The wandering subjects of the Levant: "Verbal complexes" in Lebanese Arabic as phrasal movement

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Abstract

Lebanese Arabic (LA) presents a puzzling word order in non-finite subordination contexts where the subject of the matrix clause comes sandwiched between the embedded verb and its complement (Hallman 2011). We present new facts concerning this puzzle, and argue in favor of phrasal movement of TP, which transports both verbs and intervening material above the subject, along the lines of Kayne (2005:42). Importantly, while the surface position of the subject may appear to involve rightward movement, we propose the subject itself only undergoes one simple movement leftwards (as a topic), and that the puzzling order follows from the movement of phrases containing it.

1. Some Preliminaries

Lebanese Arabic, like other varieties of Arabic, allows both VSO and SVO word orders, as illustrated in (1). OVS and OSV orders are highly marked (Aoun, Benmamoun & Choueiri 2010).

1. a. nesi saami daftar-o
   forgot Sami notebook-his

   b. saami nesi daftar-o
   Sami forgot notebook-his
   ‘Sami forgot his notebook.’

The word-order options in embedded clauses are the same as in unembedded ones, giving rise to the following 4 combinations, all of which are equally acceptable.

2. a. nesi saami enno raami jeeb daftar-o VS-SV
   forgot Sami that Rami brought notebook-his
   ‘Sami forgot that Rami brought his notebook’

   b. nesi saami enno jeeb raami daftar-o VS-VS
   forgot Sami that brought Rami notebook-his
   ‘Sami forgot that Rami brought his notebook’

   c. saami nesi enno raami jeeb daftar-o SV-SV
   Sami forgot that Rami brought notebook-his
   ‘Sami forgot that Rami brought his notebook’

   d. saami nesi enno jeeb raami daftar-o SV-VS
   forgot Sami that brought Rami notebook-his
   ‘Sami forgot that Rami brought his notebook’

‘enno, glossed as ‘that’ in (2), is obligatory here while it is optional in non-finite subordination, discussed immediately below. We argue in section 5 that, despite their phonological identity, obligatory and optional ‘enno lexicalize different heads in the left periphery: Obligatory ‘enno lexicalizes Force whereas optional ‘enno lexicalizes Fin (in the sense of Rizzi 1997). Consequently, we gloss optional ‘enno as FIN and continue to gloss obligatory ‘enno as FORCE.
In non-finite subordination cases, the subordinate subject is covert, controlled by the matrix subject in (3). Given the options in (1), the position of the matrix subject is unsurprising: It either precedes or follows the matrix verb, but it precedes all the material from the subordinate clause.

3. a. nesi saami (enno) yjiib daftar-o
    forgot Sami FIN bring.3ms.imperf notebook-his
    ‘Sami forgot to bring his notebook’

   b. saami nesi (enno) yjiib daftar-o
    Sami forgot FIN bring.3ms.imperf notebook-his
    ‘Sami forgot to bring his notebook’

Lebanese Arabic lacks a designated verbal form for infinitives. It employs the agreeing imperfective form in both subjunctive clauses and (the equivalent of) Control infinitives, as in the Balkan family (e.g., Terzi 1992; Dobrovie-Sorin 1994; Ralli & Rivero 2001). The 3rd person imperfective form, yjiib in (3), is therefore the non-finite form. As illustrated in (4), it is ungrammatical in root contexts. This contrasts with the perfective form in (5), which is finite, as well as with imperfective forms preceded by tense particles, as in (6).

4. *raami yjiib daftar-o
   Rami bring.3ms. imperf notebook-his

5. raami jeeb daftar-o
   Rami bring.3ms. perf notebook-his

6. a. raami b-y-jiiib daftar-o
    Rami pres?-bring.3ms.imperf notebook-his

   b. raami raḥ yjiib daftar-o
    Rami fut bring.3ms.imperf notebook-his

   c. raami ʕam yjiib daftar-o
    Rami cont bring.3ms.imperf notebook-his

Like Balkan, the subject of an embedded imperfective verb can be either a null or an overt pronoun or R-expression. When the embedded subject is overt, only a

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1 Some speakers accept (i), but only with a jussive/modal interpretation, and only in VSO order, due, perhaps, to the presence of an unpronounced jussive particle. Given French (ii). One might entertain the idea that yjiib in (i) is preceded by a covert modal/jussive particle, like the Standard Arabic in (iii).

   i. yjiib saami daftar-o
      bring.3sm.imperf Sami notebook-his
      ‘Sami should bring his notebook.’

   ii. Que Sami amène son cahier.
      that Sami bring-subj his notebook

   iii. fal-yajlib saami daftar-a-hu
        jus brings.3sm.imperf Sami notebook-acq-his
        ‘May Sami bring his notebook’

Speakers who reject a jussive reading in (i) do not allow an overt subject in the embedded clause in (7).

3 The nature of b- is controversial, and its discussion lies beyond the scope of this paper. We gloss it as present tense, but remain agnostic as to its syntactic position and semantic contribution. In any analysis of b- in Lebanese Arabic, a verb with the b- prefix is finite and can occur in root contexts, which is what is relevant here.

4 We assume, although nothing crucially hinges on it, that the embedded subject of the embedded clause is pro, not PRO, following one strand of analyses of Balkan subjunctive infinitives ([Farkas 1985;
subjunctive or jussive interpretation is available, not a Control interpretation. (7) illustrates this with a non-pronominal subject in the embedded clause.

7. a. nesi saami ‘enno yelbes l-bebe jakeet-o. 
   forgot.3ms.perf Sami that wear.3ms.imperf the-baby jacket-his 
   ‘Sami forgot that the baby should wear his jacket’
   ‘Sami forgot to make sure the baby wear his jacket.’
   b. fakkar saami ‘enno yettesel marwaan be-z-zbuun. 
   thought.3ms.perf Sami that call.3ms.imperf Marwaan with-the-client 
   ‘Sami thought that Marwaan would/should call the client.’
   (Sami is Marwan’s associate or manager)

These non-finite subordinations are cases of Control, and not of subject Raising. This is supported by the fact that the examples in (8) are both ambiguous between subject and object Control.

8. a. ṭalab saami men marwan (‘enno) yjiib daftar-o 
   asked Sami of Marwan (FIN) bring notebook-his 
   ‘Sami asked Marwan to bring his notebook’
   - Sami asked Marwan to bring Marwan’s notebook.
   - Sami asked Marwan to bring Sami’s notebook.
   b. ṭalab t-telmiiz men l-esteez (‘enno) yfuut ṣa-l-ḥemmem 
   asked the-student of the-teacher (FIN) enter to-the-bathroom 
   ‘The student asked the teacher to go to the bathroom’
   - The student asked the teacher for permission to go to the bathroom
   - The student asked the teacher if the teacher would go to the bathroom

(8a) can either mean that Sami asked Marwan for permission to bring his own notebook (subject Control), or that Sami asked Marwan to bring Marwan’s notebook (object Control). Similarly, (8b) is ambiguous between the subject-Control interpretation in which it is the student who asked the teacher for permission to go to the bathroom, and the object Control interpretation where the student asked the teacher if he would be willing to go to the bathroom (e.g., in order to show him something written on the bathroom wall).

2. Wandering Subjects: The puzzling VVSO word order

A puzzling order emerges in cases of non-finite subordination in Lebanese Arabic. In this environment, the matrix subject can appear to the right of the embedded verb, and to the left of the complement of the embedded verb (Hallman 2011:6-7). Consider (9).

9. a. nesi (‘enno)yjiib saami daftar-o. 
   forgot.3ms.perf (FIN) bring.3ms.imperf Sami notebook-his 
   ‘Sami forgot to bring his notebook’
   b. fakkar (‘enno) yettesel saami fii-kon/be-l-telefon. 
   thought.3ms.perf (FIN) call.3ms.imperf Sami with-you/with-the-phone 
   ‘Sami considered calling you’

In this order, an overt subject is not possible in the embedded clause. As the ungrammaticality of (10) shows, there are no ‘inverted’ equivalents to (7):

10. a. *nesi ('enno) yelbes l-bebe saami jakeet-o.
   forgot.3ms.perf that wear.3ms.imperf the-baby Sami jacket-his
b. *fakkar ('enno) yettesel marwaan saami fii-kon.
   thought.3ms.perf (that) call.3ms.imperf Marwaan Sami with-you

The ungrammaticality of (10) demonstrates that in (9), the wandering subject *saami* is the subject of the matrix clause and not of the embedded clause. We note, in passing, that if *saami* in (9a,b) were the embedded subject, then it would be c-commanded by the null pronoun of the matrix, yielding a Condition C violation.

In addition, the object-Control interpretation of (8a,b) can be replicated with a wandering subject although for reasons we do not understand, the object control interpretation here is more natural with a pronominal object than with a non-pronominal one. Consider (11).

11. a. ṭalab menn-o ('enno) yjiib saami daftar-o
    asked of-him (FIN) bring Sami notebook-his
   - Sami; asked him; (for permission) to bring; Sami’s notebook.
   - Sami; asked him; to bring; his; notebook.
b. ṭalab menn-o ('enno) yfuut t-telmiiz ʕa-l-ḥemmem
    asked of-him (FIN) enter the student to-the-bathroom
   - The student asked him for permission to go to the bathroom
   - The student asked him if he would go to the bathroom

While the VVSO order is not acceptable with an overt subject in the embedded clause, a covert pronominal subject in the embedded clause, distinct from the matrix subject, as in (12), is acceptable for many speakers⁵. Object control is the only option in these cases

12. a. %ʕallam-ni ('enno) erkab raed ʕa-beskleett-o.
    taught-me (FIN) ride.1s Raed on-bike-his
   ‘Raed taught me to ride his bike’
b. % nasseeni ('enno) jiib saami daftari
    forget-me (FIN) bring.1s Sami notebook-my
   ‘Sami made me forget my notebook’

These considerations, in addition to a number of arguments presented by Hallman (2011), lead us to set aside a reviewer’s suggestion that the VVSO order is derived by backward Raising – in the sense of e.g., Polinsky and Potsdam (2006).

We are now faced with a puzzle: How does the subject get to where it is in (9)?

Hallman (2011) explores this puzzle, and rules out a number of options. We consider his arguments against rightward PF movement of the subject, syntactic lowering of the subject, and backwards control (Polinsky & Potsdam 2002) to be valid.

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⁵ 57% of the speakers who found (9) acceptable also found (12) acceptable. Although speakers are not unanimous about the judgement of (12) the Lebanese Arabic speaking co-author of this contribution finds the sentence grammatical.
Hallman’s own proposal is that the verb moves from $V$ of the subordinate clause to $T$ of the matrix clause, forming an increasingly complex verbal complex, as in Figure 1, which diagrams the derivation of (9a).

This analysis correctly captures the word order in (9). However, as we show in the following section, new data concerning adverbs and negation turns out to be problematic for this analysis.

3. The case for Phrasal Movement: Negation and Adverbs

As the previous section concludes, Hallman’s proposal correctly captures the word order in (9). However, there are reasons to consider other alternatives. First, we note that Hallman’s analysis links the formation of verbal complexes in Arabic to restructuring phenomena in Germanic. But Germanic (and Romance) restructuring is restricted to certain classes of verbs, typically modals, (functional restructuring verbs) and, in certain languages try, allow (lexical restructuring verbs) (Cinque 2006; Wurmbrand 2001; 2004). In Lebanese Arabic, by contrast, typical non-restructuring verbs can give rise to the structure in (9), like aal ‘said’, nesi ‘forgot’, arrar ‘decided’. This suggests that (9) may not be a restructuring configuration.6

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6 VVSO orders, similar in form to (9), have been documented in Romance. Costa (2004) cites the following European Portuguese example (his (9a), but notes that the order is only acceptable with some finite verbs with nonfinite complements, with decide, as in (i), but not with refuse. Whether Portuguese (i) involves restructuring or not remains to be determined, but the fact that there are no restrictions on the matrix verb in Lebanese Arabic argues that, at least in this language, VVSO orders do not come about through restructuring.

(i) Decidiram ler todos os alunos esse livro.
   Decided-3pl read all the students that book
Second, in the presence of negation and adverbs in the subordinate clause, the matrix subject can follow all the material from that clause, and still precede the complement, as illustrated in (13). The formation of this sentence, given Hallman’s proposal in Figure 1, would require the subordinate verb to incorporate with the matrix verb, with negation, as well as with an unlimited number of adverbs. While head movement through Neg⁰ may be possible, pied-piping adverbial material by a head is less plausible. This suggests that a non-head movement approach should be explored.

13. a. nesi (enno) ma deghri yjiib saami daftar-o forgot.3ms.perf (FIN) not immediately bring.3ms.imperf Sami notebook-his ‘Sami forgot to not immediately bring his notebook’
   b. nesi (enno) ma ased yjiib saami daftar-o forgot.3ms.perf (FIN) not intentionally bring.3ms.imperf Sami notebook-his ‘Sami forgot to not intentionally bring his notebook’

A more serious complication for head movement emerges when an adverb linearly follows the verb in the subordinate clause. In such cases, the matrix subject can still follow that adverb from the subordinate clause, as in (14).

14. a. nesi (enno) ma yjiib deghri saami daftar-o forgot.3ms.perf (FIN) not bring.3ms.imperf immediately Sami notebook-his ‘Sami forgot to not immediately bring his notebook’
   b. nesi (enno) ma yjiib ased saami daftar-o forgot.3ms.perf (FIN) not bring.3ms.imperf intentionally Sami notebook-his ‘Sami forgot to not intentionally bring his notebook’

The adverbs in (14), deghri ‘immediately’ and asd ‘intentionally’, modify the verb yjiib ‘bring’, and follow it. Presumably, this involves the verb moving to a functional position above the adverb. If the position of the subject in (14) were due to head movement of yjiib ‘bring’ to the matrix T, forming an increasingly complex verbal complex, then the adverb modifying it would either tag along and be forced to precede the verb, as in (13), or be left behind, in which case it would not move above the subject of the matrix, as in (15).

15. nesi (enno) ma yjiib saami deghri daftar-o forgot.3ms.perf (FIN) not bring.3ms.imperf Sami immediately notebook-his ‘Sami forgot to not immediately bring his notebook’

Crucially, a verb-raising account does not leave an option for the verb to move above an adverb, then drag it along behind it in its further head movement. So, a verb-raising account would incorrectly predict the grammatical order in (14) to be ungrammatical.

4. The Phrasal Movement Alternative

We propose that the wandering subject (VVSO) order is the result of ‘enno ‘that’ merging above the matrix verb, and attracting the non-finite TP to its specifier, like French & Italian infinitives in Kayne (1999, 2004).

Kayne argues that the French complementizer de and its Italian counterpart di do not form a constituent with the non-finite TP. Rather, the non-finite TP is merged directly with the main verb, and de/di merges above it. De/di attracts the infinitival TP to its specifier and then raises to an immediately higher head, W. De/di+W then attract the finite VP to its specifier. Adapting Kayne’s approach to LA, we propose that (1) is derived as follows:
First, The complement TP is merged with the matrix verb and the subject externally-merged in the matrix Spec/vP, (16)

   Sami forgot.3ms.perf. bring.3ms.imperf notebook-his

Our analysis crucially exploits Belletti’s (2004) 'low' left periphery for foci and topics. We argue that the object of the embedded clause, [DP daftar-o], moves to this low focus position in the matrix clause, see also Belletti (2015). We diverge from Belletti’s original proposal by assuming that the ‘low’ left periphery here is on the edge of AspP, not vP. AspP is a label for a clause-medial projection within the aspectual field above vP and below modals and tense particles. We assume here that the Arabic imperfective verb moves to this Asp head and not to T. (What is crucial is not Asp, but some position lower than T; see Hallman (2015), Shlonsky (1997)). One reason for this is that the imperfective verb can be preceded by various tense, aspect and modal affixes, as in (17) (cf. (6) and note 2 on the prefix b-).

17. keen ʕam  b-yi’ra  (lamma  ‘jiit)
   was  progressive  pres?2-read.3ms.imperf  (when  come.1s.perf)
   ‘He was reading when I came in.’

v/V-movement to Asp and focalization of the embedded object give rise to the intermediate structure in (18). The matrix subject [DP saami] then moves – perhaps in intermediate steps – to a topic position in the pre-AspP low left periphery, yielding (19).7


Topicalization of non-subjects in Lebanese (and many other varieties of Arabic) is similar to Romance clitic left dislocation, in requiring the topic to be associated with a clitic, (Cinque 1990). Like in Italian (Rizzi 1997), left peripheral focus in Lebanese Arabic is not associated with a clitic. Note that the order Top>Foc is perfectly licit in the Lebanese Arabic 'high' left periphery, (20). There is no reason for which this order be disallowed in the low left periphery.

20. sami  l-kteeb  ʕata  marwaan  
   Sami the-book  gave  Marwan
   ‘Sami gave the book to Marwan’

After topicalization of the subject, the non-finite complementizer ’enno, which we take to correspond to Rizzi’s (1997) Fin, merges. Note that ’enno is only optionally-realized phonetically, a point to which we return.


The complement AspP (or TP) is then attracted to the specifier of Fin (’enno).

7 We put the embedded subject in Spec/AspP – rather than Spec/TP – for reasons having to do with other properties of the syntax of Lebanese Arabic and other Arabic varieties, but which are not germane to this paper. Nothing in the analysis proposed here needs to be altered if the subject turned out to be in Spec/TP.
22. \([\text{FinP} [\text{AspP} [\text{DP pro} \text{ bring t}_1] 3 (\text{’enno}) [\text{TP…[TopP [\text{DP saami}]]} 2 [\text{FocP [\text{DP his book}]]} 1 [\text{AspP forgot [vP t}_2 t_{v/V} [\text{TP t}_3]]}\]

The Fin head, ‘enno, then moves to an immediately higher head, \(W\) yielding (23). And finally, ‘enno+W attract the matrix AspP (or TP, not diagrammed) to its specifier, yielding (24).

23. \([\text{WP(’enno)}+\text{W[FinP [AspP [DP pro] bring t}_1] 3 t_{\text{FIN}}[\text{TP...[TopP [DP saami]]} 2 [\text{FocP [DP his book]}] 1 [\text{AspP forgot [vP t}_2 t_{v/V} [\text{TP t}_3]]}\]

24. \([\text{WP [AspP forgot [vP t}_2 t_{v/V} [\text{TP t}_3]]} 4 (\text{’enno})+\text{W[FinP [AspP [DP pro] bring t}_1] t_{\text{FIN}} [\text{TP...[TopP [DP saami]]} 2 [\text{FocP [DP his book]}] 1 t_4]\]

These operations are schematized in Figure 2, with the optional movements in dotted arrows, and the obligatory ones in solid arrows.

Figure 2

These operations derive the puzzling word order in (9), as well as the fact that non-head material moves along with the subordinate verb above the matrix subject, as observed in (13) and (14).
5. Wandering subjects in finite clauses

The order in (9) with a *finite* subordinate verb, i.e., with a subordinate verb in the perfective or in the imperfective preceded by prefixes, yields ungrammaticality under a neutral intonation.

25. a. *nesi 'enno jeeb saami kteeb-o.
   forgot.3ms.perf that bring.perf.3ms Sami book-his
   'Sami forgot that he would bring his book.'

   b. *nesi 'enno ha-yjiib saami kteeb-o.
   forgot.3ms.perf that fut-bring.3ms Sami book-his
   'Sami forgot that he would bring his book.'

Even though 'enno appears in both finite and non-finite clauses, it is optional in nonfinite ones and obligatory in finite clauses. We interpret this difference to mean that two different heads are involved. In finite clauses such as (25), we argue, obligatory 'enno lexicalizes a Force head - the equivalent of French que, (as opposed to de), while the optional 'enno in nonfinite clauses such as in (3) and (9) realizes FIN.

As a Force head, 'enno is selected by the matrix verb and merges below it, “between” the matrix and embedded clauses. Consider (26).

26. [TP [DP Sami] forgot [Forcep 'enno [TP ... will [AspP bring [DP his book]]]]

Though the two 'enno's have the same phonological form in Lebanese Arabic, they have different selectional properties, and originate from different lexical items in Classical Arabic, an in (27) and 'anna in (28), roughly matching the finite/non-finite complementizers in Romance and Germanic.

27. qarrar-tu an 'aqifa
decide.1s.perf de/di stand.1s.imperf
'I decided to stand'

28. sami-tu 'anna-hu sa-ya'ti ghadan
heard.1s.perf that-he FUT-come.3ms.imperf tomorrow
'I heard that he will come tomorrow.'

Moreover, Classical (as well as Modern Standard) Arabic ‘anna must be followed by a topic, as in (29), a fact which Shlonsky (2000) interprets to mean that it cannot lexicalize FIN but FORCE, as FIN is lower than all topics (as per Rizzi 1997). Inversely, ‘an cannot be followed by a topic, as illustrated in (30), suggesting that it obligatorily occupies a lower position than TopicP.
There are three kinds of verbs: Some verbs select both finite and nonfinite complementizers, like ‘arrar ‘decide’ and nesi ‘forget’, in (31). Some verbs can only take a finite complement clause, e.g. semef ‘hear’, in (32) and some verbs must select nonfinite enno, e.g. jarrab ‘tried’, as in (33). The two complementizers in Lebanese Arabic are distinguished, not in terms of their phonological form but in terms of a phonological diacritic +/- obligatory.

31. a. ‘arrar/nesi/feraf/fakkar/nawa  ’enno ḥa-yrouḥ
decided/forgot/knew/thought/decided  that  fut-go.imperf
b. ‘arrar/nesi/feraf/fakkar/nawa  ’enno ḥa-yrouḥ
decided/forgot/knew/thought/decided FIN  go.imperf:

32. a. semef/’aal/’aflan  ’enno ḥa-yrouḥ
heard/said/declared  that  will-go.imperf
b. *semef/’aal/’afla  (’enno) yrouḥ
heard/said/declared FIN  go.imperf

33. a. *jarrab/*haawal  ’enno ḥa-yrouḥ
tried/attempted  that  fut-go.imperf
b. jarrab/haawal  (’enno) yrouḥ
tried/attempted FIN  go.imperf

Consider (34), the hypothetical structure underlying (25) - a finite clause embedded under forgot (see Note 7 for our decision to place the embedded subject in Spec/AspP).
34. \([TP [AspP [DP saami]] forgot [ForceP 'enno [TP [AspP [DP pro] bring [DP his book]]]]]\\)

We now show that the operations leading to the derivation of the VVSO order in nonfinite clauses (see (16)-(24) and Figure 2) cannot apply in finite clauses to yield (25).

Since the embedded clause is a full CP, it has its own focus position in its left periphery to which the object would move when focused, before the matrix clause is merged (35). The subject of the matrix clause is then topicalized in the main clause, resulting in (36).

35. \([TP [AspP [DP saami]] forgot [ForceP 'enno [TP [FocP [DP [aspi his book]]1 [AspP [DP pro] bring \(t_1\)]]]]]\\)

36. \([TP [AspP [TopP [DP saami]]2 [VP t_2 forgot [ForceP 'enno [FocP [DP [his book]]1 [TP [DP pro] bring \(t_1\)]]]]]\\)

A Kaynian derivation at this point would derive an acceptable order, but not the VVSO order. The lowest « clausal » constituent accessible to phrasal movement targeted by Fin is ForceP. (The embedded TP is enclosed within the CP phase and thus inaccessible to probe by matrix Fin). This results in (37).

37. \([Fin [ForceP 'enno [FocP [DP [his book]]1 [TP [DP pro] bring \(t_1\)]]3 \& [TP [TopP [DP saami]]2 [VP t_2 forgot \(t_3\)]]]\\)

Merging \(W\) results in (38)

38. \([WP \& [Fin [ForceP 'enno [FocP [DP [his book]]1 [AspP [DP pro] bring \(t_1\)]]3 \& [TP [TopP [DP saami]]2 [VP t_2 forgot \(t_3\)]]]]\\)

\(W\) attracts the matrix TP to its specifier, resulting in (39).

39. \([WP [TP [VP t_2 forgot \(t_3\)]] \& [Fin [ForceP 'enno [FocP [DP [his book]]1 [AspP [DP pro] bring \(t_1\)]]3 \& [TopP [DP saami]]2]]\\)

The resulting order would then be (40), which is acceptable under a contrastive focus reading of \(kteebo\). This, however, is not the puzzling order of interest. Crucially, the matrix subject Sami is not sandwiched between the embedded verb and its object.

40. \(nesi 'enno kteebo \(h\)-ajiib Sami forgot that book-his fut-\(\text{bring}\) Sami 'Sami forgot that it was his book he would bring'\\)

So a VVSO order is not expected in finite clauses, and indeed, it is not possible in normal circumstances.

In fact, a VVSO order is possible in finite clauses only with a highly marked prosody, and under a very specific interpretation: When either the matrix verb or the subordinate verb is stressed and is interpreted contrastively, as in (41). Here, we make a tentative proposal. Like in the non-finite case, the complement of the subordinate verb moves, but this time not to the clause-internal left-periphery but rather to the matrix one (42). The matrix subject [DP saami] moves to a yet higher topic position.
(43). Then, the matrix TP can be contrastively-focused, and moved above the topicalized subject and complement (44).

41. \textit{nesi ‘en} ha-yjiib \textit{saami kteeb-o}
\textit{Sami forgot.3ms.perf that fut-bring.3ms Sami book-his}
‘Sami forgot that he would bring his book (he didn’t pretend to)’ (ungrammatical without the stress on \textit{nesi})

42. \([\text{Foc} [\text{DP his book}]_1 [\text{TP [DP Sami] forgot [CP that [TP pro will bring [DP t1]]}}]

43. \([\text{Top[DP saami]}]_2[\text{Top[DP his book]}]_1 [\text{TP t2 forgot[CP that[TP pro will bring [DP t1]]}}]

44. \([\text{Foc [TP t2 forgot [CP ‘en} no that [TP pro will-bring t1]_3 [\text{Top [DP Sami]}]_2 [\text{Top [DP his book] t3.}}]

This results in the word order and stress pattern of (41), with a stressed matrix verb. In this derivation, Lebanese Arabic would be making use of two focus positions in the left periphery, separated by a Topic (the matrix subject). Note that the two foci have different informational content: The focalized object here (as well as in the nontinite cases, where it targets a ‘low’ focus position), is new-information focus, it answers a wh-question. The focalized TP however, is contrastive. The existence of two focus positions in the left periphery, one contrastive and one for new information, is described for Sicilian by Cruschina (2011).

6. Conclusion

Lebanese Arabic (LA) presents a puzzling order in subordination contexts where the subject of the matrix clause comes sandwiched between the embedded verb and its complement (Hallman 2011). In this paper, we revisited this puzzling word order, and uncovered new facts that militate for a phrasal (TP) movement carrying both verbs and intervening material above the subject, along Kayne (2005:42). We presented the details of this proposal, and how it accounts for the wandering subject phenomenon, as well as for the new facts.

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