A'-movement feeds licensing: Evidence from Indirect Causatives in Sason Arabic

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This paper demonstrates that Sason Arabic (SA, an endangered language in eastern Anatolia) exhibits a causative construction with an embedded active VoiceP, in which the embedded agent is subject to Romance ECM-type restrictions, and cannot remain *in-situ*. The paper provides a phase-based account to explain why the embedded Voice can license the embedded theme, but cannot have a DP in its specifier. In so doing, we provide striking evidence of A'-movement feeding licensing relationships. This construction also adds to the typologies of Voice and of causatives (cf. Schäfer 2008, 2017, Alexiadou 2012, Harley 2013, Legate 2014).

It is a construction with an overt embedded theme argument, but no overt embedded agent, with the verb in gerundial/infinitival form, (1). It maintains an agentive reading where the agent is interpreted as indefinite, non-specific 'someone' or 'some people'.

(1) si-tu addil beyt-ma
    made-1SG build.INF house-a
    'I made (sb.) build a house.'

Thematic Voice. We first provide evidence for a thematic VoiceP layer in the embedded event (drawing on tests from Alexiadou et al. 2015, Bruening 2013). The evidence comes from (i) agent-oriented adverbs associated with the causee, (2), (ii) the availability of instrument phrases modifying the embedded agent, (iii) agent-oriented comitatives, (iv) thematic subject requirement (in that unaccusative verbs are disallowed), (3), (v) lack of stative verbs in the embedded complement.

(2) aɣa sa [hazd haşiş bı sabır.]
    landlord made.3M [cut.INF grass with patience]
    'The landlord made [(sb.) cut the grass patiently].'

(3) *kemal sa var mı mardivan-ad
    Kemal made.3M fall.INF from stair-PL
    Int: 'Kemal made (sb.) fall from the stairs.'

Active Voice. We demonstrate that the VoiceP is active. (i) Non-passivizable idioms: Certain idiomatic expressions, such as *qarf faxz le şeytan* "to get lucky; *lit.* to break the devil's leg" lose their idiomatic reading in the passive, (4). They are allowed in the complement of "make", (5), maintaining the idiomatic interpretation.

(4) faxz le şeytan ın-qaraf mı kemal
    leg of devil PASS-broke.3M by Kemal
    'The devil's leg was broken by Kemal.'
    '*Kemal finally got lucky.'

(5) si-tu qarf faxz le şeytan
    made-1SG break.INF leg of devil
    'I made (sb.) finally get lucky.'

(ii) Sluicing: The embedded VoiceP behaves as active for sluicing. In SA, VP ellipsis may in some cases allow voice mismatching, whereas sluicing does not, in line with Merchant's (2013) generalization. In (6a), the remnant "who" indicates that the sluice is active and it can target the caused event "build" in the complement of "make", diagnosing "build" as active. In (6b), the remnant "by who" indicates that the sluice is passive, and it can only target the matrix clause, which is an impersonal passive, not the caused event "build", again diagnosing "build" as active.

(6) a. ın-sa addil beyt, hama m-ore ande
       PASS-made build.INF house but NEG-know.1SG who
       i. 'It was made (sb.) build the house, but I don't know who (built it).'
       ii.*'It was made (sb.) build the house, but I don't know who (made sb. build the house).'

    b. ın-sa addil beyt, hama m-ore mı ande
       PASS-made build.INF house but NEG-know.1SG by who
       i. 'It was made (sb.) build the house, but I don't know by who (it was made sb. build the house).'
       ii. *'It was made (sb.) build the house, but I don't know by who (it was built).'

Theme as the grammatical object. (i) definiteness effects, and (ii) CLLD facts indicate that the embedded theme is the grammatical object. (i) In Sason Arabic, a low theme in the passive exhibits definiteness effects, (7). In contrast, the low embedded theme does not, (8). (ii) Objects (but not subjects) in Arabic can be CLLD-ed, (9) (Benmamoun 2000, Aoun et al. 2010). The embedded theme can also undergo CLLD, (10).

(7) a. ɪn-addel beyt-*?(ma).
   PASS-built.3M house-*?(a)
   'A/*?The house was built.'

   b. beyt-(ma) ɪn-addel
   house-(a) PASS-built.3M
   'A/The house was built.'

(8) si-tu addil beyt-(ma)
   made-1SG build.INF house-(a)
   'I made (sb.) build a/the house.'

(9) a. *haşiş* ams aɣa hazad-*u*.
   grass yesterday landlord cut-3M
   'The grass, yesterday the landlord cut it.'

   b. *kemal* qara-(*u*) gaste.
   Kemal.M read-3M newspaper.F
   'Kemal, he read the newspaper.'

(10) *haşiş* ams aɣa sa hazd-*u*.
   grass yesterday landlord made cut-3M
   'The grass, yesterday the landlord made (sb.) cut it.'

We also show agreement asymmetries that diagnose the theme as a grammatical object. Moreover, we demonstrate that the embedded theme is licensed by the embedded VoiceP, not the matrix VoiceP. Even when the matrix clause is an impersonal passive construction, (6), the embedded theme is still licensed as a grammatical object. This provides further evidence for the active nature of the embedded Voice.

Romance ECM-type restriction. We demonstrate that the embedded agent cannot remain *in-situ* in Spec,VoiceP, similar to Romance ECM (e.g. Kayne 1984, Rochette 1988, Pesetsky 1991, Bošković 1997, 2002, Moulton 2009). (i) Reflexives, (ii) reciprocals, and (iii) depictives are licensed in the active, but not in the passive, (11-12). They are also not licensed by the embedded agent (see only (13) for space reasons).

(11) odav ɪn-addel (*mışa roen/rou).
   homework PASS-do.3M for themselves/himself
   'The homework was done for (*themselves/himself).'

(12) xanni ɪn-kar-a (??sarxoş).
   song.M PASS-write-3M (??drunk)
   'The song was composed drunk.'

(13) iya$_i$ satte addil$_k$ odav (*mışa rou$_k$/roen$_k$/bazen$_k$) / sarxoş$_{i/*k}$.
   she made do.INF homework for himself/themselves/each.other / drunk
   'She$_i$ made (sb.$_k$ / some people$_k$) do the homework (*for himself$_k$/themselves$_k$/each other$_k$)/drunk$_{i/*k}$.'

(iv) The agent is obligatorily null, unless A'-moved (question, relativization, contrastive focussing, (14-15)).

(14) *kemal sa cinar-ma faqz
   Kemal made neighbor-a run.INF
   'Kemal made a neighbor run.'

(15) CINAR-MA kemal sa faqz, (mara-ma gbire la)
   neighbor-a Kemal made run.INF (woman-a old no)
   'Kemal made A NEIGHBOR run (not an old woman).'

Notably, when the agent is A'-moved, reflexive and reciprocal binding, and depictives become licit:

(16) ande$_k$ iya$_i$ satte addil odav (mışa roen$_k$)?
   who she made do.INF homework for themselves
   'Who$_i$ did she$_k$ make do the homework for themselves$_i$?'

(17) ande$_k$ si-t karu xanni (sarxoş$_k$)?
   who made-2SG write song (drunk)
   'Who$_k$ did you make compose the song drunk$_k$?'

Analysis. The SA 'make'- causative construction has the structure on the right. The absence of CP and TP layers is shown by the fact that CLLD-ed elements and *wh*-phrases cannot occur under 'make', and the complement cannot have distinct temporal modification. We argue for a phase-based account for the ECM-type restriction, in that an extra projection, FP, intervenes between 'make' and the embbedded VoiceP. The F head counts as the phase-head, and thus intervenes in the licensing of the embedded agent by the matrix 'make'. However, A'-movement (not A-mov't; left out due to space) makes licensing possible. We suggest that this is because F can host A'-features, and the embedded agent can raise to its edge (cf. Rezac 2013), so the agent can be licensed by 'make' in a local configuration. In fact, the specifier of FP can also host pronounced material in SA: it is the alternative landing site for the focus constituent, (18) (cf. 14-15).

(18) kemal sa CINAR-MA faqz, (mara-ma gbire la)
   Kemal made neighbor-a run.INF (woman-a old no)
   'Kemal made A NEIGHBOR run (not an old woman).'