yaqum vs *qāma* in the conditional context: a relativistic interpretation of the frontier between the prefixed and the suffixed conjugations of the Arabic language

This article is based on an investigation which we have been conducting on the meaning of conditionality in the earliest Arab grammatical theory and on how that meaning is reflected in syntax.[1] Our investigation started by analysing how earliest Arab grammatical theory[2] and European grammars[3] treat conditional systems of the Arabic language.

The analysis was at first led by a syntactic consideration of the conditional sentence, in the attempt to answer the following questions: Which particles[4] introduce the

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1 M. E. B. Giolfo, "Le strutture condizionali dell'arabo classico nella tradizione grammaticale araba e nella tradizione grammaticale europea", *Kervan – International Journal of Afro-Asiatic Studies, Universities of Turin and Enna* - 2 (2005), 55-79, www.kervan.unito.it; M. E. B. Giolfo, "I sistemi condizionali in *in* dell'arabo classico: *in yafʿal vs in faʿala*, un'ipotesi modale" (paper presented at the 12th Italian Meeting of Afro-Asiatic Linguistics, University of Ragusa, Italy, June 6-9, 2005), in *Atti del XII Incontro Italiano di Linguistica Camito-semitica (Afroasiatica)*, ed. M. Moriggi (Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 2006), 185-192; M. E. B. Giolfo, "*in yaqum vs in qāma*: un'ipotesi modale", *Kervan – International Journal of Afro-Asiatic Studies, Universities of Turin and Enna* - 3 (2006), 17-34, www.kervan.unito.it.

2 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, 5 vols., ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: 1973); Sībawayhi, *Kitāb Sībawayhi*, 2 vols., ed. Būlāq (1318 H); Ibn Jinnī, *Kitāb al-lumaʿ fī al-naḥw*, ed. Hadi M. Kechrida (Uppsala: 1976); Zamaḫsharī, *Kitāb al-mufaṣṣal fī al-naḥw*, ed. J. P. Broch (Christianiae, 1859); Zamaḫsharī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī ʿilm al-ʿarabiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, n.d.); Ibn al-Ḥājib, *Kāfiya*, via Raḍī al-dīn al-Astarābāḏī, *Šarḥ Kāfiyat Ibn al-Ḥājib*, 2 vols. (Istanbul: Maṭbaʿat al-sharika al-ṣiḥāfiyya al-ʿuthmāniyya, 1275 and 1310 H) [Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, n.d.]; Ibn al-Ḥājib, *Kāfiya*, via Molla Jāmī, *al-Fawāʾid al-ḍiyāʾiyya, Molla Jāmī ʿalā al-Kāfiya* (Istanbul: n.d.); Ibn ʿAqīl, Šarḥ *ʿalā al-alfiyya*, 2 vols. (Cairo: 1965); Ibn ʿAqīl, *Šarḥ Ibn ʿAqīl ilā Alfiyyat Ibn Mālik*, ed. Ṭaha Muḥammad al-Zaynī, 4 vols. (Cairo: ʾĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1966-1967).

3 W. Wright, *A grammar of the Arabic language, translated from the German of Caspari, and edited with numerous additions and corrections*, 3rd ed., 2 vols, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896-98 [1st ed. 1859-1862; repr. Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1974, 2 vols. in 1, Revised by W. Robertson Smith and M. J. de Goeje; preface, addenda & corrigenda by P. Cachia]; L. Veccia Vaglieri, *Grammatica teorico-pratica della lingua araba*, 2 vols, Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1937; R. Blachère and M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Grammaire de l'arabe classique (morphologie et syntaxe)*, 3ᵉ édition revue et remaniée, Paris: G. P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1952; W. Fischer, *Grammatik des klassischen Arabisch*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972; F. Corriente, *Gramática árabe*, Madrid: Instituto Hispano Arabe de Cultura, 1980.

4 As far as the use of the term 'particle' is concerned, it descends from two reasons: on the one hand, the terminological choice of expressly avoiding the use of terms like 'conjunction', 'subordinate conjunction', 'subordinate operator', which could be misleading, as they would reflect the subordinate character of the protasis with respect to the apodosis when referring to the structure *in sharṭ jawāb al-sharṭ*; on the other hand, it also descends from a wish of cautious assent to the neutral terminology of Arab grammarians. Furthermore, the term 'operator' should only be used after a clarification about the elements on which the conditional

conditional sentence? Which verbal forms occur in conditional sentences? Which verbal forms are correlated to a specific conditional particle? These questions necessarily bring to other subsequent interrogatives, which make clear that syntax and semantics are intrinsically tied, and that the first is subordinated to the latter: Which conditional particle is to be used in this or in that case? Which is the typical verbal form associated with a certain conditional particle? Which set is originated by the different verbal forms which are used with the same conditional particle?

The first series of questions, being of empiric-formal nature, corresponds to the grammatical investigation for any specific language. The answers to these questions are provided by linguists, or rather by grammarians of that particular language. Questions of the second group cannot be answered without a prior investigation on meaning, that is to say without taking into account the conceptual values of the conditional structures in general, and after that the value of each conditional structure pertaining to a specific language. The second group of questions belongs to the field of logics and semantics, rather than to that of grammar. Nevertheless the grammatical analysis is never complete until the questions of the second group are answered, being these answers the only ones able to explain the results of the syntactic analysis. As a matter of fact, when analysing the conditional structures of the Arabic language, we are compelled to face problems of semantic nature, which are related to the way in which reality is reflected by each single clause of the conditional sentence, and tied to the type of relationship between the two components of a conditional sentence. The conceptual value of different conditional expressions can only be determined after an investigation on these aspects. We are convinced that it is up to the linguists to provide a linguistic answer on these logic-semantic questions.

Which kind of process was developed by the Arab grammatical tradition, with respect to the above fields (syntactic and semantic) and to their mutual relationships, in the investigation of the conditional structures? At a first glance, the study of conditionality does not seem to play an important role in the Arab grammatical tradition, as this was primarily concerned with the syntactic-formal aspects. Nevertheless, when getting closer to this problem, we realise that Sībawayhi and early Arab grammarians, though they do not treat the conditional sentence in its pure theoretical sense, refer to an indirect conceptualisation of conditionality, by means of attributing a prototypical character to

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particles operate or, in other terms, whether they operate directly on the sharṭ and only indirectly on the jawāb, or directly on both the sharṭ and the jawāb.

particular conditional structures. In this respect, a deep difference has to be noticed between the approach of Sībawayhi (d.? 793) and that of any later Arab grammarians. Sībawayhi, in fact, tried to show the semantic-communicative values of formal linguistic structures, and this due to his conviction that any syntactic variation has its semantic counterpart. As Dévényi[5] remarks:

> Later grammarians, contrary to Sībawayhi, were not able and, 'frankly', did not want, to follow this method which demands great discipline and supposes an overall insight into the basic character of language. They inherited, of course, some general semantic principles (the communicative orientation of Arabic grammar had never ceased to be tangible) from 'great' generation of eighth-nine century linguists, but on the whole they were mainly interested in syntactic phenomena from normative and pedagogic points of view.

In our opinion, as far as this matter is concerned, it is in virtue of such a syntactic-semantic analysis, reaching the semantic definition of the concept of conditional sentence, that Sībawayhi's system of conditional structures - which actually contemplates only the structure of the type 'in apocopate, apocopate' - is minimally inclusive compared to later Arab grammarians. This appears to be due to his restrictive judgement, deriving from the selective view by which he evaluates different syntactic solutions on the basis of their semantic value. The semantic value of a specific conditional structure would be in this view checked against the semantic definition of the conditional expression. As a consequence, a certain number of particles are excluded from the set of conditional particles (namely the particle iḏā and the particle law), a certain number of syntactic structures introduced by particles not belonging to the set of conditional particles is excluded from the system of conditional structures, together with verbal forms other than the apocopate.

It has to be outlined that Sībawayhi's approach is not only due to his conception of language, but also to the subsequent conception of linguistics as a science able to describe the relationships between syntax and semantics. In fact, only such a conception of language and linguistics can justify the exclusion, from his system of conditional structures, of all structures other than 'in apocopate, apocopate'. Conversely, the higher inclusiveness of the systems of conditional structures as contemplated by later Arab grammarians could be explained by the fact that, as reported by Dévényi,[6] they limited

5 K. Dévényi, "The treatment of conditional sentences by mediaeval Arab grammarians. (Stability and change in the history of Arabic grammar.)", *The Arabist (Budapest Studies in Arabic)* 1 (1988): 11-42, p. 12.
6 Kinga Dévényi, "The treatment of conditional sentences," p. 12.

themselves to a merely formal treatment of the conditional structures, refraining, in their approach, from that deep comprehension which can reach to the essential character of linguistic expression. The higher inclusiveness of the systems of conditional structures by later Arab grammarians actually represents a loss in descriptive effectiveness and in 'normative' meaningfulness. Anyhow, despite the fact that Arab grammatical tradition is characterised, from a historical point of view, by a certain variability in the methods used when analysing linguistic data, there is a general agreement on the fact that the essence of the conditional sentences lays in their characteristic of uncertainty: uncertainty about the feasibility of the condition, and, as a consequence, uncertainty about the feasibility of the event subject to that condition.

The different evaluation of conditional sentences with respect to temporal sentences, arises from this very definition of the true conditional expression. As a consequence, an analysis is performed by Arab grammarians on conditions themselves, abstracting from their relation with the conditioned event, with the aim to distinguish conditions which are 'only possible' ('uncertain') from the 'certain' ones ('possible and necessary', or 'impossible').

Sībawayhi clearly limits the field of conditional sentences to the case of 'only possible' conditions, that is to say that he limits the domain of conditional sentences to hypothetical sentences alone. He therefore judges that any sentences arising from a condition which is not 'uncertain' ('possible and non-necessary') should not be considered as a proper conditional sentence, being in fact non-hypothetical. This would be the case for those conditions which are introduced by the particle iḏā, and by the particle law. Sībawayhi's definition of the essence of the conditional expression is in fact as follows:

وسألته عن إذا، ما منعهم أن يجازوا بها؟[7] [...] إذا تجيء وقتا معلوما؛ ألا ترى أنك لو قلت: آتيك إذا احمر البسر[8] كان حسنا، ولو قلت: آتيك إن احمر البسر، كان قبيحا. فإن أبدا مبهمة،[9] وكذلك حروف الجزاء.[10]

Then I asked him [al-Ḫalīl] why iḏā should not be employed as conditional particle. [...] Iḏā occurs when there is temporal determination; can't you see that if you said: "I'll come to you when [iḏā] the dates, now unripe, will be mature" this would be a good expression, whilst in case you said: "I'll come to you if [in] the dates, now

7 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, I-V. ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: 1973), vol. III, p. 60, line 8.

8 Unripe dates.

9 Uncertain.

10 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 60, lines 10-12.

unripe, will be mature", this would be a bad expression?[11] In fact in is always uncertain, like all conditional particles.[12]

Such a definition – based on non-formal criteria - of *in* as proper conditional particle inasmuch as it is hypothetical, in opposition to the temporal character of *iḏā*, delimits the scope of conditional expression to hypothetical expressions alone.[13] This has its syntactic counterpart in the statement that: "*Ḥurūfu al-jazāʾi tajzimu al-afʿāla wa-yanjazimu al-jawābu bi-mā qabla-hu*".[14]

If Arab grammarians did not reach a direct description of the cases of the implication,[15] this, in our opinion, is not due to their unawareness of implication itself, and of its cases, i.e. the type of relation between the condition and the event subject to that condition. We think in fact that they did not provide such a direct definition only because the logic-semantic analysis is already implicit in Sībawayhi's hierarchy of conditional particles and associated verbal forms. The choice of the particle introducing the protasis, and of the verbal forms in the protasis and the apodosis is in fact based on semantic and non-formal criteria.

A confirmation of the 'possible and non-necessary' i.e. 'hypothetical' character of the condition is to be found in another passage of *al-Kitāb*, where Sībawayhi draws a parallel between interrogative, imperative, and conditional expressions.

The term which was most commonly used by Arab grammarians referring to the conditional sentence is *jazāʾ* (remuneration, compensation, reciprocation), whilst the conditional particles (*ḥurūf al- jazāʾ*) are those which introduce a conditional sentence (*mā yujāzā bi-hi*). In Sībawayhi's terminology the protasis is called *al-kalām al-awwal* (the first clause), while the apodosis is called *jawāb al-jazāʾ* (answer of the conditional expression) or, more simply, *jawāb* (answer).[16] The term *jazāʾ* became, in time, a term indicating the apodosis, sometimes referred to as *jawāb* and sometimes as *jazāʾ*[17] (though the two terms

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11 It is important to notice here that *ātī-ka in iḥmarra al-busru* would be a bad expression because of a twofold reason: *in* is always uncertain whilst *iḏā* occurs when there is temporal determination, and the semantic characteristic of uncertainty of the expression introduced by *in* is represented at the morpho-syntactic level by the fact that "*Ḥurūfu al-jazāʾi tajzimu al-afʿāla wa-yanjazimu al-jawābu bi-mā qabla-hu*": Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 62.

12 Whilst dates sooner or later do necessarily ripen! It's just a question of time.

13 For the particle *law*, see *infra*.

14 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 62.

15 A. Kratzer, *Semantik der Rede, Kontexttheorie – Modalwörter – Konditionalsätze* (Scriptor, 1978); D. K. Lewis, *Counterfactuals* (Oxford: 1973).

16 K. Dévényi, "The treatment of conditional sentences," p. 14.

17 Ibn ʿAqīl, *Šarḥ ʿalā al-alfiyya*, I-II (Cairo: 1965), p. 377, 380.

maintained, for some grammarians,[18] a certain distinctive meaning), while the protasis assumed the denomination of *sharṭ* (condition), this latter term maintaining, for some grammarians,[19] the original meaning of the term *jazāʾ*.

The fact that the terminology used by Sībawayhi reflects his conviction that a similarity exists between interrogative and conditional sentences, is described in the following passage of *al-Kitāb*:[20]

[الاستفهام] كالأمر فى أنه غير واجب،[21] وأنه يريد [به][22] من المخاطب أمرا لم يستقر عند السائل. ألا ترى أن جوابه جزم[23] [...] لأنها حروف ضارعت بما بعدها ما بعد حروف الجزاء، وجوابها كجوابه[24] وقد يصير معنى حديثها إليه.[25] وهى غير واجبة كالجزاء [...]. ألا ترى أنك إذا قلت: أين عبد الله آته، فكأنك قلت: حيثما يكن آته.

[The interrogative expression] is like the imperative expression inasmuch its character is non-necessary[26] [note (1) ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn: That is to

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18 Zamaḫšarī, *Kitāb al-mufaṣṣal fī al-naḥw*, ed. J. P. Broch (Christianiae, 1859), p. 151.

19 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. IV, p. 235; Zamaḫšarī, *Kitāb al-mufaṣṣal fī al-naḥw* (ed. J. P. Broch), p. 151.

20 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. I, p. 99, lines 6-11.

21 *Ibid.*, line 6, note (1) ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn:
يعنى غير واقع، يجوز أن يقع وألا يقع.

22 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. I, p. 99, line 7, ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn: [به].

23 *Ibid.*, note (2) al-Sīrāfī (b. 279-289/892-902; d. 2 Rajab 368/2 February 979-984):
يعنى ألا ترى أن جواب الاستفهام جزم كما يكون جواب الأمر. تقول أين زيد آته، كما تقول ائتنى آتك.

24 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. I, p. 99, line 9, note (3) ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn:
(...). "كجوابها"أى جواب الجزاء. وفى الأصل:

25 *Ibid.*, note (4) ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn:
أى إذا قلت أين زيد آته، فأين زيد استفهام بمنزلة الشرط لأن بعده جزاء كما بعد الشرط جزاء.

26 What leads me to translate *ghayru wājibin* by means of 'non-necessary' is the fact that Sībawayhi defines *in* as *mubhama* (uncertain) and therefore when he speaks of *jazāʾ* he only refers to conditional-*hypothetical* expressions, in which the condition is *possible and non-necessary*. Probably by Sībawayhi, along with the first Aristotle, 'uncertainty' was simply a characteristic of 'possibility'. Initially in fact, Aristotle excluded 'necessarily true' propositions from the category of 'possible' propositions. He erroneously - see J. Łukasiewicz, *Modal Logic* (Warzawa: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1970), p. 26 - stated in *De Interpretatione* that 'possibility' implies 'non-necessity': Cfr. Aristoteles (B.C. 350) *Categoriae et Liber de interpretatione*, ed. L. Minio-Paluello (London: Oxford University Press, 1949). We think that the term 'non-necessary' (in logic 'contingent') describes better the modal character of conditional-hypothetical expressions, compared to what Sīrāfī states about "[...] [Wa-lākinna] al-qawla fī-hi (al-jazāʾi) ka-al-qawli fī al-istifhāmi" [Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 59, lines 4-5; (ed. Būlāq), vol. I, p. 433, line 6], which he comments in the following way: "*al-istifhāmu yaʾūlu maʿnā-hu ilā al-jazāʾi wa-laysa bi-ḥadīthin bi-al-ḥaqīqati li-anna al-ḥadītha mā kāna ḫabaran*" (G. Jahn, *Sībawaihi's Buch über die Grammatik, Übersetzt und Erläutert von G. Jahn*, Berlin 1894-95 - rist. Hildesheim 1969: vol. I, second half, p. 102, note 10). In fact, Sīrāfī's comment seems to us more generally referred to the fact that both interrogative and conditional expressions would have a non-assertive character, character which is pointed out by Jahn's explanation of "*Wa-hiya [ḥurūfu al-istifhāmi] ghayru wājibatin ka-al-jazāʾi*" [Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. I, p. 99, line 10; (ed. Būlāq), vol. I, p. 51, line 15] by "*insofern beide keine*

say it is only possible,[27] it may occur or not]. By means of an interrogative expression in fact, the one to whom the question is addressed is asked about what is doubtful for the one who asks. Don't you see that the interrogative expression [and the imperative expression] can be followed by an apodosis and that, when it is followed by an apodosis, the verbal form which appears in such apodosis is apocopated? [note (2) Sīrāfī: That is to say, don't you see that the interrogative expression can be followed by an apodosis and that, when it is followed by an apodosis, the verbal form which appears in such apodosis is apocopated, as well as the imperative expression can be followed by an apodosis and, when it is followed by an apodosis, the verbal form which appears in such apodosis is apocopated? You say 'Where is Zayd that I may go and see him?' as well as you say 'Come and see me, and I'll come and see you!'] In fact, interrogative [and imperative] propositions can carry out the same function as the function of the protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence, and the apocopate that follows them is like the apocopate that follows the protasis of the conditional-hypothetical sentence [note (3) ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn: That is to say the apodosis of the conditional-hypothetical sentence. Originally: 'like the apocopate that follows the proposition introduced by the conditional particles' (...)], so that these interrogative [and imperative] expressions can acquire a conditional-hypothetical semantic value [note (4) ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn: That is to say, when you say 'Where is Zayd that I may go and see him?', 'Where is Zayd?' is an interrogative expression which carries out the function of protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence, in fact it is followed by an apodosis as well as the protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence is followed by an apodosis]. They have in fact the same non-necessary character as the conditional-hypothetical sentence [...].[28] Don't you see that when you say 'Where is ʿAbdullah

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wirklich geschehene Thatsache ausdrücken" (G. Jahn, *Sībawaihi's Buch über die Grammatik*, rist. 1969: vol. I, first half, p. 63).

27 That is to say 'possible and non-necessary': 'contingent'. Cfr. previous note.

28 See also "[...] [*Wa-lākinna*] *Al-qawla fī-hi (al-jazāʾi) ka-al-qawli fī al-istifhāmi*" (The conditional expression is like the interrogative expression): Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 59, line 4-5; (ed. Būlāq), vol. I, p. 433, line 6. It is meaningful to report one more time the clarifying comment of Sīrāfī "*Al-istifhāmu yaʾūlu maʿnā-hu ilā al-jazāʾi wa-laysa bi-ḥadīthin bi-al-ḥaqīqati li-anna al-ḥaditha mā kāna ḫabaran*" (G. Jahn, *Sībawayhi's Buch über die Grammatik*, rist. 1969, vol. I, second half, p. 102, note 10) about the fact that both expressions do not carry any truth value (they are neither true, neither false) inasmuch as they are not assertive.

that I may go and see him?', it is as if you said 'Wherever he were, I would go and see him'.)

The whole passage actually consists in the explanation that it is possible that interrogative and imperative utterances carry out the function of protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence. What is explained is that the uncertainty of the premise, on which depends the uncertainty of the consequence in a conditional-hypothetical sentence, is either secured by conditional-hypothetical particles (*in* and similar) which introduce the first utterance, operating at the same time the apocope of the verbal form contained in it, or it is intrinsic to the first utterance being an imperative proposition (*ġayr wāqiʿa*,[29] and after all already apocopated) or an interrogative proposition (introduced by particles which render it *ġayr wājiba*).[30] This is in our opinion the sense of Sībawayhi's statement about the fact that *in* is *mubhama*, *wa-ka-ḏālika ḥurūfu al-jazāʾi*[31] and that "*Ḥurūfu al-jazāʾi tajzimu al-afʿāla wa-yanjazimu al-jawābu bi-mā qabla-hu*",[32] and this is the sense of the equation *mā baʿda ḥurūfi al-jazāʾi*[33] = *al-sharṭu* (the condition)[34] = protasis of the conditional-hypothetical sentence. The meaning of *mubhama*, *ġayr wājiba*, and *ġayr wāqiʿa*, both in terms of 'intentions of the speaker' and in terms of 'functional meaning of linguistic categories' is that of 'non-assertion', which restricts the expression to the domain of 'virtuality', that is to say to the domain of what exists though not in actual fact.[35] Such character of the expression is normally rendered by means of the apocope of the verb, which in the Arabic language is a trait common to conditional-hypothetical sentences and to imperative, jussive, injunctive and prohibitive sentences.

The formal mechanism described by Sībawayhi presents the conditional-hypothetical sentence as a structure of two clauses having 'possible and non-necessary' (i.e.

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29 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. I, p. 99, nota (1) ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn: "*Yaʿnī ghayru wāqiʿin, yajūzu an yaqaʿa wa-allā yaqaʿa*".

30 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. I, p. 99, line 6.

31 *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 60, linee 10-12.

32 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 62.

33 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. I, p. 99, linea 9.

34 *Ibid.*, note (4): ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn.

35 It is worth quoting here a passage from the first chapter of *al-Kitāb* (Sībawayhi, ed. Būlāq, vol. I, p. 2, lines 1-3), quoted and translated by Versteegh (K. Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997: p. 77): "[...] *wa-ammā al-fiʿlu fa-amthilatun uḫiḏat min lafẓi aḥdāthi al-asmāʾi wa-buniyat li-mā maḍā wa-li-mā yakūnu wa-lam yaqaʿ wa-mā huwa kāʾinun lam yanqaṭiʿ* [...]". Versteegh's translation "Verbs are patterns taken from the expression of the events of the nouns; they are construed for what is past; *for what is going to be, but has not yet happened*; and for what is being without interruption", strongly temporalising and based on the model of 'temporal tripartition' (K. Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*: p. 84), does not in our opinion completely fit the concept of *ghayru wāqiʿin* as cleared by Hārūn's note.

'uncertain') character, the first of which is either apocopated or imperative or interrogative (protasis) and the second of which (apodosis) - apocopated – is operated by the protasis. The formal mechanism described by Zamaḫšarī presents instead the conditional sentence – hypothetical and non-hypothetical (which differs from the hypothetical inasmuch as it has a 'certain' character: i.e. 'possible and necessary'[36] or 'impossible') – as a structure of two clauses both of which are directly operated by the conditional particle (respectively *in* or *law*).[37]

Imperative and interrogative expressions can carry out the function of the protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence inasmuch as they are provided of the same 'uncertain' character of which is provided the protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence. They can occupy the place of a *šarṭ*, they can have the same semantic-syntactic function as a *jazm* and can thus be followed by a *jazm* in the same way in which the *šarṭ* is followed by a *jazm*. What Sībawayhi states is that the conditional particle (*in*), operates the apocope of the verb of a proposition transforming it by means of this operation under two respects: the particle transfers to the proposition the same uncertainty of which the particle is provided and at the same time the particle renders the proposition a proposition which can't stand alone (protasis) but must necessarily be followed by another proposition (apodosis), on which the same twofold transformation (i.e. that the second proposition results uncertain and the fact that it is not independent from the first proposition) is operated by means of the apocope of the verb in the second proposition. This last operation

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36 The reason for the higher inclusiveness of *in*-systems introduced by grammarians posterior to Sībawayhi and to Ibn Jinnī is in our opinion due to the fact that they recognised that 'possibility' is actually included in 'necessity'. For them, necessary propositions would therefore be 'possible and necessary'. In the same way, Aristotle initially excluded 'necessarily true propositions' from the category of 'possible propositions'. He later corrected his assumption, first in *De Interpretatione* and then in *Analytica priora*, and stated that 'necessity' implies 'possibility'. Cfr. Aristoteles (B.C. 350) *Categoriae et Liber de interpretatione*, ed. L. Minio-Paluello, London, Oxford University Press, 1949; *Prior Analytics*, tr. A. J. Jenkinson, Oxford University Press, 1928, and *Prior and posterior analytics*, ed. W. D. Ross, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1949. On *in*-systems by Arab grammarians posterior to Sībawayhi and Ibn Jinnī, including suffixed verbal forms along with 'protocolarly' apocopated verbal forms, see M. E. B. Giolfo, "I sistemi condizionali in *in* dell'arabo classico," (Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 2006), and M. E. B. Giolfo, "*in yaqum vs in qāma*," *Kervan* 3 (2006).

37 Zamaḫšarī (d. 1144) limits the set of conditional particles to only two elements, *in* and *law*, being the latter, for the said reasons, not included in Sībawayhi classification: "*in wa-law tadḫulāni ʿalā jumlatayni fa-tajʿalāni al-ūlā šarṭan wa-al-thāniyata jazāʾan*" (*in* and *law* operate on two sentences, rendering the first 'condition' and the second 'consequence'): Zamaḫšarī, *Kitāb al-mufaṣṣal fī al-naḥw*, ed. J. P. Broch, Christianiae, 1859, quoted in Dévényi: "The treatment of conditional sentences," *The Arabist* 1 (1988), p. 19. Zamaḫšarī's classification was generally accepted at that time and, despite the criticisms of later grammarians as for his inclusion of *law* among conditional particles, is still the classification followed nowadays in contemporary grammar.

is operated by the protasis. Both clauses result in being 'uncertain' and 'non-independent'. Zamaḫšarī sheds light on the fact that the function of all conditional particles, and not only of hypothetical ones, is that of render two propositions inseparable in a structure which represents the relationship of implication. If the semantic characteristic common to interrogative, imperative and conditional-hypothetical expressions can be summarized by the term 'uncertainty', the syntactic characteristic common to interrogative and conditional expressions is represented by the fact that both the conditional particle, introducing the protasis of the conditional sentence, and the interrogative particle, which introduces the interrogative sentence, are not particles of conjunction:[38] "*A-lā tarā anna-ka iḏā istafhamta lam tajʿal mā baʿda-hu ṣilatan?*"[39] (Don't you see that, when you use an interrogative particle, what follows such a particle is not *ṣila?*)[40]

فالوجه أن تقول: الفعل ليس فى الجزاء[41] بصلة لما قبله كما أنه فى حروف الاستفهام[42] ليس صلة لما قبله، كما أنك إذا قلت أين تكون وأنت تستفهم فليس[43] الفعل بصلة لما قبله، فهذا فى الجزاء ليس بصلة لما قبله، كما أن ذلك فى الاستفهام ليس بوصل لما قبله.[44]

The best thing you can say[45] is: "The verb in the conditional expression is not *ṣila* of what precedes it,[46] as well as with the interrogative particles the verb is not *ṣila* of

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38 The Arabic *ṣila* designates a sentence after a *mawṣūl* either *ismī* (relative pronouns) either *ḥarfī* (particles of conjunction). The expression 'is not *ṣila*' could be explained as 'is not in relation with what precedes', where the concept of 'being in relation with what precedes' is wider than the concept of 'relative clause'. The expressions 'is not *ṣila* of what precedes' and 'is not *waṣl* of what precedes' could be then understood as: 'is not dependent on what precedes'. What, in our opinion, we should read here is that both in the conditional and in the interrogative expression, the conditional particle introducing the conditional expression and the interrogative particle introducing the interrogative expression are not subordinative conjunctions.

39 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 59, line 5; (ed. Būlāq), vol. I, p. 433, lines 6-7.

40 This translation finds its justification in Sībawayhi's statement: "*iḏā qulta ayna takūnu wa-anta tastafhimu fa-laysa al-fiʿlu bi-ṣilatin li-mā qabla-hu*" (Sībawayhi *al-Kitāb* (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 59, line 8).

41 In the proposition introduced by conditional particles, i.e. in the protasis of the conditional sentence.

42 In the proposition introduced by interrogative particles.

43 'fa-laysa' is referred to the verb in the protasis of the conditional sentence 'Ḥaythu-mā takun akun'. In fact, whilst the expression 'Ayna takūnu?', in the following line, is an interrogative sentence, 'ḥaythu-mā takun', being only a part of the conditional sentence 'Ḥaythu-mā takun akun', is not quoted independently of the whole conditional sentence 'Ḥaythu-mā takun akun'.

44 Sībawayhi (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 59, lines 6-9; (ed. Būlāq), vol. I, p. 433, line 7 and following. "Man sollte sich also korrekt so ausdrücken: Das Verbum ist in Bedingungssätzen ebensowenig Ṣila des Vorhergehenden (d.i. der Konditionalpartikel) wie in Fragesätzen (Ṣila der Fragepartikel)", G. Jahn, Sībawayhi's Buch über die Grammatik, Übersetzt und Erläutert von G. Jahn, Berlin 1894-95 - rist. Hildesheim 1969 – II vol., first half, p. 168.

45 Often *al-wajh* is synonymous with *ḥadd al-kalām* 'the normal way of expression', cfr. A. Levin, "Sībawayhi's view of the syntactic structure of *kāna wa-aḫawātu-hā*", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 1 (1979) 185-213 [repr. in A. Levin, *Arabic linguistic thought and dialectology*, Jerusalem 1998], p. 211.

what precedes it",[47] and when you say 'Wherever you were, I would be', it is not[48] *ṣila* of what precedes it, as well as, when you question saying 'Where are you?', the verb[49] is not *ṣila* of what precedes it, in the conditional expression it is not *ṣila* of what precedes it,[50] as well as it is not *waṣl* of what precedes it in the interrogative expression.[51]

"*Wa-taqūlu: man yaḍribu-ka fī al-istifhāmi, wa-fī al-jazāʾi: man yaḍrib-ka aḍrib-hu, fa-al-fiʿlu fī-himā ġayru ṣilatin*".[52] (You say: 'Who beats you?' when asking, and in the conditional expression: 'Whoever beat you, I would beat him', and in both the verb is not *ṣila*.)[53]

If what accounted for clarifies in which sense the terminology by which Sībawayhi refers to the apodosis is based on the fact that for Sībawayhi interrogative and conditional-hypothetical expressions have in common[54] a semantic and a syntactic aspect, it also enables to consider that the three sub-domains of linguistic expression – i.e. interrogative, imperative, and conditional-hypothetical - would belong to the common domain of 'virtuality' ('virtual domain') as opposed at the same time to the domain of facts ('factual' domain) and to the domain of subordination ('conceptual domain'). For Sībawayhi, *in* is not a conjunction; the apodosis is *maʿmūl* of the complex *in*+protasis. For Zamaḫsharī, who does not subvert Sībawayhi's assumptions about the semantic characteristic of conditional-hypothetical sentences, the second *maʿmūl* is *maʿmūl* of the *maʿmūl* of the *ʿāmil*, thus being itself *maʿmūl* of the *ʿāmil*. In other terms, defining the *ʿāmil* as a binary operator, it is possible to switch to a simpler representation, where both the protasis and the apodosis are

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46 The conditional particle.

47 The interrogative particle.

48 The verb 'to be' refers here to the verb in the protasis of the conditional sentence '*Ḥaythu-mā takun akun*'.

49 That is to say the verb in the interrogative sentence '*Ayna takūnu?*'.

50 The verb in the protasis of the conditional sentence is not *ṣila* of the conditional particle: the conditional particle is not a particle of conjunction.

51 The verb in the interrogative sentence is not *ṣila* of the interrogative particle: the interrogative particle is not a particle of conjunction. "*Man sollte sich also correct so ausdrücken: Das Verbum ist in Bedingungssätzen ebensowenig Ṣila des Vorhergehenden (d.i. der Conditionalpartikel) wie in Fragesätzen (Ṣila der Fragepartikel)*": G. Jahn, *Sībawaihi's Buch über die Grammatik,* rist. 1969, vol. II, first half, p. 168.

52 Sībawayhi (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 59, lines 9-11; (ed. Būlāq), vol. I, p. 433, lines 10-11.

53 Is not ṣila of what precedes. That is: the verb in the protasis of the conditional sentence is not ṣila of the conditional particle and the verb in the interrogative sentence is not ṣila of the interrogative particle. Therefore: the conditional particle in not a particle of conjunction and the interrogative particle is not a particle of conjunction.

54 "*li-anna-hu [al-istifhāma] ka-al-amri fī anna-hu ghayru wājibin, wa-anna-hu yurīdu [bi-hi] min al-muḫāṭabi amran lam yastaqirra ʿinda al-sāʾili*": Sībawayhi (ed. Hārūn), vol. I, p. 99, line 6.

maʿmūl of *in* and are not *ṣila* of *in*.[55] Zamaḫsharī's words clearly indicate that both *in* and *law* are not logically translated by 'if', but instead by 'if... then', which is to say that they are binary operators. This explains why Sībawayhi, focusing on hypothetical sentences, clearly stated that conditional particles operate the apocope of the verbs:[56] such a syntactical description/prescription coincides with his way of representing the implication relatively to conditional-hypothetical sentences. That a verb should be apocopated must actually signify that the proposition which contains it has 'uncertain' character (otherwise the verbal form would belong to the suffixed conjugation), that it has not an assertive character (otherwise the verbal form would belong to the prefixed conjugation in its *marfūʿ* variant), that it is not dependent (otherwise the verbal form would belong to the prefixed conjugation in its *manṣūb* variant), that is to say that either it is independent, or it is not independent and at the same time it is not *ṣila*.

Arab grammarians refer to the conditional particles through a non-uniform terminology, and the list of conditional particles is not the same for all early grammarians. According to Sībawayhi,[57] the conditional particles are *ayya ḥīnin*, *matā*, *ayna*, *anā*, *haythu-mā*, *in*, *iḏā-mā*, and the conditional nouns[58] *man*, *mā*, *ayyu-hum*. He indicates the particle *in* as the 'mother' [*umm*], that is the 'root' [*aṣl*] of all conditional particles, being *in* the one and only particle which does not have any other functions, and therefore possessing a purely conditional meaning.[59] According to Ibn Jinnī (d. 392/1002), the set of the conditional particles and their classification is essentially the same as for Sībawayhi. Both of them use the same classification for the conditional particles, which assumes by Ibn Jinnī the denomination of *aḫawāt in*[60] (sisters of *in*), due to the outstanding conditional character of the latter, which makes of it an *aṣl* ('root'). However, two other authors, Ibn al-Ḥājib (m.

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55 "in wa-law tadḫulāni ʿalā jumlatayni fa-tajʿalāni al-ūlā shartan wa-al-thāniyata jazāʾan" (in and law operate on two sentences, rendering the first 'condition' and the second 'consequence'): Zamaḫsharī, Kitāb al-mufaṣṣal fī al-naḥw, ed. J. P. Broch, Christianiae, 1859, quoted in Dévényi: "The treatment of conditional sentences,", The Arabist 1 (1988), p. 19.

56 Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 62, line 10; (ed. Būlāq), vol. I, p. 435, line 1: [...] *Ḥurūfu al-jazāʾi tajzimu al-afʿāla wa-yanjazimu al-jawābu bi-mā qabla-hu.*

57 Sībawayhi, (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 56.

58 Arab grammarians distinguish between conditional particles (ḥurūf) and conditional nouns (asmāʾ). Man, mā and ayyuhum are nouns. It is possible to group conditional particles and nouns as 'conditional operators'. As Dévényi points out, "originally ḥarf did not only mean a part of speech ('particle') but a function, too. This means that even an ism was allowed to occur in the function of ḥarf": K. Dévényi, "The treatment of conditional sentences," The Arabist 1 (1988), p. 39, note 11.

59 Sībawayhi, al-Kitāb (ed. Hārūn), vol. III, p. 63, 112.

60 Ibn Jinnī, Kitāb al-lumaʿ fī al-naḥw, ed. Hadi M. Kechrida, Uppsala, 1976, p. 54.

646/1249)[61] and Ibn *Mālik* (d. 672/1274),[62] classify the conditional particles among other particles under the terminology *al-jāzimāt li-al-muḍariʿ* so that they are no more presented as conditional 'operators' (*ʿawāmil*), but they are equalised with any formal operator causing the apocope of the verb as, for example, the particle *lam* for the negative past and the particle *lā* for the negative form of the imperative.[63] In so doing, one could say that they recognised not only 'one' syntactic behaviour, but also implicitly defined the apocope of the verb as representing 'one' specific pragmatic-semantic function. It is interesting to see how Ibn *Mālik*[64] introduced, within the same set of 'particles operating the apocope of the verb' (*jawāzim*) a distinction between those operating on a single verb and those operating on two verbal forms, being the latter in fact conditional particles. The particle *law* appears among the conditional particles in Ibn al-Ḥājib's classification too, but it is not mentioned in the chapter concerning *al-sharṭ wa-al-jazāʾ*.

The apocopated form of the *muḍāriʿ* (*al-fiʿl al-majzūm*) appears thus by Arab early grammarians as a prototypical form in the conditional context, representing the protocolar 'uncertain' character of hypothetical expressions. If we look in fact at the conditional systems of the type *in sharṭ jawāb al-sharṭ* by early Arab grammarians, namely:

Sībawayhi (d. 793)[65]
in yaqum yaqum
[*in qāma yaqum*][66]

Ibn Jinnī (d. 1002)[67]

61 Ibn al-Ḥājib, al-Kāfiya, in Molla Jāmī, al-Fawāʾid al-ḍiyāʾiyya, Molla Jāmī ʿalā al-Kāfiya, Istanbul (n.d.), pp. 227-229.

62 Ibn ʿAqīl, Šarḥ ʿalā al-alfiyya, 2 vol., Cairo: 1965, p. 22.

63 Ibn al-Ḥājib, *al-Kāfiya*, in Molla Jāmī, *al-Fawāʾid al-ḍiyāʾiyya, Molla Jāmī ʿalā al-Kāfiya*, Istanbul (n.d.), pp. 227-229.

64 Ibn Mālik, *Alfiyya*, in: Ibn ʿAqīl, *Šarḥ ʿalā al-alfiyya*, 2 vol., Cairo: 1965, p. 22.

65 *al-Kitāb*, I-V. ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, Cairo, 1973.

66 The brackets mean here that, although Sībawayhi cites this combination of verbal forms, he actually considers only *yaqum yaqum*, to which he brings back the other combinations, and through which he explains the other combinations [Cfr. K. Dévényi, "The treatment of conditional sentences," *The Arabist* 1 (1988), p. 22]. He mentions the combination *qāma qāma* (*al-Kitāb*, ed. Hārūn, vol. III, p. 91 line 15, p. 92 line 1: "*wa-iḏā qāla in faʿalta fa-aḥsanu al-kalāmi an taqūla faʿaltu li-anna-hu mithla-hu*" only as an example of his preference for symmetric construction, but he does not mention it in the chapter on conditional sentences (*bābu al-jazāʾi*) and therefore he does not include it in his system. Cfr. K. Dévényi, "The treatment of conditional sentences," *The Arabist* 1 (1988), p. 23.

67 *Kitāb al-lumaʿ fī al-naḥw*, ed. Hadi M. Kechrida, Uppsala, 1976, p. 54: "*al-sharṭu wa-al-jawābu majzūmāni*".

in yaqum yaqum

Zamaḫsharī (d. 1144)[68]
in yaqum yaqum
in yaqum qāma
in qāma qāma
in qāma yaqum

Ibn al-Ḥājib (d. 1249)[69]
in yaqum yaqum
in qāma qāma
in qāma yaqum

Ibn *Mā*lik (d. 1274)[70]
in yaqum yaqum
[*in yaqum qāma*][71]
in qāma qāma
in qāma yaqum

we notice that the only combination allowed by all these five grammarians is *in yaqum yaqum.*

Our analysis of all the occurrences of structures of the type *in sharṭ jawāb al-sharṭ* in the Koran showed that the 87% is of the type *in yaqum yaqum*, whilst the type *in qāma qāma* only covers the remaining 13%.[72]

As for European grammarians,[73] the priority order used by them to list the set of verbal forms allowed in conditional sentences is the same for all (with the exception of

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68 *Kitāb al-mufaṣṣal fī al-naḥw*, ed. J. P. Broch, Christianiae, 1859, p. 150: "*Wa-lā yaḫlū al-fiʿlāni fī bābi in min an yakūnā muḍāriʿayni aw māḍiyayni aw aḥadu-humā muḍāriʿan wa-al-āḫaru māḍiyan. Fa-iḏā kānā muḍāriʿayni fa-laysa fī-himā illā al-jazmu.* [...]".

69 al-Kāfiya, in: Molla Jāmī, al-Fawāʾid al-ḍiyāʾiyya, Molla Jāmī ʿalā al-Kāfiya, Istanbul, n.d., pp. 227-229.

70 Alfiyya, in: Ibn ʿAqīl, Šarḥ ʿalā al-alfiyya, 2 vol., Cairo, 1965, vol. I p. 22, vol. II pp. 370-371, 372-374, 377, 380, 385.

71 This structure is considered rare by Ibn ʿAqīl. In order to justify its presence in Ibn Mālik's system, he quotes the ḥadīth "man yaqum laylata al-qadri ghufira la-hu mā taqaddama min ḏanbi-hi", cfr. Ibn ʿAqīl, Šarḥ ʿalā al-alfiyya, 2 vol., Cairo, 1965, vol. I p. 22, vol. II p. 372.

72 For more detailed data, see M. E. B. Giolfo, "I sistemi condizionali in in dell'arabo classico," Rubbettino, 2006, and "in yaqum vs in qāma," Kervan 3 (2006).

Fischer): either the perfect, or the apocopate. According to Fischer the order is: apocopate or perfect. As for the value of the perfect and of the apocopate in conditional sentences, according to Wright the perfect represents an action whose occurrence is so certain that it can be considered as already occurred; according to Veccia Vaglieri the perfect in the Arabic hypothetical structures fulfils its function by presenting as completed the facts mentioned in the protasis and in the apodosis; according to Blachère & Gaudefroy-Demombynes it indicates that the speaker considers the idea that he formulates as already realised; according to Fischer it represents the perfective aspect, and according to Corriente in the conditional structures the perfect shows its full aspectual value, that is its perfective aspect indicating a process which becomes real as a whole.

For Wright the jussive following *in,* or other words having the same sense, has always the meaning of a perfect: he explains that the jussive is used in a protasis depending from *in* or similar particles, because, when something is presumed or assumed, it is as if an order is issued that this event occurs or happens, and again according to Wright this becomes manifest in the fact that the jussive is used in apodosis depending both on imperative protasis and on conditional ones. As far as the value of the apocopate in conditional sentences is concerned, we remark that only one fact exists which leads to the conclusion that Veccia Vaglieri wished to underline the privileged bond between the apocopate and the conditional structures of the Arabic language: the fact that she inserted the notions on the hypothetical sentence in the chapter concerning the 'conditional-jussive' mood. According to Blachère & Gaudefroy-Demombynes the apocopate represents a process whose realisation is uncertain or conditional, and they find in this statement the reason for the use of the apocopate in sentences containing a notion of eventuality or having a hypothetical content, in injunctive or prohibitive sentences, and after *lam* (not...) and *lammā* (not yet) with a meaning, in the latter case, of past. If they state that the perfect represents the fact that the speaker considers the eventuality or the hypothesis that he expresses as already realised, the use of the imperfect would be instead tied to the presence of particles which underline 'uncertainty'. Fischer states that the apocopate has the function of a perfect, both when it is associated with the particle *lam* or *lammā,* and when it appears in conditional sentences. Corriente presents the apocopate as the simplest morphologic form of the imperfect, and points out that its uniformity is poor in terms of its

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73 The five treatises by leading European grammarians which we have examined are mentioned in note 3. For a more detailed treatment see Giolfo, M. E. B. "Le strutture condizionali dell'arabo classico nella tradizione grammaticale araba e nella tradizione grammaticale europea", Kervan 2 (2005).

semantic-syntactic content, being the apocopate required by some negative particles which give to it (like *lam)* the sense of the perfect (which according to Corriente is synchronically unjustified) or by others which give to it (like *lā)* a prohibitive meaning, or by conjunctions like *li-* for the jussive or the exhortative, as well as it can be required for conditional structures.

Both Wright and Fischer speak of 'protasis' and 'apodosis' according to the classical terminology which refers to the apodosis as to the main clause, and to the protasis as to the subordinate clause. Veccia Vaglieri conceives the 'condition' as a subordinate sentence, and the 'answer' as a main sentence. Only Blachère & Gaudefroy-Demombynes treat the conditional structures in a special chapter, dedicated to the 'double sentence', in which the two clauses which form the sentence are not seen in a relationship of subordination, nor in a mere relationship of juxtaposition, as it is their particular relationship which renders the exact scope of the expression. Corriente underlines that the situation is not simply that one clause is subordinate to a main one, but that a clause (condition or protasis), which should be, in principle, the subordinate, can affect the other one (apodosis or conditioned clause), which in turns should be the main clause, though generally following the protasis in this interrelation.

According to Wright *in* is the conditional particle introducing possible hypothesis, and *law* the particle introducing impossible hypothesis. According to Veccia Vaglieri, the two main *conjunctions* translating 'if' are *in* and *law*. The difference between them is that *in* is used for a real or possible hypothesis, while *law* is used for the unreal one, i.e. opposite to reality. Also Blachère & Gaudefroy-Demombynes distinguish between the 'double sentence' '*hypothétique réalisable*', introduced by *in,* and the 'double sentence' '*hypothétique irréalisable*', introduced by *law.* Fischer distinguishes between two kinds of conditional sentence: the real conditional sentence and the unreal conditional sentence. *In* (*wenn*) introduces the real conditional sentences, *law* introduces the potential and unreal conditional sentences. Corriente states that the real affirmative conditional sentence is introduced by *in* (if), while the unreal conditional sentence is introduced by *law.*

As far as the structure of the type *in sharṭ jawāb al-sharṭ* is taken into consideration, if *yaqum yaqum* is indeed the only combination shared by early Arab grammarians, nevertheless their systems do also include *qāma* forms. Ibn ʿAqīl[74] (d. 1367) lists all possible combinations of verbal forms, which generate four different structures. The English translation below each different structure is meant to shows that it is still problematic to

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74 Ibn ʿAqīl, Šarḥ ʿalā al-alfiyya, 2 vols, Cairo:1965.

disclose the semantic differences between the different verbal combinations, whose existence seem to be implicit in Sībawayhi's principle that any syntactic variation has its semantic counterpart.

in yaqum Zaydun yaqum ʿAmrun

if to get up (prefix conjugation variant-Ø 3rd p m s) Zayd (n) to get up (prefix conjugation variant-Ø 3rd p m s) ʿAmr (n)

If Zayd gets up, ʿAmr will get up

in qāma Zaydun qāma ʿAmrun

if to get up (suffix conjugation 3rd p m s) Zayd (n) to get up (suffix conjugation 3rd p m s) ʿAmr (n)

If Zayd gets up, ʿAmr will get up

'in yaqum Zaydun qāma ʿAmrun

if to get up (prefix conjugation variant-Ø 3rd p m s) Zayd (n) to get up (suffix conjugation 3rd p m s) ʿAmr (n)

If Zayd gets up, ʿAmr will get up

in qāma Zaydun yaqum ʿAmrun

if to get up (suffix conjugation 3rd p m s) Zayd (n) to get up (prefix conjugation variant-Ø 3rd p m s) ʿAmr (n)

If Zayd gets up, ʿAmr will get up

In order to find the key to disclose the different semantic interpretations which must be underlying the different morpho-syntactic structures of the system, we looked at how the early Arab tradition represented the system over the centuries. It is evident that the tables representing the verbal forms combinations considered by Arab grammarians, in virtue of the prototypical position of the structure *in yaqum yaqum*, appear as variations, in some cases more inclusive - and in some others less inclusive – of the combination(s) allowed by Sībawayhi. One important fact is that the existence of variation in terms of higher/lower inclusiveness of the system actually proves the existence of a semantic differentiation among structures generated by different verbal forms combinations. What is also evident is a sequence from earlier systems to later systems which ranges from lower inclusiveness to

higher inclusiveness in terms of admitted verbal form combinations. In our opinion, the answer to the question 'what are the semantic differences within the four structures listed by Ibn ʿAqīl?' consists in the answer to the question 'How is the lower and higher inclusiveness of verbal forms combinations justified within the history of this particular system in early Arab grammatical tradition?'. An answer may be provided by a modal interpretation of the opposition between *yaqum* and *qāma* verbal forms within the conditional context.

Our position takes distance from the Semitistic paradigm which states that the Arabic jussive is nothing but the old proto-Semitic perfect **yíqtVl,*[75] which would clearly cancel all possibilities of semantic differentiation among verbal forms combinations within the conditional system introduced by *in*.[76]

Our hypothesis is in fact that within the conditional context *yaqum* forms do not represent either two different tenses or two aspects, but rather two different modal categories, namely the two Aristotelian modal categories of 'possibility' (*yaqum*) and 'necessity' (*qāma*). Modal logic was developed by Aristotle in *De Interpretatione* and in *Analytica Priora*.[77]

Propositions can be in principle divided into 'possible' and 'impossible' (necessarily false). Possible propositions are divided into 'contingent' (neither necessarily true nor necessarily false) and 'necessary' (necessarily true) propositions. At an initial phase, Aristotle excluded necessary propositions from the category of possible propositions. He

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75 An important datum in these respects is that, in Koranic Arabic, with in, lam yafʿal is not the only negation. There is in fact also another negation: lā yafʿal (P. Larcher, "Les systèmes conditionnels en in de l'arabe classique", Bulletin d'Études Orientales, tome LVIII, 2008-2009, (2009), pp. 205-232, p. 207 and following), and with no exceptions lā yafʿal is the negative counterpart of yafʿal whilst lam yafʿal is the negative counterpart of faʿala (P. Larcher, "Les 'complexes de phrases' de l'arabe classique", Kervan 6 (2007) pp. 29-45, www.kervan.unito.it: p. 35). See H. Reckendorf, Arabische Syntax, Heidelberg, C. Winter 1921 [2., unveränderte Auflage. Heidelberg, C. Winter 1977], p. 487: "lam mit Apok. ist die Verneinigung des Perf. (...). Seltener ist lā mit Apok., das als Verneinigung eines Apok. zu verstehen ist".

76 "In Arabic, too, when the imperfect is used with the conditional particle in (...), it refers to the past": K. Versteegh, The Arabic Language, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997, p. 17.

77 Cfr. M. E. B. Giolfo, "in yaqum vs in qāma: un'ipotesi modale", Kervan 3 (2006). The theory of modal propositions, i.e. of propositions which contain the word 'necessarily' or the word 'possibly' or an equivalent of these words, was developed by Aristotle in De Interpretatione, chapters 12 and 13, and in Analytica priora, I. 3 and 13. The theory of modal syllogisms, i.e. of syllogisms in which at least one of the premises is a modal proposition, was developed by Aristotle in Analytica priora, I. 8-22.

erroneously affirmed in *De Interpretatione* that 'possibility' implies 'non-necessity'.[78] The same position seems to be adopted by Sībawayhi and Ibn Jinnī. In a second phase, Aristotle himself included within the possible propositions the necessarily true propositions. Already in *De Interpretatione* he realised that necessity implies possibility and corrected his assumption in *Analytica Priora*.[79] According to our hypothesis, both Sībawayhi and Ibn Jinnī would exclude the *qāma* verbal forms because these would represent necessarily true conditional sentences, whilst propositions represented by *yaqum* forms are possible and non-necessary. Propositions in which appears a *qāma* form would lack the feature of uncertainty and would therefore be non-hypothetical. Zamaḥsharī, Ibn Ḥājib and Ibn *Mā*lik would include *qāma* forms in the system of conditional structures introduced by *in* because propositions in which appears a *qāma* form would be possible although necessary and, although non-hypothetical, they could be part of a conditional sentence.

The frontier between *yaqum* and *qāma* verbal forms within the system of conditional structures introduced by *in* appears then as a frontier between 'uncertainty' ('*possible and non-necessary*' propositions = 'contingent' propositions) and 'certainty' ('*possible and necessary*' propositions = 'necessary' propositions). Only 'contingent' propositions would contain a *yaqum* form.

As an example of how 'necessary' propositions could be part of a conditional sentence introduced by *in*, we would like to quote one conditional sentence taken from that 13% of the occurrences of *in sharṭ jawāb al-sharṭ* structures in the Koran in which the structure is *in qāma qāma*, whilst in the remaining 87% of the occurrences of *in sharṭ jawāb al-sharṭ* structures in the Koran the structure is *in yaqum yaqum*: 3/144 *Wa-mā Muḥammadun illā rasūlun qad ḫālat min qabli-hi al-rusulu a-fa-<u>in māta aw qutila inqalabtum</u> ʿalā aʿqābi-kum* (And Muḥammad is no more than an apostle; the apostles have already passed away before him; if he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels?). We understand this Koranic verse as follows: If Muḥammad dies (*māta*) or is killed (*qutila*) – and he will *necessarily/certainly* die or be killed as he is no more than an apostle like those who have already passed away before him – will you *necessarily/certainly* turn back (*inqalabtum*) upon

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78 He erroneously (cfr. J Łukasiewicz, Modal Logic, Warzawa: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1970, p. 26) stated in *De Interpretatione* that 'possibility' implies 'non-necessity'. Cfr. Aristoteles (B.C. 350) *Categoriae et Liber de interpretatione*, ed. L. Minio-Paluello, London, Oxford University Press, 1949.

79 Already in De Interpretatione and then in Analytica priora Aristotle corrects its judgment, stating that 'necessity' implies 'possibility'. Cfr. Aristoteles (B.C. 350) Categoriae et Liber de interpretatione, ed. L. Minio-Paluello, London, Oxford University Press, 1949; Prior Analytics, tr. A. J. Jenkinson, Oxford University Press, 1928 e Prior and posterior analytics, ed. W. D. Ross, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1949.

your heels? (Would this certainty be enough for you to turn back upon your heels?). This reading would explain the presence of *qāma* form both in the protasis and in the apodosis.

If the frontier between *yaqum* and *qāma* verbal forms within the system of conditional structures introduced by *in* is interpreted as the frontier between the 'uncertainty' of *yaqum* forms appearing in *contingent propositions* as opposed to the certainty of *qāma* forms appearing in *necessary propositions*, the frontier between *yaqum* and *qāma* verbal forms within the whole conditional context of the Arabic language appears then as a frontier between 'uncertainty' and 'certainty' which separates *contingent propositions* at the same time from *necessary propositions*, and from *impossible propositions*.

The definition of *law* by Sībawayhi is "*Wa-ammā law, fa-li-mā kāna sa-yaqaʿu li-wuqūʿi ġayri-hi*"[80] (*Law* is for what could have happened if something else had happened). This definition is not part of the treatment that the *Kitāb* reserves to conditional expression,[81] and it was further articulated - by grammarians posterior to Sībawayhi – in terms of 'impossibility' (*imtināʿ*).[82] For some of them *law* would be a particle introducing an impossible 'condition': they do not specify anything about the 'consequence'.[83] For others *law* would introduce an impossible 'condition' and an impossible 'consequence', being a particle indicating the impossibility of something as caused by the impossibility of something else "*ḥarfu imtināʿin li-imtināʿi ġayri-hi*".[84] Ibn Hishām (m. 1360), however, points out that there are examples of expressions introduced by *law* in which the condition is impossible, but the consequence is necessary as it exists independently of the existence of

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80 Sībawayhi, al-Kitāb, ed. Hārūn, vol. IV, p. 224.

81 It is worth noting here that Versteegh, at the beginning of his article "Two Conceptions of Irreality in Arabic Grammar: Ibn Hishām and Ibn al-Ḥājib on the particle *law*", in P. Larcher ed., *De la grammaire de l'Arabe aux grammaires des arabes*, Institut Français de Damas, Damas (1991) [= *Bulletin d'Études Orientales*, 43], pp. 77-92, p. 77, states that: "The point of departure of this article is a remark in Dévényi's analysis (1988) of conditionality in the Arabic grammatical tradition. She remarks on the fact that within this tradition the particle *law* is not regarded as a conditional particle. Now, in traditional Western grammars *law* is always mentioned on a par with the particle *in*, both of them having a conditional meaning. Westerns grammarians distinguish between the two particles by stating that *in* indicates real conditions, whereas *law* indicates irreal conditions. Both particles are categorized as conjunctions".

82 Cfr. Ibn Hishām, Mughnī al-labīb ʿan kutub al-aʿārīb, ed. Māzin al-Mubārak, Muḥammad ʿAlī Ḥamd Allāh, Saʿīd al-Afghānī, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1969, II, p. 283 and following.

83 For example Ibn Hishām, ibid.; Versteegh remarks that "He himself, however, does not believe that law indicates the impossibility of both parts of the conditional sentence, and he refutes their theory with an argument derived from logic: if both condition and conclusion are false, the opposite of both must be true (thābit), and in many instances this is not the case": Versteegh (1991: 83).

84 Versteegh "Two Conceptions of Irreality in Arabic Grammar," 1991, p. 84.

the 'condition' (*wujida al-sharṭu aw fuqida*[85]). He therefore rejects the definition of *law* as *ḥarfu imtināʿin li-imtināʿi ġayri-hi* and sticks to the definition of *law* given by Sībawayhi, provided that the expression *li-wuqūʿ* is understood as simultaneity (*ʿinda thubūti al-awwali*)[86] and is not restricted to the cause-effect relation between the condition and the consequence. Sībawayhi's definition is in fact compatible both with impossible conditions and impossible consequences, and with impossible conditions and necessary consequences.

What is relevant for our hypothesis is that in all cases the condition is 'certain' and the consequence is 'certain'. *Law* introduces impossible conditions (always false and therefore *certain*), to which are associated impossible consequences (always false and therefore *certain*) or necessary consequences (always true and therefore *certain*). Once accepted that only *uncertainty* (i.e. the 'non-necessary' character of the proposition) is associated with the apocopate,[87] it becomes clear why the apocopate cannot appear neither in the protasis neither in the apodosis of sentences introduced by *law*. It appears at this point also evident that the apocopated verbal form cannot be associated with *iḏā*, being *iḏā* not *mubhama* (uncertain).

As for the verbal system of the Arabic language, along with Massignon, who affirms that the perfect and imperfect represent, outside our tenses, the degree of realisation of the action,[88] it appears to us that the entire verbal system of the Arabic language, made up of the prefixed conjugation and by the triplet of the prefixed conjugation, can be interpreted - within the different linguistic pragmatic contexts - basing on Sībawayhi's opposition 'certainty *vs* uncertainty' (in Massignon's terms 'reality *vs* irreality').

Our hypothesis is that verbal expressions which represent present or future facts as uncompleted actions clearly have an uncertain character, however, we must recognise that

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85 Ibn Hishām, Mughnī al-labīb ʿan kutub al-aʿārīb, ed. Māzin al-Mubārak, Muḥammad ʿAlī Ḥamd Allāh, Saʿīd al-Afghānī, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1969, II, p. 283 and following, quoted in Versteegh "Two Conceptions of Irreality in Arabic Grammar," 1991, p. 83.

86 Versteegh, Ibid.

87 "Fa-in abadan mubhamatun, wa-ka-ḏālika ḥurūfu al-jazāʾi" (Sībawayhi, al-Kitāb, ed. Hārūn, vol. III, p. 60, lines 10-12) (In fact in is always uncertain, as conditional particles are) and "Ḥurūfu al-jazāʾi tajzimu al-afʿāla wa-yanjazimu al-jawābu bi-mā qabla-hu" (Sībawayhi, ed. Hārūn, vol. III, p. 62) (Conditional particles operate the apocope of the verbs, being the apodosis apocopated by what precedes i.e. protasis).

88 In his article "Le temps dans la pensée islamique" (1952), Louis Massignon, analysing the notion of 'time' and 'aspect' (p. 143-144), writes that Arabic grammar "*en principe, d'ailleurs, ne connaît que des 'aspects verbaux': l'accompli (māḍī) et l'inaccompli (muḍāriʿ), qui marquent, hors de notre temps, le degré de réalisation de l'action*": quoted in V. Monteil, *L'arabe moderne*, Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1960, p. 250. Cfr. also A. Roman, "Le temps dans la langue et la culture d'Arabie et d'Islam. Paroles, signes, mythes", in *Mélanges offerts à Jamel Eddine Bencheikh*, ed. F. Sanagustin, Damas: Institut Français d'Etudes Arabes de Damas, 2001, pp. 41-65.

their uncertainty is different from the uncertainty of verbal expressions which represent uncompleted actions whose reality is complementary[89] to the reality of other actions on which they depend and to which they are subordinate. These two kinds of uncertainty ('factual uncertainty' and 'conceptual uncertainty') would be represented respectively by the prefixed conjugation variant-*u* and by the prefixed conjugation variant-*a*.

Verbal expressions representing uncompleted actions belonging to the 'factual domain' have an assertive character, are independent and are not introduced by any particle. Verbal expressions representing uncompleted actions belonging to the 'conceptual domain'[90] have non-assertive character, are subordinate, and are introduced by a subordinative conjunction.[91] There are then verbal forms - like jussive, prohibitive, negative, and imperative verbal forms - which have a non-assertive character, are non-dependent, and can be introduced or not by some particles. The domain to which these latter belong can be defined as 'virtual'.

The three domains – factual, conceptual, and virtual – contain expressions that range from the lowest degree of uncertainty ('factual uncertainty') to the highest degree of uncertainty ('virtual uncertainty'). Viewed from this angle, the verbal system of the Arabic language would represent 'certainty' (suffixed conjugation) as opposed to three different kind of 'uncertainty' (*yafʿal-u vs yafʿal-a/-ø*). Verbal forms contained in the conditional-hypothetical structure (i.e. *in yaqum yaqum*), representing 'contingent' propositions, would have the maximum degree of uncertainty.

As for the optative expressions (positive or negative), the suffixed verbal form by means of which they are construed would express 'certainty'. It is in fact the certainty of faith included in such expression as '*raḥima-hu Allah*' that psychologically differentiates

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89 In the sense of Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes, who state that in such complex sentences "*la subordonnée équivaut à un maṣdar et dépend d'une principale dont elle est complément*": R. Blachère, M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Grammaire de l'arabe classique (morphologie et syntaxe)*, 3e édition revue et remaniée, Paris: G. P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1952, p. 452.

90 "When the action of the subordinate clause is factual and completed the verb occurs in the perfect after an. This is one of the very limited number of occasions when an may be followed directly by anything other than the dependent imperfect form": S. M. al-Badawi, M. G. Carter, A. Gully, Modern Written Arabic: A Comprehensive Grammar, London and New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 603.

91 "The subjunctive is used in subordinate clauses after the following common conjunctions: *an* that, *allā* (or *an lā*) that not, *li-*, *kay*, *li-kay* and *li-an* so that, *kaylā*, *li-kaylā* and *li-allā* so that not, *ḥattā* until, so that": D. Cowan, *An Introduction to Modern Literary Arabic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958, p. 93.

optative propositions from suppositions and hypotheses; if not in faith, the psychological 'certainty' has to be found in one's expectations.[92]

Finally, as for the negative context, our opinion is that it should be distinguished in two domains. The domain of the 'external' negation being represented by the metanegation *mā faʿala* of a suffixed form *faʿala* or by the metanegation *mā yafʿalu* of a prefixed form *yafʿalu*, where *faʿala* and *yafʿalu* are positive predicates and *mā* is a modal operator assigning to the proposition a 'truth value' indicating the relation of the proposition to truth. When the modal operator *mā* is applied to propositions of the language, like '*faʿala*' and '*yafʿalu*', it generates the propositions of the metalanguage *mā faʿala* (it is not true that *faʿala*) and *mā yafʿalu* (it is not true that *yafʿalu*).[93] If we eliminate the negation, we find the positive predicate of the language to which the metanegation is applied (*faʿala* or *yafʿalu*). The other domain is the domain of the internal negation, in which predicates are negative predicates. Being all equally 'uncertain' in the sense that they are 'unrealised' - with the only exception of optative ones which are seen as if they were 'realised' - all negative predicates are construed with *yafʿal-* forms: *lam yafʿal* is the internal negation of *faʿala*, *lā yafʿalu* is the internal negation of *yafʿalu*, *lan yafʿala* is the internal negation of *sawfa/sa- yafʿalu*, *lā yafʿala* is the internal negation of *yafʿala*, *lā yafʿal/tafʿal* is the internal negation of *yafʿal*[94]/*ifʿal*.

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Aristoteles (B.C. 350). *Categoriae et Liber de interpretatione*, ed. L. Minio-Paluello, London: Oxford University Press, 1949.

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92 "She knew that what Marianne and her mother conjectured one moment, they believed the next – that with them, to wish was to hope, and to hope was to expect": J. Austin, Sense and Sensibility, London: T. Egerton 1811, repr. 1970, London, Oxford University Press, p. 17. "Con l'agile speme precorre l'evento": A. Manzoni, Adelchi (1822).

93 For a detailed discussion see M. E. B. Giolfo, "La particella *mā* nel sistema della negazione verbale in arabo classico: un'interpretazione sincronica", in P. G. Borbone, A. Mengozzi and M. Tosco ed., *Loquentes Linguis. Studi linguistici e orientali in onore di Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006, pp. 307-317.

94 In constructions like *li-yafʿal*, but also in constructions like *in yafʿal* since, as already mentioned, in Koranic Arabic, with *in*, *lam yafʿal* is not the only negation, there is in fact also another negation: *lā yafʿal* (Larcher, 2009, p. 207 and following), and with no exceptions *lā yafʿal* is the negative counterpart of *yafʿal* whilst *lam yafʿal* is the negative counterpart of *faʿala* (Larcher, 2007, p. 35).

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