

# Epistemic Modality and Conditional Sentence: On the Presentative Particle of an Arabic Dialect of Tunis (Tunisia)

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## Abstract

This study focuses on the particle *ʔa:-* of an Arabic dialect of Tunis (Tunisia) which appears in the apodosis of the conditional sentence in certain environments. After presenting the descriptive work on the particle, which mainly uses data collected by the author, the attempt is made to explain its presence and function in the conditional sentence according to a view that it is a propositional-epistemic modal particle. The propositional nature of the particle reveals its function of determining the counterfactuality of conditional sentence in terms of realis-irrealis opposition. On the other hand, its epistemic feature involves how it presents the proposition of the apodosis. Based on Haiman's analysis on the conditional sentence (1978), the author argues that it is the presentative of the information that is new to the hearer which is inferred from the protasis. Because it ensures the newness of the information, the inferential character is the most basic function of this epistemic particle. Furthermore, this character motivates the sense of warning or encouragement expressed in the *ʔa:-* apodosis. This paper will contribute to the study of the conditional sentence for it describes the function of the epistemic modality in apodosis of the conditional sentence.

## 1. Purpose of the Paper

In the study of conditional sentences, much attention has been paid to the protasis (if-clause) and its marker (if) rather than the apodosis (consequence-clause) (e.g. Haiman 1978, Traugott 1985). This seems to result from two things: (a) well-studied languages such as English tend to have a protasis marker but not an apodosis marker, and (b) the sentence structure of the apodosis is usually the same as ordinary sentences, while that of the protasis is not.

The same is true in the domain of Arabic language study. Since in Arabic (Classical, Modern Standard and its local variants) protasis markers and verbal forms of both the protasis and the apodosis play crucial roles in forming the counterfactual conditional, many research and descriptive works have focused on them (e.g. Holes 1995, Brustad 2000). However, it has been well reported that some of the Arabic variants of North Africa show quite different features in the conditional sentence. For example, in Moroccan Arabic the counterfactuality is expressed by proper verbal forms with the protasis marker which reappears in the head of the corresponding

apodosis (Harrell 2004: 168. The same phenomenon is mentioned in one of the Algerian Arabic dialects. See Marçais, Ph. 1956: 567).

- (1)      kun sket,                                  kun flet  
           if    be.silent:PERF:3:SG    if    get.away:PERF:3:SG  
           ‘if he had kept quiet, he would have gotten away’

Another peculiarity is known in a dialect of Tunis, which needs special consideration. In a certain environment, a particle *rʔa:-* suffixed with a personal pronoun appears before the apodosis.

- (2)      lu:ka:n ma:-kunt-ʃ                                  mri:ðʕ, *rʔa:-*ni:      mʃi:t                                  mʃa:-k.  
           if      NEG-be:PERF:1:SG-NEG<sup>1</sup> sick    RA-1:SG    go:PERF:1:SG    with-2:SG  
           ‘If I had not been sick, I would have gone with you.’

The purpose of this paper<sup>2</sup> is to give a detailed description of this particle *rʔa:-* in the conditional sentence, and to explain its appearance in the apodosis in terms of the epistemic modality which, as the author analyzes, is key function of this particle.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Environment

The Arabic dialect of Tunis, the capital of the Republic of Tunisia, is one of the Arabic local variants which has the same origin as Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic (genealogically all of them are Semitic, itself one of the major branches of Afroasiatic). In Arabic dialectology, it is usually classified in the Maghreb dialect group which in turn forms the West dialects group, which involves the dialects of Egypt and Sudan. Thus the group is opposed to the East group of the rest of the Arabic speaking area (Nakano 1989).

At least three variants can be distinguished in the Arabic dialect of Tunis: the language spoken by dwellers of the older part of Tunis (usually called Medina)(Singer 1984), the language spoken by Jewish community in Tunis (Cohen, D. 1975), and the ‘koineized variety’ (Gibson 2009:563). This last variant is not only spoken by all the inhabitants of Tunis including migrants from other parts of Tunisia, but is also nationally recognized as the most prestigious variant besides the CLA—the only official language of Tunisia. This paper mainly refers to this third variant.

<sup>1</sup> The ordinary negation in this language is formed by the negative marker *ma:-* and the suffix *-ʃ* which is not a negative marker. However, in this paper this suffix is glossed as a negative marker for simplicity’s sake.

<sup>2</sup> This paper was developed from two of my presentations at the 141st and 143rd Meeting of The Linguistic Society of Japan held at Tohoku University on 27-28 November, 2010, and at Ohsaka University on 26-27 November, 2011 respectively. I am grateful to my audiences for their concern and thoughtful comments. I also wish to thank all the Tunisians who have helped my research; especially two of my friends whose names are already mentioned in the body of the paper. I alone, however am responsible for any errors of fact or judgement that remain.

## 2.2. Grammatical Sketch

The Arabic dialect of Tunis phonemically distinguishes seven vowels (a, i, u, a:, i:, u:, ə) and thirty three consonants (b, b<sup>ʕ</sup>, m, m<sup>ʕ</sup>, f, t, t<sup>ʕ</sup>, d, d<sup>ʕ</sup>, n, r, r<sup>ʕ</sup>, θ, ð, ð<sup>ʕ</sup>, s, s<sup>ʕ</sup>, z, ʒ, ʒ, l, l<sup>ʕ</sup>, k, g, x, ɣ, q, h, ʕ, ʔ, h, w, y).

Typologically, it is a topic-prominent language of VSO word order. The verb has the perfect form, the imperfect form, and the imperative form. Each of them inflects according to the person, the gender, and the number—i. e. the first person singular/plural, the second person singular/plural, the third person masculine/feminine singular, and the third person common gender plural. Nouns are classified in the masculine and the feminine. Each basically has a singular form and a plural form.

## 2.3. Data

Most of the data in this paper is, unless otherwise mentioned, collected by several fieldworks in Tunis conducted by the author (though some small research was done through internet communication). The method adopted by the author during the research is mainly elicitation from two research partners who are both fluent speakers of the target language: Mr. Farouk Herzi (Takalanca Linguistic Services, <http://www.takalanca.com/>), and Mr. Wacel Krir. The author wishes to express his deepest gratitude to them for their insight and patience, which was indispensable for this paper.

The examples cited from other works are glossed by the author with the appropriate modification of the original transcriptions.

## 2.4. Terminology and Abbreviation

According to Holes (1995: 237), ‘Conditional sentences consist of two structurally independent clauses which contain propositions, the validity of one of which is dependent on the validity of the other.’ These two clauses are semantically distinct—the first mentions a condition, and the other states its result. The former is commonly called protasis, and the latter apodosis (for the advantage of choosing these terms, see Traugott 1983: n.2). In many languages the protasis appears with a word approximately equivalent to the English word, ‘if’. The term ‘protasis marker’ is used for designating this part of language. The structure of the conditional sentence can be illustrated as follows:

- (3) Conditional sentence = Protasis [Protasis marker + Proposition] + Apodosis [Proposition]  
(The order of the clauses may be reversed.)

It should be noted that this definition excludes the type of the conditional which does not have the protasis marker. For example, ‘Those who lie with dogs will rise with fleas’, is not

conditional sentence even though it has a conditional sentence version; ‘If you lie down with dogs, you will get up with fleas’ (Speake 2008: 183-184).

Compared with the structural definitions above mentioned, it is a rather awkward task to semantically define types of the conditional sentences. This is because various types of the causal relationship such as logicity, physicality, social conventionality, and discourse are compacted in it. It is beyond the scope of this paper to clarify all of these relationships. Here, the following hypothetical, counterfactual, and concessive classifications of the semantics of the conditional sentence is sufficient for the argument of this paper.

- (4) Hypothetical: If it rains, he will not leave. If it rained, he would not leave.<sup>3</sup>  
 Counterfactual: If it had rained, he would have left.  
 Concessive: Even if it rains, he will leave.

The following are the abbreviations used in this paper.

1:	first person	2:	second person
3:	third person	AP:	active participle
CLA:	Classical Arabic	DEF:	definite article
F:	feminine	FUT:	future marker
IMPF:	imperfect	IMPR:	imperative
M:	masculine	MSA:	Modern Standard Arabic
NEG:	negative marker (and particle <i>-f</i> which is relevant to the negation)		
PERF:	perfect	PL:	plural
PM:	protasis marker	RA:	particle <i>rʔa:-</i>
SG:	singular		

### 3. Problem

According to Gibson (2009), the protasis of the counterfactual conditional sentence has the protasis marker *lu:* while its apodosis is introduced by the particle *rʔa:-* (Gibson 2009: 570. The emphasis is by the author).

- (5) *lu:* *kli:t-ha:*, *rʔa:-k* *lqi:t-ha:* *bni:na.*  
 PM eat:PERF:2:SG-it RA-2:SG find:PERF:2:SG-it delicious  
 ‘If you had eaten it, you would have found it to be delicious!’

<sup>3</sup> Some authors spare the term ‘hypothetical’ exclusively for the latter (e.g. Payne 1997: 319). But this distinction is irrelevant to the data presented in this paper.

It is certain that most counterfactual conditional sentences have *rʕa:-* in the apodosis. The conditional sentence becomes ungrammatical without it.<sup>4</sup>

- (6)    *lu:ka:n* *ʒi:t*                      *tʕbi:b*, *rʕa:-ni:*              *ʕa:wənt-ək*./\**lu: ka:n ʒi:t tʕbi:b*,  
 PM    come:PERF:1:SG   doctor RA-1:SG    help:PERF:1:SG-you  
*ʕa:wənt-ək*.  
 ‘If I had been doctor I would have helped you.’<sup>5</sup>

The hypothetical conditional sentences are usually realized without the particle *rʕa:-*.

- (7)    *ka:n* *nəmfi:*                      *lə-l-madrsa*                      *tawwa*, *nalqa:-h*.  
 PM    go:IMPF:1:SG to-DEF-school    now    find:IMPF:1:SG-him  
 ‘If I go to school now, I will find him.’

According to the author’s own data, this particle may, however appear in the apodosis of the hypothetical conditional sentences.

- (8)    *i:ða:*    *tufɾub*                      *barfa ta:y*,    *rʕa:-k*    *tmu:t*.  
 PM    drink:IMPF:2:SG much tea    RA-2:SG die:IMPF:2:SG  
 ‘if you drink much tea you will die!’

Even counterfactual conditional sentences without the particle can be found.

- (9a)    *ka:n* *kunt*                      *tʕbi:b*, *kunt*                      *ənnazɟəm*  
 PM    be:PERF:1:SG    doctor be:PERF:1:SG be.able.to:IMPF:1:SG  
*nʕa:wn-ək*.  
 help:PERF:1:SG-you  
 ‘If I had been doctor I was able to help you’

- (9b)    ?*ka:n* *kunt tʕbi:b*, *rʕa:-ni:* *kunt ənnazɟəm nʕa:wn-ək*.

<sup>4</sup> The language has four protasis markers: *lu:ka:n*, *ka:n*, *i:ða:* and *i:ða:ka:n*. (*lu:* is not found in the author’s own data.) Originally *lu:ka:n* was used for the counterfactual conditional sentence, and *i:ða:* (and *i:ða:ka:n*) for the hypothetical. However the distinction which CLA, MSA and some other dialects retain is now so unclear for the speakers of Tunis that these four markers become interchangeable (Same phenomenon is observed in the Egyptian dialect [Abdel-Massih et al. 2009:49-58]. For further detail on the protasis markers of this language, see Kumakiri 2011).

<sup>5</sup> In the protasis of counterfactual conditional sentences, the verb *ʒa:* ‘come’ is sometimes substituted for the verb *ka:n* ‘be’ (this may be due to the confusion between *ka:n* of verb and that of the protasis, cf. Kumakiri 2011).

It might be plausible to identify this *rʕa:-* particle as an apodosis marker if it appeared only in the counterfactual conditional sentences, but according to the above data, this does not hold true.

Taking all of the above situations into consideration, the counterfactuality of the conditional sentence does not seem to explain the occurrence of the particle in question. An alternative should be sought by scrutinizing the environments it accompanies.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4. The *rʕa:-* Particle in the Conditional Sentences

The particle *rʕa:-* always occurs as a complex with the personal pronouns: *rʕa:-ni:* (1:SG); *rʕa:-k* (2:SG); *rʕa:-hu:/-w* (3:SG:M); *rʕa:-hi:* (3:SG:F); *rʕa:-na:* (1:PL); *rʕa:-kum* (2:PL); and *rʕa:-hum* (3:PL). These suffixed pronouns usually agree with the subject of the main verb. However, there are exceptional cases which are irrelevant to the current topic.

In the following discussion, the environment in which the particle appears will be distinguished into three cases: the counterfactual conditional sentence, the conditional sentence of which the apodosis contains the imperative as main verb, and the hypothetical and concessive conditional sentence.

##### 4.1. The Counterfactual Conditional Sentences

As already shown above, most of the counterfactual conditional sentences require the particle *rʕa:-*.

- (10) i:ða: a:na: qtəlt                      had,            *rʕa:-hu:*            l-bu:li:s            hatʔtʔ-ni:  
PM I      kill:PERF:1:SG someone RA-3:SG:M DEF-police put:PERF:3:SG:M-me  
fə-l-habs.  
in-DEF-prison  
'If I had killed somebody, the police would have put me into the prison.'

- (11) ka:n xði:t                      ʔtʔ-tʔayya:ra            ha:ði:ka, *rʕa:-k*            ma:-k-ʃ  
PM take:PERF:2:SG DEF-airplane      that            RA-2:SG NEG-you-NEG  
qa:ʃəd                      tahki:                      mʃa:-ya.  
stay:AP:SG:M talk:IMPF:2:SG with-me  
'If you had taken that airplane, you would not be talking with me.'

But in some cases the particle is not necessary for the counterfactual conditional sentences. See (9a, 9b) and the below example.

<sup>6</sup> Many Maghreb dialects have this *rʕa:-* particle and seem to use it in both the hypothetical conditional sentence and the counterfactual. For the dialect of the old town of Tunis, see Singer 1984: 258-259. For Takrouna dialect of Tunisia, see Marçais et Guiga 1958-1961: 1403. For Moroccan Arabic, see Harrel et al. 1966: 120. For one of the Libyan dialects, see Owens 1984: 179-180.

- (12) hatta: i:ða: kunt mri:ð<sup>s</sup>, nǧi: l-əl-xidma.  
 even PM be:PERF:1:SG sick come:IMPF:1:SG to-DEF-work  
 ‘Even if I had been sick, I would go to the work/Even if I were sick, I would go to the work.’

Comparing examples (10) and (11) to example (12), it is obvious that the particle appears only when the apodosis is counterfactual. In other words, the occurrence of the particle is determined by the counterfactuality of the apodosis, rather than that of the protasis. The following example shows that even after hypothetical protasis, the *r<sup>a</sup>a:-* appears when the apodosis is counterfactual.

- (13) i:ða:ka:n nut<sup>l</sup>lub mən-insa:n ba:ʃ  
 PM ask:IMPF:1:SG from-man in.order.to  
 yəsǧəd l-insa:n a:xər, *ra:-*ni: t<sup>l</sup>labt əl-mr<sup>a</sup>:  
 bow.down:IMPF:3:SG:M to-man another RA-1:SG ask:PERF:1:SG DEF-woman  
 ba:ʃ təsǧəd l-ra:ǧəl-ha:, ʕla:xa:t<sup>l</sup>ər di:ma ba:hi: mfa:-ha:.  
 in.order.to bow.down:IMPF:3:SG:F to-man-her, because always good with-her  
 ‘If I will ask someone to bow down to the other man, I would have asked the woman to bow down to her husband. Because it is always good for the woman.’

This may be related to the ambiguity caused by the confusion of the protasis markers. For example, *i:ða: ka:n* of (14a) is understood as the combined protasis marker in the hypothetical context while the counterfactual interpretation is possible when *i:ða: ka:n* is recognized as the protasis marker preceding the third person singular perfect form of the verb *ka:n* “be” (14b).

- (14a) i:ða:ka:n bda:-ha: lba:rəh, ykamməl əlyu:m.  
 PM start:PERF:3:SG:M-it yesterday finish:IMPF:3:SG:M today  
 ‘if he started it yesterday he’ll finish it today’ (Hypothetical)
- (14b) i:ða: ka:n bda:-ha: lba:rəh, *r<sup>a</sup>a:-*hu:  
 PM be:PERF:3:SG:M start:PERF:3:SG:M-it yesterday RA-3:SG:M  
 kamməl-ha: lyu:m  
 finish:IMPF:3:SG:M-it today  
 ‘if he had started it yesterday, he would have finished it today’ (Counterfactual)

Indeed, the complex *r<sup>h</sup>a:-hu:* is the first element of speech which informs the hearer of the counterfactuality of this conditional sentence. Alternative, but redundant, means may be taken to avoid this ambiguity.<sup>7</sup>

- (15) i:ða:ka:n ka:n                      bda:-ha:                      lba:rəh, *r<sup>h</sup>a:-hu:*  
 PM       be:PERF:3:SG:M       start:PERF:3:SG:M-it    yesterday RA-3:SG:M  
 kamməl-ha:                      lyu:m  
 finish:IMPF:3:SG:M-it    today  
 ‘if he had started it yesterday, he would have finished it today’ (Counterfactual)

#### 4.2. Incompatibility with the Imperative

The particle cannot precede to the imperative.

- (16) i:ða: ma:-hu:-f              ʒa:y,                      (\**r<sup>h</sup>a:-k*) xalli:-na:  
 PM    NEG-he-NEG    come:AP:SG:M    RA-2:SG let:IMPR:2:SG-us  
 norta:hu:.  
 take.rest:IMPF:1:PL  
 ‘If he is not coming, let us take rest.’

#### 4.3. The Hypothetical and the Concessive Conditional Sentence

Hypothetical conditional sentences may have the *r<sup>h</sup>a:-* complex in the apodosis. The presence of the complex adds a feeling of indirectness and a sense of warning or encouraging to the whole proposition of the apodosis.

##### 4.3.1. Feeling of Indirectness

According to the native speaker, when compared to (17b), (17a) implies a more direct and straightforward connection between the protasis and the apodosis. This, in turn gives (17b) a feeling of indirectness or subjectiveness as if the effort of study does not automatically result in success. Thus whole sentence of (17b) is interpreted as the proposition less general and less objective than that of (17a).

- (17a) ka:n       taqra:                      bilgda:, tənʒaḥ.  
 PM       study:IMPF:2:SG well       succeed:IMPF:2:SG  
 ‘If you study well you will succeed.’

- (17b) ka:n       taqra:                      bilgda:, *r<sup>h</sup>a:-k*       tənʒaḥ.  
 PM       study:IMPF:2:SG well       RA-2:SG    succeed:IMPF:2:SG

<sup>7</sup> The importance of the particle *r<sup>h</sup>a:-* as the deciding factor for the counterfactuality in the whole conditional sentence may explain the interchangeable situation of the protasis markers mentioned in n. 4.



‘If you study well you will succeed!’

#### 4.3.2. Sense of Warning or Encouraging

As already shown in (8), the particle *rʕa:-* evokes an impression of warning when it precedes the imperfect with, or without, the future marker (the example (18) below is with the future marker).

- (18) i:ða:ka:n tuqtul had, *rʕa:-*hu: l-bu:li:s ba:f  
 PM kill:IMPF:2:SG someone RA-3:SG:M DEF-police FUT  
 yhuṭṭʕ-ək fə-l-ḥabs.  
 put:IMPF:3:SG:M-you in-DEF-prison.  
 ‘If you kill someone, the police will put you in the prison!’

In the cases such as (17b), the particle adds a mood of encouragement to the apodosis rather than that of warning. This seems to be related to the positive content of the apodosis. Thus, the sense evoked by the particle depends on the content of the apodosis it occurs with. When the apodosis states a positive situation, the particle expresses encouragement. When it states a negative situation, the particle expresses warning.

The same phenomenon is observed in the concessive sentences, which is usually marked *hatta*: ‘even’ with the protasis markers. Below is an example which shows slightly different structure from the conditional sentence.

- (19a) *hatta*: w-a:na: mri:ḏʕ, nʒi: di:ma l-əl-xidma.  
 even and-I sick go:IMPF:1:SG always to-DEF-work  
 ‘even if I am sick I always go to work’
- (19b) *hatta*: w-a:na: mri:ḏʕ, *rʕa:-*ni: nʒi: di:ma l-əl-xidma.  
 ‘even if I am sick I always go to work (so you have to be ready)!’

#### 5. *rʕa:-* as a Modal Marker

The *rʕa:-* occurs in different contexts other than conditional sentences.

- (20) *rʕa:-*hi: thəbb-ək!  
 RA-3:SG:F love:IMPF:3:SG:F-you  
 ‘(To the person who does not know he is loved by a girl) She loves you!’
- (21) ər-rizq qa:l; a:f xi:r min-ni: ? *rʕa:-*ni: r-rizq.  
 DEF-wealth said what better than-me RA-1:SG DEF-wealth

‘(Personified) Wealth said; What is better than me? I am the wealth.’<sup>8</sup>

In the previous studies, *rʕa:-*<sup>9</sup> has been described as ‘presentative’<sup>10</sup> since it vividly presents the proposition which it precedes.<sup>11</sup>

Kumakiri (2011) argues about this particle along with the other two particles *ha:-* and *mʕa:-* which share similar properties with it. Kumakiri concludes that they belong to the same category of the modal particles. His argument is primarily based on the following three grounds: (a) all of them are suffixed by a specific set of personal pronouns which is slightly different from that of the accusative and the possessive (namely the form of third feminine singular *-hi:* while the others have *-ha:*); (b) they share common syntactical features such as their positional precedence to the proposition and their incompatibility with the negation; and (c) with regard to semantics, they similarly have presentative function, though each present a proposition differently. Kumakiri (2011) identifies *rʕa:-* as a modal particle that presents its following proposition as information which the speaker believes to be new to the hearer.<sup>12</sup>

The propositional nature of this modal particle is clearly shown above.<sup>13</sup> This modality is usually classified as a propositional modality which is, ‘concerned with the speaker’s attitude to the truth-value, or factual status, of the proposition’ (Palmer 2001: 8).

In his typological study of the modality, Palmer (2001) recognizes two types of propositional modality: epistemic modality, and evidential modality. The evidential modality concerns only the evidence for the proposition while ‘with epistemic modality speakers make judgement about the factual status of the proposition’ (Palmer, 2001: 24). The particle in question seems to agree with this definition of epistemic modality. Deciding whether the proposition is a new piece of information or not involves a judgment about the factuality of the proposition in the sense that this factuality concerns whether it is a known fact or not (this relationship may need some more explanation, which will be given in terms of topic-comment structure in section 7). Therefore, the particle *rʕa:-* is both propositional and epistemic modality.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from the story of ‘*ʕr-rizq w-l-barka* (the wealth and the blessing)’ on page 67 of the second volume of *hika:ya:t al-ʕarwi:* (Stories of Al-Arwi) by al-ʕArwi:, ʕAbd al-ʕazi:z. (1989. Tunis: al-Da:r al-Tu:nisi:ya li-Naʕr).

<sup>9</sup> The particle *rʕa:-* comes from the second person singular imperative of the verb *rʕa:* ‘see’ (Marçais, Ph. 1977: 194, Singer 1984: 258).

<sup>10</sup> e.g. ‘Präsantativa’ (Singer 1984: 258), ‘présentative’ (Marçais, W. et Guïga 1956-1961: 1402), Harrell describes it under the title, “Presentational Particles” (2004: 215). Owens’ analysis as ‘subject emphazier’ may take the same line (Owens 1984: 210).

<sup>11</sup> ‘Diese Serie [i.e. *rʕa:-ni:*, *rʕa:-k*, *rʕa:-hu:*...] wird verwendet, wenn es sich darum handelt, die Lage einer Person oder das nahe Bevorstehen eines Zustandes anzuzeigen, zu aktualisieren, wobei die Lagebestimmung auch nur gedacht oder selbst unreal sein kann.’ (Singer 1984: 258)

<sup>12</sup> The particle *ha:-* and *mʕa:-* can be also described in terms of the speaker’s attitude toward the information; *ha:-* simply presents a information on one hand and *mʕa:-* presents it as an information already shared by the speaker and the hearer on the other.

<sup>13</sup> The previous studies also suggest its propositional property, translating it such as “die Tatsache/die Lage ist...was mich (dich etc.) betrifft, so ((die folgende)...” (Singer 1984: 258) and “c’est que...” or “le fait est que[...].” (Marçais, W. et Guïga 1956-1961: 1403).

## 6. Propositional Modality and Conditional Sentence

As argued in the previous section, the particle *rʕa:-* can be recognized as a propositional-epistemic modal marker. One possible hypothesis is that the modal nature of the particle provides proper explanation on the occurrence of *rʕa:-* in conditional sentence. This hypothesis is examined in this section and in section 7.

### 6.1. Indirectness

The propositional modality involves the whole proposition rather than a certain part of it. In the dialect of Tunis, this relationship between the propositional modality and the proposition is explicitly displayed in sentence structure; it always appears outside of the proposition. As shown in example (22), any word in a proposition cannot precede the *rʕa:-* complex (though this is not the case with the topic which is also outside the proposition).

- (22a) ya: si:d-i: *rʕa:-hu:* za:-ni: ð-ði:b.  
 Oh! lord-my RA-3:SG:M came:PERF:3:SG:M-me DEF-wolf  
 ‘Oh my lord, the wolfe came to me!’<sup>14</sup>
- (22b) \*ya: si:d-i: za:-ni: *rʕa:-hu:* ð-ði:b.  
 (22c) \*ya: si:d-i: za:-ni: ð-ði:b *rʕa:-hu:*.

The *rʕa:-* complex differs from the adverb which can appear in any place of the proposition depending on the context. Therefore, it is possible to formulate syntactic structure of the *rʕa:-* complex and the proposition as in (23) below.

- (23) *rʕa:-* complex (*rʕa:-hu:*) [the proposition: (za:-ni: ð-ði:b)]

It is reasonable to assume that this syntactic structure corresponds to a semantic structure. The simple proposition, such as ‘za:-ni: ð-ði:b’, states about the fact which, more or less, relates to the real world. Contrastingly, the epistemic proposition consisting of the epistemic modality and the simple proposition concerns the epistemic fact which is realized in the speaker’s thought or imagination. Therefore, the fact stated in the simple proposition of the epistemic proposition, itself belongs to the realm of the speaker’s subjectiveness, rather than the real world. In other words, it is not factual but irrealis because it belongs to the imaginary world relating indirectly to the real world. This explains the expressivity of *rʕa:-* complex in the conditional sentence. As for the relation with the protasis, the apodosis states the realization of the fact as a result or consequence. When the apodosis is a simple proposition, the result is identical with what is mentioned in the proposition. However, in the case of the apodosis that consists of the propositional-epistemic modal and the proposition, it is the epistemic fact that is realized rather

<sup>14</sup> Quoted from the story of ‘ð-ði:b (the wolfe)’ on page 180 of the second volume of *hika:ya:t al-Sarwi:*.

than the fact mentioned in the proposition. In terms of the realis-irrealis opposition, the *rʰa:-* apodosis itself is realis, but the proposition in it is irrealis. This is the reason for the indirectness or subjectiveness expressed in (17b). There, the proposition, ‘you will succeed’ becomes irrealis by the modal particle, thus connecting indirectly with the protasis (as if *rʰa:-* intervenes between them). In contrast, (17a) shows a direct connection between the protasis and the proposition.

## 6.2. Counterfactuality

Before entering the argument, it is useful to notionally distinguish counterfactuality from non-factuality. Each of them is irrealis but they are different from each other. The counterfactuality is said to be an unreal situation contrary to the specific fact while the non-factuality refers to a situation without deciding its factual status. Therefore, the counterfactuality stands in contrast to the specific fact whereas the non-factuality does not. This distinction is vital for understanding why the combination of the *rʰa:-* complex and the proposition containing the perfect verb always involves the counterfactuality.

The perfect verb of this language is by nature realis insofar it describes the fact which is already completed. In other words, the factuality of the perfect verb is relying on completeness or perfectiveness. In the apodosis of conditional sentences, when the *rʰa:-* precedes the proposition with the perfect verb, the proposition becomes irrealis. But the irrealis nature cannot cancel the perfectiveness of the proposition. If it were to do this, the distinction between the perfect and the imperfect would be lost; there would be no meaning to use the perfect in the proposition. Therefore, the *rʰa:-* complex does not affect the factual status of the perfectiveness; the proposition with the perfect main verb cannot be non-factual. Thus, the only possible interpretation is counterfactual, which is an inevitable logical output of the correlation between the epistemic modality and the perfect.

It is worth mentioning that the correlation works in the environment other than the conditional sentence. This is shown in the example below.<sup>15</sup>

- (24) *rʰa-ni:*    *ʃri:t*                      *ta:li:fu:n* *ʒdi:d* *xi:r*.  
RA-1:SG buy:PERF:1:SG telephone new better  
‘I should have bought new telephone. (literally: it had been better if I had bought new telephone)’

Since the factuality of the perfectiveness is preserved in the *rʰa:-* apodosis and thus becomes the key factor for the counterfactual interpretation, it is reasonable to assume that if the proposition of the apodosis is non-perfective, its combination with *rʰa:-* may cause the non-factual apodosis rather than the counterfactual one. This assumption proves to be valid in cases such as (8) and (18). In these examples the apodoses with the *rʰa:-* complex are non-factual. This is

<sup>15</sup> Interestingly the *rʰa-ni:* complex here is used as if it is a protasis marker. This may be a conclusion from its importance in choosing the counterfactual interpretation on the protasis.

because both of the propositions refer to potential or future events. There is no aspectual factuality which leads to the counterfactual interpretation with the *rʔa:-* complex.

The theory, however does not successful with regard to example (11) which has a negative proposition in its apodosis. Since the negation withholds the judgement on the factual status of the proposition, its nature is non-factual. According to the foregoing argument, the non-factual proposition, when combined with the *rʔa:-* complex, continues to be non-factual. This is because this proposition contains no perfect verb whose factuality prevents it from being non-factual. Despite all this logical expectation, it is counterfactual.

This exception is due to the nature of the counterfactuality. As already defined, the counterfactuality has a one-to-one correspondence to a specific fact of the real world. In the example of (11), the real situation is that the person referred as ‘you’ is speaking with the speaker. And this fact has immediate actuality for the people concerned. Thus, the negation of this fact is automatically understood as counterfactual implication.

It is, however not enough to be counterfactual apodosis. Because what is important here is that it is the *rʔa:-* complex that realizes this implication. This negative proposition, if uttered without the *rʔa:-* complex, may imply the speaker’s misunderstanding of the present situation or the ironical comment on it, but it will not imply counterfactuality. Therefore, the power of the modal *rʔa:-* which makes a realis proposition to an irrealis one is vital for the counterfactual implication to be realized as a linguistic form. On the contrary, there is the case that the counterfactual implication can be realized without the *rʔa:-* complex. This is (9a) in which the apodosis mentions to the possible situation in the past. The situation as such is logically understood as an unfulfilled event. This is because if it actually did happen, it is meaningless to refer to it as a possible event. Thus, the possibility in the past by nature implies the counterfactual interpretation. This is the reason for the unnatural impression shown in (9b); the *rʔa:-* complex is redundant in expressing the counterfactuality.

The modal verb of possibility and ability *naʒʒəm*, ‘can, be able to’, is incompatible with the *rʔa:-* complex of the apodosis in the present situation.

- (25a) i:ða:ka:n nnaʒʒəm                      ntʔi:r,                      nnaʒʒəm  
 PM            be.able.to:IMPF:1:SG fly:IMPF:1:SG    be.able.to:IMPF:1:SG  
 ntʔull                      ʕli:-k.  
 visit:IMPF:1:SG    on-you  
 ‘If I can fly I can visit you’
- (25b) \*i:ða:ka:n nnaʒʒəm ntʔi:r, *rʔa:-*ni: nnaʒʒəm ntʔull ʕli:-k.

This ungrammaticalness can be explained in terms of realis-irrealis opposition rather than in terms of counterfactuality. The apodosis states the speaker’s present judgement on his or her ability. In other words, what is realized in this apodosis is the judgement on the proposition that ‘I visit you’ rather than the proposition itself. However, the *rʔa:-* complex cannot make the realized

judgement irrealis mood because it only affects the propositions. Therefore, the particle does not work in this example.

The other ungrammatical situation is found in example (16), in which the apodosis consists of the imperative. The act of order itself is an actual event, thus it cannot be non-factual or counterfactual interpretation. Therefore the combination of the imperative and the *r<sup>a</sup>a:-* complex is ungrammatical.<sup>16</sup>

## 7. Epistemic Modality and Conditional Sentences

The previous section was devoted to the argument on the propositional nature of the *r<sup>a</sup>a:-* complex in the conditional sentence. In this section, the focus of discussion is on the epistemic aspect of this modal particle.

In his classical study of conditional sentences, Haiman (1978) paralleled conditional sentences with a topic-comment relationship. He argues that the protases are topics, which implies that the apodoses are comments. Since he defines the topic as, ‘the given or old information’ and the comment as, ‘the new information’ (Haiman 1978: 583), it is reasonable to consider the apodosis as the new information. Then, it might be possible a following illustration for the conditional sentence:

(26) The conditional sentence:

[the protasis [topic/old information] + the apodosis [comment/new information]]

As already defined, the modal particle *r<sup>a</sup>a:-* is the presentative of new information. Thus, it is no wonder that this *r<sup>a</sup>a:-* plays the essential role in the apodosis. Both, *r<sup>a</sup>a:-* and apodosis have the affinity for new information. Therefore, there is linguistic evidence to consider that the *r<sup>a</sup>a:-* complex introducing the proposition of the apodosis is presenting the new information. This is, however, just a part of a property of this particle. Because if the apodosis just presents the new information, the *r<sup>a</sup>a:-* complex must occur in every conditional sentence; which has already been shown to be incorrect.

It can be seen that there is a peculiar way in which the *r<sup>a</sup>a:-* presents the new information, and this conditions its occurrence in certain semantic environments. This peculiarity has already been suggested in terms of the discourse nature of this particle. It presents its following proposition as information which the speaker believes is new to the hearer.

Thus, it is not just the new information that the particle presents, but the information new to the hearer as supposed by the speaker—whether the supposition is true or not. It is the speaker-hearer relationship that plays another focal role in its function.

In analyzing the information structure of the conditional sentence, Haiman (1978: 571) focuses on following, ‘mini-conversations’.

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<sup>16</sup> ‘[I]mperative and jussive do not normally occur in subordinate clauses or in questions, for the obvious reason that they are performative—the speaker actually giving a command.’ (Palmer 2001: 137)

- (27) A: Is he coming?  
(28) B: (Yes.)  
(29) A: Well then, I'll stay.

Haiman argues that it becomes possible for A to talk about his or her idea on the situation (29) because of B's positive reply (28)—either aloud or not—to the question on the third person's coming (27). According to this view, these conversations initiated by the interrogative have semantical and formal similarity to the conditional sentence such as, 'if he is coming, I'll stay'. This 'mini-conversations' approach is also helpful to illustrate how the particle works. For example, the hypothetical (17b) can be rendered into conversations as below.

- (30) A: Are you studying well?  
B: (Yes)  
A: Then, you see you will succeed!

Then the counterfactual (2) might be based on following conversations.

- (31) A: Can you imagine I had not been sick at that time?  
B: (Yes)  
A: Then, you see I would surely have gone with you!

Interestingly, this 'mini-conversations' approach does work in the cases of the *fa-* complex out of conditional sentences. For example, it is possible to assume the following conversations concerning (20).

- (32) A: Did you notice that she wears significant look?  
B: (Yes)  
A: Then, you see she loves you!

Here, speaker A watches a girl and sees how she behaves in front of B, then guesses that she loves him. A is also convinced that B too is watching her and notices her behavior, which is asserted in B's assent which is actually imaged by A. However, A judges that B does not guess as A does because B does not respond to her favor in expected way. Finally, feeling friendship or irritation, he is forced to suggest B to guess in right way saying, 'Can't you guess from the way she sees you, the way talks to you and the way she touches you? See! She loves you!'

It is clear that there are two motives that enact the last utterance: inference and judgement. These factors are compacted in this particle whether in conditional sentences or not. As to the latter, its relevance to this particle is already mentioned when discussed on its

propositional nature—it involves a judgement about the factuality of the proposition. On the other hand, more clarification is needed concerning the former.

First, it is obvious that the protasis in the *rʔa:-* conditional sentence is the explicit form of the premise of the inference. Thus, the *rʔa:-* particle connects the protasis with the apodosis by an inferential relationship. The inference comes from the particle rather than another factor in the conditional sentence—e.g. the protasis marker, or verbal form. Therefore, the inferential function of the *rʔa:-* works even in the sentence without the protasis marker like the case of (33) and (34), the latter being by definition excluded from conditional sentences in advance.

- (33) ma:-nxalli:-k-f                      thəzz:-u:                      mʕa:-k                      rʕa:-hu:  
NEG-let:IMPF:1:SG-you-NEG    pick.up:IMPF:2:SG-it    with-you    RA-3:SG:M  
yri:h-lək.  
go:IMPF:3:SG:M-to.you  
'je ne te laisserai pas l'emporter; (si tu le faisais) tu pourrais le perdre'  
(Marçais et Guïga 1958-1961: 1402)
- (34) w-əlli:    yəbda: bə-f-fərr                      rʕa:-hu:                      sa:ʕa:t                      ma:ʕa:ɗf  
and-that is                      with-DEF-hunger    RA-3:SG:M    sometimes    no longer  
yaðʕbatʕ  
hold.back:IMPF:3:SG:M  
'and he who is in hunger sometimes no longer refrains.'<sup>17</sup>

These examples evidently show that the  $\mathbf{r}^{\mathbf{a}}$ -complex maintains its inferential character in any environment.

According to Palmer (2001:24-25), the epistemic modality distinguishes three types of inference:

- (35) Speculative (a possible conclusion)  
Deductive (the only possible conclusion)  
Assumptive (a reasonable conclusion)

It is reasonable to consider that the inferential property of the *r<sup>a</sup>a:-* particle has to do with the above three types; most notably the deductive. This is typically obvious in the cases of the counterfactual in which the unreal proposition of its apodosis has only one possible counterpart in the real world. Its inference concerns, ‘the only possible conclusion’. It should be, however noted that Palmer’s term, ‘deductive’ is somehow misleading. The term usually refers to a form of the inference in contrast to the induction, but Palmer’s term does not. Rather, his term is just defined

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from the story of ‘əsf-əfədq w-l-axla:sf (the honest and the salvation)’ on page 13 of the second volume of *hika:ya:t al-farwi:*.



as, 'an inference from observation' and a judgement, 'on the basis of evidence' (ibid.). For this reason, the wider term, 'inference' is adopted here rather than, 'deduction'.

The act of the inference is that of drawing information which is unknown to the speaker from the known premise. Therefore, since it introduces the new information to the discourse, the inference is the most basic property of the *rʕa:-* particle. In other words, the *rʕa:-* particle appears when the inference is involved in the discourse. As to the conditional sentence, it reflects the inferential relationship between the protasis and the apodosis.

Furthermore, the inference of the *rʕa:-* particle involves another discourse strategy. As already indicated, the particle is the presentative of an information that is supposed to be new to the hearer rather than the speaker. Accordingly, when the *rʕa:-* complex presents its proposition as unknown to the hearer, it works in a way that the speaker forces the hearer to accept it as if pretending that the two participants share the same inference. That is, the particle has a strong hearer-oriented character. This is the reason why the use of this presentative bears impressions such as insisting, persuading, surprising, and attracting the hearer's attention.

In the case of the conditional sentence, the premise is explicit as a form of the protasis. This naturally weakens the effect of the particle compared to its state when outside the conditional sentence. The reduction of its vivid expressivity explains the two phenomena: the opacity in its semantic function to such an extent that it is (falsely) seen as just a marker of counterfactual apodosis on the one hand; and the sense of the warning or the encouragement as a trace of the strong presentative character on the other.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper describes how the epistemic modal particle *rʕa:-* works in conditional sentences. It functions in two ways: (a) as the propositional modality it causes the indirectness between the protasis and the apodosis and plays a key role in displaying the counterfactuality; (b) as the epistemic modality it presents the following proposition as a piece of information that is new to the hearer and which connects the protasis to the apodosis by the inference. The inferential character is the most basic function of this modal particle because it ensures the newness of the information to the hearer. In addition, this function is relevant to the impression of warning or encouragement that is expressed in the *rʕa:-* apodosis.

Furthermore, some remarks on the contribution to the general linguistic and the study of Arabic may be appropriate. The work primarily describes the function of the epistemic modality in the apodosis of the conditional sentence, which is less investigated compared to the function of the protasis. It reveals that the inferential relationship between the protasis and the apodosis involves the modality of the latter.

The study of the Arabic dialects has been deeply influenced by the framework of CLA/MSA grammar. This is not surprising when the historical and cultural background of the Arabic dialects is considered. However, because of the predominance of CLA/MSA, the linguistic features which are peculiar to dialects may happen to be overlooked or slighted. Therefore,

focusing on one of such features in the dialect of Tunis and showing its own property and logic which are absent in 'higher' variants is meaningful work.

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## 認識のモダリティと条件文：

アラビア語チュニス方言（チュニジア）の提示的小辞について

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Keywords: アラビア語, 方言, セム語, 条件文, 認識のモダリティ,  
命題的モダリティ, 提示辞, 推論

### 要旨

本研究においては、アラビア語チュニス方言の条件文の主節に現れる小辞 *rfa:-* を取り上げた。まず、筆者自身が収集したデータを用いて、この小辞がどのように条件文に現れるかを記述し、その後、この小辞が命題的・認識的なモダリティを表示するという観点から、その出現と機能に関する説明を試みた。この小辞の命題的モダリティとしての特徴についていえば、これが命題を非現実 (irrealis) なものとする機能から、条件文全体におよぼ現実仮想性の決定に関わることを明らかにした。また、この小辞の認識的モダリティとしての性質が、命題の提示の仕方として現れていることを指摘し、条件文に関する Haiman (1978) の分析を手がかりに、この小辞に、条件文の条件節からの推論を通じて聞き手にとって新しい情報を提示するという機能があることを示した。この推論性は、新しい情報を帰結としてもたらすという点で、この小辞のもっとも基本的な機能と考えることができる。さらに、こうした機能が、この小辞によってはじまる条件文主節における警告あるいは励ましといった表現性をもたらしていることを述べた。本研究は、条件文における条件節と主節との関係が主節のモダリティに影響を及ぼす事例を報告するものであり、一般言語学における条件文の研究に寄与するほか、アラビア語方言独特の言語特徴を主題とする点で、アラビア語研究においても一定の価値を有する。

(くまきり・たく)