaTra* – clever

مشهور مشهورة *mashhuur mashhuura* – famous

The only other regular feminine pattern that exists is for adjectives of 'colour and defect' (basically adjectives with masculines formed on *af3al*), which have a feminine in *fa3la* and usually a plural in *fé3l,* as you would predict from their fuSHa forms:

أهبل هبلا *ahbal hable hébl* – idiot

اسود سودا *aswad sooda suud* – black

اسمر سمرا *asmar samra sémr* – brown-skinned

The plural is formed either through the addition of the suffix *-iin* or on a broken plural pattern (some of which are rare or nonexistent in fuSHa):

شاطر شاطرين *shaaTer shaaTriin* – clever

كبير كبار *kbiir kbaar* – big

قليل قلايلة *2aliil 2alaayle* – few

Many speakers have an optional feminine plural in *-aat* which can only occur with feminine plurals. Using this form is not compulsory for anyone, however, except perhaps some rural speakers:

طيب طيبين طيبات *Tayyeb Tayybiin Tayybaat* – tasty

Agreement

Dual nouns usually take plural nouns:

رجالين اوادم *réjjaaleen 2awaadim* – two nice guys

شغلتين مهمين *shégh@lteen muhummiin* – two important things

Plural inanimate nouns, unlike in (modern) fuSHa, can occur with both feminine singular and plural adjectives. Where there is a nuance, it is that the singular generalises or collectivises more:

الكراسي فاضية
élkaraasi faaDye
the chairs are empty

الكراسي فاضيين
élkaraasi faaDyiin
 the (various, different) chairs are empty

When the plural noun is used in a generic sense (i.e. when it is translated as 'Xes are good' and not 'the Xes are good'), however, only the feminine is acceptable.

الكتب مفيدة
élkétob mufiide
books are useful (or 'the books are useful')

الكتب مفيدين كتير
élkétob mufiidiin @ktiir
the books are very useful = the ones you gave me

Matching feminine singular adjectives (or verbs) with plural *animate* nouns is also possible, although much less common (and again generalises).

As in fuSHa, adjectives agree with nouns in definiteness when they modify them:

الكتب المنيحة
élkétob lémnii7a
 the good books

Modifying adjectives

Unlike in fuSHa, adverbs modifying adjectives, like *ktiir* 'very' (and its fancier equivalent, *jiddan*) can go before the adjective as well as after it:

كتير صعب
ktiir Sa3@b
very difficult

عن جد جدا مفيد
3an jadd jiddan mufiid
 [it] really [was] **very** useful

بس شوي حامي صراحة
bass shwayy 7aami Siraa7a
but it's a **bit** hot, to be honest

Superlative and comparative

As in fuSHa not all adjectives can have a superlative derived from them. Only the simpler superlative and comparative constructions (with no agreement) appear in colloquial. Superlatives cannot usually stand on their own and require a noun to come after them:

> أشطر واحد
> *ashTar waa7ed*
> the cleverest (one)

If an adjective cannot form its own superlative, a construction with *aktar* immediately preceding the noun is used with the normal adjective:

> اكتر واحد مجنون
> *aktar waa7ed majnuun*
> the craziest one

With a relative clause this sort of construction is the idiomatic way to say 'the X I Yed most' or 'the one who Xes most', as in these examples:

> اكتر شي حبيتو بالاردن
> *aktar shi 7abbeeto bél2érdon*
> the thing I liked most about/in Jordan [= the most thing I liked in Jordan]

> انا اكتر واحد بحبك
> *ana aktar waa7ed b7ébbak*
> I'm the one who loves you most [= I'm the most one who loves you]

Comparatives follow as in fuSHa. Although they are invariable for gender and number, they do agree in definiteness where appropriate:

> واحد اشطر مني *waa7ed ashTar ménni* – someone cleverer than me

> القنينة الاكبر *él2anniine él2akbar* – the bigger bottle

If an adjective cannot form its own comparative, a structure with the plain adjective plus *aktar* following it is used:

> مجنون اكتر *majnuun aktar* – crazier

Negating adjectives

Unlike fuSHa, nominal sentences (i.e. sentences like 'the X is Y') are usually negated with a particle rather than a verb. This particle is *muu* in Syrian and *mish* in the other Levantine dialects:

> مش جديد, مو جديد
> *mish @jdiid, muu jdiid*
> (he's) not new

This particle, as well as the غير you may be familiar with from fuSHa, can precede adjectives with articles, in which case they take the article:

المو معقول انو يرشح حالو
él-muu ma32uul énno yrashshe7 7aalo
the unreasonable/unbelievable thing is for him to nominate himself

الشخص المو منيح
ésh-shakhS él-muu mnii7
the not good person

In Leb/Syr, adjectives can also be negated with the sort-of-verbal negative 'to be' structure, which conjugates for person as *maani, maanak, maanek, maano, maan(h)a, maanna, maankon, maan(h)on.* In Syria some people say *maal-* instead, and in Lebanon the forms are with *mann-* (not *maan-*).

ماني جديد
maani jdiid
I'm not new

Adverbs

Most adjectives can be used straightforwardly as adverbs to modify verbs:

عود **ادمي**
*3ood **2aadami***
Sit **nicely**! [= nice]

بتحكي عربي **منيح**
*bté7ki 3arabi **mnii7***
You speak Arabic **well**

This includes superlatives:

انت بتعرف **احسن** مني
*inte bta3ref **a7san** ménni*
You know **better** than me

The equivalents of *7aal* expressions with accusatives in fuSHa are simply unmarked:

الشيكات بتجي هيك **طويلة**
*éshsheekaat btéji heek **Tawiile***
cheques are about this length [= come **long**]

ما في احلى من انو تجي ع البيت **تعبان** **وجوعان** وبتلاقي اهلك طابخين ملوخية
*maa fii a7la mén énno térja3 3albeet **ta3baan** w-**joo3aan** w-bétlaa2i ahlak Taabkhiin @mluukhiyye*
There's nothing nicer than coming home **tired** and **hungry** and finding your family have cooked mlukhiyye

الماسورة جاية **فلتانة**
*élmaasuura jaaye **faltaane***
The pipe's come **loose**[7]

There are some fuSHa adverbial expressions formed with the accusative suffix *–an* which are also commonly used in colloquial:

عادةً *3aadatan* 'usually'

اصلا *aSlan* 'to start with, anyway'

اساسًا *asaasan* 'basically'

مبدئيًا *mabda2iyyan* 'to start with, as a starting point'

خاصةً *khaaSSatan* 'in particular, especially'

عامةً *3aammatan* 'in general, generally'

---

[7] This is an idiomatic use of اجى 'to come' which is combined with an adjective or a participle.

With *nisba* adjectives (formed with *-i*) this is quite productive, at least in higher-register contexts, just as in fuSHa:

سياسيا *siyaasiyyan* 'politically'

عاطفيا *3aaTifiyyan* 'emotionally'

There are also a few odd set expressions:

ليل نهار *leel @nhaar* 'every day and every night'

There are also many expressions formed with the prepositions بـ and على. For these see the relevant sections.

Past tense

Conjugation

The suffixes used for conjugating all past tense verbs are as follows:

درس *daras*
'study'

ana	*dar<u>as</u>-**t***	درست	انا
inte	*dar<u>as</u>-**t***	درست	انت
inti	*dar<u>as</u>-**ti***	درستي	انتي
huwwe	*dar<u>as</u>*	درس	هو
hiyye	*dar<u>s</u>-**et** (dars-**at**)*	درست	هي
ni7na	*dar<u>as</u>-**na***	درسنا	نحنه
into	*dar<u>as</u>-**tu***	درستو	انتو
hinen	*dar<u>as</u>-**u***	درسو	هنن

As you can see, they generally line up with fuSHa but without the final vowels, except *-et*. In Palestinian and Jordanian *-at* and not *–et* is used, as in fuSHa. There are no dual forms and no plural feminine forms, and the forms for *ana* and *inte* are identical and can only be distinguished by context. The consonant cluster at the end of *darast* is often broken up with a helping vowel: *daras@t*.

Usage

As in fuSHa, the past is used for single instances (i.e. not continuous or habitual action) in the past tense, meaning it generally lines up with the English simple past ('I went' etc). It is also often used in places where in English we would use the present perfect ('I have been'):

> هلأ **قريت** بزماني شي سبعين تقرير، و**شفت** شي ميتين فيلم
> *halla2 **2areet** bzamaani shi sab3iin taqriir, w **shéf@t** shi miiteen fil@m*
> now in my time I**'ve read** some seventy reports, and **seen** some two hundred films…

> مرة **رحت** ع السفارة
> *marra **ré7@t** 3a-ssafaara*
> one time I **went** to the embassy

An important usage that is very common is with verbs of becoming. With these verbs the past is used in a way that often lines up with the use of an adjective in English:

> نعست *n3és@t* – I'm sleepy (I've become sleepy)

> شبعت *shbé3@t* – I'm full (I've had my fill/become full)

> مليت *malleet* – I'm bored (I've become bored, got bored)

عرفت *3réf@t* – I know (I've found out, I've worked out what you're talking about)[8]

حبيت *7abbeet* – I like, I've fallen in love with

In a few cases the past can express non-past meaning when triggered by specific particles:

بس **فضيت** خبرني
bass **@fDiit** *khabbérni*
As soon as you're free [= **get free**], let me know

وبركي ما قدرت تجي؟
w-berki maa **2dér@t** *téji?*
What if you can't come?

The past tense verb also has an important secondary use in conditionals of various kinds which we will discuss in the introduction to conditional sentences.

Negation

The past tense is almost always negated with *maa:*

ما رحت *maa ré7@t* - I didn't go

There is no *lam* and no jussive form. In Southern Levantine of course it can take the variant *ma-sh*:

مرحتش *maru7tesh* – I didn't go

---

[8] Contrast this one with ماكنت اعرف 'I didn't know'.

Present tense

Conjugation

The forms are quite similar to the fuSHa subjunctive. As elsewhere, there are no dual and no plural feminine forms. There are two main sets of prefixes used for the present tense depending on whether the 'stem' (the part that remains constant between all the forms, like -*dros*- or -*darres*-) begins with a consonant cluster or a single consonant:

درس *daras*
'study'

ana	*b-é-dros (b-a-dros)*	بدرس	انا
inte	*b-té-dros (b-ti-dros)*	بتدرس	انت
inti	*b-té-dros-i (b-ti-dros-i)*	بتدرسي	انتي
huwwe	*b-yé-dros (b-i-dros)*	بيدرس, بدرس	هو
hiyye	*b-té-dros (b-ti-dros)*	بتدرس	هي
ni7na	*m-né-dros (b-ni-dros)*	مندرس	نحنه
intu	*b-té-dros-u (b-ti-dros-u)*	بتدرسو	انتو
hinnen	*b-yé-dros-u (b-i-dros-u)*	بيدرسو	هنن

درس *darras*
'teach, put through school'

ana	*b-darres (b-a-darres)*	بدرس	انا
inte	*b-ét-darres (b-it-darres)*	بتدرس	انت
inti	*b-ét-darrs-i (b-it-darrs-i)*	بتدرسي	انتي
huwwe	*b-i-darres*	بدرس	هو
hiyye	*b-ét-darres (b-it-darres)*	بتدرس	هي
ni7na	*m-én-darres (b-in-darres)*	مندرس	نحنه
intu	*bé-t-darrs-u (b-it-darrs-u)*	بتدرسو	انتو
hinnen	*b-i-darrs-u*	بيدرسو	هنن

There are some important things to note. Where *fuSHa* has a in all of its prefixes, Syrian and Lebanese have é throughout and Jordanian and Palestinian have i throughout except in the first person where they have a–, like fuSHa. Secondly, because Jo/Pal have *a-* in the first person, this allows them to contract the third person masculine form *byidros* to *bidros*. This can lead to confusion for the learner, because in Leb/Syr *bédros* is first person, whilst in Pal/Jor it is third person masculine.

Also important to note, although not related to fuSHa, is the first person plural, where *b-* changes to *m-* under the influence of *n-*. This does not happen for all speakers, however, and *bn-* is common especially in Jo/Pal.

We should note one important exception to the Syrian/Lebanese selection of prefixes above. In the very common verbs *3éref* 'know' and *3émel* 'do', the prefix vowel is always *a* in these dialects:

<div align="center">

عمل *3émel*
'do'

</div>

ana	*b-a-3mel*	بعمل	انا
inte	*b-ta-3mel*	بتعمل	انت
inti	*b-ta-3ml-i*	بتعملي	انتي
huwwe	*b-ya-3mel*	بيعمل	هو
hiyye	*b-ta-3mel*	بتعمل	هي
ni7na	*m-na-3mel*	منعمل	نحنه
intu	*b-ta-3ml-u*	بتعملو	انتو
hinnen	*b-ya-3ml-u*	بيعملو	هنن

This is not the case in Jor/Pal, where we get instead regular forms like *bti3raf*.

Usage

The present tense with *b-* is used to talk about generalisations, habitual action and dispositions. This mainly lines up with its use in fuSHa or the simple present in English:

> بحبك
> *b7ébbak*
> I **love** you

> **بدرس** دكتور
> *bédros doktoor*
> I **study** medicine

> **بروح** لعندو كل يوم
> *bruu7 la-3éndo kéll yoom*
> I **go** and see him every day [= go to him]

Sometimes, however, it is best translated as 'would'. This is its 'dispositional' usage and often involves a conditional, either implicitly or explicitly:

> محلي محلك ما **بدفع**
> *ma7alli ma7allak maa bédfa3*
> if I was in your shoes I **wouldn't pay**

> ما **بروح** على هيك حفلة
> *maa bruu7 3ala heek 7afle*
> I **wouldn't go** to a party like that

It can also occasionally express continuous meaning, (e.g. Jor/Pal بمزح معك *bamza7 ma3ak* 'I'm joking'). But this is more commonly expressed with the particle *3am* which appears before either the *b-* form or the *b-less* form of the present tense:

ما عم **بفهم** عليك
*maa 3am **béfham** 3aleek*
I**'m** not **understanding** you

عم **يجي** لعندك كتير هالإيام
*3am **yiji** la-3éndak @ktiir hal-2iyyaam*
he**'s coming** to your house a lot these days

It is also commonly used for the future:

اي **بروح** بكرا
*ee **bruu7** bukra*
yeah, I**'ll go** tomorrow

And for polite requests/suggestions in Syr/Leb:

بتشرب قهوة؟
***btéshrab** 2ahwe?*
would you like some coffee? [= **will you drink**]

بكون *bikuun*

The present tense form of the verb كان has a number of special uses. Firstly, it is commonly used (where we might expect no verb) when describing family relationships:

احمد **بكون** ابن خالي
*a7mad **bikuun** ib@n khaali*
Ahmad **is** my cousin

هلبنت شو **بتكنلك؟**
*halbén@t shuu **bétkén**-lak?*
what **is** this girl to you [= how is she related to you, she's your what?]

It's also used for future or for expressing conclusions:

بكرا الصبح **بكون** ع باب بيتك
*békra éSSéb@7 **bkuun** 3a-baab beetak*
 I**'ll be** at your front door tomorrow morning

كل مخلوق ببعتلو فيديو خمس دقايق وبيضحك بعد دقيقة **بكون** مخلوق كذاب
*kéll makhluu2 béb3atlo viidyo kham@s da2aaye2 w byéD7ak ba3@d da2ii2a **bikuun** makhluu2 kazzaab*
every person who I send a 5 minute video to who laughs [sends me a laughing emoji] after a minute **is** a liar [= must be, will be a lying guy]

Negation

Like the past tense the present is typically negated with *maa*:

ما بحبك *maa b7ébbak* 'I don't love you'

Subjunctive

The form in Shami that looks more like the fuSHa present tense (and the present tense in lots of other dialects), without *b-*, is very similar in behaviour to subjunctives in European languages.

Conjugation

The subjunctive conjugates almost identically to the *b-*present, albeit minus the *b-*. There are two sets of prefixes – one for verbs whose present stem begins with a consonant cluster, and one for verbs whose present stem begins with a single consonant:

<div align="center">

daras درس
'study'

</div>

ana	*é-dros (a-dros)*	أدرس	انا
inte	*té-dros (ti-dros)*	تدرس	انت
inti	*té-dros-i (ti-dros-i)*	تدرسي	انتي
huwwe	*yé-dros (i-dros)*	يدرس	هو
hiyye	*té-dros (ti-dros)*	تدرس	هي
ni7na	*né-dros (ni-dros)*	ندرس	نحنه
intu	*té-dros-u (ti-dros-u)*	تدرسو	انتو
hinnen	*yé-dros-u (yi-dros-u)*	يدرسو	هنن

<div align="center">

darras درس
'teach, put through school'

</div>

ana	*darres (a-darres)*	درس	انا
inte	*t-darres*	تدرس	انت
inti	*t-darrs-i*	تدرسي	انتي
huwwe	*y-darres*	يدرس	هو
hiyye	*t-darres*	تدرس	هي
ni7na	*n-darres*	ندرس	نحنه
intu	*t-darrs-u*	تدرسو	انتو
hinnen	*y-darrs-u*	يدرسو	هنن

One thing which is important to note is that in Syr/Leb, on verbs like *darras*, there is no first person prefix. This means that the first person singular form – *darres* – looks identical to the masculine singular imperative (also *darres*). This does not apply in Jor/Pal.

Usage

The use of the subjunctive is largely triggered by environment – that is, there is usually some other word in the sentence you can identify as the trigger. Most of these triggers are similar to those associated with subjunctive forms in European languages. Often, but not always, it lines up with the English to-infinitive or bare infinitive (or if you prefer, the fuSHa use of the *maSdar* and the subjunctive with *2an*). It is used following expressions of desire:

بدي روح
béddi ruu7
I want **to go**

بدي ياك تروح معي
béddi yaak @truu7 ma3i
I want you **to go** with me

حابب امشي
7aabeb émshi
I'd like to **leave**

يا ريت تعرفلي وقت الموعد
yaa reet ta3réf-li wa2t él-moo3ed
I'd really like you **to find out** the time of the appointment for me

Fear, expectation and anticipation:

خايف تروح عليي الفرصة
khaayef @truu7 3aleyyi élférSa
I'm scared I'**ll miss**/**to miss** the opportunity [= that the opportunity will **go,** to my detriment[9]]

كان متوقع يصير كلشي الا هاللحظة
kaan métwaqqe3 ySiir kéll shi élla hal-la7Za
He had anticipated anything but this [expected everything **to happen** except this moment]

اذا دخلت ع جهنم مين اول حدا بتتوقع تشوفو؟
iza dakhal@t 3a jahannam miin 2awwal 7ada btétwaqqa3 @tshuufo?
If you ended up in [= entered] hell, who's the first person you'd expect **to see** [there]?

انا ماني مصدق ايمت يجي يوم وارجع على سوريا
ana maani msadde2 eemat yéji yoom w-érja3 3ala suurya
I can't wait for the day **to come** when I **go back** to Syria [= I don't believe when **will come** the day and I **go back**...]

Ability and inability:

---

[9] See the section on uses of على.

ماني قدران **نام** تعبان مابعرف شبني

*maani 2édraan **naam** ta3baan maa ba3ref shébani*

I can't **sleep**, I'm worn out, I don't know what's wrong with me

معي وقت **اتمشى** شوي

*ma3i wa2@t **étmashsha** shweyy*

I've got time **to walk around** for a bit

ما عم اعرف **افتح** الباب

*maa 3am a3ref **éfta7** élbaab*

I can't work out [I'm not knowing] how **to open** the door

هادا شكل واحد خرج **يتجوز** ويفتح بيت؟

*haada shék@l waa7ed kharaj **yétjawwaz** w **yéfta7** beet?*

Is this what someone able to **get married** and **start** a family [= open a house] looks like? [= is this the shape of]

Compulsion, necessity:

لازم **تنساني**

*laazem **ténsaa**ni*

you have **to forget** me

اضتريت انو **ارجع** ع البيت

*@DTarreet énno **érja3** 3albeet*

I was forced **to go back** home

جبرني **روح** جبلو الكتب

*jabarni **ruu7** jéblo élkétob*

He forced me **to go** and get him the books

Commands, permission etc:

قالتلي **انسى** عنك

*2aalétli **énsa** 3annek*

She told me **to forget** about you[10]

شو يلي بيمنعك تكون من أوائل الدفعة تبعتك

*shuu yalli byémna3ak **@tkuun** mén 2awaa2el éddéf3a tab3etak?*

What's stopping you from **being** one of the top students in the class?

ما بسمحلك تحكيلي على شهري الجميل اللي بحبو

*maa bésma7lak **té7kii**li 3ala shahri ljamiil élli b7ébbo*

I won't let you talk [that way] about my beautiful month that I love so much!

---

[10] Although this looks like it might be an imperative – 'she told me "forget about…"' – it is in fact a subjunctive, and to be an imperative we'd need انسى عنها 'she told me 'forget about her!'' since otherwise the pronouns don't make sense.

شو هو هالموضوع الخطير اللي مخليك تأجّل الصلاة؟

shuu huwwe halmawDuu3 élkhaTer élli mhalliik@ t2ajjel éSSalaat?

What is it that's so urgent it made[11] you **delay** your prayers? [= this urgent issue that]

Starting and stopping:

بلش يضيق خلقي من تمثيلك

ballash ydii2 khél2i mén tamsiilek

Your acting has started **getting on** my nerves [my temper started **to narrow**]

ما عاد اعرف مثل دور المجامله

maa3aad a3ref massel door lémjaamle

I can't flatter people anymore [= I no longer **know** how to act the role of flatterer]

حاج **تكشر**

7aaj @tkashsher

Stop **frowning**

نص شباب الحارة تابت وقتها وبطلت تدخن من الخوف

néSS shabaab él7aara taabet wa2ta w baTTalet tdakhkhen mn élkhoof

Half the kids of the neighbourhood repented that moment and stopped **smoking** out of fear

Expressions of opinion about (e.g.) activities:

بحب **اتماشى** بالشوارع

b7ébb étmaasha bishshawaare3

I like **walking around** in the streets[12]

ما بحب حدا **يضحك** علي

maa b7ébb 7ada yéD7ak 3aleyyi

I don't like anyone **taking advantage** of me

It often appears after certain verbs – particularly verbs of motion – to express purpose. A similar construction exists in fuSHa with the jussive.

بدي روح **شوف** الدكتور

béddi ruu7 shuuf éddoktuur

I want to go **and see/to see** the doctor

انا فايت **نام**

ana faayet naam

I'm going to bed [= going in **to sleep**]

انا جايه **قلّك** شغلة

ana jaaye 2él-lak shéghle

I've come **to tell** you something

---

[11] Although it's definitely 'make' here, *khalla* can also express permission ('let'). See the section on causatives.

[12] Depending on context this could also be 'I want to walk around in the streets'.

More broadly, it is triggered by the various conjunctions expressing purpose:

منعني من الروحة ع بيروت مشان ما **شوف**ك
*mana3ni mén érroo7a 3a beeruut méshaan maa **shuuf**ak*
he forbade me/stopped me from going to Beirut so I **wouldn't/couldn't see** you

جاي عبالي اركض بهالشوارع ل **دوّر** عليك
*jaay 3abaali érkoD bi-hash-shawaare3 la-**dawwer** 3aleek*
I feel like running in the streets **to look** for you

It is also used very commonly with expressions combining a preposition with *ma* and meaning for example 'without', 'instead of', 'before', 'after', 'until' etc (the equivalent of fuSHa من دون أن and other expressions). For more of these see the conjunctions section:

بلا ما **يفوت** ع البيت
*bala ma **yfuut** 3a-lbeet*
without coming inside

بعد ما **ينام**
*ba3@d ma **ynaam***
after he **goes to sleep**[13]

It is used with كان to form a past habitual, as in fuSHa:

كان **يروح** كل يوم
*kaan **yruu7** kéll yoom*
he used **to go** every day

In a possibly related usage, it commonly appears in past narratives (without *kaan*) expressing repeated action. In this sentence we could insert *Saar* but not *kaan*:

قعدت ورا الشوفر, كل شوي **تمد** ايدا **وتعطيه** حبة فستق
*2é3det wara shshoofeer, kéll @shweyy **tmédd** iida w **ta3Tii** 7abbet fésto2*
She sat behind the driver – every little while, she **stretched out** her hand and **gave** him a peanut

It is used without any triggering word commonly in prayers ('may/let X happen'). This is the only construction in colloquial (other than the negative imperative) which is normally negated by *laa* (as in MSA) rather than *maa*:[14]

يعطيك العافية
*ya3Tii**k** él3aafye*
[God] **give** you health

---

[13] Some speakers distinguish habitual بعد ما بنام *ba3@d ma binaam* and future بعد ما ينام *ba3@d ma ynaam* – the first would be used for example in 'every day after he goes to sleep I read a book' and the second in 'after he goes to sleep this evening, I'll read a book'.
[14] The only exception to this is *laa… laa* 'neither… nor'.

لا **تكون** راجع لـهون

*laa **tkuun** raaje3 lahoon*

(I hope) you**'re** not coming back here

A relatively common use related to this which is not easy to directly translate is approximately similar to the biblical English 'let him' (not in the sense of 'allow' but as a kind of third person imperative) suggesting a course of action:

اذا ضاع منو المفتاح **يفوت** من الباب التاني

*iza Daa3 ménno lméftaa7 **yfuut** mn élbaab éttaani*

If he's lost the key, he can [= **let him**] **get in** through the other door

انا هيك اللي عاجبو عاجبو واللي ما عاجبو **ينساني**

*ana heek. élli 3aajbo 3aajbo wélli muu 3aajbo **yénsaa**ni*

this is how I am – those who it pleases it pleases and those who it doesn't please **should forget** me

This form is also used for first-person action similar to English 'shall':

سمعك الغنية؟

samm3ak élghénniyye?

shall I **play** you the song?

بلش من اول وجديد؟

ballesh mén awwal w @jdiid?

Shall I **start** again from the beginning [= from first and new]?

In Lebanese however the *b-* form is used for suggestions where the question does not have a yes or no answer but has a question word or presents answers, as in the second example above (where Lebanese speakers would say شو بعملك *shu ba3mél-lak*).

In Pal/Jor, the subjunctive form is also used in suggestions to another person. In Syr/Leb, the *b*-present is used here:

تشرب شاي؟ *tishrab shaay?* – (would you like to) drink some tea?

Imperative

The formation of the imperative (فعل الأمر) is one of the major dividing lines between Jor/Pal and Syr/Leb. However, the differences are exclusively in form 1 ('simple') verbs. For non-form-1 verbs, the imperative is simply the present form with the prefix removed:

تتعلم *té-t3allam* > تعلم *t3allam* 'learn!' (masc)

تعلمي *t-3allm-i* > علمي *3allmi* 'teach!' (fem)

تشتغلو *té-shteghl-u* > اشتغلو *shtéghlu* 'work!' (pl)

Sometimes, especially where it appears in fuSHa writing, the initial اmay be written in forms in Shami before consonant clusters. This does not mean it is necessarily pronounced.

For form 1 verbs, Jor/Pal work like fuSHa, prefixing *i-* or *u-* to the present form minus its prefix depending on the stem vowel for sound and defective verbs and using the present form minus its prefix on its own for hollow verbs:

افتح *ifta7* 'open!'

ادرس *udros* 'study!'

احكي *i7ki* 'speak!'

قول *2uul!* 'say'

Syr/Leb follow Jor/Pal in their treatment of hollow and defective verbs, but with sound verbs (with three solid root consonants) they do not add a prefix but instead lengthen the stem vowel:

فتاح *ftaa7!* 'open!' (< yéfta7)

دروس *droos!* 'study!' (< yédros)

مسيك *mseek!* 'take!' (< yémsek)

The vowel is not lengthened in the feminine and the plural, but neither is a prefix added:

فتحي *fta7i* 'open!'

درسو *drésu* 'study!'

This also applies to the imperatives of *akal* 'eat', *akhad* 'take' and *2é3ed* 'sit', which are slightly irregular:

خود خدي خدو *khood khédi khédu* 'take!' (you might hear the shortened *kho, khi*)

كول كلي كلو *kool kéli kélu* 'eat!'

عود عدي عدو *3ood 3édi 3édu* 'sit!' (compare with the regular Jor/Pal *u23od*).

عطى *3aTa* 'to give' has an irregular imperative:

عطي عطي عطو *3aTi 3aTi 3aTu* 'give!'

اجى *ija* does not have a regular imperative, replaced (as in fuSHa) by the following forms:

تعال تعالي تعالو *ta3aal ta3aali ta3aalu*

تع تعي تعو *ta3 ta3i ta3u*

A few other forms are used with imperative meaning that are not full verbal paradigms (or not verbs at all):

مكانك *makaanak* (*makaanik* etc) – 'stop where you are'

ايدك *iidak* (*iidik* etc) – 'put that down!'

And most commonly:

هات هاتي هاتو *haat haati haatu* 'give me, hand over' (e.g. هات المصاري 'give us the money')

Negation

The negative imperative is typically formed with *maa* plus the subjunctive, similar to fuSHa:

ما تروح *maa truu7* 'don't go'

In Jor/Pal it can take the final *-esh*:

متروحش *matruu7esh* 'don't go'

Many Syrian speakers use لا instead, lining up even more with fuSHa:

لا تروح *laa truu7* don't go!

It can occasionally be formed with *muu/mish*, which gives a nuance which you might translate into English as 'don't go Xing' or 'don't go and X':

كول صندويشتك **مو** متل العادة **ترجعلي** ياها
*kool Sandwiishtak **muu** métl él3aade **trajjé3**li yaaha*
eat your sandwich – **don't go bringing** it **back** to me like usual!

Participles

Participles (اسم فاعل واسم مفعول) are much more broadly used in Shami than in fuSHa. Often described lazily as equivalent to the English continuous, this is only rarely the case and learning to use them properly (and understand their meaning) is very important to understanding normal speech.

Formation

Passive participles are basically the same as in fuSHa, except that those which are formed with a *mu-* prefix are usually formed with a *m(é)-* prefix instead (مكسر *mkassar* 'broken'). Form I hollow participles are regularised (مبيوع *mabyuu3* 'sold', not مباع) and in Syr/Leb – though not in Jor/Pal – form I defective participles are prefixed with *me-*, not *ma-* (مطفي *méTfi* 'switched off').

Outside form I, active participles are also generally formed similarly to fuSHa, with the same exception of *m(é)–* replacing *mu-* (متعلم *mét3allem* 'educated', *mtarjem* 'having translated, translator'). In form I most verbs form their participles on a variant of the *faa3el* pattern as in fuSHa.

It is important to note as well that in recent 'borrowings' from fuSHa, in more educated speech, etc, fuSHa forms are used as well even in colloquial: مثقف *musaqqaf* 'cultured', متداول *mutadaawel* 'ranging between' etc.

There is an additional form I participle pattern in *fa3laan* (or for a few irregular verbs *fé3laan*) for some form I verbs (تعبان *ta3baan* 'tired', بردان *bardaan* 'cold', ربيان *rébyaan* 'having grown up', سكران *sékraan* 'drunk'). You have probably already encountered this in fuSHa with تعبان, جوعان and other related forms, although some teachers will tell you that this is not in fact proper fuSHa. Regardless of its correctness in writing, this form is found with quite a few verbs in the Levant. In Jor/Pal/Leb, these forms are almost exclusively used with a relatively small set of verbs of becoming: تعب 'get tired', برد 'get cold', سكر 'get drunk'. In Syrian in particular, however, its usage has been extended to a lot more verbs, and this much broader use (وصلان, شربان, عرفان , فهمان) is very characteristic of Syrian.

Whether a verb has a *fa3laan* or a *faa3el* participle is to some extent unpredictable and has to be learnt, especially in Syrian. Most form I verbs of becoming, however, have one of these participles.

Gender and number

All participles have regular feminines in ـة and plurals in ين, regardless of form:

> حاسس حاسة حاسين *7aases 7aasse 7aassiin*

> كاتب كاتبة كاتبين *kaateb kaatbe kaatbiin*

> تعبان تعبانة تعبانين *ta3baan ta3baane ta3baaniin*

> مبيوع مبيوعة مبيوعين *mabyuu3 mabyuu3a mabyuu3iin*

Use

Active participles especially are very common in colloquial. The use you've probably encountered if you have any familiarity with any dialect at all is with certain verbs of motion. For these, the participle is often used in a continuous meaning:

وين **رايح**؟
*ween **raaye7**?*
Where are you **going**?

ماشيين
maashyiin
we're **leaving**

This can of course be used in a future sense similar to the English continuous:

نازل هون؟
***naazel** hoon?*
are you **getting off** [the bus] here?

This continuous sense also appears with a limited number of other verbs, primarily verbs of sensation, thought etc:

يلي شجع منتخب النظام خلال المباريات الأخيرة **معتبر** انو السياسة مالها علاقة بالرياضة
*yalli shajja3 muntakhab énniZaam khilaal élmubaarayaat él2akhiira **mé3taber** énno ssiyaase maala 3alaa2a bi-rriyaaDa*
The people [= the one who] who supported the regime's team in the last few matches **believe** that politics has nothing to do with sport

حاسس حالي مرضان شوي
***7aases** 7aali marDaan @shweyy*
I **feel** [= am feeling myself] a bit ill

مالي **سمعانة**
*maali **sam3aane***
I can't **hear** [you][15]

ناطر تليفونك اه؟
***naaTér** telefoonak aah?*
I'll be [= I'm] **waiting** for you to call [= your phone call], OK?

مستنيك
méstanniik
I'm **waiting for** you

With most verbs, however, the participle has the sense of completion of an action often lining up with the English present perfect. This is easiest to show with verbs of becoming. You probably already know تعب *té3eb* 'get tired' and its participle تعبان *ta3baan* 'tired'. Another

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[15] Though as you can see from the examples below, we could also see this as a participle of completion/result.

good example is طول *Téwel* 'get long, tall' and its causative equivalent *Tawwal* 'lengthen, let grow longer', whose participles contrast with simple طويل 'long, tall':

> دقنك **طولان**
> *da2nak **Toolaan***
> your beard has **got longer/is longer**

> **مطول** دقنك
> ***mTawwel** da2nak*
> you've **grown** your beard **out**/**let** it **grow longer**

There are some verbs which typically have a 'becoming' sense in colloquial which are not necessarily used in the same way in fuSHa. لبس *lébes* for example in colloquial means 'get dressed' or with an object 'put on'. بلبس *bélbes* means 'I get dressed' or 'I put on' or 'I wear' in a habitual sense. It doesn't mean 'I'm wearing' – for that you need *laabes*. Contrast the two forms below:

> متل اللي كل السنة **بيلبس** ملوّن وبعاشورا بتلاقيه **لابس** أسود
> *métl élli kéll ésséne **byélbes** @mlawwan w b3aashuura bétlaa2ii **laabes** 2aswad*
> Like someone who **wears/puts on** coloured [clothes] the whole year then in Ashoura you'll find him **wearing/having put on** black

The same applies to نام *naam*, which usually means 'go to sleep' (thus نايم is sleeping and بنام means 'I go to sleep' and not 'I'm sleeping'), سكن *sakan*, which usually means 'take up residence' (thus ساكن is 'living'), and many others.

The sense of completion, however, is not restricted to verbs of becoming or intransitive verbs. Do not mistake forms like كاتب, دارس etc for 'writing', 'studying'. This will confuse your understanding and, if you use them that way, the meaning you're trying to put across! Most verbs have a participle expressing completed action, the result of the action expressed by the equivalent verb, which in many cases can be most idiomatically translated with the English present perfect:

> سمعت انو **فاتح** محامي
> *smé3@t énno **faate7** mu7aami*
> I heard he**'s opened** a lawyer['s practice]

> **كاتبلك** كل شي ع الورقة
> ***kaatéb**lak kéll shi 3a-lwara2a*
> I**'ve written** everything **down** for you on the paper

> ماحدا بيعرف بعدين شو رح يصير اكيد الله **كاتبلك** شي احسن وافضل
> *maa 7ada bya3ref ba3deen shuu ra7 ySiir akiid aLLa **kaatéb**lak shi a7san w afDal*
> Nobody knows what's going to happen, God's definitely **got** something better **planned** for you [= **has written** for you]

> يلي الله **رازقه** صوت حلو بيقدر يغني ويعبر عن نفسه من خلاله
> *yalli aLLa **raaz2**o Soot 7élw byé2der yghanni w y3abber 3an nafso mén khilaalo*
> [People] who God **has blessed** with nice voices can sing and express themselves with them...

اهداء لكل شخص **فاقد** شخص

*ihdaa2 lakull shakh@S **faa2ed** shakh@S*

Dedicated [= a dedication] to everybody who**'s lost** somebody

صرلو خمس سنين **موقف** شغل بالمشروع مشان الناس تمل وتبيع

*Sallo khams @sniin **@mwa22ef** shégh@l bilmashruu3*

It's been five years since he stopped work on the project [= he's been **in a state of having stopped** work on the project for five years][16]

انتي ليش **مكبرة** القصة؟

*inti leesh **@mkabbra** l2éSSa?*

Why're you making this into a big thing [= why **have you made** the story **big**?]

With some verbs of sense there are cases which are debatable one way or the other – does عرفان *3arfaan* represent a continuous equivalent to بعرف 'I know', or does it express the result of عرفت 'I found out'? Either way, it expresses a state of knowing. In cases like the one below, these verbs have a definite completed action:

الاستاذ يظهر مو **سمعان** بهاد الحديث

*él2éstaaz yaZhor[17] muu **sam3aan** b-haad él7adiis*

It seems that sir **has** not **heard** of this hadith

Confusingly, even verbs of motion can have this sense. We saw رايح above in a continuous meaning, but it can also mean 'have been', depending on the context:

رايح شي على المانيا؟

***raaye7** shi 3ala 2almaanya?*

have you ever **been** to Germany?

قديش صارلكون **طالعين** من الحارة

*2addeesh Sallkon **Taal3iin** mn él7aara?*

how long has it been since you left the neighbourhood [= how long has it become for you **having left** the neighbourhood?]

Participles can also be used in an emphatic future sense stressing the certainty (or impossibility) of an action:

اي من هلق **موقع** عليه

*ee mén halla2 **mwaqqe3** 3alee*

consider it signed [from now I've signed it]

ماني **باعتة** حدا لعندك

*maani **baa3te** 7ada la3éndak*

I'm not **sending** anyone to your house! (depending on context this could also be 'I haven't sent…')

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[16] صارلو and its other pronominal forms is usually used for 'he's been… for Y years' and is often combined with an adjective but the combination of this and a participle (which carries the force of 'having stopped') makes it awkward to translate this even halfway literally into English.

[17] يظهر is a fixed fuSHa form used in colloquial in a way syntactically identical to شكلو *sheklo* 'it seems that'.

مش **حاكي** عن الموضوع خلص

*mish **7aaki** 3an élmawDuu3 khalaS!*

I'm not **talking** about it [= the issue], forget it!

انا فشخة برات هالبيت ماني **فاشخة**

2ana fashkha barraat halbeet maani faashkha

I'm not taking a single step [= a step I'm not **stepping**] outside this house!

Participles with objects

With noun objects participles do not form an *iDaafe* but act like verbs. This is not clear in the masculine, but in the feminine (where *-e* should become *-et*) it is obvious:

انا **كاتبة** رسالة

*ana **kaatbe** risaale*

I've **written** a letter

When object pronouns are attached to a feminine participle with ة, however, the ة usually does become *-t*:

مساويتّو *msaawiit-o* (*msaawye*) – she's done it

كاتبتا *kaatébt-a* – she's written it

For some Southern Levantine speakers, it lengthens instead (similar to Egyptian):

كاتباها *kaatbaa-ha* – she's written it

Furthermore, when the subject is second person feminine singular انتي, participles gain an *-ii-* when a pronoun is added. This does not apply if the subject is otherwise feminine:

مخبيتيه؟ *mkhabbiitii?* (*mkhabbye*) – have you hidden it?

Participles and nouns-from-participles

Some participles proper (i.e. parts of the verbal paradigm) are also nouns with a distinct meaning – كاتب *kaateb* and طالب *Taaleb* can either be participles 'having written' and 'asked for' or nouns meaning 'writer' or 'student'. These are obviously etymologically derived from the participles, but they're distinct in meaning and often have their own broken plurals (*kéttaab* and *Téllaab* in these cases) which do not work for the plurals of the participles. They also form *iDaafe* with their objects rather than taking direct objects normally:

هي **كاتبة** لكتاب

*hiyye **kaatbet** léktaab*

she's the **author** of the book

There are a number of cases with non-form I verbs where rather than using the colloquial participle, the noun equivalent is taken from fuSHa and has *mu-* instead (although in Arabic script they are indistinguishable):

مدرب **mu**darreb coach, **m**darreb having trained (someone)

مفوض **mu**fawwaD commissioner / **m**fawwaD (having been) commissioned

These are distinct. To use *mdarreb* for 'coach' (or, for that matter, *mudarreb* for 'having trained') is incorrect.

Compound tense structures

Future

There are various ways to express the future. One is by using the simple present with *b-* on its own:

> **بروح** معك
> **bruu7** ma3ak
> **I'll go** with you

One is by using *bédd-* (literally 'want'):

> **بدي** امرق لعندو بكرا
> **béddi** émro2 la-3éndo bukra
> **I'm going to** go to his house tomorrow

Another common way is with the particle رح *ra7(a)-* or the prefix حـ *7a-* (also لح لـ in some parts of Syria and sometimes رايح):

> **رح** روح
> **ra7** ruu7
> **I'll** go

> **حشوفك** بكرا
> **7a-shuufak** bukra
> **I'll** see you tomorrow

There are differences in nuance between these different forms and the use of the bare present, as there are between 'going to', 'will' and the present continuous in English, but these differences are difficult to pin down. Native speakers have an intuition about what sounds right and wrong in different sentences, and the only way to gain that sort of intuition as a non-native speaker is from practice.

Continuous

The continuous is formed with *3am* which can be combined with the subjunctive or *b-* present. It typically lines up with the English continuous form in that it suggests repetitive action over a specific period of time:

> **عم ادرس**
> **3am édros**
> **I'm studying**

> ضرسي ما **عم ينوم**لي الليل
> Dérsi maa **3am ynawwem**ni élleel
> my tooth is stopping me from sleeping at night [= **is** not **letting me sleep**]

One small difference in usage is that *3am* can be used with many verbs that in English do not permit a continuous:

ما **عم بقدر** افتح الباب
*maa **3am bé2der** éfta7 élbaab*
I can't get the door open [= I'm not **being able** to…]

The continuous is often best translated with the English perfect continuous:

عم اقرى كتير هالايام
3am é2ra *ktiir hal2éyyaam*
I've been reading a lot these days [= I'm reading...]

Combinations of kaan **and other verb forms**

كان can be used with other verb forms to make compound tenses, as in fuSHa. With the subjunctive past *kaan* can be used to form a past habitual:

كان يدرس *kaan yédros* – he used to study

With the continuous it can be used to form a past continuous:

كنت عم ادرس *ként 3am édros* – I was studying

With the future the past form of *kaan* can be used to form a future-in-past:

كان رح يشتي
kaan ra7 yshatti
it was going to rain

كنت رح انجلط
ként ra7 énjaleT
I almost had a heart attack!

كان بدو يفوت
kaan béddo yfuut
he was about to go in (or 'he wanted to go in')

With the past or participle, it can form a pluperfect:

كان راح
kaan raa7
he'd gone

كان جايب كولا
kaan jaayeb koola
he'd brought some coke

The present form *bikuun* can also be used with past, continuous and future in a similar way to express either assumptions or to centre the action on the future:

بكون عم يدرس
bikuun 3am yédros
he must be studying, he'll be studying

بكون خلص
bikuun khallaS
he'll have finished, he must have finished

بكون بدو يفوت
bikuun béddo yfuut
he'll be about to go in

The *b*-less form can be used similarly where it is triggered by something:

خايف **يكون** فات من الباب التاني
*khaayef **ykuun** faat mn élbaab éttaani*
I'm afraid he **might have** come in through the other door

Possession

iDaafe

As we all know from fuSHa, two or more nouns can be put into a possessive structure by simply sticking them alongside one another in *iDaafe* (اضافة), literally 'addition' and fiddling about with the case and *tanwiin* suffixes. The absence of case suffixes and *tanwiin* makes this much simpler in Shami. Nouns that do not end with the suffix ـة do not typically change at all when placed into iDaafe with another noun, other than predictable addition of helping vowels:

مكتب احمد *maktab a7mad* 'Ahmed's office'

اسم حبيبتي *is@m 7abiibti* 'my lover's name'

The ending ـة *-a/e* always turns into *-et* on the first term of *iDaafe* (rather than *–at-* as in fuSHa). In line with the normal rules of vowel dropping, this can sometimes contract to simply *-t* before vowels:

قطة اختي *2aTTet ékhti* 'my sister's cat'

مدرسة احمد *madras(e)t a7mad* 'Ahmad's school'

As in fuSHa, the iDaafe can express all sorts of different relationships alongside possession:

كيس النايلون *kiis énnaaylon* 'the plastic bag'

كاسة مي *kaaset moyy* 'a glass of water'

بيت المخدة *beet lémkhadde* 'the pillowcase'

رخصة سواقة *rékhSet @swaa2a* 'driving licence'

As in fuSHa, only the final term of iDaafe can take a definite article. But in Syrian, the contracted 'this/that' *hal-*, which is clearly derived from the definite article, can appear at the beginning of an *iDaafe* as well:

هلكاسة المي *hal*kaast élmoyy '**this** glass of water'

Taba3

Apart from the *iDaafe* the main way of expressing possession is the particle تبع *taba3* (or تع *ta3*). This appears between the noun and its possessor. As with the *iDaafe* it can express various different types of relationship.

حط الستاتوس **تبع الواتس** بكومنت
*7étt lé-staatus **taba3 élwat@s** bkooment*
Put [your] **Whatsapp** status in a comment

اللون **تبع** جراباتك اللي انت لابسو حاليا هو لون قلبك

*élloon **taba3** jraabaatak élli inte laabso 7aaliyyan huwwe loon 2albak*

The colour **of** the socks you're wearing now is the colour of your heart

بيقولك راح ناس **تبع** جمعيات خيرية يشوفو اللاجئين

*bi2éllak raa7 naas **taba3** jam3iyyaat kheeriyye yshuufu llaaji2iin...*

They say that people **from/belonging to** charity organisations went to see the refugees...

What triggers use of تبع as opposed to the *iDaafe* is not always clear. It's common with compounds and with loanwords (like the first example here). But it is also often used in contexts where the *iDaafe* would also be fine.

For some speakers تبع agrees with the possessed noun. In Syrian this is optional, but in Palestinian for example it is compulsory. The feminine is تبعت *taba3et*. The plural has various different forms, including تبعون *tab3uun* and تبعوت *tab3uut*.

Taba3 differs from the *iDaafe* in that it can be used independently, providing the only easy way to translate expressions like 'Ahmad's' or 'mine' where the possessed noun is dropped. As with its normal use, *taba3* here can express all sorts of relationships (the only difference is it stands in for the noun it would normally follow):

كسرت **تبعتو**

*kassar@t **tab@3t**o*

I broke his **[one]**

بدكن لايف متل **تبع** امبارح

*béddkon laayv mét@l **taba3** @mbaare7?*

You want a Live [video] like yesterday**'s**?

بس **تبع** اللون الاخضر وبنات العمارة شغلة

*bass **taba3** élloon él2akhDar, wbanaat él3emaara shéghle*

Only the green **one**, [because] the architecture girls are something else[18]

طلع **تبع** الضابط

*Téle3 **taba3** éDDaabeT*

It turned out to **belong to** the officer/be the officer**'s**!

وينهم **تبعون** الإنجلش؟

*weenhom **tab3uun** élinglish?*

Where are the English **crew**? [= the ones who study 'Inglish']

You have to be careful with this usage, however, because تبع can sometimes be a euphemism for genitalia.

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[18] This is in response to a question about which cafeteria students at Damascus University prefer.

Open conditionals

As in fuSHa, *iza* is used for 'open conditionals' like 'if it rains, we can go' or 'if he's not happy, let him come and see me'. Unlike fuSHa, any tense form can appear in the conditional clause:

اذا **بتشوفو** بكرا خبرني
*iza **bétshuufo** bukra khabbérni*
if **you see him** tomorrow tell me

اذا **بدك** فيني احكي معو
*iza **béddak** fiini é7ki ma3o*
if **you want** I can talk to him

The past can be used with future meaning in the conditional clause as in fuSHa. For some people at least this implies a less certain emphasis on likelihood (allowing for more politeness – 'if you happen to be free [but no pressure]'):

اذا **فضيت** خبرني
*iza **fDiit** khabbérni*
if you're free (= **become free**) then tell me

It can also be used with actual past meaning, as in the following sentence. Note that usually 'if he left' in English is actually *hypothetical*, and does not have a past but a non-factual meaning ('if he left now he'd...'), which would be translated typically with لو and not اذا.[19] However, on some rare occasions it expresses an open conditional (i.e. whose fulfilment is possible) where the action fulfilling the condition must have happened in the past:

اذا **طلع** امبارح بوصل بكرا
*iza **Téle3** @mbaare7 biwaSSel élyoom*
if he **left** yesterday, he'll get there today

In the literal opposite of fuSHa, the result clause cannot (typically) be in the past directly. As in English – where we have to say 'if he left yesterday, he'll have arrived today' (and 'if he left yesterday he arrived today' is a bit odd) we have to use a construction with بكون to express an assumption:

اذا طلع امبارح **بكون وصل** اليوم
*iza Téle3 @mbaare7 **bikuun waSSal** élyoom*
if he left yesterday **he'll've got there** today

Sometimes *iza* is dropped:

دفعت هلق شو بصير؟
***dafa3@t** halla2, shu biSiir?*
(if) I paid now, what would happen

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[19] This distinction is made in one place in formal English using different verb forms – 'if he <u>were</u> at the party I'd say hi to him' vs 'if he <u>was</u> at the party, it must have been him I saw '. But even this distinction is lost for a lot of us in speech, unfortunately for those trying to get their heads around Arabic forms.

Hypothetical and counterfactual conditionals

As in fuSHa, لو is used for counterfactuals.[20]Counterfactual sentences refer to hypothetical situations that would/could be the case now (present counterfactuals) or would/could have been the case in the past (past counterfactuals) if a given condition were fulfilled/had been fulfilled. In both cases, it is assumed that the condition is unlikely or impossible to be fulfilled or has not been fulfilled.

In Levantine Arabic, this is the most basic use of *law* – similar to MSA (though *iza* is also sometimes used like this). These sorts of sentences, and the exact syntax of *law*, are subject to quite a lot of dialectal variation, but the basic principles stay the same.

The if-clause

In English, both parts of the conditional sentence – the if-clause and the result clause – both change for tense. This is not the case in Syrian and Lebanese, where the if-clause typically takes the simple past tense whatever, with tense being indicated by the result clause:

> لو درس بينجح
> *law daras - by*énja7
> If he stud**ied**, he'd do well.

> لو درس كان نجح
> *law daras - kaan néje7*
> If he **had** stud**ied**, he'd have done well.

A nominal ('to be') sentence can take *kaan* in a similar way – which depending on dialect may or may not be conjugated. In most situations, though, it's more common to drop it. Some speakers reject the presence of *kaan* as ungrammatical or awkward, depending on their region.

> لو **(كان)** آينشتاين لبناني كان هاجر على غير بلد
> *law (kaan) aynshtaayn lébnaani kaan haajar 3ala gheer balad*
> If Einstein **had been** Lebanese he'd've emigrated to another country

> لو **(كنت)** محلك ببقى بالبيت
> *law (ként) ma7allak béb2a bi-lbeet*
> If I **were** you I'd stay at home

The same applies to quasi-verbal expressions like *ma3i, béddi, 3éndi* and participles:

> لو **معي بعطيك**
> *law ma3i ba3Tiik*
> If I **had** [money] on me **I'd** give you [some]

> لو **(كان) كاتبين** تالت او رابع واحد **كان رح يكون** حلو
> *law (kaan) kaatbiin taalet aw raabe3 waa7ed kaan ra7 ykuun 7élw*
> If they**'d written** the third or fourth one it **would've been** nice

A similar case concerns 'stative' verbs, like sentences which discuss ability or possibility, where an implied (dropped) *kaan* may result in a present tense verb with *b-* following *law*.

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[20] Some Syrians use *iza* synonymously with *law* and with the same syntax for counterfactuals, but this is non-standard:
إذا بدو يفور دمو كان فار من زمان
iza béddo yfuur dammo kaan faar mén zamaan
If he was going to go crazy [= if his blood was going to boil over], it would have happened a long time ago.

لو **بحبو** بعض كانو تجوزو من زمان

law bi7ébbu ba3D kaanu tjawwazu mén zamaan

If they **loved** one another they'd have got married a long time ago

لو **بعرف** ما كنت اشتريتلك ياه

law ba3ref maa ként @shtareetéllak yaa

If I**'d known**, I wouldn't have bought it for you

لو **بيدرس** بينجح

law byédros byénja7

If he **was a studious sort**/**the type that studied**, he'd succeed (contrasting with *law daras* 'if he studied')

لو كانت الغفوات **تنقاس** بالأيام .. يعني انا نعسان عَ قد مية عام

law kaanet élghafawaat tén2aas bi-l2iyyaam… ya3ni 2ana na3saan 3a 2add miit 3aam

If naps **were measured** in days, then I'd be 100 years worth of sleepy.[21]

لو **بيحكو** الحيوانات شو بقولو؟

law byé7ku l7eewaanaat shuu bi2uulu?

If animals **could talk** what would they say?

This has a different meaning from the same sentence with a past verb:

لو **حكو** الحيوانات شو بقولو؟

law 7aku l7eewaanaat shuu bi2uulu?

If the animals **were to talk** [on a specific occasion], what would they say?

law can be followed by *énno* 'that', with no significant change in meaning. *énno* can take suffixed pronouns:

لو اني رجعتون ما كان صار اللي صار

law énni *rajja3ton maa kaan Saar élli Saar*

If I'd taken them back what happened wouldn't have happened!

It is possible to follow *law* with a subjunctive verb in a hypothetical conditional.[22] This is linked to the meaning 'if only' discussed below. Unlike *law jiit*, which can be either past ('if you had come') or present/future ('if you came'), *law téji* can only have future reference ('if you came/if you were to come') and implies unlikeliness.

لو **تجي** على تركيا بتستفاد كتير

law téji 3ala turkiyya btéstafaad @ktiir

If you**'d only come** to Turkey, you'd benefit a lot

The result clause

The result clause varies much more than the if-clause in possible structure.

Present counterfactuals

The simplest kind of present counterfactual has a *b*-prefixed present tense verb in the result clause, with an optional *kaan* in front of it:

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[21] This is an unusual example of this *kaan* triggering subjunctive. Normally it appears with a *b*-present.

[22] You might hear some speakers using subjunctives with stative verbs too, like *law a3ref* 'if I knew'. This is, however, just a variation on the *law ba3ref* above.

لو كنت محلك **ببقى** بالبيت

*law (ként) ma7allak **béb2a** bi-lbeet*

If I were you I**'d stay** at home

لو كان المناخ انشف بشوي **بكون** احسن بكتير

*law (kaan) élmanaakh anshaf bi-shweyy **bikuun** a7san bi-ktiir*

If the climate was a bit drier, it **would be** much better

لو كنتي مشتاقتيلي **كنتي بتيجي** لعننا

*law (kénti) méshtaa2tii-li **kénti btiiji** la-3éndi*

If you really missed me you**'d come** to our house

The future can also be used in the result clause, again with optional *kaan*:

لو راحت ع الشام **رح اعرف** كل شي!

*law raa7et 3a shshaam, **ra7-a3ref** kéll shi!*

If she'd gone to Damascus, I**'d** [lit. **have been going to**] **find out** everything [but she went to Homs, so I don't].

لو ما كنت عم غني **كنت رح كون** بالجيش

*law maa ként 3am ghanni, **ként ra7 kuun** bi-jjeesh*

If I wasn't singing, I **would have been** in the army.

Past counterfactuals

Generally speaking, past counterfactuals have *kaan* plus a past verb in the result clause:

لو اني رجعتون **ما كان** صار اللي صار

*law énni rajja3ton **maa kaan** Saar élli Saar*

If I'd taken them back what happened **wouldn't have** happened!

لو طلعت امبارحة **كانت وصلت** اليوم

*law Tél3et @mbaar7a **kaanet wéSlet** élyoom*

If she'd left yesterday she **would have got here** today.

لو كنت بعرف انو هيك رح يصير **لا كنت** جبتك **ولا كنت** وعدتك انو بدي رجعك

*law ként ba3ref 2énno heek ra7 ySiir **laa ként** jébtek **wala ként** wa3adtek 2énno béddi rajj3ek*

If I'd known this would happen, I **wouldn't have** brought you **nor would I have** promised you that I'd take you back.

لو معي **كنت** عطيتك

*law ma3i **ként** 3aTeetak*

If I'd had [money] on me I**'d have** given you [some].

لو بعرف ما رح تقليلي عيب **كنت** قلتلك بشو بحس لما اطلع على هاي الصورة

*law ba3ref maa ra7 t2élii-li 3eeb, **ként** 2élt-éllek b-shuu b7éss lamma éTTalle3 3ala haay eSSuura*

If I was sure [lit. knew] you wouldn't tell me it was wrong (to feel this way), I **would have** told you how I feel when I look at this picture…

Other uses of *law*

Wlaw 'even if'

Wlaw (walaw)[23], *7atta law, 7atta wlaw* and sometimes just *law* can all mean 'even if'. They generally have similar structure to normal hypotheticals:

> ولو ما **درس بينجح**
>
> *w-law maa **daras byénja7***
>
> Even if he **didn't study** he**'d** (still) **do well**

Unlike normal sentences with *law*, however, the 'even if' meaning is not restricted to hypotheticals and counterfactuals:

> ولو **الحَيت** عليي ماني رح ايجي
>
> *w-law **ala77eet** 3aliyyi maani ra7 iiji*
>
> Even if you **insist**, I'm not coming!

> صامدين لو بدنا نموت بالجوع
>
> *Saamdiin law **béddna nmuut** bi-jjoo3*
>
> We're staying here, even if [that means] we**'re going to** starve

Some speakers accept present tense verbs here, presumably in a non-counterfactual meaning:

> لو **بيضربني** ما بقبل
>
> *law **byédrébni** maa bé2bal*
>
> Even if he **hits** me I won't agree to it

'If only'

Law can be used with the subjunctive or the *b*-present in a meaning similar to 'I wish' or 'if only':[24]

> **لو تعرف** قديش بحبك!
>
> *law ta3ref 2addeesh b7ébbak!*
>
> **If** you **only knew** how much I love you!

> **لو منقدر** نوصل للناس الي بقلب الصور
>
> *law mné2der nuuSal la-nnaas élli b-2alb eSSuwar*
>
> **If only** we **could** reach the people in pictures..

These can also have result clauses:

> لو يحكيلو كلمة واحدة **بتنحل** المشكلة
>
> *law yé7kii-lo kélme waa7de **btén7all** élmésh@kle!*
>
> If only he'd say something for once the problem **would be solved**

---

[23] *Walaw* with an *a* in the first syllable has a number of other meanings that can be confused with this meaning, including 'really?' (*walaw éstaaz?*), 'no problem' and (confusingly) 'of course': *walaw b2uula 2ana* 'of course I say [that word]!'

[24] Some Lebanese speakers use *law* + subjunctive, confusingly enough, in the meaning of *iza* – for example in the Nancy Ajram couplet:

صدفة لو على هالطريق يسلم عليي شي رفيق

Sédfi law 3ala ha-TTarii2 ysallem 3aliyyi shi rfii2

And if by chance on the street a friend should say hello to me…

لو بس بتقللي شو في **ممكن ساعدك**

*law bass @t2él-li shuu fii **mémken saa3dak**!*

If you'd just say what's wrong **I might be able to help you.**

In a similar sense, *law* often appears in combination with other expressions of hope:

في أغاني **بتمنى لو** صوتي حلو عشان غنيها للشخص اللي بحبو

*fii 2aghaani **bétmanna law** Sooti 7élw 3ashaan ghanniiha la-shshakhS élli b7ébbo*

There are some songs that [make me] **wish that** my voice was nice so I could sing them to the person I love.

يا ريت لو طلعت على برطانيا

yaa reet law @Tlé3@t 3ala breTaanya

I wish I'd gone to Britain…

ألوس **يا ريت لو** فيي إجي لبنان واحضرك بكرا

*alluus **yaa reet law** fiyyi iiji lébnaan w é7Darek bukra*

Alissa my love,[25] **I wish** I could come to Lebanon and watch you tomorrow

الكبار بالعمر إذا حبوكي بيقولولك **يا ريت لو** عنا ابن بعمرك لنزوجك ياه،

*lékbaar bi-l3ém@r iza 7abbuuki bi2uuluu-lek **yaa reet law** 3énna ib@n b-3émrak la-nzawwjek yaah*

Old people if they like you, they say **I wish** we had a son your age so we could marry him off to you

Other conditional expressions

Conditions with no 'if'

As in English there are a few constructions that can take the place of a normal 'condition' clause:

محلي محلك بيبقى بالبيت

ma7alli ma7allak béb2a bi-lbeet

If I were in your place [= **my place were your place**], I'd stay at home

عجبك ولا ما عجبك رح سويا

3éjbak wélla maa 3éjbak ra7 sawwiyya

Like it or not, I'm doing it

-ever expressions

'Whatever', 'whoever', 'however', 'however' are all formed by adding –*ma* or –*man* to the end of question words. They can take either present or past verbs without tense implications:

شو من كان

shu man kaan

whatever it may be

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[25] *Alluus* is a pet name for Alissa, the famous singer.

مين **ما** اجى

miin ma éja

whoever comes/came

The equivalent for قديش is irregular قد ما *2add ma* 'however (much)':

الزلمة **قد ما** كان قلبو طيب بضل اهبل

ézzalame 2add ma kaan 2albo Tayyeb béDéll 2ahbal

The guy's still an idiot, **no matter how** good a heart he has

In Syrian at least *law* can appear before these expressions. Here it has no additional meaning and can be deleted:

بتوظف **لو شو ما** كنت دارس.. ما هيك؟

bétwaZZaf law shu maként daares… maa heek?

I can get a job **no matter** what I've studied… Right?

The more, the more

The expression used for 'the more... the more' (a kind of conditional expression) is كل ما... كل ما *kéll ma... kéll ma...*, either with two presents or two pasts:

السيارة كل ما **بتكون** اغلى كل ما **بتكون** احسن

ésséyyaara kéll ma bétkuun 2aghla kéll ma bétkuun 2a7san

the more expensive a car **is**, the better it **is**

كل ما **درسنا** كل ما **حسيت** حالي اجدب

kell ma darasna kéll ma 7asseet 7aali 2ajdab

the more we **study/studied**, the more I **felt/feel** like an idiot

طالما *Taalama* 'as long as'

Taalama can also introduce conditional clauses which may have past verbs:

طالما **راضيتني** ما بتطلع من عندي الا رضيان

Taalama raaDeetni maa btéTla3 mén 3éndi 2élla réDyaan

As long as you **keep me happy**, I'll keep you happy [= you won't leave me except happy]

Relative clauses

Definites

As in fuSHa, relative clauses require a relativising particle when attached to a definite noun and no particle if attached to an indefinite noun. Unlike fuSHa – where this particle declines for case, gender, and number – in colloquial it is invariable, either *élli/illi* or *yalli* (depending on speaker and region):

الرجال **اللي** بعرفو
*érréjjaal **élli** ba3rfo*
 the man **(that)** I know

البنت **يلي** شفتها فايت عالبناية
*élbén@t **yalli** shéfta faayte 3a-lbinaaye*
the girl **(that)** you saw going into the building

اليوم من الإيام **اللي** ما بقدر احكي فيها
*élyoom mn él2éyyaam **élli** maa bé2der é7ki fiyya*
today is one of those days **(that)** I can't even talk about

élli/illi's initial vowel drops when preceded by a vowel, as if it was the definite article:

انا اسفة **عاللي** صار امبارح
*ana 2aasfe 3a-**lli** Saar @mbaare7*
I'm sorry for **what** happened yesterday

Note that just like in fuSHa, a pronoun has to appear in the relative clause in the place of the noun you've 'extracted' unless it is the subject of the relative clause (I saw the girl who I know *her*), either as a direct object or attached to a pronoun.

élli/illi is sometimes shortened to *él-/il-*. In this case it looks the same as the definite article, but does not assimilate to sun letters:

شو الفكرة **الآخدينا** عن السوريين؟
*shu élfékra **él**-2aakhdiina 3an éssuuriyyiin?*
what do you know about Syrians? [= what's the idea **that** you've taken…]

élli is also used where *man* and *maa* are used in fuSHa as relative pronouns for 'the one who' and 'the thing that'/'what' (ما الموصولة). Whilst in fuSHa a direct object pronoun in the relative clause here is optional, with *élli* it is compulsory:

انا اسفة **عاللي** صار امبارح
*ana 2aasfe 3a-**lli** Saar @mbaare7*
I'm sorry for **what** happened yesterday

اللي بدك ياه
élli** béddak **yaa
what you want

اللي صايرة بالبلد

élli Saayre bi-lbalad

what's happened in the country

Note that in line with the general rule that definite singulars are often used to talk about generics, اللي very commonly translates idiomatically as 'people who' or 'someone who':

متل اللي ميتلو اخ

métl élli mayyétlo akh

Like someone who's lost a brother

انا هيك اللي عاجبو عاجبو واللي ما عاجبو ينسانيا

ana heek. élli 3aajbo 3aajbo wélli muu 3aajbo yénsaani

this is how I am – **those who** it pleases it pleases and those **who** it doesn't please should forget me

Relative clauses are often used for emphasis, lining up with English 'it's... who...' or 'it's... that...':

شو اللي بدك ياه بالذات

shuu lli béddak yaa bizzaat

What exactly is it **that** you want

انا اللي عطلت الاصنونصير

ana lli 3aTTalt él2asonSeer

It was me **who** broke the lift/I'm the one **who** broke the lift

Indefinites

Indefinite nouns require no particle, as in fuSHa:

واحد اسمو جان

waa7ed ésmo jaan

a guy **whose name** is Jaan

واحد بيعرف انجليزي

waa7ed bya3ref ingliizi

a guy **who knows** English

When the indefinite noun in question is not only grammatically indefinite but also does not refer to a specific thing, the relative clause has the *b*-less verb form:

بدي بنت تعرف انجليزي

béddi bén@t ta3ref ingliizi

 I want a girl **who knows** English

This contrasts with a sentence like عم دور على بنت بتحكي انجليزي, which would also translate as 'I'm looking for a girl who speaks English' – but in this case the speaker has a specific girl in mind they are looking for. This distinction is basically identical to one found in French and

explained at length [here](). The use of these sorts of relative clauses often lines up with 'an X to Y' structures in English:

شباك **اهرب** منو
*shébbaak **éhrob** ménno*
a window **to escape** from

مفتاح **افتح** فيه هالباب
*méftaa7 **éfta7 fii** ha-lbaab*
a key **to open**/**with which I can open** this door

Structures with ma

The particle ما *ma* can be attached to a number of nouns, producing constructions that translate as English relative clauses even though they are not strictly speaking relative clauses in Arabic. These structures have no equivalent in fuSHa:

لحظة ما *la7Zet ma* – the moment that

وقت ما *wa2@t ma* – the time that (when)

يوم ما *yoom ma* – the day that (when)

ساعة ما *saa3et ma* – the hour that (when)

محل ما, قرنة ما *ma7all ma, 2érnet ma/2urnet ma* – the place that

Most productively this appears with superlatives:

أحسن ما يمكن *a7san ma yémken* – as good as/the best possible

اقرب ما يكون *a2rab ma ykuun* – as close as/the closest there is

Agreement

When a pronoun is used before a relative clause, the verb in the clause usually agrees with that pronoun (unlike in modern English, which usually puts the relative clause in the third person whatever):

انا يلي **عطلت** الاسونسير
ana yalli 3aTTalt él2asoonseer
I'm the one who broke the lift

انا الي **بعرف**
*ana lli **ba**3ref!*
of course I know (I'm the one who knows!)

With certain expressions like *X mén noo3 él-… élli* (X is the type of… who'), you sometimes see odd agreement patterns with the subject rather than with the noun the relative clause is actually attached to:

سوسن من نوع البنات يلي بيتغنى **عنها**
sawsan mén noo3 élbanaat yalli byétghanna 3anha
Sawsan is the type of girl that you hear about in songs (= that is sung about **her**)

Other 'That'-clauses

Anybody who has studied fuSHa will probably have torn at least a little bit of hair out over the uses and abuses of أنْ and إنّ أنّ. You'll be happy to know that in colloquial there is only one 'that', إنّو *énno/inno,* which is used in place of all of these. إنو can take other pronoun suffixes in place of the *-o*, like fuSHa *anna*, but the form with *-o* can stand in for other pronouns as well.

Statements of fact

For normal statements of fact or assertions, all tenses can appear in that-clauses:

> مش متأكد بس بعتقد انو هيدا المحل **بيرج حمود**
> *mish mét2akked bass bé3ta2ed énno heeda lma7all @bbérj 7ammuud*
> I'm not sure but I think this shop **is in Burj Hammoud**

> بدي قللك انو **بحبك**
> *béddi 2él-lak énno b7ébbak*
> I want to tell you that **I love** you

> مين قللك انو **راح**؟
> *miin 2él-lak énno raa7?*
> who told you that he**'s gone**?

Unlike English, spoken Arabic does not usually have '[backshifting](#)' or sequence of tenses where the tense in a that-clause changes depending on the tense of the main clause – 'he says he'll come' but 'he told me he would come'. In the following examples, for example, the that-clause has present marking but is translated with past because of the tense of the main verb:

> قال انو **مرضان**
> *2aal énno marDaan*
> he said he **was ill**

> حلمت انو **عم نظم** و **نظف** غرفة نوم جدتي
> *7lém@t 2énno 3am naZZem w naZZef ghérfet noom jéddti*
> I dreamt I **was tidying** and **cleaning** my grandma's bedroom

A future verb is then interpreted as future-in-past:

> قللي **رح يجي** بعد ساعة
> *2él-li ra7 yéji ba3@d saa3a*
> he told me he**'d come** after an hour

A past verb is typically interpreted as pluperfect, although occasionally it lines up with English:

قلتلك اني **رجعت**
*2éltéllak énni **rjé3@t***
I told you I **had come back**

حلمت اني **كنت** بالجنة
*7lém@t énni **ként** bijjanne*
 I dreamt I **was** in heaven [this one has tense-shifting]

Subjunctives

There are quite a lot of cases where *énno* comes before an expression of a wish or a hope or something similarly subjunctive-y and is thus followed by the subjunctive:

بتمنى انو **يعجبكم**
*batmanna inno **yi3jeb**kom*
I hope you **like** it

الى حابب انو **يتعلم** بيت بوكس يحكي معي
*illi 7aabeb inno **yit3allam** biit boks yi7ki ma3i*
 those (anyone) who want **to learn** to beatbox should speak to me

عبوده خايف انو **ناكلو**
*3abbuude khaayef énno **naakl**o!*
Abboudeh is worried we**'re going to eat** him!

'For X to…'

انو plus a *b*-less verb is also used very commonly in a construction which is similar in usage to fuSHa's أن *an* + subjunctive. This structure replaces a maSdar and can be used with adjectives:

بس **انك تفوت** ع البيت بلا ما اعرف
*bass **énnak @tfuut** 3albeet bala ma a3ref ...*
but **for you to come into** the house without me knowing…

كتير صعب **إنو** حدا منحبو كتير.. يسقط من عيننا فجأة
*ktiir Sa3b **énno** 7ada mén7ébbo ktiir yés2oT mén 3eenna faj2a*
it's very difficult **for** someone we really **love to suddenly** [do something to] **lose** our respect [**fall** from our eye]

Obviously this same structure is not always best translated with English 'for X to'. Sometimes there are more elegant ways of doing it, especially when the adjective comes first:

مستحيل **انك تجي**
*musta7iil **énnak téji***
it's impossible **that you'll come**

Generally the *énno* can be dropped when comes after the adjective:

ما اصعبها نهاية غرامك تكتبها بايدك

*ma2aS3aba nihaayet gharaamak **téktéb**a b2iidak*

 how difficult it is **to write** your love's end with your own hand

In expressions with comparatives, *énno* is used with a *b*-less verb to compare sentences (in English we have to use a gerund for this):

احسن من **انو تدفع** المبلغ كلو دفشة واحدة

*a7san mén **énno tédfa3** élmablagh kéllo dafshe waa7de*

better than **paying** the whole thing all in one go

When comparing two actions, however, the form منما *ménma* is used instead:

بحكي احسن **منما** بفهم

*bé7ki a7san **ménma** béfham*

 I speak better **than** I understand

Exceptions with *élli*

Although *élli* is usually a relative pronoun, with a few adjectives expressing feelings it can be used instead of إنو:

منيح **اللي** ذكرتني

*mnii7 **élli** zakkartni*

 it's good **(that)** you reminded me

مبسوط **اللي** جيت

*mabsuuT **élli** jiit*

I'm happy **(that)** you came

MaSdars and nouns of instance

MaSdars (مصادر) or verbal nouns are very common in fuSHa. Cursory treatments of 3aamiyye (usually the same ones that claim that all 3aamiyye sentences are subject-verb-object or that the grammar is 'very simplified fuSHa') usually claim that the maSdar simply isn't used in colloquial. There is an element of truth to this in that certain very common uses of the maSdar in fuSHa are usually or always replaced by structures with conjugated verbs:

قبل ما يوصل > قبل وصوله – before he gets here

بحب اقرى > احب القراءة – I like reading

However, this doesn't mean that the maSdar isn't used at all (or the اسم مرّة or noun of instance which we'll also deal with here). This post will deal with the places that they are common.

Formation of maSdars

As in fuSHa, maSdars are unpredictably formed. This goes especially for form I verbs, where they can take any number of shapes (عصيان, كتابة, نسي) although there are a few very common patterns (particularly *fa3l*). A number of verbs which also exist in fuSHa have different (often regular) common maSdars in *3aamiyye*: نسي *nési* is usually نسي *nasy* 'forgetfulness', for example (and not e.g. نسيان which is instead the participle).

ضرب *Dar@b* 'hitting'

نسي *nasy* 'forgetting'

عزف *3azaf* 'playing'

جنان *jnaan* 'going crazy. madness'

It also applies, as in fuSHa (think *takallama* > *kalaam*) to some verbs in other forms as well:

دور على *dawwar 3ala* 'look for' > دوارة *dwaara* 'looking for'

The form III pattern *mufaa3ala* has a fully Shami equivalent in *mfaa3ale*:

شارك *shaarak* 'go into partnership with' > مشاركة *mshaarake* 'going into partnership'

ساعد *saa3ad* 'help' > مساعدة *msaa3ade* 'help'

There are also a few regular forms (in *3aamiyye*) which nonetheless do not line up with their equivalent forms in fuSHa. Form II defective verbs for example have maSdars in *téf3aaye* (or in Pal/Jor, *tif3aay*):

عبّى *3abba* 'to fill' > *té3baaye* 'filling'

سلّى *salla* 'to entertain' > تسلاية *téslaaye* 'entertainment'

The regular form for all quadriliteral verbs with the *t-* prefix is *fa3lane*:

تولدن *twaldan* 'act childish' > ولدنة *waldane* 'acting childish'

تحيون *t7eewan* 'act like a moron' > 7eewane 'acting like a moron'.

Finally, some verbs have both colloquial and fuSHa maSdars used in different contexts:

قرى *2ara* 'read' > قراءة, قراية *qiraa2a, 2raaye* 'reading'

MaSdars are best learnt individually with each verb.

Formation of the اسم مرة

The formation of the noun of instance is simple and identical to fuSHa. All nouns of instance take the form *fa3le* (or *fa3we, foo3a* etc for defective and hollow verbs). These nouns express the meaning of a single instance of the verb:

ضربة *Darbe* 'a blow', 'a hit', 'a strike' etc (contrast with ضرب *Darb* 'hitting')

خطوة *khaTwe* 'a step', 'a single act of stepping' (contrast with خطو *khaTw* 'stepping')

Most nouns of instance are derived from form I verbs. Generally the *maSdar* can be used in the sense of a noun of instance for non-form I verbs.

Normal gerund uses

Although as discussed above there are some fuSHa contexts where the *maSdar* is not much used – particularly where in fuSHa it stands in for a normal sentence (e.g. بعد وصوله للمطار) – it is quite commonly used as a gerund that lines up with the English usage:

بحب **القراءة**
b7ébb **élqiraa2a**
I like **reading** (equivalent to بحب اقرى)

القراءة صعبة
élqiraa2a *Sa3be*
reading is hard

المشي مفيد للضغط
élmashy *mufiid la-DDagh@T*
walking is good [= useful] for blood pressure

The noun of instance is used (intuitively) in expressions like the following:

اخي منتبه انو **فوتاتي** ع المحل كترانة
akhi méntabeh énno **footaat**i *3a-lma7all kétraane*
my brother has noticed that I'm coming here a lot [= that my **comings in** to the shop have become more]

هلحكي بالروحة ولا بالرجعة؟
ha-l7aki bé-rroo7a wélla bé-rraj3a?
was this on the way there or on the way back? [= is this talk in the **going** or the **returning**?]

قديش بتدفع روحة رجعة؟
2addeesh btédfa3 roo7a raj3a?
how much do you pay there and back?

As mentioned with normal nouns, some verbs always take indefinite direct objects. This includes maSdars, which appear with verbs like the following in a construction quite similar to the English:

كمل حكي *kammel 7aki* – keep on talking

وقف اكل *wa22ef ak@l* – stop eating

خلصت قراية *khallaSt @2raaye* – I've finished reading

Cognate accusative

More interesting is its usage in the مفعول مطلق (cognate accusative) structure, whose existence in *3aamiyye* is usually denied wholesale. In fact it is quite common, especially with accompanying adjectives (very commonly مرتب *mrattab,* literally 'tidy') and especially especially when telling stories colourfully. Of course, these nouns do not take accusative case marking since cases do not exist in *3aamiyye*:

ضربتو **ضرب** مرتب
Darabto Dar@b mrattab
I gave him a real **beating** [= beat him a tidy **beating**]

عم تدور على مشاكل **دوارة**
3am @tdawwer 3ala mashaakel @dwaara
you're looking really hard for problems [= searching a **searching**]

حكيت **حكي** ما بينحكى
7akeet 7aki maa byén7aka
I said things that shouldn't be said [= talked **talking** that is not talked]

مسكوني **مسك** اليد
méskuuni mask élyad
they caught me red-handed [= the **catching** of the hand]

The noun of instance can also be used here (when it exists), giving a slightly different meaning of a single instance:

هلق روح نملك احلى **نومة**
halla2 ruu7 némlak a7la noome
now go and have a lovely sleep [= the nicest **sleeping**]

هاد اكيد بكون ابوه هابشلو شي **هبشة** مرتبه واشترالو السيارة

haad akiid bikuun abuu haabéshlo shi habshe mrattabe w-@shtaraalo éssiyyaara

no, this guy's dad must have got his hands on a nice little deal and bought him the car [= will have got a tidy **getting**]

These can be counted:

ضربني تلت **ضربات**

Darabni tlét Darbaat

he hit me three times (= three **hittings**)

Some *maSdar*s can be used in the same construction as the *maf3uul muTlaq* but with a different verb from the one they are derived from. The most common of these refer to motion. Note that whilst the idiomatic and the literal translations could have '-ing', the English '-ing' of the literal translation is the -ing of the gerund ('running is good for you') and not of the participle ('I'm running') – that is, the English forms are identical but the Arabic words here are maSdars, not participles:

نروح **مشي**؟

nruu7 mashy?

shall we walk there? [= go a **walking**]

جينا **ركيد**

jiina rgiid

we ran here [= we came a **running**]

مو جايبتيني لهون **شحط** مشان تقليلي هيك حكي

muu jaayebtiini lahoon shaH@T mishaan t2éliili heek 7aki?

surely you haven't dragged me here just to tell me this nonsense? [= you haven't brought me here a **dragging** to tell me this sort of speech?]

Passive

The fuSHa internal passive (e.g. دُرِسَ) is not productive in Shami, although it exists in a number of commonly used set expressions and classicisms and may be used when someone is speaking in elevated language, fuSHa-style. This may seem like good news, but in fact it is not; the passive in Shami is actually much less regular than fuSHa as a result and not all verbs have a passive form.

Conjugation

Generally, although not exclusively, form I verbs correspond to an equivalent passive on form VII (*nfa3al*) or less commonly form VIII (*fta3al*):

> قرى انقرى *2ara n2ara* 'read, to be read'

> مسك انمسك *mések nmasak* 'catch, to be caught'

> نسي انتسى *nési ntasa* ''forget, be forgotten'

Form II and form III verbs usually correspond to a passive on forms V and VI:

> غيّر تغيّر *ghayyar tghayyar* 'change, be changed'

> صاحب تصاحب *Saa7ab tSaa7ab* 'date, be dated'

Form X verbs, and form V and VI verbs with a non-passive meaning, do not usually have a passive, although there are some exceptions:

> انحملتحمل *t7ammal n7amal* 'bear, be borne'

As in fuSHa, the passive equivalent of an active verb usually has as its subject the direct object of a verb. If the verb normally takes an object with a preposition, the preposition is retained and the verb remains in the masculine singular:

> ما بينهرب من **هالسجن**
> *maa byénhareb mén **has-séj@n***
> you can't escape from **this prison** [= is not escaped from]

 If the subject does not follow the preposition directly a pronoun stands in for it:

> ما بينمشى **معها**
> *maa byénmasha ma3**a***
> **she**'s impossible to get along with

> بدي تخت يننام **فيه**
> *béddi takh@t yénnaam fii**(h)***
> I want a bed that can be slept in [= is slept in **it**]

Usage

The passive is often used in a way that lines up with English:

لو **انمسكت** ما بعرف شو كان صار فيني
*law @**nmasak@t** maa ba3ref shu kaan Saar fiini*
if I**'d been caught** I don't know what would have happened to me

Its more idiomatic use which is very common in colloquial is to express things that should or should not be/can or cannot be done:

شغلات ما **بتنحكى**
*shéghlaat maa **btén7aka***
things that **should not be said**

الزلمة ما **بيتقاوى عليه**
*ézzalame maa **byét2aawa 3alee***
the guy **can't be overpowered**

ولله خطك ما **بينقرى**
*waLLah khaTTak maa **byén2ara***
I swear to God, your handwriting is illegible [= **is** not **read**]

ما في ولا بنت **تتصاحب**
*maa fii wala bént **tétSaa7ab***
there's not a single girl **worth getting together with**

With many expressions it can be used in a way that distances an agent from an action, similar to English 'I can't get X to…'

ما عم **ينفتح** معي
*maa 3am **yénfate7** ma3i*
I can't get it to open [= it**'s** not **being opened** with me]

Reflexives

The reflexive pronoun

In English we have the reflexive pronouns formed with possessives and 'self', and in fuSHa we have basically the same system with نفس 'spirit' plus possessive pronouns. Whilst there are contexts in which you might hear نفس with reflexive meaning in colloquial, far and away the most common reflexive pronoun in Shami is not formed with نفس but with حالـ plus possessive pronouns:

> احكي عن **حالك**
> é7ki 3an **7aalak**
> speak for **yourself**!

> ليش عم تجاكر **حالك**؟
> leesh 3am @tjaaker **7aalak**?
> why are you spiting **yourself**?

> مفكر **حالو** شي خرية كبيرة
> mfakker **7aalo** shi kharye kbiire
> he thinks he's the shit [thinks **himself** some big shit]

With plural pronouns *7aal* remains the same and does not pluralise like English 'self':

> شايفين **حالون**
> shaayfiin **7aalon**
> they're arrogant [they've seen **themselves**]

The same word is used in لحالـ *la7aal-* 'on X's own':

> فتح لحالو
> fata7 **la7aalo**
> it opened **on its own**

> قاعد لحالك
> 2aa3ed **la7aalo**
> sitting **on your own**

And in the expression خليه بحالو *khallii **b7aalo*** 'leave him **alone**'.

Reflexives without *7aal*

In some limited situations normal pronouns are used with a reflexive meaning:

> غصبن عنك *ghaSbin 3annak* – in spite of <u>yourself</u>

Reflexive-style verbs

There are some verbs which in and of themselves are often best translated as reflexive despite the absence of a reflexive pronoun:

احترقت *7tara2@t* – I burnt myself

انتحر *nta7ar* – he killed himself (نحر 'to slaughter')

Reciprocals

These are expressions like 'they hit one another' where the action is being carried out by two parties on one another at the same time.

The reciprocal pronoun

Lining up with English 'one another' or 'each other', fuSHa has various expressions formed with بعض, probably originally in the sense of 'some' (like the long fuSHa structure, ضرب بعضُهم البعضَ, which probably originally meant 'some of them hit some [others]' or 'one of them hit the [other]'). In Syrian the most common way of phrasing it is just to use بعض *ba3@D* on its own as a catchall 'one another' or 'each other':

ضربو بعض *Darabu ba3@D* – they hit one another

متل بعض *mét@l ba3@D* – like one another, similar

نفس بعض *naf@s ba3@D* – the same thing, the same as one another

طلعو ببعض *TTalla3u bba3@D* – they looked at one another

Reciprocal verbs

As in fuSHa, some verbs are inherently reciprocal, typically form V or form VI:

تصالحو *tSaala7u* – they made up (with one another – compare صالحو *Saala7o* 'he made up with him')

تحاكو *t7aaku* – they spoke (with one another compare حاكاه 'he spoke to him')

When they are really reciprocal the subject is usually plural. However, there are lots of cases where these reciprocals actually may appear with a singular subject and an object expressed with مع. Here, of course, 'one another' is not an appropriate translation.

تصالحت معو *tSaala7@t ma3o* – I made up with him (functionally a synonym of صالحتو)

Causatives

You've probably already encountered the idea of the causative (make someone do something) in fuSHa with reference to forms II (*fa33ala*) and IV (*2af3ala*) of the verb. In many ways causatives work similarly in fuSHa and in colloquial, but the structures are a bit different and causatives are perhaps more common in dialect.

Unlike English, which distinguishes compulsorily between 'make' and 'let' (both kinds of causative), Arabic combines the two under one basic causative. The causative can be formed with خلّى *khalla* plus a verb or with an independent verb form – both can mean either 'let X do' or 'make X do', or related meanings.

خلى *khalla*

Khalla ykhalli is probably derived from the fuSHa for 'to empty', but it is used in the sense of 'allow' or 'make'. It is combined with an object and a verb conjugated in the *b*-less present, quite simply:

> خليتو يفوت *khalleeto yfuut* 'I made him go in', 'I let him go in'.

> خلاني اقرا *khallaani é2ra* 'he made me read', 'he let me read'

> خلوني روح *khalluuni ruu7* 'let me go!'

It can also be used in a way that is not a command but expresses a suggestion, similar to English 'let's':

> خلينا نجرب *khalliina njarreb* 'let's give it a go'

It can also mean 'leave' or 'keep':

> خليا معك *khalliyya ma3ak* 'keep it with you'

Relatedly, it can mean 'stay', 'keep on' etc, in which case the singular masculine imperative is combined with pronouns indicating the subject:

> خليك دغري *khalliik déghri* – (you) keep going straight on

> خليكون هون *khalliikon hoon* – (all of you) stay here

Other verbs

There are a few other similar constructions which distinguish between 'making' and 'letting' or have other implications. Their syntax is generally the same:

> تركو يمشي *tréko yémshi* 'let him go' (= leave him to go)

> جبرني ايجي *jabarni iiji* 'he forced me to come'

Derived verbal forms

In fuSHa you might expect most causatives to be produced from form I verbs using form IV (*af3al*), although you are probably also familiar with some form II verbs with causative meanings. In Shami form IV is almost nonexistent, except with some recent fuSHa reborrowings, and causatives are formed almost exclusively on form II (although not all form IIs are causative by any means – see the section on form IIs for details).

Causatives often have a bewildering number of possible idiomatic English translations. Most have an underlying/equivalent non-causative verb. Often these are form I:

فوّت *fawwat*   'let X in(side)'   < فات *faat* 'go in, enter'
'put X in(side)'
'take/bring X in(side)'

سمّك *sammak*   'make X thicker, thicken X'   < سمك *sémek* 'get thicker'
'make X wider'

خفّف *khaffaf*   'lighten X, make X lighter'   < خفّ *khaff* 'get lighter'
'reduce [the burden of] X'
'go light(er) on X'

مشّى *mashsha*   'walk [a dog]'   < مشي *méshi* 'walk, move'
'make X to walk, let X walk'
'get X moving'
'let X go'

فيّق *fayya2*   'wake X up, awaken X'   < فاق *faa2* 'wake up'

In some cases the usual equivalent is not form I but form V. Since this is often used for passives of form II, the relationship here is a bit more ambiguous, but we don't need to worry too much about which one is derived from the other here:

غيّر *ghayyar*   'change X'   < تغيّر *tghayyar* 'change'[26]

جوّز *jawwaz*   'marry X off'[27]   < تجوز *tjawwaz* 'marry, get married'

There are a few form IIs which can be both causatives and synonyms of an underlying verb:

وقّف *wa22af*   'stand, stop'   < وقف *wé2ef* 'stand'
'cause X to stand, stop'

وصل *waSSal*   'arrive'   < وصل *wéSel* 'arrive'
'deliver X, cause X to arrive'
'give a lift to X'

---

[26] This one can also have a passive meaning 'be changed/be changeable', as in التيكيت ما بيتغيّر 'the ticket can't be changed'.
[27] This can also mean 'marry' in the sense of 'be the presiding official at the marriage ceremony of', as in the uncomfortably ambiguous 'his father, despite being a minister, refused to marry him and his wife'.

Syntax

Syntax of derived causatives is pretty predictable. The subject of the underlying verb becomes its object, and the object of the underlying verb – if there is one – stays as a second object, making the verb into a double-object verb.

سمّعتو الغنية	<	سمع الغنية
samma3to lghénniyye		*séme3 élghénniyye*
I played **him** the song		**He** listened to the song

غيلت المي	<	غلت المي
ghalleet élmoyy		*ghalet élmoyy*
I boiled **the water**		**The water** boiled

As with other double object verbs, when both objects are pronouns the carrier *yaa-* is used:

سمّعتو ياها
samma3to yaaha
I played **it** [= the song] to him

If the underlying verb takes a preposition, this almost invariably stays:

فهّمنا خالد عليها	<	فهم عليها خالد
fahhamna khaaled 3aleeha		*féhem 3aleeha khaaled*
We made Khaaled understand **her**		Khaaled understood **her**

فوّتوه ع المكتب	<	فات ع المكتب
fawwatuu 3almaktab		*faat 3almaktab*
They took him **into the office**		He went **into the office**

Causatives in context

Here are a few example sentences showing off causatives in actual context.

With *khalla*:

شو اللي مخليّك تعمل هيك؟
shu lli mkhalliik ta3mel heek?
What **made** you do/act like that?

المعلم يا بخليك تحب مادة للأبد يا بخليك تكره مادة للألد
lém3allem yaa bikhalliik @t7ébb maadde lil2abad yaa bikhalliik tékrah maadde lil2abad
Teachers either **make** you love a subject forever or **make** you hate a subject forever

بخليك تسرد وتشرح وبالاخير برد عليك باوك طيب معليش
bikhalliik tésrod w téshra7 w bil2akhiir birédd 3aleek b2ooke, Tayyeb, ma3leesh
He **lets** you go on [= narrate] and explain and in the end he responds with 'OK, well, nevermind'

Some straightforward examples with derived verbs:

اذا بدك **تطول** دقنك...

*iza béddak @**TTawwel** da2nak...*

If you're going to **grow** your beard **out**

هنه قطر ما **بفوتوك** بدون فيزا

*hénne qaTar maa **bifawwtuuk** biduun viiza*

Qatar won't **let you in** without a visa

أكتر شي **بخوف** بفيلم الرعب هي هاي الجملة : مستوحى من قصة حقيقية

*2aktar shi **bikhawwef** @bfilm érra3@b hiyye haay éjjémle: méstaw7a mén qéSSa 7aqiiqiyye*

The scariest thing [= most thing that **makes you fear**] in any horror film is this sentence: 'inspired by a true story'

شو بدك **تشرّبني**؟

*shu béddak @**tsharrébni**?*

What are you going to **give me to drink**?

ضرسي ما عم **ينومني** الليل

*Dérsi maa 3am **ynawwém**ni lleel*

I can't sleep at night because of my tooth [= my tooth is not **letting** me **sleep** at night]

رجعنا على محل ما طلعنا

***rajjé3**na 3ala ma7all ma Tlé3na*

Take us **back** [= **make** us **return**] to the place you picked us up

طلعني لبرة

***Talla3**ni labarra*[28]

He **sent/kicked** me **out**

Some examples which are perhaps a bit more metaphorical

سمك تيابك مشان ما تبرد

***sammek** @tyaabak méshaan maa tébrod*

Put a few layers on [= thicken your clothes] so you don't get cold

لا **تكتر** فحم ع الراس

*laa **tkatter** fa7@m 3a rraas*

Don't **put too much** [= overdo the?] charcoal on the head [of the shisha pipe]

كلمة عانس رح **تموتني**

*kélmet 3aanes ra7 @**tmawwét**ni*

The word 'spinster' will **be the death of** me [= will **make** me **die**]

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[28] This one, uniquely, can also be *Taala3* or *Teela3* in Lebanese – i.e. the causative can be form III not form II.

Tamyiiz

You are probably familiar with the fun (or not-so-fun) phenomenon of so-called *tamyiiz* (تمييز, sometimes translated into English as 'specification'). In fuSHa, *tamyiiz* is one of the many uses of the accusative – you take a noun, stick it in the accusative, and it turns into something that can be (often clunkily) translated as 'in terms of' or 'by way of'. This handy PDF gives some nice examples: يختلف علوًّا 'differ in height', يزداد ايمانًا 'increase in belief', اجمل اسلوبًا 'more pleasant with regard to style'. You're probably most familiar with it from the last usage, with superlatives and comparatives.

Some arguable examples of the fuSHa forms are occasionally used in speech too (كتابةً *kitaabatan* 'in writing' for example) especially in higher registers, but productively *tamyiiz* constructions are formed in 3aammiyye without any case ending. This makes them more difficult to spot, but lots of examples of similar constructions do occur – and it's important to understanding that you can recognise them.

Modifying verbs:

Tamyiiz constructions often appear modifying verbs in an adverbial sense. They can frequently but not always be translated with English 'as':

> بشتغل **مهندس**
> *béshtéghel **muhandes***
> I work **as an engineer** (ك here sounds funny and is a common non-native mistake)

> جيت **لجوء**
> *jiit **lujuu2***
> I came as a refugee [= I came **refuge**]

> المصاري بجو **شيكات**
> *élmaSaari biju **sheekaat***
> the money comes **in/as cheques**

Sometimes they modify not the verb itself, but the object:

> عطاني ياه **هدية**
> *3aTaani yaa **hdiyye***
> he gave me it **as a present**

> انت زودت الطين **بلة** اه
> *inte zawwadt éTTiin **bille** aah*
> you've made the situation worse [increased the clay in terms of **wetness**]

They can modify participles, too – as in the following:

> الكاس مليان **مي**
> *élkaas mélyaan **moyy***
> the glass is full **of water**

مبلول **مي**
*mabluul **moyy***
wet (**with water**)

compare:

عبيتو **مي**
*3abbeeto **moyy***
I filled it **with water**

انبليت **مي**
*nballeet **moyy***
I got wet (with **water**)

They can also modify the subject:

انقسمو **قسمين**
*n2asamu **2ésmeen***
they were divided **(into) two groups**

I'm not sure my divisions into modifying the subject, object and verb are particularly scientific, but hopefully these examples give a decent impression of the breadth of possible semantics.

With question words

With questions with *2addeesh* ('how much') and *shu* ('what'), there is often a *tamyiiz* which narrows the specification of the question word. Unlike in English ('what houses', 'how much change'), the *tamyiiz* typically appears later on:

قديش معك **فراطة؟**
*2addeesh ma3ak @**fraaTa**?*
how much change do you have? [how much do you have **(by way of) change**?]

شو عندك **افكار** لتطوير البلد
*shu 3éndak **2afkaar** la-taTwiir élbalad?*
what ideas do you have [have **(in the way of ideas)**] for developing the country?

They don't necessarily have to be actual questions, either:

الله وحدو بيعلم شو ممكن تجيني **أحاسيس** و **مشاعير**
*aLLa wa7do bya3lem shu mémken tijiini **a7aasiis** w **mashaa3iir***
only God knows what feelings I might have [= what can come to me (by way of) **feelings** and **feelings**]

These are of course a subset of the versions above with subjects and objects.

Other uses in fuSHa

In fuSHa *tamyiiz* is also used for expressions of quantity ('a glass of water', 'a kilo of sugar') and for superlatives/comparatives where an *afDal* noun cannot be readily used (اكثر تعقيدًا 'more complicated' for example). In *3aammiyye* the former is usually expressed with an *iDaafe* (*kaasét moyy, kaast élmoyy*) and the latter with a combination of a normal adjective and an *afDal* (معقد اكتر *mu3aqqad 2aktar*).

Numbers

In fuSHa numbers are famously terrible and impossible to master. In Shami, they are much better.

One

The number one has two forms: واحد *waa7ed* (in Jor/Pal *waa7ad*) and واحدة *waa7de/wa7de.* As in fuSHa, this typically follows the singular noun as an adjective to emphasise 'one':

في شلغة واحدة بس
fii shéghle waa7de bass
there's just one thing

With certain collective nouns (like foods and currencies) it can be placed before as a counter:

واحدة بيتزا *waa7de biitza* 'one pizza'

Or it can stand alone, of course:

كام شخص معك؟ واحد
kam shakh@S ma3ak? waa7ed.
how many people do you have with you? one.

واحد and واحدة are very commonly used to mean 'somebody' or 'some guy/some woman':

معي واحد بتعرفو
ma3i waa7ed bta3rfo
I've got a guy here you know

واحدة تانية *waa7de taanye* 'someone else', 'another woman'

قديش ع الواحد؟
addeesh 3a lwaa7ed?
how much per person?

It can also appear with (animate) nouns as a kind of indefinite article:

انت عن جد واحد اهبل
inte 3an jadd waa7ed 2ahbal
you really are an idiot

As in fuSHa, the ordinal form ('first') is أول *awwal*. This can either appear before the noun like a superlative (أول واحد *awwal waa7ed* 'the first one') or after it as in fuSHa, in which case it has a feminine form اولى *uula.*

Two

'Two' has two forms: اتنين *tneen* and its feminine equivalent تنتين *ténteen/tinteen*. It can be used to emphasise a dual:

شغلتين تنتين *shégh@lteen ténteen* 'two things'

تنين can also be used, unlike in fuSHa, before a plural noun (in which it does not have a feminine):

تنين اشخاص *tneen ashkhaaS* 'two people'

In front of certain collective nouns (like foodstuffs, currencies, and collective plurals) it can be used to count:

تنين بيتزا *tneen biitza* 'two pizzas'

Its ordinal form is تاني *taani*, fem. تانية *taanye*, which can be placed before the noun like a superlative (in which case it has no feminine) or after it as in fuSHa. This doubles up as the normal word for 'other':

تاني واحد *taani waa7ed* 'the second one'

3-10

Each number from 3-10 has two forms, one used before nouns and one used independently. Although with 3-10 these forms resemble the fuSHa feminine and masculine, they have nothing to do with gender in Shami:

تلاتة تلت *tlaate tlétt*

اربعة اربع *arba3a arba3*

خمسة خمس *khamse kham@s*

ستة ست *sétte sétt*

سبعة سبع *sab3a sab@3*

تماني تمن *tmaani (tamaanye* in Jor/Pal) *tmén*

تسعة تسع *tés3a tés@3*

عشرة عشر *3ashara 3ashar*

The counting forms are followed as in fuSHa by plural nouns:

تمن اشخاص *tmén ashkhaaS* 'eight people'

A few common words (*yoom*, *shahr*, *alf*) have special plurals (*téyyaam*, *téshor*, *taalaaf*) when counted in this fashion:

سبع تالاف *sab@3 taalaaf* 'seven thousand'

اربع تيام *arba3 téyyaam* 'four days'

A few sort-of-collective nouns like names of foods, currencies and a few irregular plurals like *3arab* are counted with the full forms:

تلاته بيرة *tlaate biira* 'three beers'

خمسة بوند *khamse boond* 'five pounds'

The ordinal versions are as expected: تالت رابع خامس سادس سابع تامن تاسع عاشر *taalet raabe3 khaames saades saabe3 taamen taase3 3aasher*, with the predictable feminines. They are commonly put before a noun with no definite article, like superlatives:

تامن واحد *taamen waa7ed* 'the eighth one'

11-19

Like 3-9 11-19 have independent and counting forms, but they are usually followed by singular nouns. In this case the counting forms, counterintuitively, are longer (with the *-ar* suffix):

احدعش احدعشر *é7da3sh é7da3shar*

انتعش اتنعشر *étna3sh étna3shar*

تلتعش تلتعشر *tléTTa3sh tléTTa3shar*

اربعتش اربعتشر *arba3Ta3sh arba3Ta3shar*

خمستعش خمستعشر *kham@STa3sh kham@sTa3shar*

ستتعش ستتعشر *séTTa3sh séTTa3shar*

سبعتعش سبعتعشر *sab@3Ta3sh sab@3Ta3shar*

تمنتعش تمنتعشر *tménTa3sh tménTa3shar*

تسعتعش تسعتعشر *tés3aTa3sh tés3aTa3shar*

Many Syrian speakers use the first form even in front of nouns:

تمنتعش واحد *tménTa3sh waa7ed* 'eighteen guys'

The most common way to turn these into ordinals is just to place them after the noun:

الدرس الخمستعش *éddars élkham@sTa3sh* 'the fifteenth lesson'

20-90

The round numbers are basically as expected. They have only one form each, independently or with nouns. They are followed by the singular, as in fuSHa, and have no distinct ordinals, again as in fuSHa.

عشرين *3éshriin*

تلاتين *tlaatiin*

اربعين *arba3iin*

خمسين *khamsiin*

ستين *séttiin*

سبعين *sab3iin*

تمانين *tmaaniin*

تسعين *tés3iin*

The compound forms with units are formed, invariably for gender, as follows:

واحدة وعشرين *wa7daa w3éshriin*

تنين وعشرين *tneen w3éshriin*

تلاتة وعشرين *tlaataa w3éshriin*

اربعة وعشرين *arba3aa w3éshriin*

خمسة وعشرين *khamsaa w3éshriin*

ستة وعشرين *sittaa w3éshriin*

سبعة وعشرين *sab3aa w3éshriin*

تماني وعشرين *tmaani w3éshriin*

تسعة وعشرين *tis3a w3éshriin*

100, 1,000, 1,000,000, 1,000,000,000

The words here are مية الف مليون مليار *miyye alf milyoon milyaar*. All are followed by singulars:

الف شخص *alf shakh@S* 'a thousand people'

مليون دولار *milyoon dolaar* 'a million dollars'

Miyye has a special form, *miit*, used when it is followed by a noun:

ميت واحد *miit waa7ed* 'a hundred guys'

To say for example '150', '50' is attached to larger numbers with *w-* 'and':

مية وخمسين واحد *miyye w-khamsiin* – 150

مية وستة وستين *miyye w-sittaa w-sittiin* – 166

All of these numbers have dual forms: ميتين الفين مليونين مليارين *miiteen alfeen milyooneen milyaareen:*

ميتين دولار *miiteen doolar* 'two hundred dollars'

They can also be counted themselves, as in English:

تلت ميت واحد *tlét miit waa7ed* 'three hundred people' (*miyye* does not have a plural)

خمس تالاف سوري *kham@s taalaaf suuri* '500 Syrians'

Fractions

Fractions up to ten, like fuSHa, are formed on *fé3l* ('half' and 'sixth' are irregular):

نص تلت ربع خمس سدس سبع تمن تسع عشر
néSS tél@t réb@3 khém@s séd@s séb@3 tém@n tés@3 3ésh@r

These have plurals formed on *af3aal*:

بانصاص الليل
b2anSaas élleel
In the middle [= the halves] of the night

عم يضربو اخماس باسداس
3am yéD@rbu akhmaas b2asdaas
they're putting two ant two together [multiplying 5ths by 6ths]

تلت ارباعون
tlétt arbaa3on
three quarters of them

(Basic) maths

Addition is expressed either with *w-* 'and' or زائد *zaa2ed* 'plus' (the verb is جمع *jama3*):

واحد زائد تنين بساوي تلاتة *waa7ed zaa2ed @tneen bisaawi tlaate* – 1 + 2 = 3

واحد وتنين بساوي تلاتة *waa7ed w@tneen bisaawi tlaate* – 1 + 2 = 3

Subtraction is expressed with ناقص *naaqeS* (the verb is طرح *Tara7*):

تلاتة ناقص واحد *tlaate naaqeS waa7ed* – 3 - 2

Multiplication is expressed by ضرب*Dar@b* or بـ *b-* (the verb is ضرب*Darab*):

تلاتة ضرب تلاتة *tlaate Darb @tlaate* – 3 x 3

تلاتة بتلاتة *tlaate b@tlaate* – 3 x 3

Division is expressed by مقسوم على *maqsuum 3ala* or simply على *3ala* (the verb is قسم *qasam*):

تلاتة على تلاتة *tlaate 3ala tlaate* – 3/3

Expressing possibility, obligation, etc

Possibility

ممكن *mumken/mémken*

This one literally means 'is possible' and is usually best translated as 'can', 'could' or 'might' depending on context. As an auxiliary, it is followed by a subjunctive verb:

> ممكن تروح معنا اذا بدك
> *mémken @truu7 ma3na iza béddak*
> you can go with us if you want

> بتعرف انه الواحد احيانا ممكن يطلع خلقه
> *bta3ref énno ilwaa7ed a7yaanan mumken yéTla3 khél2o*
> you know that sometimes, a person can lose their temper… [= that one sometimes their temper can rise]

> الله وحدو بيعلم شو ممكن تجيني أحاسيس و مشاعير
> *aLLa wa7do bya3lem shu mémken tijiini a7aasiis w mashaa3iir*
> only God knows what feelings I might have [= what feelings and feelings might come to me]

For the past, we have to use كان as an auxiliary. This gives a counterfactual meaning (could have, but didn't).

> كان ممكن يعمل فتنة بيني وبين امي
> *kaan mémken ya3mel fitne beeni wbeen émmi*
> it could've caused real trouble between me and my mum

> كان ممكن يعمل اي شي بدو ياه
> *kaan mumken ya3mel eyy shi béddo yaa*
> he could have done anything he wanted

It can also be used with subjunctive *kaan* plus a past verb:

> ممكن يكون راح يجيب بيكيت دخان
> *mémken ykuun raa7 yjiib baakeet dékhkhaan*
> he might have gone to get a packet of cigarettes

It can be used in requests as well, like English 'could':

> لو سمحت ممكن تسكر الشباك؟
> *law sama7@t mumken tsakker éshshébbaak?*
> excuse me, could you close the window?

In this sense it can appear without a verb:

ممكن قلم؟

mumken 2alam?

could I have a pen?

It appears on its own as well:

ولا ممكن!

wala mumken!

it's just not possible (anymore!)

اي ممكن

ee mumken

yeah, possibly (or yes, I can/could, yes it can/could etc)

كل شي ممكن

kéll shi mémken

anything's possible

اذا ممكن

iza mumken

if that's possible (if you can, etc etc)

yémken يمكن

Yémken is a frozen verbal form without a *b-* prefix. It is an adverbial form and often means 'perhaps' or 'possibly'. In this sense it is much freer in terms of where it can go in the sentence than *mémken* is:

يمكن اكتريت المشاكل اللي بتصير بالحياة سببها انو…

yémken aktariit élmashaakel élli bétSiir bi-l7ayaat sababa énno...

perhaps the reason for most of the problems that happen in life is…

لحتا تترجمها بدك يمكن تكتب هامش صفحتين شرح لالها حتا يفهمها القارئ

la7atta ttarjémha béddak yémken téktob haamesh Séf@7teen shar@7 la2élha 7atta yéfhamha lqaare2

in order to translate it you'd need to write maybe a two-page long footnote explaining it for the reader to understand…

مو مكتوبة بصيغة صح يمكن

muu maktuube bSiigha Sa77 yémken

it might not be written right

يمكن عمر بن الخطاب كان ناجح نوعا ما

yémken 3omar bin al-khaTTaab kaan naaje7 naw3an ma

I guess/maybe (the TV series) Umar bin al-Khattab was sort of good

You can use it with the past too:

يمكن راح يمكن ما راح
yémken raa7 yémken maa raa7
maybe he went, maybe he didn't

It is also used like *mémken* as an auxiliary with a subjunctive:

يمكن ما يتوفر معي
yémken maa yétwaffar 3éndi
I might not be able to get it (= the money) [= it might not become available with me]

It occasionally acts like a proper verb meaning 'be possible':

اكتر ما يمكن
aktar ma yémken
as much as possible

بصير *biSiir*

This is typically an auxiliary and means approximately 'is it possible/acceptable?' It appears with subjunctive verbs:

ما بصير تحكي هيك قدام الضيوف
maa biSiir té7ki heek 2éddaam léDyuuf
it's not right for you to talk like that in front of the guests!

بصير احكيلك اشتقتلك ولا الجديدة للي عندك بتغار؟
biSiir é7kiilak @shta2téllak wélla léjdiide lli 3éndak bétghaar?
am I allowed to tell you I miss you or is your new (girlfriend) the jealous type?

بصير احول خطي من اجتماعي لخط زين الجديد؟
biSiir a7awwel khaTTi min ijtimaa3i la-khaTT zeen lijdiid?
is it possible to change my (phone) contract from 'sociable' to Zain's new contract?
['sociable' was the name of one of Zain's phone contracts]

Like *mémken* it can be used with nouns too:

بصير سؤال صغير؟
biSiir su2aal @zghiir?
can I just ask one question? [= a small question]

Generally this form is invariable (and should not be confused with other uses of *Saar* like 'become' and 'happen' which conjugate normally) but some Syrians accept the plural form with nouns like in the following sentence:

التنين بصيرو
létneen biSiiru
both are possible, both work

بجوز *bijuuz*

بجوز is another frozen verbal form used similar to يمكن, meaning 'possibly' or 'might':

في منن بجوز اصلن من السويدا
fii ménnon bijuuz aSlon mn éssweeda
there are some of them who might be originally from Sweida [= that their origin might be from Sweida]

بجوز قلون رح يشتكي عليون
bijuuz 2éllon ra7 yéshtéki 3aleyyon
maybe he told them he was going to make a complaint about them

It can appear with normal *b*-presents like this – if the verb refers to something general or actually present (as opposed to future):

بجوز بيرمز لشي او لشخص
bijuuz byérmoz la-shi aw la-shakh@S
it might be a reference to a thing or a person

It can also appear in counterfactuals meaning 'might have' or 'perhaps' (depending on context):

لو هربو بجوز كانو نفدو
law hérbu bijuuz kaanu nafadu
if they'd run away perhaps they'd have escaped/they might have escaped

Or it can act like *mémken* with future reference:

كمان في كلمة بجوز تفكرها مشابهة...
kamaan fii kélme bijuuz tfakkérha mushaabiha
there's another word you might think is similar…

بجوز احتاج مساعدتك
bijuuz é7taaj musaa3adtak
I might need your help

بركي, بلكي *bérki, belki*

This one is a loanword from Turkish *belki*. In Damascus *bérki* (presumably a corruption) is more common but you will hear both. *Belki* is the normal form in Jordan and Palestine, I think. It is used almost exclusively with future reference, most commonly with *b*-present verbs:

بركي جبلك كل يوم بيتزا
bérki jéblek kéll yoom biitza
maybe I'll bring you pizza every day

بركي منشوفك عن قريب
bérki ménshuufak 3an 2ariib
maybe (hopefully) we'll see you sometime soon

It is sometimes used with a past tense verb, but this also has future reference and carries a very specific meaning which is something like 'but what if…':

> بركي انمسكت؟
> *bérki nmasak@t?*
> what if you get caught?!

> وبركي ما قدرت ترجع؟
> *w-bérki maa 2dér@t térja3*
> and what if you can't come back?!

It is also used to connect two clauses with a sense that is sort of difficult to translate concisely into English. Usually the format is like this: 'do X, *bérki* you'll do Y' and it means something like 'so that you might' in archaic English:

> احكيلو بركي بزورنا
> *é7kiilo bérki bizuurna*
> talk to him and maybe he'll visit us

This joke illustrates this use well even if it doesn't say much about marital life:

> وحدة قالت لزوجها : حلمت انك علمتني السواقة و جبتلي سيارة كمان ، قلها زوجها ؛ كملي نومك بركي بتعملي حادث والله بياخدك
> *wa7de 2aalet la-zoojha: 7alam@t énnak 3allamtni léswaa2a w-jébtélli siyyaara kamaan! 2éllha zoojha kammli noomek bérki bta3mli 7aades w-aLLa yaakhdik!*
> a woman said to her husband: 'I dreamt you'd bought me a car and taught me to drive too!' Her husband said: 'go back to sleep and maybe (hopefully) you'll have an accident!' [= that you might have an accident, and God take you!]

مستحيل *musta7iil*

'Impossible', 'it's impossible'. Used with a subjunctive verb:

> مستحيل انساكي
> *musta7iil énsaaki*
> it would be impossible for me to forget you

The passive

The [passive](#) is often used to express general possibility/ability:

> الزلمة ما بينمشى معو
> *ézzalame maa byénmasha ma3o*
> you can't get along with the guy [= he is not walked with]

> ما بينهرب من هالسجن
> *maa byénhareb mén has-séj@n*
> you can't escape from this prison

Likelihood

3al2akiid ع الاكيد **, akiid** اكيد

Certainly, definitely, surely.

> انتي اكيد مالك مقتنعة بيلي عم تقوليه
> *inti akiid maalek méqtan3a byalli 3am t2uulii*
> you definitely/surely don't believe what you're saying

> بيجي ع الاكيد خلال اسبوع
> *byiji 3al2akiid khilaal ésbuu3*
> it'll definitely come within a week

3al2aghlabع الاغلب

Probably, most likely.

> ع الاغلب ما في دوام لاول الشهر
> *3al2aghlab maa fii dawaam la-2awwal éshshah@r*
> most likely there'll be no work 'til the beginning of next month

bikuun بكون

Bikuun is often used to express judgements about likelihood in a way similar to 'must be'.

béddo ykuun بدو يكون

This construction is used to express judgements about likelihood in a way similar to 'he must be':

> هلق بدو يكون مشي
> *halla2 béddo ykuun méshi*
> by now he'll have left

ijbaari اجباري

Literally 'compulsory', but used to mean 'certainly', 'definitely'.

Ability

2éder/byé2derقدر / بيقدر

This is the normal equivalent to 'can', but typically expresses ability of a person rather than possibility. It uses subjunctive:

> بتقدر تقول مثلا بطلت من الشغل
> *bté2der @t2uul masalan baTTal@t mn éshshégh@l*
> you can say for example 'I stopped working…'

It can be used in the past to mean 'couldn't', if it refers to one specific time:

> بس والله ما قدرت اعمل شي
> *bass waLLa maa 2dér@t a3mel shi*
> but I swear, I couldn't do anything

It can also be used in participle form (*2édraan*) referring to a specific time-delimited period:

> متل اللي تعبان ومو قدران يمشي
> *mét@l élli ta3baan w-muu 2édraan yémshi*
> like someone who's worn out and can't walk (normally)

With the preposition على it can also be used with nouns and pronouns:

> اللي بتقدر عليه
> *élli bté2der 3alee*
> what you can do, what you're capable of

احسن بيحسن *a7san byé7sen*

Sometimes *7asan* instead of *a7san*. In fuSHa this means 'to do well' or 'do properly' but in Syrian it's used for simple 'be able to' or 'can' as a slightly less common synonym of *2éder*:

> ما احسنت نام *maa a7san@t naam* – I couldn't sleep

Its participle is حسنان *7asnaan*:

> مو حسنان نام
> *muu 7asnaan naam*
> I can't sleep

عرف / بيعرف *3éref bya3ref*

Literally 'to know'. Used with a subjunctive verb to indicate 'know how to':

> انا بعرف سوق
> *ana ba3ref suu2*
> I know how to drive

Its semantics however often cover things we use 'can' for in English:

> ما عم اعرف افتح الباب
> *maa 3am a3ref éfta7 élbaab*
> I can't work out how to open the door

> لو سمحت وطي صوتك شوي! خليني اعرف كمل شغلي
> *law sama7@t waTTi Sootak shweyy, khalliini a3ref kammel shéghli*
> please lower your voice and let me do my job [= know how to finish my work]

فيـ *fii-*

The pronominal forms of the preposition *b-* or a slightly different variation with an *n* added (*fiini, fiik/fiinak, fiiki/fiinek, fii/fiino, fiyya/fiina, fiina, fiikon, fiyyon/fiinon*) can be used with a subjunctive verb to express ability:

> فينك تقول انو
> *fiinak @t2uul énno*
> you could say that…

> ما فيني امشي
> *maa fiini émshi*
> I can't walk

For the past, it requires *kaan*:

> ما كان فيني اعمل شي
> *maa kaan fiini a3mel shi*
> I wasn't able to do anything

Obligation

لازم *laazem*

'Must', 'have to', 'should'. Used with a subjunctive verb:

> لازم تروح
> *laazem @truu7*
> you have to go, you should go

With a negative (either *muu* or *maa* works, though *maa* is more common) it usually means 'you shouldn't/mustn't' etc and not 'you don't have to':

> ما لازم تروح
> *maa laazem @truu7*
> you shouldn't go

It can be used in the past, but then its meaning is almost always counterfactual 'should have (but didn't)'. In order to say 'I had to' or 'I was forced to' you have to make use of other verbs (e.g. *njabar@t*). *Laazem* can either be placed into the past with كان or have a past verb used directly after it:

> كان لازم تروح
> *kaan laazem @truu7*
> you should have gone

> لازم رحت
> *laazem ré7@t*
> you should have gone

لازم can also be used as a normal adjective meaning 'necessary':

هي الورقة مو لازمة

hayy élwara2a muu laazme

this one's not necessary

In this sense it can take a direct pronominal object:

المصاري لازمينني

élmaSaari laazmiinni

I need the money [note *maSaari* is plural]

Often *laazem* + object suffix is used almost like a verb meaning 'to need' which then takes direct objects normally and uses *yaa-* with pronoun objects:

لازمني ياهون

laazémni yaahon

I need it (the money) [= I need them]

Daruuri ضروري

Usually 'urgent' or 'absolutely necessary', used with a subjunctive verb:

ضروري تضوج هيك دغري؟

Daruuri TDuuj heek déghri?

do you have to get upset like that straight away??

DTarr méDTarr اضطر مضطر

Generally stronger than *laazem* and can be used to express obligation in the past (unlike *laazem*, which if used in the past gives a counterfactual reading). Often appears with انو:

اضطريت اني اشتري واحد جديد

DTarreet énni éshtéri waa7ed @jdiid

I had to buy a new one

It can take a noun object with على:

ماني مضطر عليون

maani méDTarr 3aleyyon

I don't need them urgently

majbuur njabar انجبر مجبور

'Obligated', 'forced'. *Majbuur* is the participle, انجبر is the verb.

مجبور سافر

majbuur saafer

I have to/I'm obliged to go abroad

كانت الطريق مسدودة فانجبرت ارجع

kaant éTTarii2a masduude fa-njabar@t érja3

the road was blocked so I had to come back

Simple prepositions

ب *b-* or *bé-*

b- perhaps most commonly expresses static location and lines up with English 'in', 'at' or fuSHa في.

بالبيت *bi-lbeet* – at home

بالسيارة *bi-ssiyyaara* – in the car

It is also used to express the instrument or means by which something is done (one of the uses of English 'with'):

عملتو بايدي *3mélto b-2iidi* – I made it myself [= with my hand]

بسرعة *b-sér3a* – quickly [= with speed]

It is also commonly used with the meaning 'about':

اليوم ما بقدر احكي فيه
élyoom maa bé2der é7ki fii
I can't talk about today

It is also idiomatically used in names of food, etc to mean 'with':

رز بعدس *rézz b-3adas* – rice and lentils (i.e. Jordanian-style mjaddara)

It is also used idiomatically replacing normal direct objects in a way that adds a nuance of long, continuous action (like the colloquial English use of 'on'):

عم يضرب فيني
3am yéDrob fiini
 he's beating on me

As with other prepositions it is also used commonly with verbs in senses that seem relatively unconnected to its independent use:

اتطلع بـ *TTalla3 b-* 'look at'

التقى بـ *lta2a b-* 'meet with'

Most speakers do not have في as an independent preposition, but when pronoun suffixes are added to *b-* it becomes ـفي. In Syrian the pronoun forms are فيني فيك فيكي فيه فيا فينا فيكون فيون *fiini fiik fiiki fii fiyya fiina fiikon fiyyon* (occasionally *fiiha, fiihon*) – فيني is irregular. The regular form *fiyyi* is found in other dialects. In Pal/Jor *fiyyo* (for *fii*), *fiikom* and *fiihom* are used.

In Syrian and Lebanese, *fii-* is also very commonly used as a pseudoverb with subjunctive constructions, expressing ability:

ما فيني احكي هلق
maa fiini é7ki halla2
I can't talk now [in Lebanese, *maa fiyye/fiyyi*…]

مع *ma3*

مع as a preposition almost always means 'with':

مع اختي *ma3 ékhti* – with my sister

There are occasions when it is idiomatically translated using another preposition in English, but its basic meaning is the same:

ما عم ينفتح معي
maa 3am yénfate7 ma3i
I can't get it to open [= it's not opening with me]

شو صار معك
shu Saar ma3ak
what happened to you [= what's happened with you?]

كيفني معك؟
kiifni ma3ak?
what do you think of me? [= how am I with you?]

It is also used as a pseudoverb meaning 'to have on you', 'to have with you':

اي معي المصاري
ee ma3i lmaSaari
I've got the money with me, yeah

In Jor/Pal, some speakers use the Egyptian-style form *ma3aa-* with suffix (معاي *ma3aay*) rather than the expected form *ma3-* (*ma3i*).

عند *3énd*

3énd (or sometimes in Syr/Leb *3and*) expresses location near something or in the vicinity of something:

عند المدخل
3énd élmadkhal
by the entrance

انا عند الكازية
ana 3énd élkaaziyye
I'm by the petrol station

It is commonly used in ways which are tricky to translate into English directly but preserve this meaning intuitively (often it can be translated with French *chez*):

كنت عند خالد
ként 3énd khaaled
I was at Khaled's

المشكلة عندك
élmésh@kle 3éndak
 the problem's at your end

وقف عندك
wa22ef 3éndak
stop where you are

It is frequently used as a pseudoverb meaning 'have', as in fuSHa:

عندي تلت اخوات
3éndi tlett ékhwaat
I have three brothers

Its pronoun forms are regular, except the 1pl form: عنا *3énna* 'we have'/'by us'.

عن *3an*

3an commonly expresses distance or movement away from something:

قديش بتبعد عن البيت؟
2addeesh btéb3od 3an élbeet?
 how far away is it from the house?

اذا نفصل راسو عن جسمو نهائيا
iza nfaSal raaso 3an jésmo nihaa2iyyan…
if his head was totally separated from his body…

It also commonly means 'about':

اللي قلتلك عنو
élli 2éltéllak 3anno
the one I told you about

It means 'for' in the sense of 'instead of', as in these examples:

شيل عنك؟
shiil 3annak?
should I carry [it] for you [= instead of you]?

بدفع عنك
bédfa3 3annak
 I'll pay for you

It also expresses, occasionally, duration (e.g. of a contract):

العقد عن سنة
él3aq@d 3an séne
the contract is for a year

With pronouns it acquires an extra n: عنو *3anno* 'about him', for example.

mén من

Mén (sometimes reduced to *mn* before vowels) is most commonly translatable as 'from', expressing movement away from something:

جاية من بيروت
jaaye mén beeruut
I'm coming from Beirut

انا من برطانيا
ana mén briTaanya
I'm from Britain

In this sense, it can be combined with other prepositions:

هات من عندك
haat mén 3éndak
give me some of yours [= from by you]

من ع النيت
mén 3a-nneet
 off the internet

It also frequently means 'by way of' or 'via' or 'through':

من هون؟
mén hoon?
is it this way? (this is the root of the common arabophone English mistake 'from here?')

فات من الباب التاني
 faat mn élbaab éttaani
he came in through the other door

القطار بيمرق من هون
élqiTaar byémro2 mén hoon
the train comes through here

من تحت الجسر
mén ta7t éjjés@r
(go) underneath the bridge

It also very commonly expresses cause:

من غير شي متدايق
mén gheer shi métdaaye2
I'm annoyed because of something else

As a time expression, it means 'since' or 'ago' (equivalent to fuSHa *mundhu*):

من تلت سنين
mén tlétt @sniin
three years ago

Like عن it gains an extra n when pronouns are attached: منو *ménno* 'from him'.

لـ *la-*

la- generally lines up with fuSHa *li-*. It typically means 'for':

هدية لمرتي
hdiyye la-marti
 a present for my wife

It is also used, as in fuSHa, to express belonging outside the *iDaafe* construction:

لمين الشنطة؟
la-miin éshshanTa?
whose is the bag?

غنية لفيروز
ghanniyye la-feeruuz
a song by Feyrouz, a song of Feyrouz's (thus the common Arabophone mistake 'a song for Feyrouz', which means something else in English)

In some other limited contexts (mainly with function words) it expresses motion to or reason:

لوين؟
laween?
where to?

لعندك
la3éndak
to your house

لهيك
laheek
because of that, as a result

It also means 'until':

لهلق سهرانين؟
lahalla2 sahraaniin?
you're still up? [= until now staying up?]

سهرانين للصبح
sahraaniin la-SSéb@7
we're staying up until morning!

It is also commonly associated with verbs:

دقّ لـ *da22 la-* 'ring up, phone'

حكى لـ *7aka la–* 'speak to'

In particular, many loaned verbs take *la-*:

تلْفن لـ *talfan la-* 'telephone'

فرمت لـ *farmat la-* 'format' (a computer)

It is also often combined with a normal object or possessive pronoun and a following noun for emphasis or, sometimes, for unclear reasons:

رفيقو لابوي *rfii2o la-2abuuy* – my father's friend

سألو لإلو *s2alo la-2élo* – ask *him* [not me]

la- has two sets of pronominal forms, one independent and one which commonly attaches to verbs (and occasionally other parts of speech). We have discussed the attaching set already in the object pronoun section. The independent set are formed by attaching pronouns not to *la-* but to *él-*: الك الو *élak élo* etc. These sometimes come with an additional *la-* prefixed to them: لإلك *la2élak*:

الشنطة لإلك؟ *ésh-shanTa la-2élak?* – is the bag yours?

These independent forms are sometimes used as a pseudoverb expressing possession, as in fuSHa:

الك اخوات؟ *élak ékhwaat?* – do you have any brothers and sisters?

كـ *ka-*

Ka- is comparatively rarely used in colloquial. It is usually used in the sense of 'as' you see in the following sentence:

ما بقدر انكر اصلي كعربي
maa béd2der énkor 2aSli ka-3arabi
 I can't deny my origins as an Arab (or 'as an Arab, I can't…' depending on pause)

In a related usage you may occasionally hear it in a difficult-to-translate sense meaning something like English -wise:

هلق انا كوضعي المالي تمام

halla2 2ana ka-waD3i lmaali tamaam

now I'm, money-wise, fine

على 3ala

This is by far the most complicated and multi-meaning preposition in both colloquial and probably fuSHa as well. It has two forms: على and simple عـ *3a-*. The contracted form is always used before the definite article (*3a-lbeet*) and optionally used elsewhere too (*3a raasi* 'on my head').

It often means 'on' or 'onto', as in fuSHa:

علقو ع الحيط *3all2o 3al7eeT* – hang it on the wall

ع التخت *3a-ttakh@t* – on the bed

It also often translates English 'at' in the sense of alongside, by:

ع الشباك *3a-shshébbaak* – at the window

ع الشارة *3a-shshaara* – at the (traffic) lights

It has a similar translation ('at') with a few other verbs:

قوص عليي *2awwaS 3aleyyi* – he shot at me

تطلع على *TTalla3 3ala* – look at (or تطلع بـ)

In colloquial it is also the most common way of expressing movement towards or into something, replacing إلى in fuSHa (which does not exist):

رايحين ع الجامعة
raay7iin 3a-jjaam3a
we're going to university

فات ع الغرفة
faat 3a-lghérfe
he came into the room

In this meaning, it can appear alongside other expressions of location, particularly لعندو:

رحت لعندو ع البيت
ré7@t la3éndo 3a-lbeet
I went [to see him] at his house

It can also express metaphorical movement:

انا بدي قدم على هلمنصب
2ana béddi 2addem 3ala hal-manSeb
I want to apply for this job [= go forward, put forward for]

It is translated by 'for/to' in expressions like the following:

عزيز عليي *3aziiz 3aleyyi* – dear to me

صغير عليك *zghiir 3aleek* – it's (too) small for you

It often means something along the lines of 'according to':

ع الدور *3a-ddoor* – take it in turns/you have to wait your turn [= (it works) according to (a system of) turns]

ماشي ع النظام *maashi 3a-nniZaam* – operating according to a system, in an orderly fashion

على كيفك *3ala keefak~kiifak* – up to you, right up your street [= according to your mood]

على زوقك *3ala zoo2ak* – what you think is best, 'surprise me' [= according to your taste]

It can express a meaning of being in a particular state, as in the following expression:

قديش صارلو على هالحالة؟
2addeesh Sallo 3ala hal7aale?
how long's he been in this state?

It is used in a large number of adverbial and adjectival expressions in a related sense:

على انفراد *3ala infiraad* – in private

على رواق *3ala rawaa2* – in peace and quiet

على مهلو *3ala mahl-o* – slowly, taking his time (with pronoun agreement)

ع القديم *3a-l2adiim* – old-fashioned

ع السريع *3a-ssarii3* – quickly

ع البطيء *3a-lbaTii2* – slowly

ع المظبوط *3a-lmaZbuuT* – precisely

ع المضمون *3a-lmaDmuun* – guaranteed

ع الاغلب *3a-l2aghlab* – most likely

ع الماشي *3a-lmaashi* – in passing

على مراقي *3ala maraa2i* – to my taste, to my liking, my type

على لبناني *3ala lébnaani* – Lebanese style

It also often expresses that its object is negatively affected by a verb, as in the following expressions:

تجوز عليي
tjawwaz 3aleyyi
he married [a second wife, to my detriment] (this expression means 'he married a second wife whilst I was still married to him' and is difficult to translate pithily into English for obvious reasons)

طلّع عليي إشاعات
Talla3 3aleyyi 2ishaa3aat
he started rumours about me

عم اطفي الشوفاج ع الاولاد بالليل
3am éTfi shshoofaaj 3a-l@wlaad billeel
I've been turning the heating off on the kids at night [i.e. to the kids' detriment]

دقيت عليه الباب
da22eet 3alee lbaab
I knocked on the door [of the room he was in]

راح عليك الباص
raa7 3aleek élbaaS
you missed the bus [the bus went, to your detriment]

As in the second example, it can mean 'about', often in a negative context: حكى and حكى على and عن are supposedly distinct, with the first meaning 'talk negatively about' and the second a more neutral 'talk about'. In reality it seems that على is increasingly becoming a neutral 'about' in some expressions:

اللي قلتلك عليه
élli 2éltéllak 3alee
what I told you about

It can express 'in spite of':

انت معك حق على حيونتك
inte ma3ak 7a22 3ala 7eewantak
even though you're a moron, you're right

انت ولد ازعر وصرصري بس بحبك على عيبك
inte walad az3ar w SarSari bass @b7ébbak 3ala 3eebak
you're a petty thug, but I like you in spite of your flaws

Finally, it can express (like English 'on') that someone will pay for something or is responsible for something:

> العرس عليي
> *él3ar@s 3aleyyi*
> the (cost of) the wedding's on me!

> على حساب مين؟
> *3ala 7saab miin?*
> who's paying? [= on whose account?]

> خلي الباقي عليي
> *khalli lbaa2i 3aleyyi*
> leave the rest to me [= on me]

In a related sense, it can be used as a pseudoverb with a subjunctive verb following it in the meaning 'must' (also found in fuSHa):

> عليكون تدفعو
> *3aleekon tédfa3u*
> you must pay

The pronominal forms are attached to the root *3alee-*: عليي *3aleyyi* etc.

Complex prepositions

قدام *2éddaam*

Literally 'in front of':

قدام البيت *2éddaam élbeet* – in front of the house

لا تفضحونا قدام الاجانب
laa téfDa7uuna 2éddaam él2ajaaneb
don't make us look bad in front of the foreigners!

Can be used with *la-* indicating motion:

لقدام شوي
la2éddaam shwayy
a bit further on (keep going)

Can be used independently meaning approximately 'in front':

انا قاعد قدام وهي قاعدة ورا
ana 2aa3ed 2éddaam w-hiyye 2aa3de wara
 I'm sitting in the front and she's sitting in the back [of a car]

قد *2add*

2add essentially means 'the size of' or 'the extent of', and has a number of idiomatic uses:

مين بحبك قدي؟
miin bi7ébbak 2addi?
 who loves you as much as me?

ما في كرسي قدي
maa fii kérsi 2addi
there's no chair big enough for me

انت قدها؟
énte 2addha?
are you up to the task?

انا قد كلامي
ana 2add kalaami
I keep my word

بحبك قد الدنيا
b7ébbak 2add éddinye
 I love you to the moon and back [= as much as the world]

ع قد or على قد has its own idiomatic uses:

الكراسي على قدنا؟

élkaraasi 3ala 2addna

there are enough chairs for us [the chairs are on our number]

احلامنا على قدنا

a7laamna 3ala 2addna

 our dreams are appropriate to our standing

بيت صغير على قدي وقدك

beet @zghiir 3ala 2addi w-2addek

a little house just right for me and you

قبل *2ab@l* 'before'

2abl él7arb قبل الحرب – before the war

Can be used independently in the meaning 'the time before':

كل هادا كان قبل

kéll haada kaan 2ab@l

 all that was before

With constructions like 'two days before the war', there are two possible structures:

قبل الحرب بسنتين

2abl él7arb bsénteen

Two years before the war

قبل سنتين من الحرب

2ab@l sénteen mn él7arb

Two years before the war

برا *barra*

برا البيت *barra lbeet* – outside the house

barra has an iDaafe form, *barraat*, which is used with pronouns and optionally with nouns:

برات البيت *barraat élbeet* – not at home [= outside the house]

It can be used with *la-* indicating motion:

!طلاع لبرا

 Tlaa3 la-barra!

 get out!

It can be used independently meaning 'outside':

القعدة احلى برا
él2a3de 2a7la barra
 the atmosphere's nicer outside [= the sitting]

بقلب *b2alb* 'inside'

Generally used for confined spaces:

بقلب الظرف *b2alb éZZar@f* – in the envelope

Literally 'in the heart of', and sometimes can translate that way in English too:

نحنا بقلب السفارة هلق
né7na b2alb éssafaara halla2
 we're in the heart of the embassy now! (or perhaps, 'we're well inside the embassy!')

بعد *ba3@d* 'after'

بعد الحادث *ba3d él7aades* – after the accident

With constructions like 'two days after the accent', there are two possible constructions:

بعد الحادث بيومين
ba3d él7aades byoomeen
Two days after the accident

بعد يومين من الحادث
ba3d yoomeen mn él7aades

بين *been* 'among, between'

بين البيوت *been lébyuut* – among the houses, between the houses

When pronouns are added, *been* usually takes the form *beenaat*:

ولله يا معلم انا بيناتون
waLLa yaa m3allem 2ana beenaaton
and I swear, boss, I'm one of them! [= among them]

بنص *bnéSS* 'in the middle of'

Perhaps not really worth analysing as a preposition per se since *néSS* in itself means 'middle' (ركز بالنص *rakkez bé-nnéSS* 'concentrate on the middle') but worth considering for completeness' sake:

بنص الطريق *bnéSS éTTarii2* – in the middle of the road

Has an independent form بالنص *bé-nnéSS* 'in the middle':

انا بالنص *ana bé-nnéSS* – I'm [the one] in the middle (of the picture)

داير *daayer*

Used in the sense of 'around the border of' and also 'around' a defined mass (a pole, tree etc):

بنو حيط داير لجنينة
banu 7eeT daayer léjneene
 they built a wall around the garden

ربطو داير حوالي الشجرة
rabaTu 7ab@l daayer shshajara
 they tied a rope around the tree

رح تشوف اضاءة مشعشعة ع داير مندارك ليل نهار
 ra7 @tshuuf 2iDaa2a msha3@sh3a 3a-daayer méndaarak leel @nhaar
you'll see shining lights all around you day and night

These two forms of 'around' are used markedly less than their English equivalent however since the sense is often included in the meaning of specific verbs:

لف الدوار
léff édduwaar
go around the roundabout

لفو الحبل على رقبتو
laffu l7abel 3ala ra2ebto
they put the rope around his neck

ضد *Dédd* 'against'

انا اكيد ضد هالفكرة
ana akiid Dédd hal-fukra
 of course, I'm against this idea

فوق *foo2* 'above'

Usually means above, but can also mean 'up in' or 'on top of':

اللي ساكن فوقنا
élli saaken foo2na
the guy living above us

الطناجر معلقة فوق الشجرة
 éTTanaajer m3alla2a foo2 éshshajara
the pots are hanging up in the tree

لا تستحي حط المعلقة فوق السكر
laa tésté7i 7étt élma3la2a foo2 éssékkar
  don't worry, leave the spoon in the sugar [after using it to put sugar in your tea]

Can be used with *la-* to indicate motion:

طلع لفوق
Talle3 la-foo2
  look up

Can be used independently, usually meaning 'upstairs' (or 'further up', 'above' etc depending on context):

الاستاذ فوق
él2éstaaz foo2
  the gentleman is upstairs

جنب *janb, jamb* 'next to'

تعال عود جنبي
ta3aal 3ood jambi
  come and sit next to me

جوا *juwwa* 'inside'

جوا البيت *juwwa lbeet* – inside the house

juwwa has an iDaafe form, *juwwaat,* which is used with pronouns and optionally with nouns:

جوات البلد *juwwaat élbalad* – inside the country

جواتو *juwwaato* – inside it

Can be used with *la-* indicating motion:

فوت لجوا
fuut la-juwwa
  go inwards, further in

Can be used independently meaning 'inside':

مرتي جوا
marti juwwa
  my wife's inside

مواجه, مواجيه *mwaajeh, mwaajiih* 'opposite'

These are synonymous variants and mean 'opposite':

> ساكن مواجيه بيتون بنفس الحارة
> *saaken mwaajiih beeton bnafs él7aara*
> he lived opposite their house in the same neighbourhood

قفا *2afa*

2afa is literally the back side of something (e.g. a card, a book...) and can appear in the meaning 'behind' or 'after':[29]

> بشرب حبتين قفا بعضون
> *béshrab 7abbteen 2afa ba3Don*
> I drink two pills one after the other

تحت *ta7@t*

Usually means 'below' or 'underneath':

> تحت الطاولة *ta7t éTTaawle* – under the table

Can be used with *la-* to indicate motion:

> نزيل لتحت *nzeel la-ta7@t* – go downstairs

Can be used independently, usually meaning 'downstairs' (but also 'further down' etc depending on context):

> انا تحت *ana ta7@t* – I'm downstairs

طول *Tool*

Clearly derived from 'length', this is used for both physical description in the meaning of 'along the length of, all along' and time in the meaning of 'throughout, all… long'.

> وضلوا يلحقوني طول الليل
> *w-Dallu yél7a2uuni Tool élleel*
> they kept chasing me all night long

It often appears with *3ala*:

> قاعد يفلح فينا على طول الجمعة
> *2aa3ed yéfla7 fiina 3ala Tool éjjém3a*
> they sit there going on at us, all week long [= sitting ploughing in us]

---

[29] There's also the more sweary بطيز *bTiiz* 'in the arse of' used in a similar meaning.

مش بس هاي الرسمة. في غيرها على طول الشارع

mish bass haay irrasme. fii gheerha 3ala Tool ishshaare3

not just this painting, there are others all along the street

With على as you are probably aware it has an adverbial meaning 'straight on':

روح على طول *ruu7 3ala Tool* – go straight on

بوسط *bwasT* وسط *wasT* 'in the middle of'

بوسط البلد *bwasT élbalad* – downtown [= in the city centre]

وسط هالتخاذل كلو *wasT ha-ttakhaazul kéllo* – in the midst of all this disappointment

ورا *wara*

Literally 'behind' or 'beyond':

ورا البيت *wara lbeet* – behind, beyond the house

Can be used with *la-* to indicate motion:

رجاع لورا *rjaa3 la-wara* – go backwards, back

Can be used independently with the approximate meaning 'behind':

انا قاعد قدام وهي قاعدة ورا

ana 2aa3ed 2éddaam w-hiyye 2aa3de wara

I'm sitting in the front and she's sitting in the back [of a car]

حوالي *7awaali, 7awaalee-* 'around'

Used in all the senses of English 'around' and the fuSHa sense of 'approximately [a number]':

صرت شوف كل يلي حواليي بوضوح وعلى حقيقتهم

Sér@t shuuf kéll yalli 7awaaleyyi b-wuDuu7 w-3ala 7aqiiqathum

I started to see all those around me clearly and as they were [= on their truth]

بنو حيط حوالي لجنينة

banu 7eeT 7awaali léjneene

they built a wall around the garden

ربطو حبل حوالي الشجرة

rabaTu 7ab@l 7awaali shshajara

they tied a rope around the tree

The fuSHa form حول *7awl* is occasionally used in the sense of 'on the subject of' (e.g. *ktaab 7awl élmawDuu3*).

Conjunctions

أصبح *aSba7*

Syrian. Means 'in that case', 'then' (and NOT 'became' as in fuSHa):

> أصبح بكرا بشوفك
> *aSba7 bukra bshuufak*
> then I'll see you tomorrow

او *aw*

'Or', as in fuSHa. However in colloquial *aw* almost never coordinates nouns, only sentences:

> او فينك تحكي معها انت اذا بدك
> *aw fiinak té7ki ma3ha inte éza béddak*
> or you can talk to her yourself if you want

بقى *ba2a*

Syr/Leb. Generally means 'then, in that case':

> بقى شو بدنا نعمل؟
> *ba2a shu béddna na3mel*
> so, what are we going to do?

It can also be attached after imperatives and similar expressions. In this context it has no direct English translation but adds force to the imperative (maybe it's equivalent to American 'already'?):

> لك خلصني بقى
> *lak khalleSni ba2a*
> stop it already! [= save me already]

بعدين *ba3deen*

Literally 'afterwards' or 'later' and often used in this meaning:

> بعدين بتعرف
> *ba3deen @bta3ref*
> I'll tell you know [= you'll find out later]

> طب ممكن تطلع من قبرك تاخدني بحضنك وترجع بعدين؟
> *Tabb mémken téTla3 mén 2abrak taakhédni b-7aDnak w-térja3 ba3deen?*
> OK, can you please come back from the grave and just hug me and go back later?

Also commonly expresses 'then', 'in that case', and 'anyway':

بعدين انا شو ذنبي؟
ba3deen 2ana shu zanbi?
 in any case, what have *I* done? [= what's my sin?]

وبعدين؟
w-ba3deen?
yeah, and what then? / so what?

بس *bass*

The normal word for 'but' or 'just', much more common than classicising لكن:

بس ما بحبو
bass maa b7ébbo!
but I don't love him!

هدول بس
hadool bass
just these

It also commonly mean 'as soon as', 'when'. In this case it is usually followed by a subjunctive or a past:

امي بس تمرض ما بتركها
émmi bass témroD ma bétrékha
when my mother gets ill I don't abandon her

بس بدك تيجي لعندي اتصل فيني
bass béddak tiiji la-3éndi ttaSel fiini
when you want to come here tell me

بس فضيت خبرني
bass @fDiit khabbérni
as soon as you're free [= get free] tell me

ف *fa-*

Used commonly for 'so'. Can trail off at the end like English 'so…':

بعدين ما شفتو, فـــــ
ba3deen maa shéfto, faaaaaaa ~
anyway, I didn't see him, so…

كإنو *ka2énno*

Means 'as if':

كإنو مبارح تركنا

ka2énno mbaare7 tarakna

[it's] as if we broke up yesterday

Like *la2énno* it can be shifted to the end of the sentence:

ما حنشوفو اليوم كإنو

maa 7a-nshuufo élyoom ka2énno

seems like we're not going to see him today

It can be used on its own or with a sentence to mean something like 'looks like…', 'looks that way'.

اي كإنو

ee ka2énno

 yeah, it looks that way

لـ, لحتى *la-, la7atta*

Both of these mean 'until' and 'in order to'. The latter is distinctively Syrian:

نستنى لييجي

néstanna la-yéji

let's wait 'til he comes back

نكشت البيت لحتى جبتها

nakasht élbeet la7atta jébta!

 I had to turn the house upside down to get it [= I rifled through the house until I got it]

It can be combined with *leesh* to mean 'why would', 'why should':

ليش لحتى لحكي معو؟

leesh la7atta é7ki ma3o?

why should I speak to him?

It is used in the following two constructions with expressions of time:

للاسبوع الجاية لشوفو

la-l2ésbuu3 éjjaaye la-shuufo

I won't see him until next week [= until next week for me to see him]

بالصدفة لشوفو

béSSédfe la-shuufo

I only see him rarely [= by chance for me to see him]

La- is also sometimes affixed to first person subjunctives meaning 'let's' or 'let me':

لشوف واحد تاني
lashuuf waa7ed taani
let's speak to [= see] someone else

It also often appears in oaths after والله *waLLa* 'I swear to God':

والله لاكسرلك رجليك
waLLa la-2éskérlak réjleek
I swear to God, I'll break your legs

لا... لا *laa… laa*

The structure *laa… laa* or لا ولا *laa.. wala* means 'neither… nor':

لا شاي ولا قهوة
laa shaay wala 2ahwe
neither tea nor coffee

لا رحت ولا حروح
laa ré7@t wala 7a-ruu7
I didn't go, nor will I

لإنو *la2énn(o)*

The equivalent to fuSHa *li2anna* and the normal word for 'because' in Syrian. Unlike in fuSHa it can be shifted to the end of the sentence as a kind of afterthought:

كل هاد لإنو قللا انو شعرا مو مظبط
kéll haad la2énno 2élla énno sha3ra muu mZabbaT
all that because he told her her hair didn't look good!

ما رح شوفو اليوم لإنو
maa ra7 shuufo lyoom la2enno
 because I'm not going to see him today

مادام *maadaam*

'Since' or 'while'. Takes pronoun suffixes:

مبسوط مدامك معي موجود
mabsuuT maadaamak ma3i mawjuud
I'm happy as long as you're with me

مادامك بالبيت
maadaamak bilbeet
since you're at home

ما عاد *maa3aad,* مابقى *maaba2a*

'No longer', 'not anymore'. Clearly etymologically 'he did not return' and 'he did not remain'. These typically trigger subjunctive. For some people they conjugate, especially with third person feminine, though they are often invariable:

> ماعاد اعرف شو بدي احكي
> *maa3aad a3ref shu béddi é7ki*
> I don't know what to say anymore/I no longer know what to say

They can also mean 'never again', including in negative imperatives:

> ما بقى تحكي معي
> *maaba2a té7ki ma3i*
> never talk to me again/stop talking to me

> معقول ما بقى نرجع؟
> *ma32uul maaba2a nérja3?*
> can it be we'll never go back? [= is it reasonable we'll no longer return?]

مشان منشان عشان *méshaan ménshaan 3ashaan*

Méshaan, ménshaan, 3ashaan all mean 'in order to':

> منشان تروح معو
> *ménshaan @truu7 ma3o*
> so you (can) go with him

They are also prepositions which can be used with nouns to mean 'because of' or 'for the benefit of':

> مشان هيك *méshaan heek* – for that reason

> منشان الله *ménshaan aLLah* – for God's sake

In Jor/Pal (like Egyptian) these words can be used in the sense of 'because' (i.e. equivalent to لإنو). This is not found in Syria.

كرمال *kurmaal/kérmaal*

Probably originally derived from the fuSHa *kurma(tan) la-* 'in X's honour' this is a less common alternative to *ménshaan* meaning 'in order to', 'for the sake of', 'because' etc. Like *ménshaan* it is mainly a preposition but is worth mentioning here because like *ménshaan* it can be used with subjunctive verbs to mean 'in order to'.

شي, شي *shi… shi*

This means approximately 'sometimes like… and sometimes…' or 'some… and some…' Effectively it expresses two exclusive, alternative, but related situations:

عندون اعلى مؤهلات, شي عندو شهادة, شي عندو دكتوراه

3éndon a3la mu2ahhilaat, shi 3éndo shahaade, shi 3éndo doktuuraa

they had the highest qualifications – some of them have degrees, some of them doctorates…

هلق كتير مهم وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لانو كل واحد صار بمكان شي بالشام شي بحلب

halla2 ktiir mohumm wasaa2el éttawaaSul él2ijtimaa3i la2énno kéll waa7ed Saar b-makaan, shi b-éshshaam, shi b-7alab…

nowadays social media is very important because everybody's in a different place, some in Damascus, some in Aleppo…

ماني عايش هون طول حياتي, انا شي باسطنبول, شي بالشام

maani 3aayesh hoon Tool 7ayaati. ana shi b-isTanbuul shi bi-shshaam

I haven't lived here all my life – sometimes in Istanbul, sometimes in Damascus

w- و

Used as 'and' to coordinate sentences, nouns etc:

خبز وملح

khébz w-mél@7

bread and salt

As in fuSHa, it can be used to form *7aal* sentences with present tense sentences, including verbs and participles. In this case it must be followed by a noun:

بغني وانا سايق

bghanni w-2ana saaye2

I sing when I'm driving

وهو ماشي سمع صوت

w-huwwe maashi séme3 Soot

as he was walking along he heard a sound

Occasionally in Syrian/Lebanese *w-* can precede the predicate:

انا وصغير كنت اقرى كتير

ana w-@zghiirként é2ra ktiir

when I was young I used to read a lot

It can also be used with all tenses in a very specific meaning of 'when', 'given that', when the first clause is a a rhetorical question:

كيف بدي ادفع عنك وراتبي خلص من يومين؟

kiif béddi édfa3 3annak w-raatbi khéleS mén yoomeen?

how am I supposed to pay for you when I used up my salary [= my salary finished] two days ago?

wala ولا

A difficult one to translate directly into English. We could awkwardly sum its meaning up as 'as long as X doesn't'. It is followed by a subjunctive, and often occurs with *kéll shi* 'anything':

زقوني ولا تنسوني
zé22uuni wala ténsuuni
Leave me out/exclude me, just don't forget about me

كل شي ولا هادا
kéll shi wala haada
Anything but that!

كل شي ولا عطلك عن شغلك
kéll shi wala 3aTTlak 3an shéghlak!
[I'd rather do] anything than distract you from your work! [sarcastically]

A different *wala* appears in double negatives:

ما شفت ولا شي
maa shéf@t wala shi
I didn't see anything

ولا *wélla, willa*

'Or'. Used to offer two contradictory options:

بدك شاي ولا قهوة؟
béddak shaay wélla 2ahwe?
do you want tea or coffee?

Also used to mean 'or else', sometimes triggering the past:

سكوت ولا بضربك
skoot wélla beD@rbak
shut up or [else] I'll hit you

يا *yaa,* يامّا *ya2émma*

Yaa/ya2émma means 'or', and offers two contradictory options. It is most commonly used in the structure يا …يا *yaa… yaa* 'either… or':

يا بتروح معي, يا بتضل هون
yaa bétruu7 ma3i, yaa bétDéll hoon
either you go with me or you stay here

Forms with *-ma*

ما *ma*

On its own, *ma* is used to link together two sentences with a kind of causal relationship (this should not be mistaken for the occasional use of *maa*, with a long vowel, in various negative meanings).

> ناميين فوق. ما هنن ما نامو من امبارح
>
> *naaymiin foo2 – ma hénnen maa naamu mén @mbaare7*
>
> they're asleep upstairs. I mean, they haven't slept since yesterday

Here *ma* adds the nuance that the listener and the speaker both understand the obvious intuitive causal connection between what was said before and the sentence prefixed with *ma*. The same applies in the following sentence although here it can be translated with 'but':

> مو صايم؟ ما الدنيا رمضان
>
> *muu Saayem? ma ddénye ramaDaan*
>
> you're not fasting? but it's Ramadan!

احسن ما *a7san* ma 'lest'

Means 'in case' or more precisely 'lest' (but obviously English stylistic concerns prevent us from translating it that way):

> ما تضحك على حدا احسن ما تصير متلو
>
> *maa téD7ak 3ala 7ada a7san ma tSiir métlo*
>
> don't laugh at/trick anyone lest you become like them

For some Syrian speakers it can also be used in a way synonymous with احسن من انو 'better than…' with a following sentence.

الا ما *élla ma* 'certainly', 'it is always the case that'

> المجرم الا ما يرجع ع مسرح الجريمة
>
> *élmujrem élla ma yérja3 3a masra7 éljariime*
>
> the criminal always returns to the scene of the crime

ياما *yaama* 'how much!'

> ياما في ناس هيك
>
> *yaama fii naas heek*
>
> there are so many people like that

Nouns + *ma*

مكان ما *makaan ma*, محل ما *ma7all ma*, مطرح ما *maTra7 ma*, قرنة ما *2érnet ma* '(in, from etc) the place that'

لحظة ما *la7Zet ma* 'the moment that'

مجرد ما *mjarrad ma* 'as soon as', 'the very moment that'

وقت ما *wa2@t ma* '(at) the time when', 'when'

ساعة ما *saa2et ma* '(at) the time when', 'when'

يوم ما *yoom ma* '(on) the day when', 'when'

Prepositions + *ma*

بدال ما *badaal ma,* عواض ما *3awaaD ma* 'instead of'

> بدال ما تعمل مظاهرات وتوقف بالشوارع ... روح وقف ع باب دار النائب الي انتخبته وخليه يمثلك
> *badaal ma ta3mel muZaaharaat w-@twa22ef bé-shshaare3... ruu7 wa22ef 3a baab daar énnaa2eb élli ntakhabto w khallii ymasslak*
> instead of demonstrating and standing around in the street, go and stand at the door of the MP you elected and make him represent you

بلا ما *bala ma,* بدون ما *biduun ma,* من دون ما *mén duun ma* 'without'

> مسموح يأرغل بس بلا ما يطلع دخان بالغرفة
> *masmuu7 y2argel bass bala ma yéTla3 dékhkhaan bé-lghérfe*
> he's allowed to smoke shisha but [only] without smoke filling up the room

> واحدة نزلتو بالصفحة من دون ما تتأكد من مصدر الخبر
> *waa7de nazzaléto béSSéf7a mén duun ma tét2akkad mén maSdar élkhabar*
> someone uploaded it to the page without making sure of its source

بعد ما *ba3@d ma* 'after'

> بعد ما تقرأ عن الله
> *ba3@d ma té2ra 3an aLLah*
> after you read about God

فوق ما *foo2 ma* 'on top of'

> فوق ماني كذاب
> *foo2 maani kazzaab*
> on top of me being a liar

لبين ما *labeen ma* 'until' or 'by the time'

> لبين ما ييجي منكون خلصنا
> *labeen ma yiiji ménkuun khallaSna*
> by the time he gets here we'll be finished

لما *lamma* 'when'

> لما شفتو استغربت
> *lamma shéfto staghrab@t*
> when I saw him I was surprised

لحد ما *la7add ma* 'until'

لحد ما تموت من الضحك
la7add ma tmuut mn éDDa7@k
until you die of laughing

متل ما *mét@l ma* 'like, as' (in Jor/Pal زي ما *zayy ma*)

متل ما بدك
mét@l ma béddak
as you like

متل مانك عرفان
mét@l maanak 3arfaan
as you know

زي ما قلت
zayy ma 2ult
as I said

طول ما *Tool ma* 'as long as, while'

طول مانك عم تتنفس عندك فرصة لواقع افضل
Tool maanak 3am tétnaffas 3éndak férSa la-waaqe3 afDal
 as long as you're breathing you have the opportunity for a better reality

قبل ما *2ab@l ma* 'before'

This is usually followed by a subjunctive, even when the meaning is past:

قبل ما يوصل
2ab@l ma yuuSal
before he arrived/arrives

قد ما *2add ma* 'however much', 'as much as', 'as long as'

قد ما احكي عن ريال مدريد ما بوفي حقك
2add ma é7ki 3an reyaal madriid maa bwaffi 7aqqak
however much I talk about RM I won't be doing you justice

حسب ما *7asab ma* 'according to how', 'depending on', 'as'

بس حسب ما شفت
bass 7asab ma shéf@t
but as far as I know [= as I've seen]

Question words with *-ma*

Question forms can be combined with *-ma* to create words meaning 'ever'. These are typically combined with a past form or a subjunctive. Note that *2addeesh* has no direct *-ma* form – its equivalent is formed from the the preposition *2add*. From some speakers you may hear *man* instead of *ma* in these expressions.

ايمتى ما *eemta ma, eemat ma* **'whenever'**

كنا ايمتى ما فتحنا الراديو الصبح نلاقيهن حاطين فيروز عكل القنوات
kénna eemta ma fata7na rraadyo éSSéb@7 nlaa2iyyon 7aaTTiin feeruuz 3a-kéll élqanawaat
whenever we turned on the radio in the morning we'd find they'd put Feyrouz on all the channels

وين ما *ween ma* **'wherever'**

وين ما كنتوا يا سوريين الله يسعد صباحكن
aLLa yis3ed Sabaa7kon ween ma kéntu tkuunu yaa suuriyyiin
God make your morning happy wherever you might be, o Syrians!

شو ما *shu ma* **ايش ما** *eesh ma* **'whatever'**

شو ما صار عليكي انا حدك موجود
shu ma Saar 3aleeki 2ana 7addek mawjuud
whatever happens to you, I'll be there

شلون ما *shloon ma,* **كيف ما** *kiif ma* **'however'**

Superlatives + *ma*

Af3al superlatives can be combined with *ma* in the meaning of 'the Xest...':

احسن ما يمكن
a7san ma yémken
As good as possible

Combinations with *énno*

بما انو *bima 2énno* 'since, given that'

بسبب إنو *bésabab énno* 'because'

مع إنو *ma3 énno* 'although'

لدرجة انو *la-darjet énno* 'to the extent that'

طالما *Taalama* 'as long as'

Verb tables

Form I

Form I verbs are not associated with any one particular meaning and have a range of possible vowellings. For 'sound verbs' (no semivowels in their root) there are several alternative past (*fa3al, fé3el*) and present (*yéf3él, yéf3ol, yéf3al*) vowellings. *Fé3el-yéf3al* and *fa3al-yéf3ol/yéf3el* are the most common combinations, but all combinations occur. All possible present and past vowellings (though not all possible combinations) are shown by these three examples:

كتب *katab* 'to write'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	كاتب *kaateb*		مكتوب *maktuub*	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	كتابة *kitaabe*		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	كتوب كتبي كتبو *ktoob ktébi ktébu*			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*éktob béktob*	اكتب بكتب	*katab@t*	كتبت
Inte	*téktob btéktob*	تكتب بتكتب	*katab@t*	كتبت
Inti	*ték@tbi bték@tbi*	تكتبي بتكتبي	*katabti*	كتبتي
Huwwe	*yéktob byéktob*	يكتب بيكتب	*katab*	كتب
Hiyye	*téktob btéktob*	تكتب بتكتب	*katbet*	كتبت
Né7na	*néktob mnéktob*	نكتب منكتب	*katabna*	كتبنا
Intu	*ték@tbu bték@tbu*	تكتبو بتكتبو	*katabtu*	كتبتو
Hénnen	*yék@tbu byék@tbu*	يكتبو بيكتبو	*katabu*	كتبو

مسك *mések* 'to hold, catch'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	ماسك *maasek*		ممسوك *mamsuuk*	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	مسك *mas@k*		مسكة *maske*	
	Imperative:			
	مسيك مسكي مسكو *mseek mséki mséku*			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*émsek bémsek*	امسك بمسك	*msék@t*	مسكت
Inte	*témsek btémsek*	تمسك بتمسك	*msék@t*	مسكت
Inti	*tém@ski btém@ski*	تمسكي بتمسكي	*msékti*	مسكتي
Huwwe	*yémsek byémsek*	يمسك بيمسك	*mések*	مسك
Hiyye	*témsek btémsek*	تمسك بتمسك	*mésket*	مسكت
Né7na	*némsek mnémsek*	نمسك منمسك	*mékna*	مسكنا
Intu	*tém@sku btém@sku*	تمسكو بتمسكو	*méktu*	مسكتو
Hénnen	*yém@sku byém@sku*	يمسكو بيمسكو	*mésku*	مسكو

						تعب *té3eb* 'get tired'

	té3eb تعب 'get tired'		
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**
	ta3baan تعبان		-
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**
	ta3@b تعب		N/A
	Imperative:		
	تعاب تعبي تعبو		
	t3aab t3abi t3abu		
	Present		**Past**
Ana	ét3ab bét3ab	اتعب بتعب	t3éb@t	تعبت
Inte	tét3ab btét3ab	تتعب بتتعب	t3éb@t	تعبت
Inti	tét3abi btét3abi	تتعبي بتتعبي	t3ébti	تعبتي
Huwwe	yét3ab byét3ab	يتعب بيتعب	t3éb@t	تعب
Hiyye	tét3ab btét3ab	تتعب بتتعب	té3bet	تعبت
Né7na	nét3ab mnét3ab	نتعب منتعب	t3ébna	تعبنا
Intu	tét3abu btét3abu	تتعبو بتتعبو	t3ébtu	تعبتو
Hénnen	yét3abu byét3abu	يتعبو بيتعبو	té3bu	تعبو

So-called 'assimilating verbs' (those with a semi-vowel as their initial root consonant) do not necessarily assimilate in colloquial. In fact, generally – other than the assimilation of -éw- to -uu- – they are effectively regular. These are the forms given in the chart below. Some speakers, however, have a *fuSHa*-icised set of 'assimilated' forms where the *w* is dropped. Note however that some speakers have an alternative set of *fuSHa*-like present forms where the w is dropped and the prefixes are *(b)a-Sal, (b)té-Sal, (b)té-Sali,* and so on. These prefixes occur practically compulsorily with *fuSHa* verbs like بثق بـ *baséq b-* 'I trust'.[30]

	wéSel وصل 'arrive'		
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**
	waaSel waSlaan واصل وصلان		N/A
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**
	wSuul وصول		waSle وصلة
	Imperative:		
	وصال وصلي وصلو		
	wSaal wSali wSalu		
	Present		**Past**
Ana	uuSel buuSel	اوصل بوصل	wSél@t	وصلت
Inte	tuuSel btuuSel	توصل بتوصل	wSél@t	وصلت
Inti	tuuSli btuuSli	توصلي بتوصلي	wSélti	وصلتي
Huwwe	yuuSel byuuSel	يوصل بيوصل	wéSel	وصل
Hiyye	tuuSel btuuSel	توصل بتوصل	wéSlet	وصلنا
Né7na	nuuSel mnuuSel	نوصل منوصل	wSélna	وصلنا
Intu	tuuSel btuuSli	توصل بتوصلو	wSéltu	وصلتو
Hénnen	yuuSlu byuuSlu	يوصلو بيوصلو	wéSlu	وصلو

Two verbs with initial *hamze*, اكل *akal* 'eat' and اخد *akhad* 'take', have a similar set of forms (the past basically regular, the present replaces *-é2-* with *-aa-*.

اخد *akhad* 'to take'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	آخد *2aakhed*		مأخود *ma2khuud*	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	اخد *2akh@d*		اخدة *2akhde*	
	Imperative:			
	خود خدي خدو *khood khédi khédu*			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*aakhod baakhod*	آخد باخد	*2akhad@t*	اخدت
Inte	*taakhod btaakhod*	تاخد بتاخد	*2akhad@t*	اخدت
Inti	*taakhdi btaakhdi*	تاخدي بتاخدي	*2akhatti*	اخدتي
Huwwe	*yaakhod byaakhod*	ياخد بياخد	*2akhad*	اخد
Hiyye	*taakhod btaakhod*	تاخد بتاخد	*2akhdet*	اخدت
Né7na	*naakhod mnaakhod*	ناخد مناخد	*2akhadna*	اخدنا
Intu	*taakhdu btaakhdu*	تاخدو بتاخدو	*2akhattu*	اخدتو
Hénnen	*yaakhdu byaakhdu*	ياخدو بياخدو	*2akhadu*	اخدو

Form I hollow verbs (verbs with a semivowel for their middle root consonant) have almost as many possible forms. As in *fuSHa*, three possible present vowellings exist: *yfiil, yfuul, yfaal*. In Syr/Leb, where short *u* and *i* merge to *é* in stressed syllables, there is only one possible past vowelling: *faal (fél@t)*. In Jor/Pal, where the merger is not made, two options (*faal-fulet* and *faal-filet*) exist.

جاب *jaab* 'to bring'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	جايب *jaayeb*		مجيوب *majyuub*	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	N/A		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	جيب جيبي جيبو *jiib jiibi jiibu*			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*jiib bjiib*	جيب بجيب	*jéb@t*	جبت
Inte	*tjiib bétjiib*	تجيب بتجيب	*jéb@t*	جبت
Inti	*tjiibi bétjiibi*	تجيبي بتجيبي	*jébti*	جبتي
Huwwe	*yjiib bijiib*	يجيب بجيب	*jaab*	جاب
Hiyye	*tjiib bétjiib*	تجيب بتجيب	*jaabet*	جابت
Né7na	*njiib ménjiib*	نجيب منجيب	*jébna*	جبنا
Intu	*tjiibu bétjiibu*	تجيبو بتجيبو	*jébtu*	جبتو
Hénnen	*yjiibu bijiibu*	يجيبو بجيبو	*jaabu*	جابو

	daa2 داق			
	'to taste'			
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	daaye2 دايق		*madyuu2* مديوق	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	doo2 دوق		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	دوق دوقي دوقو			
	duu2 duu2i duu2u			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*duu2 bduu2*	دوق بدوق	*dé2@t*	دقت
Inte	*tduu2 bétduu2*	تدوق بتدوق	*dé2@t*	دقت
Inti	*tduu2i bétduu2i*	تدوقي بتدوقي	*dé2ti*	دقتي
Huwwe	*yduu2 biduu2*	يدوق بدوق	*daa2*	داق
Hiyye	*tduu2 bétduu2*	تدوق بتدوق	*daa2et*	داقت
Né7na	*nduu2 ménduu2*	ندوق مندوق	*dé2na*	دقنا
Intu	*tduu2u bétduu2u*	تدوقو بتدوقو	*dé2tu*	دقتو
Hénnen	*yduu2u biduu2u*	يدوقو بدوقو	*daa2u*	داقو

	naam نام			
	'to sleep'			
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	naayem نايم		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	noom نوم		*noome* نومة	
	Imperative:			
	نام نامي نامو			
	naam naami naamu			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*naam bnaam*	نام بنام	*ném@t*	نمت
Inte	*tnaam bétnaam*	تنام بتنام	*ném@t*	نمت
Inti	*tnaami bétnaami*	تنامي بتنامي	*némti*	نمتي
Huwwe	*ynaam binaam*	ينام بنام	*naam*	نام
Hiyye	*tnaam bétnaam*	تنام بتنام	*naamet*	نامت
Né7na	*nnaam bénnaam*	ننام مننام	*némna*	نمنا
Intu	*tnaamu bétnaamu*	تنامو بتنامو	*némtu*	نمتو
Hénnen	*ynaamu binaamu*	ينامو بنامو	*naamu*	نامو

Weak verbs (those with a final semivowel root consonant) have two possible present vowellings (*yéf3a, yéf3i*) and two past vowellings (*fa3a fé3i*). By far the most common combinations are *fa3a-yéf3i, fé3i-yéf3a*, but there are some common exceptions (*béki-yébki* 'cry', *méshi yémshi* 'walk').

نسي *nési* 'forget'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	نسيان *nésyaan*		منسي *ménsi*	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	نسي *nasy*		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	انسى انسي انسو *énsa énsi énsu*			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	énsa bénsa	انسى بنسى	nsiit	نسيت
Inte	ténsa bténsa	تنسى بتنسى	nsiit	نسيت
Inti	ténsi bténsi	تنسي بتنسي	nsiiti	نسيتي
Huwwe	yénsa byénsa	ينسى بينسى	nési	نسي
Hiyye	ténsa bténsa	تنسى بتنسى	nésyet	نسيت
Né7na	nénsa mnénsa	ننسى مننسى	nsiina	نسينا
Intu	ténsu bténsu	تنسو بتنسو	nsiitu	نسيتو
Hénnen	yénsu byénsu	ينسو بينسو	nésyu	نسيو

طفى *Tafa* 'turn off'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	طافي *Taafi*		مطفي *méTfi*	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	طفي *Tafy*		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	اطفي اطفي اطفو *éTfi éTfi éTfu*			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	éTfi béTfi	اطفي بطفي	Tafeet	طفيت
Inte	téTfi btéTfi	تطفي بتطفي	Tafeet	طفيت
Inti	téTfi btéTfi	تطفي بتطفي	Tafeeti	طفيتي
Huwwe	yéTfi	يطفي بيطفي	Tafa	طفى
Hiyye	téTfi btéTfi	تطفي بتطفي	Tafet	طفت
Né7na	néTfi mnéTfi	نطفي منطفي	Tafeena	طفينا
Intu	téTfu btéTfu	تطفو بتطفو	Tafeetu	طفيتو
Hénnen	yéTfu byéTfu	يطفو بيطفو	Tafu	طفو

Doubled verbs (those with identical second and third root consonants) only have one possible set of vowellings, *fa33-yfé33*. In dialects without the merger of *e* and *o* to *é*, there are two possible present vowellings (*yfe33, yfo33*). In both cases, doubled verbs are more straightforward than in fuSHa.

دق *da22* 'hit, tap'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	داقق *daa2e2* (or *daa22*)		مدقوق *mad2uu2*	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	دق *da22*		دقة *da22a*	
	Imperative:			
	دق دقي دقو			
	dé22 dé22i dé22u			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*dé22 bdé22*	دق بدق	*da22eet*	دقيت
Inte	*tdé22 bétdé22*	تدق بتدق	*da22eet*	دقيت
Inti	*tdé22i bétde22i*	تدقي بتدقي	*da22eeti*	دقيتي
Huwwe	*ydé22 bidé22*	يدق بدق	*da22*	دق
Hiyye	*tdé22 bétdé22*	تدق بتدق	*da22et*	دقت
Né7na	*ndé22 méndé22*	ندق مندق	*da22eena*	دقينا
Intu	*tdé22u bétdé22u*	تدقو بتدقو	*da22eetu*	دقيتو
Hénnen	*ydé22 ydé22u*	يدقو بدقو	*da22u*	دقو

3aTa 'give' is regular in the past, but has an irregular imperative (*3aTi*). The present is formed with *a* in all of the prefixes, which it shares with *3émel* (*ya3mel*) and *3éref* (*ya3ref*).

عطى *3aTa* 'give'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	عاطي *3aaTi*		معطي *mé3Ti*	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	عطي *3aTi*		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	عطي عطي عطو			
	3aTi 3aTi 3aTu			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*a3Ti ba3Ti*	اعطي بعطي	*3aTeet*	عطيت
Inte	*ta3Ti bta3Ti*	تعطي بتعطي	*3aTeet*	عطيت
Inti	*ta3Ti bta3Ti*	تعطي بتعطي	*3aTeeti*	عطيتي
Huwwe	*ya3Ti bya3Ti*	يعطي بيعطي	*3aTa*	عطى
Hiyye	*ta3Ti bta3Ti*	تعطي بتعطي	*3aTet*	عطت
Né7na	*na3Ti mna3Ti*	نعطي منعطي	*3aTeena*	عطينا
Intu	*ta3Tu bta3Tu*	تعطو بتعطو	*3aTeetu*	عطيتو
Hénnen	*ya3Tu bya3Tu*	يعطو بيعطو	*3aTu*	عطو

Éja 'come' is very irregular. In the past it has two sets of forms, one with the prefix *é-* one without it. The active participle is *jaaye* (which is used for the masculine and the feminine). There is no actual imperative: forms based on *ta3aal-* or *ta3-* stand in. For some speakers the prefixes have a long vowel (*iiji, tiiji*) or, more standardly, are as below:

		éja اجى 'to come'		
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	جاية *jaaye*, جايين *jaayiin*		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	N/A		*jayye* جيّة	
	Imperative:			
	ta3aal ta3aali ta3aalu تعال تعالي تعالو			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*éji béji*	ايجي بيجي	*jiit éjiit*	جيت اجيت
Inte	*téji btéji*	تيجي بتيجي	*jiit éjiit*	جيت اجيت
Inti	*téji btéji*	تيجي بتيجي	*jiiti éjiiti*	جيتي اجيتي
Huwwe	*yéji byéji*	ييجي بيجي	*éja*	اجى
Hiyye	*téji btéji*	تيجي بتيجي	*éjet*	اجت
Né7na	*néji mnéji*	نيجي منيجي	*jiina éjiina*	جينا اجينا
Intu	*téju btéju*	تيجو بتيجو	*jiitu éjiitu*	جيتو اجيتو
Hénnen	*yéju béju*	ييجو بيجو	*éju*	اجو

La2a 'to find' is slightly irregular – the past is a normal form I *fa3a* verb, the present conjugates like a form 3 *faa3a-yfaa3i*.

		la2a لقى 'to find'		
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	mlaa2i ملاقي		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	N/A		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	laa2i laa2i laa2u لاقي لاقي لاقو			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*laa2i blaa2i*	لاقي بلاقي	*la2eet*	لقيت
Inte	*tlaa2i bétlaa2i*	تلاقي بتلاقي	*la2eet*	لقيت
Inti	*tlaa2i bétlaa2i*	تلاقي بتلاقي	*la2eeti*	لقيتي
Huwwe	*ylaa2i bilaa2i*	يلاقي بلاقي	*la2a*	لقى
Hiyye	*tlaa2i bétlaa2i*	تلاقي بتلاقي	*la2et*	لقت
Né7na	*nlaa2i ménlaa2i*	نلاقي منلاقي	*la2eena*	لقينا
Intu	*tlaa2u bétlaa2u*	تلاقو بتلاقو	*la2eetu*	لقيتو
Hénnen	*ylaa2u bilaa2u*	يلاقو بلاقو	*la2u*	لقو

Form II

There are only two types of form IIs – defective roots and all other types of roots. Form II is one of the most common patterns. Its most well-known and perhaps common use, of course, is for causatives or transitive equivalents of form I verbs or form V verbs:

    درّس *darras*   'teach' (*daras* 'study')

    خرّب *kharrab*   'mess up, break' (*khéreb* 'be broken')

    فوّت *fawwat*   'take in, bring in, put in, let/make enter' (*faat* 'enter')

    علّم *3allam*   'teach, show how to do' (*t3allam* 'learn')

A second common use also recognised by classical grammar is 'intensive', i.e. expressing an *intense* version of the action of the underlying verb (and sometimes implies repetitive action):

    كبّس *kabbas*   'press hard and repeatedly' (*kabas* 'press')

    قتّل *2attal*   'slaughter' (*2atal* 'kill')

    قطّع *2aTTa3*   'chop up [into multiple pieces]' (*2aTa3* 'cut')

It is also used to derive verbs from e.g. materials meaning 'put X on' or 'add X to' or 'apply X' (etc):

    جبّص *jabbaS*   'put plaster on' (*jabSuun* 'plaster')

    ملّح *malla7*   'salt' (*mél@7* 'salt')

    سكّر *sakkar*   'add sugar to', 'sweeten' (*sékkar* 'sugar')

A very small number of form II verbs mean 'consider somebody to be X':

    صدق *sadda2*   'believe' (*Saadi2* 'honest')

    كذب *kazzab*   'disbelieve, think a liar' (*kazzaab* 'liar')

    كفّر *kaffar*   'consider to be a non-Muslim' (*kaafir* 'unbeliever')

And another small number mean 'to say X', where X is a specific (usually religious) expression:

    كبّر *kabbar*   'say *aLLaahu 2akbar*'

    سمّل *sammal*   'say *bismillaah*' (the fuSHa equivalent is بسمل *basmal*)

    سلّم *sallam*   'say hi to, greet' (originally 'say *salaam*')

A few form IIs mean 'spend [a specific time]':

    مسّى *massa*   'spend an evening'

    صيّف *Sayyaf*   'to summer'

Quite a few form II verbs are actually verbs of becoming:

شوّب *shawwab* 'get hot' (*shoob* 'hot')

رشّح *rashsha7* 'develop a cold, catch a cold' (*rash@7* 'a cold')

عطّل *3aTTal* 'take the day off' (*3éTle* 'holiday')

Quite a lot of form IIs are basically causative but have (sometimes additional) meanings which are not quite predictable from a basic combination of underlying verb + causative meaning:

درّس *darras* 'teach'
'put through school, send to school'

رقّص *ra22aS* 'dance with'

لعّب *la33ab* 'play with' [e.g. a child]

Many form IIs actually have several different meanings depending on context, derived from different underlying words or from different meanings of the same underlying word:

سكّر *sakkar* 'get/make someone drunk' (< *séker* 'get drunk')
'add sugar to' (< *sékkaar* 'sugar')
'close' (transitive or intransitive)

عطّل *3aTTal* 'break down' [of a mechanical thing] (< *3aaTel* 'not functioning')
'break, cause to break down' (causative of above)
'have a day off' (< *3éTle* 'holiday')
'distract, take away from' [work]

قطّع *2aTTa3* 'chop into pieces, chop up' (< *2aTa3* 'cut')
'allow, let, make cross' (< *2aTa3* 'cross')

A number of form II verbs, including some of those above, can be either intransitive (often synonymously with a form I verb where one exists) or transitive/causative equivalents of that verb:

وقّف *wa22af* 'stop, stand' (synonym of rare/regional *wé2ef*)
'stop, make stop, make stand'

وصّل *waSSal* 'arrive' (synonym of *wéSel*)
'deliver, make arrive'

فكّر *fakkar* 'think about' (no form I synonym)
'cause to think about'

Finally, in a few unusual cases, form IIs have very similar semantics to form Is but are used in different contexts:

غسّل *ghassal* 'wash [a body part]' (*ghasal* 'wash')

Fa33al, yfa33el

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">زبّط zabbaT
'sort out'</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
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<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">تزبيط tazbiiT</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">زبط زبطي زبطو
zabbeT zabbTi zabbTu</td></tr>
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<tr><td>Intu</td><td>tzabbTu bétzabbTu</td><td>تزبطو بتزبطو</td><td>zabbaTTu</td><td>زبطنا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>yzabbTu bizabbTu</td><td>يزبطو بزبطو</td><td>zabbaTu</td><td>زبطو</td></tr>
</table>

Fa33a, yfa33i

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">عبّى 3abba
'fill'</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">معبي m3abbi</td><td colspan="2" align="center">معبى m3abba
معباية m3abbaaye (f)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">تعباية té3baaye</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">عبي عبي عبو
3abbi 3abbi 3abbu</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>3abbi b3abbi</td><td>عبي بعبي</td><td>3abbeet</td><td>عبيت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>t3abbi bét3abbi</td><td>تعبي بتعبي</td><td>3abbeet</td><td>عبيت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>t3abbi bét3abbi</td><td>تعبي بتعبي</td><td>3abbeeti</td><td>عبيتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>y3abbi bi3abbi</td><td>يعبو بعبو</td><td>3abba</td><td>عبى</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>t3abbi bét3abbi</td><td>تعبي بتعبي</td><td>3abbet</td><td>عبت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>n3abbi mén3abbi</td><td>نعبي منعبي</td><td>3abbeena</td><td>عبينا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>t3abbu bét3abbu</td><td>تعبو بتعبو</td><td>3abbeetu</td><td>عبيتو</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>y3abbu bi3abbu</td><td>يعبو بعبو</td><td>3abbu</td><td>عبو</td></tr>
</table>

Form III

Form III (*faa3al*) verbs can be a variety of different things. Although they're not the most common pattern, there are still quite a lot of them. In their conjugation they're pretty similar to fuSHa, with the normal exceptions of *mu-* being replaced by *m-* (including in most *maSdar*s, although some verbs typically have fuSHa-style *maSdar*s instead).

A lot of form IIIs are transitive verbs with direct objects equivalent to a form I verb plus a preposition:

> حاكى *7aaka* 'talk to' > حكى مع *7aka ma3*

> كاتب *kaatab* 'write to' > كتب لـ *katab la-*

> طالب *Taalab* 'demand from' > طلب *Talab mén*

Some of them have a strange relationship with form I verbs from the same root where the form III expresses something like 'try to X' or 'seek to X'. Most of the examples of this though are kind of metaphorical and it's probably not worth getting too bound up in the exact derivational meaning of form III:

> خانق مع *khaana2 ma3* 'fight, argue with' > خنق *khana2* 'strangle'

> سابق مع *saaba2 ma3* 'race with' > سبق *sébe2* 'come ahead of, precede'

> قاتل مع *2aatal ma3* 'fight with' > قتل *2atal* 'kill'

> شارك مع *shaarak ma3* 'go into partnership with' > شريك *shariik* 'partner'

A small number are causatives, usually alternatives to form IIs:

> طالع *Taala3* 'take, bring up' (causative of طلع 'go up'), alternative to طلّع *Talla3*

Finally, lots of them have no obvious relationship with other verbs:

> عانى من *3aana mén* 'suffer from'

> جاكر *jaakar* 'tease, spite'

Faa3al, yfaa3el

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">جاكر jaakar
'tease'</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">mjaaker مجاكر</td><td colspan="2" align="center">mjaakar مجاكر</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">mjaakara مجاكرة</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">جاكر جاكري جاكرو
jaaker jaakri jaakru</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>jaaker bjaaker</td><td>بجاكر جاكر</td><td>jaakar@t</td><td>جاكرت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>tjaaker bétjaaker</td><td>بتجاكر تجاكر</td><td>jaakar@t</td><td>جاكرت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>tjaakri bétjaakri</td><td>بتجاكري تجاكري</td><td>jaakarti</td><td>جاكرتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>yjaaker bijaaker</td><td>بجاكر يجاكر</td><td>jaakar</td><td>جاكر</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>tjaaker bétjaaker</td><td>بتجاكر تجاكر</td><td>jaakaret</td><td>جاكرت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>njaaker ménjaaker</td><td>منجاكر نجاكر</td><td>jaakarna</td><td>جاكرنا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>tjaakru bétjaakru</td><td>بتجاكرو تجاكرو</td><td>jaakartu</td><td>جاكرتو</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>yjaakru bijaakru</td><td>بجاكرو يجاكرو</td><td>jaakaru</td><td>جاكرو</td></tr>
</table>

Faa3a yfaa3i

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">حاكى 7aaka
'talk to'</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">m7aaki محاكي</td><td colspan="2" align="center">m7aaka محاكى</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">حاكي حاكي حاكو
7aaki 7aaki 7aaku</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>7aaki b7aaki</td><td>بحاكي حاكي</td><td>7aakeet</td><td>حاكيت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>t7aaki bét7aaki</td><td>بتحاكي تحاكي</td><td>7aakeet</td><td>حاكيت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>t7aaki bét7aaki</td><td>بتحاكي تحاكي</td><td>7aakeeti</td><td>حاكيتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>y7aaki bi7aaki</td><td>بحاكي يحاكي</td><td>7aaka</td><td>حاكى</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>t7aaki bét7aaki</td><td>بتحاكي تحاكي</td><td>7aaket</td><td>حاكت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>n7aaki mén7aaki</td><td>منحاكي نحاكي</td><td>7aakeena</td><td>حاكينا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>t7aaku bét7aaku</td><td>بتحاكو تحاكو</td><td>7aakeetu</td><td>حاكيتو</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>y7aaku bi7aaku</td><td>بحاكو يحاكو</td><td>7aaku</td><td>حاكو</td></tr>
</table>

Form V

Form V (*tfa33al*) verbs are very common, one of the most common patterns. They are similar to *fuSHa* except that the *fuSHa ta-* prefix is *t-* instead. They have fuSHa-style *maSdar*s on the shape *tafa33ul/tafa33i*, but these are very commonly replaced in practice by the *maSdar*s of their form II equivalents (تعلم *t3allam* for example often uses تعليم *ta3liim* as its maSdar in practice despite the existence of تعلم *ta3allum*).

Form V is particularly productive as a passive/reciprocal/etc counterpart to form II (*fa33al*) verbs:

> تغير *tghayyar* 'be changeable, changed' < غير *ghayyar* 'change'

> تصور *tSawwar* 'be photographed' < صور *Sawwar* 'photograph'

> تلون *tlawwan* 'be coloured' < لون *lawwan* 'to colour'

Related (possibly even the same category) but with a slightly different translation in English are the intransitive equivalents to form II transitive verbs:

> تغير *tghayyar* 'change' (intransitive)

> تسرب *tsarrab* 'leak' (intransitive)

Some are verbs expressing 'act like' or 'act...' (although these are more common on pattern VI or as quadriliteral verbs):

> تمنن *tmannan* 'ungraciously remind someone of a favour you did them to make them do favours for you' (< منية *ménniyye*)

> تبنت *tbannat* 'act girly'

> تفنن *tfannan* 'be artistic, do skillfully'

> تكفل بـ *tkaffal b-* 'take responsibility for' (be a كفيل for)

Some are synonyms of underlying form II or form I verbs (or both, in some cases):

> تضحك *tDa77ak* 'laugh' (ضحك *Da7ak, Da77ak*)

> تركز *trakkaz* 'concentrate' (ركز *rakkaz*)

Some are verbs of becoming:

> تحسن *t7assan* 'improve'

Lots of form Vs have no clear underlying verb:

> تفضل *tfaDDal* 'go ahead and...'

Tfa33al yétfa33al

تعلم t3allam 'learn'				
	Active Participle		Passive Participle	
	متعلم mét3allem		متعلم mét3allam	
	MaSdar		Noun of Instance	
	تعلم ta3allum		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	تعلم تعلمي تعلمو t3allam t3allami t3allamu			
	Present		Past	
Ana	ét3allam bét3allam	اتعلم بتعلم	t3allam@t	تعلمت
Inte	tét3allam btét3allam	تتعلم بتتعلم	t3allam@t	تعلمت
Inti	tét3allami btét3allami	تتعلمي بتتعلمي	t3allamti	تعلمتي
Huwwe	yét3allam byét3allam	يتعلم بيتعلم	t3allam	تعلم
Hiyye	tét3allam btét3allam	تتعلم بتتعلم	t3allamet	تعلمت
Né7na	nét3allam mnét3allam	نتعلم منتعلم	t3allamna	تعلمنا
Intu	tét3allamu btét3allamu	تتعلمو بتتعلمو	t3allamtu	تعلمتو
Hénnen	yét3allamu byét3allamu	يتعلمو بيتعلمو	t3allamu	تعلمو

Tfa33a yétfa33a

تخبى tkhabba 'hide, be hidden'				
	Active Participle		Passive Participle	
	متخبي métkhabbi		N/A	
	MaSdar		Noun of Instance	
	تخبي takhabbi		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	تخبى تخبي تخبو tkhabba tkhabbi tkhabbu			
	Present		Past	
Ana	étkhabba bétkhabba	اتخبى بتخبى	tkhabbeet	تخبيت
Inte	tétkhabba btétkhabba	تتخبى بتتخبى	tkhabbeet	تخبيت
Inti	tétkhabbi btétkhabbi	تتخبي بتتخبي	tkhabbeeti	تخبيتي
Huwwe	yétkhabba byétkhabba	يتخبى بيتخبى	tkhabba	تخبى
Hiyye	tétkhabba btétkhabba	تتخبى بتتخبى	tkhabbet	تخبت
Né7na	nétkhabba mnétkhabba	نتخبى منتخبى	tkhabbeena	تخبينا
Intu	tétkhabbu btétkhabbu	تتخبو بتتخبو	tkhabbeetu	تخبيتو
Hénnen	yétkhabbu byétkhabbu	يتخبو بيتخبو	tkhabbu	تخبو

Form VI

Form VI (*tfaa3al*) verbs are very common, one of the most common patterns. They are similar to *fuSHa* except that the *fuSHa ta-* prefix is *t-* instead.

Form VI is particularly productive as a passive/reciprocal/etc counterpart to form III (*faa3al*) verbs:

تحاكى مع *t7aaka ma3* 'talk with, be spoken to'

تخانق مع *tkhaana2 ma3* 'argue with, be argued with'

تسابق مع *tsaaba2 ma3* 'race with, be raced with'

توافق مع *twaafa2 ma3* 'agree with, be agreed with'

Some of them are verbs expressing 'act like':

تغاشم *tghaasham* 'be naive' (< غشيم *ghashiim*)

تناسى *tnaasa* 'pretend to have forgotten'

تمايع *tmaaya3* 'act rudely, naughtily' (< مايع *maaye3*)

تبالد *tbaalad* 'act slowly, irritatingly' (< بليد *baliid*)

Some senses don't seem to have obvious underlying verbs:

تجاوب مع *tjaawab ma3* 'respond positively to'

Tfaa3al yétfaa3al

	تجاوب *tjaawab* 'respond'			
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	متجاوب *métjaaweb*		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	تجاوب *tajaawub*		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	تجاوب تجاوبي تجاوبو *tjaawab tjaawabi tjaawabu*			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*étjaawab bétjaawab*	اتجاوب بتجاوب	*tjaawab@t*	تجاوبت
Inte	*tétjaawab btétjaawab*	تتجاوب بتتجاوب	*tjaawab@t*	تجاوبت
Inti	*tétjaawabi btétjaawabi*	تتجاوبي بتتجاوبي	*tjaawabti*	تجاوبتي
Huwwe	*yétjaawab byétjaawab*	يتجاوب بيتجاوب	*tjaawab*	تجاوب
Hiyye	*tétjaawab btétjaawab*	تتجاوب بتتجاوب	*tjaawabet*	تجاوبت
Né7na	*nétjaawab mnétjaawab*	نتجاوب منتجاوب	*tjaawabna*	تجاوبنا
Intu	*tétjaawabu btétjaawabu*	تتجاوبو بتتجاوبو	*tjaawabtu*	تجاوبتو
Hénnen	*yétjaawabu byétjaawabu*	يتجاوبو بيتجاوبو	*tjaawabu*	تجاوبو

Tfaa3a yétfaa3a

	تحاكى *t7aaka* 'be spoken to'			
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	متحاكي *mét7aaki*		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	تحاكي *ta7aaki*		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	تحاكى تحاكي تحاكو *t7aaka t7aaki t7aaku*			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*ét7aaka bét7aaka*	اتحاكى بتحاكى	*t7aakeet*	تحاكيت
Inte	*tét7aaka btét7aaka*	تتحاكى بتتحاكى	*t7aakeet*	تحاكيت
Inti	*tét7aaki btét7aaki*	تتحاكي بتتحاكي	*t7aakeeti*	تحاكيتي
Huwwe	*yét7aaka byét7aaka*	يتحاكى بيتحاكى	*t7aaka*	تحاكى
Hiyye	*tét7aaka btét7aaka*	تتحاكى بتتحاكى	*t7aaket*	تحاكت
Né7na	*nét7aaka mnét7aaka*	نتحاكى منتحاكى	*t7aakeena*	تحاكينا
Intu	*tét7aaku btét7aaku*	تتحاكو بتتحاكو	*t7aakeetu*	تحاكيتو
Hénnen	*yét7aaku byét7aaku*	يتحاكو بيتحاكو	*t7aaku*	تحاكو

Form VII

Form VII is exclusively a passive of form I:

انضرب *nDarab* 'be hit'

انقرى *n2ara* 'be read'

Nfa3al/yénfa3al

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">انمسك nmasak
'be held, caught'</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">منمسك ménmasek</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">انمسك انمسكي انمسكو
nmasek nmaski nmasku</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>énmasek bénmasek</td><td>انمسك بنمسك</td><td>nmasak@t</td><td>انمسكت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>ténmasek bténmasek</td><td>تنمسك بتنمسك</td><td>nmasak@t</td><td>انمسكت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>ténmaski bténmaski</td><td>تنمسكي بتنمسكي</td><td>nmasakti</td><td>انمسكتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>yénmasek byénmasek</td><td>ينمسك بينمسك</td><td>nmasak</td><td>انمسك</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>ténmasek bténmasek</td><td>تنمسك بتنمسك</td><td>nmasket</td><td>انمسكت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>nénmasek mnénmasek</td><td>ننمسك مننمسك</td><td>nmasakna</td><td>انمسكنا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>ténmasku bténmasku</td><td>تنمسكو بتنمسكو</td><td>nmasaktu</td><td>انمسكتو</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>yénmasku byénmasku</td><td>ينمسكو بينمسكو</td><td>nmasaku</td><td>انمسكو</td></tr>
</table>

Nfaal/yénfaal

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">انشاف nshaaf
'be seen</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">منشاف ménshaaf</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">انشاف انشافي انشافو
nshaaf nshaafi nshaafu</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>énshaaf bénshaaf</td><td>انشاف بنشاف</td><td>nshéf@t</td><td>انشفت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>ténshaaf bténshaaf</td><td>تنشاف بتنشاف</td><td>nshéf@t</td><td>انشفت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>ténshaafi bténshaafi</td><td>تنشافي بتنشافي</td><td>nshéfti</td><td>انشفتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>yénshaaf byénshaaf</td><td>ينشاف بينشاف</td><td>nshaaf</td><td>انشاف</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>ténshaaf bténshaaf</td><td>تنشاف بتنشاف</td><td>nshaafet</td><td>انشافت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>nénshaaf mnénshaaf</td><td>ننشاف مننشاف</td><td>nshéfna</td><td>انشفنا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>ténshaafu bténshaafu</td><td>تنشافو بتنشافو</td><td>nshéftu</td><td>انشفتو</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>yénshaafu byénshaafu</td><td>ينشافو بينشافو</td><td>nshaafu</td><td>انشافو</td></tr>
</table>

Nfa3a/yénfa3a

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">انعطى n3aTa
'be given'</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">م/ mén3aTi منعطي</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">انعطى انعطي انعطو</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">n3aTa n3aTi n3aTu</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>én3aTa bén3aTa</td><td>انعطى بنعطى</td><td>n3aTeet</td><td>انعطيت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>tén3aTa btén3aTa</td><td>تنعطى بتنعطى</td><td>n3aTeet</td><td>انعطيت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>tén3aTi btén3aTi</td><td>تنعطي بتنعطي</td><td>n3aTeeti</td><td>انعطيتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>yén3aTa byén3aTa</td><td>ينعطى بينعطى</td><td>n3aTa</td><td>انعطى</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>tén3aTa btén3aTa</td><td>تنعطى بتنعطى</td><td>n3aTet</td><td>انعطت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>nén3aTa mnén3aTa</td><td>ننعطى مننعطى</td><td>n3aTeena</td><td>انعطنا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>tén3aTu btén3aTu</td><td>تنعطو بتنعطو</td><td>n3aTeetu</td><td>انعطيتو</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>yén3aTu byén3aTu</td><td>ينعطو بينعطو</td><td>n3aTu</td><td>انعطو</td></tr>
</table>

Nfa33/yénfa33

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">انكب nkabb
'be thrown away'</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">ménkabb منكب</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">انكب انكبي انكبو</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">nkabb nkabbi nkabbu</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>énkabb bénkabb</td><td>انكب بنكب</td><td>nkabbeet</td><td>انكبيت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>ténkabb bténkabb</td><td>تنكب بتنكب</td><td>nkabbeet</td><td>انكبيت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>ténkabbi bténkabbi</td><td>تنكبي بتنكبي</td><td>nkabbeeti</td><td>انكبيتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>yénkabb byénkabb</td><td>ينكب بينكب</td><td>nkabb</td><td>انكب</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>ténkabb bténkabb</td><td>تنكب بتنكب</td><td>nkabbet</td><td>انكبت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>nénkabb mnénkabb</td><td>ننكب مننكب</td><td>nkabbeena</td><td>انكبينا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>ténkabbu bténkabbu</td><td>تنكبو بتنكبو</td><td>nkabbeetu</td><td>انكبيتو</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>yénkabbu byénkabbu</td><td>ينكبو بينكبو</td><td>nkabbu</td><td>انكبو</td></tr>
</table>

Form VIII

The meaning of form VIII is famously difficult to pin down, and its formation is also quite difficult. In terms of vowelling it is basically identical to form VII, but it's formed (in colloquial as in fuSHa) by the insertion of a -t- after the first root consonant. As in fuSHa this *t* undergoes and causes some strange assimilations, which it's important to be aware of, but these are explained elsewhere and since you're unlikely to need to derive form VIII verbs it's more important to be familiar with the shapes:[31]

اتكل *ttakal* (< *wtakal* < *wakkal*) 'depend'

اضطر *DTarr* (< *Dtarr* < *Daruura*) 'be obligated to'

اتخذ *ttakhaz* (< *2akhaz*) 'take (a decision)'

Many form VIIIs are reflexive/reciprocal /etc versions of form I (or occasionally non-form I) verbs:

ارتبط بـ *rtabaT b-* 'connect, link together with' < ربط *rabaT* 'tie'

استوى *stawa* 'be cooked, finish cooking'

التقى *lta2a* 'meet (one another)'

ازدهر *zdahar* 'flower'

Many are passive, sometimes alternatives of form VIIs:

اقتنع بـ *qtana3 b-* 'be convinced of' < قنع *qana3*

انتسى *ntasa* 'be forgotten' > نسي *nési*

استلم *stalam* 'receive' > سلّم *sallam* 'give to'

Some are more specific/abstract versions of form I verbs:

افتتح *ftata7* 'open (a meeting, a shopping centre)

اتخذ *ttakhaz* 'take on, adopt' > اخذ *akhaz*[32]

---

[31] Lots of the assimilations reflected in spelling in form VIII verbs actually occur naturally in terms of how the language is actually pronounced.

[32] Though this one maybe doesn't count since it presumably exists in *fuSHa* instead and *akhaz* is not a common verb in *3aamiyye*.

Fta3al/yéfta3al

shtaghal اشتغل 'work'				
Active Participle			**Passive Participle**	
N/A			N/A	
MaSdar			**Noun of Instance**	
shégh@l شغل			N/A	
Imperative:				
اشتغل اشتغلي اشتغلو *sht@ghel shtéghli sht@ghlu*				
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*éshtéghel béshtéghel*	اشتغل بيشتغل	*shtaghal@t*	اشتغلت
Inte	*téshtéghel btéshtéghel*	تشتغل بتشتغل	*shtaghal@t*	اشتغلت
Inti	*téshtéghli btéshtéghli*	تشتغلي بتشتغلي	*shtaghalti*	اشتغلتي
Huwwe	*yéshtéghel byéshtéghel*	يشتغل بيشتغل	*shtaghal*	اشتغل
Hiyye	*téshtéghel btéshtéghel*	تشتغل بتشتغل	*shtaghlet*	اشتغلت
Né7na	*néshtéghel mnéshtéghel*	نشتغل منشتغل	*shtaghalna*	اشتغلنا
Intu	*téshtéghlu btéshtéghlu*	تشتغلو بتشتغلو	*shtaghaltu*	اشتغلتو
Hénnen	*yéshtéghlu byéshtéghlu*	يشتغلو بيشتغلو	*shtaghalu*	اشتغلو

Ftaal/yéftaal

rtaa7 ارتاح 'rest'				
Active Participle			**Passive Participle**	
mértaa7 مرتاح			N/A	
MaSdar			**Noun of Instance**	
irtiyaa7 ارتياح			N/A	
Imperative:				
ارتاح ارتاحي ارتاحو *rtaa7 rtaa7i rtaa7u*				
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*értaa7 bértaa7*	ارتاح برتاح	*rté7@t*	ارتحت
Inte	*tértaa7 btértaa7*	ترتاح بترتاح	*rté7@t*	ارتحت
Inti	*tértaa7i btértaa7i*	ترتاحي بترتاحي	*rté7ti*	ارتحتي
Huwwe	*yértaa7 byértaa7*	يرتاح بيرتاح	*rtaa7*	ارتاح
Hiyye	*tértaa7 btértaa7*	ترتاح بترتاح	*rtaa7et*	ارتاحت
Né7na	*nértaa7 mnértaa7*	نرتاح منرتاح	*rté7na*	ارتحنا
Intu	*tértaa7u btértaa7u*	ترتاحو بترتاحو	*rté7tu*	ارتحتو
Hénnen	*yértaa7u byértaa7u*	يرتاحو بيرتاحو	*rtaa7u*	ارتاحو

Fta3a/yéfta3i

التقى *lta2a* 'meet'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	ملتقي *mélta2i*		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	التقاء *iltiqaa2*		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	التقي التقي التقو			
	lta2i lta2i lta2u			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*élta2i bélta2i*	التقي بلتقي	*lta2eet*	التقيت
Inte	*télta2i btélta2i*	تلتقي بتلتقي	*lta2eet*	التقيت
Inti	*télta2i btélta2i*	تلتقي بتلتقي	*lta2eeti*	التقيتي
Huwwe	*yélta2i byélta2i*	يلتقي بيلتقي	*lta2a*	التقى
Hiyye	*télta2i btélta2i*	تلتقي بتلتقي	*lta2et*	التقت
Né7na	*nélta2i mnélta2i*	نلتقي منلتقي	*lta2eena*	التقينا
Intu	*télta2u btélta2u*	تلتقو بتلتقو	*lta2eetu*	التقيتو
Hénnen	*yélta2u byélta2u*	يلتقو بيلتقو	*lta2u*	التقو

Ftall/yéftall

اضطر *DTarr* 'be obliged to'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	مضطر *méDTarr*		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	N/A		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	اضطر اضطري اضطرو			
	DTarr DTarri DTarru			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*éDTarr béDTarr*	اضطر بضطر	*DTarreet*	اضطريت
Inte	*téDTarr btéDTarr*	تضطر بتضطر	*DTarreet*	اضطريت
Inti	*téDTarr btéDTarr*	تضطر بتضطر	*DTarreeti*	اضطريتي
Huwwe	*yéDTarr byéDTarr*	يضطر بيضطر	*DTarr*	اضطر
Hiyye	*téDTarr btéDTarr*	تضطر بتضطر	*DTarret*	اضطرت
Né7na	*néDTarr mnéDTarr*	نضطر منضطر	*DTarreena*	اضطرينا
Intu	*btéDTarru btéDTarru*	تضطرو بتضطرو	*DTarreetu*	اضطريتو
Hénnen	*yéDTarru byéDTarru*	يضطرو بيضطرو	*DTarru*	اضطرو

Form IX

Form IX verbs are quite rare, and only a few of them exist. In *fuSHa* all *if3alla* verbs are by their nature doubled verbs in terms of conjugation, and the same applies in colloquial, but like other doubled verbs the conjugation strategy used for form IXs is formed by analogy with finally-weak/defective verbs and avoids breaking up the cluster: *7marr-eet* for example.

All (almost all?) form IX verbs are associated with an *af3al* adjective of colour or defect and are verbs of becoming:

اسودّ *swadd* 'turn black' > اسود *aswad* 'black'

احمرّ *7marr* 'turn red' > احمر *a7mar* 'red'

اسمرّ *smarr* 'turn brown-skinned, tan' > اسمر *asmar* 'tanned, brown-skinned'

F3all/yéf3all

اسود *swadd* 'turn black'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	مسود *méswadd*		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	N/A		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	اسود اسودي اسودو *swadd swaddi swaddu*			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*éSwadd béSwadd*	اسود بسود	*swaddeet*	اسوديت
Inte	*téSwadd btéSwadd*	تسود بتسود	*swaddeet*	اسوديت
Inti	*téSwadd btéSwadd*	تسود بتسود	*swaddeeti*	اسوديتي
Huwwe	*yéSwadd byéSwadd*	يسود بيسود	*swadd*	اسود
Hiyye	*téSwadd btéSwadd*	تسود بتسود	*swaddet*	اسودت
Né7na	*néSwadd mnéSwadd*	نسود منسود	*swaddeena*	اسودينا
Intu	*btéSwaddu btéSwaddu*	تسودو بتسودو	*swaddeetu*	اسوديتو
Hénnen	*yéSwaddu byéSwaddu*	يسودو بيسودو	*swaddu*	اسودو

Form X

Form X (*staf3al*) verbs are formed relatively simply and in a way similar to *fuSHa*. In fuSHa teaching some bright spark hit on the idea of explaining them in terms of 'seek to do X', which is actually a reasonably good approximation of the meaning of quite a lot of form Xs assuming you don't get too excited and literally go about translating them that way instead of using it as a handy guide to guess the meaning. If we want to approach it more accurately, however, *staf3al* verbs have quite a few different meanings.

Many common form Xs are derived from adjectives and express 'consider something X':

استغرب *staghrab* 'find strange'

استجسن *sta7san* 'consider good, better'

استهبل على *stahbal 3ala* 'treat like an idiot'

Some are verbs of becoming (-anise):

استعرب *sta3rab* 'become Arab', 'act like an Arab'

استغرب *staghrab* 'become Westernised', 'act westernised'

Some (including these two in some contexts) are verbs of action:

استرجل *starjal* 'act masculine (of a woman)'

The pattern is also used in a few cases to translate the –*ist* of English e.g. 'Orientalist', with accompanying (though rare) verbs:

مستشرق *mustashreq* 'Orientalist'

Some (and these are the ones that most fit 'seek') are derived from (typically but not exclusively form I) verbs with a meaning like 'seek for X to do Y' where Y is the underlying verb:

استعان *sta3aan* 'ask for someone's help' > عان 'help'

استقال *staqaal* 'resign' > اقال 'release from a job'

Many seem to straightforwardly fit with 'seek to' plus underlying verb (without any of the strange additional actor stuff going on above'):

استولى *stawla* 'take control of'

استوطن *stawTan* 'settle, colonise'

staf3al; yéstaf3el

	استغرب *staghrab*			
	'find strange, be surprised'			
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	مستغرب *méstaghreb*		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	استغراب *istighraab*		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	استغرب استغربي استغربو			
	staghreb staghrbi staghrbu			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*éStaghreb béStaghreb*	استغرب بستغرب	*staghrab@t*	استغربت
Inte	*téStaghreb btéStaghreb*	تستغرب بتستغرب	*staghrab@t*	استغربت
Inti	*téStagh@rbi btéStagh@rbi*	تستغربي بتستغربي	*staghrabti*	استغربتي
Huwwe	*yéStaghreb byéStaghreb*	يستغرب بيستغرب	*staghrab*	استغرب
Hiyye	*téStaghreb btéStaghreb*	تستغرب بتستغرب	*staghrabet*	استغربت
Né7na	*néStaghreb mnéStaghreb*	نستغرب منستغرب	*staghrabna*	استغربنا
Intu	*btéStagh@rbu btéStagh@rbu*	تستغربو بتستغربو	*staghrabtu*	استغربتو
Hénnen	*yéStagh@rbu byéStagh@rbu*	يستغربو بيستغربو	*staghrabu*	استغربو

Stafaal; yéstafiil

	استقال *staqaal*			
	'resign'			
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	مستقيل *méstaqiil*		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	استقالة *istiqaale*		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	استقيل استقيلي استقيلو			
	staqiil staqiili staqiilu			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*éStaqiiil béStaqiiil*	استقيل بستقيل	*staqélt*	استقلت
Inte	*téStaqiiil btéStaqiiil*	تستقيل بتستقيل	*staqélt*	استقلت
Inti	*téStaqiiil btéStaqiiil*	تستقيل بتستقيل	*staqélti*	استقلتي
Huwwe	*yéStaqiiil byéStaqiiil*	يستقيل بيستقيل	*staqaal*	استقال
Hiyye	*téStaqiiil btéStaqiiil*	تستقيل بتستقيل	*staqaalet*	استقالت
Né7na	*néStaqiiil mnéStaqiiil*	نستقيل منستقيل	*staqélna*	استقلنا
Intu	*btéStaqiiilu btéStaqiiilu*	تستقيلو بتستقيلو	*staqéltu*	اضطريتو
Hénnen	*yéStaqiiilu byéStaqiiilu*	يستقيلو بيستقيلو	*staqaalu*	اضطرو

stawla; yéstawli

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">stawla استولى
'take over'</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4"></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">méstawli مستولي</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">istiilaa2 استيلاء</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">استولي استولي استلولو
stawli stawli stawlu</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>éstawli béstawli</td><td>استولي بستولي</td><td>stawleet</td><td>استوليت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>téstawli btéstawli</td><td>تستولي بتستولي</td><td>stawleet</td><td>استوليت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>téstawli btéstawli</td><td>تستوليبتستولي</td><td>stawleeti</td><td>استوليتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>yéstawli byéstawli</td><td>يستولي بيستولي</td><td>stawla</td><td>استولى</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>téstawli btéstawli</td><td>تستولي بتستولي</td><td>stawlet</td><td>استولت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>néstawli mnéstawli</td><td>نستولي منستولي</td><td>stawleena</td><td>استولينا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>téstawlu btéstawlu</td><td>تستولو بتستولو</td><td>stawleetu</td><td>استوليتو</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>yéstawlu byéstawlu</td><td>يستولو بيستولو</td><td>stawlu</td><td>استولو</td></tr>
</table>

staghall; yéstaghell

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">staghall استغل
'exploit'</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4"></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">méstaghéll مستغل</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">istighlaal استغلال</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">استغل استغلي استغلو
staghéll staghéllu staghéllu</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>éstaghéll béstaghéll</td><td>استغل بستغل</td><td>staghalleet</td><td>استغليت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>téstaghéll btéstaghéll</td><td>تستغل بتستغل</td><td>staghalleet</td><td>استغليت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>téstaghélli btéstaghélli</td><td>تستغلي بتستغلي</td><td>staghalleeti</td><td>استغليتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>yéstaghéll byéstaghéll</td><td>يستغل بيستغل</td><td>staghall</td><td>استغل</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>téstaghéll btéstaghéll</td><td>تستغل بتستغل</td><td>staghallet</td><td>استغلت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>néstaghéll mnéstaghéll</td><td>نستغل منستغل</td><td>staghalleena</td><td>استغلينا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>téstaghéllu btéstaghéllu</td><td>تستغلو بتستغلو</td><td>staghalleetu</td><td>استغليتو</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>yéstaghéllu byéstaghéllu</td><td>يستغلو بيستغلو</td><td>staghallu</td><td>استغلو</td></tr>
</table>

Quadriliteral verbs

Unlike the other patterns given here, quadriliteral verbs are not a derivational pattern in themselves – 'quadriliteral' simply describes any verb with four letters in its root instead of three. Although they are not unified by meaning, however, they *do* conveniently conjugate on the same four patterns.

According to an Arabic teacher I had once, quadriliterals are all supposedly either loanwords (albeit sometimes very old ones) or onomatopoeia. And in fact, many of them are foreign loans:

سشور *sashwar* 'blow-dry' < سشوار *seshwaar* 'hairdrier' (French *séchoir*)

تلفن *talfan* 'phone up' < تليفون *telefoon*

تشنكل *shangal* 'link arms with' < شنكال *shangaal* 'hook' < Turkish *çengel*

تشنطط *tshanTaT* 'be tossed from place to place' < شنطة *shanTa* 'bag' < Turkish *çanta*

برمج *barmaj* 'programme' < برنامج *barnaamaj* 'programme' < Persian برنامه[33]

Many, however, are derived from other native words, and in any case lots of these borrowings are very solidly nativised to the extent speakers no longer recognise that they're foreign.

خوزق *khooza2* 'screw over' < خازوق *khaazuu2* 'impaling stake'

بسبس *basbas* 'keep giving reasons not to do something' < بس *bass* 'but'

Many onomatopoeias are also quadriliteral:

زقزق *za2za2* 'squeak'

طقطق *Ta2Ta2* 'pop, crack'

Some are derived from other derived words whilst maintaining one of the added consonants:

تمركز *tmarkaz* 'be centred on' < مركز *markaz* 'centre'

Many verbs analysed as quadriliteral in fact have an identifiable underlying three-letter root and are actually derivations on one of a large number of less common derivational patterns not usually treated in fuSHa (although some of them exist there too). These patterns have various different meanings – many are verbs of becoming or action:

تولدن *twaldan* 'act childishly' < ولد *walad* 'boy'

صفرن *Safran* 'turn yellow' < اصفر *aSfar* 'yellow'

بورد *boorad* 'cool down' < برد *bar@d* 'cold'

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[33] This one is old enough that the Persian word has lost the final –g borrowed into Arabic as –*j*.

Many have a meaning which is similar to their underlying verb but expresses drawn out action. These are probably the most common derivations which can be done on the fly, and are similar to the English transformation of verbs using adverbs like 'around':

تنطوط *tnaTwaT* 'jump around' < نط *naTT* 'jump' (*tfa3wal*)

ترقوص *tra2waS* 'dance around' < رقص *ra2aS* 'dance'

نكوش *nakwash* 'root around in' < نكش *nakash* 'root through' (*fa3wal*)

لحوس *la7was* 'lick at' < لجس *la7as* 'lick'

طزطز *TazTaz* 'fart repeatedly, make a pooting noise' < طز *Tazz* 'fart'

طرطق *TarTa2* 'tap repeatedly' < طرق *Tara2* 'hit'

بصبص *baSbaS* 'look around, peek around' < بص *baSS* 'look'[34]

Conjugation-wise, there are four major variations: sound (*fa3lal* etc), second-letter weak (*foo3al*, *fee3al*) and their final-weak equivalents (*fa3la, foo3a/fee3a*). These are modelled on form II and form IV. Each of these simple patterns also has an equivalent with the *t-* prefix (*tfa3lal*, *tfoo3al/tfee3al, tfa3la, tfoo3a/tfee3a*) modelled on form V and form VI. The uses of the *t-* forms generally line up with other *t-* forms. The passives of quadriliteral verbs for example is formed this way:

تبرمج *tbarmaj* 'be programmed' < برمج *barmaj* 'programme'

تخوزق *tkhooza2* 'get screwed over' < خوزق *khooza2* 'screw over'

تشنطط *tshanTaT* 'be tossed from place to place' < شنطط *shanTaT* 'toss from place to place'

Likewise, some *t-* verbs are the recriprocal (etc) equivalent of an underlying verb:

تشنكل *tshangal* 'link arms with one another' < شنكل *shangal* 'link arms with'

Generally verbs of action in particular are formed on the *t-* patterns.

تفهمن *tfahman* 'patronise, be a know-it-all' < فهم *féhem*[35] 'understand'

تفلسف *tfalsaf* 'philosophise, act like aphilosopher' < فلسفة *falsafe* 'philosophy'

تفصحن *tfaSHan* 'use big words in an attempt to sound educated' < فصحى *fuSHa*

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[34] The underlying verb here isn't really used in Syrian.

[35] This might be a case of retaining a consonant from a different derived form, i.e. فهمان *fahmaan* 'wise'.

Fa3fa3, yfa3fe3

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">za2za2 زقزق
'squeak'</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">mza2ze2 مزقزق</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">za2za2a زقزقة</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">زقزق زقزقي زقزقو
za2ze2 za2@z2i za2@z2u</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>za2ze2 bza2ze2</td><td>زقزق بزقزق</td><td>za2za2@t</td><td>زقزقت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>tza2ze2 bétza2ze2</td><td>تزقزق بتزقزق</td><td>za2za2@t</td><td>زقزقت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>tza2@z2i bétza2@z2i</td><td>تزقزقي بتزقزقي</td><td>za2za2Ti</td><td>زقزقتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>yza2ze2 biza2ze2</td><td>يزقزق بزقزق</td><td>za2za2</td><td>زقزق</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>tza2ze2 bétza2ze2</td><td>تزقزق بتزقزق</td><td>za2za2et</td><td>زقزقت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>nza2ze2 ménza2ze2</td><td>نزقزق منزقزق</td><td>za2za2na</td><td>زقزقنا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>tza2@z2u bétza2@z2u</td><td>تزقزقو بتزقزقو</td><td>za2za2Tu</td><td>زقزقنا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>yza2@z2u biza2@z2u</td><td>يزقزقو بزقزقو</td><td>za2za2u</td><td>زقزقو</td></tr>
</table>

Tfa3lal yétfa3lal

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">tda7raj تدحرج
'roll'</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">métda7rej متدحرج</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">da7raje دحرجة</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4" align="center">تدحرج تدحرجي تدحرجو
tda7raj tda7raji tda7raju</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>étda7raj bétda7raj</td><td>تدحرج بتدحرج</td><td>tda7raj@t</td><td>تدحرجت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>tétda7raj btétda7raj</td><td>تتدحرج بتتدحرج</td><td>tda7raj@t</td><td>تدحرجت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>tétda7raji btétda7raji</td><td>تتدحرجي بتتدحرجي</td><td>tda7rajTi</td><td>تدحرجتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>yétda7raj byétda7raj</td><td>يتدحرج بتدحرج</td><td>tda7raj</td><td>تدحرج</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>tétda7raj btétda7raj</td><td>تتدحرج بتتدحرج</td><td>tda7rajet</td><td>تدحرجت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>nétda7raj mnétda7raj</td><td>نتدحرج منتدحرج</td><td>tda7rajna</td><td>تدحرجنا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>tétda7raju btétda7raju</td><td>تتدحرجو بتتدحرجو</td><td>tda7rajTu</td><td>تدحرجنا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>yétda7raju byétda7raju</td><td>يتدحرجو بتدحرجو</td><td>tda7raju</td><td>تدحرجو</td></tr>
</table>

Fa3la, yfa3li

طعمى Ta3ma 'feed'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	mTa3mi مطعمي		mTa3ma مطعمى	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	N/A		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	طعمي طعمي طعمو Ta3mi Ta3mi Ta3mu			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	Ta3mi bTa3mi	طعمي بطعمي	Ta3meet	طعميت
Inte	tTa3mi bétTa3mi	تطعمي بتطعمي	Ta3meet	طعميت
Inti	tTa3mi bétTa3mi	تطعمي بتطعمي	Ta3meeti	طعميتي
Huwwe	yTa3mi biTa3mi	يطعمي بطعمي	Ta3ma	طعمى
Hiyye	tTa3mi bétTa3mi	تطعمي بتطعمي	Ta3met	طعمت
Né7na	nTa3mi ménTa3mi	نطعمي منطعمي	Ta3meena	طعمينا
Intu	tTa3mu bétTa3mu	تطعمو بتطعمو	Ta3meetu	طعميتو
Hénnen	yTa3mu biTa3mu	يطعمو بطعمو	Ta3mu	طعمو

Tfa3la yétfa3la

تفرشى tfarsha 'be brushed'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	métfarshi متفرشي		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	N/A		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	تفرشى تفرشي تفرشو tfarsha tfarshi tfarshu			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	étfarsha bétfarsha	اتفرشى بتفرشى	tfarsheet	تفرشيت
Inte	tétfarsha btétfarsha	تتفرشى بتتفرشى	tfarsheet	تفرشيت
Inti	tétfarshi btétfarshi	تتفرشي بتتفرشي	tfarsheeti	تفرشيتي
Huwwe	yétfarsha byétfarsha	يتفرشى بيتفرشى	tfarsha	تفرشى
Hiyye	tétfarsha btétfarsha	تتفرشى بتتفرشى	tfarshet	تفرشت
Né7na	nétfarsha mnétfarsha	نتفرشى منتفرشى	tfarsheena	تفرشينا
Intu	tétfarshu btétfarshu	تتفرشو بتتفرشو	tfarsheetu	تفرشيتو
Hénnen	yétfarshu byétfarshu	يتفرشو بيتفرشو	tfarshu	تفرشو

Foo3an, yfoo3en

دوزن *doozan* 'tune'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	mdoozen مدوزن		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	doozane دوزنة		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	دوزن دوزني دوزنو *doozen doozni dooznu*			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*doozen bdoozen*	دوزن بدوزن	*doozan@t*	دوزنت
Inte	*tdoozen bétdoozen*	تدوزن بتدوزن	*doozan@t*	دوزنت
Inti	*tdoozni bétdoozni*	تدوزني بتدوزني	*doozanti*	دوزنتي
Huwwe	*ydoozen bidoozen*	يدوزن بدوزن	*doozan*	دوزن
Hiyye	*tdoozen bétdoozen*	تدوزن بتدوزن	*doozanet*	دوزنت
Né7na	*ndoozen méndoozen*	ندوزن مندوزن	*doozanna*	دوزننا
Intu	*tdooznu bétdooznu*	تدوزنو بتدوزنو	*doozantu*	دوزننا
Hénnen	*ydooznu bidooznu*	يدوزنو بدوزنو	*doozanu*	دوزنو

Tfoo3an, yétfoo3an

تدوزن *tdoozan* 'be tuned'				
	Active Participle		**Passive Participle**	
	métdoozen متدوزن		N/A	
	MaSdar		**Noun of Instance**	
	doozane دوزنة		N/A	
	Imperative:			
	تدوزن تدوزني تدوزنو *tdoozan tdoozani tdoozanu*			
	Present		**Past**	
Ana	*étdoozan bétdoozan*	تدوزن بتدوزن	*tdoozan@t*	تدوزنت
Inte	*tétdoozan btétdoozan*	تتدوزن بتتدوزن	*tdoozan@t*	تدوزنت
Inti	*tétdoozani btétdoozani*	تتدوزني بتتدوزني	*tdoozanti*	تدوزنتي
Huwwe	*yétdoozan byétdoozan*	يتدوزن بيتدوزن	*tdoozan*	تدوزن
Hiyye	*tétdoozan btétdoozan*	تتدوزن بتتدوزن	*tdoozanet*	تدوزنت
Né7na	*nétdoozan mnétdoozan*	نتدوزن منتدوزن	*tdoozanna*	تدوزننا
Intu	*tétdoozanu btétdoozanu*	تتدوزنو بتتدوزنو	*tdoozantu*	تدوزننا
Hénnen	*yétdoozanu byétdoozanu*	يتدوزنو بيتدوزنو	*tdoozanu*	تدوزنو

Foo3a, yfoo3i

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">booya بوبی
'polish'</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6"></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">mbooyi مبويي</td><td colspan="2" align="center">mbooya مبوبی</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
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<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">بويي بويي بويو
booyi booyi booyu</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>booyi bbooyi</td><td>بويي ببويي</td><td>booyeet</td><td>بوييت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>tbooyi bétbooyi</td><td>تبويي بتبويي</td><td>booyeet</td><td>بوييت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>tbooyi bétbooyi</td><td>تبويي بتبويي</td><td>booyeeti</td><td>بوييتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>ybooyi bibooyi</td><td>يبوي ببوي</td><td>booya</td><td>بوبی</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>tbooyi bétbooyi</td><td>تبويي بتبويي</td><td>booyet</td><td>بويت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>nbooyi ménbooyi</td><td>نبويي منبويي</td><td>booyeena</td><td>بويينا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>tbooyu bétbooyu</td><td>تبويو بتبويو</td><td>booyeetu</td><td>بوييتو</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>ybooyu bibooyu</td><td>يبويو ببويو</td><td>booyu</td><td>بويو</td></tr>
</table>

tfoo3a, yétfoo3i

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">tbooya تبوبی
'be polished'</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6"></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Active Participle</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Passive Participle</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">métbooyi متبويي</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">MaSdar</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Noun of Instance</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td><td colspan="2" align="center">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">Imperative:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">تبوبی تبويي تبويو
tbooya tbooyi tbooyu</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Present</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Past</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ana</td><td>étbooya bétbooya</td><td>اتبويي بتبوبی</td><td>tbooyeet</td><td>تبوييت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inte</td><td>tétbooya btétbooya</td><td>تتبوبی بتتبوبی</td><td>tbooyeet</td><td>تبوييت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inti</td><td>tétbooyi btétbooyi</td><td>تتبويي بتتبويي</td><td>tbooyeeti</td><td>تبوييتي</td></tr>
<tr><td>Huwwe</td><td>yétbooya byétbooya</td><td>يتبوبی بيتبوبی</td><td>tbooya</td><td>تبوبی</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hiyye</td><td>tétbooya btétbooya</td><td>تتبوبی بتتبوبی</td><td>tbooyet</td><td>تبويت</td></tr>
<tr><td>Né7na</td><td>nétbooya mnétbooya</td><td>نتبوبی منتبوبی</td><td>tbooyeena</td><td>تبويينا</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intu</td><td>tétbooyu btétbooyu</td><td>تتبويو بتتبويو</td><td>tbooyeetu</td><td>تبوييتو</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hénnen</td><td>yétbooyu byétbooyu</td><td>يتبويو بيتبويو</td><td>tbooyu</td><td>تبويو</td></tr>
</table>