

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON THE GRAMMATICAL JUSTIFICATION
OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE FORM OF THE PRESENT TENSE VERB AMONG
GRAMMARIANS.

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Abstract: This study aims to demonstrate the greatness of the Arabic language by examining the accusative particles that affect the imperfect verb, in addition to classifying these particles according to whether they directly render the verb in the accusative case or require an implicit to do so. The study adopts the descriptive-analytical and comparative method, collecting the statements of grammarians such as Ibn Mālik, Ibn Jinnī, and Ibn Hishām, as well as analyzing and comparing the differing views of the Kufan and Basran scholars. It concludes with commentary and a preference among the various opinions.

Keywords: syntax, particles of subjunctive (nasb particles), present verb (imperfect), Basrans, Kufans, evidence (linguistic citation), grammarians' disagreement, implicit "an", particle of negation of ability (lam al-juhūd), emphasis.

The chapter on the accusative (naṣb) of the present tense verb is considered one of the most precise and deeply examined topics in Arabic grammar, due to the overlap it involves between meaning, semantics, and the governing grammatical agent, as well as the effects this has on the correct understanding of Arabic syntactic structures. The present tense verb in Arabic is also associated with meanings of futurity, possibility, hope, and request; these meanings cannot be properly conveyed without mastering the rules of its accusative, indicative, and jussive states, and knowing the particles that influence it.

Therefore, clarifying the function of each particle constitutes a fundamental basis for an accurate understanding of this topic. Classical and modern grammarians alike have extensively discussed the particles that place the present tense verb in the accusative, the nature of their operation, and whether the accusative is caused directly by these particles themselves or by an implied 'an following them—this being the well-known point of disagreement between the Basran and Kufan schools.

This article seeks to explain the grammarians' differing views on this issue, supported by Arabic textual evidence, poetic verses, and the statements of leading scholars. Thus, this introduction paves the way for a detailed and structured presentation of the remaining sections of the article, highlighting the importance of the topic within the science of grammar and demonstrating its role in achieving a sound understanding of Arabic texts based on established grammatical principles and rules.

First: *lan* (لن) is a particle that conveys negation and futurity by consensus, as in: "لن يكتب". It does not necessarily imply perpetuity, contrary to al-Zamakhsharī's view in al-Anmūdḥaj, nor does it necessarily indicate emphasis, contrary to his opinion in al-Kashshāf. Rather, the statement "لن أقوم" may carry two possible meanings: either that one will never stand at all, or that one will not stand at a particular time in the future. In this respect, it corresponds to the expression "لا أقوم", which also does not inherently convey emphasis.¹

¹كتاب قطر الندى و بل الصدى، التصنيف ابن هشام؛ الناشر دار الكتب العلمية، الطبعة الرابعة، لبنان 2004 م، ص 69



From this, it becomes clear that Ibn Hishām disagrees with al-Zamakhsharī regarding the meaning of *lan*, and he explains that its meaning allows both interpretations—perpetual negation or negation within a specific future time. Grammarians are also in agreement that *lan* is a particle. According to al-Khalīl, it is composed of the negative particle *lā* (لا) and the subjunctive particle *'an* (أن). According to al-Farrā', its *nūn* is substituted for the *alif* of *'an*, and its original form is *lā*, indicating future negation. Ibn Hishām rejects this opinion and maintains that it is a simple particle that always governs the accusative.

Second: the infinitival *kay* (كي). Scholars have differed over whether *kay* is always an infinitival particle or whether it can also function as a particle of causation.

The view of the majority of Kufan grammarians: They hold that it is only an infinitival particle that places the present tense verb in the accusative by itself. The Arabs say: *كَيْمَهُ* just as they say: *لِمَهُ*. The Kufans explained this by stating that the original form was: *كَيْ يَفْعَلُ مَاذَا*. However, this analysis requires them to assume frequent ellipsis, the displacement of the interrogative *mā* from its initial position, the omission of its *alif* outside the genitive context, and the deletion of the accusative verb while its governing particle remains.²

The view of the majority of Basran grammarians, including Sībawayh: *Kay* may sometimes be infinitival, in which case it governs the accusative of the present tense verb by itself, and at other times it may be causal, functioning with the meaning of the *lām* of causation. In that case, the present tense verb is placed in the accusative by an implied *'an* that obligatorily follows *kay*. Accordingly, the Basran position is that *kay* may be an infinitival particle that governs the accusative by itself, or a particle of causation after which the present tense verb is placed in the accusative by an implied *'an*.

The statement of Jamil ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Ma'mar al-'Udhali:

أكل الناس أصبحت مانحا لسانك كيما أن تغرّ و تخدعا ؟

The grammatical evidence (*shāhid*): his phrase “كيما أن تغرّ”. The explicit appearance of the infinitival particle (أن), which governs the accusative of the present tense verb, after (كي) in this expression indicates that (أن) is normally implied after (كي) when it is not explicitly mentioned in speech; as in the example: “جئت كي أعلم”, where *كي* carries the meaning of causation.³

It follows that (كي) is infinitival in expressions such as “لكي لا يكون”. The *lām* here is a preposition indicating causation, while *كي* is infinitival, equivalent to أن, and not causal, because a preposition does not govern another preposition.⁴

From the foregoing, it appears that *كي* may function as an infinitival particle and place the present tense verb in the accusative by itself when the *lām* of causation precedes it—either explicitly or by implication. It functions as a causal particle when أن is implied after it.

Third: *idhān* (إن). According to Sībawayh, it is a particle of response and consequence. Al-Shalūbīn said that this applies in every instance, while al-Fārisī held that this is the case in most instances, though it may sometimes be used purely for response. Evidence for this is the exchange: someone says “أحبك”, and you reply “إِنَّ أَطْنُكَ صَادِقًا”, where there is no sense of consequence.

For it to govern the accusative, three conditions must be met:

² كتاب الدروس النحوية، التصنيف الأساتذة العلامة حفني ناصف؛ الناشر الإسكندرية، دار العقيدة الطبعة الأولى، الإسكندرية 2007 م، ص 250

³ كتاب الدروس النحوية، التصنيف الأساتذة العلامة حفني ناصف؛ الناشر الإسكندرية، دار العقيدة الطبعة الأولى، الإسكندرية 2007 م، ص 250

⁴ كتاب شرح شذور الذهب في معرفة كلام العرب، التصنيف ابن هشام؛ الناشر دار إحياء التراث العربية، الطبعة الأولى، لبنان 2001 م، ص 151



1. It must occur at the beginning of the sentence. It does not govern in a sentence such as: “أَنَا إِذْنٌ” because it is inserted between the subject and the predicate and is therefore not initial. The poet said:

لَيْنٌ عَادَ لِي عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بِمِثْلِهَا وَأَمَكْنِي مِنْهَا إِذْنٌ لَا أَقِيلُهَا

The verb is in the indicative here because إِذْنٌ is not sentence-initial, not because it is separated from the verb; such separation is permissible, as will be mentioned.

2. The verb following it must denote the future. If someone tells you something and you reply: “إِذْنٌ تَصْنُقُ”, the verb is in the indicative, because particles governing the accusative require futurity, while here the intended meaning is present time, and the two meanings conflict.

3. The verb must either be directly connected to it or separated only by an oath or by the negative particle lā. Direct connection: “إِذْنٌ أَكْرَمَكَ” Separated by an oath: “إِذْنٌ وَاللَّهِ أَكْرَمَكَ”, as in the poet’s line:

إِذْنٌ وَاللَّهِ نَرَمِيَهُمْ بِحَرْبٍ يُشِيبُ الطِّفْلَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْمَشِيبِ

Separated by lā: “إِذْنٌ لَا أَفْعَلُ”

If it is separated by anything else, it cannot govern, as in: “إِذْنٌ يَا زَيْدُ أَكْرَمَكَ”⁵

Fourth: ‘an (أَنْ). It combines with the verb it governs to form a verbal noun. You say: “يَعْبِجُنِي قِيَامُكَ”, whose underlying meaning is: “your standing pleases me”.⁶ Likewise, as Ibn Mālik said:

وَبِـ(أَنْ) انصِبِهِ، وَ(كِي)، كَذَا بِـ(أَنْ) لَا بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ، وَالتِّي مِنْ بَعْدِ ظَنٍّ

The accusative governed by أَنْ requires two conditions:

1. It must be infinitival, not redundant nor explanatory.
2. It must not be a lightened form of the heavy particle (أَنْ), which follows verbs of certainty or supposition that are treated as such.⁸

“An” is implied after five particles: (.) the fā’, the wāw, ‘aw*, the lām of preposition, and ḥattā. Based on this, we say that “an” is optionally implied after the lām of causation, as in: “حَضَرْتُ لِأَنْ أَسْمَعَ” or “حَضَرْتُ لِأَسْمَعَ”. If the verb is accompanied by “lā”, then “an” must be expressed explicitly, as in: “لَا أَنْ أَسْمَعَ”. “An” is obligatorily implied in the following cases: After the lām of denial (lām al-juḥūd), when it is preceded by a negated form of kāna, as in: “لَمْ تَكُنْ لِتَنْقُضِ الْعَهْدَ”. After ḥattā when it conveys the meaning of limit or causation, as in: “حَتَّى يَدْخُلَ الْبَيْتَ” and “اجْتَهِدْ حَتَّى تَنْجُو”. After the fā’ of consequence and the wāw of accompaniment, when preceded by negation or a form of request, as in: “لَا تَنْتَهَ” and “لَا تَعْجَلْ فَتَنْتَهَ” and “لَا تَسْتَقِلَّنِ الصَّعْبَ أَوْ أَدْرِكِ الْمَنَى”. After ‘aw when it means “except” or “until”, as in: “عَنْ خَلْقٍ وَتَأْتِي مِثْلُهُ” and “يَحْكُمُ عَلَى الْمَتَّهِمِ أَوْ تَظْهَرُ بَرَاءَتُهُ”.

The grammatical evidence in this verse is the phrase “أَوْ أَدْرِكِ”, where the present tense verb “أَدْرِكِ” is in the accusative because of an obligatorily implied “an” after ‘aw. A group of grammarians, including Ibn Hishām—as stated in al-Qaṭr—held that ‘aw in this verse means “until” (ilā).¹⁰ Others, including Ibn Hishām in Awḍaḥ al-Masālik, Ibn ‘Aqīl, and al-Ashmūnī, said that it means “ḥattā”. There is no real disagreement between these interpretations, since

⁵كتاب شرح شذور الذهب في معرفة كلام العرب، التصنيف ابن هشام؛ الناشر دار إحياء التراث العربية، الطبعة الأولى، لبنان 2001 م، ص152

⁶كتاب الدروس النحوية، التصنيف الأستاذ العلامة حفني ناصف؛ الناشر الإسكندرية، دار العقيدة الطبعة الأولى، الإسكندرية 2007 م، ص 249
⁷كتاب متن ألفية ابن مالك، التصنيف الدكتور عبد اللطيف بن محمد الخطيب؛ الناشر مكتبة دار العروبة، الطبعة الأولى، الكويت 2006 م، ص 151

⁸كتاب شرح شذور الذهب في معرفة كلام العرب، التصنيف ابن هشام؛ الناشر دار إحياء التراث العربية، الطبعة الأولى، لبنان 2001 م، ص153

⁹كتاب اللمع في العربية، التصنيف ابو الفتح عثمان بن جني؛ الناشر دار مجدلاوي، عمان 1988 م، ص 91

¹⁰كتاب الدروس النحوية، التصنيف الأستاذ العلامة حفني ناصف؛ الناشر الإسكندرية، دار العقيدة الطبعة الأولى، الإسكندرية 2007 م، ص252



“ilā” and “ḥattā” both convey the meaning of limit. Al-Suyūfī, however, stated that ‘aw here means “except”, which differs from the other views and appears rather remote.

Thus, the verb is placed in the accusative after these five particles. Among them are two prepositions and three conjunctions. The two prepositional particles are ḥattā and the lām. The verb following these particles is in the accusative not because of them directly, but because of the implied “‘an”. Since the lām and ḥattā are prepositions, and agents that govern nouns do not govern verbs, the accusative of the verb after them must be caused by something else. When “‘an” is assumed, the lām and ḥattā return to governing a nominal element in accordance with their original function, because “‘an” together with the verb is interpreted as a verbal noun.¹¹

From these explanations, it becomes clear that “‘an” is implied after these particles and places the present tense verb in the accusative, whereas the particles themselves do not affect the verb’s inflection directly; rather, they influence it semantically. In addition, ḥattā and the lām of causation govern the verbal noun in the genitive position. This represents the Basran view, which is considered the more correct opinion.

Through this study, it becomes evident that the particles governing the accusative of the present tense verb are not equal in terms of function and meaning. The disagreement between the Basran and Kufan schools is essentially methodological, arising from their differing conceptions of the nature of the particle and its role within the syntactic structure. The Basrans hold that the particles of the accusative—أن، لن، إذن، كي—govern the present tense verb directly, while أن is implied after many other particles that do not directly affect the verb’s inflection; in such cases, أن is implied either obligatorily or optionally. The Kufans, on the other hand, consider all these particles to possess an inherent ability to govern, attributing the accusative to them without any implied element.

The study concludes that the Basran view—based on precisely determining the contexts in which أن is implied and distinguishing between infinitival, causal, and responsive particles—is stronger in terms of analogy, usage, and consistency with the general principles of Arabic grammar. It explains linguistic phenomena in a way that accords with the nature of Arabic syntactic structure and reduces forced or artificial assumptions.

Accordingly, it becomes clear that the study of the accusative particles is not merely a formal grammatical exercise; rather, it opens a window onto the methodology of the grammarians, their approaches to interpreting linguistic phenomena, and the precision with which they connect meaning and grammatical function. The study recommends linking grammatical analysis with semantics and actual linguistic usage in order to reach a more integrated understanding of the present tense verb system and its relationship with the particles that govern it.

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¹¹ مقال جدل النحاة الكوفيين والبصريين في نواصب الفعل المضارع، التصنيف إبراهيم فواتيح عبد الرحيم، الجزائر 2021 م، ص 196



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