

Syrian Arabic grammatical summary

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A pdf of this post for pretty printing can be found [here](#).

This grammar is under construction. The following topics are planned to be added:

- syllable structure
- exclamations(?)
- imperative
- gender
- adverbs
- the possessive exponent
- participles
- verbal noun

1 Introduction

This is a short pedagogical summary of the variety of Arabic spoken in the Damascus area in Syria. It is intended to be used for quick reference and overview for beginner to intermediate language learners. It is partially based on *A Reference Grammar of Syrian Arabic* (Cowell 2005 [1964], Georgetown University Press¹) and *Arabisch-syrische grammatik* (Grotzfeld 1965, Harrasowitz), to which the reader is referred for detailed and comprehensive grammatical descriptions.

This grammar uses a Library of Congress' system of transcription (see Phonology). Words and examples are presented in transcription, translation, and, space permitting, also in Arabic script.² The Arabic script represents written vernacular as used in text messaging, advertisement, etc. There is considerable variation in vernacular Arabic orthography, especially in the extent to which Standard Arabic spelling is followed, and forms that differ from those presented here are therefore common.

Comparisons with Standard Arabic are made where relevant.

For corrections or suggestions on improvements, please contact the author at andreas.hallberg@sprak.gu.se.

2 Phonology

IPA symbols in square brackets are hyper-linked to sound samples from Wikipedia. Click on them to hear an example of the pronunciation.

2.1 Consonants

Compared to Standard Arabic, several consonants are missing in Syrian Arabic, namely the dentals *th* ﺚ, *dh* ﺪ, and *z* ﺯ; as well as *q* ﻖ. Furthermore, *j* ﺞ is in Syrian Arabic pronounced [ʒ], as opposed to the Standard Arabic affricate [tʃ].

¹Available as pdf on https://ia801609.us.archive.org/31/items/AReferenceGrammarOfSyrianArabic_201704/A_Reference_Grammar_of_Syrian_Arabic_text.pdf.

²For an overview of the Arabic script, see *The Arabic Writing System* (available for download at <http://andreamhallberg.github.io/documents/>).

2.1.1 Place and manner of articulation³

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar/Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Fricative						
–			<i>j</i>	<i>għ</i>	ʕ	
voiced						
–	<i>f</i>			<i>kh</i>	ħ	<i>h</i>
voiceless						
Plosive						
–	<i>b</i>	<i>d, ḍ</i>				
voiced						
–		<i>t, ṭ</i>	<i>k</i>			ʔ
voiceless						
Lateral		<i>l</i>				
Trill		<i>r</i>				
Nasal	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>				
Sibilant						
–		<i>z</i>				
voiced						
–		<i>s, ṣ</i>				
voiceless						
Semi-vowel	<i>w</i>		<i>y</i>			

The following consonants are used only in a few words:

- emphatic *m* (*māmā* ‘mum’)
- emphatic *b* (*bāba* ‘dad’)
- emphatic *l* (*alla* ‘God’)
- *g* (*ergīle* ‘water pipe’)

The emphasis distinction in *m*, *b*, and *l* is not reflected in the transcription employed here.

³Images (modified) created by User:ish shwar (original .png deleted), .svg by Rohieb, CC BY-SA 3.0 <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>, via Wikimedia Commons

2.1.2 Pointers on pronunciation

<i>r</i>	ر	[r]	Rolled <i>r</i> , as in Spanish. Pronounced emphatically [rˤ] when adjacent to <i>a</i> or another emphatic consonant (<i>mara</i> ‘wife’, <i>rṣās</i> ‘led’).
<i>j</i>	ج	[ʒ]	As in French <i>journal</i> .
<i>ḥ</i>	ح	[ħ]	Hissing <i>h</i> formed by tensioning the throat.
<i>kh</i>	خ	[x]/[χ]	As the German <i>ach</i> or (Castilian) Spanish <i>jota</i> .
<i>gh</i>	غ	[ɣ]/[ʁ]	As the French or German throaty <i>r</i> .
‘	ع	[ʕ]	Produced by using swolloing muscles to restrict the air flow. It is one of the most difficult sounds for language learners to produce. Learners often wrongly percieved as a vowel <i>a</i> .
’	ء	[ʔ]	A stop and quick release of the air pressure by the vocal-cords, as the <i>t</i> in colloquial British <i>better</i> .
ṣ	ص	[sˤ]	Emphatic <i>s</i> .
ḍ	ض	[dˤ]	Emphatic <i>d</i> .
ṭ	ط	[tˤ]	Emphatic <i>t</i> .

2.1.3 Emphatic consonants

Emphatic consonants (technically “pharyngalized”) are pronounced as their non-emphatic equivalents but with the back of the tongue raised, giving a darker, thicker sound. This affects the quality of surrounding vowels, most clearly heard in *ā* [æ:] (as English *bad*) becoming a backed [ɑ:] (as in English *far*).

2.1.4 Consonant length

All consonants have a short and a long variant. The long variant is transcribed as a doubled letter. Consonant length is a central part of Arabic phonology, often changing the meaning of a word (*daras* ‘he studied’ vs. *darras* ‘he taught’, *ḥakat* ‘she talked’ vs. *ḥakkat* ‘she scratched’).

For plosives (‘, *b*, *d*, *t*, ṭ, *k*) the long variant is produced by briefly holding the air pressure before releasing it and producing the sound.

Consonant length is not indicated in the Arabic script. Only very rarely is it marked with the diacritic : (*shadda*).

2.2 Vowels

Short		Long		
<i>i</i>	[i]	<i>ī</i>	[i:]	ي
<i>e</i>	[e]/[ə]	<i>ē</i>	[e:]	ي
<i>u</i>	[u]	<i>ū</i>	[u:]	و
<i>o</i>	[o]	<i>ō</i>	[o:]	و
<i>a</i>	[a]/[ɑ]	<i>ā</i>	[æ:]/[ɑ:]	ا

Note:

- The Arabic letters only represent long vowels. Short vowels are normally not indicated.

- *i* and *u* occur primarily in word final position as part of inflections (*bēt-i* ‘my house’, *bye‘mel-u* ‘they do’).
- The vowel here transcribes as *e* is pronounced
 - [ə] *schwa* (as in English *the*) before or at word stress
 - [e] (as in English *when*) after word stress
- Short and long *a* is pronounced backed [ɑ] when adjacent to an emphatic consonant.
- There are no diphthongs in Syrian Arabic. The Standard Arabic diphthongs *ay* and *aw* correspond in Syrian Arabic to the long vowels *ē* and *ō* respectively.

2.3 Word stress

Word stress in Syrian Arabic is largely predictable and corresponds with the rules of word stress in Standard Arabic. Word stress occurs on

- the last
 - long vowel followed by consonant (*darrasúu-na* ‘they taught us’)
 - short vowel followed by two consonants or a long consonant (*darásna* ‘we studied’, *byedárres* ‘he studies’)
- or else on the first vowel (*dárasu* ‘they studied’), excluding any prefix (*u-dárasu* ‘and they studied’).

2.4 Standard to Syrian Arabic phonological conversion rules

<i>aw</i>	→	<i>ō</i>	<i>yawm</i>	→	<i>yōm</i>	day	يوم
			<i>šawt</i>		<i>šōt</i>	sound/voice	صوت
<i>ay</i>	→	<i>ē</i>	<i>bayn</i>	→	<i>bēn</i>	between	بين
			<i>šabāḥ al-khayr</i>		<i>šbāḥ el-khēr</i>	Good morning	صباح الخير
<i>q</i>	→	’	<i>daqīqa</i>	→	<i>da’ī’a</i>	minute	دقيقة
			<i>qalb</i>		<i>’alb</i>	heart	قلب
			<i>ṭāriq</i>		<i>ṭāre’</i>	Tariq (name)	طارق
<i>z</i>	→	<i>d</i>	<i>zühr</i>	→	<i>ḍuhr</i>	noon	ضهر
’	→	∅	<i>masā’</i>	→	<i>masa</i>	eveing	مسا
<i>th</i>	→	<i>t</i>	<i>thalātha</i>	→	<i>tlāte</i>	three	ثلاثة
		(s)	<i>mathalan</i>	→	<i>masalan</i>	for example	مثلا
<i>dh</i>	→	<i>d</i>	<i>dhahab</i>	→	<i>dahab</i>	gold	ذهب
		(z)	<i>idha</i>	→	<i>iza</i>	if	إذا

Loans from Standard Arabic, including foreign Arabic place names, often retain the Standard Arabic pronunciation. In such words, *th* and *dh* are pronounced *s* and *z* respectively. Some examples are:

Syrian Arabic	Standard Arabic		
<i>saqāfe</i>	<i>thaqāfa</i>	culture	ثقافة
<i>ustāz</i>	<i>ustādh</i>	teacher	أستاذ
<i>demuqrāṭiyye</i>	<i>dimuqrāṭiyya</i>	democracy	ديمقراطية
<i>el-qur’ān</i>	<i>al-qur’ān</i>	the Quran	القرآن
<i>el-qāhira</i>	<i>al-qāhira</i>	Cairo	القاهرة

3 Pronouns

3.1 Personal pronouns

	Independent	Attached		متصل	منفصل
I	<i>ana</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>(-ya)</i>	ي	انا
you (m.s.)	<i>enta</i>	<i>-ak</i>	<i>(-k)</i>	ك	انت
you (f.s.)	<i>enti</i>	<i>-ik</i>	<i>(-ki)</i> (كي)	ك	انتى
he	<i>huwwe</i>	<i>-o</i>	<i>(-h)</i> (ه)	و	هو
she	<i>hiyye</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>(-ha)</i>	ها	هى
we	<i>nehna</i>	<i>-na</i>		نا	نحننا
you (pl.)	<i>intu</i>	<i>-kon</i>		كن	انتو
they	<i>honnen</i>	<i>-on</i>	<i>(-hon)</i> (هن)	ن	هنن

Forms in parenthesis are used with words with final vowel: *a'tā-ki* 'he gave you (f.)'.

Attached pronouns are used for:

possession	<i>ktāb-o</i>	his book	كتابو
prepositional complements	<i>ma'-o</i>	with-him	معو
direct objects	<i>katabt-o</i>	I wrote it	كتبتو
indirect objects	<i>katabt-l-o</i>	I wrote for him	كتبتلو

The connective *-l-* 'for' for indirect objects may take the form *-el-* to prevent consonant clusters: *katabt-el-kon* 'I wrote for you (pl.)'. A direct object may then be added with the word *yā-*: *katabt-l-ak yā-ha* 'I wrote it (fem.) for you'.

3.2 Demonstrative pronouns

	Close	Distant	بعيد	قريب
m.s.	<i>hāda</i>	<i>hadāk(e)</i>	هداك	هادا
f.s.	<i>hāy</i>	<i>hadīk(e)</i>	هديك	هاي
pl.	<i>hadōl(e)</i>	<i>hadōlīk</i>	هدوليك	هدول

Note:

- Several forms have a stylistic variant with final *e*.
- *hāda* has a shortened form, *hād*, used only at the end of phrases: *shū hād?* 'What is this?'.
- The distant plural has several variants not listed above, including *hadōk*, *hadenk*, and *hadenken*.

3.3 Indefinite pronouns

<i>ḥada</i>	someone/anyone	حدا
<i>shi</i>	something/anything	شي

4 Nouns

Nouns are inflected for number and definiteness, and most animate nouns (referring to humans or animals) are also inflected for gender.

4.1 Plural

There are four ways to form plural: *irregular*, *regular masculine*, *regular feminine*, and *general human*:

		Singular	Plural		جمع	مفرد
Irrregular		<i>bēt</i>	<i>buyūt</i>	house	بيوت	بيت
Regular masculine	<i>-īn</i>	<i>muslem</i>	<i>muslemīn</i>	muslim	مسلمين	مسلم
Regular feminine	<i>-āt</i>	<i>sheghle</i>	<i>sheghlāt</i>	thing	شغلات	شغلة
General human	<i>-(iyy)e</i>	<i>‘erāqi</i>	<i>‘erāqiyye</i>	Iraqi	عراقية	عراقي

4.2 Dual

The noun has three forms of number inflection: singular, plural, and dual. (The adjective, verb, and pronoun have no dual forms.) The dual form is used to indicate specifically two of something. It is formed by adding the ending *-ēn* to the singular (*-tēn* for feminine formed with *-e/-a*).

		Singular	Dual		المثنى	مفرد
Masculine	<i>-ēn</i>	<i>walad</i>	<i>waladēn</i>	boy	ولدين	ولد
Feminine	<i>-tēn</i>	<i>sā‘a</i>	<i>sā‘atēn</i>	hour	ساعتين	ساعة

The dual is used only in contexts where the precise number is important:

‘inna sā‘atēn bas We only have two hours.
ash-sha‘a fī-ha ghurfatēn u-maṭbakh The apartment has two rooms and a kitchen.

Otherwise the plural is used:

rāḥu aḥmad u-rafi‘u ‘a-buyūt-un Ahmad and his friend went home [to their houses (pl.)]
mā ‘inna wlād, bas banāt, rīm w-raniya we don’t have any boys, only girls (pl.), Rim and Rania

The dual is avoided on nouns with attached pronouns, except for pairwise occurring body parts. The plural follow by an explicit *itnēn* ‘two’ is used instead:

akhwāt-i l-itnēn my two sisters اخواتي الاتنين
sayārāt-u l-itnēn his two cars سياراته الاتنين
ghassili idē-ki wash your hands غسل ايديكي

Note:

- When used with an attached pronoun, the *n* in the dual ending is dropped.

īd ‘hand’ → *īdēn* ‘two hands’ → *īdēk* ‘your two hands’.

5 Prepositions

<i>‘a-/‘alē-</i>	to (place)	ع/عليه
<i>‘ala/‘alē-</i>	on	على/عليه
<i>‘and</i>	with, at	عند
<i>barrāt</i>	outside	برات
<i>bēn</i>	between	بين
<i>bēn/bēnāt-</i>	among	بين/بينات
<i>bi-/fī-</i>	in, at	ب-/فيه
<i>fō³</i>	above	فوق
<i>ḥadd</i>	next to	حد
<i>juwwāt</i>	inside	جوات
<i>la-/el-</i>	for (ownership)	ل/ال
<i>le‘and</i>	to (person)	ل عند
<i>ma^c</i>	with	مع
<i>men/menn-</i>	from	من/من
<i>taḥt</i>	below	تحت
<i>‘uddām</i>	in front of	قدام
<i>wara</i>	behind	ورا

Note:

- For the prepositions with two alternate forms, the first is used with nouns and the second with pronouns:

<i>bi-l-bēt</i>	in the house	بالبيت
<i>fī-h</i>	in it	فيه

6 Verbs

6.1 Inflection

	Non-past	Past	المضارع	الماضي
I	<i>e-ktob</i>	<i>katab-t</i>	اكتب	كتبت
you (ms.)	<i>t(e)-ktob</i>	<i>katab-t</i>	تكتب	كتبت
you (fs.)	<i>t(e)-ktob-i</i>	<i>katab-ti</i>	تكتبي	كتبتني
he	<i>ye-ktob</i>	<i>katab</i>	يكتب	كتب
she	<i>t(e)-ktob</i>	<i>katab-et</i>	تكتب	كتبت
we	<i>n(e)-ktob</i>	<i>katab-na</i>	نكتب	كتبنا
you (pl.)	<i>t(e)-ktob-u</i>	<i>katab-tu</i>	تكتبو	كتبتمو
they	<i>ye-ktob-u</i>	<i>katab-u</i>	يكتبو	كتبو

The pronoun is often omitted. The *e* in parenthesis is omitted on stems beginning with a single consonant *t-shūf-i* ‘you (fs.) see’.

The non-past verb form is preceded by one of the following:

<i>b-</i>	habitual, generalities	بـ
<i>‘am</i>	ongoing (progressive)	عم
<i>ħa-/raħ</i>	future	ح/حـ
<i>lāzim</i>	‘have to’	لازم
auxiliary verb		

Note:

- For 1s, the initial letter *alif* ا is normally omitted when preceded by *b*: *bektob* يكتب.
- For 1pl. the *b-* prefix is partially assimilated and pronounced as *m*: *mnektob*. This is often reflected in orthography: منكتب.
- Some speakers combine *b-* and *‘am*: *‘am b-yektob*.

6.1.1 Hollow verbs

Hollow verbs have a long vowel in the middle of the stem. They are of three types, each with different middle vowel in non-past tense: 1) *ū*, 2) *ī*, and 3) *ā*. The inflection of the three types does not differ in past tense, where the middle long vowel is invariably *ā*, reduced to *e* in past tense in forms with consonantal suffixes (1s, 2ms, 2mf, 1pl, and 2pl).

1. Middle *ū* (*rāħ* ‘went’):

	Non-Past	Past	المضارع	الماضي
I	<i>e-rūħ</i>	<i>reħ-t</i>	اروح	رحت
you (ms.)	<i>t-rūħ</i>	<i>reħ-t</i>	تروح	رحت
you (fs.)	<i>t-rūħ-i</i>	<i>reħ-ti</i>	تروحي	رحتي
he	<i>ye-rūħ</i>	<i>rāħ</i>	يروح	راح
she	<i>t-rūħ</i>	<i>rāħ-et</i>	تروح	راحت
we	<i>n-rūħ</i>	<i>reħ-na</i>	نروح	رحنا
you (pl.)	<i>t-rūħ-u</i>	<i>reħ-tu</i>	تروحو	رحتو
they	<i>ye-rūħ-u</i>	<i>rāħ-u</i>	يروحو	راحو

Some other frequent verbs of this type are *kān* ‘was’, *‘āl* ‘said’, *rāħ* ‘went’, *shāf* ‘saw’/‘met’, *‘ām* ‘stood up’, and *māt* ‘died’.

2. Middle *ī* (*šār* ‘became’):

	Non-Past	Past	المضارع	الماضي
I	<i>e-ṣīr</i>	<i>ṣert</i>	اصير	صرت
you (ms.)	<i>t-ṣīr</i>	<i>ṣert</i>	تصير	صرت
you (fs.)	<i>t-ṣīr-i</i>	<i>ṣert-i</i>	تصيري	صرتي
he	<i>ye-ṣīr</i>	<i>ṣār</i>	يصير	صار
she	<i>t-ṣīr</i>	<i>ṣār-et</i>	تصير	صارت
we	<i>n-ṣīr</i>	<i>ṣer-na</i>	نصير	صرنا
you (pl.)	<i>t-ṣīr-u</i>	<i>ṣer-tu</i>	تصيرو	صرتو
they	<i>ye-ṣīr-u</i>	<i>ṣār-u</i>	يصيرو	صارو

Some other frequent verbs of this type are *‘āsh* ‘lived’, *jāb* ‘fetched’, *bāc* ‘sold’. and *dār* ‘turned’.

3. Middle *ā* (*nām* ‘slept’):

	Non-Past	Past	المضارع	الماضي
I	<i>e-nām</i>	<i>nem-t</i>	انام	نمت
you (ms.)	<i>t-nām</i>	<i>nem-t</i>	تنام	نمت
you (fs.)	<i>t-nām-i</i>	<i>nemt-i</i>	تنامي	نمتي
he	<i>ye-nām</i>	<i>nām</i>	ينام	نام
she	<i>t-nām</i>	<i>nām-et</i>	تنام	نامت
we	<i>n-nām</i>	<i>nem-na</i>	ننام	نامنا
you (pl.)	<i>t-nām-u</i>	<i>nem-tu</i>	تنامو	نمتو
they	<i>ye-nām-u</i>	<i>nām-u</i>	ينامو	نامو

Some other frequent verbs of this type are *khāf* ‘was frightened’ and *ghār* ‘was jealous’.

6.1.2 Doubled verbs

Doubled verbs have a stem ending in a lengthened (doubled) consonant. In past tense forms with consonantal suffixes, *ē* is added.

Ḥass ‘felt’:

	Non-Past	Past	المضارع	الماضي
I	<i>e-ḥess</i>	<i>ḥassē-t</i>	احس	حسيت
you (ms.)	<i>t-ḥess</i>	<i>ḥassē-t</i>	تحسي	حسيت
you (fs.)	<i>t-ḥess-i</i>	<i>ḥassē-ti</i>	تحس	حسيتي
he	<i>y-ḥess</i>	<i>ḥass</i>	يحس	حس
she	<i>t-ḥess</i>	<i>ḥass-et</i>	تحس	حست
we	<i>n-ḥess</i>	<i>ḥassē-na</i>	نحس	حسينا
you (pl.)	<i>t-ḥess-u</i>	<i>ḥassē-tu</i>	تحسو	حسيتو
they	<i>ye-ḥess-u</i>	<i>ḥass-u</i>	يحسو	حسو

Some other frequent verbs of this type are *radd* ‘answered’ and *dall* ‘remained’.

6.2 Auxiliary verbs

The main verb may be preceded by an auxiliary verb. Both the auxiliary and the main verb are inflected for person:

<i>beddo yektob</i>	'he wants to write'	بدو يكتب
<i>byeḥebb yektob</i>	'he likes to write'	بيحب يكتب
<i>kān yektob</i>	'he was writing'	كان يكتب
<i>ṣār yektob</i>	'he began to write'	صار يكتب

6.3 *kān* 'was'

The verb *kān* 'was' is used

1. to make a verb-less clause past or future tense:

<i>aḥmad kān ṭāleb</i>	Ahmad was a student
<i>aḥmad ḥa-yekūn ṭāleb</i>	Ahmad will be a student

2. to express a past ongoing (progressive) event:

<i>aḥmad kān (‘am) yedros</i>	Ahmed was studying
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It is a hollow verb with middle *ū* in non-past tense:

	Non-past	Past	المضارع	الماضي
I	<i>e-kūn</i>	<i>ken-t</i>	اكون	كنت
you (ms.)	<i>t-kūn</i>	<i>ken-t</i>	تكون	كنت
you (fs.)	<i>t-kūn-i</i>	<i>kent-i</i>	تكوني	كنتي
he	<i>ye-kūn</i>	<i>kān</i>	يكون	كان
she	<i>t-kūn</i>	<i>kān-et</i>	تكون	كانت
we	<i>n-kūn</i>	<i>ken-na</i>	نكون	كنا
you (pl.)	<i>t-kūn-u</i>	<i>ken-tu</i>	تكونو	كنتم
they	<i>ye-kūn-u</i>	<i>kān-u</i>	يكونو	كانو

6.4 Pseudo-verbs

<i>bedd-</i>	want	بد
<i>‘and-</i>	has	عند
<i>fī</i>	there is	في

The pseudo-verbs are negated as verbs with *mā* (see Negation) but do not follow verbal person and tense inflection. *bedd-* and *‘and-* are inflected for person with attached pronouns, like nouns, while *fī* is not inflected:

<i>bedd-a ktāb</i>	she wants a book [her wish is a book]	بدها كتاب
<i>‘and-a ktāb</i>	she has a book [with her is a book]	عندها كتاب
<i>fī ktāb</i>	there is a book	في كتاب

Pseudo-verbs are inflected for tense with an auxiliary *kān*:

<i>kān</i> ‘ <i>and-a ktāb</i>	She had a book.	كان عندها كتاب
<i>ḥa-yekūn</i> ‘ <i>and-a ktāb</i>	She will have a book.	حيكون عندها كتاب

7 Question words

<i>shū</i>	what	شو
<i>mīn</i>	who	مين
<i>ēmta</i>	when	ايمتى
<i>kīf/shlōn</i>	how	كيف/شلون
<i>wēn</i>	where	وين
<i>mīnnen</i>	from where	منين
<i>lawēn</i>	whereto	لوين
<i>lēsh</i>	why	ليش
<i>addēsh</i>	how much	قديش
<i>kam</i>	how many	كم
<i>ayyi/anu</i>	which	اي/انو

Question words are normally clause-initial, and may be preceded by a preposition:

ma‘ *mīn* ‘*am teḥki?* ‘Who are you talking to?’ مع مين عم تحكي؟

Wēn and *kīf* may take attached pronouns:

<i>wēn-ak?</i>	Where are you?	وينك؟
<i>kīf-ak?</i>	How are you?	كيفك؟

Yes/no-question are formed with rising intonation. The Standard Arabic particle *hal* is in Syrian only used for rhetoric questions.

8 Negation

Syrian Arabic has three main forms of negation:

<i>mā</i>	ما	verbs
<i>mū</i>	مو	non-verbal clauses
<i>lā</i>	لا	imperative

For declarative clauses, in effect, *mū* is only used to negate a verbless clauses in present tense, otherwise the *mā* is used:

	Verbal clause	Verbless (“is”) clause
Past	Ahmed is studying. <i>aḥmad mā daras</i> أحمد ما درس	Ahmed is a student. <i>aḥmad mā kān ṭāleb</i> أحمد ما كان طالب
Present	<i>aḥmad mā byedrus</i> أحمد ما بيدرس	<i>aḥmad mū ṭāleb</i> أحمد مو طالب
Future	<i>aḥmad mā ḥa-/raḥ yedrus</i> أحمد ما ح/رح بيدرس	<i>aḥmad mā ḥa-/raḥ yekūn ṭāleb</i> أحمد ما ح/رح يكن طالب

8.1 *mā-n-*

mā- followed by a connecting *-n-* and an attached pronoun (*mān-i*, *mān-ak*, *mān-ik*, etc.) may be used to reply in the negative to a statement, question, or implication. For example,

mā-n-i ju‘ān I am not hungry ماني جوعان

can be used to answer someone saying that you are hungry, asking whether you are hungry, or urging you to eat.

9 Numerals 1–100

The independent form of the numeral in the table below is used when the numeral stands by itself and is not followed by a noun, and the counting-form is used when the numeral is followed by counted a noun: *tlāte* ‘three’, but *tlatt ewlād* ‘three boys.’

	Independent	Counting	مضاف	غير مضاف
1	<i>wāhed</i> (m.)/ <i>waḥde</i> (f.)			واحد/وحدة
2	<i>etnēn</i> (m.)/ <i>tentēn</i> (f.)			اثنين/تنتين
3	<i>tlāte</i>	<i>tlatt</i>	ثلاث	ثلاثة
4	<i>arba'a</i>	<i>arba'</i>	أربع	أربعة
5	<i>khamse</i>	<i>khams</i>	خمس	خمسة
6	<i>sette</i>	<i>sett</i>	ست	ستة
7	<i>sab'a</i>	<i>sab'</i>	سبع	سبعة
8	<i>tmāne</i>	<i>tman</i>	ثمان	ثمانة
9	<i>tes'a</i>	<i>tes'</i>	تسع	تسعة
10	<i>'ashara</i>	<i>'ashar</i>	عشر	عشرة
11	<i>edda'sh</i>	<i>edda'shar</i>	ادعشر	ادعش
12	<i>eṭna'sh</i>	<i>eṭna'shar</i>	اطنعشر	اطنعش
13	<i>tlaṭa'sh</i>	<i>tlaṭa'shar</i>	تلاطعشر	تلاطعش
14	<i>arba'ṭa'sh</i>	<i>arba'ṭa'shar</i>	اربعةعشر	اربعةعش
15	<i>khamṣṭa'sh</i>	<i>khamṣṭa'shar</i>	خمسةعشر	خمسةعش
16	<i>seṭṭa'sh</i>	<i>seṭṭa'shar</i>	سبعةعشر	سبعةعش
17	<i>sab'aṭa'sh</i>	<i>sab'aṭa'shar</i>	سبعةعشر	سبعةعش
18	<i>tmanṭa'sh</i>	<i>tmanṭa'shar</i>	ثمانعشر	ثمانعش
19	<i>tes'aṭa'sh</i>	<i>tes'aṭa'shar</i>	تسعةعشر	تسعةعش
20	<i>'eshrīn</i>			عشرين
30	<i>tlātīn</i>			ثلاثين
40	<i>arba'īn</i>			اربعين
50	<i>khamṣīn</i>			خمسين
60	<i>settīn</i>			ستين
70	<i>sab'īn</i>			سبعين
80	<i>tmānīn</i>			ثمانين
90	<i>tes'īn</i>			تسعين
100	<i>miyye</i>	<i>mīt</i>		مئة

Note:

- Except for 1 and 2, numerals are not inflected for gender, as opposed to Standard Arabic.
- 1–2 are used only for emphasis or contrast, or when ordering in restaurants and the like (*etnēn shāy* 'two tea', see also Dual). Otherwise, the lone noun in singular or dual is used (*ktāb* '[a/one] book'; *ktabēn* 'two books'). 1 and 2 are the only numerals that inflect for gender.
- 3–10 have a special form with a final *-t* when used with one of three following nouns:

<i>eyyām</i>	days	(<i>khamst eyyam</i> five days)
<i>eshhur</i>	months	(<i>khamst eshhur</i> 'five months')
<i>ālāf</i>	thousands	(<i>'ashart ālāf</i> 'ten thousand')

- For 3–10, the counted noun is in the plural: *tlatt kutub* 'three books', and for numerals above 10,

it is in the singular: *idda‘ashar ktāb* ‘eleven book[s]’.

- 11–19 are constructed from the counting form of the unit number and the ending *-ta‘sh*, with irregularities in 11, 12, and 15.
- Decades (20, 30, etc.) are constructed from the counting form of the unit number and the ending *-īn*, with only 20 having an irregular form. In complex numbers, the unit in independent form appears before the decades with the two parts connected with *u-* ‘and’: *sab‘a u-tlātīn*, ‘thirty-six’.
- For numbers above one hundred there is no counting form for 100: *miyye u-tlāte kelime* ‘103 words’.