Who is What and What is Who

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The Morphosyntax of Arabic WH

By

Issa M. Abdel-Razaq

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To Muhammad (PBUH)…

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INTRODUCTION

This book is essentially concerned with the typological variation in wh-constructions in Arabic. Many spoken Arabic dialects like Iraqi Arabic (Wahba 1991, Ouhalla 1996 and Simpson 2000), Lebanese Arabic (Aoun and Choueiri 1999, Aoun and Li 2003, and Aoun, Benmamoun and Choueiri 2010), Egyptian Arabic (Wahba 1984, Cheng 1991 and Soltan 2009) and Jordanian Arabic use more than one strategy in the formation of wh-questions[1]. At least four wh-formation strategies avail themselves to speakers of Arabic. These are best illustrated by the following paradigm from Lebanese (Aoun, Benmamoun and Choueiri 2010: 128).

(1) a. šəft ʔayya mmasil b-l-maTʕam? (Lebanese)
saw.2ms which actor in-the-restaurant
Which actor did you see in the restaurant?'
b. ʔayya mmasil šəft **ø** b-l-maTʕam?
which actor saw.2ms in-the-restaurant
'Which actor did you see in the restaurant?'
c. ʔayya mmasil šəft-**o** b-l-maTʕam?
which actor saw.2ms-him in-the-restaurant
'Which actor did you see in the restaurant?'
d. miin (huwwe) (ya)lli šəft-**o** b-l-maTʕam?
who (he) that saw.2ms-him in-the-restaurant
'Who is it that you saw in the restaurant?'

Whereas the question in (1a) represents the wh-in-situ strategy, in which the (d-linked) wh-phrase occurs in the internal argument position; (1b) represents the movement strategy, in which the moved wh-phrase is related to a gap in the argument position. (1c) represents the resumptive strategy whereby the wh-phrase appears clause initially and is related to a resumptive pronoun in the position corresponding to the wh-phrase. Finally, (1d) represents a class of questions known as *reduced cleft wh-questions* (Cheng 1991 and Ouhalla 1996) or Class II Interrogatives (Shlonsky 2002 and Aoun, Benmamoun and Choueiri 2010) which are restricted to argument wh-phrases only. In this type of question, the argument

wh-phrase occurs in the initial position followed by an (apparently) optional copula pronoun and a relative clause headed by the complementiser (*ya*)*lli* 'that'.

In this book, I will be essentially dealing with syntactic variation, hence, macro-variation, and morphological variation, hence, micro-variation, phenomena in the Iraqi as well as in the Lebanese dialects. To illustrate, consider, first, the following paradigm from Iraqi.

(2) a. Mona shaafat meno? (Iraqi)
Mona saw.3fs whom
'Who did Mona see?'
b. Mona ishtarat šeno?
Mona bought.3fs what
'What did Mona buy?'

(3) a. meno Mona shaafat? (Iraqi)
who Mona saw.3fs
'Who did Mona see?'
b. šeno Mona ishtarat?
what Mona bought
'What did Mona buy?

(4) a. *Mona shaafat men? (Iraqi)
Mona saw.3fs whom
'Who did Mona see?'
b. *Mona ishtarat šen?
Mona bought.3fs what
'What did Mona buy?'

(5) a. men Mona shaafat? (Iraqi)
who Mona saw
'Who did Mona see?'
b. šen Mona ishtarat?
what Mona bought
'What did Mona buy?'

As originally reported in Wahba 1991, Iraqi is a wh-in-situ language with optional wh-fronting as can be seen in (2) and (3), respectively. However, the data in (4) and (5), for example, show that Iraqi has another set of argument wh-phrases that display a behaviour that differs from the ones in (2) and (3). More

specifically, the wh-phrases *men* 'who' and *šen* 'what' are only permitted in a clause initial position as in (5), but not in situ as shown in (4).

A similar situation to that of the Iraqi wh-questions presented above can also be found in Lebanese wh-questions. In this dialect, there is a sharp contrast between argument wh-phrases in various wh-constructions, as illustrated in the following examples.

(6) a. šeft miin mbeeriħ? (Lebanese)
saw.2sm who yesterday
'Who did you see yesterday?'
b. *štarayte šu mbeeriħ?
bought.2sf what yesterday
'What did you buy yesterday?'

(7) a. miin šeft mbeeriħ? (Lebanese)
who saw.2sm yesterday
'Who did you see yesterday?'
b. šu štarayte mbeeriħ?
what bought.2sf yesterday
'What did you buy yesterday?'

(8) a. miin šəft-o b-l-maTʕam? (Lebanese)
who saw.2sm-him in-the-restaurant
'Who did you see in the restaurant?'
b. * šu štarayt-i mn l-maktabe?
what bought.2sf-it from the-bookstore
'What did you buy from the bookstore?'

The data from Lebanese shows that the asymmetry lies in the behaviour of individual wh-phrases. More precisely, while the wh-phrase *miin* 'who' occurs fully formed in wh-in-situ questions (6a), wh-movement questions (7a) and resumptive wh-questions (8a), the wh-phrase *šu* 'what' is only well-formed when it occurs clause initially (7b).

The asymmetric variation in Iraqi and Lebanese wh-question poses a challenge for current approaches to parametric variation encapsulated in the well-known Principles and Parameters framework proposed in Chomsky (1981, 1986, 1995, and 2000). The P&P framework is primarily concerned with the notion that all grammars are invariant cross-linguistically, i.e., Universal Grammar

Principles. Within this framework, typological variation follows from language specific rules operating in one language but not the other. These rules are known as Parameters which vary from one language to another, such as the head-directionally parameter, the wh-parameter, the null-subject parameter, to mention a few. The one parameter pertinent to this work is the wh-parameter, which will be closely examined along with the question of whether the P&P framework captures the variation observed here.

In its recent reformulation, the wh-parameter is couched within the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995, 2000) which seeks to divide languages into either wh-movement languages or wh-in-situ languages. The crucial factor responsible for this division is the EPP. The EPP is a property of C, which requires its Specifier to project the closest wh-phrase once Agree has taken place be-tween C and the wh-phrase, Probe and Goal in Chomsky's terms (Chomsky 2000), respectively. That is, when the EPP is present on C, movement of the wh-phrase to Spec,C is obligatory; otherwise, i.e., when the EPP is not present on C, wh-phrases remain in situ. Thus, languages that have an EPP feature on C are wh-movement languages and those that do not have an EPP feature on C are wh-in-situ languages.

However, such a strict division between languages as to whether or not they have an EPP property on C is both conceptually and empirically problematic. One the one hand, the data presented here constitute a challenge to the MP (Chomsky 1995) in which derivational economy is the driving motivation in seeking to reduce linguistic computation to the minimum. Languages like Iraqi and Lebanese, which display wh-movement alongside wh-in-situ, appear to have two derivations based on one and the same numeration. If we follow the reasoning as to whether or not a language is set to have an EPP, Iraqi and Lebanese cast a serious doubt on the plausibility of the wh-parameter. Even if we manipulate some of the operations responsible for syntactic derivation, we are still faced with issues affecting derivations, such as discourse and pragmatic factors, that, I believe, are not encoded in the syntax.

At a narrower level, such an approach to parametric variation runs into further problems posed by the distribution of wh-movement and wh-in-situ in both Languages. The data above show that the wh-phrases in the two constructions have asymmetric distribution be it in the same dialect or across the two dialects.

Further data that will be presented in the course of this study will also show that this situation is even more complicated when dealing with long wh-dependencies in both dialects. The picture presented by wh-constructions here makes it impossible to explain within the rigid P&P framework.

Recent trends in current (bio-) linguistics research put the credibility of the P&P approach to parametric variation under scrutiny. While some authors suggest certain identity criteria for parametric variation, as opposed to non-parametric variation, in an attempt to arrive at a correct representation for what Parameters are (Smith and Law 2009), others go to the extent of questioning the very existence of Parameters as an approach to linguistic variation (see Boeckx 2010 and the references cited therein). In fact, Chomsky 1995 himself acknowledges the problem encountering research and the question of how to reduce language differences and typology plainly stating that very "little is understood to venture any strong hypotheses" (1995:6). With this background, Starke (2010, 2011) develops a new approach to parametric variation, namely Nanosyntax, which seeks to address such variation at a (sub-) morphemic level via principles of size differences of lexical items and the phrasal spell-out. While it is still in its early stages, Nanosyntax seems to be a promising approach to cross-linguistic variation departing away from what Starke calls dedicated markers such as the EPP, while at the same time preserving the tenet of the P&P framework.

The picture emerging from the controversy surrounding parametric variation and the question of whether we really have a theory of parametric variation is not a clear one. Delving into the area of parametric variation may have a beginning, but it certainly has no end. Fortunately, it is not my goal in this book to settle this issue insomuch as to show how the external syntax of wh-phrases in certain dialects is affected by their internal syntax. Of course, I will be dealing with cases where I show that the Parameters' approach to cross-linguistic variation is inadequate. And, certainly, the current book makes a contribution, based on empirical data, to the issue of how parametric variation should proceed onwards. Still, little do we understand to venture any strong hypotheses.

Let us begin the journey; the present book adopts an approach that takes morpho-syntactic properties of wh-phrases to be responsible for their distribution in the various wh-constructions. In particular, I defend the view that variation in Arabic wh-

constructions can be straightforwardly accounted for on the basis of the micro-parametric differences between (properties of) individual wh-phrases. Based on cross-dialectal observations, I propose that argument wh-phrases have complex syntax in Arabic, which has been long concealed by standard assumptions about argument wh-phrases being a uniform class, and that the only way to unfold their complex syntax is by identifying morpho-syntactic properties of each wh-phrase. New data from a range of Arabic dialects will be presented with the aim of bringing into light existing asymmetries in the behaviour of individual argument wh-phrases. As far as Iraqi is concerned, once each wh-phrase is assigned its true syntax, it will be revealed that wh-in-situ in Iraqi is not what it appears to be. I will show that Iraqi is a wh-movement language, which uses relativization as a means of d-linking, which, in turn, licenses wh-in-situ. This means that Iraqi wh-in-situ is d-linked. As for the contrast between Lebanese argument wh-phrases, I will also argue that their morpho-syntactic properties are what defines their distributional patterns. The analysis advanced here has implications for the syntax of wh-constructions in general and for Arabic wh-constructions in particular.

The book contains four main chapters. Chapter one lays the ground for subsequent chapters by providing an analysis for copular constructions in Arabic. In particular, the chapter argues that equative constructions of the form [DP [PRON DP]] are left-dislocation structures in which the initial DP is functionally a topic, not a subject, that is base-generated in its surface position. The actual subject is PRON, more precisely, a resumptive strong pronoun that is directly merged in the subject position inside the predicational shell. The chapter begins with an investigation about properties of copular constructions in Arabic. Data and evidence from different dialects will be brought into light with the purpose of showing that among simple copular constructions, there exists one construction that has received little attention in the literature on Arabic copular constructions, that is, PRON-less equatives of the form [DP DP]. A major consequence of this finding is that equative constructions of the form [DP [PRON DP]] are in fact dislocation structures and have the form they do due to pragmatic reasons applied for the sake of obviating ambiguity and identifying the predicate. A second major consequence is that the problem posed by optionality of the so-called *copula pronoun* in copular

wh-constructions, usually represented as [WH-DP (PRON) DP], is no longer a problem. Under the analysis presented in this study, optionality represented by the structure [WH-DP (PRON) DP] is understood to be two distinct structures. That is, copular wh-constructions involving PRON are assigned the form [Wh-DP [PRON DP]] and are, therefore, syntactically and semantically different from those copular wh-constructions of the form [WH-DP DP]. The findings and conclusion drawn from this chapter will have important implications for both the analysis of copular wh-phrases in the following two chapters and the analysis of (Wh-) clefts in Arabic in the subsequent chapter.

In chapter two, I develop a morpho-syntactic analysis for Iraqi argument wh-phrases. I present the problems associated with Iraqi and Lebanese wh-in-situ constructions and broadly discuss current approaches to wh-in-situ in the literature. In particular, I will concentrate on two types of approaches: the LF-movement approach to wh-in-situ of Huang 1982 (and Lasnik and Saito 1992) and the binding approach of Pesetsky 1987. Presenting a number of arguments, I will show that whereas the LF-approach is incompatible with the data from Arabic, the binding approach is more plausible, but only when some refinement is undertaken. The refinement in question lies in what I take to be a micro-parametric approach to the (internal) syntax of individual wh-phrases, which will be shown to be responsible for their external syntax. To be more precise, I will argue that whereas the wh-phrases *men* 'who' and *šen* 'what' are simple DPs, the wh-phrases *men-o* 'who' and *šen-o* 'what' are copular wh-phrases which consist of the wh-phrases, i.e., *men* and *šen*, as predicates whose external subject is the subject pronoun, i.e., *-o* 'he/it' that it is attached to them. Based on the analysis provided in chapter one for copular constructions, I will argue that Iraqi argument wh-phrases have the same structure as copular wh-constructions. Furthermore, I will show that Iraqi is a wh-movement language, albeit, wh-movement is triggered by the need to check the [WH] feature on the wh-phrase itself, contra Chomsky (1995, 2000) whereby movement is triggered by the operator feature on C. As a consequence, *meno* 'who' will have the structure of the CP 'who is he?' that involves internal movement of the wh-phrase *men* to Spec,CP. The analysis then deals with the distributional problem posed by the occurrence of *meno* in an argument position in Iraqi matrix wh-in-situ questions. This problem is solved on the basis of facts from free relatives, which

exhibit the same behaviour. It will be argued that *meno* is a free relative DP with a [WH] feature. A second consequence of this analysis is that Iraqi employs relativisation as a d-linking stratagem for the licensing of wh-in-situ.

Chapter three extends the logic of the analysis advanced in chapter two and tackles the problem posed by the asymmetric behaviour of Lebanese argument wh-phrases. I will argue that Lebanese 'what' is the copular CP 'which-thing is it'. The chapter investigates properties and distribution of argument wh-phrases in Lebanese wh-questions. It will be shown that while the wh-phrases *miin* 'who' and *ʔayya*-NP 'which'-NP are DPs and display properties characteristic of argument wh-phrases, the wh-expression *šu* 'what' does not. I, then, put forward the hypothesis that the wh-expression *šu* is a complex phrase and it is this complexity that is responsible for the type of conflict observed here. Based on observations from other Arabic dialects, I will show that the wh-expression *šu* is derived from the string *ʔayy š(i) hu* 'which thing it/he'. A syntactic analysis will be provided for this string in conformity with the analysis of copular constructions proposed in chapter one. The conclusion that will be drawn is that the wh-expression *šu* is indeed complex and it behaves the way it does because it is a CP. The CP analysis of the wh-expression *šu* will account for most of the facts surrounding the asymmetries reported in this study, except for one fact about this wh-expression, namely, that it occurs in one type of question, i.e., copular wh-questions, which is restricted to DPs. This issue is left for the subsequent chapter to deal with.

Chapter four begins with a question carried over from the preceding chapter concerning the occurrence of the wh-expression *šu*, a CP, in wh-equatives and wh-clefts that admit only definite DPs. The first part of this chapter investigates properties of clefts and wh-clefts and shows that such properties are characteristic of equative constructions. Two types of analysis presented in the literature on Arabic wh-clefts, i.e., Cheng's 1991 and Shlonsky's 2002, will be discussed to see whether they can account for all the facts presented in this study. Although the two analyses have much to commend them, they fail to explain a number of crucial facts about cleft constructions in Arabic. In the second part of this chapter, I provide an alternative analysis that is based on the analysis of equatives advanced in chapter one. The proposed analysis accounts for all the facts related to clefts and wh-clefts in

the various Arabic dialects, with implications for the analysis of English clefts. Lastly, the chapter returns to the question about wh-clefts in which the wh-expression *šu* occurs and whether they receive the same treatment as wh-clefts involving Wh-DPs like the wh-phrase 'who'. Two alternatives will be explored, both of which will be shown to constitute further evidence for the base-generation analysis of *šu*-questions, regardless of question type.

Finally, chapter five summarizes the results of the current analysis and brings the discussion to a close with final concluding remarks and implications for further future research.

CHAPTER ONE

COPULAR CONSTRUCTIONS IN ARABIC

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a unified syntactic analysis for present-tense copular constructions in modern Arabic dialects. As is well known, the Arabic languages do not use the present-tense form of the copula in such constructions. The two types of copular constructions reported in the literature are illustrated in (1) and (2) below (Eid 1983, 1991, 1992; Farghal 1986; Doron 1983, 1986; Bahloul 1993; Plunkett 1993; Fassi-Fehri 1993; Ouhalla 1999; Shlonsky and Ouhalla 2002; Benmamoun 2000; Edwards 2006; Al-Horais 2006; Soltan 2007 and Aoun, Benmamoun and Choueiri 2010).

(1) a. Nada hiyye l-mudiira (Jordanian)
Nada she the-director
'Nada is the director'

b. ʕali huwwe l-steez (Lebanese)
Ali he the-teacher
'Ali is the teacher'

(Iraqi)
the-boys they the-responsible
'The boys are the responsible ones'

(2) a. Majdi muhandis (Jordanian)
Majdi engineer
'Majdi is an engineer'

b. l-bint ħelwa (Palestinian)
the-girl pretty
'The girl is pretty'

c. ʕali fi-l-gamʕa (Egyptian)
Ali in-the-university
'Ali is in the university'

The above examples show that present tense copular sentences are verbless. In particular, the first set of examples represents one type of copular construction known as the equative construction, which displays a systematic pattern consisting of two definite DPs separated by a subject pronoun. The latter is taken to perform the function of a copula in this type of construction (Eid 1983, 1991, 1992; Ouhalla 1999; Shlonsky 2002, Edwards 2006 and Al-Horais 2006). The second set of examples illustrates another type of copular construction known as the simple copular construction that involves an initial definite DP followed by either an indefinite DP, an AP or a PP (Eid 1992, Benmamoun 2000, Edwards 2006, Al-Horais 2006, and Aoun, Benmamoun and Choueiri 2010)[1].

The problem presented by Arabic present-tense copular constructions above is twofold. As far as simple copular constructions are concerned, the absence of a verbal predicate poses a syntactic problem to do with the structural representation of such constructions and raises the question of whether they are full clauses like verbal predications or whether they are small clauses. Various views have been entertained in the literature. For instance, Farghal 1986 and Fassi-Fehri 1993 adopt the view that there is a copula that does not surface at the PF component. Benmamoun 2000 and Aoun, Benmamoun and Choueiri 2010, on the other hand, advance the view that simple copular constructions are full clauses, more specifically, TP projections but without a VP projection.

As far as equative constructions are concerned, the occurrence of a subject pronoun in equative constructions presents another problem that essentially centers on the nature of this pronoun. Several studies have argued for an approach that takes equatives to have the structure of full clauses in which the pronoun is said to be the phonetic realization of subject agreement in I(NFL), much in the same way as subject-verb agreement in verbal predications (Doron 1983, Ouhalla 1999 and Shlonsky 2002). Meanwhile, Eid (1983, 1991, and 1992) suggests a functional explanation in which the pronoun is taken to be a predicate head that functions as an anti-ambiguity device in forcing sentential interpretation.

Besides the problems just outlined, there are two particular questions that have not been fully explored in the literature on Arabic copular constructions, which will be the main focus of this chapter. The first question is whether simple copular sentences and equative sentences represent two different types of structure or

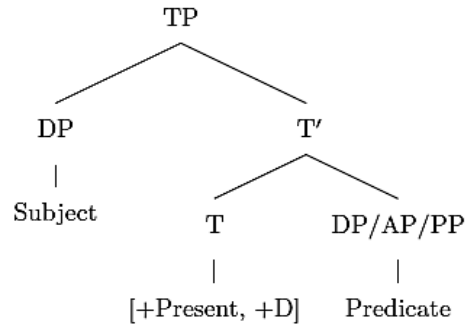
whether they have the same structure, given the verbless nature of such constructions. The second question concerns the structure of copular wh-constructions and whether they represent a different type of wh-question from canonical wh-questions in the Arabic dialects studied here.

The chapter is organised as follows. Section two puts forward the proposal for the syntax of Arabic copular constructions. Section three presents non-verbal predications in Arabic in more detail and concentrates on equatives and the properties associated with them. Section 3 looks into previous approaches to copular constructions and shows that they are incompatible with the data presented here. In sections four and five, I put forward the proposal and discuss its consequences. Section 6 is the conclusion.

1.2 Proposal

Based on data and observations from various Arabic dialects, this chapter shows that the inventory of simple copular constructions involves an equative construction without PRON. Building on Cowell 1964 and Heggie 1988, I will adopt the view that a definite DP can be predicative and argue, therefore, that these are subject-predicate constructions. The structure I propose for such constructions is the one advanced in Benmamoun 2000 and Aoun, Benmamoun and Choueiri 2010 in which the DP predicate is merged as complement of T and the DP subject is (base-generated) in Spec,TP, as shown in (3) below.

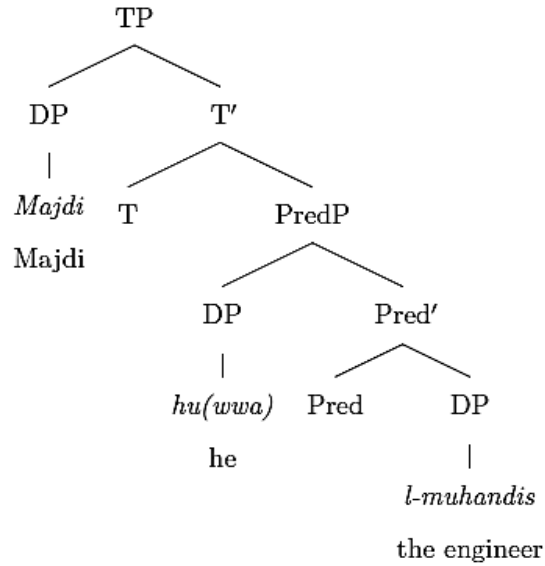
(3)



Under this structure, the predicate can either be adjectival (AP), prepositional (PP) or nominal (DP). A nominal predicate can be either an indefinite DP or a definite DP[2]. Presenting data from various dialects, I will show that Arabic does allow the type of sentence in which two definite DPs occur as subject-predicate clauses, i.e. without PRON, on a par with simple copular sentences.

As far as equatives involving PRON are concerned, I will propose an LD analysis along the lines of Cowell 1964, Plunkett 1993, Adger and Ramchand 2003, Edwards 2006 and Soltan 2007. More specifically, the proposed analysis treats equative sentences of the type illustrated in (1) above as left-dislocation structures in which the first DP is base-generated in an A'-position as a discourse topic, rather than a subject. The actual subject is the pronoun in the low subject position with which the left-dislocated DP is coreferential. The structure for equatives featuring PRON is roughly represented in (4).

(4)



The analysis will show that equatives have the form they do, i.e., [DP [PRON DP]], because they are left-dislocation structures that derive from a basic subject-predicate construction. The proposed analysis

will be shown to have several consequences. First, left-dislocation will equally apply to simple copular sentences, on a par with equative sentences. Second, as concerns copular wh-constructions, the proposed analysis solves the problem of optionality of PRON in such constructions. Under the analysis proposed here, optionality of PRON is only apparent in that constructions involving PRON and those without represent two different types of construction. More specifically, the analysis correctly divides such constructions into basic subject-predicate clauses, which involve no PRON, and into LD'ed constructions, which involve PRON, on a parallel fashion to LD'ed equative constructions. Lastly, the findings of this chapter will be the backbone of the analysis developed for wh-clauses in the subsequent chapters.

1.3 Copular Constructions

This section reviews types of copular constructions in Arabic and highlights some of the main properties associated with them. As is well known, Arabic languages allow sentences in which no verbal predicate is involved, i.e., verbless constructions or the so-called *nominal sentences* (Fassi-Fehri 1993, Plunkett 1993, Benmamoun 2000 and Shlonsky 2002). There are two types of verbless constructions frequently reported in the literature on Arabic copular constructions: predicational copular sentences and equative copular sentences (Eid 1983, 1991, 1992; Farghal 1986; Doron 1983, 1986; Bahloul 1993; Plunkett 1993; Fassi-Fehri 1993; Ouhalla 1999; Shlonsky and Ouhalla 2002; Benmamoun 2000; Edwards 2006; Al-Horais 2006; Soltan 2007 and Aoun, Benmamoun and Choueiri 2010). Predicational copular sentences consist of a definite DP followed by either an indefinite DP, an AP or a PP. These are illustrated in (5a), (5b) and (5c) respectively.

(5) a. Majdi muhandis (Jordanian)
Majdi engineer
'Majdi is an engineer'

b. l-bint ħelwa (Palestinian)
the-girl pretty
'The girl is pretty'

c. ʕali fi-l-gamʕa (Egyptian)
Ali in-the-university
'Ali is in the university'

In spite of the absence of a copular element, the sentences above are fully well-formed and are treated in the literature as copular constructions, on a par with the English copular sentences shown in the translation. The absence of a copula in Arabic, however, is confined to present-tense copular sentences; in all other tense configurations, a verbal copula is obligatory. For instance, past tense and future tense copular sentences involve an inflected form of the copular verb *kwn* 'be', as illustrated in (6a-c).

(6) a. Majdi kan muhandis (Jordanian)
Majdi was.3ms engineer
'Majdi is an engineer'
b. l-bint kaan-at ħelwa (Palestinian)
the-girl was-3fs pretty
'The girl was pretty'
c. ʕali ħa-y-kun fi-l-gamʕa (Egyptian)
Ali will-3ms-be in-the-university
'Ali will be in the university'

In addition to the absence of a verbal predicate, another property that characterizes Arabic copular constructions is the definiteness of the initial DP. This is due to a general restriction in Arabic that prohibits indefinite DPs from occurring in a clause initial position. An initial DP can be, however, indefinite in this type of construction, but only when it is specific. An indefinite DP is specific in Arabic if it is modified by, say, an adjective or a relative clause (see also Al-Horais 2006). The contrast between bare indefinites and specific indefinites below illustrates this point.

(7) a. *walad b-s-sayyaara (Jordanian)
boy in-the-car
'A boy is in the car'
b. walad sʁeer b-s-sayyaara
boy little in-the-car
'A little boy is in the car'
c. walad laabis bluuze ħamra b-s-sayaara
boy wearing shirt red in-the-car
'A boy (who is) wearing a red shirt is in the car'

The other type of non-verbal copular constructions is the equative construction. Arabic equatives systematically consist of two definite

DPs separated by a subject pronoun, i.e., the so-called *PRON* (Doron 1983, Ouhalla 1999, Shlonsky 2002 and Edwards 2006). These are illustrated below.

(8) a. nada hiyye l-mdiira (Lebanese)
Nada she the-director
'Nada is the director'
b. Mhemmed hu l-mʕallem (Palestinian)
Mhemmed he the-teacher
'Mhemmed is the teacher'
c. ʕali huwwa l-mudarris (Egyptian)
Ali he the-teacher
'Ali is the teacher'
d. l-wlaad humme l-masʔuuliin (Iraqi)
the-boys they the-responsible
'The boys are the responsible'
e. Majdi hu(wwa) Saaħib l-benaayeh (Jordanian)
Majdi he owner the-building
'Majdi is the owner of the building'

There are two distinct properties that characterize present-tense equatives in Arabic. The first property is the definiteness of the two DPs forming the equative construction, as seen in the sentences above. The second property is the presence of what is known as the *copula pronoun* between the two DPs (8a-c) (Eid 1983, 1991, 1992; Doron 1983, 1986; Ouhalla 1999; Ouhalla and Shlonsky 2002 and Edwards 2006)[3]. Copula pronouns are homophonous with third person subject pronouns and have very limited distribution in that they appear only in present-tense equative sentences. In configurations other than present tense, a verbal predicate must be used, much in the same way as simple copular sentences. To further illustrate, consider the sentences in (9a-c)[4].

(9) a. ʕali kaan l-mudarris (Iraqi)
Ali 3ms.was the-teacher
'Ali was the teacher'
b. Majdi raħ y-kuun l-mudarris (Jordanian)
Majdi Fut. 3ms-BE the-teacher
'Majdi will be the teacher'
c. Nadia ħa-t-kuun l-masʔuula (Egyptian)
Nadia fut.-3fs-BE the-responsible
'Nadia will be the responsible'

Equatives are also subject to the indefiniteness restriction observed above. Unlike simple copular sentences, however, the initial DP in equatives cannot be a specific indefinite. Consider the cases below.

(10) a. *benet hiyye l-mudiira (Jordanian)
girl she the-director
'A girl is the director'
b. *benet ħelwa hiyye l-mudiira
girl pretty she the-director
'A pretty girl is the director'
c. *benet qaaʕde b-l-ħadeeqa hiyye l-mudiira
girl sitting in-the-garden she the-director
'A girl (who is) sitting in the garden is the director'

In spite of the fact that the indefinite DP is modified in (10b, c), such examples are ruled out in the same way as (10a) is. Only definite DPs can occur in this type of construction.

One more issue that is usually discussed in the context of equative constructions concerns agreement of PRON. So far, the patterns of agreement that PRON displays have been shown to be consistent in that PRON shows full agreement with the two DPs forming the equative construction. There are cases, however, where PRON shows limited agreement, such as agreement in Number and/or Gender with the first DP. This might be shown in the examples below.

(11) a. ʔanta huwa l-masʔul (Standard Arabic)
you(ms) he the-responsible
'You are the one responsible'
b. *ʔanta ʔanta l-masʔul
you(ms) you(ms) the-responsible
'You are the one responsible'
(12) a. enti huwwa enti (Egyptian)
you(fs) he you(fs)
'You are you'
b. *enti enti enti
you(fs) you(fs) you(fs)
'You are you'
c. *enti hiyya enti
you(fs) she you(fs)
'You are you'

(13) a. eħna hummu l-masʔuuliin (Jordanian)
we they the-responsible
'We are the ones responsible'
b. *eħna huwwa l-masʔuuliin
we he the-responsible
'We are the ones responsible'

On the other hand, there are cases where PRON shows agreement with one of the two DPs, but not with the other. In (14a), for instance, PRON agrees with the second DP, but not with the first DP. By contrast, PRON shows agreement with the first DP rather than with the second DP in (14b)[5].

(14) a. ahamm ši b-kell d-daktoraa hiyye l-oTrooħa
important thing.ms in-every doctorate she the-dissertation.fs
'The most important thing in every doctorate is the dissertation'
b. ašhar asor tariχi f-l-balad huwwe l-alʕa
famous palace.ms historical in-the-country he the-fortress.fs
'The most famous historical monument in town is the fortress.'

To recap, this section has so far presented the two frequently reported types of copular constructions: simple copular sentences and equative copular sentences. It has been shown that in both types of construction, the verbal copula is absent in the present tense; whereas in other tenses, a verbal copula is obligatory. In simple copular constructions, the initial DP may be either definite or a specific indefinite followed by an indefinite DP, an AP or a PP. As for equative constructions, they differ from simple copular sentences in two respects: the definiteness of the two DPs forming the equative sentence and the presence of a subject pronoun between the two DPs.

The types of copular constructions presented here give rise to a number of questions. One of the questions is to do with their syntax and whether the two types of copular construction entail different structures, and, if so, whether such constructions are full clauses with functional projections like verbal predications; or whether they are simple subject-predicate structures. Another question is posed by equatives in which third person subject pronouns apparently perform the function of a copula, hence, presenting a conflict between their (pro)nominal form and their apparent predicative function. The third question concerns the

semantics of the two constructions, i.e., whether or not their interpretive properties are the same, given the absence of a verbal predicate. A further complication resides in the irregularities of agreement between PRON and either of the two DPs forming the equative construction. Some of these questions have been addressed in a number of studies in this field. The next section looks into some of the main approaches to copular constructions and sees whether the data presented here can be accounted for.

1.4 Brief Review

There is extensive literature on copular constructions in general, and on Arabic copular constructions in particular (Eid 1983, 1991, 1992; Fassi-Fehri 1993; Doron 1983, 1986; Heggie 1988; Bahloul 1993; Plunkett 1993; Shlonsky 1997; Moro 1997; Ouhalla 1999; Benmamoun 2000; Greenberg 2002; Adger and Ramchand 2003; Al-Horais 2006; Edwards 2006 and Aoun, Benmamoun and Choueiri 2010, among others). A full account of analyses presented in the literature is rather beyond the scope of this section. However, I briefly present some of the dominant approaches to the syntax of copular constructions, especially, those that are directly related to the current discussion.

The question of whether or not predicational sentences and equative sentences are syntactically the same has been entertained in Heggie 1988 for English, French and Hebrew as well as in Adger and Ramchand 2003 for Scottish Gaelic. Heggie 1988 provides a unified account for predicative and equative constructions that are said to derive from a single D-structure configuration. The core argument in her analysis of copular constructions is that the copula functions as a kind of a verbal operator that can create a predicate out of any phrasal category. Given that any phrasal category can be turned into a predicate by the copula, both DP and CP predicates are allowed in Heggie's analysis. Accordingly, this would then naturally account not only for predicative and equative constructions, (15a) and (15b), but also for clefts and pseudo-clefts, (15c) and (15d, e), respectively.

(15) a. John is a teacher.
b. John is the teacher.
c. It is John who married Susan.
d. What Mary hates is Bill's tie.
e. Bill's tie is what Mary hates.

The cases in (15a) and (15b) are interesting in the sense that they are taken by Heggie to be syntactically the same. For Heggie, a definite DP like *the teacher* in (15b) can be predicative on a par with indefinite DPs like a teacher in (15a). This is attributed to the function of the copula as an operator, which seems to be blind to the semantics of DPs, or any phrasal category for that matter, that it selects as a predicate. In this respect, Heggie points out that since selectional restrictions are based on phrasal category, a distinction has to be made between predicative and referential DPs in terms of category types, a costly and an unnecessary move. This aspect of Heggie's analysis will be crucial to the discussion that follows. Capitalizing on Heggie's treatment of definite DPs, it explicitly entails that such DPs are of type *e*, *t*. Heggie's treatment radically differs from Bowers's 1993 original work on predicational structures, where DPs are unambiguously saturated expressions, i.e., of type *e*.

More recently, Adger and Ramchand 2003 explore the hypothesis that apparently different types of predicational constructions all reduce to one underlying structure. For Scottish Gaelic, Adger and Ramchand present evidence that this is indeed the case, and that the range of variation found in Scottish Gaelic copular sentences can be attributed to the semantic properties of the constituents. Syntactically, copular constructions are said to consist of a predicational core mediated by the functional projection Predicate Phrase (PredP) (see also Bowers 1993, Chomsky 2000, 2001). The head of PredP takes as its complement only lexical projections NP, VP, AP, and PP. PredP is, in turn, dominated by TP[6]. The structure is diagrammed in (16) below.

However, Adger and Ramchand's claim that Pred is restricted to taking lexical projections as its complement gives rise to the question of equative copular sentences, which consist of two DPs. DPs would have to be allowed to have more than one interpretation, i.e., a referential interpretation or a predicational interpretation. Crucially, an indefinite NP in Scottish Gaelic has no determiner, and is treated by Adger and Ramchand as an NP. As for definite NPs, since they are preceded by a definite determiner, they are taken to be DPs.