Passives in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)

Csilla Kász · Kiel University · ckasz@isfas.uni-kiel.de

1 Passive types in MSA

(1) a **inflectional passive**

buniyat　　　　　*ad-dār-u.*
build.PRF.PASS.3SG.F　　ART-house.M-NOM
'The house was built.' (I-H)

b **derivational passive**

inbanat　　　　*ad-dār-u.*
build.VII.PASS.PRF.3SG.F　ART-house.F-NOM
'The house was built.' (I-H)

c **periphrastic passive**

tamma　　　　*binā'-u*　　　*d-dār-i.*
be.achieved.PRF.3SG.M　build.NMLZ.M-NOM　ART-house.F-GEN
'The house was built.' ~ 'The building of the house was achieved.' (I-H)

2 Basics of MSA morphosyntax / argument marking strategies

- Three-case system (NOM, GEN, ACC).
- Arguments are flagged by case - nominative, accusative - and by prepositions.
- The subject is indexed by the verb (VS > agreement in person and gender, SV > agreement in person, gender and number; [-human] NPs take F.SG agreement.
- Constituent order identifies arguments in constructions with two NP$_{ACC}$.
- Adjuncts are flagged by the accusative case and by prepositions.

3 Types of (non-subject) verb-dependent phrases

(2) a **Argument NP$_{ACC}$**

banâ　　　　*'ab-ī*　　　*d-dār-a.*
build.PRF.3SG.M　father.M.NOM-1SG　ART-house.F-ACC
'My father built the house.' (I-H)

b **Argument PP**

qabaḍa　　　*š-šurṭiyy-u*　　　*'alâ l-liṣṣ-i.*
catch.PRF.3SG.M　ART-policeman-NOM　on ART-thief-GEN
'The policeman caught the thief.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. 2010: 29)

c **Adjunct NP$_{ACC}$ (often lexicalized > adverb)**

ḍaḥaka　　*ṭ-ṭifl-u*　　*ḍaḥkat-an*　　　*sāḏiğat-an.*
laugh.PRF.3SG.M　ART-child.M-NOM　laugh.NMLZ.F-ACC.IDEF　naive.F-ACC.IDEF
'The child laughed [with] a naive laughter.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. 2010: 25)

d **Adjunct PP**

nanāmu　　　*fī*　　*hāḏihi*　　*l-ġurfat-i.*
sleep.IPFV.1PL　in　DEM.SG.F　ART-room.F-GEN
'We are sleeping in this room.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. 2010: 25)

e **Argument subordinate clause**

'a'takidu　　　　*'anna-hu*　　*sa-yu'tī.*
think.IPFV.1SG　SUBJ-3SG.M　FUT-come.IPFV.3SG.M
'I think that he will come.' (I-H)

f **Adjunct subordinate clause**

ḏahaba　　　　*ba'da 'an*　　*'akala.*
go.PRF.3SG.M　after SUBJ　eat.PRF.3SG.M
'He left after he had eaten.' (I-H)

4 Passive - Definitional criteria

Definition of passives based on Haspelmath (1990), Dixon and Aikhenwald (2000), Kennan and Dryer (2007) and Comrie (2008).(In the definition the grammatical roles S, A and P are used.)

(a) Markedness - The passive construction is morphologically marked. It shows more morphological material as its active counterpart and therefore corresponds to the iconicity principle of 'basic semantics' (active voice) > less morphology vs. 'complex semantics' (passives) > more morphology'

(b) Directions of derivation - Passive constructions are derived from a corresponding active construction with the logical consequence that every passive has an active counterpart but actives may lack of a passive one.

(c) Frequency - The active voice shows higher occurrence than its passive counterpart.

(d) A-demotion - The A of the active construction is demoted in the passive construction– either unexpressed or optionally expressed as an adjunct.

(e) P-promotion - The P of the active construction is promoted to the S of the passive counterpart.

(f) Identical proposition - The propositional semantics of the passive construction is identical to that of its active counterpart.

(g) Non-actor[1] S - The S of the passive construction is not an actor.

(h) Implicit actor - Passive involves an implicit actor.

5 Inflectional passives

In Arabic grammars referred to as *maǧhūl* 'unknown', indicating the unknown actor (cf. Restö 1983: 21, Ryding 2005: 657).

5.1 Formal properties of inflectional passives

- Formed by the alternation of the vowel-pattern.
PRF: active: *a*-V/*a-a-a* > passive: *u-i/u-u-i-*, e.g. *kataba* 'wrote > *kutiba* 'was written'
IPFV: active: irregular vowel-pattern > passive: *u-a/u-u-a-*, e.g. *yaktubu* 'write' > *yuktabu* 'be written'
- Do not apply to verbs of stem IX (denoting acquisition of properties) and VII (forms derivational passives/anticausatives and reflexives)

5.2 Restrictions on forming inflectional passives

Inflectional passives do not apply to the following verb-types:

(a) The copula kāna 'to be'

(b) Verbs of predication, e.g. *baqiya* 'remain, stay', *ṭalla* 'continue to be like sth./s.o.', *'aṣbaḥa* 'become'.

(c) Verbs with an obligatory complement denoting quantity or measurement, e.g. *dāma* 'take an amount of time', *kallafa* 'cost'.

(d) Stative verbs, e.g. *ḥasana* 'be good', *ḥayya* 'be alive'.

(e) Verbs denoting the acquisition of state/properties, e.g. *kabura* 'become big/biger', *māta* 'become dead/ die', *ğā'a* 'become hungry'.

(f) Verbs of stem VI denoting symmetrical relations, e.g. *tašābaha* 'resemble each other', *tawāzâ* 'be parallel to each other'.

>> ***verbs with patient-like, non-agentive subject***

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[1] I shall use the term *actor* instead of *agent* in the present paper, since passive applies not only to constructions with agent subject but experiencer and subjects of mental states are also demoted cross linguistically (and in MSA, as we shall see below) in the course of passivization; see Foley and Van Valin (1983) and Kazenin 2001 for similar use of terms.

Further: the possibility of passivization depends on *the existence of a non-subject verb-dependent phrase* that can be promoted to S in the course of passivization. The phrase may be either an argument or an adjunct and it can have a form either of a NP$_{ACC}$ or of a PP. (In case of NP$_{ACC}$ adjuncts: adverbials denoting location, modality or manner are typical, in Classical Arabic temporal adverbials are also attested) (cf. El-Ayoubi et.al. 2010: 20).

5.2 Syntactic properties of inflectional passives
5.2.1 Inflectional passives with canonical subjects
Derived from verbs with (at least one) NP$_{ACC}$ verb-dependent phrase (cf. ex.(1a))
　> A-demotion
　> P-promotion to S (NP$_{ACC}$ > NP$_{NOM}$ + indexing by the passive verb)

- Promotion of an adjunct NP$_{ACC}$

　(3) NP$_{ACC}$ adjunct – modal adverbial (passive counterpart of (2c))
　　　ḍuḥikat　　　　　　*ḍaḥkat-un.*　　　　　*sāḏiǧat-un.*
　　　laugh.PRF.PASSS3SG.F　laugh.NMLZ.F-NOM.IDEF　naive.F-NOM.IDEF
　　　'A naive laughter was laughed.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 25)

　(4) NP$_{ACC}$ adjunct – temporal adverbial (rare in MSA)
　　a　*ṣūma*　　　　　*ramaḍān-a.*
　　　　fast.PRF.3SG.M　Ramadan.M-ACC
　　　　'He was fasting in Ramadan.' (I-H)

　　b　*ṣīma*　　　　　　　　*ramaḍān-u.*
　　　　fast.PRF.PASS.3SG.M　Ramadan.M-NOM
　　　　'It was fasting in Ramadan.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 25)

- Ditransitive verbs with alternative argument coding <NP$_{NOM}$ NP$_{ACC}$ NP$_{ACC}$ ~ NP$_{NOM}$ PP NP$_{ACC}$>

　(5) a　*ʾaʿṭaytu*　　*l-faqīr-a*　　　　*dīnār-an.*
　　　　give.PRF.1SG　ART-poor-ACC　　Dinar-ACC.IDEF
　　　　'I gave the poor a Dinar.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 28)

　　b　*ʾuʿṭī*　　　　　　　　*l-faqīr-u*　　　　*dīnār-an.*
　　　　give.PRF.PASS.3SG.M　　ART-poor-NOM　　dinar-ACC.IDEF
　　　　'The poor was given a Dinar.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 28)

　(6) a　*ʾaʿṭaytu*　　*li-l-faqīr-i*　　　*dīnār-an.*　　　　　.
　　　　give.PRF.1SG　to-ART-poor-GEN　dinar-ACC.IDEF
　　　　'I gave a Dinar to the poor.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 28)

　　b　*ʾuʿṭī*　　　　　　*li-l-faqīr-i*　　　*dīnār-un.*
　　　　give.PRF.PASS.3SG.M　to-ART-poor-GEN　　dinar-NOM.IDEF
　　　　'A Dinar was given to the poor.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 28)

- Ditransitive verbs with the coding frame <NP$_{NOM}$ NP$_{ACC}$ NP$_{ACC}$> allow the promotion of the first NP$_{ACC}$, the second NP$_{ACC}$ remains unchanged (cf.El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 28)).

　(7) a　*ʿayyana*　　　　*l-malik-u*　　*ʾab-ā-ka*　　　　*wazīr-an.*
　　　　appoint.II.PRF.3SG.M　ART-king.M-NOM　father-ACC-2SG.M　minister-ACC.IDEF
　　　　'The king appointed your father to a minister.' (cf.El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 28)

　　b　*ʿuyyina*　　　　　　*ʾab-ū-ka*　　　　*wazīr-an.*
　　　　appoint.II.PRF.PASS.3SG.M　father-NOM-2SG.M　minister-ACC.IDEF
　　　　'You father was appointed to a minister.' (cf.El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 28)

- Passivization of tetravalent verbs, e.g. *ʾabdala* 'give so. sth. in exchange for sth.' < NP$_{NOM}$ NP$_{ACC}$ NP$_{ACC}$ PP>, *ʾarâ* 'make so. consider so./sth. as so./sth.' < NP$_{NOM}$ NP$_{ACC}$ NP$_{ACC}$ NP$_{ACC}$>, is not attested

in my data but I assume that it is possible at least for the first NP$_{ACC}$ to be promoted to the canonical subject of the passive construction.

5.2.2 Inflectional passives with non-canonical subjects
Derived from verbs with (at least one) PP verb-dependent phrase
　> A-demotion
　> no promotion of P to S, (P-phrase remains unchanged) + verb shows the inflection PASS.3SG.M

　(8) a　*qabaḍa*　　　　　*š-šurṭiyy-u*　　　*ʿalâ*　　*l-liṣṣ-i.*
　　　　catch.PRF.3SG.M　　ART-policeman-NOM　on　　ART-thief-GEN
　　　　'The policeman caught the thief.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 30)

　　b　*qubiḍa*　　　　　　　*ʿalâ*　　*l-liṣṣ-i.*
　　　　catch.PRF.PASS.3SG.M　on　　ART-thief-GEN
　　　　'The thief was caught.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 30)

- Passivization of a verb with PP adjunct, e.g. (9) (passive counterpart of (2d)).

　(9)　*yunāmu*　　　　　*fī*　　*hāḏihi*　　*l-ġurfat-i.*
　　　　sleep.IPFV.PASS.3SG.M　in　DEM.SG.F　ART-room.F-GEN
　　　　'There is sleeping in this room.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. 2010: 25)

- A prepositional phrase can be promoted to a non-canonical subject instead of a NP$_{ACC}$ if the place of the NP$_{ACC}$ is in the active construction unoccupied, e.g. (10).

　(10) a　*ʾatâ*　　　　　*(ʿaḥad-an)*　　　*bi-šayʾ-in.*
　　　　come.PRF.3SG.M　(one-ACC.IDEF)　　with-thing-GEN.IDEF
　　　　'He came (to someone) with something.' ~ 'He brought (someone) something.'
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 31))

　　b　*ʾutiya*　　　　　*bi-šayʾ-in.*
　　　　come.PRF.3SG.M　with-thing-GEN.IDEF
　　　　'Something was brought.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 31))

- Many verbs in Arabic display alternative argument structures by marking their arguments optionally by prepositions or by the accusative. According to Schoch (1981: 80) with these verbs both the promotion of the accusative noun phrase and of the prepositional phrase possible, although the promotion of the NP is preferred.

　(11) a　*budiʾa*　　　　　*bi-taqdīm-i*　　*l-buḥūṯ-i*　　*l-ʿilmiyyat-i.*
　　　　start.PRF.PASS.3SG.M with-submission-GEN ART-research.PL-GEN　ART-scientific.F-GEN
　　　　'The presentation of scientific studies was started. (Schoch (1981. Nr. 72))

　　b　*budiʾa*　　　　　*l-ʿamal-u*　　*fī*　　*hāḏā*　　*l-mašrūʾ-i.*
　　　　start.PRF.PASS.3SG.M　ART-work-NOM　in　　DEM.SG.M　ART-project-GEN
　　　　'The work on this project was started.' (Schoch (1981. Nr. 72))

- Verbs with more than one PP-argument allow the promotion of each prepositional argument to a non-canonic subject in a passive construction. Generally holds that the promotion of the more patient-like phrase is preferred (cf. El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 31f).

- The subject position of a passive verb can be filled by a subordinate clause as well, e.g. (12), In this case the verb takes the same inflection as with PP non-canonical subjects.

　(12)　*wa-ʿulima*　　　　*fī nafs-i*　　*l-yawm-i*　　*ʾanna-hu*　　*sa-yarǧaʿu.*
　　　　and-know.PRF.PASS.3SG.M　in　same-NOM　ART-day-GEN SUBJ-3SG.M　FUT-return.IPFV.3SG.M
　　　　'It was known on the same day that he will return.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 27).

Adverbial sentence as non-canonical subject in passive construction was not reported in the consulted literature.

- The lack of agreement between canonical S and verb is attested in literary and informal written language by Meiseles (1979: 295) and by El-Ayoubi et.al (2010: 29).

(13) *yurǧâ*   *muwāfaqat-u*   *l-qiyādat-i.*
 request.IPFV.PASS.3SG.M approval.F-NOM ART-command.F-GEN
 'The approval of the command is requested.' (Meiseles (1979: 295))

- Non-canonical subject in active clause:

(14) *kafâ*   *bi-l-lāh-i*   *šahīd-an.*
 suffice.PRF.3SG.M with-ART-God-GEN witness-ACC.IDEF
 'The God is sufficient as witness.' (Quran 4:79)

5.2.3 The actor/instrument phrase
In prescriptive grammars and in many other studies is stated that the possibility of expressing the actor of the inflectional passive is restricted for informal language use (cf. Ryding 2005, El-Ayoubi et.al. 2010) or its overt expression is completely rejected (cf. Saad 1982).
Schoch (1981: 74) declares that of the more then 10 000 passive constructions he analyzed, not even in 1% consists of an actor phrase.
Prepositions used to mark the actor phrase are: *min* 'from, on the part of', *min qibali* 'on the part of', *min ǧānibi* 'on the part/side of' (15), *min ṭarafi* 'on the part/side of', *ʿalâ yad (yaday, ʾayday)* 'with the help of ~ 'at the hands of' (cf. El-Ayoubi et.al. 2010), *bi-ʾaydī* 'at the hands of', *bi-* 'with', 'by', 'by means' (cf. Buckley 2004).

(15) *ʿūqiba*   *min ǧānibi* *ṣ-ṣulṭāt-i*   *t-turkiyyat-i.*
 punish.PRF.PASS.3SG.M from side ART-autorities-GEN ART-Turkish-GEN
 'He was punished by the Turkish authorities.' (Restö 1983: 26)

According to Holes (2004: 319f) in the contemporary journalistic Arabic, passive constructions with actor phrases are largely present. The actor phrase is marked mostly by *min qibal(i)* or *min ṭaraf(i).* He states that this development towards passives with actor phrases results from the transfer of the syntax of European languages into Arabic.

- Instrument / source is often expressed in passive constructions – phrase marked by prepositions *bi-* 'by, by means of, with' *min* 'from'

(16) *futiḥa*   *l-bāb-u*   *bi-hādā*   *l-miftāḥ-i.*
 open.PRF.PASS.3SG.M ART-door-NOM by/with-DEM.3SG.M ART-key-GEN
 The door was opened by/with this key.'(Ryding 2005: 659)

Infinitive verbal forms in subject position are often interpreted as instruments. If passivized these subjects often are expressed in an actor phrase marked by *bi-* in the passive counterpart, e.g. (17), (cf. (El-Ayoubi et.al. 2010: 24).

(17) a *ʾaṣāba-hu*   *l-ǧunūn-u.*
  seize.PRF.3SG.M-3SG.M ART-madness.NMLZ-NOM
  'Madness struck him.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 24)

 b *ʾuṣība*   *bi-l- ǧunūn-i.*
  seize.PRF.PASS.3SG.M by-ART-madness(VN)-NOM
  'He was struck by madness.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 24)

5.3 Semantics of inflectional passives
- Imperfective passive verbs often express the possibility / impossibility of the action denoted by the verb (cf. Buckley 2004: 612).

(18) a *hādā* *ʾaqall-u* *mā* *yuqālu.*
  DEM.3SG.M little.ELAT-NOM what say.IPFV.PASS.3SG.M
  'This is the least that one can say.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. 2010: 26)

 b *hunā* *lā* *yulʿabu*   *wa-lā* *yusbaḥu.*
  here NEG play.IPFV.PASS.3SG.M and-NEG swim.IPFV.PASS.3SG.M
  'Here one cannot play and swim.' (El-Ayoubi et.al. 2010: 26)

El.Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 26) give a list of negated imperfective passive verbs that are used phrasal and have a meaning of NEG-ADJ-able.

(19) *lā yuṭāqu* insufferable *lā yūṣafu* indescribable
 lā yuṣaddaqu unbelievable *lā yuḥṣâ* countless
 lā yunsâ unforgetable *lā yustaġnâ* indispensable

6 Derivational passives
Derivational passives (together with anticausatives) are called in Arabic grammars *muṭāwiʿ* 'obedient' implying the passive attitude of the subject of the passive construction towards the action expressed by the verb (cf. Ryding 2005: 657).

6.1 Formal properties of derivational passives
Derivational passives are formed in Arabic predominantly by the derivational pattern VII, but they are reported with patterns V and VIII as well.

(20) a stem I C$_1$aC$_2$VC$_3$- → stem VII (i)nC$_1$aC$_2$aC$_3$-
  saraqa 'steal sth.'   *insaraqa* 'be stolen'
  banā 'build sth.'   *inbanā* 'be built'

 b stem I C$_1$aC$_2$VC$_3$- → stem VIII (i)C$_1$taC$_2$aC$_3$-
  mazaǧa 'mix sth.'   *imtazaǧa* 'be mixed'
  ḫanaqa 'strangle so./sth.' *iḫtanaqa* 'be strangled'

 c stem II C$_1$aC$_2$C$_2$aC$_3$- → stem V taC$_1$aC$_2$C$_2$aC$_3$-
  faššara 'explain sth.' *tafaššara* 'be explained'
  farraqa 'separate sth.' *tafarraqa* 'be separated'

6.2 Restrictions on forming derivational passives
- Stem VII does not form derivations of roots with C$_1$= ʾ, w, y, r, l or n. If derivational passives apply to roots with these C$_1$, the derivation is carried out by the stem VIII (cf. Ryding 2005: 565).
- Derivational passives apply on verbs with following coding frames:
 (a) <NP$_{NOM}$ NP$_{ACC}$> e.g. *banā* 'build sth.', *ʾassasa* (II) 'establish sth.'
 (b) < NP$_{NOM}$ PP>, e.g. *ʾattara fī/ʿalâ* (II) 'impress so.'
 (c) < NP$_{NOM}$ NP$_{ACC}$ NP$_{ACC}$ ~ NP$_{NOM}$ PP NP$_{ACC}$>, e.g. *saraqa min/*NP$_{ACC}$ 'steal sth. from so.',
 (d) < NP$_{NOM}$ NP$_{ACC}$ PP ~ NP$_{NOM}$ PP PP >, e.g *ʾadâ bi* / NP$_{ACC}$ *ʾilâ* 'guide / bring so/sth. to.'
The existence of derivational passive counterparts of active verbs is lexically conditioned and is therefore unpredictable (cf. Wehr (1985), Holes (2004), Buckley (2004) Ryding (2005) and El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010)).

6.3 Syntax of derivational passives
 > A-demotion (deletion – no constructions with expressed actor phrase are reported)
 > Only argument P-phrases (not adjuncts) are promoted to the S of the passive counterpart.
 > The promoted P becomes a canonical subject of the passive construction (cf. ex. 1b).

(1) b   *inbanat*   *ad-dār-u*.
          build.VII.PASS.PRF.3SG.F   ART-house.F-NOM
          'The house was built.' (I-H)

6.4 Semantics and Pragmatics

- Write (1967 I: 51) claims that derivational passives in Arabic are actually resultatives.
- Many verbs (in particular of stem VII and V) with passive meaning allow an additional anticausative interpretation.

(21)   *kasara* (I) 'break sth.'   > *inkasara* (VII) 'be broken/ brake'
        qataʿa (I) 'cut sth.'   > *inqataʿa* (VII) 'be cut/rip, end'
        ʾassasa (II) 'establish sth.'   > *taʾassasa* (V) 'be established / base, arise'

- El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 35-38) report the use of following passive verbs as replacement for their inflectional equivalent:

(22)   *taʾallafa* (V) 'be formed'
        taʾakkada (V) 'be confirmed'
        taḥaqqaqa (V) 'be fulfilled'
        tarabbâ (V) 'be raised, brought up'
        taʿazzaza (V)   'be strengthened, fortified'
        inʿaqada (VII) 'be called up'

- Restö (1981) reports the replacement of inflectional passives in Arabic dialects by derivational counterparts.

7 Periphrastic passives

(2) c   *tamma*   *bināʾ-u*   *d-dār-i*.
          be.achieved.PRF.3SG.M   build.NMLZ.M-NOM ART-house.F-GEN
          'The house was built.' ~ 'The building of the house was achieved.' (I-H)

7.1 Verbs used in periphrastic passive constructions

Periphrastic passives similar to the construction in (1c) are recorded beside the verb *tamma* 'be achieved', 'take place' with following verbs: *ǧarâ, waqaʿa* (with similar meaning like *tamma)*, whereat the last two are rather uncommon and according to El-Ayoubi et.al. (2010: 351) *waqaʿ* is used predominantly in texts in Maghreb (cf. Badawi et.al. 2004: 383). Other verbs with this function are *wāǧaha* 'be confronted with sth.', *šahida* 'witness sth.', *ṣādafa* 'come across sth.', *laqiya* 'meet so. / sth.' (cf. El-Ayoubi et.al 2010: 33).

7.2 Restrictions in applying periphrastic passives and its semantics

Periphrastic passives apply to gradual terminative verbs,
- to report "the completion of durative and iterative processes", where the result expressed by the verb is achieved by some kind of cognitive, planned, purposeful process.
- where the result is more important than the process itself.
- where the action is performed usually by more than one individual.
The application of periphrastic passives to total-terminative verbs is not ungrammatical but sounds odd (cf. Holes 2004: 317-320, Buckley 2004: 616).
Every periphrastic passive construction can be paraphrased by an inflectional passive, but not all inflectional passive constructions have a periphrastic equivalent.

(23) a   *qutila*   *talātat-u*   *ʾašḫāṣ*   *ʾams*   *ʾatnāʾa*   *maʿraka...*
          die.PRF.PASS.3SG.M   three-NOM   person.PL   yesterday   during   battle
          'Three people were killed yesterday in a battle...'
                                              (Holes 2004: 318 *aš-šarq al-ʾawsat* 1992)

     b   *ʾtamma*   *qatl-u*   *talātat-i*   *ʾašḫāṣ*   *ʾams*   *ʾatnāʾa*   *maʿraka...*
          be.achieved.PRF.3SG.M killing-NOM   three-GEN   person.PL   yesterday during   battle
          ''Three people were killed yesterday in a battle...'(Holes 2004: 318)

(24) *tamma*   *ʾiʿdām-u*   *talātat-i*   *ʾašḫāṣ*   *ʾams...*
     be.achieved.PRF.3SG.M   execution-NOM   three-GEN   person.PL   yesterday
     'Three people were executed yesterday...' (Holes 2004: 318)

7.3 Syntax of periphrastic passives

> A-demotion
> Nominalization of the active verb, it becomes the S of the passive construction.
> P is expressed as a genitive attribute of the S if it had a form of a NP_{ACC} in the passive construction.

The subject phrase is usually definite (determined by an article, by a genitive attribute or by a possessive suffix) (cf. Buckley 2004: 616).

> The flagging of the P is unchanged in the passive construction, if it has the form of a PP.

(25) *tamma*   *l-istīlāʾ-u*   *ʿalâ* *l-qaṣr-i*   *l-malakīy-i*
     be.achieved.PRF.3SG.M ART-capture-NOM   on   ART-palace-GEN   ART-royal-GEN

     min qibali   *quwwat-i*   *l-infiṣālīy-īna.*
     by   forces-GEN   ART-secessionist-GEN.PL
     'The royal palace was captured by secessionist forces.'
                                              (Holes 2004: 320 *š-šarq al-ʾawsat* 1992).

7.4 Actor phrase

The expression of the actor phrase is with periphrastic constructions widely attested. It is marked mostly by *min qibal(i)* or *min ṭaraf(i)* (cf. (25), Holes 2004: 320).

7.5 Use of periphrastic passives

Periphrastic passives are primarily attested in newspapers in contexts of public trade, administration, and mainly in the field of politics, economy, culture, sport and science. In belletristic texts, these constructions are rare (cf. El-Ayoubi el.al. 2010: 33, Badawi (2002)).

8 Conclusion

8.1 Canonicity

■ Derivational and periphrastic passives correspond to the iconicity principle. In contrast, inflectional passives (formed by vowel change) do not show 'more' morphology and therefore are based on their formal properties non-canonical.

■ All three passive types show clearly a lower frequency of occurrence than their active counterpart.

■ A-demotion takes place in all three passive-types and therefore in this regard all three passives are canonical: While expressed actor phrases are not reported with derivational passives, with inflectional and periphrastic passives, the occurrence of the actor phrase is attested primarily in journalistic texts.

■ In derivational passive constructions, the promotion of P to S(/A) results in canonical subjects, i.e. flagged by the nominative case and indexed by the passive verb. In inflectional passive constructions the S(/A) may be canonical (NP_{NOM}) or non-canonical (PP). Periphrastic passives are non-canonical; The S of the passive construction is a nominalization of the active verb. The P-phrase is embedded in the Subject NP as genitive attribute or completely deleted.

■ The semantic definitional criteria of passives – (*f*) *identical proposition,* (*g*) *non-actor S* and (*h*) *implicit actor* – are fulfilled by periphrastic passives entirely. Inflectional passives, if formed by imperfective verbs, may express deontic or epistemic modality. Derivational passives may have resultative meaning or display unpredictable semantics.

8.2 Productivity and use

■ The productivity of morphological passive morphemes correlates with their morpheme-type of inflection and derivation: While inflectional passives are the subject of clear definable restrictions and are within these restrictions productive, the forming of derivational passives is highly unpredictable.

■ The formation of periphrastic passives is more semantically restricted than that of inflectional passives but it is productive.

■ Inflectional passive constructions with their unmarked semantics and high productivity are most widespread to form passives. In recent language use the replacement of inflectional passives by periphrastic constructions is attested mainly in contexts of public trade, administration, and in the field of politics, economy, culture, sport and science. Furthermore the tendency to choose derivational passives over inflectional ones is recorded for certain lexemes in MSA.

9 Open questions

9.1 Derivational passives:

► Is there a possibility to include the actor phrase into the derivational passive construction?

► Is the semantic classification of the verbs that have derivational passive counterparts and do not allow anticausative interpretation possible (e.g. verbs that require an agent with cognitive ability)?

9.2 Inflectional passives:

► Is there a possibility to promote an adjunct NP_{ACC} in the passive construction if an argument PP is available in the active counterpart?

► Are adverbial sentences promoted to a non-canonical subject of the passive construction?

► Are lexicalized adverbial NP_{ACC} (or PPs) promoted to subjects of passive constructions?

NP_{ACC} / PP in adverbial function	lexicalized NP_{ACC} / PP as adverb	
NP_{ACC} temporal adverbial (4)	*al-yawm-a* ART-day-ACC 'today' ~ 'the day'	NP_{ACC}
cognate NP_{ACC} obj./modal adverbial (1c) *ḍaḥkat-an* *sāḏiġat-an.* laugh.NMLZ.F-ACC.IDEF naive.F-ACC.IDEF 'naive laughter'	*as-sanat-a* ART-year-ACC 'in/during this year' ~ 'the year' *sanat-an* year-ACC.IDEF 'every year' ~ 'a year'	NP_{ACC} NP_{ACC}
PP adverbial (9)	*bi-t-taʾklīd-i* with-ART-garantee-GEN 'certainly' ~ 'with the garantee'	PP

►► New definition of transitivity in Arabic is required > based on passivization / non-subject phrase-marking strategies.

Abbreviations:

1: 1st person / 2 : 2nd person / 3 : 3rd person / II, V, VII, VIII, IX, : stem (derivational pattern) of the verb / ACAUS : anticausative / ACC : accusative / adj. : adjective / ART : article / DEM : demonstrative / ELAT : elative / FUT : future / GEN : genitive / IDEF : indefinite / IPFV : imperfective / JUS : jussive / NOM : nominative / NMLZ : nominalization / NP : noun phrase / PASS : passive / PL : plural / POSS : possessive / PP : prepositional phrase / PRF : perfective / SG : singular / SUBJ : subjunction

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