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A Corpus-Based Analysis of Verbal Prefixes and the Progressive Aspect Marker *gāʕid* 'sitting' in Qatari Arabic

Abstract This article deals with the study of Gulf Arabic. By the means of the Qatari Arabic Corpus elaborated by Elmahdy et al. (2014), the aim of this study is investigating a number of selected verbal prefixes and the active participle *gāʕid* 'sitting' as a progressive aspect marker in Qatari Arabic, a relatively under researched variety in the field of Arabic Dialectology. A descriptive and quantitative approach in the data collection was adopted and the validation process, throughout the whole corpus which consists of 15 hours of speech flow, provided over 600 manually-selected tokens of verbal prefixes and active participles as progressive aspect markers whose main forms and functions were discussed in the paper.

Keywords Gulf Arabic, Qatari Arabic, Arabic dialectology, progressive aspect marker, verbal prefixes, Qatari Arabic Corpus

1 Language situation in Qatar

Qatar is a fast-growing country in terms of population, recording '2.3 million people in 2014 from 0.1 million in 1960' (Trading Economics 2021).[1] The majority of the population is made up of expatriates who have found opportunities contributing to various projects and mega events sponsored by the state.

The Qatari community has experienced major cultural and linguistic challenges due to continuous demographic changes. Arabic is the first language of less than 40% of the country's population (De Bel-Air 2014: 18) and over 88% of its

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[1] 'Trading Economics. Qatar Population'. Accessed 15 July 2021. https://tradingeconomics.com/qatar/population.

population consists of non-Qatari citizens (Qatari 11.6% out of 2,720,411; Qatar Statistics Authority—Priya Dsouza Communications 2019).[2]

Although the Qatari constitution declares in its first article '… the Arabic language shall be its official language' (Al-Khateeb 2014: 152), English is widely used in daily business dealings, advertisements, education, etc. In order to strengthen the position of the Arabic language, the Amir issued a decree under 'The Protection of Arabic Language Act' in January 2019, a policy that was considered as a U-turn to revive the use of Arabic in society.

On the other hand, Qatari Arabic (QA) is one of the varieties of Eastern Arabic, which is a subgroup of North Arabian varieties that are further divided into the following subgroups including: Syro-Mesopotamian, Shammari, Anazi, and Eastern Arabian (Johnstone 1967: 1–2). However, QA reflects the segmentation in Qatari socio-geographical variations, which includes Bedouins (*badu*) and Urbanites (*ḥaḍar*), who consists of three subgroups: tribes (*gibāyil*), returnees (*ḥwala*), and foreigners (*ʕağam*) (Al-amadidhi 1985: 35–39). Nevertheless, since Qatar experienced a Bedouin immigration to urban towns for socio-economic reasons, causing a 'constant interaction with the other inhabitants [in particular 'tribes'], the variety of Doha has come to be a mixture of the varieties of these two groups, with a strong bias towards that of the former' (Mustafawi 2006: 4).

Qatar and QA experienced a dynamic language situation (Pechcin 2017; Al-Hamad 2017), either caused by the demographic and social changes that the country went through, directly influencing QA (Maṭar 1983; Al-amadidhi 1985: 35; Mustafawi 2006: 4; Bettega 2017), or by the modernisation process that it has undergone since the 1950s (Al-amadidhi 1985: 143). The linguistic situation in Qatar deserves closer attention because it provides new starting points to observe the present classification of QA.

The expatriates who originate from Arab countries are *c.*282,000 in number and come from all over the Arab world (De Bel-Air 2014: 10). This diverse dialectical and linguistic culture probably resulted in a complex shift in the variety of Arabic as a medium of communication (i.e. Educated Colloquial) between different Arabic speaking communities (Al-Hamad 2017: 10).

Moreover, the contact situation in Qatar, as in other Gulf countries, has left room for other new forms of language to evolve, such as Gulf Pidgin Arabic widely used by the less affluent imported workforce (Almoaily 2013: 47). Interestingly, Pidgin Madam—a linguistic phenomenon firstly discussed in the Lebanese context (Bizri 2005)—'has emerged as a result of contact between female maids and female "madams"' (Almoaily 2013: 50).

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[2] 'Population of Qatar by Nationality—2019 Report'. Accessed 30 August 2023. https://priyadsouza.com/population-of-qatar-by-nationality-in-2017.

2 Data and methodology

By employing a descriptive and quantitative approach and by means of QAC (Elmahdy et al. 2014), this article investigates in 15 hours of speech flow the prefixes which occur before the p-stem conjugation of the verb: the *b-* prefix,[3] *rāḥ* (and its lexical item *rāyiḥ*), as well as other prefixes found in the QAC, namely *ḥa-* and *xa-*, *xal-*. Moreover, even though we are aware that the active participle *gāʕid* is partially grammaticalised since it retains its full original form and is mandatorily inflected for gender and number, in our study we have decided to include it in a separate section because previously unattested examples have emerged regarding QA. This study aims to update data in QA by providing a selection of verbal prefixes and the active participles *gāʕid* as progressive aspect marker, discussing their forms and functions, as well as to briefly illustrate the comparison of data with some of the findings published in the literature of Gulf Arabic (GA).[4]

When compared to other Gulf varieties such as Bahraini or Saudi, QA is under-investigated and available sources of this variety are still few. However, computational linguistics provides us with the Qatari Arabic Corpus (QAC)[5] by Elmahdy et al. (2014)[6] to which we had full access and which represents a source to be used to good advantage in the field of Arabic dialectological studies. In the following lines we will describe the corpus as it was presented in Elmahdy et al. (2014: 3057–3058) and how it was used by us for the purpose of our study.

The QAC—elaborated to propose a speech recognition system for Qatari colloquial Arabic—includes examining various sources in the field of TV broadcasts, such as TV series and talk show programmes, namely the Qatari series *Tesaneef* (season 2), the talk show Sabah El-Doha, and some episodes from Al-Jazeerah.[7] In terms of the QAC composition, the *Tesaneef* series lasts for 9.3 hours, Sabah El-Doha 2 hours, and Al-Jazeerah episodes 3.7 hours for an overall length of a 15-hour speech flow, and all recordings date to the period between 2009 and 2011.[8] Elmahdy et al. (2014: 3058) specify that in the vast majority of the selected speech segments QA is used: more specifically, *Tesaneef* uses almost 100% QA, Sabah El-Doha 80%, while in the Al-Jazeerah sections, only the segments

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[3] The prefix is *b-* when it is followed by vowels or semivowels, although is *bi-*.

[4] See Johnstone (1967); Holes (1990: 2016); Brustad (2000); Persson (2008).

[5] The corpus is partially available online: Qatari Arabic Corpus. Accessed 10 January 2022. http://isle.illinois.edu/dialect/data.shtml.

[6] We would like to acknowledge the authors of the article entitled 'Development of a TV Broadcasts Speech Recognition System for Qatari Arabic', in particular Dr Mark Hasegawa-Johnson for providing us a full access to the QAC for the purpose of this study.

[7] We mention the programmes' names as written in Elmahdy et al. (2014).

[8] The gender distribution of speakers in the corpus is fairly homogeneous between men and women, but QA occurrences found are almost all related to Qatari male speakers.

where guest speakers use QA were considered.[9] The corpus has been manually transcribed in Arabic script, but five graphemes of Persian origin were added: the phoneme /tʃ/ is rendered by the grapheme چ, گ stands for /g/, ڤ for /v/, ژ for /ʒ/, and پ for /p/. Homographs and ambiguous words written in Arabic script were marked by diacritics to make the reading clear. Furthermore, the corpus was translated into English (Elmahdy et al. 2014: 3058).[10]

The QAC data were validated by academic entities both in the USA and in Qatar—the University of Illinois and Qatar University—making it a valid corpus that followed scientific methods and is suitable for the linguistic analysis of this article. Nevertheless, as specified by Elmahdy et al. in their paper, the Al-Jazeerah and Sabah El-Doha sections often include other Arab speakers such as Syrians, Jordanians, Lebanese, and Egyptians, who use their own local variety or a mixed Arabic with Qatari speakers. In the Qatari series *Tesaneef* we realised that apart from Levantine, Egyptian, Sudanese, Filipino, Iranian, and Indian speakers, Gulf actors from Kuwait and Bahrain etc. are also employed. It should be highlighted that all the non-Qatari texts are not marked in QAC. Therefore, to adapt the data quality according to our standards, we received and verified the data authenticity by extracting from the Arabic transcriptions of the whole corpus all the sentences that include the particles object of this study, then we matched the transcript to the audio-video files and reassessed the examples in the sample provided by eliminating any non-QA entries. It is clear in the audio-video recordings who are Qatari speakers in the Al-Jazeerah and Sabah El-Doha sections, but how to confirm that the QA of *Tesaneef* spoken by Gulf actors is authentic QA? We interviewed Ghanim al-Sulaiti,[11] the Qatari author and scriptwriter of *Tesaneef* (season 2) who also took charge of the quality control of the dialogues and the performances relating to QA. He stated that the language used could be considered as modern urban QA and that, for quality control, all the non-Qatari Gulf actors were asked to speak only this variety according to the script by accurately reproducing authentic QA, including its phonological and syntactic peculiarities.

After a manual annotation of the all surveyed 629 tokens based on the whole corpus, we arranged data in tables in terms of their frequency occurrence, adding a transliteration to the examples in addition to an edited version of English translation provided by QAC; in this way every single occurrence was double-checked in the validation process, ensuring that each selected prefix exclusively pertains to QA instances, as appears in Table 1 below:

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[9] The Al-Jazeerah section includes all the scripts of the selected episodes (QA and non-QA).

[10] In most examples, the English translation was slightly edited by the authors of this article to rectify or correct the meaning.

[11] The authors warmly thank Ghanim al-Sulaiti for his kind collaboration and precious linguistic communication.

	b- prefix	*rāḥ*	*rāyiḥ*	*ḥa-*	*xa-*	*xal-*	*gāʕid*
Tesaneef	454	15	4	3	1	3	50
Al-Jazeerah	50	4	–	9	–	–	3
Sabah El-Doha	20	6	–	3	–	–	4
Total number of tokens	524	25	4	15	1	3	57

Table 1. Total number of tokens of all the surveyed prefixes
and progressive aspect markers based on QAC

3 Verbal prefixes in the QAC

Verbal prefixes which precede the p-stem conjugation are a linguistic phenomenon that has been attested for a long time in many Semitic languages and Arabic varieties, and it occurs in most colloquial Arabic dialects, where they mainly express continuous and future tenses.[12]

The following sections will provide updated examples of the morphosyntax of QA. Since the investigation is ongoing, it is important to highlight that the verbal prefixes' occurrences might be included in the main, subordinate, final, conditional, temporal, and complement clauses. The data here are analysed through a descriptive and quantitative approach, but at the time of writing a full categorisation concerning the *b-* prefix was not available. It is worth mentioning that most examples selected from the QAC were spoken by men[13] and that for every example we provide a progressive number followed by the abbreviation of the corpus section and episode number.

3.1 The verbal *b-* prefix

The *b-* prefix in GA is supposed to be a shortened form of the verb *aba/yabi or baġa/ yabġi* 'to want, wish' > *b* and has multiple meanings and functions according to the context (Johnstone 1967; Holes 1990, 2016; Ingham 1994). Retsö states that

> Diachronically, the *b-* imperfect appears in the so-called Middle Arabic texts, Christian and Jewish, from the 12th century onwards. We have no certain documentation of it before that period, which, however, does not mean that it did not exist. (Retsö 2014: 64)

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[12] For further readings, see Bybee et al. (1991); Brustad (2000); Holes (2016); Persson (2008).

[13] Among the most recent studies on imperfective prefixes, Persson (2008) states that 70% of her informants were women from various Gulf countries, even if it is not specified how many hours and how many speakers of QA were included in her survey.

Previous studies have covered the subject of verbal prefixes in GA. To name a few, Johnstone (1967: 143, 152, 163, 169) noted that the *b*- prefix indicates a sense of volition in the future tense and *rāḥ* usually indicates intention in Kuwaiti, Bahraini, and QA. Qafisheh (1977), as also noted by Persson (2008: 30), does not include the *b*- prefix in his description of GA based on the Abu Dhabi spoken variety, but in the provided sample texts included in his GA grammar, we found 2 occurrences of the *b*- prefix as a marker that encodes the future tense (Qafisheh 1977: 250–51).[14] Al-Najjar (1984: 1991)[15] wrote about what she calls the lexical marker of Kuwaiti Arabic focusing on the related development of future and progressive markers. Durand (1991: 7) offers an overview of the use of verbal prefixes in the main types of spoken Arabic and, by mentioning Peninsular Arabic, he agrees that the *b*- prefix serves in a more systematic way to render an immediate future. Brustad (2000: 241–248) investigated the syntax of Moroccan, Egyptian, Syrian, and Kuwaiti Arabic. According to her data of Kuwaiti Arabic, she highlights that the *b*- prefix, as well as *rāḥ*, encodes future and intentive moods. Persson published a study (2008: 26–52) on the role of the *b*- prefix in GA based on 23-hour recordings gathered in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE, where she concluded that *b*- is first and foremost a marker of *irrealis* modality which includes, but is not limited to, futurity and intention. Importantly, Holes (1990) in his descriptive grammar of GA classifies the *b*- prefix as a futurative/intentive prefix, which usually has a 'modal colouring conveying speaker intent'. In his recent volume, Holes (2016: 301–304) confirms that the *b*- prefix conveys future and volition; moreover, he agrees with Persson (2008) that the *b*- prefix is a marker of *irrealis* in some conditional sentences (2016: 290–291; 402–418). Jarad writes that

> […] the verb (y)abi, originally a verb meaning 'want, desire' has gradually developed into a grammatical particle expressing volition and future. As this lexical verb becomes grammaticalized, it is reduced to an affix. (Jarad 2017: 753)

As shown, some linguistic studies on verbal prefixes in GA were published where QA is mentioned. However, no study exclusively devoted to QA concerning this morphosyntactic phenomenon has been published so far.

After double-checking, the total number of tokens of the *b*- prefix, found exclusively in QA, is 454 instances in *Tesaneef*, 20 in Sabah El-Doha, and 50 in Al-Jazeera, selected examples of which are provided below:

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[14] The two occurrences, whose transliteration has been adapted according to the journal guidelines, are contained in text II based on Emirati Arabic (Qafisheh 1977: 250–251): 1. *binḥaṣṣil min warā flūs w-xēr* ('we will get money and a lot of good things from him?'); 2. *yaʕni bintak biṭḥaṣṣil ʔaḥsan min yūsif?* ('will your daughter get a better man than Yusif?').

[15] In Brustad (2000: 242).

(1; *T* 26)

يُمّه عِندِي لَچ خَبَر بِيفَرحِچ

yumma ʕind-i la-č xabar b-ifarḥ-ič

'Mom, I have some news for you that will please you!'

(2; *T* 24)

يُبّه بَس هَالْلِعبَة وبِنرُوح نَدرِس

yubba bas ha-l-liʕba w-bi-nrūḥ nadris

'Dad, just this game and then we will go and study!'

(3; *T* 8)

اِلْوَزِيرِ بِيكُولْ لَك نَفس اِلْكَلام

il-wazīr b-igūl-la-k nafs il-kalām

'The minister will tell you the same thing.'

(4; SD 29)

طَبعاً بَعطِيكُم أرقَام جُزَافِيّة

ṭabʕan b-aʕṭī-kum ʔarqām ğuzāfiyya

'Of course, I will give you random numbers.'

(5; SD 3)

گالوُا لِنَا اِحنَا بِنرَتِّب لِكُم حَفلَةُ

gālū-l-na ʔiḥna bi-nrattib-li-kum ḥafla

'They said we will organise the party for you.'

In the following example (6) taken from Al-Jazeerah the speaker says: *yōm bi-kaḏa* as if he clearly separates the *b-* giving in its function as intentive; he uses the *b-* prefix with *kaḏa* rather than stopping the flow of the speech because he wants to highlight that many things might happen, thus replacing the verbs with *kaḏa* (i.e. 'one day it does so and so').

(6; J 5)

يُوم تِرظَى لفلان يُوم تِظرِب افلان يُوم بِتعَاقِب إفلان يُوم بكَذا

yōm tirḏa la-flān yōm tiḏrib iflān yōm bi-tʕāqib iflān yōm bi-kaḏa

'One day it hits someone, one day it punishes someone, one day it does so and so, one day it satisfies someone.'

As expected, the examples found confirm that the *b-* prefix in QA is a future and intentive marker. Apart from this, as Persson (2008) states, the use of *b-* in protasis and apodosis is very common in GA, in fact the *b-* prefix occurs in conditional clauses, as emerging in the following examples:

(7; SD 23)

إِحْنَا إِذَا گِدَرْنَا نَصِل إِلَى رِيَاظَتَه اِلْمُفَظَّلة ودِعَمْنَاه فِيهَا هُو بِيتَوَلَّع فِ الرِّيَاظَة

iḥna iḏa gidarna naṣil ila riyāḏat-ah il-mufaḏḏala w-diʕamnā-h fī-ha huwwa b-itawallaʕ fi-r-riyāḏa

'If we could figure out his favourite sport and support him to do it, he would be interested in sports.'

(8; *T* 7)

حَبِيبتِي أُبُوج اِمقَدَّم عَلَى سِلفَة وإِذَا وَافقُوا لَه بنغَيِّر اِلْأَثَاث كِلَّه

ḥabība-i abū-č imqaddim ʕala silfa w-iḏa waqfū-la-h b-inġayyir il-aṭāṭ kill-ah

'Darling, your father applied for a loan. If approved, we will change all the furniture.'

(9; *T* 7)

حَتَّى لَو أَهَلنَا مَا بِيسَوُّون چِذِ

ḥatta law ahal-na mā b-isawwūn čiḏi

'Even though they are our relatives, they would not do that for us.'

(10; *T* 19)

إِذَا گِت لِك مَا بتصِير مُفَاجَأَةٌ

iḏa git-l-ik mā b-itṣīr mufāğaʔa

'It won't be a surprise if I tell you.'

Indeed, the analysed data confirm that the *b-* prefix occurs in conditional clauses, although most of the extrapolated occurrences of *b-* encode the future tense in the QAC.

3.2 The verbal prefix *rāḥ*

The hollow verb *rāḥ* means 'to go' in Arabic dialects, is also used as a verbal prefix in GA (Al-amadidhi 1985: 97, 114), although it receives less attention than the *b-* prefix, and the particle *rāḥ* is commonly classified as a marker of the future tense (Johnstone 1967; Holes 1990; 2016; Brustad 2000). Holes (1990: 187–188) specifies that '[i]n Oman *ḥa-* is prefixed to the verb, while in Iraq and Kuwait the same function is fulfilled by proposing the indeclinable free particle *rāḥ*', whereas in the case of Bahraini Arabic, Holes observes (2016: 304) that *rāḥ* as a verbal prefix occurs 'only very rarely, and always in the sense of the simple future'. On Kuwaiti Arabic, Brustad (2000: 241–243) writes in her data that *rāḥ* is used as a future particle that marks what will happen.

According to our data, in the whole corpus the total number of tokens of *rāḥ*, pertaining only to QA, is 15 in *Tesaneef*, 6 in Sabah El-Doha, and 4 in Al-Jazeerah, a total of 25 occurrences. The action or event that is conveyed by the verbal prefix *rāḥ* which takes place after the utterance time, as in the following examples:

(11; *T* 20)

رَاح أَطّر أَبِيع كِلّ مَا عِندِي عَشَان أَرَّعّ أُمُورِي

rāḥ ʔaṭṭar ʔabīʕ kill mā ʕind-i ʕašān ʔaraggiʕ ʔumūr-i

'I will have to sell everything; I have to put my affairs in order.'

(12; SD 18)

عِندِي فِي كَذَا حَلقَة رَاح أَعمِل فِيهَا كَرَكتَرَات

ʕind-i fī kaḏa ḥalqa rāḥ ʔaʕmil fī-ha karaktarāt

'In more than one episode I will act different characters.'

As a modal marker, it conveys, in some cases, a degree of certainty concerning the fulfilment of that action or event in the future, as in the following examples:

(13; *T* 19)

رَاح اتشُوف رَاشِد مُختَلِف

rāḥ itšūf Rāšid muxtalif

'You will see a different Rashid.'

(14; J 2)

يَعنِي إحنَا آنَا أَبِي أَقُّول للبيت رَبٌّ يَحمِيَه سُورِيَا وإيرَان ايدَافِعُون عَن نَفسِهم آنَا مَا رَاح أَدَافِع عَنهُم

yaʕni ʔiḥna ʔāna ʔabi ʔagūl li-l-bēt rabb yaḥmī-h sūrya wa-ʔīrān īdāfiʕūn ʕan nafiss-um ʔāna mā rāḥ ʕudāfiʕ ʕan-hum

'What I am trying to say is that the House has a Lord who can protect it. Syria and Iran can defend themselves, I am not going to defend them.'

In the latter example, *rāḥ* occurs in a negative clause where the speaker underlines with certainty that he will not 'defend them', even if it is not clear if this will happen in the near or distant future. As expected, in the data, *rāḥ* is negated only by the particle *mā*:

(15; SD 15)

مَا رَاح ايتَعِب نَفسَه عِندَه عِشرِين أَلف مُسَلسَل غِيرَه

mā rāḥ yitʕab nafs-ah ʕind-ah ʕišrīn ʔalf musalsal ġēr-ah

'He will not be bothered; he has another twenty thousand series.'

(16; J 5)

إِلشَّارِع مَا رَاح يِرحَمنَا

iš-šāriʕ mā rāḥ yirḥam-na

'The street will not have mercy on us.'

No combination of *rāḥ* followed by other prefixes were found, while Persson (2008: 32) reported a single instance of *rāḥ, ḥa-* by an elderly Qatari male,[16] and she concludes that *rāḥ* is an 'obvious future marker' (2008: 48). All the instances of *rāḥ* that were found in QAC confirm its role as a future marker that might enclose a sense of certainty, a real possibility.

It is worth noting that since *rāḥ* appears to be a grammaticalised form of the active participle *rāyiḥ*, occasionally the original form is still found alongside its more grammaticalised descendant. In the corpus, only 4 occurrences of *rāyiḥ*—as a future marker—in the TV series *Tesaneef* were found, one of which appears as feminine singular form *rāyḥa* (20; *T* 18). Moreover, it is also shown in (19; *T* 6) that *rāyiḥ* is used before an active participle *rāyiḥ yāyib* 'You're going to get':[17]

> (17; *T* 4)
>
> إهيَه عَلَى طِرِيجك وانتَ رَايِح اتخَلّص مُعَامَلةٌ سعِيد أخُوي
>
> *ʔihya ʕala ṭariǧ-ik w-ʔinta rāyiḥ ʔitxalliṣ muʕāmalat saʕīd ʔaxū-y*
>
> 'It is on your way, while going to finish my brother Said's procedures.'

> (18; *T* 4)
>
> الِحَمِدالله هَذَاني أحِين رَايِح أخَلّص أمُوري
>
> *il-ḥamdillah haḏ-āni ʔaḥīn rāyiḥ ʔaxalliṣ ʔumūr-i*
>
> 'Alhamdulillah, here I am, going now to sort out my issues.'

> (19; *T* 6)
>
> رَايِح يَايِب مُگَّص اش كُبرَه
>
> *rāyiḥ yāyib mugaṣṣ ʔiš kubr-ah*
>
> '[You're] going to get very big scissors.'

> (20; *T* 18)
>
> وان شَالله رَايحَة ادَّورين لِي شُغُل
>
> *w-inšaḷḷah rāyḥa ʔiddawrīn-li ʕala šuġul*
>
> 'If God wills, you're going to look for a job for me.'

3.3 Other verbal prefixes in the QAC

In order to provide new data from QA, this short section is devoted to other verbal prefixes found in the QAC during the data validation process uttered by Qatari speakers, namely *ḥa-*, *xa-*, and *xal-*.

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[16] This is the only instance specifically pertaining to QA reported by Persson (2008) in her study.

[17] In this example *rāyiḥ* might be interpreted either as a future marker or an active particle 'going'.

Occurrences of *ḥa-*, a verbal prefix borrowed from Egyptian and Levantine Arabic, were found, 3 in *Tesaneef*, 9 in Al-Jazeerah, and 3 in Sabah El-Doha as future markers, according to the following selected examples:

(21; *T* 10)

وبِالْمُنَاسَبَة حَنْرَاسِل كُل ٱلْمُراسِلِين فِإلْعَالَم عَشَان يِتَصِلُوا بِينَا

w-bi-l-munāsaba ḥa-nrāsil kull il-murāsilīn fi-l-ʕālam ʕašān yittaṣlu bi-na

'And by the way, we will correspond with all the world's reporters to communicate with us.'

(22; J 5)

كِيف حَنِجِيب سُورِيَا وِانِجِيب لِبنَان وِانِجِيب الدُّوَل الثَّانِيَةْ وفِي دُوَل عَرَبِيَةْ مَا تِتكَلَّم مَعَ بَعظ

kēf ḥa-nǧīb sūrya wi-nǧīb libnān wi-nǧīb id-duwal iṯ-ṯānya w-fī duwal ʕarabiyya mā titkallam maʕ baʕḍ

'How are we going to bring together Syria, Lebanon and the other countries when there are Arab countries that don't speak to each other?'

(23; SD 29)

فَفِي اِلْبَدَايَةْ مِثل مَا يِگُولُونْ اِلْمِصرِينْ دُغرِي حَنخُش فِي اِلْمَوظُوع

fa-fi-l-bidāya miṯl mā yigūlūn il-maṣriyyīn duġri ḥa-nxušš fi-l-mawḍūʕ

'So, for a start, as Egyptians say, we will go straight to the point.'

In the last example (23) the Qatari speaker code-switches an Egyptian common expression *ḥa-nxušš fi-l-mawḍūʕ* and he borrows the particle *ḥa-* from Egyptian Arabic[18] to express the future, since the Qatari speaker accommodates the speech to the Egyptian host.

The verbal prefixes *xa-* derived from the verb *xalla* 'to let, to allow' (as well as *xal-*) which conveys exhortation,[19] once emerged:

(24; SD 11)

يَلّا خَنشُوف

yaḷḷa xa-nšūf

'Alright, let us see.'

Furthermore, three occurrences of the exhortative marker *xal-* were found in *Tesaneef* as in the following examples:

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[18] The Qatari speaker also pronounced *il-mawḍūʕ* with [ḍ] as Egyptian speakers do, instead of QA [ḏ].

[19] See Holes (2016: 318).

(25; *T* 2)

يَلا خَلِ انْجُوفهُم اشْ بِيقَررُرون

yaḷḷa xal-inčūf-hum ʔiš b-iqarrarūn

'Let us see what they will decide.'

(26; *T* 2)

خَل انْجُوف اِلْمطَوَّع عَبدِالرَحمَن اشْ بِيسَوي مَعَاهُم

xal-inčūf il-miṭawwaʕ ʕAbd ar-Raḥmān ʔiš bi-tsawwi maʕā-hum

'Let us see what sheikh Abdulrahman will do with them.'

(27; *T* 2)

خَل انْجُوف رُوحَةْ اِلمطَوَّع عَبدِالرَحمَن إِشْ بِتسوّي

xal-inšūf rōḥat il-miṭawwaʕ ʕAbd ar-Raḥmān ʔiš bi-tsawwi

'Let us see what sheikh Abdulrahman will do.'

There are not enough data to draw a conclusion about the use of the verbal prefix *xa-* and *xal-* in contemporary QA, but it might deserve further attention in the future.

4 The active participle *gāʕid*

The active participle *gāʕid* is partially grammaticalised in QA, thus we decided to include occurrences and discussion of *gāʕid* in this separate section because its use can be observed in QA and examples of *gāʕid* as a progressive aspect marker that were not attested before have emerged during the QAC analysis.

Concerning what was published about *gāʕid* in GA, we found that Holes (2016: 314) states that *gaʕad*, which is the lexical item for 'to sit, to stay', 'has developed from this a separate aspectual function as a verb or a participle that marks durative or regularly repeated action' in Bahraini Arabic. Agius and Harrak (1987: 164–168) dedicated a study to the auxiliary particles prefixed to the imperfective conjugation of the verb in ten Arabic varieties from Maghreb and Mashreq, and they mention the use of the participle *gāʕid* in southern and northern Iraqi Arabic to indicate an action going on or a past progressive action. Brustad, in her study of comparative syntax (2000: 247–248), shows that Kuwaiti Arabic, like Syrian, grammaticalises the progressive using particles, namely *gāʕid*. The uses of the active participle in Omani Arabic and Gulf littoral varieties have been investigated by Eades and Persson where they conclude that

> the AP [active participle] can be used in a number of contexts with a wide variety of meanings. Any temporal or aspectual interpretations of a particular participle are derived from the interplay between the situation type provided by the context, the stative character of the AP and the Aktionsart value of the verb stem. The fact that

the AP form can convey a variety of contrasting meanings is thereby a result of the varying semantics of verbal stems. (Eades and Persson 2013: 364–365)

Concerning Kuwaiti Arabic, as stated by Al-Najjar[20] *gāʕid* 'show subject agreement in all cases', thus a feminine subject cannot agree with a masculine form, and we found this assumption is valid also in QA. Furthermore, in the case of Gulf Arabic, Owens and Yavrumyan (2007) add that, as far as action and stative verbs in Spoken Arabic is concerned,

> The active participle describes a state which has been entered into. For an action verb, the difference between the active participle *yālsīn* and the imperfect verb *yīlisūn* (Gulf Arabic) is that between 'they are seated' and 'they are sitting down [now]', between an event whose effect is still visible and an incompleted event. (Owens and Yavrumyan 2007: 545)

Jarad (2015: 107) in his study focused on the active posture participle *yālis* (sitting) in Emirati Arabic and later, he investigated (Jarad 2017: 742–60) a wide range of grammaticalisation phenomena in Emirati Arabic as well as the formation and changes of a series of constructions belonging to this variety of the Gulf.

Concerning QA, Al-amadidhi (1985: 143) states that '[t]he word [ga:9id] has two meanings in Q[atari]D[ialect]. It may be used as an auxiliary verb, denoting a continuous action, or as an active participle, "sitting"'. In fact, we found occurrences of *gāʕid* as an active participle, as shown in example (28; *T* 20), however we found that *gāʕid* and its variants occur more as progressive aspect markers in our data:

(28; *T* 20)
آنَا إلِّي گاعدَةْ فِ البِيت
ʔāna ʔilli gāʕda fi-l-bēt
'I'm the one staying at home.'

In the whole corpus the total number of tokens of *gāʕid* as progressive aspect marker including its feminine singular (*gāʕda*) and plural masculine/feminine forms (*gāʕdīn*) is 57, distributed as follows: 50 instances in *Tesaneef*, 4 in Sabah El-Doha, and 3 in Al-Jazeerah, as shown in Table 2:

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[20] In Brustad (2000: 248).

Source	*gāʕid*	*gāʕda*	*gāʕdīn*
Tesaneef	25	11	14
Sabah El-Doha	3	1	–
Al-Jazeerah	1	–	2
Total number of tokens	29	12	16

Table 2. Tokens of *gāʕid* as progressive aspect marker
in QAC based on gender and number

The data from QAC confirm its use to refer to a present ongoing event and that *gāʕid* agrees with the subject. Moreover, when *gāʕid* encodes progressive, it occurs more frequently with action verbs that indicate activity and accomplishment—as noted by Jarad (2015: 104) for the participle *yālis* 'sitting' in Emirati Arabic, as in the following examples:

(29; *T* 1)
يَا سُلطَان إنتْ اِشْ گَاعِد تݣُول
yā Ṣultān ʔint ʔiš gāʕid itgūl
'Sultan, what are you saying?'

(30; *T* 5)
إنتَ تَدرِي اِش گَاعِد اِيسَوِّي هَالْأيَّام
ʔinta tadri ʔiš gāʕid isawwi ha-l-ʔayyām
'You know what he is doing these days.'

(31; SD 22)
طَبعاً إحنَا الآن يا أعزَائِي الْمُشَاهِدِين گَاعِد أفحَص الْجُزء الأيسَر مِن جِسمَه
ṭabʕan ʔiḥna l-ʔān yā ʔaʕzāʔ-i l-mušāhidīn gāʕid ʔafḥaṣ il-ğuzʔ il-ʔaysar min ğism-ah[21]
'Now dear viewers, we are examining the left side of his body.'

(32; *T* 9)
رِيَايِيل گَاعدِين يِتنَاقِشُون مُب مِحتَاݣِين رَأي حَرِيم
riyāyīl gāʕdīn yitnāqišūn mub miḥtāğīn raʔi ḥarīm
'Men are having a discussion. They do not need women's opinions at all.'

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[21] In this example (31; SD 22) the pronoun *ʔiḥna* 'we' is plural, but *gāʕid* is singular. However, this inconsistency is likely due to fast speech.

(33; *T* 21)

بَس آنَا مَاني اِمصَدگَة اِلّي گَعدَة أَسِمعَه

bas ?āna māni mṣaddaga ?illi gāɛda ?asmaɛ-ah

'I cannot believe what I am hearing!'

In QAC, we attest two occurrences of *kān + gāɛid* that, as far as we know, have never been published in GA studies. Both examples refer to an accomplished progressive action that took place in the past, for example:

(34; *T* 6)

يُمّه آنَا وعَدّول كِنّا گَعدين نِلعَب

yumma ?āna w-ɛAddūl kinna gāɛdīn nilɛab

'Mum, Addoul and I were playing.'

(35; *T* 6)

كِنت گَاعِد أركِض بَعدِين عَدّول يَرَ اِلْقَميص واِنْشَگَّ

kint gāɛid ?arkiḍ baɛdēn ɛAddūl yarr il-gamiṣ w-inšagg

'I was running then Addoul pulled the shirt and it got torn.'

The active participle *gāɛid* also occurs in the corpus preceded by the adverb *il-ḥīn* (now) to strengthen the idea of simultaneity and progressivity of the action, for example:

(36; *T* 2)

ألحين گَاعِد بِترَجَّاني عَلَشَان أجِل رُوحتي

il-ḥīn gāɛid yitraǧǧā-ni ɛalašān ?aǧill rōḥt-i

'Now, he is begging me to postpone my going (to court).'

Another instance when *il-ḥīn* occurs with *gāɛid* shows the singular feminine agreement with the word *nās* (people):

(37; *T* 11)

والنَّاس كِلَّهَا گَاعدَة اِتجُوف واِلشَّي جِدّام اِلْگَامِيرَا ألَحِين اِلنَّاس كِلَّهَا گَاعدَة اِتَّفَرَّج

w-in-nās kill-ha gāɛda tšūf w-iš-ši ǧiddām il-kāmira il-ḥin in-nās kill-ha gāɛda tfarraǧ

'People are watching. They are seeing this. It is happening right in front of the camera.'

Not surprisingly the agreement of *gāɛid* with the inanimate entities takes the feminine singular, as in the following clause where the progressive marker is referred to 'banks':

(38; *T* 20)

آگُول ِلك في ِبنُوك گَاعدَةٌ اتفَكّر ِتعِلن يَعني ِتشِهر افلاسّا

ʔagūl-li-k fī bunūk gāʕda tfakkir tiʕlin yaʕni tišhir iflāss-a

'I am telling you, there are banks who think to declare bankruptcy.'

Only two instances of negation of *gāʕid* were found: in the first example (39) *gāʕdīn* is negated by the particle *mā*, the most common for negating verbs, although interestingly, in the second example (40) *gāʕid* is negated by *mub*, showing that the participle is becoming more and more grammaticalised, since it is now perceived as a noun.

(39; *T* 4)

إنِنّوا حَتّى ِالشَّيِب إلِّي فِ رَاسَه مَا گَاعِدِين ِتحتَّرِمُونَه

ʔintu ḥatta š-šēb fi-rās-ah mā gāʕdīn tiḥtarmūn-ah

'You are not even respecting his age.'

(40; *T* 3)

مُب گَاعِد لِ ِاتّرَزَّز ِف هَالْكَفَترِيَا مَع هَالْخَايسَات

mub gāʕid-li itrazzaz fi-ha-l-kafatīrya maʕ ha-l-xāysāt

'I am not going to show off in this café with those losers.'

5 Final remarks

By using the QAC by Elmahdy et al. (2014), this article aimed at providing recent data concerning selected verbal prefixes—namely the *b*- prefix, *rāḥ* (and its lexical item *rāyiḥ*), as well as other prefixes found in the QAC which are *ḥa*-, *xa*-, and *xal*- —and the active participle *gāʕid* as progressive aspect marker in QA since there are currently no studies exclusively dedicated to this linguistic phenomenon in this Arabic variety.

The study also provided and discussed some forms and functions of the tokens (a total number of 629) and the data confirm that in QA the investigated verbal prefixes are used as future or intentive markers—as stated in the main previous studies of GA[22]—, and that the *b*- prefix also occurs as marker of irrealis as found in Persson (2008). Moreover, a section devoted to the active participle *gāʕid* in its function as progressive aspect marker was included because it emerged from the data that the use of *gāʕid* can be observed in contemporary QA and that it can also occur preceded by the auxiliary verb *kān* to refer to an accomplished progressive action that took place in the past.

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[22] Mainly Johnstone (1967); Holes (1990; 2016); Brustad (2000); Persson (2008).

Although the QAC is partially available online, until now its data had never been utilised as a source in the field of Arabic dialectology. The QAC corpus proves to be a valuable source for future studies of QA and for comparing data from GA in the future. Furthermore, it is still open for further investigation, as discussing how the verbal prefixes and the active participle *gāʕid* could possibly impact on sentence syntax, as well as re-investigating them from a sociolinguistic perspective in order to search for differences in their use based on linguistic variables of Qatari speakers.

Information on authorship

The entire work is the result of constant collaboration between the authors who discussed and contributed to the final article: specifically, Najla Kalach wrote sections 2, 3.2 and 4; Muntasir Fayez Al-Hamad wrote sections 1, 3, 3.1, 3.3. Section 5 (final remarks) was written upon discussion by both authors who equally contributed to its writing.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Abbreviations

AP	active participle
GA	Gulf Arabic
J	Al-Jazeerah
QA	Qatari Arabic
QAC	Qatari Arabic Corpus
SD	Sabah El-Doha
T	*Tesaneef*

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