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The syntax of motion light verbs in Jordanian and Moroccan Arabic*

Hamid Ouali and Juman Al Bukhari
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Motion verbs, when they co-occur with main verbs in what we call motion light verb constructions, have an aspectual function. In this paper, we examine the properties of these motion verbs and the implication of their distribution on clause structure. We argue that motion light verbs and main verbs head different *v*Ps. Motion light verbs select AspP. We show how our analysis explains the aspectual properties of light verb constructions and the distribution of light verbs in relation to the main verb, the subject, and negation. We also explain why these sentences can have a simple tense reading and two possible negative readings depending on the position of negation.

Keywords: light verbs, aspect, negation, tense, argument structure

1.   Introduction

There are several cases where a sequence of two verbs occurs in Arabic. One context is subordination as in (1) from Jordanian Arabic (JA). Another context is an auxiliary and a main verb sequence as in (2). A third context is the sequence of a light verb and a main verb as in (3). The latter is what we are concerned with in this paper.[1]

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1.   The following abbreviations are used in the glosses of the data throughout the paper: 1, 2, 3 = person; F = feminine; FUT = future; IMP = imperfective; M = masculine; NEG = negation; PER = perfective; PL = plural; SG = singular.

(1) Subordination
     b-i-ħəb   *ji-ħki*
     ASP-3.M-like.IMP.SG 3.M-talk.IMP.SG
     'He likes to talk.'

(2) Auxiliary + main verb
     ka:n   *ji-ħki*
     be.PER.3.M.SG   3.M-talk.IMP.SG
     'He was talking.'

(3) Light verb construction
     ʔaʕad   *ji-ħki*
     sit.PER.3.M.SG   3.M-talk.IMP.SG
     'He kept talking.'

In Arabic dialects, such as JA and Moroccan Arabic (MA), motion verbs such as *ʔaʕad/gləs* 'sat', *ʔa:m/na:dˤ* 'stood', *natˤ/nqəz* 'jumped', *ʔiʒa/ʒa* 'came', *ra:ħ/mʃa* 'went', and *riʒəʕ/rʒəʕ* 'returned' can co-occur with a main verb and do not denote their literal meaning. Moreover, more than one motion verb can occur in one sentence with some restrictions on their order. For instance, examples (4) and (6) are acceptable, but (5) and (7) are not.

(4) *ʔa:m*   *ʔaʕad*   *ji-mʃi*   (JA)
     stand.PER.3.M.SG sit.PER.3.M.SG   3.M-walk.IMP.SG
     maʕ-na
     with-us
     'He started walking with us.'

(5) **ʔaʕad*   *ʔa:m*   *ji-mʃi*   (JA)
     sit.PER.3.M.SG   stand.PER.3.M.SG 3.M-walk.IMP.SG
     maʕ-na
     with-us

(6) *na:dˤ*   *gləs*   (MA)
     stand.PER.3.M.SG sit.PER.3.M.SG
     ka-j-dˤħək   *mʃa-na*
     ASP-3.M-laugh.IMP.SG with-us
     'He started laughing with us.'

(7) **gləs*   *na:dˤ*   (MA)
     sit.PER.3.M.SG   stand.PER.3.M.SG
     ka-j-dˤħək   *mʃa-na*
     ASP.3.M-laugh.IMP.SG with-us

To our knowledge, such constructions have not been analyzed syntactically in Arabic and our goal is to propose a syntactic analysis that explains their properties.

We explore the function of these motion verbs and discuss the implications for the clause structure of JA and MA. We argue against a complex vP-shell structure for these constructions and demonstrate that the motion light verb and the main verb are separate verbs in different vP domains. Using evidence from the positions of the main verb, the subject, and negation, we will motivate the structures in (8) for light verb constructions:

(8) a. $[_{TP}$ T $[_{vP}$ Light v $[_{AspP}$ Asp $[_{vP}$ v $[_{VP}$ V$]]]]]$
     b. $[_{TP}$ T $[_{vP}$ Light v $[_{AspP}$ Asp $[_{NegP}$ Neg $[_{vP}$ v $[_{VP}$ V$]]]]]]$
     c. $[_{NegP}$ Neg $[_{TP}$ T $[_{vP}$ Light v $[_{AspP}$ Asp $[_{vP}$ v $[_{VP}$ V$]]]]]]$

The structure in (8a) is for affirmative sentences, (8b) is for negative sentences with vP-negation (which has narrow scope negative reading), and (8c) is for negative sentences with sentential negation.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the properties of light verbs in JA and MA. Section 3 provides an analysis for these constructions. Section 4 presents a note on grammaticalization of motion verbs into light verbs. Section 5 summarizes and concludes the paper.

2. Properties of light verb constructions in JA and MA

Verbs like *ʔaʕad* 'sat' in JA and *gləs* 'sat' in MA do not denote their literal meaning when they co-occur with a main verb. The event is described by the main verb as illustrated by examples (9) and (10):

(9) *ʔaʕad*   *ji-mʃi*   *la*   (JA)
     sit.PER.3.M.SG 3.M-walk.IMP.SG until
     sˤ-sˤuboħ
     the-morning
     'He walked/kept walking till morning.'

(10) *gləs*   *ka-j-lʕəb*   *ħatta*   (MA)
     sit.PER.3.M.SG ASP-3.M-play.IMP.SG until
     l- sˤ-sˤba:ħ
     to-the-morning
     'He kept playing till morning.'

Verb sequences (a light verb followed by a main verb) of the types illustrated in (9) and (10) have been a contentious topic in the Arabic descriptive literature. Some argue that they constitute a clear case of the so-called Serial Verb Constructions (SVCs) (Hussein, 1990; Versteegh, 2003–2005), while others argue against treating them as SVCs (Woidich, 2002). However, treating them as SVCs or not depends

on what definition one adopts. Those who argue that they constitute a clear case of SVCs adopt Sebba's (1987) definition according to which one or more light verbs, which are semantically demoted, form a verbal "syntagm" with a main verb without a coordinator but with the same argument structure. Woidich (2002), adopting a stricter definition, argues against treating them as SVCs and claims that for a V1-V2 construction to count as an SVC, V2 must be lexically restricted, the subject of both verbs cannot occur between V1 and V2, and the scope of negation must be over the second verb alone. We do not have anything at stake in this whole debate. Our goal is to provide a syntactic analysis that explains the general properties of light verbs in JA and MA when they occur in such contexts. To avoid any confusion, we will simply refer to these contexts as light verb constructions, noting that in our approach the term "construction" does not have any theoretical status.

Light verb constructions in Arabic exhibit a set of properties that we discuss below. Some of these properties they share with SVCs in prototypical SVC languages, while others they do not.[2]

Same event

Both the light verb and the main verb in light verb constructions are associated with the same event. Examples (11a) from JA and (11b) from MA have a sequence of a motion verb and a main verb describing the same event of walking and talking respectively.

(11) a. *b-ju-ʔʕod   ji-mʃi   ħawale:n*   (JA)
          ASP-3.M-sit.IMP.SG 3.M-walk.IMP.SG around
          l-be:t
          the-house
          'He keeps walking around the house.'
      b. *ka-j-gləs   ka-j-tməʃʃa*   (MA)
          ASP-3.M-sit.IMP.SG ASP-3.M-walk.IMP.SG
          ħətta l-sˤ-sˤba:ħ
          until   to-the-morning
          'He keeps walking till morning.'

Note that if we insert a conjunction between the motion verb and the main verb in (11), we get a completely different meaning with two subsequent events as illustrated in (12a–b).

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2.   In fact, it is these properties that led some scholars to conclude that Arabic has SVCs. As pointed out above, the literature is not in agreement regarding what constitutes a clear definition of an SVC. Light verb constructions in Arabic could be categorized as SVCs if one adopts a loose and less strict definition of SVCs.

(12) a. *ʔa:m   w   ʔaʕad*   (JA)
          stand.PER.3.M.SG and sit.PER.3.M.SG
          ji-mʃi   maʕ-na
          3.M-walk.IMP.SG with-us
          'He stood up and kept walking with us.'

      b. *ka-j-gləs   w   ka-j-tməʃʃa*   (MA)
          Asp-3.M-sit.IMP.SG and ASP-3.M-walk.IMP.SG
          ħətta l-sˤ-sˤba:ħ
          until to-the-morning
          'He sits and walks till morning.'

A single tense

Light verb constructions have a single tense reading. This tense reading is associated with the light verb, which precedes the main verb as in (13).[3]

(13) a. *ʔaʕad   ʔaħmad ji-ħki*   (JA)
          sit.PER.3.M.SG Ahmad 3.M-talk.IMP.SG
          maʕ-o
          with-him
          'Ahmad kept talking with him'

      b. *gləs   ka-j-lʕəb   ħətta*   (MA)
          sit.PER.3.M.SG ASP-3.M-play.IMP.SG until
          l-sˤ-sˤba:ħ
          to-the-morning
          'He kept playing till morning.'

      c. *raħ ju-ʔʕod   ʔaħmad ji-ħki*   (JA)
          FUT 3.M-sit.IMP.SG Ahmad 3.M-talk.IMP.SG
          maʕ-o
          with-him
          'Ahmad will keep talking to him'

      d. *ɣa-j-gləs   ka-j-lʕəb*   (MA)
          will-3.M.SG-sit.PER ASP-3.M-play.IMP.SG
          ħətta l-sˤ-sˤba:ħ
          until to-the-morning
          'He will keep playing till morning.'

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3.   It is important to note that (13c) is grammatical under the context in which someone is not convinced of doing something and so Ahmad will keep talking to him. That is, Ahmad will spend a period of time talking to him till he is convinced. Another context might be when a boy is not behaving, so his dad Ahmad will spend some time talking to him.

We take this to indicate that there is a single Tense projection in the clause.

Even though these light verbs can co-occur with perfective or imperfective verbs, the latter do not contribute or indicate any tense. They only indicate aspect as shown in the examples below:

(14) a. *natˤ*   *ʒa:b*   *xubəz*   (JA)
          jump.PER.3.M.SG bring.PER.3.M.SG bread
          'He brought bread.'
      b. *nəqqəz*   *ka-ɣəwwət*   *ʕli-h*   (MA)
          jump.PER.3.M.SG ASP-yell.PER-3.M.SG on-him
          'He started yelling at him.'

Lexical aspect

The light verbs in light verb constructions contribute to the overall aspectual inter-pretation of the sentence (Mitchell, 1994). Main verbs still inflect for and denote imperfective/perfective aspect, which is more about whether an event is ongoing or has ended (event completion or telicity). Motion verbs, however, denote differ-ent types of lexical aspect, which restricts the meaning of the main verbs. Some of these light verbs denote inceptive aspect. These verbs are *natˤ/nəqqəz* 'jumped' as shown in (15), as well as *ʔa:m/na:dˤ* 'stood', *ʔiʒa/ʒa* 'came' as, *ra:ħ/mʃa* 'went' (JA/MA).

(15) a. *natˤ*   *ʒa:b*   *xubəz*   (JA)
          jump.PER.3.M.SG bring.PER.3.M.SG bread
          'He brought bread.'
      b. *nəqqəz*   *ɣəwwət*   *ʕli-h*   (MA)
          jump.PER.3.M.SG yell.PER.3.M.SG on-him
          'He then yelled at him.'

The verbs *natˤ/ nəqqəz* in (15) mark a sudden inception of the event, whereas the main verbs, which are in the perfective, indicate that the event was completed.

Other verbs such as *ʔaʕad/gləs* 'sat' (JA/MA) denote durative aspect as illus-trated in (16).

(16) a. *ʔaʕad-na* *ni-mʃi*   *ʒamb* *l-be:t*   (JA)
          sit.PER.1PL 1.PL-walk.IMP next   the-house
          'We kept walking next to the house.'
      b. *gləs*   *ka-j-lʕəb*   *ħətta*   (MA)
          sit.PER.3.M.SG ASP-3.M-play.IMP.SG until
          l-sˤsˤba:ħ
          to-the-morning
          'He kept playing till morning.'

The verbs *ʔaʕad* 'sit' in JA and *gləs* in MA in (16), indicate that the duration of the event was long, and the main verb *nimʃi* 'walk', which is in the imperfective, indicates that the event is incomplete or atelic.

Verbs, such as *riʒaʕ* 'returned', mark iterative aspect as in (17).

(17) a. *riʒaʕ*   *katab*   *er-risa:le*   (JA)
          return.PER.3.M.SG write.PER.3.M.SG the-letter
          'He wrote the letter again.'
      b. *rʒaʕ*   *ka-jə-hdˤər*   (MA)
          return.PER.3.M.SG ASP-3.M-speak.IMP.SG
          mʕa   sˤaħb-u
          with   friend-his
          'He's speaking to his friend again.'

The main verb *katab* in (17a) from JA indicates that the event of writing was completed, but the light verb *riʒaʕ* indicates that the event was preceded by another writing event in the past; in other words, it marks iteration of the event. Similarly, the verb *ka-jə-hdˤə*r in (17b) from MA indicates that the process of speaking is ongoing, and the light verb *rʒaʕ* indicates that this process was resumed after an interruption.

A single negative marker

Negating light verb constructions requires using a single negation to negate the whole event, as in (18).

(18) a. *ma:-ʔaʕad*   *ji-ʃrab*   *ʔahwe*   (JA)
          NEG-sit.PER.3.M.SG 3.M-drink.IMP.SG   coffee
          tˤu:l   is-sane
          all   the-year
          'He didn't keep drinking coffee all year long.' OR
          'It's not the case that he kept drinking coffee all year long.'
      b. *ma-gləs-ʃ*   *ka-j-ʃrəb*   (MA)
          NEG-sit.PER.3.M.SG-NEG ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG
          l-qəhwa
          the-coffee
          'He didn't keep drinking coffee.' OR
          'It's not the case that he kept drinking coffee.'

However, whether negation precedes the light verb as shown in (18) or immediately precedes the main verb as (19) results in different readings. In (18), negation has a wide scope reading and in (19) it has narrow scope.

(19) a. *ʔaʕad*   *ma:-ji-ʃrab*   *ʔahwe*   (JA)
         sit.PER.3.M.SG NEG-3.M-drink.IMP.SG coffee
         tˤu:l is-sane
         all   the-year
         'He kept not drinking coffee all year long.'

      b. *gləs*   *ma-ka-j-ʃrəb-ʃ*   (MA)
         sit.PER.3.M.SG NEG-ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG-NEG
         l-qəhwa
         the-coffee
         'He kept not drinking coffee.'

The negative marker in (18) results in sentential negation, whereas the one in (19) leads to constituent (*v*P) negation. In principle both sentential negation and constituent negation could co-occur in the same sentence yielding a positive reading. This prediction is borne out as shown in (20).[4]

(20) a. *ma:-ʔaʕad*   *ma:-ji-ʃrab*   (JA)
         NEG-sit.PER.3.M.SG NEG-3.M-drink.IMP.SG
         ʔahwe tˤu:l is-sane
         coffee all   the-year
         'He didn't keep not drinking coffee.' OR
         'It's not the case that he kept not drinking coffee all year long.'

      b. *ma-gləs-ʃ*   (MA)
         NEG-sit.PER.3.M.SG-NEG
         ma-ka-j-ʃrəb-ʃ   *l-qəhwa*
         NEG-ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG-NEG   the-coffee
         'He didn't keep not drinking coffee.' OR
         'It's not the case that he kept not drinking coffee.'

Argument structure

Another property of light verb constructions in JA and MA is argument sharing or, more specifically, subject sharing, as shown in (21). No object sharing may take place.

(21) a. *ʔaʕad*   *ʔahmad ji-ħki*   *maʕ-o*   (JA)
         sit.PER.3.M.SG Ahmad   3.M-talk.IMP.SG with-him
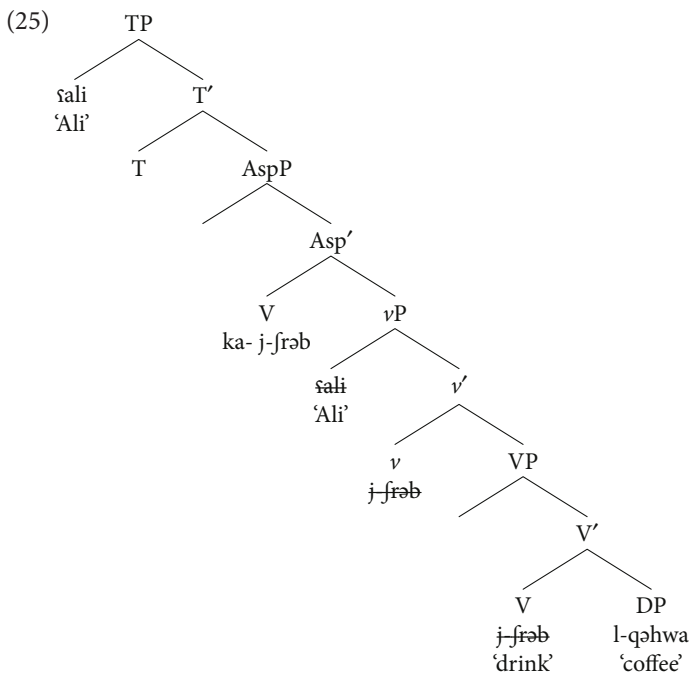   'Ahmad kept talking with him.'

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4. We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to us.

b. *gləs   ʕali ka-j-ʃrəb*   (MA)
   sit.PER.3.M.SG Ali ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG
   l-qəhwa   l-lil   kull-u
   the-coffee the-night all-it
   'Ali kept drinking coffee all night long.'

Inserting another argument in (21a–b) renders it ungrammatical, as (22a–b) illustrate.

(22) a. **natˤ   ʔaħmad ʒa:b-at*   (JA)
         jump.PER.3.M.SG Ahmad bring.PER.3.F.SG
         lajla   xubəz
         Laila   bread
      b. **gləs   ʕali ka-t-ʃrəb   fatima*   (MA)
         sit.PER.3.M.SG Ali ASP-3.F-drink.IMP.SG Fatima
         l-qəhwa   l-lil   kull-u
         the-coffee the-night all-it

The ungrammaticality of (22a–b) is not surprising since these light verbs do not introduce an argument structure. It is the main verb that does. The light verb has a grammatical function only in that it marks Aspect. Both the main verb and the light verb show subject agreement.

To conclude this section, light verb constructions in JA and MA display a set of properties:

– Both verbs are associated with the same event.
– They share a single tense.
– Light verbs denote different types of lexical aspect, whereas main verbs only denote perfective or imperfective aspect.
– The position of negation in relation to the two verbs determines the scope of negation in the sentence. Pre-light verb negation is sentential negation and yields a wide scope reading, while post-light verb negation is *v*P negation and yields a narrow scope reading.

The question that follows is: How can we explain these properties in a principled way? The next section addresses this question by analyzing the syntactic structure of light verb constructions.

3.   Analysis

Before we present the details of the analysis, we summarize some of the assumptions we make about Arabic clause structure, including verb and argument positions. Arabic is an overt verb-raising language (Benmamoun, 2000; Soltan, 2007,

2011; Aoun, Benmamoun, & Choueiri, 2010). It exhibits both SVO and VSO orders as in (23) and (24), respectively (with SVO being the unmarked order in the dialects).
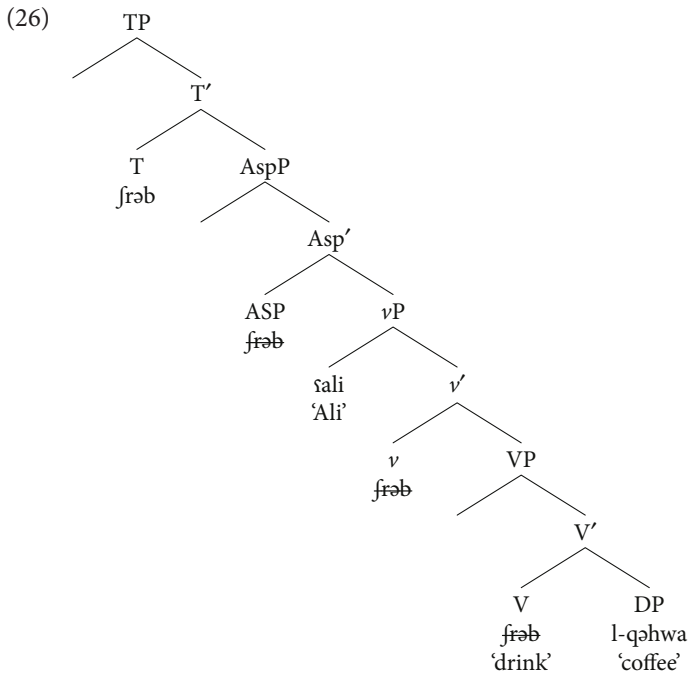
(23) ʕali k-ja-ʃrab   l-qǝhwa   (MA)
      Ali   ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG   the-coffee
      'Ali drinks / is drinking coffee.'

(24) ʃrǝb   ʕali l-qǝhwa   (MA)
      drink.PER.3.M.SG   Ali   the-coffee
      'Ali drank coffee.'

The standard and well-motivated assumption is that the verb moves overtly. Imperfective verbs move as high as Asp as illustrated in (25), and perfective verbs move to T as illustrated in (26) (see Benmamoun, 2000; Soltan, 2007; and Aoun et al., 2010).[5]

(25)

```
                TP
              /    \
           ʕali     T′
           'Ali'   /  \
                  T    AspP
                        \
                        Asp′
                       /    \
                      V      vP
                  ka- j-ʃrǝb  / \
                           ʕali  v′
                           'Ali' / \
                                v    VP
                            j-ʃrǝb   \
                                     V′
                                    /  \
                                   V    DP
                               j-ʃrǝb  l-qǝhwa
                               'drink' 'coffee'
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5.   Some details in the syntactic derivations are omitted.

(26)

```
                    TP
                   /  \
                      T′
                     /   \
                    T    AspP
                    ʃrəb  /  \
                        Asp′
                        /   \
                      ASP    vP
                      ʃrəb   /  \
                          ʕali   v′
                          'Ali'  /  \
                               v    VP
                               ʃrəb  /  \
                                    V′
                                   /   \
                                  V     DP
                                  ʃrəb  l-qəhwa
                                  'drink' 'coffee'
```

Motion verbs, such as *ʔaʕad* in JA and *gləs* in MA, function categorically as light verbs and presumably head a *v*P projection when they feature as V1 in V1–V2 constructions like (27a–b).

(27) a. *ʔaʕad*   *ji-ʃrab*   *ʕali ʔahwe*   (JA)
          sit.PER.3.M.SG 3.M-drink.IMP.SG Ali   coffee
          tˤu:l   il-le:l
          all   the-night
          'Ali kept drinking coffee all night long.'

      b. *gləs*   *ka-j-ʃrəb*   *ʕali*   (MA)
          sit.PER.3.M.SG ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG Ali
          l-qəhwa   l-lil   kull-u
          the-coffee the-night all-it
          'Ali kept drinking coffee all night long.'

However, we argue that these light verbs do not occur in the same *v*P shell as the main verb. Since Larson (1988), the *v*P-shell has become the standard analysis for the structure of VP (Hale & Keyser, 1990; Sportiche, 1990; Speas, 1990; Chomsky,

1995, 2000 among others). We will propose that light verbs and main verbs occupy two distinct *v*Ps.[6]

Against a *v*P shell for light verb constructions in Arabic

There are three main arguments against the complex *v*P-shell analysis for light verb constructions in Arabic and they are: (i) verb position (assuming an Aspect projection), (ii) subject position, and (iii) negation.

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6. Carstens (2002) (following Collins 1997) proposes a vP-shell analysis for SVCs as illustrated by the example in (i) and the structure in (ii):

   (i)   *áràụ́ zuye ákị buru tèri-mí*   (Ijọ)
          s/he basket take yam cover-PAST
          'she covered the yam with a basket.'   Carstens (2002: 3)

(ii)

```
                         TP
                       /    \
                     vP      T'
                   /   \    /   \
                She    v'  T     t_vP
                      / \  Past
                     v  VP
                       /   \
                  basket_i  V'
                          /   \
                         V    vP
                        take  / \
                            t_i  v'
                               /   \
                              v     VP
                                   /   \
                                 yam    V'
                                        / \
                                      cover
```
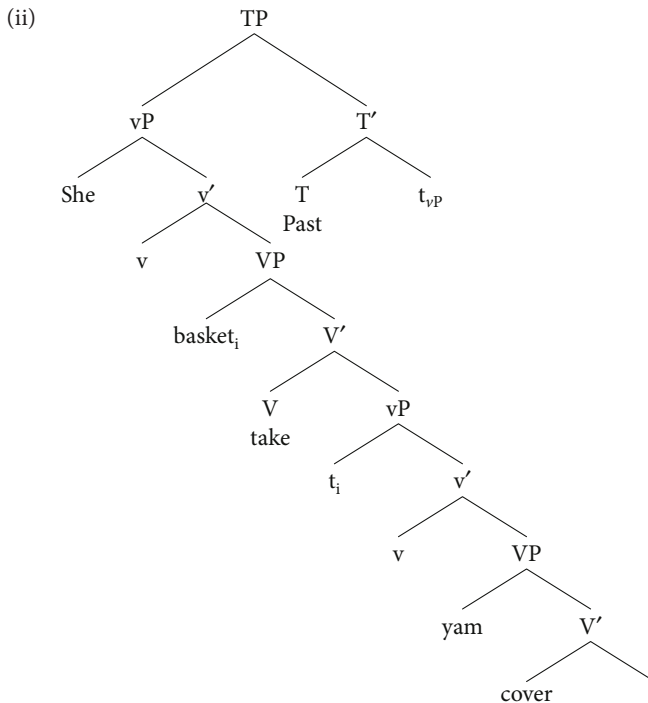
It is tempting to adopt the *v*P-shell for light verb constructions in Arabic, but there are a few facts that disfavor this analysis.

Main verb position

As shown above, the standard analysis of word order in Arabic is that the verb moves overtly. For Benmamoun (2000), perfective verbs move to T. Imperfective verbs, on the other had, do not move to T but to Asp (Soltan, 2007). Sentences like (28a–b) from JA and MA, respectively, have the structures in (29a–b):

(28) a. *b-ji-ʃrab*   *ʕali ʔahwe*   (JA)
          ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG Ali coffee
          'Ali drinks/ is drinking coffee.'

      b. *ka-j-ʃrǝb*   *ʕali l-qǝhwa*   (MA)
          ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG Ali the-coffee
          'Ali drinks/ is drinking coffee.'

(29) a. [$_{TP}$ [$_{AspP}$ *b-j-ʃrab* [$_{v*P}$ *ʕali v** ~~*j-ʃrǝb*~~ [$_{VP}$ ~~*j-ʃrǝb*~~ *ʔahwe*]]]]
      b. [$_{TP}$ [$_{AspP}$ *ka-j-ʃrǝb* [$_{v*P}$ *ʕali v** ~~*jfrǝb*~~ [$_{VP}$ ~~*jfrǝb*~~ *l-qǝhwa*]]]]

Given this analysis, the question arises: how do we derive light verb constructions such as (30a–b)?

(30) a. *ʔaʕad*   *ji-ʃrab*   *ʔaħmad*   (JA)
          sit.PER.3.M.SG 3.M-drink.IMP.SG Ahmad
          ʔahwe t^{s}u:l il-le:l
          coffee all   the-night
          'Ahmad kept drinking coffee all night.'

      b. *gles*   *ka-j-ʃrǝb*   *ʕali*   (MA)
          sit.PER.3.M.SG ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG Ali
          l-qǝhwa   l-li:l   kamǝl
          the-coffee the-night complete
          'Ali kept drinking coffee all night.'

If the main verb has to move to Asp°, the motion verb has to be higher in the structure as in (31).

(31) [$_{FP}$ *ʔaʕad* [$_{AspP}$ *ji-ʃrab* [$_{v*P}$ *ʔahmad* v** ~~*ji-ʃrab*~~   (JA)
      [$_{VP}$ ~~*ji-ʃrab*~~ *l-ʔahwe t^{s}u:l il-le:l*]]]]

This indicates that the motion verb and the main verb cannot be base-generated in the same *v*P. The next argument against the complex *v*P analysis is the subject position.

Subject position

If we consider examples (32a–b) from JA and MA, we note that the subject can occur between the motion verb and the main verb. Having argued that the main verb moves overtly out of *v*P to Asp, the subject, which is base-generated in Spec,*v*P, must have moved to a position higher than Asp°, presumably to Spec,AspP as illustrated in (32c).

(32) a. *ʔaʕad*   *ʔaḥmad ji-ʃrab*   *ʔahwe*   (JA)
          sit.PER.3.M.SG Ahmad 3.M-drink.IMP.SG coffee
          tˤu:l il-le:l
          all   the-night
          'Ahmad kept drinking coffee all night.'
      b. *gles*   *ʕali ka-j-ʃrəb*   (MA)
          sit.PER.3.M.SG Ali ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG
          l-qəhwa   l-lil   kaməl
          the-coffee the-night complete
          'Ali kept drinking coffee all night.'
      c. [FP *ʔaʕad* [AspP *ʔaḥmad ji-ʃrab* [*v**P   ~~*ʔaḥmad*~~ *v** ~~*ji-ʃrab*~~
              sat   Ahmad 3.M.SG-drink ~~Ahmad~~   ~~drink~~
          [VP ~~*ji-ʃrab*~~ *ʔahwe tˤu:l il-le:l*]]]]
              ~~drink~~ coffee all   the-night

One piece of evidence that the subject is out of *v*P comes from the quantifiers as in (33a–d).

(33) a. *ʔaʕad-u   l-bana:t j-sˤarrx-u*   (JA)
          sit.PER-3.PL the-girls 3-scream.IMP-PL
          kul-hum   b-l-le:l
          all-them   in-the-night
          'All the girls kept screaming at night.'
      b. *ʔa:m-u   l-bana:t j-sˤarrx-u*   (JA)
          stand.PER-3.PL the-girls 3-scream.IMP-PL
          kul-hum   b-l-le:l
          all-the   in-the-night
          'All the girls started screaming at night.'
      c. *gəlsu   l-bna:t ka-j-dˤəhk-u*   (MA)
          sit.PER-3.PL the-girls ASP-3-laugh.IMP-PL
          kul-hum
          all them
          'All the girls kept laughing.'

    d.   *na:dˤu*   *l-bna:t*   *ka-j-ɣəwt-u*   (MA)
        stand.PER-3.PL the-girls ASP-3-scream.IMP-PL
        kul-hum *bə-lxəlʕa*
        all-them with-fear
        'All the girls started screaming with fear.'

In all these examples, the motion verb precedes the subject. If the subject is outside of *v*P, then the motion verb must be in a position higher than *v*P. Having argued that the main verb moves as high as Asp, the subject must be at least in Spec,AspP and the motion verb has to be in a position higher than AspP. The question of whether the resumptive pronouns in the examples in (33a–d) are spelled out traces/copies of the moved subjects (in which case these would be examples of the so-called floating quantifiers), or are genuine pronouns functioning as the grammatical subjects is beyond the scope of this paper. What matters for us here is that the DP *l-bana:t* 'the girls' is higher than *v*P, and that it is preceded by the motion verb. We conclude again that the light motion verb and the main verb cannot both be in the same complex *v*P.

    The third argument against the complex *v*P-shell analysis for light verb constructions in Arabic is the position of negation.

Negation
Negation in light verb constructions can occur between the motion verb and the main verb, as shown in (34a–b), or before the motion light verb as in (35a–b). The two positions yield two different negative readings.

  (34) a.   *ʔaʕad*   *ʕali ma:-ji-ʃrab*   *ʔahwe*   (JA)
          sit.PER.3.M.SG Ali NEG-3.M-drink.IMP.SG coffee
          tˤu:l is-sane
          all   the-year
          'Ali kept not drinking coffee all year long.'
      b.   *gləs*   *ʕali ma:-ka-j-ʃrəb-ʃ*   (MA)
          sit.PER.3.M.SG Ali NEG-ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG-NEG
          l-qəhwa   *l-ʕa:m*   *kull-u*
          the-coffee the-year all-it
          'Ali kept not drinking coffee all year long.'

  (35) a.   *ma:-ʔaʕad*   *ʕali ji-ʃrab*   *ʔahwe*   (JA)
          NEG-sit.PER.3.M.SG Ali 3.M-drink.IMP.SG coffee
          tˤu:l is-sane
          all   the-year
          'Ali didn't keep drinking coffee all year long.' OR
          'It's not the case that Ali kept drinking coffee all year long.'

(35)   b.   *ma-gləs-ʃ*   ʕali   (MA)
           NEG-sit.PER.3.M.SG-NEG Ali
           ka-ji-ʃrəb   *l-qəhwa*   *l-ʕa:m*   *kull-u*
           ASP-3.M-drink.IMP.SG the-coffee the-year all-it
           'Ali didn't keep drinking coffee all year long.' OR
           'It's not the case that Ali kept drinking coffee all year long.'

These facts suggest that there are two possible positions for NegP in the structure; either higher than vP, a case of constituent negation, or higher than the position that the light verb occupies, a case of sentential negation. Given what we have established about the position of the main verb in light verb constructions and that it moves to Asp, and given the narrow scope negative reading in (34a–b), we argue that NegP must select vP and be selected by AspP in (34a–b). The main verb has to move to Asp, as established before, and on its way it picks up negation. This explains the narrow scope negative reading, the position of the main verb, and the position of the subject. This is consistent with our conclusion, from before, that motion light verbs in Arabic select AspP. The derivation of (34a) is schematized below:

(36)   …[$_{vP}$ ʔaʕad [$_{AspP}$ ʕali ma-ji-ʃrab [$_{NegP}$ ~~ma:-ji-ʃrab~~
       [$_{vP}$ ~~ji-ʃrab~~ [$_{VP}$ ~~ji-ʃrab~~ ʔahwe tˤu:l is-sane]]]]][7]

In (35a–b), the picture is different. This is a case of sentential negation, where NegP is higher in the structure, presumably higher than TP (see Soltan, 2007). It follows then that in this type of sentences, negation is attached to the light verb and yields a wide scope negative reading. The derivation of (35a) is schematized below:

(37)   [$_{NegP}$ *ma: -ʔaʕad* [$_{TP}$ ~~ʔaʕad~~ [$_{vP}$ ~~ʔaʕad~~ [$_{AspP}$ ʕali ji-ʃrab
       ʔahwe   tˤu:l is-sane]]]]

To summarize, the main verb position, the subject position, and negation position all indicate that the motion light verb and the main verb in a light verb construction are not base-generated in the same vP. We argue that light verbs select AspP. The clause structures that we have motivated for these constructions are (38a) for affirmative sentences, (38b) for negative sentences with vP constituent negation, and (38c) for negative sentences with sentential negation.

(38)   a.   [$_{TP}$ T [$_{vP}$ Light v [$_{AspP}$ Asp [$_{vP}$ v [$_{VP}$ V]]]]]
       b.   [$_{TP}$ T [$_{vP}$ Light v [$_{AspP}$ Asp [$_{NegP}$ Neg [$_{vP}$ v [$_{VP}$ V]]]]]]
       c.   [$_{NegP}$ Neg [$_{TP}$ T [$_{vP}$ Light v [$_{AspP}$ Asp [$_{vP}$ v [$_{VP}$ V]]]]]]

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7.   We are abstracting away from whether the position of the subject is derived by movement or not.

4.   A note on grammaticalization

As attested in a number of languages, motion verbs get grammaticalized into light
verbs, then auxiliaries, and then tense affixes. Examples (39a–b) and (40a–b) from
French and English, respectively, illustrate this point.

(39)   a.   *Je visiterai   Paris*   (French)
            I   visit-FUT Paris
            'I will visit Paris.'
       b.   *Je vais   visiter   Paris*
            I   go   visit   Paris
            'I am going to visit Paris.'

(40)   a.   I will visit Paris.   (English)
       b.   I'm gonna visit Paris.

Raħ is an example of a verb that went through all stages of change in some Arabic
dialects, such as the Levantine dialects, and the form marking each stage is still in
use. In (41a) *raħ* is used as a full verb, in (41b) it functions as a light verb, in (41c)
it is an auxiliary, and in (41d) it is grammaticalized as an affix.

(41)   a.   *ruħ-t   ʕa-l-ʒa:mʕa*
            go.PER.1SG   to-the-university
            'I went to the university.'
       b.   *ra:ħ   ʔal-l-i…*
            go.PER.3.M.SG   tell.PER.3.M.SG-to-me
            'He told me.'
       c.   *raħ   a-ru:ħ*
            FUT   1.SG-go.IMP
            'I am going to go.'
       d.   *ħa-ʔa-drus*
            FUT-1.SG-study.IMP
            'I will study.'

We assume that motion light verbs are in the second stage of grammaticalization.
They went through semantic bleaching by which they lost their literal meaning.
In addition, they have an aspectual function which enhances the meaning of the
main verb. While the main verb denotes the telicity of the event, or what Travis
(1992) calls the Inner Aspect, the light verb denotes a different aspect which, we
believe, corresponds to what Travis (1992) calls the Outer Aspect.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter we discussed the major properties of light verb constructions and proposed a syntactic analysis that explains these properties. We examined the distribution of motion light verbs in relation to the main verb, the subject, and negation, and we concluded that light verbs and main verbs in light verb constructions do not occupy the same *v*P. Light verbs and main verbs are associated with the same event where the main verb describes the event and the light verb contributes an additional meaning. We argued that light verbs bear lexical aspect and head a separate *v*P which is higher in the structure. These light verbs select AspP. Whether negation precedes motion verbs or follows them yields different readings. We argue that this results from two possible fixed positions for NegP. The first position is immediately above the *v*P domain of the main verb and through which the main verb moves on the way to Asp. This type of structure and derivation yields the narrow scope reading of negation. The second position is higher in the functional domain selecting TP and is used to derive sentences with sentential negation.

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