A Pragmatic Reading of the Verb "Kana" and Its Meanings

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Abstract : Arab Grammarians stood at variance with regard to the definition of kana (which might equal was, were, the past form of "be" in English). Kana was considered as a verb, a particle, or a quasi-verb by different scholars; others saw it as an auxiliary verb; while some other scholars categorized kana as one of the incomplete verbs or (Afa'al naqisa) based on two different claims: first, a considerable group of grammarians saw kana as fie'l naqis or an incomplete verb since it indicates time, but not the event or action itself. Second, kana requires a predicate (xabar) to complete the meaning, i.e., it does not suffice itself with a noun in the nominal sentence. This study argues that categorizing the verb kana as fie'l naqis or an incomplete verb is inaccurate and confusing since the term "incomplete" does not agree with its characteristics, meanings, and temporal indications. Moreover, interpreting kana as a past verb is also inaccurate. kana □□□ (derived from the absolute action of being □□□) is considered unique and the most comprehensive verb, encompassing all tenses of the past, present, and future within the dimensions of continuity and eternity of all possible actions under "being".
Keywords : pragmatics, kana, context, Arab grammarians, meaning, fie'l naqis
Conference Title : ICGLLS 2023 : International Conference on General Linguistics and Language Sciences
Conference Location : Rome, Italy
Conference Dates : January 16-17, 2023