

A Minimalist-Based Approach of Tense and Subject Features in Standard Arabic and Yemeni Arabic

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Abstract:

The present study is an investigation of the syntactic issues of Tense and Subject features in SA and YA. This study is cast within the MP advocated by Chomsky (1993, 1995). The main objective of the study is to examine the structural properties of the subject in SA and YA and its relationship with its verb. More specifically, the study shows that the subject in SA and YA has two forms, namely lexical noun, and suffixed pronoun. Therefore, the suffixed morphemes within the verb have been proved to be real pronoun subjects of the verb whether they occur alone within the verb or followed by a lexical DP as the case in some of YA sentences. Based on empirical evidence, the preverbal DP was affirmed to be a topic that occupies the [Spec TopP] while the post-verbal DP, which occurs after a suffixed pronoun, was proved to be a noun in apposition that occupies a position below VP.

Keywords: Subject, Minimalist program, DP-features; suffixed pronoun, lexical DP.

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تحليل الزمن وخصائص الفاعل في اللغة العربية واللهجة اليمنية العربية بناء على برنامج الحد الأدنى

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ملخص:

يعد هذا البحث تحقيقًا في القضايا النحوية للزمن وخصائص الفاعل في اللغة العربية الفصحى واللهجة اليمنية العربية، وقد تم وضعه في إطار برنامج الحد الأدنى الذي دعا إليه تشومسكي (1993، 1995). ويهدف إلى فحص الخصائص الهيكلية للفاعل في كل من اللغة العربية واللهجة اليمنية العربية وعلاقتها بفعالها. وقد أظهر البحث أن للفاعل في اللغة العربية واللهجة اليمنية العربية شكلين: هما الاسم الظاهر والضمير المتصل؛ لذلك أثبت البحث أن اللواحق المتصلة بالفعل، هي ضمائر فاعل حقيقة للفعل سواء ظهرت مع الفعل بمفردها أو ظهرت متبوعة باسم ظاهر كما هو الحال في بعض الجمل في اللهجة اليمنية العربية. واستنادًا إلى الأدلة التجريبية فقد تم التأكيد أن الاسم الذي يأتي قبل الفعل هو مبتدأ يحتل موقع المحدد في العبارة الاسمية أما الاسم الظاهر الذي يظهر بعد الفعل المتصل به ضمير الفاعل فإنه بدل يحتل موقع الاسم تحت الفعل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفاعل، برنامج الحد الأدنى، خصائص الاسم، الضمير المتصل، الاسم

الظاهر.

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1. Introduction

As a sentential argument, the subject in Arabic syntax has been studied by many Arabic grammarians (Hariry, 2017; Ibn Ajroom, 2013; Al Galayani, 1994; Khefajy and Azzayni 1961); and Al Azhary (2011 among others). Indeed, many modern researchers have proposed new perspectives based on Generative Grammar (GG) (Fassi Fehri, 1993). However, other researchers have handled the subject features in correlation to some minimalist assumptions to check the implementation of the economy principles implementations (see Al Qurashi et al (2020), Tedj, G. & Souadkia, M. (2020), Al Qahtani & Al Zahrani (2020), Al Buhayri (2019), Al Qahtani (2016), Aoun et al. (1994), Jouini (2014), Fassi Fehri (2004), and Soltan (2011), among others).

Although the issue of T(ense)-subject has been widely studied with regard to word order, and licensing features, the debate on such issues is still ongoing. Indeed, Modern syntacticians agree that the lexical subject in SA occurs in two alternative positions, namely, post-verbal position or preverbal position (see Fassi Fehri, 1993 and Fakih, 2017). However, these alternative positions of the subject led Modern syntacticians to argue that verbs show two types of agreement, namely partial agreement, and full agreement (see Fakih, 2016). Partial agreement occurs solely in SA syntax in the usual case when a lexical subject follows the verb. On the other hand, full agreement, according to the modern analysis, is displayed in both SA and its varieties, when the subject occurs preverbally and the verb is followed by a suffixed morpheme. Nevertheless, it is also assumed that the latter type of agreement also occurs in SA dialects, when the subject appears post-verbally along with a suffixed morpheme attached directly to the verb. From this point, the suffixed morphemes were always shown as number agreements of the subject.

Based on empirical evidence, we will argue, in this paper, that the subject in SA and YA appears in two forms, namely lexical DP or suffixed pronoun. The lexical subject will be assumed to bear interpretable features that match with other uninterpretable features on the T, then a [T, Subj] relationship results. While the verb bears uninterpretable features, which are also checked with other interpretable features on T so that a [T, v] relationship results. This separate relationship between [T, Subj] and [T, v] will lead us to propose that the verb in SA and YA shows technically partial agreement whenever the lexical subject occurs.

Moreover, we will argue that the suffixed morphemes are real subject pronouns because they bear interpretable features of nouns rather than features of verbs. In consequence, we posit that the suffixed morphemes are suffixed subjects of the verb whether they appear alone within the verb or followed by a full lexical DP as the case in YA sentences

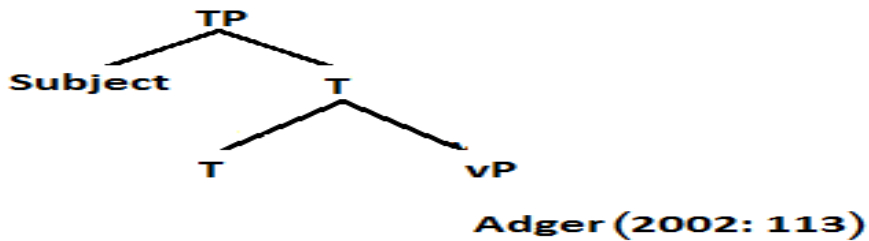
Concerning the position of the subject, we will show that the subject in SA and YA, either lexical DP or suffixed pronoun, is base generated on the Spec of the light vP. In this regard, the preverbal DP in both SA and YA will be considered a Topic that occupies the specifier position of the Topic Phrase [TopP] while the postverbal DP along with the suffixed pronoun as the case in YA will be considered a noun on apposition (badle).

This paper is organized as follows: section two is a brief sketch of the minimalist program in light of the current study. Section three provides a preliminary consideration of the Subject in SA. This section is a pavement for the minimalist analysis of the subject on both SA and YA. Section four is a minimalist account of [T-subject] in SA and YA. Section five illustrates the subject projection and tense features, and section six is a conclusion.

2. Theoretical framework

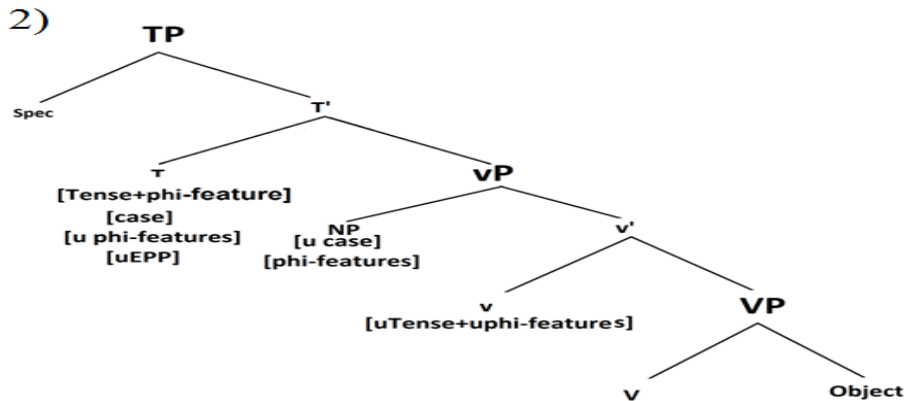
The MP is a syntactic theory proposed by Chomsky (1993). It has undergone several developments and many revisions have popped up since **Chomsky's Minimalist Program (1995)** emerged. According to this theory, "structures are built up in the derivation and are assumed to project as Tense Phrases (TP)"⁽¹⁾. In other words, the properties of sentences are essentially projections of the properties specified on T as in (1).

1)



The MP states that T bears two types of features that show two types of relationships, namely a [T, v] relationship and a [T, subject] relationship. For [T, v] relationship, Chomsky (1995) assures that the agreement relationship is built between the Tense and the verb, where the T bears an interpretable tense feature [tense], and interpretable verb phi-features [Φ -features]; while the verb bears an uninterpretable tense feature [utense] and uninterpretable verb phi-features [$u\Phi$ -features]. As for the [T, subject], according to the MP, it is a projection of the T-subject relationship. The T bears an interpretable nominative case feature [case: nom], uninterpretable nominal phi-features [$u\Phi$ -features], and a strong uninterpretable EPP feature⁽²⁾; meanwhile, the subject bears an uninterpretable nominative case [ucase: nom] and interpretable nominal phi-features [Φ -features].

In consequence, the verbal features [+V] on T are checked by verbal heads, and the nominal features [+D] on T are checked by nominal heads⁽³⁾. Accordingly, we get the following structure of TP represented as in (2) below:



3. Preliminary considerations

According to the traditional Arab grammarians, the subject is always considered a nominative noun that follows its verb⁽⁴⁾. Therefore, the important property of the subject that distinguishes it from other DPs in a clause is its close adjacency to the verb. Indeed, the subject inevitably appears in two forms, namely a Noun Phrase or a suffixed pronoun. The former may occur as a lexical noun or 'an estimated verbal noun'. The latter, on the other hand, has two forms; overt/visible pronoun or covert/invisible pronoun. For purposes of the current paper, consider the following examples;

3. a. qama Zaid-un SA
 woke-up-3s.m Zaid-Nom
 'Zaid woke up.'

- b. qama-t Hind-un SA
 woke up- 3s.f Hind-Nom
 'Hind woke up.'
4. a. qama SA
 woke up-3s.m invisible pro-3s.m he
 'He woke up.'
- b. qama-t SA
 woke up-3s.f pro-she
 'She woke up.'
- c. qam-aa SA
 woke up- dual.m/f pro-they
 'They (dual) woke up.'
- d. qam-uu SA
 woke up-3pl.m pro-they
 'They woke up.'

Besides the occurrence of the subjects in post-verbal positions, the above examples show that the subjects appear as lexical nouns in (3a) and (3b), but as suffixed pronouns in (4 a,b,c, and d). Nevertheless, according to *the kufi grammarians* perspective⁽⁵⁾, the subject may precede its verb if the verb keeps its singular form and is not affected by the number of the preceded subject just as (5 and 6) below show⁽⁶⁾.

5. a. Zaid-un qaama SA
 Zaid- s.m.Nom woke up-3s.m
 'Zaid woke up.'

- b. a-ZZaid-aani qaama SA
Zaid- dual.m.Nom woke up-3pl.m
'The two Zaid's woke up.'
6. a. Hind-un qaama-t SA
Hind s.f.Nom woke up- 3s.f
'Hind woke up.'
- b. al-hind-aani qaama-t SA
Hind- dual.f.Nom woke up- 3pl.f'
'The two Hinds woke up.'
- c. al-hind-aatu qama-t SA
Hind pl.f- Nom woke up- 3pl-f
'The hinds woke up.'

With regard to (5) and (6), if the subject occurs preverbally and the verb is affected by its number as the case in YA and other SA's dialects, the DP loses its function as a subject and is transformed to a topic⁽⁷⁾ building a novel nominal sentence that consists of the topic and the verbal predicate⁽⁸⁾. Consider (7) for clarification of a subject realization as Topic in YA:

7. Al-ḡial kharaj- uu YA
the boys-topic-Nom went out-3pl.m pro-3 pl.m. Nom
'The boys, (they) went out.'

Concerning the traditional Arab grammarians' accounts, (8a) and (8b) below are novel structures, which occur among an ancient era of Arabic language known as /Lugat al-baragith/ 'the baragith language'⁽⁹⁾. Consider the following sentences from SA and YA, respectively.

8. a. *nam-uu* *al-awlaad* SA
 slept-3s.m pro-pl m. the boys
 ‘They slept, (the boys).’
- b. *ragad-uu* *al-jahal* YA
 ‘slept-3s.m pro- pl. m. the boys’
 ‘They slept, (the boys).’

For the analysis of (8a/b), the traditional Arab grammarians suggest two fold analyses. The first view assumes that (8a/b) are verbal sentences. The suffixed morpheme /-uu/ is considered to function as a subject pronoun while the post verbal lexical DP /*al-awlaad*, or *al-jahal*/ ‘the boys’ is a ‘noun in apposition’⁽¹⁰⁾. The second view proposes that (8a/b) is a nominal sentence, where the suffixed morpheme /-uu/ is treated as a subject pronoun and the lexical DP /*al-awlaad*, or *al-jahal*/ ‘the boys’ as an extraposed topic ‘*mubtadaʔ moʔakhar*’⁽¹¹⁾. For the same reason, the verb and its subject pronoun /*nam-uu* or *ragad-uu*/ ‘they slept’ are considered together as an advanced predicate (dislocated predicate) for the extraposed topic /*al-awlaad*, or *al-jahal*/ ‘the boys’.

4. A minimalist account of T-subject

Under a minimalist approach, the subject is an argument that holds two important features, namely nominative case feature, and noun phi-features. It occurs in two forms; namely lexical noun and pronoun. For purposes of this paper, we devoted two sections for the analysis of each form separately. The first section discusses the features of the subject as a lexical noun and demonstrates the relationship between subject features on the specifier of the verb and subject features on T; while the second section examines the subject pronouns in both SA and YA respectively.

4.1 Subject as a lexical noun

In this section, we will examine the lexical subject, in SA and YA, and its relationship with the verb. Following Chomsky (2005), we assume that T in SA is responsible for determining the features of the verb, and the features of the subject. T in SA sets up separate relationships: it sets up an **Agree relationship** with the verb for tense and verb phi-features to get [T, v] relationship, then it sets an **Agree relationship** with the subject for noun phi-features to get [T, subj] relationship. Consequently, we propose that the T sets up an **Agree relationship** with the verb regardless of the subject number. The subject, on the other hand, matches with the phi-features on T regardless of the features of the verb. For empirical evidence, consider the following examples:

SA	YA
<p>9. a. ya-lʔab-u al-walad-u play-3m the boy-Nom 'The boy is playing.'</p>	<p>- bi-yi-lʔab al-wald Asp-play-3m the boy-Nom 'The boy is playing.'</p>
<p>b. ya-lʔab-u alwalad-aani play-3m the boys-dual.Nom 'The boys (dual) are playing.'</p>	<p>- bi-yi-lʔab Muhamed wa Ali Asp-play-3m Muhamed and Ali 'Muhamed and Ali are playing.'</p>
<p>c. ya-lʔabu al-awladu play-3m the boys-pluNom 'The boys are playing.'</p>	<p>- bi-yi-lʔab al-ʔial Asp-play-3m the boys-plu.Nom 'The boys are playing.'</p>

10. a. ta-lʔab-u al-bint-u

play-3f the girl-s.Nom

'The girl is playing.'

- bi-ti-lʔab al-bin-t

Asp-play-3f the girl-s.Nom

'The girl is playing.'

b. ta-lʔab-u al-bint-aani

play-3f the girl-dual.Nom

'The girls (dual) are playing.'

- bi-ti-lʔab Hadeel wa Huda

Asp-play-3f Hadeel and Huda-dual.Nom

'Hadeel and Huda are playing.'

c. ta-lʔab-u al-ban-aatu

play-3f the-girl-plu.Nom

'The girls are playing.'

- bi-ti-lʔab al-ban-aat

Asp-play-3f the girls-plu.Nom

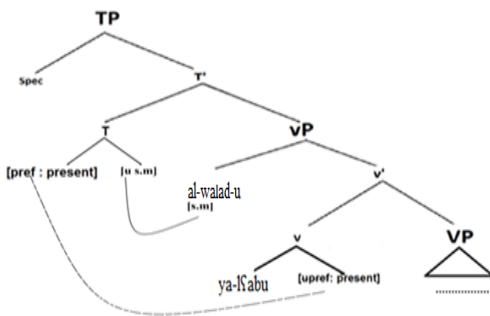
'The girls are playing.'

The analytical view for (9) and (10) show that the subjects appear in the form of lexical nouns. Each subject determines different gender and number features. Although the dual number in SA is restricted as (9b-10b) show, the dual number in YA is lost completely⁽¹²⁾. Indeed, as it is clear in (9b-10b) the conjoined Lexical DPS are used to express the dual number yet the plural DP can also be used as an indicator of the dual.

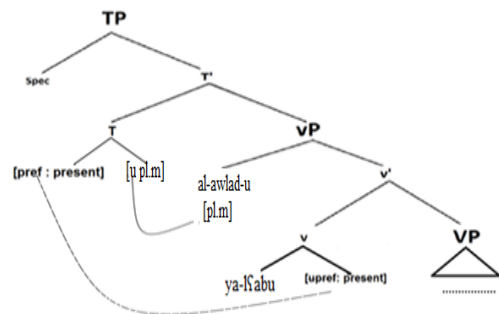
With respect to the bottom-up derivation in MP, we argue that the subjects in (9, a, b, c), and (10 a, b, c) enter the numeration with interpretable phi-features, namely person, number, and gender. These features match with other uninterpretable phi-features on T to form a [T, Subj] relationship. However, the subject enters the numeration with interpretable features since the features of the verb have not affected it already. Regarding the verb features, we argue that the verb enters the numeration with a single form regardless of the subject number.

That is either the subject holds a singular, dual, or plural feature, the verb holds the same singular features except for the change in the gender feature if needed. For example, apart from the Aspect⁽¹³⁾ nature in YA, the above sentences in (9, and 10) show that the verbs /*ya-lʃab*/ and *ta-lʃab* 'he/she is playing' have solely a singular form regardless of the gender feminine feature specified in the prefix '*ta-*'. That is, the verb /*ya-lʃab*/ 'he is playing' in (9 a, b, c) triggers all third masculine persons, while the verb / *ta-lʃab*/ 'she is playing' in (10 a, b, c) triggers all third feminine persons. Given that, under the minimalist approach, we assume that the verb /*ya-lʃab*/ enters the numeration with a single form regardless of the subject number that matches with other features on T to form a [T,v] relationship. Certainly, this separate relationship between [T, Subject] and [T, v] displays a partial agreement of the verb and the subject specified only in gender. If this reasoning is correct, (9a and c) might be represented as in (11):

11) a



b



4.2 Subject as a suffixed pronoun

Following the Arab traditional syntacticians, we claim that the suffixed morphemes are real subjects of the verb. However, we will assume under the minimalist approach that the

suffixed morphemes are suffixed pronouns because they are interpretable features of nouns.

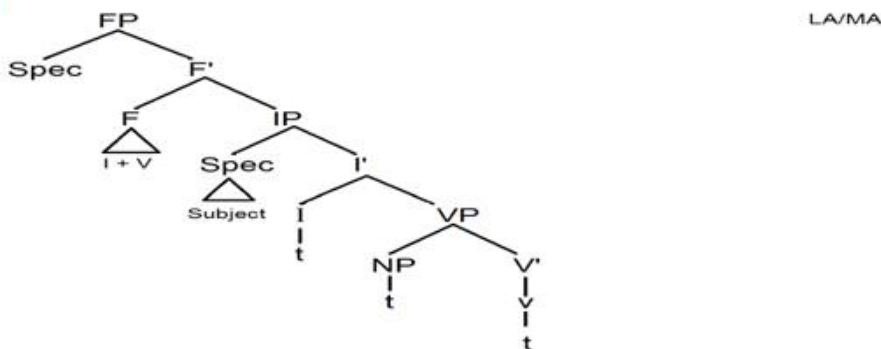
For illustration, consider the following examples in (12- 18):

SA	YA
12. a. /ʕaaʔ-a/	b. /ʕaaʔ/
13. a. /ʕaaʔ-aa/	b. /ʕa-uu/
14. a. /ʕaaʔ-uu/	b. /ʕa-uu/
15. a. /ʕaaʔ-at/	b. /ʕa-at/
16. a. /ʕaaʔ-taa/	b. /ʕa-uu/
17. a. /ʕiʔ-n/	b. /ʕa-uu/
18. a. /ʕiʔ-na/	b. /ʕi:-na/

The ground zero of our analysis stems from the fact that the above examples are not mere verbs with solid suffixes as some modern syntacticians assume but rather as full interpretable sentences (see Aoun et al. (2014), Jouini (2014), Al Asbahi (2001), Soltan (2011), Al Buhayri (2019), Tedj & Souadkia (2020), Al Qahtani and Al Zahrani (2020) among others). Each sentence consists of a verb and its suffixed-subject pronoun. Indeed, each subject pronoun either visible as *(-t, -aa, -uu, -n, -i, and -na)* in (13-18) or invisible (whose pronouns features are estimated from the context) as in (12) has a phonological meaning as well as a semantic meaning in the Arabic cognitive system. Therefore, the features of the suffixed morphemes in SA, and YA, except the feminine suffix *-t*, would be assumed to be features of nouns rather than features of verbs. In this regard, we may question, Al Qahtani & Al Zahrani (2020), Jouini (2020) among others, who assume that the suffixed morphemes attach to the

verbs as the case in the above examples are Agreement markers. In other words, it is argued that through Agreement markers, the verbs show full agreement with the DP subjects either these subjects occur in a post verbal position as the case in VSO, or in a preverbal position as the case in SVO. Their evidence is that full agreement in VSO sentences in SA is lost because of the loss of the number agreement. Therefore, to retain the full agreement in VSO, Aoun et al. (2014) suggest the raising of the verb farther up from the head T to a higher functional head F of FP (Focus Phrase)⁽¹⁴⁾ as illustrated in (19).

19)



(Aoun et al., 2014: 199)

A noteworthy mention in (12-17) is that the suffixed pronouns in SA are marked for specific number and gender while the number distinction in YA⁽¹⁵⁾ has been reduced and the gender distinction has been disappeared. In that, the dual-plural distinction has been lost with the plural replacing the dual. For example, the suffixed morpheme */-aa/* in (13a) and (16a) is a subject, which indicates a dual person interpretation, while YA uses the suffixed morpheme */-uu/* to indicate the subject with a dual person interpretation as (13b) and (16b) show. However, the suffix */-uu/* in general, as in (14 a/ b) is a subject pronoun for a masculine plural person in SA, and YA. On the other hand, the suffix */-n/* in (17 a) indicates a third feminine

plural subject in SA, while YA interprets the third feminine plural subject via the plural suffix /-uu/. Finally, the suffix /-na/ in (18 a, b) is a suffixed pronoun that indicates the first plural subject in both SA and YA respectively.

In this regard, we confirm that the suffixed morphemes are real subjects of the verbs and not just mere agreement markers of number or even resumptive pronouns⁽¹⁶⁾ as it is assumed by some modern syntacticians exemplified in (Musabhién, (2008) and Fakih (2016)) among others. Indeed, the suffixed subject pronouns as we noticed in the above sentences are formal features⁽¹⁷⁾ of nouns that reflect semantic properties. They enter the derivation with their phi-features valued and when checked they remain visible and therefore are not deleted. They all could be substituted with lexical nouns as the examples in (3 and 4) above showed and as the example in (25 and 26) below will also verify.

Having proved that the suffixed morphemes are subject pronouns, let us move to the question of how the suffixed morphemes project when followed or preceded by a lexical Noun phrase (DP) as in (20 and 21)?

20. raḥ-uu al-ṣial YA

left-3m.pl the-children

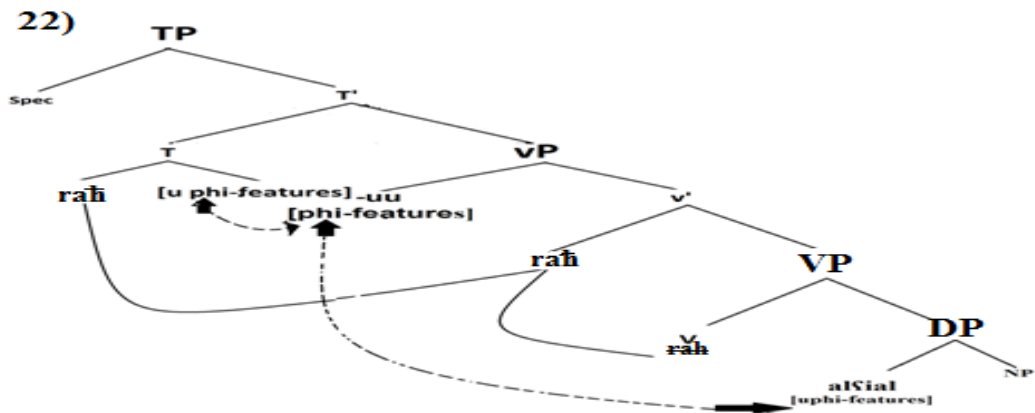
'The children went.'

21. al-ṣial raḥ-uu YA

the-children Left-3m.pl

'The children went'

In contrary to modern analysis, which assumes that the suffixed morphem */-uu/* in (20) is a number marker, and the DP */al-sial/* is a subject of the verb that occupies the spec of the vP (see Kemel Jouini (2014, 2020), Tedj & Souadkia (2020), Al Qahtani & Al Zahrani (2020), Al Qahtani (2016), Thabit M. (2013), Aoun et al. (2014) among others, instead, we suggest in this paper that the suffixed morpheme */-uu/* in (20) is the real subject of the verb that occupies the spec of vP while the lexical noun */al-sial/* 'the boys' is a dislocated noun to the right (an extraposed DP) that occupies the spec of DP below the VP as in (22) below:

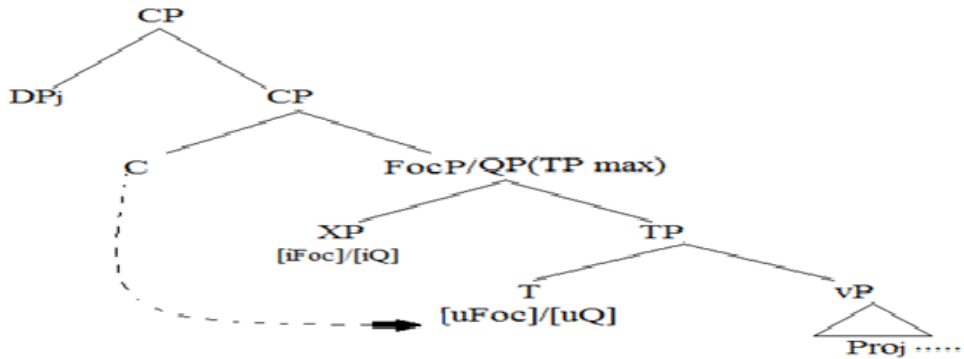


Under a minimal analysis, the suffixed morpheme */-uu/* and the noun phrase */al-sial/* 'the boys' receive a single interpretation given that they show a third plural masculine feature. Thus, following the Feature Economy principles⁽¹⁸⁾, we propose that the suffixed morpheme */-uu/* is a formal feature because it has a semantic meaning and a phonological interpretation. The noun phrase, on the other hand, represents the informal features in the sentence because it follows the suffixed pronoun and receives the same features.

Indeed, Geldren, (2017) confirms that, “if a specific feature appears more than once, one of these features is interpretable and the other is uninterpretable”⁽¹⁹⁾. The interpretable features represent the suffixed morpheme /-uu/ in (22), and match with the other feature on T. Meanwhile, the uninterpretable features represent the one on the noun phrase /*al-fial*/ in (22) and are checked by the interpretable features on the suffixed morpheme⁽²⁰⁾. Based on this reasoning, we posit that the pronoun /-uu/ receives the subject nominative case while the noun phrase /*al-fial*// becomes caseless.

Nevertheless, we assume that (21) is a formal sentence commonly displayed in SA and YA. In other words, (21) is a nominal sentence with a topic and a verbal predicate. In this regard, we might agree to some extent with Fakhri (2016) and Musabhi (2008) who pointed out that in SA the preverbal DP is a topic that occupies the Spec-TopP. For Fakhri (ibid), the difference between the derivation of VSO and SVO is that the subject in VSO remains in situ while it moves in SVO from Spec-vP to Spec-TopP via TP. In the case of SA dialects, Musabhi (2008) assumes that the preverbal DP is a subject, which occupies the Spec-TP. However, the interpretive variability of the preverbal DP is not peculiar to Musabhi (2008), Albuhayri (2019) has put forward a proposal in which the preverbal DP in SVO is argued to be either a topic based-generated in Spec-Cp or a Focus Phrase (FP). According to Albuhayri (2019), the topic DP projects in a position higher than wh-questions while the focus projects in FP. In either case, the subject is in \bar{A} -position:

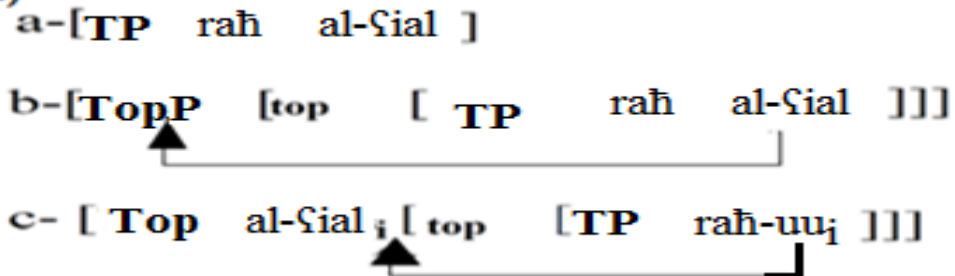
23)



Albuhayri (2019)

In this paper, we argue that the DP /*al-ʕial*/ 'the boys' is a topicalized⁽²¹⁾ element, which moves outside the local domain [TP] to the specifier of the Topic Phrase [TopP]. When the DP leaves its position, it leaves visible features (pronoun) in the immediate lower spec to ensure a connection with the left element (Haegman, 2004). This analysis is illustrated in (24) below:

24)



The clause / *raḥ al-ʕial*/ 'the boys went' in (24a) is essentially a TP. The verb is 'raḥ' and the subject is the DP /*al-ʕial*/. In (24b), the DP /*al-ʕial*/ left its domain to a Topic Phrase at an \bar{A} position. Therefore, with respect to the EPP which does not allow an empty position as (24c)

shows, the DP */al-sial/* leaves visible phonological features of its features represented in the suffixed morpheme */-uu/*. This morpheme is co-referential with it (i.e. *al-sial*) and functions as a subject pronoun for the verb *ʔaḥḥ* 'in the A position. Consequently, the clause, */raḥ-uu/* they went' is considered a completely separate TP just like (24 a). The verb is */raḥ/* and the subject is the suffixed pronoun */-uu/*.

To sum up, reflecting back on the relationship between the verb and the subject, and on contrary to the Modern analyses, which argue that the verb shows two types of agreements, namely full agreement, and partial agreement, we confirm that the verb always shows a partial agreement with its subject. The minimal reasoning analysis is that the verb and the subject always perform separate agreement operations. Accordingly, the verb is always checked by the features on T for tense and verb phi-features to get [T, v] relationship while the subject matches with noun phi-features on T to get [T, subj] relationship. As a result, we get a partial agreement between the verb and the subject. Another important finding is that SA has two different word orders rather than two alternative word orders. The first word order is a VS order or SV as in (3-5-6) and the second word order is a Topic-predicate⁽²²⁾ order as (24c) shows.

5. The subject projection and tense features

An interesting fact to recall is that the suffixed morphemes are intrinsic features of nouns, exemplified in person features and number features. Indeed, the suffixed pronouns have clear semantic interpretations in the Arabic cognitive system. Therefore, they are considered interpretable features of nouns rather than uninterpretable features of verbs. Consider the following sentences for more clarifications:

(SA)

25. a. ya-ʕtahid-u

work hard-he-pro3ms-Nom

'He works hard.'

26. a. ya-ʕtahid-u Saʕid-un

work hard Saʕid-Nom

'Saʕid works hard.'

27. a. na-ʕtahid-u

work hard -we-in.pro.pl

'We work hard.'

28. a. *na-ʕtahid-u at-talamið-u

work hard 1pl the-students-Nom

29. a. *na-ʕtahid-u naħnu

work hard we-pro.1pl

(YA)

b. bi-y-ʕtahid

Asp-work hard he-pro 3ms

'He works hard.'

b. bi-y-ʕtahid Saʕid

Asp-work hard Saʕid

'Saʕid works hard.'

b. bi-n-ʕtahid

Asp-work hard we-pro.pl

'We work hard.'

b. *bi-n-ʕtahid at-talaamið

Asp-work hard the students

b. *bi-n-ʕtahid aħna

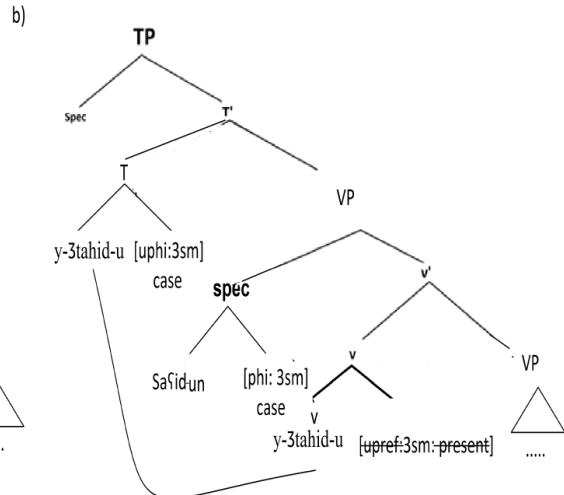
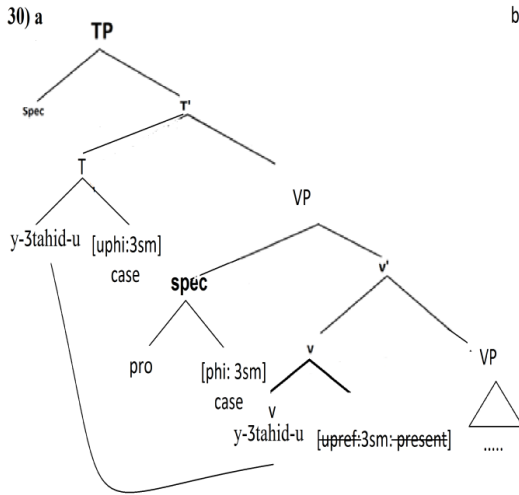
Asp-work hard we-pro.1pl

As it is noted, in (25a/b) the subjects in both SA and YA are an invisible pronoun estimated in the pronoun /ħwa/ 'he', which indicates the third masculine singular pronoun

while the subjects in (26a/b) are obviously the visible noun */Saʕid/* with the third masculine singular features. In fact, the grammaticality of (26 a/b) stems from the ability of the noun */Saʕid/* in both languages to substitute the invisible pronoun in (25). On another note, given the examples in (27-28-29), we may wonder why (27 a/b) are grammatical while (28 a-b and 29 a-b) are ungrammatical. For argumentation purposes, we suggest that the invisible pronoun in (27 a/b) does not permit the lexical noun */at-talaamið-u/* 'the students' in (28 a-b) or the independent pronoun */nahnu/* in (29a-b) to substitute it.

The invisible pronouns by the consensus of the Arab grammarians⁽²³⁾ are classified according to their concealment to necessary concealment⁽²⁴⁾ pronouns, and permissible concealment⁽²⁵⁾ pronouns. The necessary concealment pronouns, on one hand, are the ones, which do not permit a noun or an independent pronoun to stand in their positions just as (28) and (29) show. On the contrary, the permissible concealment pronouns are the ones that permit a noun or a pronoun to replace it as (25) above shows.

Given this close adjacency of the suffixed pronoun to its verb in the above example and not allowing the DP */at-talaamið-u/* 'the students' or the independent pronoun */nahnu/* 'we' in (28 and 29) to stand in its position, we confirm that the subject either lexical or pronoun in both SA and YA are base-generated at the specifier of the vP. They have interpretable noun features that will be checked with another uninterpretable noun features on T. For more illustration, consider the following derivations:



As (30 a/ b) show, both the invisible *pro* and the noun phrase */Sa'fid-un/* are base-generated at the specifier of the *vP* in (30a) and (30b) respectively. Since the invisible *pro* bears meaningful features, this means that its features are interpretable and match with the other uninterpretable features on T. Likewise, the noun */Sa'fid-un/* bears interpretable features that match with those uninterpretable features on T.

6. Conclusion

This paper examines the issues of Tense and Subject in SA and YA using the Minimalist analysis. First, we introduce the broad outlines of the Minimalist approach, and then we explore the issues in question within the traditional Arab accounts. Nevertheless, in Minimalism, we show that T performs a twofold relationship, namely a [T, v] relationship and a [T, subject] relationship. Concerning the [T, subject] relationship, we confirm that the subject in SA and YA appears postverbally in two forms, namely lexical noun phrase or suffixed pronouns, the features of which match with the uninterpretable features on T. Based on

empirical evidence,, the suffixed morphemes ‘-t, i-, aa, uu, na-, and n-’ have been proved to be spelled out as real subjects of the verb rather than number agreements of the subject. They are considered subject pronouns because they indicate interpretable features of nouns rather than features of verbs, besides their clear adjacency of the verb. Based on that, the preverbal DP, which occurs along with the suffixed pronoun has been considered a topic that occupies the [Spec TopP] at the \bar{A} position. On the other hand, the post-verbal DP, which occurs along with the suffixed pronoun, has been considered a caseless noun on position (badle). Indeed, this type of DP, as the case in YA, is confirmed to hold uninterpretable features, which are checked with other interpretable features on the subject. Consequently, based on the above analysis, we affirm that the verb in SA and YA shows technically a partial agreement with the subject wherever the subject occurs. Finally, this paper has confirmed that T in SA and YA holds a weak EPP. The subject either a lexical noun or a suffixed pronoun is base-generated in a postverbal position as [spec vP]. Therefore, we confirm the existence of two different word orders, namely VS or SV order and a Topic-predicate order instead of two alternative word orders, namely SVO and VSO orders.

Endnotes:

(1) Adger, *Core Syntax: a Minimalist Approach*: 113.

(2) Adger, *Core Syntax: a Minimalist Approach*: 114-160.

(3) Chomsky, *The Minimalist Program*: 350-364.

(4) الأزهرى، تيسير قواعد النحو: 220. الحريري، شرح مُلحة الإعراب: 151. خفاجي والزيّني، شرح ابن عقيل على ألفية ابن مالك .267:

(5) The position of the subject was a controversial debate between two ancient schools, namely the Baṣri School and the Kufi School. The Baṣri’s perspective emphasizes the existence of the subject postverbally as it is explained in (3 a and b) above, while the kufi’s perspective emphasizes the potentiality of the subject to existence preverbally as in (5 a,b and 6 a,b) . However, the Kufi’s builds up their assumption on a condition that the subject

could occur preverbally if and only if the verb preserves its singular form and was not affected by the number of the proceeded subject.

(6) خفاجي والزيني ، شرح ابن عقيل على ألفية ابن مالك: 267.

(7) More information about the topic and nominal sentences see. (222). (الأزهري، تيسير قواعد النحور: 222).

(8) الأزهري، تيسير قواعد النحور: 222.

(9) خفاجي والزيني ، شرح ابن عقيل على ألفية ابن مالك: 267.

(10) The badal in SA is a grammatical rule which means in English 'nouns in apposition'. This phenomenon occurs when the same entity mentions twice in a juxtaposed form. Thus, one entity will receive the nominative case while the other will remain caseless. Ryding, A reference grammar of Modern Standard Arabic: 224

(11) خفاجي والزيني ، شرح ابن عقيل على ألفية ابن مالك: 262.

(12) For further remarks on duality and a conjoined subjects see. Aoun et al., Modern Arabic: Structures, Functions, and Varieties: 201.

(13) YA is considered as an aspect language since it is based on the aspectual system in creating the present tense (Qafisheh, 1990). However, the aspectual system in YA and other SA dialects is a reaction toward the disappearance of Mood in SA present tense verbs (Clive, 2004).

(14) Aoun et al., Agreement and Conjunction in some Varieties of Arabic: 199.

(15) In the case of YA, the nominative suffixed pronouns function as SA pronouns do. More specifically, the suffixed morphemes (-t, -aa, -uu, -n, -i, and -na) are always suffixed to verbs and function as the subject of the verb. In principle, the only distinction realized in all YA dialects is the reduction of gender distinctions. That is, the numbers of gender distinctions in the second and third persons have disappeared in the plural forms, thus the generalization of the masculine form in all Yemeni dialects except in the San'ani dialect. In fact, the latter still reserves the gender distinctions in the second and the third person although there is a slight difference from the one in SA forms. That is to say, the San'ani dialect indicates the second-person feminine plural with "-tayn" instead of "-tn and the masculine with "-tuu" instead of "-tum". Likewise, the third person pronoun feminine plural in San'ani dialect is indicated with "ayn" instead of "-n" and the masculine with "-uu" as the case in SA.

(16) Resumptive pronouns refer to bound pronouns, which are associated with co-referential pronouns (Haegman 2001). These resumptive pronouns occur in relative clauses as spellouts of traces. Shlonsky (1992) and Hornstein (2001) add that the resumptive pronoun is a last resort strategy that is required when movement is not allowed as the case of Relative clauses and wh- clauses. For example:

i- That is the girl that I do not know [what t did].

ii- That is the girl that I do not know [what she did].

According to (Mckee and Mcdaiel, 2001) (ii) shows a resumptive pronoun, namely 'she'. Since the movement of the resumptive pronoun in (i) is not allowed, the resumptive pronoun 'she' in (ii) has necessarily been used.

(17) For Chomsky (1995: 230, 381) "formal features have semantic correlates and reflect semantic properties (accusative Case and transitivity, for example)". This means that, if a language has nouns with semantic phi-features, the learner will be able to hypothesize uninterpretable features on another functional head and will be able to bundle them there, Geldren, *Syntax: An introduction to minimalism*: 153.

(18) The Feature Economy principle states, "Features which are doubly expressed (...) but receive a single interpretation, must be functional", Muysken, *Functional*: 46.

(19) Geldren, *Syntax: An introduction to minimalism*: 153.

(20) see the Affix-hop: Geldren, *Syntax: An introduction to minimalism*: 153-155

(21) Topicalized element according to Cinque (1990) is characterized by the appearance of a clitic in the embedded clause. For more information about Topicalization see Haegeman (2004).

(22) It also called Topic-comment order.

(23) الأزهري، تيسير قواعد النحو: 133.

خفاجي والزيني، شرح ابن عقيل على ألفية ابن مالك: 267.

الغلايبي، جامع الدروس العربية: 85.

(24) The necessary concealment pronouns were predicted in nine positions by Al Azhary (2005), and in six positions by Al galayani (1994), while Khefajy and Azzayni (1959: 54) recognizes them only in four positions. In this dissertation, we will summarize them in the two below points. For more information, the reader is recommended to read Al-Azhary (2011: 133), and Al-Galayani (1994).

The necessary concealment pronoun occurs within the command verb, which indicates the second masculine singular person such as /ʔuktub!/' write!', where the estimated pronoun is 'you', and the estimated phrase will be /ʔuktub anta/ to mean 'you write'.

They also occur within the present tense verb started with hamzh /ʔ-/ ,/n-/ , or /t-/ which indicates the first singular person, such as /ʔ-ktubu/, the first plural person such as /n-ktubu/, and the second singular person such as /t-ktubu/ respectively.

خفاجي، والزيني، شرح ابن عقيل على ألفية ابن مالك: 54.

(25) The permissible concealment pronouns exhibit in general four positions. We will summarize them in the following expecting the reader to seek more knowledge from Al-Azhary (2011: 133), Al-Galayani (1994), and Khefajy and Azzayni (1959).

The permissible concealment pronouns occur naturally within the present tense verbs, which indicate the third masculine and feminine singular persons. These verbs can be exemplified in /y-ktubu/, and /t-ktubu/ to mean literary he writes, and 'she writes'.

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