

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

2) In serial verb construction

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

3) In aspectual auxiliary construction

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

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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