



International Workshop, INALCO, Paris, 23 January 2026

Programme

11h00-11h15 Welcome

11h15-12h30

Faruk Akkuş – *(In)dependence of subordination types*

Slavomir Čéplö – *Subordination in Maltese: the case of il, biex, and ma*

12h30-14h00 lunch

14h00-15h00

Bruno Hérin – *Does Arabic have a relative pronoun?*

Maxime Tabet – *Subordination of clauses in Šiḥḥī, some unusual particles for conditional*

15h00-15h30 coffee break

15h30-17h30

Alessia D'Accordio Berlinguer and Stefano Manfredi – *Subjunctive clauses across Arabic varieties: a typological overview*

Catherine Taine-Cheikh – *De l'utilité des notions d'insubordination et de semi-insubordination pour l'étude des langues arabes et berbères*

Thomas Leddy Cecere – *Insubordination in an Arabic Depurposive Future*

Conclusions

Free attendance, both on site and online

Venue: [INALCO, Maison de Recherche, 2 Rue de Lille, Room LO.01](#)

Zoom link for attendance online:

<https://cnrs.zoom.us/j/97801114433?pwd=ISJFB2v3fMrkH8XPChqXCEIGlzAtUO.1>

Organizing Committee

Alessia D'Accordio Berlinguer (AMU-IREMAM/INALCO-LACNAD), Stefano Manfredi (CNRS- SeDyL), Christophe Pereira (INALCO-LACNAD).





Workshop rationale

Insubordination in Spoken Arabic While significant progress has been made in cross-linguistic studies of subordination (Frajzyngier 1996; Kortmann 1996; van der Auwera 1998; Caron 2008; Manfredi and Quint 2024), the domain remains largely underexplored in spoken varieties of Arabic, especially from a typologically grounded perspective. Despite valuable contributions such as Brustad (2000) and Taine-Cheikh (2022), detailed accounts of subordination across Arabic varieties are still rare, and studies that integrate insubordination into the analysis are virtually non-existent. This workshop seeks to fill this gap by bringing together studies on subordination and insubordination in spoken varieties of Arabic. The workshop is also open to comparative research involving other Semitic languages. The domain of subordination involves constructions in which one clause is syntactically and semantically dependent on another. Typological work has emphasized the diversity of the encoding of subordinating relations across languages and the importance of identifying cross-linguistic parameters such as finiteness, dependency, or embedding (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997; Cristofaro 2003; Nordström 2010). However, the cross-linguistic comparability of these notions is far from settled and often language-dependent (Comrie 2008). Insubordination rather refers to the conventionalized use of formally subordinate clauses as matrix clauses (Evans 2007). Diachronically, insubordination may result from ellipsis, diachronic reanalysis, or discourse-driven constructions, and has never been extensively studied in Arabic. Given the high typological diversity of Arabic vernaculars, and the relative lack of comparative research on their syntactic variation, the goal of this workshop is to explore how subordinate and insubordinate constructions in spoken Arabic challenge or reinforce existing typologies. The workshop will address the following questions:

- Morphosyntactic comparison of subordinate/insubordinate clauses: How can we describe and compare the morphosyntactic encoding of adverbial, complement, and relative subordinating relations across spoken varieties of Arabic? Are ‘dependency’, ‘finiteness’, and ‘embeddedness’ valuable morphosyntactic notions for the comparison of subordination/insubordination in spoken varieties of Arabic?
- Grammaticalization of subordinating devices (subordinators, complementizers, and relators): Do subordinating devices present converging or diverging grammaticalization paths across Arabic varieties? To what extent is the



grammaticalization of subordinating devices in spoken Arabic affected by internal or contact-induced change?

- Mood, modality, and subordination: What is the diachronic link between the grammatical expression of mood and modality and the morphosyntactic encoding of subordinating relations in one or more Arabic varieties? How do spoken varieties of Arabic grammaticalize and convey equivalents of a subjunctive mood in subordinate/insubordinate clauses?

- Morphosyntactic variation: What are the main sociolinguistic variables producing morphosyntactic variation of subordinate/insubordinate clauses in one or more varieties of Arabic? What are the main grammatical factors producing language-dependent variation of subordinate/insubordinate clauses?

Organizing committee:

Alessia D'Accordio-Berlinguer (IREMAM, Aix-Marseille Université/LACNAD, INALCO)

Stefano Manfredi (SeDyL, UMR 8202, CNRS, IRD, INALCO)

Christophe Pereira (LACNAD, INALCO)

Abstracts

(In)dependence of subordination types

Faruk Akkuş (UMass Amhers Linguistics)

This talk presents two case studies of subordination from Sason Arabic that evaluate whether the syntax of finite subordinate clauses is the basis for their seemingly distinct counterparts. The first case study is concerned with the syntax of subordinate clauses with and without the complementizer *le* 'that'. In English and many languages, the prevailing approach to finite clauses without *that* is to suggest they are identical to their corresponding clauses with an overt complementizer, apart from a null complementizer (e.g., Chomsky and Lasnik 1977, Stowell 1981). Various pieces of evidence challenge this conclusion for Sason Arabic, and suggest that embedded clauses with the overt complementizer have the CP layer, whereas those without the complementizer lack the CP layer and instead are finite TP.

The second case study investigates a contact-induced construction, in which indirect causatives are established via the causing predicate 'make', which can embed a finite



CP or an infinitival. Some recent approaches to subordination suggest that every embedded clause is built as a full finite CP, and some layers may be reduced as a consequence of later derivational processes (Exfoliation by Pesetsky 2019, Structure Removal by Müller 2015). Examination of ‘make’-causatives against this background reveals that constructions in which ‘make’ embeds an infinitival cannot be derived from the deletion of projections from a full clause, and as such, the two are derivationally independent.

Together these two case studies suggest a more transparent syntax-surface form correspondence.

Subordination in Maltese: the case of *il*, *biex*, and *ma*

Slavomír Čéplö (BBAW)

In Maltese, there are three general subordinators, i.e. subordinators that do not encode a specific semantic relationship (typically adverbial, e.g. purpose, time, or cause) between the main clause and the embedded clause:

1. *li* (< Old Arabic *allaḏī*), the most general one (Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander 1997: 30);
2. *biex* (< Arabic *bāš*, Taine-Cheikh 2022: 655–657), typically used as a subordinator of purpose (Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander 1997: 41), but now a general subordinator as well (1);¹
3. *ma* (< Old Arabic subordinator *mā*, Fischer 1972: 188), the least common and thus little described (Camilleri 2016: 168).

- (1) [BCv3: 2011 Joe Pace – *It-Tielet Teorija*]
Il-ni biex n-ghid-lek.
 PAST-SP.1SG SUB.PURP 1IPFV-tell-io.2SG
 ‘I have been saying this to you for a while.’

The function of *li* in various types of subordinate clauses has been described in previous works (Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander 1997: 30–36), as has *biex* as a

¹ The abbreviation BCv3 refers to the *bulbulistan* Corpus of Maltese, accessible at <https://www.bulbul.sk/crystal/#concordance?corpname=maltiV3> and described in Čéplö (2018: 57–81).

(In)subordination In Arabic

subordinator of purpose (Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander 1997: 41). This description, however, seems to be lacking: for example, the fact that *biex* and *li* are in complementary distribution in some constructions has only been mentioned in passing (Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander 1997: 3). Recently, I have provided more evidence for this overlap in function with regard to a subclass of words previously described as pseudo-verbs (Čéplö 2025: 257, 261, 265), such as *il* ‘for a long time’ in (1): note that in the same structure, the clause complement of *il* can also be introduced by the subordinator *li* (2), or the subordinator can be completely absent (3).

(2) [BCv3: it-torca.46267]

Ilni li ghed-t-ilkom dan koll-u eluf ta' snin.
PAST-SP.1SG SUB tell.PAST-3SG-IO.2PL that.M all-3SGM thousand.PL POSS year.PL
‘I have been telling you that for thousands of years.’

(3) [BCv3: 2012 Ivan Buġeja – Ġimġha Sibte u Hadd]

U ejja, Ruth, il-ni n-ghid-lek fuq-ha.
And come.on PROPN PAST-SP.1SG 1IPFV-tell-IO.2SG about-3SGF
‘Oh come on, Ruth, I’ve been telling you about this for ages.’

Structures like (3) raise the question of their relationship to the phenomenon of verbal chains (Stolz 2009; Taine-Cheikh 2022: 662–670) and the nature of subordination—and subordinators—as a whole. In this paper, I sketch out an answer to that question by providing a comprehensive analysis of the use and function of the three subordinators. In addition to the study of this particular aspect of Maltese syntax, I also consider the diachrony of Maltese (i.e. contact influence from Romance) and the wider areal context by comparing analogous or equivalent structures in other varieties of North African Arabic.

References

Borg, Albert, and Marie Azzopardi-Alexander. 1997. *Maltese*. London: Routledge.
Camilleri, Maris. 2016. “Temporal and Aspectual Auxiliaries in Maltese.” Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Essex.

Čéplö, Slavomír. 2018. *Constituent Order in Maltese: A Quantitative Analysis*. PhD thesis, Charles University.

Čéplö, Slavomír. 2025. “Maltese Pseudo-verbs Revisited.” In Čéplö, Slavomír, and



Adam Ussishkin (eds.), *Quam lingua melitea hic subicio. Studies in Maltese Linguistics Dedicated to Thomas Stolz on the Occasion of his 68th Birthday*, 223–294. Tucson: Staten House.

Fischer, Wolfdietrich. 1972. *Grammatik des klassischen Arabisch*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

Stolz, Thomas. 2009. “Splitting the Verb Chain in Modern Literary Maltese.” In Comrie, Ray, Elisabeth Hume, Manwel Mifsud, Thomas Stolz, and Martine Vanhove (eds.), *Introducing Maltese Linguistics*, 133–179. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. (Studies in Language Companion Series Vol. 113). doi:10.1075/slcs.113.12sto

Taine-Cheikh, Catherine. 2022. “From Embedded Propositions to Complex Predicates. The Contribution of Arabic Dialects to Syntactic Typology.” *STUF – Language Typology and Universals* 75(4): 643–684.

Does Arabic have a relative pronoun?

Bruno Hérin (INALCO, CERMOM)

The goal of this presentation is to explore to what extent Classical Arabic *alladhī* or dialectal *illi* can safely be classified as relative pronoun, as is often assumed in descriptive works. Using Croft’s (2022) packaging of semantic classes in different propositional act functions, relativisation is understood as the use of an action-word to modify the reference of an object-word, i.e. the use of a predicate to narrow the reference of a noun. Several relativisation strategies have so far been identified cross-linguistically (Comrie & Kuteva 2013): relative pronoun, non-reduction, pronoun-retention and the gap strategy. While Arabic is famously known for using the pronoun-retention strategy, a closer look reveals different patterns between eastern and western Arabic as far as relativisation on objects is concerned and that Arabic as a whole uses the gap strategy with relativized subjects in case of non-verbal predicates. Authors agree that for a relativiser to be recognised as relative pronoun it has to recall in some way the syntactic function of the relativised noun within the relative clause (Creissels 2006; Comrie & Kuteva 2013). According to this, Arabic



alladi or *illi* cannot be said to be relative pronouns. Instead, the proposal put forward here is that these morphemes are best viewed as definiteness markers and as such are allomorphs of the definite article whose distribution is governed by predicate type (adjective vs clausal).

References

Comrie, Bernard & Tania Kuteva. 2013. Relativization on Subjects. In Matthew S. Dryer & Martin Haspelmath (eds.), *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*. Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. <https://wals.info/chapter/122>. (31 January, 2019).

Creissels, Denis. 2006. *La phrase (Syntaxe générale une introduction typologique / Denis Creissels; 2)*. Paris: Hermès Science [u.a.].

Croft, William. 2022. *Morphosyntax: Constructions of the World's Languages*. 1st edn. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316145289>.

Subjunctive clauses across Arabic varieties: a typological overview

Alessia D'Accordio-Berlinguer AMU-IREMAM / INALCO-LACNAD

Stefano Manfredi, SeDyL (CNRS, INALCO, IRD)

This study investigates typological variation in the marking of subjunctive clauses across spoken varieties of Arabic. Spoken Arabic is traditionally contrasted with Old Arabic due to the absence of dedicated subjunctive suffixes, which have generally been replaced by an unmarked prefixed conjugation (Brustad 2000). In line with this assumption, our analysis explores the morphosyntactic and semantic variability of subjunctive clauses across epistemic, deontic, and performative modalities (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994; Bybee and Fleischman 1995). Special attention is given to the interaction between subjunctive marking and the realis/irrealis distinction (Givón 1994), as well as broader TAM patterns. The study also examines additional formal features of subordinate subjunctive clauses, including the presence or absence of overt complementizers, the morphosyntactic encoding of the embedded subject, and the TAM marking of the subordinate verb. The comparative scope encompasses a range of Eastern and Western Arabic dialects (e.g., Hassaniya, Moroccan, Tunisian,



Maltese, Sudanese, Omani), as well as Arabic-lexified creoles (Juba Arabic, Ki-Nubi), drawing on both primary data and secondary sources (Caubet 2013; Čéplö 2017; D'Accordio-Berlinguer 2024; Manfredi 2017). Ultimately, the study argues that spoken Arabic varieties indeed encode an indicative/subjunctive distinction and highlights the morphosyntactic diversity shaped by both internally motivated developments and contact-induced change in this grammatical domain.

References

Brustad, Kristen. 2000. *The Syntax of Spoken Arabic: A Comparative Study of Moroccan, Egyptian, Syrian, and Kuwaiti Dialects*. Georgetown: Georgetown University Press.

Bybee, Joan, Revere Perkins & William Pagliuca. 1994. *The evolution of grammar: Tense, aspect, and modality in the languages of the world*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.

Bybee, Joan & Suzanne Fleischman. 1995. "Modality in Grammar and Discourse: An Introductory Essay." In Joan Bybee and Suzanne Fleischman (eds.), *Modality in Grammar and Discourse*, Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 1–14.

Caubet, Dominique. 2013. Moroccan Arabic Corpus. Corpus recorded, transcribed and annotated by Dominique Caubet. In Amina Mettouchi & Christian Chanard (eds.), *The CorpAfroAs Corpus of Spoken AfroAsiatic Languages*. Available online.

Čéplö, Slavomír. 2017. Bulbulistan corpus of Maltese, accessible at <https://www.bulbul.sk/crystal/#concordance?corpname=maltiV3>.

D'Accordio-Berlinguer, Alessia. 2024. *The Arabic Spoken in Kairouan (Tunisia): Towards a Reassessment of the Arabization of Northern Africa*. INALCO - Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale" PhD.

Givón, Talmy. 1994. "Irrealis and the Subjunctive." *Studies in Language* 18(2): 265–337.

Manfredi, Stefano. 2017. *Arabi Juba: un pidgin-créole du Soudan du Sud*. Leuven - Paris: Peeters.



Subordination of clauses in Šihhi, some unusual particles for conditional and speech report

Maxime Tabet (INALCO, CERMOM)

The goal of this paper is to clarify the distributional rules of the conditional particle *ko* in Šihhi Arabic following Holes's tripartite typology of conditional clauses in Eastern Arabia's varieties of Arabic (Holes 2015: 402). The secondary goal is to confirm its verbal source, presumably developed from *kān*>*kōn* with the elision of /n/ (Bernabela 2011). Initial /k/ is not affricated as it is the case in Bedouin varieties across the Arabian Peninsula, up to some Jordanian varieties with conditional *čān* regardless of if /k/ is affricated elsewhere in the dialect (Herin & al-Wer 2025). In Jordanian *čān* has undergone grammaticalization and apheresis with the loss of prefixed “in” or “law” and is now mainly restricted to real present conditions and unreal predictive (*ibid.*: 450). In Eastern Arabia, *čān* can occur in condition I “open condition” and condition II “hypothetical that could be realised” (Holes 2015) with verbal or non-verbal predicates in all varieties. Comparison with *čān* using Holes's typology will seek if *ko* is distributed with similar syntactic and semantic patterns. The analysis includes a review of other conditional particles, *iza* and *lō* (*law*), employed in Šihhi to verify how they are co-distributed with *ko* compared to other varieties.

Interestingly, a relativizing morpheme and conditional “*ka*” is found in Indo-Iranian Kumzari variety where it is not linked to an Arabic borrowing. It occurs with similar syntactic distribution as in Eastern Arabic varieties but only in irrealis contexts (Van Der Wal 2015: 221). Consequently, this paper also aims to check whether this is a case of coincidence or not.

References

Bernabela R. 2011, A Phonology and Morphology Sketch of the Šihhi Arabic Dialect of ʿalĠēdih, Musandam (Oman). Leiden University (Master thesis).



Herin B. & al-Wer E. 2025, *A Grammar of Jordanian Arabic*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0410>.

Holes C. 2015, *Dialect, Culture, and Society in Eastern Arabia*, Vol. III, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Style. 51 (3). Brill

Van der Wal Anonby C. 2015, *A grammar of Kumzari: a mixed Perso-Arabian language of Oman*. PhD Dissertation, Leiden: Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (LUCL).

De l'utilité des notions d'insubordination et de semi-insubordination pour l'étude des langues arabes et berbères

Catherine Taine-Cheikh Lacito (CNRS, Université Sorbonne nouvelle, INALCO)

Le concept d'insubordination a été introduit assez récemment en linguistique et semble n'avoir fait naître, jusqu'à présent, que peu d'intérêt pour l'analyse du chamito-sémitique (ou afro-asiatique), alors que divers auteurs ont montré leur utilité pour l'étude de certaines langues, tant européennes (notamment l'allemand, l'espagnol, le portugais, le latin...) que non européennes (telles que les langues d'Australie). Dans la définition proposée par Evans (2007), l'insubordination s'applique fondamentalement à la présence, dans des énoncés indépendants, d'une ou de plusieurs marques considérées comme caractéristiques, dans la langue, des énoncés subordonnés : formes verbales non finies comme l'infinitif, le subjonctif ou le participe, présence d'un subordonnant, ordre spécifique, etc.

Le nom dit « d'action » (ou *maṣḍar*) ne présente qu'un équivalent approximatif de l'infinitif (forme non finie par excellence) et les formes verbales non finies (tels que les participes et les pseudo-verbes) sont, comme les nominaux, susceptibles d'assumer la fonction prédicative des propositions indépendantes – du moins sous certaines conditions. Néanmoins on peut trouver, en arabe et en berbère, des phénomènes susceptibles d'illustrer, non pas tous les cas d'insubordination trouvés ailleurs, mais un certain nombre d'entre eux. Sans doute moins rares en berbère qu'en arabe et plus fréquents dans certaines variétés arabes que dans d'autres, ces phénomènes ont généralement été analysés comme des cas de grammaticalisation, à moins qu'ils n'aient été marginalisés et considérés comme des cas d'ellipse, à l'instar de ce qui s'est passé souvent ailleurs.



Taine-Cheikh, C. 2010. Ordre. Injonction, souhait et serment en zénaga (étude comparative). In H. Stroemer, M. Kossmann, D. Ibrizimow & R. Vossen (éds), *Études berbères V. Essais sur des variations dialectales et autres articles* [Actes du « 5. Bayreuth-Frankfurt-Leidener Kolloquium zur Berberologie », Leiden, 8-11 octobre 2008], *Berber Studies* n° 28, Köln : Köppe, 191-212.

Taine-Cheikh, C. 2014a. Du verbe à la conjonction. Quelques cas de grammaticalisation de *kân* dans les dialectes arabes. In Angela Daiana Langone Olivier Durand & Giuliano Mion (eds), *Alf lahğa wa lahğa. Proceedings of the 9th Aida Conference*, Münster-Wien: LIT-Verlag, pp. 423-438.

Taine-Cheikh, C. 2016. The Aorist in Zenaga Berber and the Imperfective in two Arabic dialects. A comparative viewpoint. In Z. Guentchéva (éd.), *Aspectuality and temporality: descriptive and theoretical issues*, Amsterdam: Benjamins [Studies in Language Companion series 172], pp. 465-501.

Taine-Cheikh, C. 2018. Condition. Interrogation and exception. Remarks on the particles attested in Berber. In Mauro Tosco (éd.), *Afroasiatic: Data and perspectives*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory (Cilt)* 339, pp. 105-129 + appendix (a map).

Taine-Cheikh, C. 2022. "From embedded propositions to complex predicates. The contribution of Arabic dialects to syntactic typology", *Language Typology and Universals* 75/4 (2022) (STUF special issue Exploring typological variation across varieties of Arabic edited by B. Herin, S. Manfredi & C. Pereira), pp. 643-684.

Van linden, An & Van de Velde, Freek. 2014. (Semi-)autonomous subordination in Dutch: Structures and semantic-pragmatic values. *Journal of Pragmatics* 60. 226-250.

Insubordination in an Arabic Depurposive Future

Thomas A. Leddy-Cecere (Bennington College)

In this investigation, I describe and motivate the development of the Arabic subordinating purposive conjunction **hattā* into a verbal prefix of optative mood and future tense via processes of insubordination and grammaticalization. Previously noted by Arabic scholars (Jastrow 1978; Taine-Cheikh 2004 inter alia), this change is



best documented in dialects of the Northern Fertile Crescent and is also known from some varieties of Tunisia and southern Arabia, and displays a trajectory with potential to inform cross-linguistic theoretical accounts of insubordination as a diachronic process. Foundational among these has been that of Evans, who describes insubordination as initiating via the gradually conventionalizing ellipsis of a main clause with accompanying interpretive restriction of its remaining subordinated element, to the point where the latter is reanalyzed as a novel main clause type with specific constructional meaning (2007).

The present case, however, appears to follow a distinct path: contra Evans, it is not necessary or motivated to posit that the crucial reanalysis of Arabic **hattā*-clauses as non-subordinate occurs only as a final stage following a gradual conventionalization of ellipsis. Rather, an immediate, abrupt reanalysis of **hattā*-purposives is available to Arabic speakers ad incipio via their simultaneous use of asyndetic purpose clauses of the type *arūh aštaḡil* (cf. Persson 2013). This duality of purpose-marking strategies provides clear ground for the reinterpretation of **hattā* not as a subordinating conjunction marking a syndetic purpose structure, but instead as a verbal modifier providing relevant TAM inflection within an asyndetic one. Once such reanalysis has occurred, I then demonstrate how typical grammaticalization forces of subjectification and semantic bleaching may take hold to provision the evolving item with its observed values of optative mood and future tense. This account of the Arabic data is consistent with “classic” understandings of reanalysis in the sense of relabeling and rebracketing (cf. Weiß 2021), and thus avoids a major and self-acknowledged weakness of Evans’ proposal. While obviously a product of language-specific circumstance and not intended to replace Evans’ ellipsis-based paradigm in other settings, this investigation demonstrates that not all instances of insubordination need occur by the same means, nor require a “bit of massaging” (2007: 376) to align with commonly accepted principles of historical reanalysis.

References

- Evans, N. (2007). Insubordination and its uses. In I. Nikolaeva (ed.), *Finiteness: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations*, 366-431. Oxford University Press.
- Jastrow, O. (1978). *Die mesopotamisch-arabischen Qeltu-Dialekte (Band I)*. F. Steiner.

(In)subordination In Arabic

Persson, M. (2013). Asyndetic clause combining in Gulf Arabic dialects: Auxiliary, adverbial and discourse functions. *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* 57, 5-39.

Taine-Cheikh, C. (2004). Le(s) futur(s) en arabe: Réflexions pour une typologie. *Estudios de dialectología notreafricana y andalusí* 8, 215-238.

Weiss, H. (2021). Reanalysis involving rebracketing and relabeling: A special type. *Journal of Historical Syntax* 5, 1-26.