The Arabic Topic-Comment Structure

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(Received 2/12/1409; accepted 18/11/1410)

Abstract. This study aims to discuss the properties of the Arabic Topic-Comment structure and its implications in terms of movement rules. A fundamental distinction is drawn between the topic-comment structure and constructions that fall under focusing phenomena. It will be argued that the topic-comment structure is base-generated, while focused constituents are transformationally generated. Therefore, constructions that fall under the rule of Focus will not involve wh-movement; rather, the focused constituent will leave a trace at the original site that is co-indexed with it, hence it carries all the features of that trace. This analysis will call into question the grouping of the topic-comment structure, i.e., left-dislocation, and focusing, i.e., topicalization, under the same analysis in Chomsky (1977) and subsequent literature.

1. Overview

This paper intends to discuss the basic properties of the Arabic topic-comment structure and its implications in terms of movement rules. A fundamental distinction between the topic-comment structure and constructions that fall under focusing phenomena is spelled out. It is argued that while the topic NP is base-generated, focused constituents that fall under the rule of Focus don't involve Wh-movement; rather, the focused constitutent leaves a trace at the original site that is co-indexed with it, hence it carries all the features of that trace. This analysis calls into question the grouping of the topic-comment structure, i.e., left-dislocation, and focusing, i.e., Topicalization, under the same analysis in Chomsky (1977)[1], (1981)[2] and subsequent literature.

The paper shows that Wh-elements can not be moved to the left of an NP that is dominated by $\overline{\overline{S}}$, i.e., the topic NP. Moreover, it is argued that the topic-comment structure starts with a [–Wh] Comp that can be either overt or covert, Wh-

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(1) Noam Chomsky, "On Wh-movement," in P. Culicaver, *et al.* (eds.) *Formal Syntax* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), pp. 71,132.

(2) Noam Chomsky, *Lectures on Government and Binding* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1981), pp. 140,225.

movement is banned in it. Besides, the nominative case of the topic is overridden by the overt comp which acts as the topic's governor by assigning the accusative case to it.

2. Preliminaries

By definition, a topic-comment structure in Arabic is a structure that starts with a topic NP followed by a sentence containing a resumptive pronoun that is co-referential with the topic NP. There are two strategies of composing topic – comment structure in Arabic. The first strategy, on the one hand, utilizes, in addition to case and resumptive pronoun, a discontinuous formal structure, that is, *'ammā ... fa*, enveloping the topic NP from both sides. The second strategy, on the other hand, relies solely on case and resumptive pronoun, i.e., it does away with the discontinuous formal structure. Observe the examples in (1) below:

1. a.   'amma-t-ṭālib-u   fa-ḍaraba-hu-l-mu^callim-u

         as for-def-student-nom   ?-beat-him-def-teacher-nom
            "As for the student,   the teacher beat him."

    b.   'aṭālib-u   ḍaraba-hu-l-mu^callim-u
         def-student-nom beat-him-def-teacher-nom
         "The student, the teacher beat him."

In the examples above, (1a) represents the first strategy, whereas (1b) represents the second strategy. As can be noted, the two strategies are structurally identical except for the presence vs. the absence of the formal structure *'ammā ... fa*. Therefore, whatever analysis is advanced for either strategy will fit the other. For ease of exposition, the reference in this paper will be to the second strategy.

The topic NP is categorically definite and must be assigned the nominative case. To confirm this, examine the sentences in (2):

2. a.   'al-bint-u qabbala-hā ^camr-un

         def-girl-nom kissed-her Amr-nom
         "The girl, Amr kissed her."

    b.   *bint-un qabbala-hā ^camr-un
         girl-nom kissed-her Amr-nom
         "A girl, Amr kissed her."

    c.   'al-bint-a qabbala-hā Amr-nom
         def-girl-acc kissed-her Amr-nom
         "The girl, Amr kissed her."

The ungrammaticality of (2b) is due to violating the definiteness of the topic NP as a well-formedness condition on topic-comment structures. As for the well-formedness of (2c), it is explainable in terms of movement rules, that is, '*al-bint-a* has undergone a movement transformation leaving a phonetically realized NP-trace, i.e., the clitic pronoun, behind it at the original site it occupied before movement. Thus '*al-bint-a* is not a topic; rather, it is a focused NP.

With regard to the resumptive pronoun in the comment part of the topic-comment structure, it is co-referential with the topic NP and its presence is also a well-formedness condition. However, the resumptive pronoun is subject to the general subject-pro drop rule in Arabic; hence its obligatory deletion when it bears the nominative case, i.e., when it is a subject pronoun.[3] Consider the examples below:

3. a. 'al-mu^{c}allium-u$_i$ madaha-hu$_i$-1-mudîr-u

        def-teacher-nom praised-him-def-headmaster-man
        "The teacher, the headmaster praised him."

    b* 'al-mu^{c}allim-u madaha-φ-1-mudîr-u

4. a. *aš-šurṭiyy-u$_i$ 'i^{c}taqala huwa$_i$-1-liss-a
        def-policeman-nom arrested he-def-thief-acc

    b. 'ašurṭiyy-u$_i$ 'i^{c}taqala-φ-1-liss-a

As can be noticed, the urgrammaticality of (3b) is due to the deletion of the resumptive object-pronoun in the comment part of the sentence. As for the ill-formedness of (4a), it results from violating the subject-pro drop rule, i.e., the surfacing of the subject pronoun in the comment part of the sentence is ungrammatical.

3. Transformational Analysis

Two works on Arabic — Snow[4] and Killean[5] — generate the topic-comment structure transformationally from the Arabic kernel sentence. For them, therefore, the topic NP is generated by a copying rule in the sense of Ross.[6] Subsequently, the original NP, which has been copied by the topic NP, is pronominalized, deriving the surface resumptive pronoun. To illustrate, observe the examples below:

(3) Mohammed Farghal, "Wh-movement in Arabic," *International Journal of Islamic and Arabic Studies*, 3, No. 2 (1986), 69-121.

(4) James Snow, "A Grammar of Modern Written Arabic Clauses," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1968, pp. 1-15.

(5) Mary Killean, "The Deep Structure of the Noun Phrase in Modern Written Arabic," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1966, pp. 1-30.

(6) John Ross, "Contraints on Variables in Syntax," Ph.D. Dissertation, MIT, 1967, pp. 25-40.

5. 'ištarā ᶜaliyy-un 'al-bayt-a
   bought   Ali-nom def-house-acc
   "Ali bought the house."

6*. 'al-baytu$_i$ 'ištrā ᶜaliyy-un 'al-bayt-a$_i$
    def-house-nom bought Ali-nom def-house-acc

7. 'al-bayt-u$_i$ 'ištrā-hu$_i$ ᶜaliyy-un
   def-house-nom bought-it Ali-nom
   "The house, Ali bought it."

According to the transformational account, sentence (7) is transformationally derived from (5) by a copying rule. To clarify, the intermediate structure in (6) is further subject to pronominalization of the copied NP. To derive the surface structure in (7), the rule obligatorily effecting the VOS word order in Arabic applies.[7]

The transformational account of the topic-comment structure runs into many difficulties. First, there is no plausible account of the definiteness of the topic NP since it has been derived by copying another NP. The transformational solution to this problem by placing a definiteness well-formedness condition on the source of copying constitutes a complication in the grammar because while it succeeds in blocking (8), it does not account for the well-formedness of (9) below:

8. *bayt-un   'ištarā-hu   ᶜaliyy-un
   house-nom bought-it   Ali-nom
   "A house, Ali bought it."

9. bayt-an 'ištarā ᶜaliyy-un
   house-acc bought Ali-nom
   "Ali bought a house."

(8) is predicted to the ill-formed because the source of copying is [-definite] as in (10) below:

10. 'ištarā ᶜaliyy-un bayt-an
    bought Ali-nom house-acc
    "Ali bought a house."

However, the [—definite] NP in (10) can be freely focused as in (9) above. Transformationally, there is no explanation for the difference in the grammatical status between (8) and (9) above.

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(7) See Farghal, p. 104.

Second, the transformational account can not convincingly explain the discrepancy in the case-marking of the co-referential NPs in (6) above, i.e., the topic NP is assigned the nominative case although the original NP (the source of copying) bears the accusative case. Finally, the transformational analysis can not account for the difference between (7) above and (11) below:

11. a. 'al-bayt-a 'ištarā ᶜaliyy-un
       def-house-acc bought Ali-nom
       *"The house Ali bought."

    b. 'al-bayt-aᵢ 'ištarā-huᵢ ᶜaliyy-un
       def-house-acc bought-it Ali-nom
       "The house, Ali bought it."

To explain, the topic NP in (7) above meets the well-formedness conditions on the topic-comment structure, i.e., it is definite, nominative and co-referential with the resumptive pronoun in the comment part of the sentence, whereas the focused NP in (11a) violates two well-formedness conditions on the topic-comment structure, i.e., it is accusative and it has no resumptive pronoun in the comment part of the structure. As for the focused NP in (11b), it only violates the case condition. However, the clitic pronoun can be accounted for in terms of NP-movement, for NP-trace may be realized in Arabic.[8] These facts indicate the different nature of (7) and (11).

4. Base-generation Analysis

Due to the insurmountable difficulties encountered by the transformational analysis of the topic-comment structure, more recent, works on Arabic — Lewkowicz,[9], Russel,[10], Bakir[11] and Suaih[12] — reject the generation of the topic NP transformationally in favor of generating it in the base. Thus the base-generation

(8) Np-movement in Arabic is completely different from that in English. On the one hand, English Np-movement represented by Np-raising in the strict sense, and Arabic passivization does not seem to involve Np-movement, either. For details, George Saad, *Transitivity, Causation and Restricted Passivization* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1982), pp. 45-65.
     Unlike English, Arabic Np-traces are restricted to occupying θ-positions; hence, they are phonetically realizeable. For more details see Mohammed Farghal, "The Syntax of Wh-questions and Related Matters in Arabic," Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1986, pp. 174-76.
(9) Nancy Lewkowicz, "Topic-comment and Relative Clause in Arabic," in S. Al-Ani, *Readings in Arabic Linguistics* (Bloomington: Publications of Indiana University Linguistics Club, 1971), pp. 563-76.
(10) Robert Russel, "Word Order of Classical and Egyptian Arabic," Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1977, pp. 1-25.
(11) Murtadha Bakir, "Aspects of Clause Structure in Arabic," Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1979, p. 151.
(12) Saleh Suaih, "Aspects of Arabic Relative Clauses," Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1980, p. 100.

analysis does away with both the copying and the pronominalization rules. Moreover, it offers a clearcut distincttion between the topic-comment structure and other focusing rules in the grammar which can be accounted for transformationally. Consequently, the topic NP is base-generated; and so is the resumptive pronoun in the comment part of the sentence. As for the definiteness restriction on the topic NP, it is specified as so in the base, i.e., topic NPs are [+ definite] in the base.

Chomsky[13] talks about two structure-types in English: topicalized and left-dis-located, which, to him, are both base-generated. To clarify, compare the two examples below:

12. As for the red book, everybody should read it.
13. That red book everybody should read.

Chomsky asserts that in left-dislocation exemplified in (12), no transformational rule can introduce the structure "as for that red book" or even more complicated phrases that can appear in this position. Therefore, such material should be base-generated by a phrase structure rule of the form:

14. a. $\bar{\bar{S}} \rightarrow \text{Top } \bar{S}$
    b. $\bar{S} \rightarrow \text{Comp S}$

He then notes the failure of the two rules in (14) to generate embedded left-dislocation cases as in (15) below:

15. I informed the students that as far as this book is concerned, they would have definitely to read it.

To accommodate such cases, Chomsky reformulates (14b) to look like (16):

16. $\bar{S} \rightarrow \text{Comp} \begin{Bmatrix} \bar{\bar{S}} \\ S \end{Bmatrix}$

As for topicalization exemplified in (13), Chomsky also suggests an analysis that base-generates the topicalized NP, namely "that red book" in (13). The only difference between topicalization and left-dislocation is that the $\bar{S}$ in topicalization is a wh-clause in which the wh-phrase gets obligatorily deleted. That is to say, the Comp

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(13) Chomsky, "Wh-movement," pp. 90-95.

dominated by S̄ in left-dislocation can be [±wh] depending on the availability of a wh-element in the clause, whereas the Comp dominated by S̄ in topicalization is always [±wh] that is subject to obligatory deletion. To illustrate, here are the D-structures corresponding to (12) and (13), respectively:

<div align="center">Comp</div>

17. [^{Top} as for that red book [−wh] [everybody should read it]]]

$\underset{\overline{\overline{S}}}{}$ s   e   s

<div align="center">Comp</div>

18. [^{Top} that red book [+wh] [everybody should read that]]]

$\underset{\overline{\overline{S}}}{}$ s

The wh-element "what" gets moved to the [+wh] Comp, and it subsequently gets deleted giving the surface structure in (18).

The above analysis of topicalization in English predicts that topicalization, like left-dislocation, is possible within embedded clauses. To confirm this, Chomsky[14] gives the examples in (19) below:

19. a.   I believe that this book, you should read.
    b.   I believe that this book, you should give away.
    c.   I believe that his friends, John gave some books away to.

Before we proceed to Arabic examples, it should be remarked that Chomsky's introduction of the functional notion "topic" in PS-rules in his (1977) paper is odd. The oddity of this stems from the fact that since the advent of transformational grammar, functional notions such as "subject" and "object" have been considered as derivative terms which are defined configurationally in terms of basic syntactic categories such as S, NP, VP, etc. The distinction between categorial and functional notions is made clear in Chomsky (1965)[15] and related works. It seems that Chomsky has been tempted by his working hypothesis that in a unified analysis of left-dislocation and topicalization in English, a topic may stand for many syntactic categories, i.e., NPs, PPs, and AdvPs. Leaving the question open as to whether this analysis is adequate or not for English, we will directly see how much evidence facts of Arabic lend to the universality of Chomsky's analysis.

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(14) Ibid., p. 93.
(15) Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965), pp. 64-74.

In Arabic, it is implausible to group left-dislocation and topicalization, in Chomsky's terms, under the same analysis. Before pointing out the inadequacy of Chomsky's analysis, I would like to clear up some terminological issues. First, what Chomsky terms topicalization is called focusing in this paper. Second, Chomsky's left-dislocation is called the topic-comment structure here. For the sake of illustration, the focused constituent is marked as $[+F]$, while the topic NP is marked as $[+T]$. Observe the two examples below:

20.   'al-hayyat-a- $[+F]$ qatala ^{c}aliyy-un
        def-snake-acc   killed   Ali-nom
        "Ali killed the snake."

21.   'al-hayyat-u $[+T]$ qatala-hā ^{c}aliyy-un
        def-snake-nom   killed-it   Ali-nom
        "The snake, Ali killed it."

The strongest argument against Chomsky's analysis is the difference in the case-marking of the focused NP and the topic NP. Obviously, 'al-hayya-a in (20) is a focused NP because it still retains its original case, i.e., the accusative case. Therefore, it is implausible to base-generate it as Chomsky does in English. Instead, the focused NP can be generated by a rule that preverbally proposes it as follows:

22.   V   S   O $[+F]$

                            $\longrightarrow$ 3   2   1   t
        1   2   3

The base-generation analysis involving wh-movement in focusing is thus given up in favor of a movement rule generating the focused NP transformationally.

As for "al-'hayyat-u" in (22), it is a topic NP that can be convincingly argued to be base-generated since it has the nominative case rather than the accusative case due to the grammatical relation it holds in this kind of structure. The topic NP also has an accusative resumptive pronoun clitic in the comment part of (22). Like English, also, the topic NP can be embedded in Arabic. Observe the example below:

23.   'aǧunnu 'anna ^{c}amr-an$_i$ daraba-hu$_i$ ^{c}aliyy-un[16]
        I + think   that   Amr-acc   beat-him   Ali-nom
        "I think that Amr, Ali beat him."

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(16) The ungrammaticality of the English rendition of (23) is attributable to language-specific differences. The rendition of (23) is in (i) below:

    (i)   I think that as far as Amr is concerned, Ali beat him.

It should be noted that the correct case-marking of the topic NP, i.e., nominative, is overridden by the existence of the case-assigner particle *'anna* which always assigns the accusative case to the NP immediately following it.

To further confirm the fundamental distinction between focusing and the topic-comment structure in Arabic, observe the ill-formedness of embedded cases of focusing below in contrast with the well-formedness of the embedded topic-comment structure in (23) above:

24.   *'aḏunnu 'anna ʿamr-an ḍaraba ʿaliyy-un
       I + think   that   Amr-acc   beat   Ali-nom
       *"I think that Amr, Ali beat."

25.   *saddaqa ʿamr-un 'anna – l-kitāb-a qaraʿa sālim-un
       believed   Amr-nom that-def-book-acc read   Salim-nom
       "Amr believed that the book, Ali read."

Finally, focusing and the topic-comment structure behave differently in permitting syntactic phenomena. For instance, there is an asymmetry between focusing and the topic-comment structure in respect to the permissibility of contrastiveness and wh-movement. On the one hand, focusing permits contrastiveness, while the topic-comment structure does not. On the other hand, the topic-comment structure allows wh-movement, whereas focusing does not. To confirm this, observe the examples below:

26. a.   'al-ḥayyat-a-   qatala ʿaliyy-un wa laysa-n-nisr-a

          def-snake-acc killed Ali-nom and NEG-def-eagle-acc
          "Ali killed the snake, not the eagle."

     b.   *'al-ḥayyat-u qatala-hā ʿaliyy-un wa laysa-n-nisr-a

          def-snake-nom killed-it   Ali-nom and NEG-def-eagle-acc

          *"The snake, Ali killed it, not the eagle."

27. a.   *'al-ḥayyat-a   man qatala?

          def-snake-acc who killed

          *"The snake who killed?"

     b.   'al-ḥayyat-u   man qatala-hā

          def-snake-nom who killed-it
          "The snake, who killed it?"

The ill-formedness of (26b) is due to the fact that the topic-comment structure does not permit contrastiveness. As for the ill-formedness of (27a), it is ascribed to the restriction that focusing may not allow wh-movement.

Now let us throw more light on the formal properties of the topic-comment structure. Following Chomsky (1977),[17] Bakir[18] assigns the configuration in (28) to the topic-comment structure in Arabic:

28.
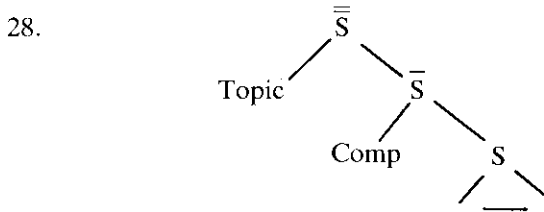
It follows that Arabic, like English, has the PS-rules in (14) and (16) above. In a more recent analysis, Suaih[19] gives up the functional notion "Topic" in favor of a categorial notion "NP" since topics in Arabic, as he claims, are strictly NPs. A closer look at Arabic, however, shows that Suaih's claim is legitimate only insofar as the maximal projection of the topic NP is considered. The topic NP in Arabic can be projected as major categories ranging from $\overset{\circ}{N}$– to $\overline{N}$– phrasal categories. Observe the examples below:

29.   'as-sayyārat-u   'ištarā-hā   ᶜaliyy-un
       def-car-nom   bought-it   Ali-nom
       "The car, Ali bought-it."

30.   sayyārat-u ᶜamr-in 'ištarā-hā ᶜaliyy-un
        car-nom   Amr-gen bought it Ali-nom

31.   'as-sayyārat-u   -1-jadīdat-u   'ištarā-hā ᶜaliyy-un
       def-car-nom-def-new-nom   bought-it Ali-nom
       "The new car, Ali bought it."

In (29), the topic NP is an $\overset{\circ}{N}$-major category, whereas it is an $\overline{\overline{N}}$-major category in (30) and (31). Clearly, in all of the above cases, the major categories representing the topic NP are headed by an N. As a matter of fact, this is a well-formedness condition on topics in Arabic since they cannot be headed by prepositions. Contrast (32) with (33) below:

(17) Chomsky, "Wh-movement," pp. 90-93.

(18) Bakir, p. 151.

(19) Suaih, p. 100.

32. fi-1-bayt-i qābala ᶜaliyy-un hind-an
    in-def-house-gen met Ali-nom Hind-acc
    "In the house Ali met Hind."

33. 'al-bayt-u- qābala ᶜaliyy-un hind-an fī-hi
    def-house-nom met Ali-nom Hind-acc in-it
    "The house, Ali met Hind in it."

(32) above can be argued to derive from (34) below by focusing, whereas (33) can be argued to be a topic-comment structure.

34. qābala ᶜaliyy-un hind-an fi-l-bayt-i
        met Ali-nom Hind-acc in-def-house-gen
    "Ali met Hind in the house."

Moreover, the topic NP can be rewritten as NP + S. Look at the following topic-comment structure:

35. 'ar-raĵul-u-llaðī taḥaddaθa ᶜan-hu ᶜamr-un daᶜā-hu ᶜaliyy-un

    def-man-nom-who talked about-him Amr-nom invited-him Ali-nom
    'ila-l-ᶜurs-i
    to-def-wedding-gen
    "The man whom Amr talked about, Ali invited him to the wedding ceremony."

With these facts in mind, the PS-rule generating the topic-comment structure can be reformulated as follows:

36. $\overline{\overline{S}} \rightarrow NP \overline{S}$

Configurationally, therefore, the topic in Arabic can be categorically defined as an NP that is immediately dominated by $\overline{\overline{S}}$ in a structure.

5. Topic-comment and Wh-movement

Underlyingly, the comp is categorically specified as [+Wh] in Wh-questions. Consequently, the Wh-element in the topic-comment structure gets moved from where it originates into the [+Wh] Comp dominated by $\overline{S}$. Diagrammatically, the topic-comment structure involving Wh-movement looks like (37) below:

37.
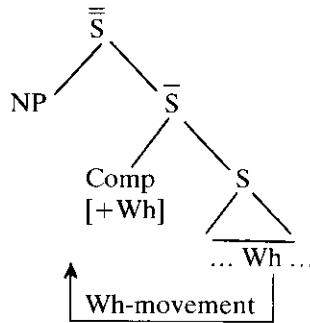
Thus, the topic NP lies outside the domain of Wh-movement, i.e., the Wh-element can not be moved to the left of the topic NP since there is no comp to the left of it. Considering emphatic topic-comment structures, however, reveals that the topic-comment can be introduced by the overt comp *'inna* which adds emphasis to sentences. Observe (38) below:

38.   'inna-l-walad-a   wabbaxa-hu-r-rajul-u
        that-def-boy-acc   rebuked-him-def-man-nom
        "The boy, the man did rebuke him."

In the light of this fact, the topic-comment structure should be assumed to start with a Comp whether it be phonetically realized or not. The only difference between the Comp introducing a topic-comment structure and that introducing a simple clause is that it can never be a [+Wh] Comp. Observe the examples in (39) below:

39. a. 'al-walad-u man wabbaxa-hu
        def-boy-man who rebuked-him
        "The boy, who rebuked him."

    b. *man-il-walad-u wabbaxa-hu
        who-def-boy-nom rebuked-him

        *"who the boy rebuked him."

    c. *man 'inna-al-walad-a wabbaxa-hu
        who that-def-boy-acc rebuked-him

        *"Who the boy did rebuke him."

In the example above, (39a) complies with (37), hence its well-formedness. Conversely, (39b) is ill-formed because it violates (37) above. As for (39c), it is ungrammatical because the Comp introducing the topic-comment structure can never be [+Wh].

Moreover, Wh-movement is categorically banned in topic-comment structures where the Comp introducing them is phonetically realized. Consider (40) below:

40. *ʾinna-l-walad-a man wabbaxa-hu
    that-def-boy-acc who rebuked-him
    "The boy, who did rebuke him."

Consequently, a constraint is needed in the grammar of Arabic to block sentences like (40). This constraint can be formally expressed as (41) below:

41. In a structure XYZ where X is an overt Comp, Y is a topic and Z is a Comp dominated by S, Z can never be [+Wh].

In conclusion, facts of the topic-comment structure in Arabic necessitate a revision of Chomsky's rules in (41) and (16) above. The revision must abandon the functional notion "topic" and must reorder the rules so as to incorporate the motivated assumption that the topic-comment structure starts with a Comp. To these effects, the PS-rules generating sentence-types in Arabic can be reformulated as follows:

42. a $\bar{\bar{S}} \rightarrow \text{Comp } \left\{ \begin{array}{c} S \\ \bar{\bar{S}} \end{array} \right\}$

b. $\bar{\bar{\bar{S}}} = \text{NP } \bar{S}$

6. Right-dislocation

So far, the topic NP has appeared at the beginning of the topic-comment structure; however, it may, as a second alternative, appear at the end of the topic-comment structure while still retaining the same features. Consider the following examples:

43. daraba-hu ʿaliyy-un zayd-un
    beat-him   Ali-nom   Zayd-nom
    *"Ali beat him, Zayd."

The medieval Arab grammarians differ on the premissibility of what Fehri[20] calls Right-dislocation. While the Kūfī grammarians question the well-formedness of Right-dislocation saying that a pronoun can not precede its antecdent, i.e., the

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(20) To my knowledge, Fasi Fehri, *Linguistique Arabe: Forme et interpretation* (Rabat: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et des Science Humaines, 1982), p. 67, is the first to talk about Right-dislocation in recent literature about Arabic. He offers two solutions for Right-dislocation: a base-generation rule and a reordering rule as in (i) and (ii) below, respectively:

(i) $\bar{\bar{\bar{S}}} \rightarrow (\text{TOP}) \bar{S} (\text{TOP})$

(ii) $(\text{TOP}) \bar{S} \rightarrow \bar{\bar{S}} (\text{TOP})$

Fehri does not choose between the two rules.

resumptive pronoun can not precede the topic, the Baṣrī grammarians accept it. It seems that the Kūfī grammarians' rejection of Right-dislocation is semantically-grounded, i.e., they consider the representation of the topic and its resumptive pronoun to be necesarily iconic or linear. However, their position is untenable since there is nothing to prevent the existence of Right-dislocation as a stylistic device, i.e., a reordering rule. This rule can be formulated as (44):

44.   NP $\overline{\overline{S}}$ → $\overline{S}$ NP   "optional"

where NP is dominated by $\overline{\overline{S}}$.

The above rule, however, inapplicable in emphatic topic-comment structures, i.e., structures introduced by the Comp *'inna,* due to the sub-categorization of *'inna* in the grammar of Arabic. To illustrate, Arabic possesses the lexical rule in (45) below:

45.   *'inna* [—— NP]

To confirm the effect of (45), contrast the well-formedness of (46a) with the ill-formedness of (46b) below:

46. a.   'inna zayd-an   daraba-hu   ᶜaliyy-un
           that Zayd-acc   beat-him   Ali-nom
           "Zayd, Ali did beat him".
    b.   *'inna daraba-hu   ᶜaliyy-un zayd-un

Interestingly, (46b) can be salvaged if a redundant resumptive pronoun is used after *'inna* in order to meet the rule in (45). The salvaged example is in (47) below:

47.   ᶜinna-hu$_i$ daraba-hu   ᶜaliyy-un -un zayd-un$_i$
       that-him   beat-him   Ali-nom   Zayd-nom
       "Zayd, Ali did beat him."

In essence, the rule in (45) is inherently related to topic-comment structures because *'inna* is always followed by a topic NP. Consequently, Right-dislocation is categorically prohibited where *'inna* is used unless a resumptive pronoun clitic that is co-referential with the Right-dislocated topic is used after *'inna* to meet its lexical sub-categorization.

Conclusion

The paper has examined the properties of the topic-comment structure in Arabic and its implications in terms of movement rules. The fact that there is a fundamental difference between the topic-comment structure and constructions that fall

under focusing phenomena has been stressed. Thus, it is argued that while the topic NP is base-generated, focused constitutents are transformationally generated. As a result, constructions that fall under the rule of Focus will not involve Wh-movement. Rather, the focused constituent will leave a trace at the original site that is co-indexed with it, hence the focused constitutent will carry all the features of that trace. In terms of Wh-movement, it has been shown that Wh-elements can not be moved immediately to the left of an NP is dominated by $\overline{\overline{S}}$, i.e., the topic NP. Moreover, it has been argued that the topic-comment structure starts with a [−Wh] comp that can be either overt or covert. However, whenever an overt comp is chosen in the D-structure of the topic-comment strucutre, Wh-movement will be banned in it.

Besides, the present paper raises the following theoretical question: How much can we constrain the transformational component of grammar? In response to this question, we have observed the advantages and disadvantages of constraining the transformational component. On the one hand, we have seen the merits of base-generating topics and pronouns in place, thus avoiding the resultant complications in accounting for them transformationally. Put differently, we have pruned our grammar by cutting out many unnecessary complications where another simpler analysis is feasible. On the other hand, we have seen the demerits of constraining the transformational component by base-generating topicalized constituents in focusing phenomena. Focusing phenomena should therefore belong to the rule of Move rather than PS-rules. This theoretical conclusion, which has been solidly supported by evidence from Arabic, calls into question the widely-accepted analysis of topicalization, i.e., focusing phenomena, in Chomsky (1977) and subsequent literature. Thus, while the transformational component can be rightly constrained in some areas, it may not in others.

جملة المبتدأ والخبر في اللغة العربية

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ملخص البحث. تهدف هذه الـدراسـة إلى مناقشة خصائص جملة المبتدأ والخبر في اللغة العربية وبيان علاقتها بقواعد التقديم والتأخير. ستتركز هذه الدراسة على حقيقة أن جملة المبتدأ والخبر تختلف اختلافاً جوهرياً عن الجمل التي تقع تحت ظاهرة التقديم والتأخير. سيُنظَر إلى جملة المبتدأ والخبر على أنها جملة أصلية من النـاحية الاشتقاقية ، بينما سيُنظَر إلى الجمل التي تضمنت تقديماً أو تأخيراً على أنها جملٌ تحويلية من النـاحية الاشتقاقية . لذلك فإن الجمل التي تقع تحت ظاهرة التقديم لا تتضمن ما يسمى بـ Wh-movement أو تقديم الكلمات الاستفهامية . الأرجح أن الجزء المقدم من الجملة يترك أثراً في موقعه الأصلي ويكون هذا الأثر مرتبطاً ارتباطاً معنوياً بالجزء المقدم ويحمل كل خصائصه . هذا الموقف يشكك في إمكانية الجمع بين جملة المبتـدأ والخـبر والجمـل التي تقـع تحت ظاهرة التقـديم في التحليل نفسه كما حصل في مقال نوم تشومسكي Noam Chomsky (١٩٧٧) والأدبيات اللغوية اللاحقة .