The Syntax of Complex Tense Constructions in
Standard and Jordanian Arabic[*]

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ABSTRACT

The current paper presents a Minimalist account of the syntax of tense in Standard Arabic (SA) and Jordanian Arabic (JA). I assume that tense is not morphologically realized, but semantic tense interpretations and independent structural evidence, e.g. Nominative Case on subjects and the availability of expletive subjects, suggests the presence of an independent TP in the clause structure of the varieties at issue. The clause structure of simple tense constructions, e.g. simple past, is monoclausal with one TP; the clause structure of complex tense constructions, e.g. past perfect, is biclausal with two TPs that differ in terms of their categorial feature structure. The matrix TP hosts the interpretable Speech Time feature, whereas the embedded clause hosts the interpretable Reference Time feature. This proposal explains the semantic temporal dependency of the embedded clause on the matrix clause, which in turn derives the complex tense interpretations, and some empirical data that would be otherwise unexplained such as the impossibility for the embedded T head to host the tensed negative particles

Keywords: Clause Structure; Complex Tense Constructions; Bi-Clausal; Monoclausal.

1. Introduction

A complex tense construction is a construction that combines an auxiliary with a lexical verb as illustrated by the examples in (1) from English.

(1) a. Jim is reading a book.
    b. Jim has read the book.

There are two proposals concerning the syntax of complex tense constructions in the linguistic literature. The first account considers these constructions as **monoclausal** whereby there is one extended projection of the main verb and the auxiliary is inserted in a functional head in the extended projection (Ouhalla 1991, Cinque 1999). The other standpoint considers these constructions as **biclausal** (Kayne 1993, Alexiadou 1997). Under this proposal, there are two independent VPs: the lexical verb heads one VP; the auxiliary heads the other VP. Each VP has its own extended projections. Consequently, those VPs along with their extended projections when combined result in a biclausal structural representation.

Recently, the linguistic research on the syntax of tense has assumed that the semantic notions of tense can be mapped onto the syntax of clauses. Following the NeoReichenbach's model of tense, there are three time points or intervals: the Speech Time (ST), the time of utterance, Reference Time (RT), the orientation time established in the context relevant to the ST, and the Event Time (ET), the time at which the event took place (Reichenbach 1946; Hornstein 1990). Complex tense constructions are argued to involve two temporal orderings: deictic absolute tense that orders the RT relative to the ST and relative tense that orders the ET relative to the RT. The assumption is that the auxiliary represents absolute tense, but the thematic verb represents the relative tense on a par with perfect and progressive tenses in English. To capture these

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temporal interpretations, syntacticians claim that these constructions are biclausal having two TPs with the auxiliary in the matrix TP that hosts the absolute tense and the lexical verb in the embedded TP that hosts the relative tense (see Giorgi and Pianesi 1997, 2001). These proposals have motivated the recent accounts of the syntax of tense in Arabic to advance the biclausal proposal of complex tense constructions.

Based on this synopsis, the present study aims at accounting for the following enquiries within the Minimalist Program framework (cf. Chomsky 1995, 2000). First, what is the clause structure of complex tense constructions in SA and JA? Is it monoclausal or biclausal? Related to the first question, if there are two TPs in the clause structure of these constructions, what is the categorial feature structure of the T heads? Third, what are the merits of the proposal advocated in the current study over the other and what empirical data it develops better understanding of?

The current paper is organized as follows. Section 2 summarizes the main previous accounts of the syntax of complex tense constructions in Arabic. Section 3 is divided into two sub-sections. The first addresses the clause structure of simple tense constructions in SA and JA; the other discusses the clause structure of complex tense constructions in SA and JA. Section 4 discusses the significance of the analysis advocated in the present study. Section 5 concludes.

2. Previous accounts of complex tense constructions in Arabic

Both proposals, the monoclausal and biclausal, have been adopted in the literature on Arabic to account for the syntax of complex tense constructions in different Arabic varieties (Ouhalla 1993, Benmamoun 2000, Ouali and Fortin 2007). Generally speaking, the literature on the syntax of tense in Arabic has been dominated by assuming that there is an independent projection of tense, i.e. TP, even though there has been no consensus regarding whether the distinctive verb forms encode tense or aspect and what features the tense head has. For example, the advocates of the stand that tense is morphologically realized on Arabic verbs argue that the tense head has semantic feature of tense that requires a lexical support (Fassi Fehri 1993, Benmamoun 1992, 2000, Ouhalla 1993). On the other hand, the scholars who consider Arabic as lacking overt tense morphology on verbs contend that there is an abstract morpheme generated in the tense head (Aoun, Benmamoun, and Choueiri 2010). Independent from the debate regarding the morphological realization of tense, the presence of TP in the clause structure of Arabic is supported by some structural evidence, for example, the subject in Arabic is in Nominative Case, and according to generative syntax, Nominative case is assigned by the TP (Chomsky 1995, 2000, Adger 2003)

(2) ya-drusu   ʻaT-Talib-u   fii   al-maktabat-i
    Impf.3-study.sgm-ind   the-student-nom   in   the-library-gen
    'The student is studying at the library.'

Granted that there is an independent projection of tense, the first standpoint in the literature on Arabic tense constructions is that complex as well as simple tense constructions are monoclausal with one TP, one AspP and one VP. The difference lies in which verb is inserted in the tense head. More precisely, in simple tense constructions, e.g. simple past, the lexical verb moves to TP; in complex tense constructions, the auxiliary is inserted in the tense head, whereas the lexical verb remains in a lower projection like the AspP (Ouhalla 1993, Benmamoun 2000).

Recently, some researchers advocate the biclausal account of the constructions at hand. For example, Fassi Fehri (2004) argues that Arabic is a tense language and not an aspect language because tense induces aspect and not the opposite. His evidence is that while the Perfective aspect can be associated with the Past or Future and the Imperfective aspect can be associated with the Present, Past or Future, Simple Past is only Perfective and actual present is only Imperfective. Based on this, he contends that tense is essential and aspect is covert since it is dependent on tense, and so they project independently in the clause structure. As for complex tense constructions, he adopts the recent biclausal accounts of the syntax of tense following Giorgi and Pienesi (2001) and he suggests the following representation.

(3) [TP (Past) [TP (Perfect/ anterior) [AspP [VP]]]]

As both the auxiliary *kaan* 'be' and lexical verbs carry the same inflection, Fassi Fehri argues that the morphology on

each verb contributes tense interpretation that matches an independent TP projection. Therefore, he proposes that all perfect and progressive constructions in Arabic have two TPs with the auxiliary in the matrix TP and the lexical verb in the embedded TP. In simple tenses, there is only one TP, though. All in all, Fassi Fehri advances these different clause structures to account for the complex versus simple tense interpretations.

In the same vein, Ouali and Fortin (2007) claim that complex tense constructions in Moroccan Arabic (MA) are expressed by combining the auxiliary *kaan* 'be' and a lexical verb, e.g. *katab* 'write' as illustrated below. (The glosses are modified according to the one used throughout this paper.)

(4) a. kan-u   la9b-u
       Perf.be.3-plm   Perf.play.3-plm
       'They had played'

   b. kan-u   **ka** y-la9b-u
      Perf.be.3-plm   Asp Impf.3-play-plm
      'They were playing'

   c. kan-u   ɣ**a** y-la9b-u
      Perf.be.3-plm   Fut Impf.3-play-plm
      'They were going to play'

The resulting temporal interpretations are past perfect (4a), past progressive (4b), and future in the past (4c).

(5) a. ɣ**a**   y-kun-u   la9b-u
       Fut Impf.3-be-plm   Perf.play.3-plm
       'They will have played'

   b. ɣ**a**   y-kun-u   **ka**   y-la9b-u
      Fut 3-be-plm   Asp Impf.3-play-plm
      'They will be playing'

   c. ɣ**a** y-kun-u   ɣ**a**   y-la9b-u
      Fut Impf.3-be-plm   Fut Impf.3-play-plm
      'They will be about to play'

The temporal interpretations are future perfect (5a), future progressive (5b), and future in the future (5c).

To explain these temporal interpretations, Ouali and Fortin (2007) proposed the representations in (6) to account for the syntax of complex tense constructions in MA.

(6) [TP [AspP [VP *BE* [TP [AspP [*v*P [VP main verb]]]]]]]

They assume that since the auxiliary carries independent tense, aspect and agreement morphology similar to that of the lexical verb, each verb has independent extended functional projections. The only difference is that the matrix TP lacks an *v*P because it does not license an independent external projection as shown in the ungrammaticality of (7a). Only one subject is licensed in these constructions regardless of its surface position as shown in the grammaticality of (7b)

(7) a. *l-bnat…   ɣa y-kun-u   l-wlaad   ka y-la9b-u
       the-girls   Fut Impf.3-be-plm   the-boys   Asp Impf.3-play-plm

b. (l-bnat)   ɣa. y-kun-u   (l-bnat)   ka y-la9b-u   (l-bnat)
   (the-girls)   Fut Impf.3-be-plm (the-girls)   Asp 3-play-plm   (the-girls)
   'The girls will be playing.'

They maintain that the biclausal proposal of the clause structure of complex tense constructions in MA accounts for the temporal interpretation illustrated in (4, 5) above where the embedded TP is dependent on the matrix TP in its temporal interpretation. Another merit of this proposal is that it explains the potential two positions that negation can surface in with no difference in meaning.

(8) a. **ma**   ɣa (*ma)   y-kun-u-ʃ   mʃa-w   daba
       not   Fut (not)   Impf.3-be-plm-Neg   Perf.leave.3-plm   now
       'They will not have left now/by now'

   b. ɣa   y-kun-u   **ma**   mʃa-w-ʃ   daba
       Fut   Impf.3-be-plm   not   Perf.leave.3-plm-Neg   now
       'They will have not left now/by now'

In a nutshell, the synopsis provided above concerning the main trends in the syntax of tense in Arabic can be structurally summarized as follows.

(9) Simple tense constructions, e.g. simple past as in *katab*, the prevailing account is:
    [TP *katab* [AspP [VP]]]   (Benmamoun 1992, Ouhalla 1993)

(10) Complex tense constructions, e.g. past perfect as in *kaan katab*, there are two proposals
    a. Monoclausal account:
    [TP *kaan* [AspP *katab* [VP]]]   (Benmamoun 1992, Ouhalla 1993)

    b. Biclausal accounts
       1. [TP *kaan* [TP *katab* [AspP [VP]]]]   (Fassi Fehri 2004)
       2. [TP [AspP [VP *kaan* [TP [AspP [*v*P [VP *katab*]]]]]]]   (Ouali and Fortin 2007)

In this paper, I will explore the projections of simple tense root clauses in SA and JA with a special focus on whether these clauses have an independent projection of tense, TP. Then I will proceed to discuss the clause structure of complex tense constructions in both varieties to show with evidence that the biclausal account of such structures is more plausible than the monoclausal analysis.

3.1 The clause structure of simple tense constructions in SA and JA

Simple tense constructions can be informally defined as the clauses that involve one verb without an auxiliary and the tense interpretation is non-progressive and non-perfect. In other words, it is either simple past, simple present or simple future. The discussion is devoted to the past and present since the focus is on the morphological verbal forms. The future is excluded because it is assumed to be modal, i.e. expressed through a modal auxiliary such as SA *sawafa* and JA *raH* 'will'. The clause structure of root clauses with simple tense constructions has a VP projection with its extended projections. Before identifying the potential projections in their clause structure, it is important to identify what the morphology the verbs carry encodes in order to determine the functional projections above the VP. I claim that the morphological distinction at hand is aspectual since they are not sensitive to tense interpretation of the clause. For instance, the Perfective, commonly associated with past tense interpretation, is licensed in past as well as non-past tense contexts as shown in the respective (11a) and (11b) examples.

(11) a. **qara'-tu**   al-kitaab-a   'ams-i   **SA**
     Perf.read.1sg   the-book-acc   yesterday-gen
     'I read the book yesterday.'

   b. sa-'au9iir-u-ka   al-kitaab-a   iða   **qara'-tu-hu**   **SA**
      will-lend.1sg-ind-you the-book-acc   if   Perf.read.1sg-it
      'I will lend you the book if I have read it.'

Similarly, the Imperfective, which is commonly considered a present form, is legitimate in non-past as well as past tense contexts as illustrated below in (12a) and (12b), respectively.

(12) a. **ta-qra'-u**   al-kitaab-a   'ala'an-a   **SA**
     Impf.3-read.sgf-ind   the-book-acc   now-acc
     'She is reading the book now.'

   b. marar-it   bi-ha   'amsi   wa heya **ta-qra'-u**   al-kitaab-a **SA**
      Perf.pass-1sg   by-her   yesterday-gen and-she Impf.3-read.sgf-ind the-book
      'I passed by her while she was reading the book.'

To sum up, since these forms are not sensitive to the tense of the sentence in which they occur, these forms are not plausibly morphological realization of tense.

Instead, these forms encode aspectual meanings. For example, the Perfective mainly encodes a complete action; the Imperfective conveys incomplete, progressive and habitual aspectual meanings that cannot be cancelled by the context. I test this assumption by adding a conjunction that asserts the completion of the action in the matrix clause following Smith (1997).

(13) a. #**kataba**   9ali-un   a-risaalat-a   *wa ma zaala ya-ktub-u*   **SA**
      Perf.write.3sgm   Ali-nom   the-letter-acc   and   still   3-write.sgm-ind

   b. #**naððaf-at**   hind   il-beit   *wi-lisaat-ha   bi-ti-naððif*   **JA**
      Perf.clean.3-sgf   Hind   the-house   and-still-her   Asp-3-clean.sgf

(14) a. 9ali-un   **ya-ktub-u**   a-risaalat-a   *wa ma zaala ya-ktub-u*   **SA**
      Ali-nom   3-write.sgm-ind   the-letter-acc   and   still   3-write.sgm-ind
      'Ali is writing the letter and he is still writing.'

   b. hind   **bi-ti-naððif**   il-beit   *wi-lisaat-ha   bi-ti-naððif*   **JA**
      Hind   Asp-3-clean.sgf   the-house   and-still-her   Asp-3-clean.sgf
      'Hind is writing the letter and she is still writing.'

Example (13) is not acceptable if the action is complete, but (14) is acceptable at the moment of speech if the action is still ongoing. Therefore, as the complete versus incomplete aspectual meanings do not cancel with the context, then these meanings are inherently semantic and not the result of pragmatic inferences. This indicates that the morphological verbal forms convey aspectual interpretation rather than tense interpretation. The aspectual morphology along with the aspectual interpretations distinguishes finite clauses from non-finite clauses. Compare the following examples from JA that has an aspectual distinctive prefix in the Imperfective.

(15) a. layela   gara-at/   bi-ti-gra/   *ti-gra   il-kitaab
      Laila   Perf.read.3-sgf/   Asp-3-read.sgf/   3-read.sgf   the-book
      'Laila read/ is reading/ *read the book.'

   b. 9ali   gaal   innu layela gara-at/   bi-ti-gra/   *ti-gra   il-kitaab
      Ali   Perf.say.3sgm   that Laila Perf.read.3-sgf/   Asp-3-read.sgf/   3-read.sgf the-book
      'Ali said that Laila read/ is reading/ *read the book.'

   c. 9ali   biduh   laila *gara-at/   *bi-ti-gra/   ti-gra   il-kitaab
      Ali   want.he   Laila Perf.read.3-sgf/   Asp-3-read.sgf/   3-read.sgf   the-book
      'Ali wants Laila to read the book.'

The empirical data reveal that the Perfective is licensed only in finite clauses but not in non-finite clauses and *bi-*Imperfective is as well. Accordingly, an independent functional projection of aspect is well-motivated in the sense that any finite verb in Arabic has an extended projection of aspect above each verb with a strong [V+] feature, and it is affixal in nature and requires a lexical host.

The next question then is if tense is not represented morphologically on verbs, is there any independent evidence on the presence of a TP projection? The answer is affirmative on syntactic-semantic grounds. At the structural level, the subject is in the Nominative Case in SA and JA, and this is a property of TP. Consider the following example.

(16) a. jaa'a   ar-rajul-u   ila   al-bayit-i   **SA**
      Perf.come.3sgm   the-man-nom   to   the-house-gen
      'He came to the house.'

   b. ijaa   huwwa   la-il-bayit   **JA**
      Perf.come.3sgm   he   to-the-house
      'He came to the house.'

Additionally, both varieties allow an expletive subject, a non-thematic subject, which is also a structural property of a TP. Below is an illustration.

(17) a. hunaaka   rijaal-un   fi   al-bayit-i   **SA**
      there   men-nom   in   the-house-gen
      'There are men in the house.'

   b. fii   izlaam   fi   il-bayit   **JA**
      there   men   in   the-house
      'There are men in the house.'

The expletive subject is not assigned an Φ-role and so it originates in the specifier position of the TP in the generative tradition (Chomsky 1995, 2000).

A further support comes from the tensed sentential negation in SA. Consider the following examples.

(18) a. lam   yaktub   9ali-un   ar-risaalat-a   'ams-i/   *ɣad-an
      not   3-write.sgm   Ali-nom   the-letter-acc   yesterday-gen/ tomorrow-acc
      'Ali did not write the letter yesterday.'

   b. lan   yaktub   9ali-un   ar-risaalat-a   *'ams-i/   ɣad-an
       not   3-write.sgm   Ali-nom   the-letter-acc   yesterday-gen/ tomorrow-acc
       'Ali will not write the letter tomorrow.'

The distinctive property of the tensed negative particles is that *lam* is only compatible with temporal adverbs with past tense interpretation whereas *lan* is only compatible with temporal adverbs with future tense interpretation. It is assumed in the literature on Arabic negation that the tensed negative particles at issue start in the NegP and they move higher to the TP in order to account for their tense interpretation (Ouhalla 1994; Benmamoun 2000). I will consider this as a further piece of evidence on the presence of the TP projection in the clause structure of Arabic.

It is also plausible to argue that there is a CP projection headed by a null complementizer in the case of declarative statements hosting the type of the clause. This claim can be supported by independent structural evidence. For instance, if there is a wh-phrase, it is situated in the left periphery of clause, which is the specifier position of the CP. Below is an illustration.

(19) a. maða   kataba   9ali-un   **SA**
        what   Perf.write.3sgm   Ali-nom
        'What did Ali write?'

    b. ʃu   katab   9ali   **JA**
        What   Perf.write.3sgm   Ali
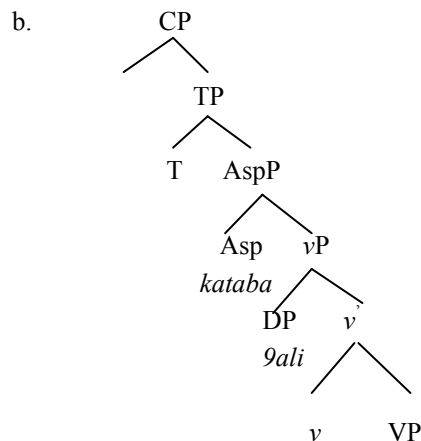   'What did Ali write?'

Another piece of evidence is that if the clause is embedded in a complement clause, it can be preceded by the complementizer that introduces finite clauses as the following examples show.

(20) a. qaala   abi-i   anna 9al-un   kataba   ad-dars-a   **SA**
        Perf.say.3sgm father-my   that   Ali-nom Perf.write.3sgm the-lesson-acc
        'My father said that Ali wrote the lesson.'

    b. gaal   abu-yi   innu   9ali   katab   ad-dars   **JA**
        Perf.say.3sgm father-my   that   Ali   Perf.write.3sgm the-lesson
        'My father said that Ali wrote the lesson.'

Example (20) reveals that there must be an available position for the complementizer to occupy when the clause is embedded under a predicate but it is null in declarative root clauses.

Concluding the discussion so far, a root simple tense clause in SA and JA as in (21a) has the clause structure sketched in (21b), irrelevant details are deleted.

(21) a. kataba   9ali-un   ar-risaalat-a   **SA**
        Perf.write.3sgm   Ali-nom   the-letter-acc
        'Ali wrote the letter.'

b.

```
            CP
           /  \
              TP
             /  \
           T    AspP
               /   \
             Asp    vP
            kataba  / \
                  DP   v'
                 9ali  / \
                      v   VP
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It projects a *v*P since the external argument, *9aliun* 'Ali', is agentive following Chomsky (1995).

3.2 The clause structure of complex tense constructions in SA and JA

Turning now to the core question of the current study which is the syntax of complex tense constructions in SA and JA whereby the auxiliary, e.g. *kaan* 'be', *'SbaHa* 'be in the morning,' as well as the lexical verb carry finite inflections in the same clause as exemplified below.

(22) a. kaana   9ali-un   ya-l9ab-u   **SA**
      Perf.be.3sgm   Ali-nom   Impf.3-play.sgm-ind
      'Ali was playing.'

    b. kaan   9ali   bi-yi-l9ab   **JA**
      Perf.be.3sgm   Ali   Asp-Impf.3-play.sgm
      'Ali was playing.'

Both the auxiliary and lexical verbs carry aspectual morphology.

Furthermore, both verbs have lexical interpretation that they contribute to the sentence. In Arabic, in particular SA, auxiliary verbs are not purely functional, for instance, the verb *kaana* means 'exist, be', *'SbaHa* 'be in the morning', *'amsa* 'be in the evening', *'DHa* 'be in the prenoon'*, 'adhalla* 'be all day'*, baata* 'be all the night'*, Saara* 'become'. All these verbs except *kaana* can also mean 'become' and indicate a change of state. Other auxiliary verbs such as *ma fati'a, ma infakka, ma bariHa, and ma zaala* mean 'still' and *ma daama* means 'as long as'. These auxiliary verbs also take complements that can be of different types, verbal as well as non-verbal. Consider the following examples:

(23) a. 'SbaHa   9ali-un   mariiD-an   **SA**
      Perf.morning.3sgm   Ali-nom   sick-acc
      'Ali was sick in the morning.'

    b. 'SbaHa   9ali-un   fi   al-bayit-i   **SA**
      Perf.morning.3sgm   Ali-nom   in   the-house-gen
      'Ali was at home in the morning.'

    c. 'SbaHa   9ali-un   ya-l9ab-u   bi-il-kurat-i   **SA**
      Perf.morning.3sgm   Ali-nom   3-play.sgm-ind   with-the-ball-gen
      'Ali was playing with the ball in the morning.'

The complement of the verb *'aSbaH* 'be in the morning' is an AdjP in (24a), a PP in (24b) but verbal in (24c).

As far as distinctive lexical contribution is concerned, complex tense constructions are are similar to canonical finite complement clauses where the lexical contribution of the verbs is made up of the lexical interpretation of the matrix verb as well as the complement. Consider the example below.

(24) a Hmad   **bi**-yi-guul   innu   9ali   **bi**-yi-l9ab   bi-il-kurah   hassa
      Ahmad   **Asp**-3-say.sgm   that   Ali   **Asp**-3-play.sgm   with-the-ball   now
    'Ahmad says that Ali is playing with the ball now.'

There are two lexical verbs in (24); *bi-yi-guul* and *bi-yi-l9ab*. Each has distinctive lexical contributions. Accordingly, the clause structure of these constructions plausibly indicates the presence of two VPs on a par with clauses that include finite complement clauses where the lexical verb in the matrix clause projects an independent VP and the lexical verb in the typical finite complement clause projects another VP.

Based on the discussion so far, I conclude that the auxiliaries in complex tense constructions in Arabic have the following properties:

1. They contribute distinctive lexical interpretations.

2. They carry finite aspectual morphology just like the following lexical verbs.

3. They require complements, verbal or non-verbal.

Therefore, I argue that the introduction of auxiliaries project an independent VP projection. This is the first piece of evidence that supports the biclausal status of complex tense constructions in SA and JA.

The biclausal account is further supported by the logical forms of complex tense constructions in Arabic adopting the Neo-Davidsonian framework that unravels the semantic status of such clauses to be biclausal. Consider the following sentence.

(25) kaana   aT-Tifl-u   ʃariba   al-Haliib-a   **SA**
    Perf.be.3sgm   the-child-nom   Perf.drink.3sgm   the-milk-acc
    Ali was in the state of having completed drawing the picture.
    'Ali has/ had written the picture.'

Kaana is a stative verb that asserts the existence of a certain state. The thematic verb *ʃariba* 'drink' is a thematic verb that denotes the writing event with the agent, the child, and the theme, the milk. The following logical representation captures this meaning of Example (25).

(26) Ǝs Ǝe [KAANA (s) & Perf (s) & SHARIBA (e) & Perf (e) &AGENT (aTTiflu, e) &THEME (alHaliiba, e)]

The proposal advanced here has an important implication regarding the clause structure of complex tense constructions as being bi-clausal with the pseudo verb in the matrix clause and the thematic verb is the embedded one.

Comparing complex tense constructions to finite complement clauses is legitimate on the grounds that there are two finite verbs with distinctive lexical contributions. However, the analogy is better between complex matrix clauses and clauses with perception verbs in Arabic for a number of reasons. First, both constructions involve two verbs with independent lexical contribution and selectional properties. Second, both verbs in each construction at hand are fully inflected. Third, the embedded clause is not preceded by a complementizer. These similarities make complex tense constructions resemble clauses with perception verbs more than canonical finite clauses, which allow a complementizer. The contrast below is suggestive.

(27) a. aHmad   gaal   (innu)   9ali   bi-yi-ktub   ir-risalih
      Ahmad   Perf.say.3sgm   (that)   Ali   Asp-3-write.sgm   the-letter

'Ahmad said that Ali is writing the letter.'

b. aHmad   ʃaaf   (*innu)   9ali   bi-yi-ktub   ir-risalih
Ahmad   Perf.see.3sgm   (that)   Ali   Asp-3-write.sgm   the-letter
'Ahmad saw Ali writing the letter.'

c. kaan   (*innu)   9ali   bi-yi-ktub   ir-risalih
Perf.be.3sgm   (that)   Ali   Asp-3-write.sgm   the-letter
'Ali was writing the letter.'

These empirical facts along with the comparison across different types of clauses defend the biclausal analysis of complex tense constructions.

The semantic analysis of the clauses with perception predicates in English supports the biclausal account of these clauses. Consider the following English example taken from Kearns (2000: 193).

(28) a. Jones saw <u>Lina shake the bottle</u>.
b. $\exists e \exists e'$ [SEE (e) & EXPERIENCER (j, e) & STIMULUS (e$'$, e) & SHAKE (e$'$) & AGENT
(l, e$'$) & PATIENT (the bottle, e$'$)]
'There was an event *e* and there was an event *e$'$*. *e* is a seeing and Jones was the experiencer of *e* and *e$'$* was the stimulus of *e* and *e$'$* was a shaking and Lina was the agent of *e$'$* and the bottle was the patient of *e'*.'

This analysis considers the underlined string *Lina shake the bottle*, the embedded one, as a clause on its own that denotes an event and it is the second argument of the perception verb *saw*. In essence, this means that such clauses are biclausal with the embedded verb projects its clause and the matrix verb projects the main clause.

So far, there are two VPs in complex tense constructions. As for the *v*P, I adopt Ouali and Fortin's (2007) claim for Moroccan Arabic to account for the data in SA and JA that the matrix clause lacks the *v*P projection because it lacks a projection for an external argument. The same is true in SA and JA. Only one agentive subject is licensed and it is assigned the thematic role by the lexical verb as is the case with a verb like *yil9ab* in (29). Indeed, only one thematic subject is licensed in complex tense constructions contrary to typical finite embedded clauses. Compare the following cases.

(29) a. *aHmad   **bi**-yi-kuun   9ali   **bi**-yi-l9ab   bi-il-kurah   hassa
Ahmad   **Asp**-3-be.sgm   Ali   **Asp-**3-play.sgm   with-the-ball   now

b. aHmad   **bi**-yi-guul   innu   9ali   **bi**-yi-l9ab   bi-il-kurah   hassa
Ahmad   **ASP**-3-say.sgm   that   Ali   **Asp-**3-play.sgm   with-the-ball   now
'Ahmad says that Ali is playing with the ball now.'

The presence of two thematic subjects results in ungrammaticality in complex tense construction (29a), but it is grammatical and fully accepted in sentences with finite complement clause (29b). This shows that even though both are biclausal, they differ in the extended projections each verb projects. One explanation for the difference at issue is that complex tense constructions allow only one *v*P with a position for one agentive subject only. However, clauses with finite complements allow two *v*Ps: one in the matrix clause; the other in the complement clause.

The next issue concerns the projections that each VP has. First of all, there is an independent projection of aspect above each VP that is affixal in nature and it needs a lexical host. This is supported by data from JA in which the finite Imperfective form contains the aspectual prefix *bi-* as illustrated below.

(30) **bi**-yi-kuun   9ali   **bi**-yi-l9ab   ʃaTaranaj   hassa
Asp-3-be.sgm   Ali   **Asp**-3-play.sgm   chess   now

'Ali is playing chess now.'

Since the auxiliary as well as the lexical verbs have the aspectual prefix *bi-* independently within the same sentence, I claim that each verb has an extended projection of aspect.

The most crucial question now is: are there two TPs in complex tense constructions or only one? Some diagnostics adopted to defend the presence of a TP projection in a clause structure involve: tense morphology on verbs, nominative case on subjects, and the availability of non-thematic expletive subjects. I will take each one in turn. First of all, the distinctive verbal morphology in Arabic encodes aspect and not tense. Hence, I argue that tense morphemes in Arabic are abstract. Nonetheless, the other structural diagnostics show that there are two potential TPs in the clause structure of complex tense constructions. The examples will be exclusively from SA because it shows overt case marking. The subject surfaces in Nominative Case whether the subject belongs to the matrix or embedded clause.

(31) a. kaana   al-'awlad-**u**   ya-l9ab-uuna
     Perf.be.3sgm   the-boys-nom   Impf.3-play-plm.ind
     'The boys were playing.'

   b. 'al-'awlad-**u**   kaan-u   ya-l9ab-uuna
     the-boys-**nom**   Perf.be.3-plm   Impf.3-play-plm.ind
     'The boys were playing.'

   c. kaana   ya-l9ab-u   al-'awlaad-**u**
     Perf.be.3sgm   Impf.3-play-plm   the-boys-**nom**

In (31), it is not clear whether the subject, *al'awlaadu* 'the boys', belongs to the matrix or embedded clause. However, it is clear that the subject belongs to the matrix clause in (31b) but to the embedded clause in (31c). Nonetheless, the presence of expletive subject along with the thematic one makes it clearer that there are two TPs. The expletive subject is licensed in either clause as well. Both subjects can co-occur in the matrix as well as embedded clause. Consider the following examples.

(32) a. kaana   **hunaaka**   **'awlaad-un**   ya-l9ab-uuna   **SA**
     Perf.be.3sgm   there   boys-nom   Impf.3-play-plm.ind
     'There were boys playing.'

   b. kaan   **fiih**   **'iwlaad**   bi-yi-l9ab-uu   **JA**
     Perf.be.3sgm   there   boys   **Asp**-Impf.3-play-plm
     'There were boys playing.'

(33) a. **hunaaka**   **'awlaad-un**   kaan-u   ya-l9ab-uuna   **SA**
     there   boys-nom   Perf.be.3-plm   Impf.3-play-plm.ind
     'There were boys playing.'

   b. **fiih**   **'iwlaad**   kaan-u   bi-ya-l9ab-uu   **SA**
     there   boys   Perf.be.3-plm   **Asp**.Impf.3-play-plm
     'There were boys playing.'

In (32), the expletive appears below *kaana* and if this type of subjects originates in the specifier position of TP. Then, this strongly supports the presence of a TP below the auxiliary. The thematic subject appears below the expletive. This means it is definitely a subject and not a topic preposed to the left periphery of the clause. But what is its position? A

plausible answer is that it is in the Spec-AspP if the verb obligatorily moves to Asp head position to lexically support the affixal morpheme of aspect. The analysis advanced here supports the assumption that there is a TP below the auxiliary. Example (33) defends the argument that there is another TP projected from the auxiliary. The expletive precedes the auxiliary. Its canonical position in the clause structure is Spec-TP. Then the auxiliary projects an independent TP.

The final issue regarding the clause structure of complex tense constructions is whether there are two CPs or just one. My contention is that there is only one matrix CP whereas the embedded clause is only a TP. The use of the complementizer in front of the embedded clause is ungrammatical compared to the entire clause. As there is no difference between SA and JA in this regard, the examples below are exclusively from SA. Below is an illustration.

(34) a. *kaana   anna   9ali-an   ya-l9ab-u   'amr-un   raa'i9-un
         Perf.be.3sgm   that   Ali-acc   3-play.sgm-ind   matter-nom   wonderful

   b. anna   9ali-an   kaana   ya-l9ab-u   'amr-un   raa'i9-un
      that   Ali-acc   Perf.be.3sgm   3-play.sgm-ind   matter-nom   wonderful-nom
      'That Ali was playing is a wonderful thing.'

   c. anna   9ali-an   ya-l9ab-u   'amr-un   raa'i9-un
      that   Ali-acc   3-play.sgm-ind   matter-nom   wonderful
      'That Ali is playing/ plays is a wonderful thing.'

The intervention of the complementizer between the auxiliary and the lexical verb renders Example (34a) ungrammatical. In contrast, when the complementizer precedes the whole complex tense construction including both the auxiliary as well as the thematic verb, the whole sentence is grammatical as shown in (34b). In simple tense construction, the use of the complementizer is also grammatical in the absence of the excluded auxiliary as demonstrated in (34c).

Another piece of evidence comes from wh-questions. If there is a wh-phrase movement, it triggers the left periphery of the clause, which is the Spec-CP. Excluding echo-question, if it is an ordinary question, the wh-phrase ends in front of the whole complex tense constructions. Compare the following cases.

(35) a. maðaa   kaana   ya-ktub-u   9ali-un
         what   Perf.be.3sgm   3-write.sgm-ind   Ali-nom
         'What was Ali writing?'

   b. *kaana   maðaa   ya-ktub-u   9ali-un
      Perf.be.3sgm   what   3-write.sgm-ind   Ali-nom

   c. *kaana   ya-ktub-u   maðaa   9ali-un
      Perf.be.3sgm   3-write.sgm-ind   what   Ali-nom

The grammaticality of (35a) as opposed to the ungrammaticality of (35b-c) indicates that there is one Spec-CP position available for the moved *wh*-phrase *maðaa* 'what'. Putting all these pieces of evidence together, I contend that there is only one CP which is the matrix one whereas the embedded clause is TP and it lacks a CP which explains the grammaticality of Example (35a) and the ungrammaticality of (35b-c).

To conclude the previous discussion, I propose the following syntactic representations of the respective clause structure of simple tense versus complex tense constructions. (Unnecessary details are deleted.)

(36) **Simple Tense construction:**
   a. kataba   9ali-un   ar-risaalat-a
      Perf.write.3sgm   Ali-nom   the-letter-acc

'Ali wrote the letter.'

b. [CP [TP [T] [AspP [Asp *kataba*] [vP [DP *9ali*] [v' [v kataba] [VP [V kataba] [DP arrisaalata]]]]]]]]

(37) **Complex Tense constructions:**

a. kaana	9ali-un	kataba	ar-risaalat-a
Perf.be.3sgm	Ali-nom	Perf.write.3sgm	the-letter-acc

'Ali had written the letter.'

b. [CP [TP1 [T] [AspP1 [Asp kaana] [VP1 [v kaana] [TP2 [T][AspP2 [Asp KATABA][vP [DP 9ali][v][VP2]]]]]]]]]

In short, simple tense constructions are monoclausal. However, I advocate the biclausal structure as a better account of the syntax of complex tense constructions. The next section discusses some merits of the biclausal account.

4. The Discussion of the significance of the biclausal account

The previous discussion favored the biclausal account to the monoclausal one for many reasons. First, the logical representation of complex tense construction is semantically biclausal and this is consistent with the biclausal account. Second, the auxiliary and lexical verbs carry the same finite aspectual morphology. The monoclausal account reveals that the morphology on the auxiliary encodes tense but on the thematic verb is aspectual. This is implausible since they carry identical morphology. The biclausal account reveals that the morphology on the auxiliary and the lexical verbs is aspectual and temporal interpretations are implied. Thus, the treatment of both verbs is consistent. Furthermore, the identical morphology on the auxiliary and lexical verbs is used by scholars to assume the absence of morphological finiteness distinction in Arabic even though the distinction is evident in finite versus non-finite complement clauses as illustrated below.

(38) a. 9ali gaal   inn-uh **[bi-yi-ktub/   katab/   *yi-ktub   ir-risaalah]**
    Ali Perf.say.3sgm that-he [Asp-3-write.sgm/ Perf.write.3sgm/ 3-write.sgm the-letter
    'Ali said that he is writing/ wrote the letter.'

   b. 9ali kaan   **[bi-yi-ktub/   katab/   *yi-ktub   ir-risaalah]**
    Ali Perf.be.3sgm [Asp-3-write.sgm/ Perf.write.3sgm/   3-write.sgm the-letter
    'Ali was writing/ wrote the letter.'

   c. 9ali bid-uh   **[*bi-yi-ktub/   *katab/   yi-ktub   ir-risaalah]**
    Ali Perf.be.3sgm [Asp-3-write.sgm/ Perf.write.3sgm/   3-write.sgm the-letter
    'Ali wants to write the letter.'

Considering the bold embedded clauses in (38a-c), one observes that embedded clauses in complex tense constructions (38b) pattern with canonical finite embedded clauses (38a) rather than canonical non-finite complement clauses (38c). The monoclausal proposal always renders such contexts unexplained and ambiguous because considering finite versus non-finite complement clauses reveals that there exists a finiteness distinction in Arabic varieties. The case of complex tense constructions complicates the picture because it contradicts the observation, though. This analysis elucidates that the complex tense construction is not the appropriate context to assume the lack of finiteness distinction in Arabic because Arabic auxiliaries behave just like other Arabic predicates that select finite complex clauses in contrast with predicates that select non-finite complements.

In spite of its merits, there are some residual problems that may undermine the plausibility of the biclausal account. First, if there are two TPs and tensed negatives in SA land in the head T, then the prediction is that these particles can

occur in T_1 or T_2 interchangeably. In fact, this prediction is not borne out by empirical data as illustrated below.

(39) a. lam   ya-kun   9ali-un   ya-l9ab-u   fi   il-Hadiiqat-i   'ams-i
        not   Impf.3-be.sgm.jus   Ali-nom   3-play-ind   in   the-garden-gen   yesterday-gen
        'Ali was not playing in the garden yesterday.'

    b. *kaana   9ali-un   lam   ya-l9ab   fi   il-Hadiiqat-i   'ams-i
       Perf.be.3sgm   Ali-nom   not   3-play.sgm-jus   in   the-garden-gen   yesterday-gen

    c. kaana   9ali-un   laa   ya-l9ab-u   fi   il-Hadiiqat-i   'ams-i
       Perf.be.3sgm   Ali-nom   not   3-play.sgm-ind   in   the-garden-gen   yesterday-gen
       'Ali was not playing in the garden yesterday.

The grammaticality of (39a) suggests that the tensed negative particle *lam* lands in the matrix T. On the other hand, the ungrammaticality of (39b) questions the status of the embedded TP because the tensed negative particle cannot land in its head. More precisely, even if the assumption under the biclausal account is that the embedded verb projects a TP, these empirical data reveal that the embedded T is different from the matrix T. The only possible negative particle in the embedded clause is the neutral nontensed negative, *laa,* as illustrated by the grammaticality of (39c).

Some researchers argue for the presence of tense projection in the clause structure in Arabic based on the presence of temporal adverbs as they must be anchored by tense syntactically (Mughazy 2004). In line with this assumption, the presence of two TPs leads to the prediction that the presence of two deictic temporal adverbs with contradictory temporal reference should be acceptable similar to ordinary complement clauses. This prediction is not borne out by the data, though.

(40) a. qaala   9ali-un   **'amsi**   ann-uh   sa-ya-zuura-ni   **ɣad-an**
        Perf.say.3sgm   Ali-nom   yesterday-gen   that-he   will-3-visit.sgm-me   tomorrow
        'Ali told me yesterday that he will visit me tomorrow.'

    b. *kaana   9ali-un   **'amsi**   sa-ya-zuura-ni   **ɣad-an**
       Perf.say.3sgm   Ali-nom   yesterday-gen   will-3-visit.sgm-me   tomorrow

Example (40a) is acceptable under two interpretations that the time reference of the embedded clause is established with respect to ST with the RT established in the matrix clause. However, Example (40b) is only acceptable under the interpretation that time reference of the embedded clause is established with respect to the time of the matrix clause only. This gives some insights on the status of the the embedded TP as being different from the matrix TP.

Additionally, Arabic raises serious questions concerning the biclausal account in the sense that the simple verb form may allow two temporal interpretations: one is often associated with simple tense constructions; the other with complex tense constructions. Consider the examples below.

(41) a. 9ali   katab   shi9ir
        Ali   Perf.write.3sgm   poetry
        'Ali wrote/ has written poems.'

    b. 9ali   bi-yi-ktub   shi9ir
       Ali   Asp.Impf-3-write.sgm   poetry
       'Ali writes/ is writing poems.'

There are two potential temporal interpretations implicated from the use of the Perfective: the simple past tense and the

present perfect as illustrated in (41a). The two possible interpretations resulted from the use of the Imperfective are the simple present tense and the present progressive as (41b) reveals.

My contention in this paper is that the biclausal account provides better understanding of the three problems that have been just discussed by assuming the presence of two TPs in complex tense constructions, but they differ in the categorial feature structure of the T heads of the matrix clause as opposed to the embedded in the sense that both Ts have uninterpretable Φ-features, but they differ in their interpretable features. A plausible proposal that can account for the differences between them is that the matrix T hosts the ST/UT whereas the embedded T hosts the RT. This shows that the matrix TP is independent whereas the embedded is dependent. The morphological distinction in Arabic is aspectual, and in either case the temporal interpretations are implicated. The implication that follows from the Perfective aspect is anteriority (before-relation); the implication drawn from the Imperfective is simultaneity (within-relation). What makes the distinction in temporal interpretation in Arabic whether absolute or relative is not the morphology on verbs because it is invariant and in essence it is aspectual. The distinction follows from the clause structure in the sense that if the anteriority relation implicated from the matrix verb, then the ordering of temporal elements is established with respect to the ST/ UT giving the absolute tense interpretation; if the ordering is established within the embedded clause, then it is established with respect to the RT, giving the relative tense interpretation. Tense is covert in both clauses because it is not realized morphologically. This assumption explains why a verb like *kaatab* 'wrote' in simple tense constructions is interpreted as past, but when embedded under *kaana* 'be' as in *kaan katab* it is interpreted as anterior relative to the RT established by the matrix clause.

As for the second issue regarding SA negative particles, these particles are tensed in the sense that they encode absolute tense. They either encode past, *lam,* or future, *lan*, as explained in Example (18). The current proposal provides a straightforward account of why those particles can only occur in the matrix TP. These particles encode absolute rather than relative tense. The monoclausal account will be unhelpful because it is unable to explain the potential two negative positions that differ in tense specification.

Why deictic temporal adverbs with contradictory temporal reference are only acceptable under the dependent temporal reading of the embedded clause on the matrix. The explanation lies in that there is only one TP with ST/ UT interpretable feature, the matrix clause, in complex tense constructions; whereas the embedded T has RT established in the matrix clause. Therefore, only dependent temporal interpretation is acceptable in such constructions.

The last point is the ambiguity of one form with two temporal interpretations, simple as well as complex. Morphology cannot be of any help in this regard because only one verb is at hand. Nonetheless, the syntactic representation may provide a better explanation of how these two tense readings are possible. The biclausal account explains the complex tense interpretations: present perfect or present progressive. Both interpretations involve present tense reference. The present tense reference is a special case in Arabic because it does not require the presence of an overt auxiliary. This is also true in verbless clauses which lack an overt verbal copula and the interpretation is present whereas the overt copula is necessary in other contexts, e.g. past tense. Consider the following representative examples from JA.

(42) a. 9ali   fii   il-bayit
      Ali   in   the-house
      'Ali is in the house.'

   b. 9ali   kaan   fii   il-bayit
      Ali   Perf.be.3sgm   in   the-house
      'Ali was in the house.'

The default interpretation in the absence of any verbal copula is present. However, if other marked interpretations are intended as is the case with past tense reading, the copula is necessary with a suitable verb form from which anteriority can be inferred. Sometimes, the context necessitates the overt realization of the copula in the Imperfective form with present tense interpretation as is evident in the following real-life settings in JA.

(43) a. wein   9ali   hassa?
       where   Ali   now
       'Where is Ali now?'

-   bi-yi-kuun   fii   il-bayit/   - fii   il-bayit
    Asp-3-be.sgm   in   the-house/   - in   the-house
    'He is in the house.'

    b. ma-ana   ʃayif-uh
       not-I   see-1sg
       'I don't see him.'

-   bi-yi-kuun   bi-yi-drus/   - bi-yi-drus
    Asp-3-be.sgm   Asp-3-study.sgm/   Asp-3-study.sgm
    'He is studying.'

    c. layiʃ   layila   ta9ban-ih
       why   Laila   tired-sgf
       'Why is Laila tired?'

-   bi-ti-kuun   naððaf-at/   naððaf-at   il-bayit   kuluh
    Asp-3-be.sgm   Perf.clean.3-sgf/   Perf.clean.3-sgf   the-house   whole-sgf
    'She has cleaned the whole house.'

The examples above show that the verbal copula can be overtly realized. This is optional whether the complement is nonverbal (43a), or verbal as in the present progressive (43b) or the present perfect (43c).

Based on these actual conversations, I assume that the Imperfective copula in present tense contexts is covert but it can be overtly realized. This assumption can be visualized as follows.

	Simple tense	Complex tense interpretation	
		Present progressive	present perfect
Verbal clauses	Lexical$_{Imperfective}$	(AUX$_{Imperfective}$) Lexical$_{Imperfective}$	(AUX$_{Imperfective}$) Lexical$_{Perfective}$
	Lexical$_{Perfective}$		
Verbless clauses	(AUX$_{Imperfective}$)		

In conclusion, I follow Fassi Fehri's (2004) account that the clause structure can be basically monoclausal giving the simple interpretations, but the biclausal proposal accounts for the complex tense interpretation.

5. Conclusion

The current paper mainly proposed a Minimalist account of the syntax of tense in SA and JA. At the outset of the discussion, I demonstrated that the distinctive morphological verb forms encode aspect but not tense because the commonly associated tense readings past versus present cancel with the context, whereas the canonical aspectual interpretations, complete versus incomplete, do not. Accordingly, I argue that the distinction is aspectual, and so this indicates that there is an AspP projection in the clause structure of SA and JA. In spite of not being morphologically realized, tense has an independent projection in the clause structure on semantic-syntactic grounds. It is necessary to account for the implicated temporal interpretations. The syntactic evidence centers around the Nominative Case on subjects, the expletive subject, and the host of tensed negative particles. As for the complex tense constructions, I argue

that they are syntactically and semantically biclausal. However, the status of the T heads is distinct in terms of the categorial feature structure whereby the interpretable feature each head hosts is distinct. The matrix T hosts the ST/ UT; the embedded T hosts the RT. The biclausal account has some merits. It, in essence, offers better understanding of some empirical data that would be otherwise unexplained such as the acceptability of hosting the tensed negative particles, e.g. *lam*, in the matrix T head only. The present study gives further support to the recent accounts that consider the complex tense constructions as biclausal, and it provides solid evidence on the claims that some semantic tense interpretations can be regulated in the syntax.

List of the Phonetic Symbols

Consonants:

Symbol	Arabic corresponding sound
ʾ	أ
b	ب
t	ت
j	ج
H	ح
d	د
ð	ذ
r	ر
z	ز
s	س
ʃ	ش
S	ص
D	ض
T	ط
9	ع
ɣ	غ
f	ف
q	ق(SA)
g	ق(JA)
k	ك
l	ل
m	م
n	ن
h	ه
w	و
y	ي

Vowels:

Symbols	
a, u, i	Short vowels
aa, uu, ii	Long vowels

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التحليل النحوي لبنية الجمل ذات الزمن المركب في اللغة العربية

رانيا نايف العقاربة *

ملخص

تقدم الدراسة تحليلا نحويا للزمن في اللغة العربية ضمن النظرية الأدنويّة. يفترض الباحث أنّ الصيغ الصرفيّة للفعل في العربية لا يدّل على الزمن، وأنّ وجود فصيلة وظيفية مستقلة لعبارة الزمن في بنية الجملة العربية يستدلّ عليه من خلال حالة الرفع التي يأتي عليها الفاعل وإمكانية وجود ضمائر حشويّة وهي خصائص الفصيلة الوظيفية للزمن. ويفترض الباحث أنّ الجمل ذات الأزمنة البسيطة أحادية البنية، والجمل ذات الأزمنة المركبة ثنائية؛ أي تشتمل على عبارتين زمنيتين تختلفان في تركيب خصائصهم التصنيفية. وعليه يمكن تفسير اعتماد الجملة المكتنفة في دلالتها الزمنيّة على العبارة الزمنيّة الرئيسة واستحالة وجود أدوات النفي المعبّرة عن الزمن في الجملة المكتنفة.

الكلمات الدالة: التحليل النحوي، بنية الجمل، الزمن المركب.