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THE ARABIC PARTICLES 'INNA WA AḤAWĀTU-HĀ' AT THE SYNTAX-SEMANTICS INTERFACE

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THE ARABIC PARTICLES ‘*INNA WA AḤAWĀTU-HĀ*’ AT THE
SYNTAX-SEMANTICS INTERFACE

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Linguistics
in the College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

THE ARABIC PARTICLES ‘*INNA WA AḤAWĀTU-HĀ*’ AT THE SYNTAX-SEMANTICS INTERFACE

In Arabic *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* ‘*inna* and its related sisters’ are traditionally considered as verb-like particles. They are specified as introducing equational sentences and change their constituents’ case to a different pattern from what verbs do. Therefore, they are called *nawāsiḥ* in Arabic, or words that cause a shift to the accusative case (Ryding 2005).

The medieval grammarians’ treatment of *inna* and its sisters as verb-like particles and of the equational sentence in general is based on the theory of ‘*amal*, ‘government’ which Sībawayhi has described it in his book *Al-kitāb*. The theory presumes a grammatical operation (‘*amal*) in which an operator (‘*āmil*) assigns to a unique operand (*ma’mūl*) a grammatical function (Carter, 1973, 151). However, in modern linguistics, government is realized as a syntactic relation that imposes case agreement between the syntactic elements in the sentential structure. And this structure has a deep representation and surface representation.

The Medieval treatment for the equational sentence introduced by *inna* is problematic, because it attributes to *inna* a verbal power to resolve the issue of the case assignment to the equational sentence which lacks an overt syntactic operator. Modern approaches to equational sentence differ totally from the traditional account. Some modern approaches propose a copula for the equational sentence; this copula is either covert or deleted. Other modern approaches propose a tense projection in deep structure that determines an equational sentence’s surface form. Neither sort of approach gives a reasonable explanation for the case assignment pattern, for the general properties of equational sentences, or for the status of *inna*.

In this study, I propose a new approach focusing on the role of semantics in the assignment of case in equational sentences in Arabic. My hypothesis is based on a new interpretation to Sībawayhi’s description of the ‘*ibtida*’ sentence; according to this new interpretation *ibtida*’ is not a syntactic operator but rather a semantic one. I also propose that a sentence’s syntactic properties are sensitive to its semantic MODE, a specification of whether it expresses a topic-based proposition; or an event-based proposition.

My new hypothesis is intended to apply to all varieties of Arabic including Classical Arabic, and Modern Standard Arabic, as well as the regional dialects of Arabic.

Keywords: Arabic, *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā*, *nawāsiḥ*, equational sentence, case assignment. *ibtida*’.

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12/15/2015

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To my Master;
absent in presence, present in hearts.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

Inna wa-aḥawātu-hā are traditionally described as particles which functions as verbs by assigning both the accusative and nominative case to what follow them. Particles are defined in medieval grammar as words which have a meaning by virtue of referring to something else (Owen. 1988: 128), or in other words particles signify meaning in the words they operate on. Before, addressing the characteristics of *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā*, we must first give some information about the types of Arabic sentences. In this chapter I discuss the two types of Arabic sentences, verbal and nominal sentences, describing their patterns of case assignment and the kind of operator that assigns case for each one. I also discuss instances in which the case assignment of what is traditionally called the nominal sentence is changed by what are called *nawāsiḥ al-jumla al'smyya* (the nominal sentence case changers or cancelers). These are *kāna*, *ẓanna*, and *inna* each of which is representative of a small group of sister expressions. I explain how the members of each group operate and I elaborate on the grammatical properties of the *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā*. Before going through all these we have to relate some information about Sībawayhi's identity, his life, and the significance of his book *Al-kitāb*.

1.1 Sībawayhi and the legacy of *Al-kitāb*

The biographical sources of Sībawayhi's life give very little information about his birth, but the most probable information is that Sībawayhi was born in Šīrāz around c.752 and died in his forties in Fāris. His full name is 'Amr bin Uṭmān bin Qanbar. Sībawayhi

went to Baṣra to study the religious law, but because he had inconsistent knowledge in Arabic language as he was non- native speaker of Arabic, he committed publically serious grammatical mistakes. Feeling embarrassed and ashamed from being corrected in public, Sībawayhi decided to study Arabic. So, he joined Al-Ḥalīl bin Aḥmad's classes of grammar. Soon Sībawayhi became Al-Ḥalīl's favorite student. Carter (2004:28) describes their relationship; "The personal relation between the two was obviously one of extreme affection from the master and boundless respect from the pupil".

As a repayment for his master Al-Ḥalīl, Sībawayhi wrote his famous book *Al-Kitāb* in which he refers to his master Al-Ḥalīl 608 times. Sībawayhi even described *Al-Kitāb's* contents as only the 'ilm 'knowledge' of Al-Ḥalīl. *Al-Kitāb* was the only book written by Sībawayhi. His death around c.796 was before he could publish his book. Therefore, the title of his book was left for Sībawayhi's contemporaries to give. As an expression of their appreciation of Sībawayhi's achievement, they gave the book the title *Al-Kitāb* 'the book'. The introduction of the definite article *al-* to *Kitāb* indicates *Al-Kitāb* dominance over other books of grammar.

Al-Kitāb is considered as the oldest extant text of Arabic grammar and at the same time the most comprehensive book that its influence has lasted for centuries. The chapters of the book deal with the different linguistics divisions, syntax, semantics, morphology, and phonology. The recognizable thing in *Al-Kitāb* is Sībawayhi's special interest in Semantics and pragmatics. *Al-Kitāb* can be described as an instance of communicative grammar that relates syntax, pragmatics, and semantics to each other. Throughout the book we can recognize two main analytical tools that has been used. The first is the theory of

'amal 'government' that concerned with government and case assignment. Like the effect of verbs upon their arguments and assigning certain case to them.

The second tool is *qiyās* 'analogy' which is the key method that Sībawayhi's uses to explain forms, patterns, and constructions by comparing accidental grammatical similarities between two elements, or among various elements that form a certain phenomenon. Just like comparing the effect of *inna* on the topic with the effect of *ʕiṣrūna* 'twenty' on *dirham*. We will discuss these two analytical tools adopted by Sībawayhi later on chapter two.

1.2 Arabic types of sentences

Traditionally Arabic sentences are divided into two types: verbal and nominal sentences. This division is identified by Sībawayhi in his book *Al-kitāb*¹. A verbal sentence starts with a verb while a nominal sentence starts with a noun. Examples (1) and (2) illustrate.

(1) Qaraʔ-a Zayd-un al-kitab-a
read-PAST Zayd. SG.NOM the- book- ACC
'Zayd read the book'

(2) Zayd-un ṭālib-un
Zayd. SG.NOM student- SG.NOM
'Zayd is a student'

As Peled (2009:4) states "in written Arabic the type of sentences is determined by the sort of its predicate and location of the predicative constituent (subject and predicate) relative to each other".

¹ Although the distinction between the two types was first identified by Sībawayhi, the terms themselves were introduced by later grammarians. (Peled, 2009)

When the subject comes at the beginning of the nominal sentence it is termed *mubtada* ‘what comes first’ (henceforth topic). This term is derived from Sībawayhi’s term *ibtida* ‘the positioning of the subject in initial position, inception’. But, when the subject comes after the verb in verbal sentences (henceforth VSO sentences), the subject is analysed as *fā’il* ‘the doer, or the agent’ (henceforth the subject). In both positions whether a topic or a subject they are assigned the nominative case. Unlike the subject, the topic must always be definite. However, in the case in which the topic is indefinite, the predicate precedes it, as in (3)

- (3) *fī* *aṣ-ṣaf-i* *ṭālib-un*
in the-school- SG. GEN student- SG.NOM
‘A student is in the class’

The topic is followed by a predicate and it is termed *ḥabar* ‘the constituent that convey information about the topic, or the piece of information about the topic’ (henceforth the predicate). The predicate is assigned the nominative case. See for example (4). It is not necessary that the predicate be a single noun, rather it may be of various categories²: an adjective (5), a prepositional phrase (6), a verbal clause (7), and even a nominal clause (8).

- (4) *Zayd-un* *ṭālib-un*
Zayd. SG.NOM student- SG.NOM
‘Zayd is a student’
- (5) *Zayd-un* *ṣani-un*
Zayd. SG.NOM rich.-SG. NOM
‘Zayd is rich’
- (6) *Zayd-un* *fī* *al= madrasa-ti*
Zayd. SG.NOM in the= school- SG. GEN
‘Zayd is in the school’

² Ibn As-Sarraj (*Uṣul* I, 65) identifies four types of predicates: *ism* (nominal, including adjective), *fī’l* (finite verb), *zarf* (adverbial), and *jumla* (clause, whether verbal or nominal)

- (7) Zayd-un yaqraʔ-u al=kitāb-a
 Zayd. SG.NOM read-IND. PRS/ 3SG SBJ the=book- SG.ACC
 ‘Zayd reads the book’
- (8) Zayd-un ḍāhib-un ila al=madrasa-ti
 Zayd. SG.NOM going-SG.NOM to the=school- SG. GEN
 ‘Zayd is going to school’

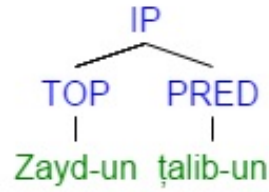
Notice that the traditional treatment for a sentence like (7) is that it is a nominal sentence starts with a topic ‘*Zayd*’ and has a verbal predicate ‘*yaqraʔ-u al-kitāb-a*’, in which the verb ‘*yaqraʔ-u*’ has a null subject. The embedded clause here is treated as a sentence that forms a part of a larger sentence (Peled, 2009: 4). However, in modern approaches it is considered as an SVO sentence. The predicate only receives the nominative case marker when it is an NP or AP.

1.3 The Equational constructions

Nominal sentences are also called equational sentences. In some languages, like English, equational sentences have a copula (verb *to be* in English) that links the two parts of the sentence. In other languages, like Russian and Japanese, equational sentences consist of a topic and predicate without a copula. Arabic equational sentences are of the later type⁴. See (9) as an example. The two constituents, the topic and the predicate have the nominative case. The question, whether there is a covert copula or not in the equational sentence, will be discussed thoroughly in later chapters. If a sentence is verbal the topic is assigned the nominative case while the predicate is assigned the accusative case, like in (10).

⁴ It is controversial whether there is a copula and if it is verbal or nominal copula. We will deal with these argument later on our discussion.

(9)



- (10) Kāna Zayd-un ṭālib-an
be- PST Zayd- SG.NOM student - SG. ACC
'Zayd was a student'

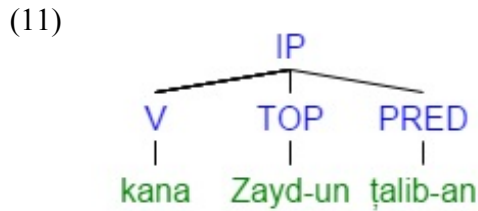
1.4 *Nawāsiḥ* 'the cancelers'

There are cases where equational sentences receive a different pattern of case assignment. This is when one of the group of *nawāsiḥ* (words that cause shift to the accusative case (Ryding, 2005) joins the equational sentence; the members of this group are *kāna*, *zanna*, and *inna*, each of which has a small group of sisters of similar behavior. Sībawayhi argues (*Al-kitāb* I, 6) that when a member of any of these three groups of *nawāsiḥ* introduces the *ibtida'* construction (i.e the equational construction) it is one of these verbs or particles that assigns case to the topic and no longer the *ibtida'* itself. These expressions are therefore referred to as *nawāsiḥ ibtida'* (*ibtida'* cancelers). Each one of these groups has a different pattern of case assignment to the equational sentence depending on whether it is a verb or particle or on what types of arguments the construction possesses.

1.4.1 *Kāna wa-aḥawātu-hā*

Kāna and its related verbs form the first group of *nawāsiḥ* with seventeen verbs (Ibn Malik, *Tashīl*: 52). They assign the nominative case to the topic and promote it to be

kāna's subject, and assign the accusative case to the predicate and promote it to be *kāna*'s predicate. See (10) and (11).



Kāna assigns the nominative case to its subject and the accusative case to the predicate just like the transitive verbs do. However, Sībawayhi identifies the *kāna* verbs as deficient verbs⁵, because *kāna* ‘to be’ (unlike the verb *ḍaraba* ‘hit’, which require subject and object arguments) requires a topic and predicate which share the same referent. In addition, *kāna* does not express any kind of action but only tense, while *ḍaraba* indicates both the semantic component of action and tense.

Nevertheless, *kāna* has all other characteristics of verbs in terms of inflection⁶, case assignment, flexible positioning...etc. and other than that, when it introduces the equational sentences, it would be regarded as a verbal sentence and no more as nominal. Therefore, *kāna* is considered as a copula.

1.4.2 *Zanna wa-aḥawātu-hā*

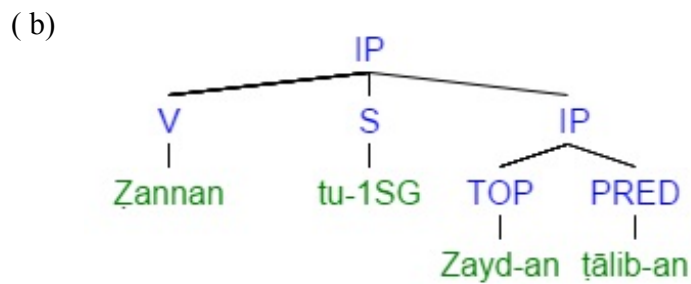
The second group of cancelers is *zanna wa-aḥawātu-hā*. Unlike *kāna*, *zanna* and its sisters are regarded as real verbs that require subject and object (in particular, they are identified as verbs that describe mental action). They form the largest group with 23 verbs (Ibn Malik, *Tashīl*: 70-71).

⁵ In Arabic *afʿāl nāqīṣa*

⁶ Some verbs of this group are defective like *mādama* and *laysa*.

According to Sībawayhi (*Al-kitāb* I, 39) a verb in *ẓanna*'s group requires three arguments, one is nominative as a subject, and two are accusative as an object and a complement, see for example 12 (a and b) the equational construction occupies the two accusative arguments' positions. Sometimes the complement is a prepositional phrase. See for example 13.

- (12) (a) *Ẓannan=tu* *Zayd-an* *ṭālib-an*
 Think/PAST=1SG. NOM Zayd- SG. ACC student - SG. ACC
 'I thought Zayd is a student'



- (13) *Ẓannan=tu* *Zayd-an* *fi* *aṣ=ṣaf-i*
 Think/PAST=1SG. NOM Zayd- SG. ACC in the=school- SG. GEN
 'I thought Zayd is in the class'

In a lot of cases, *ẓanna* comes along with *anna* in one construction. The case assignment for the complement clause in this case would be according to *anna*'s case assignment rules, to be discussed below. See for example (14).

- (14) *Ẓannan=tu* *anna* *Zayd-an* *ṭālib-un*
 Think/PAST=1SG. NOM that Zayd- SG. ACC student - SG. NOM
 'I thought that Zayd is a student'

1.4.3 *Inna wa-aḥawātu-hā*

Traditionally, *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* (henceforth, *inna*) are considered as particles that operate like verbs (verb-like particles). Particles are defined by medieval grammarians

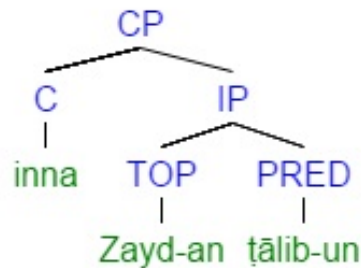
as words that signify meaning in the words they operate on. They are six in number: *inna* ‘verily, indeed’ (15), *anna* ‘that’ (16), *kaʔnna* ‘as if’ (17), *lakinna* ‘but’ (18), *layta* ‘If only’ (19), *laʕala* ‘Perhaps’ (20). Sībawayhi in his book *Al-kitāb* (II: 131) called them the five particles considering *inna* and *anna* as the same particle. Some other linguists add *liʔanna* ‘because’ to this group of particles (Ryding 2005: 422)

- (15) Inna Zayd-an ṭālib-un
Indeed Zayd- SG. ACC student - SG. NOM
‘indeed Zayd is a student’
- (16) ʕalim=tu anna Zayd-an ṭālib-un
know/PAST=1SG. NOM that Zayd- SG. ACC student - SG. NOM
‘I knew that Zayd is a student’
- (17) kaʔnna al=waqt qad fāt-a
as if the=time PARTICLE lapse-PST
‘As if the time is out’
- (18) lays-at lubnāniya-t-an, wa=lākinna=hā
be/ not-3 F. SG.NOM Lebanese- F-ACC.SG and=but=3F. ACC
saʕid-at fi lubnān-a
enjoy-PST.F.SG. NOM in Lebanon- GEN
‘She is not Lebanese, but she was happy in Lebanon’.
- (19) Layta=ni ḍahab=tu
If only= 1SG. ACC go/PST=1SG.NOM
‘If only I had gone’
- (20) Wa=laʕalla=hu mat-a qabl-a ḍalika
and=perhaps= 3SG.M.ACC die-PST before-ADV that
‘Perhaps he died before that’

Inna introduces the equational sentence. Traditionally it is said that it governs the sentence by (i) assigning the accusative case to the topic and making it its subject, and (ii) assigning nominative case to the predicate and making it its predicate. See for example

(21). Thus, it operates in a manner that is exactly the opposite of what verbs do. The belief that *inna* governs two arguments is actually what made the medieval grammarians describe this group as a verb-like particles. Also, *inna* resembles verbs in that it can host the pronoun clitic as in (22). However, *inna*'s subject must always be overt, whereas verbs can take pronominalized subjects (have a pro-drop subject).

(21)



- (22) (a) kāna ḡalis-an
 Be/PST= (3SG) sitting - ACC.SG
 ‘(He) was sitting’
- (b) Inna=hu ḡalis-un
 indeed=3SG. ACC sitting - NOM.SG
 ‘Indeed he is sitting’

Inna's predicate must follow its subject; *inna*, is unlike verbs, does not allow for a free distribution for its arguments. Yet, if the predicate is a prepositional phrase or an adverb it may precede the subject, but in the other cases it is not allowed to do so. See (23)

- (23) (a) Inna al=yawma Zayd-an munṭaliq-un
 Indeed the=today.ADV Zayd- ACC leaving - NOM
 ‘Indeed Zayd is leaving today’
- (b) Inna fi ad=dar-i Zayd-an
 Indeed in the=home- GEN Zayd- ACC
 ‘Indeed Zayd is in the home’

It is not permissible for a verb to follow *inna* immediately, but a verb may come within the predicative clause. For example (24)

- (24) Inna Zayd-an yadrus-u fi ad=dar-i
 Indeed Zayd- ACC study-PRS.3 SG in the=home- GEN
 ‘Indeed Zayd is studying at home’

Inna can be followed by the complementizer *mā* ‘that’, and in this case *mā* blocks *inna*’s operation on what follows. For example (25), the topic *Allāh-u* is nominative because *mā* has blocked *inna* from assigning the accusative case to the topic. Also, a verb can come after *inna +ma* construction, and *inna* will no longer be specified to introduce equational sentences. See (26).

- (25) Inna=mā Allāh-u ilāh-un wāḥid-un (An-nisā’:171)
 Indeed=that Allāh - NOM god-NOM one- NOM
 ‘For sure, Allāh is the only One God’
- (26) Kaʔanna=mā yusāq-ū-na ilā al=mawt-i (Al-anfāl: 6)
 As if=that drive.PASS-PL-PRS to the=death-GEN
 ‘As if that they were being driven to death’

Coordination clause can follow the equational sentence after *inna* and *lakinna* only. In classical Arabic the topic of the second clause that comes after the predicate takes the nominative case, like in (27), however it is ungrammatical to have the coordination after *inna*’s subject⁷. As (28) shows.

- (27) Inna Zayd-an munṭaliq-un wa=ʕamr-un
 Indeed Zayd-ACC leaving-NOM and= ʕamr-NOM
 ‘Indeed Zayd and ʕamr are leaving’
- (28) *Inna=ka wa= Zayd-un munṭaliq-ā-ni
 Indeed=2SG.M.ACC and=Zayd-NOM leaving-DUAL-NOM
 ‘Indeed you and Zayd are leaving’

⁷ There is a debate between the Baṣran and Kufan schools in regard this subject. The Kufan school debates that (28) is grammatical and gives it as a proof that *inna* is weaker than verbs, therefore *inna* does not operate on the predicate. For further discussion see (Ibn Al-Anbārī, Inṣāf :158)

In Modern Standard Arabic, it is grammatical to have a sentence like (28). The conjunct noun would be assigned the accusative case just like *inna*'s subject⁸. See (29)

- (29) Inna Zayd-an wa=ʕamr-an munṭaliq-ā-ni
 Indeed Zayd- ACC and= ʕamr-ACC leaving-DUAL-NOM
 ‘Indeed Zayd and ʕamr are leaving’

1.5 Summary

In this chapter we have shown that equational sentences in Arabic have four different patterns of case assignment according to the type of the operator that introduces them. Table (1) explains each one of these cases. In (1), the equational sentence comes in its verbless form; the topic agrees with the predicate in CASE, GENDER, and NUMBER. In (2), *kāna* introduces the equational sentence; the topic agrees with the predicate in GENDER, and NUMBER but not in CASE. *Kāna* assigns case in the same pattern that other verbs assign to their arguments. Therefore, the topic is nominative and the predicate is accusative. The two constituents of the equational sentence, the topic and the predicate, no longer form an IP, but are now *kāna*'s (the copula) arguments. In (3) both the topic and the predicate agrees in CASE, GENDER, and NUMBER. What makes (3) different from (1) is that the topic and the predicate have the accusative case because the two constituents form a complement clause of the verb *zanna*. In (4) the topic and the predicate still agree in GENDER, and NUMBER but not in CASE. Example (4) has a reverse case pattern to (2); *inna*, the complementizer, introduces the whole CP and it assigns the accusative case to the topic.

⁸ It seems that in MSA there is overgeneralization in the rule of *inna* operation.

The equational sentence's constituents				
		Topic	Predicate	example
1	Verbless sentence	NOM	NOM	2
2	<i>Kāna's</i> sentence	NOM	ACC	9
3	<i>Zanna's</i> sentence	ACC	ACC	10
4	<i>Inna's</i> sentence	ACC	NOM	13

Table (1) The equational sentence's case patterns

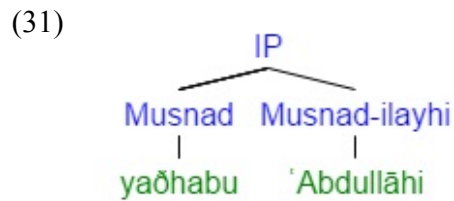
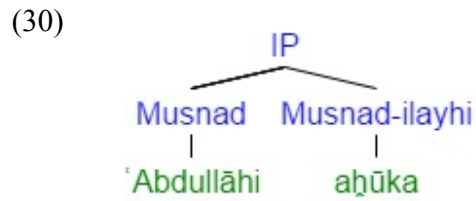
From this table, types (1) and (4) are problematic, because in (1) there is no clue to the kind of operator that assigns the nominative case to the both constituents of the equational sentence, and whether their CASE are structural or lexical. Example (4) in other hand is problematic because the predicate is nominative. This raises the same previous question whether the predicate's CASE is lexical or structural, that is assigned by *inna* in the same way that it assigns the accusative case to the topic. In this study we address those two questions and we will prove that the verbless sentence in Arabic has a lexical case and it is also true for the predicate in *inna's* sentence.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature review

2.1 Sībawayhi and Medieval grammarians' concept of Arabic sentences

Sībawayhi (*Al-kitāb* I, 23) relates any sentence type (whether verb-initial or noun initial) to the principle of *'isnād* (leaning), he proposes two elements in the sentence: *musnad* (i.e. Theme), and *musnad ilayhi* (i.e. rheme). The noun-initial sentence, which Sībawayhi calls the "*ibtida'* sentence" consists of a *musnad* and *musnad ilayhi*, as in *'Abdullāhi aḥūka* 'Abdullahi is your brother', where the *mubtada'* (topic) *'Abdullahi* is the *musnad* while the *ḥabar* (predicate) *aḥūka* is the *musnad ilayhi*. See for example (30). By thus every *mubtada'* must have a *ḥabar* following it. In verb-initial sentence, as in *yaḏhabu 'Abdullahi* 'Abdullahi is going', the verb *yaḏhabu* is the *musnad* while the subject *'Abdullahi* is the *musnad ilayhi*. See for example (31). Sībawayhi asserts that every verb should be followed by an argument. Then, Sībawayhi describes how case is assigned to the constituents of the sentence within the theory of *'amal* (government). In the *ibtida'* sentence the case is assigned to the *mubtada'* by the *ibtida'* proposing that the unmarked case for any noun is that of the *ibtida'* sentence. Otherwise, the case is assigned when there is an operator that appears in the sentence such as a verb or a particle like *inna*. Sībawayhi's proposal is that there is an *'āmil* (operator) in every sentence that assigns case to a *ma'mūl* (operand). As for the *ḥabar* (predicate) of the *ibtida'* sentence, Sībawayhi argues that it is assigned the nominative case by the *mubtada'* itself.



Later grammarians, adopting Sībawayhi’s principles of *isnād* and *‘amal*, define two types of sentences and two types of operators. They make a distinction between the noun-initial sentence and called it the nominal sentence and the verb-initial sentence and called it the verbal sentence. The operator in the nominal sentence is *ibtida’* which is an *‘āmil ma’navy* (abstract operator), while the operator on the verbal sentence is the verb which is an *‘āmil lafzy* (formal operator).

2.2 Modern Linguistic approaches’ concept to Arabic sentences

In modern linguistic studies, Greenberg (1966) proposes the idea that every language has a basic pattern of the subject and object ordering in relation to the verb in a sentence, and that each word order pattern like SVO, VSO, or SOV correlates with a specific grammatical feature. This arises the question to which word order Arabic language is related and what is the unmarked word order. It is needless to say that the equational sentence in Arabic becomes problematic and raises major controversies among modern scholars who deal with the Arabic language because it lacks the verbal element.

Most of the modern linguistics studies about word order have been conducted within Chomskian transformational generative grammar. Their major concern is to determine the basic word order and its alternatives, and to formulate transformational rules for the various types of word order.

Bakir (1980) has identified VSO as the basic (unmarked) word order in Arabic while other patterns such as VOS and SVO are derived from VSO by certain transformational movement rules. For Bakir, VOS is derived by the rule of movement of the object to a position immediately to the right of the verb. As for SVO, Bakir supports the traditional Arabic grammarians' view that an initial MP is actually a topic and not a subject and the structure of the sentence would be a topic/ comment.

Fassi-Fehri (1982: 39) in other hand rejects fiercely the traditional Arabic analysis for the two sentences types and he adopts a Chomskyan analysis of Arabic, assuming that Arabic is a VS language and that an equational sentence in Arabic has a covert copula.

Marogy (2010:145) disagrees with Fassi-Fehri and argues that talking about SV and VS word order in Arabic is inaccurate and smacks of misapplied western concepts. For her, dealing with SV order in Arabic is problematic, unlike that of VS, because the western notion of subject and Arabic agent are not the same, and more importantly because the initial noun in a statement with a verbal predicate does not fulfil the function of the agent but that of a *mubtada'*.

2.3 Sibawayhi's analysis of *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā*

The subject of *inna* and its related particles attracted considerable attention from the medieval Arab Grammarians. Sibawayhi (*Al-kitāb* II: 131) describes two views regarding *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* or as he calls them the five particles. The first view, which

he advocates, is that *inna* is a special kind of particle that has a verbal effect on what comes after it.

“This is the chapter on the five particles which operate on what comes after them in the same way as a verb operates on what comes after it”

Sībawayhi in his explanation proposes that *inna* works on the topic of the sentence in the same way that *ʕiṣrūna* ‘twenty’ works on *dirham*. For example (32)

(32)	ʕiṣrūna	dirham-an
	Twenty/NOM. PL	dirham- ACC. SG
	‘Twenty dirhams’	

He based his supposition for *inna* in analogous to the effect of the noun *ʕiṣrūna* on *dirhaman*. *ʕiṣrūna* assigns the accusative case to *dirhaman* even that *ʕiṣrūna* is not a verb or derived from a verb like participles. *Dirhaman*, in the other hand, is not an epithet for *ʕiṣrūna* or even a noun that annexed to *ʕiṣrūna*. By this supposition Sībawayhi proposes that *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* is actually have an effect only on the topic by assigning the accusative case to it. As for the predicate, Sībawayhi does not explain whether it is assigned the nominative case by *inna* or by the *mubtada*’ just like what he proposes for the *ibtida*’ sentence before *inna* insertion.

He explains the second traditional view by citing his master Al-Khalīl’s description of *inna* as involving two operations on what follows it: it assigns the accusative case to the topic and assign the nominative to the predicate just like the verb *kāna* ‘be’ which is specified to introduce the equational sentence as we mentioned earlier in chapter one, but the way *inna* assigns case is in reverse of *kāna*’s pattern of case assignment to what follows, for detail see table (1) in chapter one. Also, the subject of *inna* cannot be pronominalized like that of *kāna*. Some scholars like Peled (2009) and Marogy (2010:196) propose that by

saying "Al-Khalil claims", Sibawayhi is actually expressing disagreement with Al-Khalil, rejecting the view that *inna* operates on both the subject and the predicate in favor of the view that *inna* only operates on the following noun. However, when we look at Sibawayhi's description of *inna*'s operation we cannot say that he assumes that the predicate is assigned the nominative case by the topic because he actually leaves that without explanation.

2.4 Later grammarian's classification of *inna*, and the Al- Baṣra - Al-Kūfa Dichotomy

The medieval Arab grammarians that followed Sibawayhi agree with him on the verbal behavior of *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā*. However, they differ in their view of how *inna* operates on what follows it. Their debate is reflected in the contrasting hypotheses of the two grammatical schools, Al- Baṣra and Al-Kufa schools of grammar. Followers of Al-Basra school follow Al-Khalīl in associating *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* with two operations. Contrastingly, the Kufan followers believe that *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* only affect the following noun and have no direct effect on the predicate. Followers of both schools give evidence from Arab speech to support their claims.

Ibn Al-Saraj (*Uṣul* I, 230) agrees with Al-Khalīl in that *inna* operates on both the topic and predicate. Ibn Al-Saraj gives an explanation that it is like the verb whose object precedes its subject. This difference in order has the effect of differentiating *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* from verbs¹. He also rejects the idea that *inna* only operates on the topic

¹ Ibn Al-Saraj account for *inna*'s similarity to the verb whose object precedes its subject is inaccurate, because the difference between *inna* and verbs is in case assignment patterns and not in word order, unless if Ibn Al-Saraj could account for verbs that assign the accusative case to their subjects and the nominative case to their objects, which are not true for Arabic. In addition, *inna* does not permit flexible movement of the topic and predicate as verbs do for their arguments as we explained in chapter one.

arguing that the predicate cannot be nominative by *ibtida* ' as the topic is no longer in the initial position of the sentence.

Al-Jurjani (*Al-Mqtaṣid* I, 443- 444) indicates that *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* precede the *Ibtida* (the nominal sentence) and make the topic accusative and the predicate nominative because they resemble verbs for the fact they are triliterals, and they also have two arguments. However the accusative argument precedes the nominative and cannot come after it, because *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* are not verbs but subtypes of verbs. Therefore, Al-Jurjani claims that *inna*'s sentences should follow only one order or construction by fronting the accusative to the nominative argument to distinguish them from verbs. Al-Jurjani rejects the Kufan grammarians' proposition that the predicate of *inna* is not actually assigned the nominative case by *inna* but, instead, assigned the nominative case by *Ibtida* '. He argues that if the predicate maintains its original case after *inna* introduces the nominal sentence, then it is more proper to the subject to maintain that. Yet, since the *inna*'s subject has become accusative the predicate has to be in a nominative case. Al-Jurjani's justification of that is that there is no category, in Arab speech, governs a noun to be accusative and does not assign nominative case also².

According to Ibn Hišām (*Šarḥ*, 230) *inna* precedes the topical sentence and makes the topic accusative and the predicate nominative, and it is unacceptable to move the predicate before the topic unless the predicate, is *zarf* (space and time qualifier) or a prepositional phrase. In this case it must come between the particle and its subject. For example (33).

² Al-Jurjani by this claim contradicts Sībawayhi's claim (*Al-kitāb* II: 131) that *fišrūna* assigns the accusative case to *dirhaman* even though it doesn't assign the nominative case into any other noun.

- (33) Inna fi ad=dar-i rajul-an
 Indeed in the=home- GEN man- ACC
 ‘indeed there is a man inside the house’

Ibn Uṣfūr (*Šarḥ*, 415) states that *amal* (government) is basic in verbs, but it is marked in nouns and particles. As a proof all the verbs are operators (i.e. all verbs in Arabic assign case to their arguments) but not all nouns and particles, therefore, ‘*amal* is marked in nouns and particles for some specifications. So, for Ibn Uṣfūr, *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* are operators because: (i) they are specified for preceding only nouns, just like verbs. (ii) they have two jobs: assigning the accusative case to the topic and the nominative to the predicate. Ibn Uṣfūr argues that *inna* cannot make its arguments both nominative, nor both accusative, *inna*’s arguments have to differ in case. Also, *inna* makes the predicate nominative because it emphasizes the predicate not the subject³.

Al-Farā’ (*M’āni* I: 310-311) states that *inna* is too weak to operate on the predicates, and therefore it only assigns the accusative case to the subject, and does not assign case to the predicate. Abo Ḥayan (*taḍkira*: 316) reports that the Kufan school’s grammarians, who agree with Al-Farā’’s hypothesis, give a proof that if the predicate is also *inna*’s argument then it should be possible that the predicate comes after *inna*. Just like the predicate of *kāna* ‘be’ which has a free distribution.

2.5 Modern Linguists’ classifications of *inna*

We can see that all the medieval Arab grammarians agree that *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* are particles. In the recent approaches, linguists have dealt in greater detail with *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā*. Some of the linguists who follow the medieval approach still regard them

³ In classical Arabic case has a pragmatic function

as particles; an example is Badawi (2000), who describes them as a subdivision of a larger group called *nawāsiḥ*, which in its turn contains both the *kanna* group of verbs and the *ẓanna* group of verbs.

Other linguists prefer not to use the word particle to describe *inna* group. Zwicky (1985) argues that particles are actually affixes, clitics, and words, and that there is no justification for treating particles as constituting an independent syntactic category.

Al- Azzawie (1990) agrees with Abdul-Ghany (1981:6-7) considering *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* as complementizers, which I would agree with. Al-Azzawi (1990:130) called them *inna* and its related complementizers. He assumes that it is a type of a preposition specified for the feature [+V]. He gives an explanation for the *inna*'s verbal quality on the basis it can occur with the direct object clitic. As for Abdul-Ghany (1981:6-7), *inna* is a nominal complementizer which must be followed by an NP in an accusative case.

Al-Kohlani (2010:20) considers *inna* as a discourse marker. It usually occurs sentence-initially in texts and is grammatically and semantically loosely attached to its host sentence. She further proposes that discourse markers function across sentence boundaries to connect textual units above the sentence and to guide the text-receivers' interpretation throughout the text.

Modern scholars have also dealt with the word order in *inna*'s sentence extensively. Muhamad (1999: 85) indicates that *inna / anna* must be followed by the subject, but it is acceptable to have a prepositional phrase after *inna/ anna*, like in example (4). Therefore, Muhamad formulates a rule in which *inna* must be followed by a [-V] category. Unlike Muhammad, Kouloughli (2002: 19-11) proposes that *inna* assigns the accusative case to the nearest following NP and not only to the topic.

Wittig (1994:322) deals with semantic and pragmatic aspects of *inna*'s sentence. She argues that *inna* has a semantic function of presenting the content of the sentence as a fact and of emphasizing the sentence as a whole. She further claims that *inna* must be followed by a topic.

Testen (1998:47) considers *inna* as a particle that functions as an emphasizer; he studies *inna* in isolation from the rest of its group. He makes a comparison between *inna* in Arabic and its counterparts in other Semitic languages and describes some differences in function between them in order to define an ancestral particle in early Semitic language *h/in(n) and to explain its syntactic role.

Like Testen, Bloch (1986:102) makes a comparison between the Arabic particle *inna* and the Biblical Hebrew *hinnē*. He asserts that when we look at the historical counterparts of *inna* we can define two functions for it: the first is to emphasize the sentence, as the medieval Arabic grammarians made the focus of their definition, and *inna*'s second function is to express presentative meaning. He gives evidence for that from Sibawayhi's book *Al-kitāb* and Zamaḥṣari. *Inna malan wa inna waladun wa inna a'dadan* "There is money and there is a boy and there is a quantity". In this sentence *inna* comes three times to present the existence of each noun it modifies and not to emphasize the sentence. Bloch concludes that *inna* originally had a presentative function which was reduced to an emphasizing function in Classical Arabic.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Theoretical discussion

3.1 Arabic equational sentence in modern approaches' view:

In modern studies, Sībawayhi's theory of *'amal* does not meet with approval among linguistics scholars, even though this is the only theory that gives a detailed account of how case is assigned in every type of Arabic sentence, and of the type of operator employed in each.

Even so, many studies have been devoted to the Arabic verbless sentence (i.e. equational sentence); four main approaches have been pursued in this domain. The first approach assumes a copula; this copula is seen as either verbal ((Fassi Fehri, 1982), (Obiedat and Farghal, 1994), (Al-Tamari, 2001), and Bakir, 1980)) or nominal (Eid, 1991). The verbal copula is seen either as being null ((Fassi Fehri, 1982), (Obiedat and Farghal, 1994), (Al-Tamari, 2001)) or undergoing deletion (Bakir, 1980). The nominal copula Eid (1991) is identified by the use of the third person pronoun. The second approach is based on the properties of INFL (Bahloul 1993) the content of INFL determines what type of complement (VP or not VP) I° may take. The third approach, based on the minimalist syntax (Bemamoun, 2000), assumes that there is a projection of TP in verbless sentences which dominates the nonverbal predicate and that the nominative case of the subject (topic) is therefore assigned by tense. The fourth approach is that of Mouchaweh (1986) who analyses the verbless sentence as a small clause that has no functional projection above the lexical one.

In general, all modern approaches to the verbless constructions fall in line with one or another of these four hypotheses. We discuss each of these Hypotheses below.

3.2 The copula analysis

3.2.1 The verbal copula

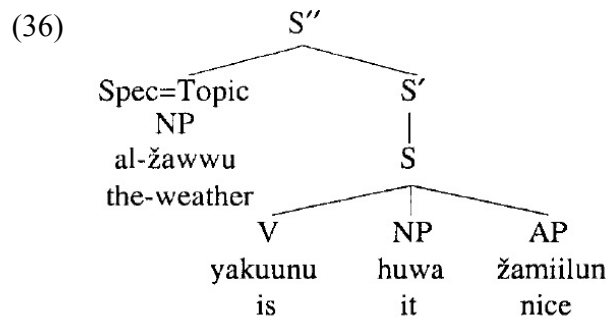
This approach subsumes either the assumption that Arabic equational sentence have a null copula (Fassi Fehri 1993), or the assumption of a deleted copula (Bakir, 1980)

Fassi Fehri (1993) assumes that there is a functional projection that hosts tense and also a copula which is null (without phonological matrix). This assumption is problematic because in sentences like (34) when there is an overt copula the predicate is assigned the accusative case. However, when the copula is covert the predicate is nominative, as in (35), and there is no reason to assume that overt copula assigns a different case from the covert one; for this reason, it may be preferable to say that there is actually no copula.

(34) kāna Zayd-un ṭālib-an
be- PST Zayd- SG.NOM student - SG. ACC
'Zayd was a student'

(35) Zayd-un ṭālib-un
Zayd. SG.NOM student- SG.NOM
'Zayd is a student'

On the other hand, Bakir (1980) assumes that the Arabic verbless sentence is a topic – comment structure which has a verbal predicate, as in (36). The first NP is a topic while the verbal predicate consists of a copula followed by a pronominal subject. Then, two deletions are applied in the surface structure, the first a deletion of the copula, and the second a deletion of the pronominal subject.



This assumption also does not explain why the predicate would be assigned the nominative case in the deleted copula sentence, and why this deletion is only true in present tense sentences, as in (37) and (38).

(37) Zayd-un yāʔib-un al=yawm-a
 Zayd. SG.NOM absent-NOM the=today-ACC
 ‘Zayd is absent today’

(38) Zayd-un kāna yāʔib-an bi=l=ams-i
 Zayd. SG.NOM be/PAST.3SG absent-ACC at=the=yesterday-GEN
 ‘Zayd was absent yesterday’

3.2.2 The nominal copula

Eid (1991: 33) suggests that there is a nominal copula in complementary distribution with the verb ‘be’ in Arabic and Hebrew. In Arabic this copula is illustrated by the third person pronoun *huwwa/hiyya*, which she calls the ‘copula pronoun’. She proposes that these pronouns behave like verbs but they cannot simply be analyzed as such. And the obligatory use of the pronoun entails that the subject and the predicate NPs must be both referential. She also proposes that the pronoun actually links the subject to the predicate; see (39) and (40) from the Egyptian Arabic.

(39) Nadya hiyya il=duktōr-a
 Nadya she the=doctor-F
 ‘Nadya is the doctor’

- (40) Ali huwwa il=mudarris
 Ali he the-teacher
 ‘Ali is the teacher’

Eid indicates that the pronoun cannot be used if the predicate is an indefinite noun or adjective, or if the predicate is locative, as in (41), (42), and (43)

- (41) *Ali huwwa zarīf
 Ali he nice
 ‘Ali is nice’

- (42) *Ali huwwa mudarris
 Ali he teacher
 ‘Ali is a teacher’

- (43) *Ali huwwa hina/ fi l-bīt
 Ali he here/ in the-house
 ‘Ali is here/at home’

Eid argues that the copula pronoun functions as anti-ambiguity device to force a sentential, rather than a phrasal interpretation of a structure; in this way, the copula pronoun keeps sentences like (39) and (40) distinct from the phrases like *Nadia al-duktora* ‘Nadia who is the doctor’ and *Ali al- mudaris* ‘Ali who is a teacher’

There are some flaws in Eid’s analysis. First, she limits her study to Egyptian Arabic which cannot extend to other Arabic dialects and in the same way to Standard Arabic. Second, the use of the copula pronoun is only limited to certain cases in order to solve the ambiguity and not to all the cases of the equational sentences, and that does not prove that there is a necessity to propose a copula in Arabic equational sentences. Besides, it only proves that the third person pronoun is an anti-ambiguity device for certain

sentences and not necessarily that it is a copula that links the subject with the predicate.

Third, she does not explain how case is assigned in the equational sentence.

3.3 INFL property analysis

Bahloul (1993: 209) argues that, in Standard Arabic (SA), INFL is allowed to select the type of the complement it takes, sometimes selecting for VP; as in (44), and sometimes for a PP complement; as in (45).

(44) Qadim-a al=walad-u
 Come-3M.PST the=boy-NOM
 ‘The boy came’

(45) al=walad-u fi al=bayt-i
 the=boy-NOM in the=house-GEN
 ‘The boy is at home’

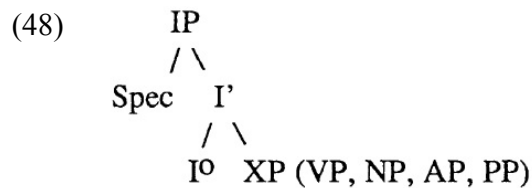
The restriction is determined by the feature [₊tense] in INFL. He also proposes that unlike the heads of lexical categories², the non-lexical head INFL may be specified either for values of tense, aspect, negation, interrogation (and so on) or for none. For example (46) & (47).

(46) kāna al=walad-u fi al=bayt-i
 be/PAST.3SG the=boy-NOM in the=house-GEN
 ‘The boy was at home’
 INFL → [tense, PAST]

(47) al=walad-u fi al=bayt-i
 the=boy-NOM in the=house-GEN
 ‘The boy is at home’
 INFL → [tense, Ø]

² Lexical heads are fully specified for the value of their features (PERSON, GENDER, NUMBER) (Bahloul, 1993: 212)

INFL's modal features³ are directly instantiated on the structure without the mediation of the lexicon; instead, they are set in accordance to the input of the pragmatic information. So, depending on what type of feature it has, INFL may take any phrasal category as its complement, as in (48).



Hence, if the value of tense is not present in INFL, INFL can select for any complement except for VP. Bahloul also proposes that in SA the underlying word order is SVO, and that the verb undergoes movement to INFL so that it can get tense, because, just as tense is base generated in INFL, verbs are base generated without tense. He claims that this verb movement is obligatory and proposes these principles. (49)

- (49) a- tense and WH-features are base-generated in INFL
 b- Verbs obligatory move to support those features

Another claim of his is that WH-phrases and temporal complementizers require the presence of a copula. However, because WH-phrases such as *matā* 'when' are base generated in CP, they still can pass their inherent TNS feature to INFL, thus, INFL will select for a tensed complement.

Bahloul's hypothesis includes serious flaws. First, he does not give any kind of description of how case is assigned in verbless sentences. Second, he proposes that verbs

³ Bahloul uses the term 'modal' for the categories found under the INFL node, adopting Fillmore's suggestion (1968) that the basic syntactic structure of sentences is made up of two constituents corresponding to modality and proposition.

obligatorily move to INFL and surface in VSO order, ignoring the fact that SVO sentences do occur in discourse, as in (50). The verbs in such examples should not inflect for tense (according to his hypothesis), because verbs are base generated without tense and acquired tense only through movement. By this he even contradicts himself because he already mentioned that verb and tense are bound morphemes, hence neither of them can appear by itself (Bahloul, 1993: 215).

- (50) (a) al=walad-u katab-a tamrin-a-hu
the=boy-NOM write- PST exercise-ACC-his
‘The boy wrote his exercise’
- (b) katab-a al=walad-u tamrin-a-hu
write- PST the=boy-NOM exercise-ACC-his
‘The boy wrote his exercise’

Third, he proposes that WH- words that are temporal such as *matā* transmit the feature (+tense) to INFL which allows it to select for a copula complement. This claim is surely incorrect because verbless complements are possible even in the presence of *matā*, as in (51).

- (51) Minđu matā ab-ū-ka fī al=bayt-i
Since when/Q father-NOM-your in the=house-GEN
‘Since when your father (comes) at home?’

Fourth, *laysa* ‘is not’, the negative copula⁴, is used to negate verbless sentences. As Bahloul proposes INFL does not have the property [+tense] in verbless sentences, but in

⁴ Historically, *laysa* ‘be not’ is treated as a negative substantive verb that is compounded of *la* ‘the negative particle’ and the unused Aramaic substantive verb *aysa* that signifying being and existence (Wright, 1896: 96). Al-Khawalda (2012) has proved *laysa* as a verb and it has the same characteristics of the verb *kāna* ‘be’. By this he disagrees with Benmamoun (2010:114) who assumes that *laysa* is a negative particle only to solve the problematic issue of the verb movement to T.

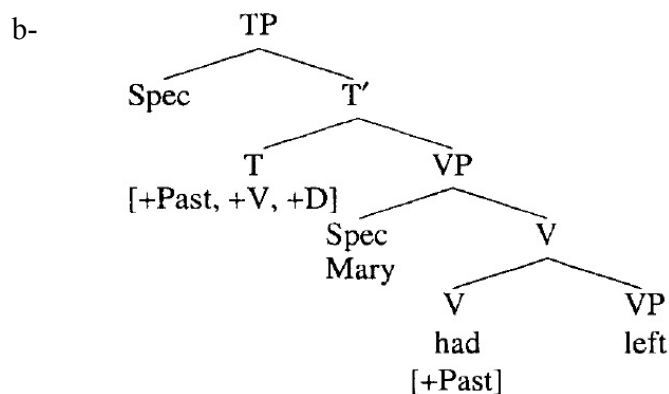
a negative sentence with *laysa*, such as (52), INFL has the tense feature because *laysa* is a verbal copula. This would be a problematic issue for the hypothesis presented by Bahloul because he assumes that the equational sentence do not have (+tense) feature. Yet, if we propose that *laysa*'s sentences lack a tense feature, we are then left with no explanation for the fact that *laysa* undergoes movement.

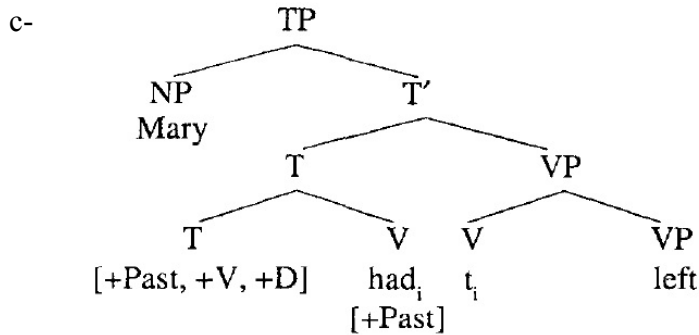
- (52) *Laysa* *Zayd-un* *ṭālib-an*
 be not/PRS *Zayd-* SG.NOM student - SG. ACC
 ‘Zayd is not a student’

3.4 The analysis of the categorial feature of tense

Benmamoun (2000:37) adopts Chomsky’s hypothesis (1995) that there is a tense projection in English sentences, represented as a TP projection. TP’s head (T) is specified for two categorial features [+V] and [+D]. The feature [+V] determines the interaction between tense and verb, while the feature [+D] determines the interaction with the subject; see (53). In (53c) the verb moves to tense (T) to check its [+V] and the subject raises from spec of the VP to spec of T to check its [+D] feature.

- (53) a- John had left



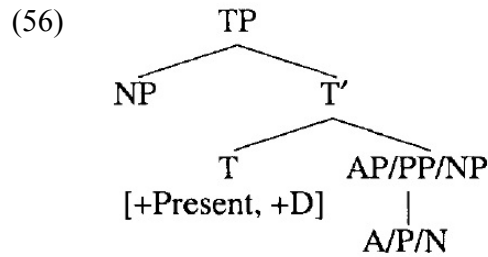


The same thing is true in Arabic for the past and future tense. However, in present tense, T may require a copula as in (54), and in other cases no copula is allowed, as in (55)

(54) Ya-kūn-u al=ğaw-u ḥār-an fi as=-şayf-i
 3M-be-BRS the=weather-NOM hot-ACC in the=summer-GEN
 ‘The weather is hot in summer’

(55) Ali-un šuğāṣ-un
 Ali-NOM brave-NOM
 ‘Ali is brave’

Here, Benmamoun explains that the difference between (54) and (55) is semantic. (54) describes a situation which is usually true in past, true in present, and expected to be true in future, and he defines it as a **generic** present sentence, while (55) describes a state of affairs that is permanent or true in the present moment only, and he defines it as a **deictic** present sentence. In the present generic tense, T may be specified optionally for [+V] beside the [+D] feature. However in present deictic tense, T is only specified for [+D]. In this case there is no need for verbal copula in the sentence. See (56)



Benmamoun (2010: 43) proposes also that, in verbless sentences, nominative case is assigned to the subject by tense. Therefore, the case of the subject is structural and not lexical. This also proves (according to Benmamoun) that the verbless sentence contains a functional category so it cannot be considered as a small clause with a lexical layer only.

It is true that this analysis seems to have an advantage over the previous ones, because it gives more solutions to the problematic issue of the Arabic verbless sentence. Yet, there are still some flaws in the tense feature analysis.

First, it explains only how nominative case is assigned to the subject (topic) without mentioning of what happens with the predicate. Second, it still cannot account for the fact that, in Arabic, we can have different word orders for the same sentence, as in (50)

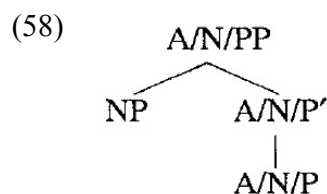
As we see Benmamoun like Bahloul assumes that V undergoes movement to PT (tense phrase) level to check for tense, and it surfaces as VSO word order. But that is not true for all cases as we saw in (50). Third, his assumption that semantics accounts for the appearance of a copula is true, as we will prove later in our discussion in chapter four. However, his distinction between the generic and deictic tenses is somehow inaccurate. Consider, for example (57 a) in which the tense feature is deictic (according to Benmamoun). Yet it describes an individual property that is true for certain amount of time

in the past and in the presents, and surely it will extend for a while into the future. And from (57 b) we recognize that it obligatorily lacks a copula.

- (57) (a) Zayd-un ṭalib-un fi ḡāmiṣat-i Kintakī
 Zayd-NOM student-NOM in university-GEN Kentucky
 minḏu 2013
 since 2013
 ‘Zayd is a student in the university of Kentucky since 2013’
- (b) *Zayd-un ya-kūn-u ṭalib-an fi ḡāmiṣat-i
 Zayd-NOM 3M-be-PRS student-ACC in university-GEN
 Kintakī minḏu 2013
 Kentucky since 2013

3.5 The small clause analysis

Mouchaweh (1986) suggests that there is no functional projection above the lexical projection in the verbless sentence, so both the subject and the predicate are contained within the small clause, which may itself be an AP, NP, or PP. as in (58)



This is similar to the embedded clause of an English sentence such as (59).

- (59) I consider [John a good teacher]

This hypothesis has been adopted by Rapaport (1987) for Hebrew which is a Semitic language that shares the same equational sentence structure with Arabic. In our analysis in the next chapter we prove that this analysis is the closest to our hypothesis. However, it lacks for a very important part, which is how case is assigned in the equational sentence.

3.6 Summary

As we can see from the early discussion, the medieval account for the equational sentence is the only one that describes in detail the structure of the equational sentence and how case is assigned to its components, while all modern approaches fail to do so. This explains why some scholars continue to adhere to the traditional way of thinking. It is true that the traditional approach has in its turn its flaws, but its flaws is indeed amendable. I say this because the traditional analysis surpasses the recent approaches as it describes the language from all its aspects like semantics and pragmatics and not only syntax, and that is what modern approaches miss. In the next chapter I will explain the importance of handling language from the perspective of its different linguistics levels and not only of syntax, in order that we can give a clear description of how we produce a well formed sentence, and also to account for case assignment. Here, in the words of Fillmore (1969:3)

‘Notational difficulties make it impossible to introduce ‘case’ as a true primitive as long as the phrase-structure model determines the form of the base rules. My claim is, then, that a designated set of case categories is provided for every language, with more or less specified syntactic, lexical, and semantic consequences, and that the attempt to restrict the notion of ‘case’ to the surface structure must fail’

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Analysis:

4.1 Semantics determines word order and assigns case:

- Laqad ṭalabtu min Zaydin musaṣadati. ʔaīn hua?
I asked from Zayd to help me. Where is he?

(60) Yaqraʔ-u (Zayd-un) fī al=yurfat-i
read-3SG.PRS (Zayd- SG.NOM) in the= room-GEN
'(Zayd) is reading in the room'

- Lam ʔara Zaydan al-yawma. ʔaīn hua?
I haven't seen Zayd today. Where is he?

(61) Zayd-un Yaqraʔ-u fī al=yurfat-i
Zayd- SG.NOM read-3SG.PRS in the=room-GEN
'Zayd is (reading) in the room'

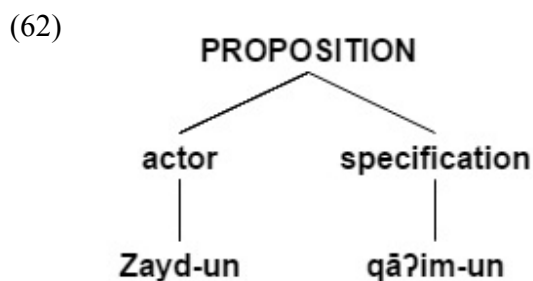
If we look at the two previous conversations we notice that the sentence (60) indicates what activity that Zayd is involved with while (62) indicates Zayd's location. Also, we notice that in the first sentence the subject (Zayd) is optional. However, it is only optional in utterance because there is no doubt that the individual who is doing the act of reading is Zayd. In the second sentence, the act (reading) is optional from both a grammatical and a pragmatic perspective: its omission does not affect the grammaticality of the sentence, and the answer would be satisfactory for what is being asked even without any mention of reading.

In a language which, like English, has a fixed word order the interpretation of both sentences is the same: it makes no difference the focus is on the act, as in (60), or on the individual denoted by the subject, as in (61). However, in a language like Arabic, this difference in word order reflects a semantic difference.

According to Firbas (Jones: 1977), there is a set of principles whose hierarchical arrangement in a given language determines that language's word order patterns. These principles are:

1. The grammatical principle; word order is determined according to the syntactic form
2. The semantic principle; word order is determined according to the semantic meaning.
3. The emotive principle, or the principle of emphasis; where word order is actually arranged in deviation from the unmarked order.
4. A principle of communicative dynamism, according to which elements are, in the unmarked case, ordered in theme-rheme sequences in which the element carrying less new information appears before the element carrying more new information.

Languages that have the grammatical concepts higher in the hierarchy have a rather fixed word order. By contrast, in languages that have the semantic concepts higher, the word order is not fixed but semantically ordered, that is organized according to the semantic functions: actor and specification (Benmahdjoub, 1991:13), such as (62). Arabic is a language of this later sort.



Marogy (2010: 145) says that the Arabic speakers place a noun or a verb in the initial position in order to achieve a particular communicative goal and not merely to comply with rules of grammar.

A reasonable hypothesis is therefore that just as semantic considerations may determine the relative order of subject and predicate, so they may also determine a subject's case assignment.

4. 1. 1 *Mubtada'* as a grammatical term of ranking rather than ordering

Let's examine again Sībawayhi description for the *ibtida'* sentence:

“This is the chapter on *ibtida'*. The *mubtada'* (topic) is every noun you place at the beginning of the sentence in order to build a speech upon it” (*Al-kitāb* II: 126)

So, to have a well formed *ibtida'* sentence according to Sībawayhi we must have two things:

1. A noun that comes first in the sentence (the *mubtada'*)
2. The rest of the speech built upon that *mubtada'*.

However, Sībawayhi then gives an example where the *mubtada'* is not the first in the sentence, as in (63)

(63) qāʔim-un Zayd-un
standing-NOM Zayd- NOM
‘Zayd is standing’

He argues that *qāʔim* cannot be *mubtada'* because it is built upon Zayd (*qāʔim* is a description for Zayd). So it has to be considered a preceding predicate of Zayd. This proves that setting back of the *mubtada'* does not cancel of the *ibtida'* construction. And that the most important property of the *mubtada'* is that the rest of the sentence is built upon it, or

dependent on it. This is the main way to identify the *mubtada'*. This was confirmed by Sībawayhi himself in another place in his book *Al-kitāb* (II: 88)

“This is the chapter on the predicate that takes the accusative case because it is a predicate to a definite noun, which in its turn (the definite noun) takes the nominative case by virtue of *ibtida'*, and in whatever order the definite noun is: preposed or postposed, as for example in: *fīha 'Abdullahi qā'imān* ‘in there (is) ‘Abdullahi [TOP.NOM] standing [ADV.ACC]’, and *Abdullahi fīha qā'imān* ‘Abdullahi [TOP.NOM] in it standing [ADV.ACC]’. Thus, ‘*Abdullahi* has the nominative case by virtue of *ibtida'*, because what is mentioned before it in the earlier sentence or after it in the later sentence is not part of it but a place for it, and it has the same status as a noun (i.e. *ḥabar*) built on what comes before it (predicate).”

Thus, we can give another interpretation for Sībawayhi’s conception of *ibtida'*: in this new interpretation, the *mubtada'* is the primary noun that the rest of the sentence is built upon. By this we change the description of *mubtada'* from a concept of ordering into a concept of ranking.

This recalls Marogy’s comment on Sībawayhi’s definition for *mubtada'* (2010:181),”The fact that *mubtada'* is defined as every initial noun on which speech is built, does not mean that Sībawayhi is underlining the linearity of its ‘initial’ position, but rather its status as the first element in an information unit, whether preposed or postposed, and about which something is said”.

4. 1.2 *Ibtida'* as a semantic component

The priority feature of the *mubtada'* indicates its semantic property as the first proposed element, rather than the syntactic property as the first ordered item in the sentence. Therefore, I assume that the proposition type is what actually makes the difference between the *ibtida'* sentence and the verbal sentence (i.e. the sentence that starts

with a verb). The first is a topic-based proposition while the second is an act or event-based proposition.

It is important here to mention that Arab grammarians¹ put verbs semantically secondary to nouns, assuming (i) that verbs actually are derived from nouns, (ii) that a verb must be accompanied by a noun, (iii) and that a predication (*isnad*) (or the *ibtida'* sentence) may occur with two nouns without the intervention of a verb. For example: *Allāhu illāhunā* 'Allāh (is) our God' and '*Abdullāhi aḥūnā* 'Abdullāh (is) our brother' are *kalām* (sentences) and do not include verbs, while the subject of a verb must be either mentioned, as in *qāma 'Abdullāhi* 'Abdullāh stood' or supplied through *taqdīr* (pronominalization) if it is not overtly stated². (Ba'labky' 2008: 199).

Cantarino argues (I, 1974:5) that a noun in the independent form is semantically self-sufficient to such a degree that 'can by itself state the existence of the idea expressed by the noun and also its presence in the definite place'. This semantic independence of nouns explains the medieval Arab grammarians' treatment of verbs as *nakira* 'indefinite' because they are actually semantically non self-sufficient in isolation. Therefore, they require arguments³.

And this also recalls Weiss (1984:614) supposition that a noun 'successfully signifies all that it is intended to signify entirely on its own'. Therefore, when a noun comes as a *mubtada'* it is not governed by a syntactic operator.

¹ Sibawayhi (*Al-kitāb* I, 26) and Ibn Jinnī (*Lum'* I, 20) and Az-Zajjājī (*Īdāh*:83)

² All verbs in Arabic have only finite forms.

³ I disagree with Marogy (2010: 146) that Arab grammarians' description of verbs as *nakira* should be interpreted as entailing syntactic incompleteness and vagueness. Instead, it actually entails semantic incompleteness, therefore verbs are syntactically requiring for argument(s).

According to Sībawayhi (II: 127) what assign the nominative case to *mubtada'* is *ibtida'* which is *'āmil ma'nawi* (abstract operator). I argue here that *ibtida'* is actually a semantic operator. As we proposed earlier that *ibtida'* is not an order indication, rather an indication derived from the fact that *mubtada'* is the first proposed element. This further indicates that when semantic governs the *ibtida'* sentence in Arabic, the *mubtada'* has the default case.

4. 2 Semantics as the predicate case assigner

For Sībawayhi, nominative case is assigned to a predicate by *mubtada'* itself (*Al-kitāb* II: 127). Here, I argue that what assigns the nominative case to the predicate (when it comes NP or AP) is actually what assigns it to the *mubtada'* which is as I earlier proposed, the semantic component. In the same way that semantic designates the *mubtada'* as the primary element in the sentence it also designates this noun or adjective as its predicate. Besides, there is no reason to assume that nouns have the capacity to assign case.

4. 3 *Inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* as an equational sentence enhancer

As we mentioned in chapter one, the medieval grammarians consider *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* as one of the groups of *nawāsiḥ* that are specified to introduce the equational sentence together with *kāna* and *ẓanna*, and each of their respective verbs. And that's why *inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* were treated as verb-like particles in that they act like verbs on the assumption that they govern both the topic and the predicate.

I argue here that *inna*, in fact is unlike the other *nawāsiḥ*: *kāna* and *ẓanna*, does not change the status of the equational sentence as a sentence governed by *ibtida'*. So, it doesn't work as the equational sentence cancelers, but rather as the equational sentence enhancers⁴.

When *kāna* or *zanna* introduces an equational sentence, they change the status of the sentence from topic-based propositional sentence into an event-based propositional sentence, and they put the topic in a certain time dimension like *kāna* or mental activity dimension like *zanna*. See for example (64 and 65. So they introduces tense and action into the equational sentence and govern it.

(64) *kāna* *Zayd-un* *ṭālib-an*
 be- PST *Zayd-* SG.NOM student - SG. ACC
 ‘Zayd was a student’

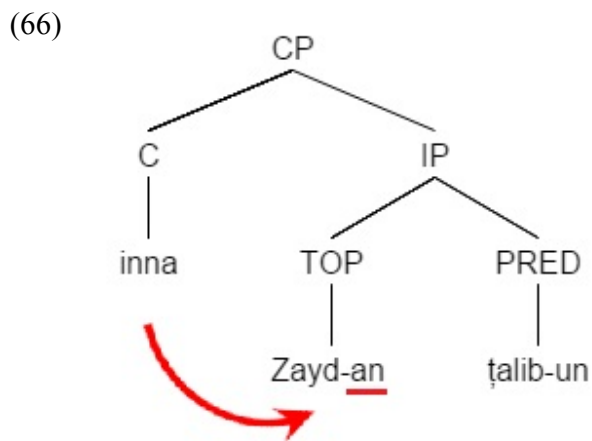
(65) *Zannan=tu* *Zayd-an* *ṭālib-an*
 Think/PAST=1SG. NOM *Zayd-* SG. ACC student - SG. ACC
 ‘I thought Zayd is a student’

On the other hand, what *inna* does is very different. It does not change the form of the sentence from a noun-initial into verb-initial, on the contrary, *inna*’s sentence is traditionally treated as a nominal sentence⁵. When *inna* or one of its group members introduces an equational sentence its impact on it is to enhance the proposition of the sentence. *Inna* does not change the status of the topic as the main element in the sentence. In addition, *inna* does not specify time or action but it gives more focus to the meaning (semantic content) of the whole sentence. The same thing is true for *inna*’s related sisters; each one of them contributes with different level of focus on the meaning of the sentence or on other words emphasizing the likelihood of the proposition’s truth), starting with highest level of certainty with *inna* ‘indeed’ and descending to the lowest with *layta*

⁴ I give them the description (enhancers) because they only emphasize the speaker certainty for the semantic content of the equational sentence.

⁵ The vast majority of Arab grammarians treat *inna*’s sentence as a nominal one. For further discussion see Ibn Uşfūr (*Şarḥ* I, 345). However, Levin (2000:258) considers the sentence with *inna* as neither nominal nor verbal.

‘hopefully’. *Inna wa-aḥawātu-hā* create that focus by making a contrast in CASE between the two elements of the equational sentence. This contrast is represented by the shifting from the nominative case of the topic into the accusative case, and leaving the predicate in its original nominative case without change. See for example (66)



Inna, besides its semantic function to focus the meaning content of the sentence, it creates a semantic-syntactic interface that governs the two parts of the equational sentence. The case assigned by *inna* to the topic, and the default case of the predicate that maintained it from its original state as the predicate of the equational sentence. Below we include table (1) again as a review.

The equational sentence's constituents				
		Topic	Predicate	example
1	Verbless sentence	NOM	NOM	2
2	<i>Kāna's</i> sentence	NOM	ACC	9
3	<i>Ẓanna's</i> sentence	ACC	ACC	10
4	<i>Inna's</i> sentence	ACC	NOM	13

Table (1) The equational sentence's case patterns

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion

Medieval Arab grammarians were aware of the properties of Arabic language and its flexible structural characteristics. Therefore, they introduce grammatical rules that par with this flexibility. Yet, the modern linguistic trend is going into different direction, and believes that these rules are outdated. Maybe because of the different language terminology. This led many scholars to ignore the traditional analysis for the Arabic sentence structure, considering it as invalid in our recent Linguistics era, and made them adopt other theories that were initiated to describe the structure of other languages. The thing that led to produce syntactic rules that were deficient in describing Arabic syntax, and could not cope with the flexibility of its structure. Therefore, the result was a stiff picture of a disabled language.

I believe that any recent effort to produce a new grammatical analysis for Arabic language should make a start from the traditional grammar heritage, putting in mind that these rules should deal with the description of language from all its linguistic concepts, like: semantic, pragmatic, lexical, besides the syntactic one. The best representative theory for this kind of description is HPSG because it describes a language not only from merely a syntactic view but an interface of all the linguistic divisions to produce a sentence.

Medieval grammarians were fully aware of the fact that Arabic equational sentences are void of verb, and because it reflects a meaning of a full sentence they produce an abstract operator that does not relate to the syntactic operator. For Sībawayhi the abstract

operator *ibtida'* is not a kind of covert copula, rather an operator that contributes in the meaning of the *mubtada'* (topic) as a primary element in the sentence. Therefore, equational sentences in Arabic have different syntactic structure, besides different semantic proposition and pragmatic intention, and there is no reason to consider one of them as default and the other has derived from it. They both stands as one opposed to the other and their use is dependent on the interpretation of context they come within. An example from the Classical Arabic, we have the Qur'ānic verse (Al-tawhīd:1-4):

- Qul! **Huwa** **Allāh -u** **aḥad ①.** **Allāh-u** **al=šammad ②.**
 Say/IMP 3SG.NOM Allāh -NOM one-NOM. Allāh -NOM the-absolute-NOM.
- Lam yalid wa=lam yūlad ③. **Wa=lam**
 NEG. PROH beget-JUSS and=NEG. PROH beget-JUSS.PASS. And=NEG.PROH
- Yakun** **la=hū** **kufw-an** **aḥad ④.**
 be-JUSS. to=3SG.GEN similar/PRED-ACC one/SUB-NOM

‘Say: He is Allāh, the One and Only①; Allāh, the Eternal, Absolute②; He begets not, nor is He begotten③; And there is none like unto Him④.’

If we look at the first and second verses we can see that an equational sentence has been used because the verses are about describing an attribute to the holy Divine in no space or time limit. While in the last verse a copula *yakun* ‘be/JUSS’ has been used because it has another subject and talks about the impossibility of an equivalent to *Allāh*. Not forgetting to mention here that the use of the copula *yakun* instead of the negative copula *laysa* ‘is not’, which is the copula that is used to negate the verbless sentence, was to emphasize the temporal state of the second subject and its limit to time and space. From this example we can see clearly that the presence of a copula in a sentence or its absence is completely driven by the semantic proposition for the giving context.

Thus, when *inna* introduces the equational sentence it will emphasize the sentence proposition without acting as a kind of verbal copula like for example specifying a tense or temporal event. It only causes a shift in the case of the topic (the first noun following it) into accusative case without affecting the property of the sentence as a verbless sentence that governed by semantic.

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