

Voice and Aspectual Verbs in Kuwaiti Arabic

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Voice is claimed to be the lowest functional head in the articulated structure of the verbal phrase in Arabic (Ouhalla (1991), Cinque (1999), Fassi Fehri (2012)), hence it separates the lexical and functional domains of the verbal projection

I present my current work on aspectual verbs, grammaticalized from posture verbs, *gaam* ‘get up’ and *gaʕad* ‘sat’ in Kuwait Arabic. These posture verbs, I claim, are involved in serial verb constructions with spatial meanings when merged below Voice, while they function as temporal aspectual auxiliaries when merged above Voice.

Interestingly posture verbs when used as main verbs can passivize (1), but they do not do so when they appear in VV constructions. Nevertheless, in the Functional aspectual VV, the lower verb may passivize, which supports their position above Voice (3). In the spatial serial VV construction (2) neither the posture verb nor the following verb can be passivized, although they are below Voice. This is caused by the conflict between the argument requirements of the two verbs in the serial construction.

Posture verbs as

1) Main verb:

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| a. | El-walad
DEF-boy
‘The boy sat on the chair’ | gaʕad
sat.3SM | ʕala
on | il-kirsi
DEF-chair | [Active] |
| b. | El-kirsi
DEF-chair
Lit: ‘the chair was seated on’ | ingaʕad
seated.REF.3SM | ʕal-eeh
on-it | | [Non-active] |
| c. | El-bint
DEF-girl
‘The girl got of her place’ | gaam.t
got up.3SF | min
of | mukan-ha
place-her | [Active] |
| d. | El-bent
DEF-girl
‘The girl was moved of her place’ | itgawwim.at
got up.REF.3SF | min
of | mukan-ha
place-her | [Non-active] |

2) In serial verb construction

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| a. | el-walad
DEF-boy
‘The boy got up (and) wrote the letter’ | gaam
got up.3SM | ketab
wrote.3SM | er-risalah
DEF-letter.F | [Active] |
| b. | * <i>Gaam.t</i>
Got up.3SF
Lit: ‘the letter got up and was written’ | ?inkatbat
written.REF.3SF | | er-risalah
DEF-letter | [Non-Active] |

3) In aspectual auxiliary construction

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| a. | gaam
INCP.3SM
Lit: ‘the door started to be opened quicker’. | y.infitah
3SM.REF.open | il-bab
the-door | bsirʕa
quickly | |
| b. | id-dars
DEF-lesson
Lit: ‘The lesson kept being repeated for a while’ | gaʕad
DUR.3SM | mudda
a while | y.inʕaad
3SM.REF.repeat | |

The picture is not as simple as it may appear, given that the colloquial Arabic varieties do not have an agentive passive, but utilize the anti-causative/reflexive verbal forms to express non-active

constructions. Following Fassi-Fehri's (1988b, 2012) analysis of the different arguments structures of passive/anti-causative/reflexive/reciprocal verbal forms in Arabic, I will show how they interact with the requirements of *gaam/ga3ad* in the serial construction to block non-active constructions as in examples (2a-b), and how they become irrelevant to the aspectual uses as in (3).

References:

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