SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE STRUCTURAL LINGUISTICS APPLIED TO THE NOMINAL SENTENCE IN ARABIC

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Abstract
The article analyzes the diverse results obtained in the syntactic analysis of the nominal sentence in Arabic according to the methods of structural linguistics from two different perspectives: the Arab way and the European-American way. By using the technique of the contrastive analysis, the study provides interesting data about the similarities and the differences between Arabic and English in relation to the nominal sentence when the morphosyntactic principles of structural linguistics are applied.

Keywords: Structural linguistics applied to Arabic, morphosyntactic analysis techniques, the nominal sentence in Arabic, contrastive analysis, generative grammar

Introduction
What all languages have in common is the structural principle and what distinguishes them is the adaptation of this principle. Both the difference as the similarity are due to the form and not to the substance (Hjelmslev, 1968).

The renowned French linguist André Martinet, the creator of the theory of double articulation of language, said that, when moving from one language to another do not change only the words and the forms but also the choice of relations expressed (Martinet, 1959).

The functionality derived from the new structural linguistic tendencies prevails today as morphosyntactic analysis technique in all languages (Chomsky, 1957). And of course, the Arabic language is no exception. The mixture of influences existing from an important grammatical tradition, initiated mainly by Sibawayhi (Al-Hadithi, 1965; Humbert, 1995), and a new linguistic current, the structural or functional, imported from West (Chomsky, 1965), has resulted among the Arabs in an interesting syntactic view of language that is similar, in some ways, but different, in others, to that of the European and American linguists.
This paper focuses on some of these topics applied to the nominal sentence in Arabic (Massignon, 1954).

In Logic sentence is called to the expression of the relationship between two concepts: subject and predicate (Cohen, 1970). The sentence consists of a number of units organized by the nominal syntagma and the verbal syntagma or predicate, understanding as syntagma "minimal functional unit", i.e., it is a syntactic unit which can be simple or complex and in which we can distinguish the nucleus and the adjacent elements. The nucleus of a nominal syntagma is the noun, and that of a verbal syntagma is the verb (Tesnière, 1959). The nominal syntagma can act as subject, attribute or complements whereas the verbal syntagma acts as the predicate. The simple sentence consists of only one nexus subject / predicate and can be nominal and verbal (El-Shishiny, 2011).

In Arabic it is meant by simple nominal sentence the one that has not verb explicitly. It is roughly equivalent to the attributive sentences and some circumstantial phrases in present time, etc. (Wright, 1967)

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>هذا البلد ذكي جداً</td>
<td>This child is very clever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>إن هذا البلد ذكي جداً</td>
<td>Certainly this child is very clever</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The simple nominal sentence may be preceded by a particle إن (inna, certainly) which requires put the subject in accusative case.

For example:

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>إن هذا البلد ذكي جداً</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, in Arabic it is meant by simple verbal sentence the one that has verb explicitly and in addition the verb is placed at the beginning of the phrase.

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>المعلم في低碳</td>
<td>The teacher writes in the notebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>يكتب المعلم في低碳</td>
<td>writes in the notebook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The compound sentence is one that consists of more than one nexus subject / predicate, and it can be juxtaposed, coordinated and subordinated.

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>يدرس التلميذ ليعلم</td>
<td>The pupil studies to learn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Nominal Syntagma (Subject): التلميذ

b) Verbal Syntagma (Verbal Predicate): يدرس ليعلم

b1) Verb: يدرس

b2) Final Subordinate Clause: ليعلم
to learn

The nominal sentence in Arabic

Let us remember that in the Western grammatical analysis it is meant by nominal sentence in Arabic the one that has not verb explicitly. It is roughly equivalent to the attributive sentences and some circumstantial phrases in present time.

But, the Arab linguists have another concept of this kind of sentences inherited from the historical grammatical tradition resulting from a descriptive point of view (Bakir, 1984; Al-Fasi, 1985; Al-Mutawwakil, 1986). For them, a nominal sentence is one that begins with:

1) a name, beech or no a verb

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>هذا الولد ذكي جداً</td>
<td>This child is very clever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الولد في البيت</td>
<td>The child is in the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>من هذا الولد؟</td>
<td>Who is this child?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

المعلم يكتب في الدفتر

The teacher writes in the notebook

Its elements are two: mubtada (بتدأ) and khabar (خبير).

Let us see the previous four examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>هذا الولد ذكي جداً</td>
<td>(This child is very clever)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mubtada: هذا الولد</td>
<td>(This child)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khabar: ذكي جداً</td>
<td>([is] very clever)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الولد في البيت</td>
<td>(The child is in the house)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mubtada: الولد</td>
<td>(The child)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khabar: في البيت</td>
<td>([is] in the house)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>من هذا الولد؟</td>
<td>(Who is this child?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mubtada: من</td>
<td>(Who)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khabar: هذا الولد</td>
<td>([is] this child?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

المعلم يكتب في الدفتر

(The teacher writes in the notebook)

mubtada: المعلم

(The teacher)

khabar: يكتب في الدفتر

(writes in the notebook)
2) the particle إنَّ (inna, certainly) or its "sisters": كَانَ (annā), (ka’anā), لَيْتَ (layta), 
(لاّ่งلا), لَيْتَ (lākinna). In these cases, the subject is in accusative.

For example:

Arabic

إنَّ هذا الولد ذكي جداً
Innā ḥadīdā ʿābdī jādā

Innā ʾābdī jādā

Its elements are two: ism inna (or ism anna, ism ka’an, ism la’alla, ism layta and ism lākinna) and khabar inna (or khabar anna, khabar ka’an, khabar la’alla, khabar layta and khabar lākinna).

Let us see the previous three examples:

إنَّ هذا الولد ذكي جداً
(Certainly this child is very clever)

particle inna

هذَا الولد ذكي جداً
(this child)

ism inna:

إنَّ الولد في البيت
(Certainly the child is in the house)

particle inna

هذَا الولد في البيت
(the child)

ism inna:

في البيت
writing in the book)

particle inna

كاذب في الكتب
(writes in the book)

ism inna:

تا

khabar inna:-write in the book)

khabar inna:

إنَّ المعلم يكتب في الدفتر
(Certainly the teacher writes in the notebook)

particle inna

المعلم يكتب في الدفتر
(the teacher)

ism inna:

إنَّ الولد في البيت
(Certainly this child is in the house)

particle inna

هذَا الولد في البيت
(this child)

ism inna:

في البيت
(Certainly)

English

Certainly this child is very clever

Certainly the child is in the house

Certainly the teacher writes in the notebook

Certainly this child is in the house

Certainly this child is in the house

Certainly the teacher writes in the

Certainly)

Let us see the previous three examples:

إنَّ هذا الولد ذكي جداً
(Certainly this child is very clever)

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(this child)

ism inna:

إنَّ الولد في البيت
(Certainly the child is in the house)

particle inna

هذَا الولد في البيت
(the child)

ism inna:

في البيت
(Certainly the teacher writes in the

particle inna

المعلم يكتب في الدفتر
(the teacher)

ism inna:

إنَّ الولد في البيت
(Certainly)

particle inna

هذَا الولد في البيت
(this child)

ism inna:

في البيت
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English

Certainly this child is very clever

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(this child)

ism inna:

في البيت
(Certainly)

English

Certainly this child is very clever

Certainly the child is in the house

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(the child)

ism inna:

في البيت
(Certainly the teacher writes in the

particle inna

المعلم يكتب في الدفتر
(the teacher)

ism inna:

إنَّ الولد في البيت
(Certainly)

particle inna

هذَا الولد في البيت
(this child)

ism inna:

في البيت
(Certainly)

English

Certainly this child is very clever

Certainly the child is in the house

Certainly the teacher writes in the notebook

Certainly this child is in the house

Certainly this child is in the house

Certainly the teacher writes in the

Certainly)
Let us see the previous three examples:

- **أنا هذا الولد ذكي جداً** (This child was very clever)
  - *ism kāna: هذا الولد* (This child)
  - *khabar kāna: ذكي جداً* (very clever)
  - *الولد في البيت* (The child was in the house)

- **كان المعلم يكتب في السفرة** (The teacher wrote in the notebook)
  - *ism kāna: المعلم* (The teacher)
  - *khabar kāna: يكتب في السفرة* (writes in the notebook)

On the other hand, for the Arab linguists a verbal sentence is one that begins with a verb.

For example:

**Arabic**  
السيدة تذهب البنات إلى المدرسة  
(The girls go to the school)

**English**  
The girls go to the school

Its elements are  
فعل (verb), وصف (complements).

Let us see the previous two examples:

- **يكتب المعلم في السفرة** (The teacher writes in the notebook)
  - *verb: يكتب* (writes)
  - *subject: المعلم* (The teacher)
  - *circumstantial complement: في السفرة* (in the notebook)

- **تذهب البنات إلى المدرسة** (The girls go to the school)
  - *verb: تذهب* (go)
  - *subject: البنات* (The girls)
  - *circumstantial complement: إلى المدرسة* (to the school)

**Analysis and results**

Considering these theoretical issues and taking into account these principles (Bull, 1965), when structural methods are applied we find different syntactic analysis to which will be referred hereinafter as A (Western way) and B (Arabic way) (Arvide Cambra, 2000).

If we contrast (Di Pietro, 1971), for instance, Arabic and English, among other results, it may be that we find a simple verbal sentence according to A and a compound nominal sentence according to B:

1) When the phrase begins with the subject

For example:

**المعلم يكتب في السفرة** (The teacher writes in the notebook)
A) It is a simple verbal sentence, because there is an only verb, regardless it starts with the subject

subject: المعلمُ (The teacher)
verb: يكتبُ (writes)
circumstantial complement: في المدرّس (in the notebook)

B) It is a compound nominal sentence. It is nominal because it begins with a name, and it is compound because the khabar is a simple verbal phrase

mubtada': المعلمُ (The teacher)
*khabar (simple verbal sentence): يكتب في الكتب
**verb: يكتبُ (writes)
**circumstantial complement: في المدرّس (in the notebook)

2) When the phrase begins with the particle إنّ (inna) or some of its "sisters" in certain cases.

For example:

إن المعلم يكتب في المدرّس (Certainly the teacher writes in the notebook)

A) It is a simple verbal sentence, because there is an only verb, regardless it starts with a particle (inna) which requires put the subject in accusative.

subject: المعلمُ (The teacher)
verb: يكتبُ (writes)
circumstantial complement: في المدرّس (in the notebook)

B) It is a compound nominal sentence. It is a nominal sentence because begin with the particle إنّ (inna) and it is compound because the khabar inna is a simple verbal phrase

particle inna (Certainly)
ism inna: المعلمُ (the teacher)

*khabar inna (simple verbal sentence): يكتب في المدرّس
**verb: يكتبُ (writes)
**circumstantial complement: في المدرّس (in the notebook)

3) When the sentence begins with the copulative verb كان (kāna), or some of its "sisters", by being used as an auxiliary verb in the pluperfect and other times of the past.

For example:

كان المعلم قد كتب في المدرّس (The teacher had written in the notebook)

A) It is a simple verbal sentence because there is an only verb in pluperfect time.

subject: المعلمُ (The teacher)
verb: كتبَ كان (had written)
circumstantial complement: في المدرّس (in the notebook)
B) It is a compound nominal sentence. It is compound because beging with the copulative verb كان (kāna), and it is compound because the khabarkāna is a simple verbal phrase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb copulative: كان</th>
<th>The teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>اسم kāna:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*khabar kāna* (simple verbal sentence):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>verb:</strong> كتب</th>
<th>(had written)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>في السـدفتر</td>
<td>(in the notebook)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**circumstantial complement:** في السـدفتر

Conclusion

The Arabic language is the same object of study in both analysis and research techniques but the descriptions are significantly different because they are based on distinct theories. The vision that every people has the world through language is different (Delacroix, 1930), but there are also similarities in it since there are many essential features of human language that are common to man of any society and time: the *linguistic universals* (Greenberg, 1973). There are features common to all languages even if they differ (Chomsky, 1968).

References:


