

Reverse and Reserve: A Cardiff Grammar Account on Reversibility in Equational Clauses in Modern Standard Arabic

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ABSTRACT

The sequence of clause elements not only determines the syntactic relations of categories but also recognizes the semantic and pragmatic roles associated with them. Therefore, this paper aims to examine reversibility in verbless Equational Clauses (ECls) by investigating the syntactic, experiential (Transitivity), and textual (thematic and informational) features of the reversed elements in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) within the Cardiff Grammar model (CG). The data consists of 138 ECls collected from twelve articles in seven daily newspapers, out of which thirty-one ECls have been identified as reversed. The findings have revealed that Subject and Complement can be optionally reversed in ECls to achieve discourse purposes. In this case, when optional reversibility represents the Unmarked Participant Role Theme, the reversed elements retain none of their syntactic, experiential, thematic, and informational meanings. But when optional reversibility reflects the Marked Participant Role Theme, the reversed elements retain their syntactic and experiential functions but not necessarily their thematic and informational meanings. On the other hand, obligatory reversibility has been argued to stem from the syntactic constraints concerning the violation of the definiteness norm and the pragmatic factors. Finally, the paper concludes that the association of the ‘Theme’ concept with what comes early in the clause should not be taken as a universally unified concept applied to all languages. The findings imply that in designing syllabi for language learning and teaching, learners should be made aware of the significant interplay of linguistic and extra-linguistic factors that cause the inversion of the clause elements. This would probably help them reflect on understanding the sentences they receive and produce in different contexts.

Keywords: Cardiff Grammar; Equational Clauses (ECls); Modern Standard Arabic; reversibility; semantics; syntax

INTRODUCTION

Reversibility is a common feature characterizing verbless Equational/Equative clauses (ECls) in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), where the Subject and Complement (Predicate) are non-verbally predicated (Abu-Mansour, 1986; Badawi, Carter, & Gully, 2016; Choueiri, 2016; Eid, 1983; Marogy, 2010; Mohammad, 2000; Ryding, 2005). Specifically, it occurs in ECls, in

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which both Subject and Complement refer to each other or in EClS that express locative or existential meaning. Reversibility has occupied a central position in modern literature to account for the factors that motivate words of different structural forms to occupy the clause-initial slot. In MSA, the focus has always been given to verbal clauses to explain either the linguistic syntactic factors leading to the pre-verbal position of the Subject or Complement (Abdul-Raof, 1998; Aoun, Benmamoun, & Choueiri, 2010; Choueiri, 2016; Fassi Fehri, 1993) or to discuss the extra-linguistic contextual motivations that cause the Subject or Complement to be pre-verbally thematized (Aziz, 1988; Kamel, 2006; Potter, 2016).

For reversibility in verbless EClS, most researchers have only touched on such a phenomenon from a syntactic perspective when discussing what constitutes copular elements in the structure of nominal verbless clauses (e.g., Al-Balushi, 2012; Al-Horais, 2006; Alazzawie, 2016; Alotaibi, 2019; Choueiri, 2016; Eid, 1983; Fassi Fehri, 1993; Kareem & Bhuvaneshwar, 2020; Mohammad, 2000). These researchers have agreed with the traditional analysis that attributed obligatory reversibility in EClS to the syntactic violation of the definiteness norm that imposes the definite word to be posed initially as the Subject. On the other hand, other researchers have pointed out that reversibility is rhetorically and pragmatically motivated (e.g., Badawi et al., 2016; Cantarino, 1974; Fareh, 1995; Owens, 1988; Peled, 2009). However, their argument paid much attention to discuss whether the thematized element is functionally labeled the Subject or the Complement irrespective of the other semantic contextual functions these elements display. In a nutshell, their accounts usually relied upon examining the structural forms of certain isolated EClS borrowed from classical Arabic books independently of their pragmatic and contextual components.

Although a few studies have taken the functional perspective into account to provide a pragmatic interpretation of reversibility in EClS, they have not tackled the interplay between the experiential, thematic, and informational features of the reversed constituents in EClS (Abu-Mansour, 1986; Aziz, 1988; Badawi et al., 2016; Bardi, 2008; Kouloughli, 2002; Mohammad, 2000). Importantly, Marogy (2010) offered insightful analysis when highlighting the role of identifiability as a pragmatic notion and definiteness as a syntactic notion in the clause word order. However, neither Marogy's study nor the previous studies have adopted the triangular approach that incorporates syntax, semantics, and contextualization to examine reversibility in EClS by studying them context-dependently.

Therefore, since a clause meaning is a simultaneous combination of syntactic, semantic, and textual functions, this study aims to provide a comprehensive account of reversibility in EClS by examining the syntactic, experiential (Transitivity), thematic, and informational meanings of the reversed elements in MSA in light of the Cardiff Grammar model (CG). The paper has been grounded in the CG because it is the fully semanticized version of SFL that has been pushed all the way to the semantics (Fawcett, 2000). It is the most thorough conscientious updating account on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Butler, 2003a, 2003b; Hawes & Thomas, 2012). Besides, this model employs the tree diagram that integrates its syntax and semantics into one single structure.

DEFINITENESS AND REVERSIBILITY IN MSA

When discussing reversibility as a linguistic phenomenon, definiteness is claimed to play a significant role in determining the syntactic order of EClS in MSA (Abu-Mansour, 1986; Marogy, 2010). To reverse Subjects and Complements in EClS, there must be a discrepancy in their degree of definiteness which is arranged in a hierarchical order from the most definite to the least definite. The more definite an item is, the more probably it occurs as a Subject in the nominal clause; the less definite an item is, the more likely it tends to function as the Predicate of that Subject (al-Sāmarā'ī, 2007; Ibn al-Sarrāj 1996; Sībawayh, 1988). In general,

definiteness entails six cases listed from the most definite to the least definite. However, there was a controversial debate on whether *asmā' al-ishārah* (demonstrative pronouns) or *asmā' al-'alam* (proper nouns) should rank second on the list (Marogy, 2010). Table 1 below demonstrates the gradable definiteness cases that characterize nouns according to Sibawayh's account, providing an example for each.

TABLE 1. Cases of definiteness in Modern Standard Arabic in a hierarchical order

Degree of definiteness	Definiteness cases	Example	Translation
High definite	1. <i>al-ḍamīr</i> (a pronoun)	<i>hiyā</i> jamīlat-un.	<i>She</i> is beautiful.
	2. <i>ism 'alam</i> (a proper noun)	<i>Hudā</i> jamīlat-un.	<i>Huda</i> is beautiful.
	3. <i>asmā' al-ishārah</i> (demonstrative pronouns)	<i>hādhihi</i> ibnatī	<i>This</i> is my daughter.
Low definite	4. <i>al-ism mawṣūl</i> (a relative noun)	al-fatāt-u hiya <i>allati</i> dhahabat	The girl is the one <i>who</i> left.
	5. <i>al-</i> (the definite article the)	<i>al-fatāt-u</i> jamīlat-un.	<i>The girl</i> is beautiful.
	6. <i>al-muḍāf wa al-muḍāf ilayh</i> (the possessive construction)	a) <i>bintu-nā</i> jamīlat-un. b) <i>fatāt-u al-bayt-i</i> jamīlat-un	a) <i>Our daughter</i> is beautiful. b) <i>The house girl</i> is beautiful.

As Table 1 shows, the most inherent definite case is the personal pronouns because they cannot be qualified by adjectives that agree with them in number, gender, and definiteness (Marogy, 2010). The second rank is given to the proper nouns as they refer to specific identities. The definite article prefix *al-* (the) almost occupies the middle of the table, whereas the least identifiable case is given to the subject with the possessive construction or annexation, appearing bottom of the list. The possessive construction is made of the elements *muḍāf and muḍāf ilayhi* (possessed and possessor). In this type, an indefinite noun is made definite by either being attached to a suffix pronominal, for example, possessive pronoun like example (6a), or juxtaposed with another definite word, like example (6b). Even though we agree that definiteness has a significant role in determining the order of the elements in ECIs, extra-linguistic pragmatic motivations equally lie behind the performer's choice to invert the clause elements.

THE CARDIFF MODEL

Inspired by Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics, the Cardiff Grammar has been developed as its simplified extended version by Robin Fawcett and his colleagues (e.g., Ball, 2002; Fawcett, 1980, 1993, 2000, 2008; Fawcett, Tucker, & Lin, 1996; Fontaine, 2008; Huang & Fawcett, 1996; Neale, 2002; Tench, 1996; Tucker, 1998). As a model in SFL, meaning and form constitute the essential components of language, which are equivalent to system and text/structure in Halliday's Sydney Grammar (SG). Therefore, the relationship between meaning and form is that of realization. Importantly, language is seen as having a multifunctional nature in that it expresses different choices of meanings that are simultaneously integrated into one single structure (Fawcett, 2000, 2008). At the level of meaning, there are eight metafunctions or strands of meaning, namely experiential (i.e., Transitivity), logical,

interpersonal (i.e., Mood), negativity, validity, affective, thematic, and informational. Sections below shall briefly introduce the three metafunctions of experientiality (Transitivity), thematization, and information that are the focus of the current paper, followed by a short overview of the clause syntax in the CG.

EXPERIENTIAL METAFUNCTION IN THE CG

The experiential strand of meaning is what is expressed by the Transitivity system network. The CG defines Transitivity as “the range of types of process that it is possible to express through the language concerned and the participants in each of those types of process (Fawcett, 2005, p. 10). Therefore, Transitivity in the CG divides the clause into a Participant Role (PR) and a Process, considering Circumstance Role (CR) as no longer a part of the Transitivity system network as the Process does not inherit it. The Main verb is experientially realized by the Process whose sense determines the predicted PRs. The PRs are typically expressed in the Subject and the Complements. So, Transitivity is syntactically recognized by S M O. Although CR is another type of the experiential strand of meaning, it is not expressed by the Process.

Fawcett (forthcoming c) identifies six types of Processes based on the sense each Process type expresses. Each Process type has its own subtypes with the various configurations of PRs. These Process types are ‘action’, ‘relational’, ‘mental’, ‘influential’, ‘event-relating’, and ‘environmental’. Since we are concerned with analyzing the verbless ECLs in MSA, the Process type they represent is typically relational (Bardi, 2008). In the relational clause, the Subject is experientially conflated with the ‘Carrier’ while the semantic role associated with the Complement varies in accordance with the Complement’s sense expressed in the clause; see Table 2 below.

TABLE 2. Subtypes of ‘relational’ Processes and the configurations of their PRs in the CG

Relational Process Type	Participant Roles	Example
<i>Attributive</i>	Carrier (Ca) + Attribute (At)	<i>John is the leader.</i>
<i>Locational</i>	Carrier (Ca) + Location (Loc)	<i>She is in New York.</i>
<i>Possessive</i>	Carrier (Ca) + Possessed (Pos)	<i>He has a car.</i>
<i>Directional</i>	Carrier (Ca) + Source (So)/Destination (Des)/Path (Pa)	<i>Ivey came from/went to/went across London.</i>
<i>Matching</i>	Carrier (Ca) + matchee (mtch)	<i>The jacket suits you.</i>

As demonstrated by Table 2, there are five subtypes of relational Processes in English: a) ‘attributive’, b) ‘locational’, c) ‘possessive’, d) ‘directional’, and e) ‘matching’. Nevertheless, due to the absence of the Main verb in nominal ECLs in MSA, it is the Complement meaning that decides a particular clause as an attributive, locational, directional, etc.

One of the notable contributions of the CG is that Fawcett (forthcoming c, p. 73) did not find the distinction made by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) between ‘identifying’ and ‘attributive’ relational clauses as important as it was outlined. That is because the meaning that relational attributive clauses convey is essentially to assert that something is a member of a class. Consequently, what matters in the different types of identifying, for instance between ‘*John is the leader*’ and ‘*The leader is John*’, is a) the thematization of a specific PR as a Subject Theme or not and b) the identification of another PR as the ‘New Information’.

THEMATIC METAFUNCTION IN THE CG

The thematic strand of meaning is treated as a subcomponent of Halliday's Textual metafunction. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 83) defined 'Theme' as "the point of departure for the message. It is the element the speaker selects for 'grounding' what he is going on to say." In the CG, the theme is defined as "the aspect of the meaning of a typical Subject that tells the addressee what the clause is about." (Fawcett, 2008, p. 109). According to, when an element is thematized, it simply means placing it at an early position in the clause to serve different discourse functions from the viewpoint of the performer. Nonetheless, this does not necessarily imply that the theme must always be related to what comes clause-initially. Instead, the CG is considered a socio-cognitive model; therefore, choices in the theme are unconsciously made by the performer to serve certain discourse purposes, a fact that makes theme a performer-oriented notion. Fawcett (2007) classified themes into eight major types that are different in terms of their syntax, semantics, and discourse functions. We shall only present the types of themes falling in the scope of the current study.

- (i) Subject Theme: One of the PRs (Subject or Complement) is selected to be the Subject Theme as Unmarked Participle Role Theme, for example:
 - a) *Ivy ate the apple.*
 - b) *The apple was eaten by Ivy.*

- (ii) Marked Participant Role Theme: The Complement is thematized without being conflating with the Subject, for example:
 - c) *The apple Ivy ate (- and not the pear).*
 - d) *By Ivy the apple was eaten (- and not by Ike).*
 - e) *Under the carpet was/lay a thick sheet of plastic.*
 - f) *Into the clearing rode a knight dressed all in scarlet.*

- (iii) Enhanced Theme: The Subject is empty in that it is not conflated with any PR.
 - g) *There is a bee in Ivy's hair.* (Existential Enhanced Theme)
 - h) *It is obvious that he is right* (Evaluative Enhanced Theme)

In the first type, the theme type is unmarked because every Subject that is conflated with a PR is also the Subject Theme (Huang, 2017). The second type is known as Marked PR Theme, see examples (c), (d), (e), and (f), because the Complement is thematized without being conflating with the Subject. According to Heng and Ebrahimi (2012), the Marked Theme implies the fronting of other information. Examples (c) and (d) might mostly be considered ungrammatical for grammarians on the ground of the very low probability of their occurrence (Fawcett, 2007). Moreover, the structure shown in (e) and (f) as C/Loc + M/Pro + S/Ca, occurs in two limited Process types: locational and directional.

The third type of theme could be existential occurring in locational Process type or evaluative in the attributive Process types. This type differs from the second type in that the Subject is empty because it lacks the experiential meaning, giving the clause a structure as S + M/Pro + C/Ca + C/Loc. The first item that directly follows the Main verb presents the Enhanced Theme that is presented as a 'New' referent to the addressee. Fawcett (2007) stated three properties that distinguish it from other typical Subjects. First, it is an empty Subject in that it does not have an experiential meaning associated with it. Second, it is expounded directly by the item *There* or *It* rather than filled by another unit. Third, it is pronounced as a weak unstressed syllable. Besides, it has only a thematic built-up function since its combination with

the verb to *be* prepares the addressee for the announcement of the existence of an object. Finally, it has an interpersonal meaning as it sets the information giver structure.

INFORMATIONAL METAFUNCTION IN THE CG

Considering the role that the ‘informational’ metafunction plays in the flow of the text information, the CG treats it as an independent strand of meaning that is significant on its own. Unlike thematization, which represents the performer’s concerns, the informational strand of meaning stands as the addressee-oriented notion. That is, it is the presentation of the clause from the viewpoint of the need of the addressee (Fawcett, 2007, 2008). The informational meaning is made of ‘Given’, the predictable recoverable element, and ‘New’, the unpredictable new element assumed to be unknown to the addressee. According to the CG, the reason for fronting a clause element not only might indicate the performer’s choice to thematize it by placing it at the START of the clause, but it could also mean his option to have another element marked as ‘New information’ at the END of the clause. The element marked as ‘New Information’ is that which the performer believes to present as new for the addressee.

A certain clause element in English is marked as “Unmarked Newness or ‘New Information’ when it receives the Tonic, i.e., “the major pitch movement that typically falls on the last strong syllable in the intonation unit” (Fawcett, 2008, p. 175). When the clause is a positive information giver, the Tonic falls on the last word. To put it another way, the Tonic falls on the last word of a clause when the performer does not select another element as ‘Contrastive Newness’. Let us consider the examples below (Fawcett, 2008, pp. 118-132).

Unmarked Newness: Rouen was besieged by King **HEN**ry.

Contrastive Newness: Adam: Fred does not like Fiona.
Paula: He **DOES** like her.

In ‘Contrastive Newness’, the performer intends to correct a possible misapprehension by the addressee. However, MSA does not have the same phonemic system of Tonic as English, which makes it difficult to determine the ‘New’ from ‘Give’. As a result, inferring which element to be marked as ‘new’ in written texts would depend on drawing shreds of evidence from the clause itself and the preceding text as well (Fawcett, 2008, p. 121). In other words, the context of the situation and textual features indicate which element is the given shared information between the performer and addressee and which element is labeled as the ‘New’.

CLAUSE SYNTAX IN THE CG

The theory of syntax in the CG is made of three fundamental categories bound by four relationships (Fawcett, 2000, 2008). The three categories are unit, element, and item, whereas the four relationships are competence, filling, exponence, and conflation. There are five classes of unit: the clause, nominal group (ngp), prepositional group (pgp), quality group (qlgp) (traditionally adjectival group), and quantity group (qtgp). The element is the direct component of a unit (Fawcett, 2000, p. 213). In general, the clause is made up of functional elements, the most frequent of which are Subject (S), Operator (O) (finiteness in the SG), Main verb (M), Complement (C), Adjunct (A), and Auxiliary (X), which are either filled by units or directly expounded by items. To put it differently, only Subjects, Complements, and Adjuncts can be filled by units (Fawcett, 2008, p. 78). Let us have an example to demonstrate this.

(1) John is the leader.

Example (1) is composed of three elements [(S) *John* + (M/O) *is* + (C) *the leader*]. In examining how these elements are syntactically structured in the clause, the M, which is also conflated with the O, is directly expounded by the items *is*; S and C are filled by nominal groups *John* and *the leader*. The conflation relationship is symbolized by the forward-slash (/), which indicates that more than one meaning from different metafunctions is simultaneously fused in one element. To represent the multiple functional syntax of this clause, a tree diagram is drawn above the text.

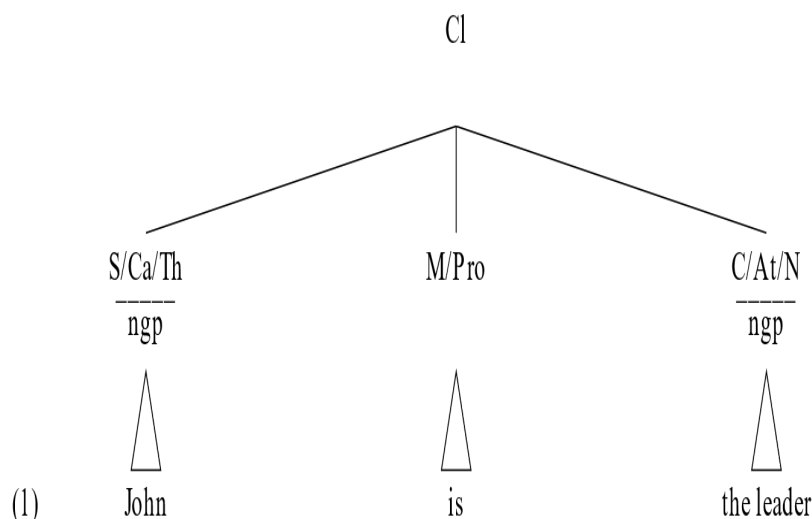


FIGURE 1. Functional analysis of an equational English clause with its syntactic, experiential, thematic, and informational functions

Figure 1 shows that the three metafunctions under investigation are represented simultaneously, and each syntactic element reflects multiple semantic roles. Irrespective of the M/O that is directly expounded by *is*, the clause expresses relational attributive meaning, so the S is conflated with the Carrier expressing the clause Theme, while the Complement is conflated with the Attribute and marked as the New.^c

THE CARDIFF GRAMMAR ACCOUNT ON REVERSIBILITY IN ECLS

Since MSA is the formal contemporary version of Classical Arabic (Holes, 2004; Razak, 2014), an ECL in its unmarked condition consists of the syntactic order of Subject-Complement structure wherein the Subject is a definite ngp conflated with the Theme whereas the Complement is indefinite conflated with the New. When discussing reversibility in MSA, it is categorized into two types based on the notion of definiteness: optional and obligatory. In other words, when both Subject and Complement have a different degree of definiteness, there is a possibility to reverse them on pragmatic grounds. But when the Subject lacks its inherent characteristic of being definite, then it syntactically becomes obligatory to post it clause-finally.

^c In the CG model, Fawcett (2008) abandoned classifying the clause's thematic and informational meanings into a two-part structure of 'Theme-Rheme' and 'New-Given'. Fawcett (2007) pointed out that it is unnecessary to label the non-them elements as 'Rheme' as they would be represented as large elements compared with the 'Theme'. In addition, classifying the clause elements into 'Theme' and 'Rheme' brings about problems while analyzing texts as some elements which were analyzed as types of themes by Halliday are not in the CG. A fact that makes them fall in the 'Rheme' function, which is not true either because they are usually treated as real types of 'Theme'. In the same vein, the functional label of 'Given' is also avoided because what matters is the element that comes as 'New', not the element(s) that could be inferred from the previous discourse.

OPTIONAL REVERSIBILITY

MSA is a free order language with flexible movement rules due to its inflectional system that maintains the elements' inflectional case despite being reversed (Fareh, 1995; Mohammad, 2000). There is some common ground that when both elements are definite and referential to each other, the element occupying the initial position is assumed to be the Subject even if it is less definite (Bardi, 2008; Marogy, 2010; Owens, 1988; Peled, 2009). We argue that the elements in this case retain none of their functions after being permuted, namely syntactic, experiential, thematic, and informational. Therefore, the clauses express Unmarked Participle Role Theme. Let us consider examples (2a, b) and (3a, b) below.

(2) a. *al-ṣabru* *qabru-nā* *al-khālidu*
 the-patience grave-our the-eternal
 'Patience is our eternal grave.'

b. *qabru-nā* *al-khālidu* *al-ṣabru*
 grave-our The-eternal the-patience
 'Our eternal grave is patience.'

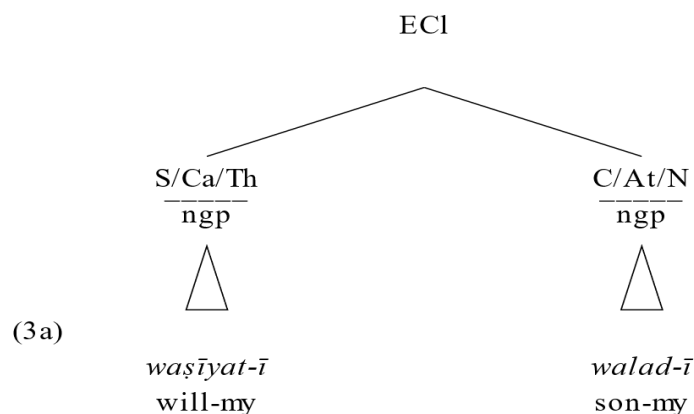
(Mohammed, 2018, October 26)

(3) a. *waṣīyat-ī* *walad-ī*
 will-my son-my
 'My will is my son.'

b. *walad-ī* *waṣīyat-ī*
 son-my will-my
 'My son is my will.'

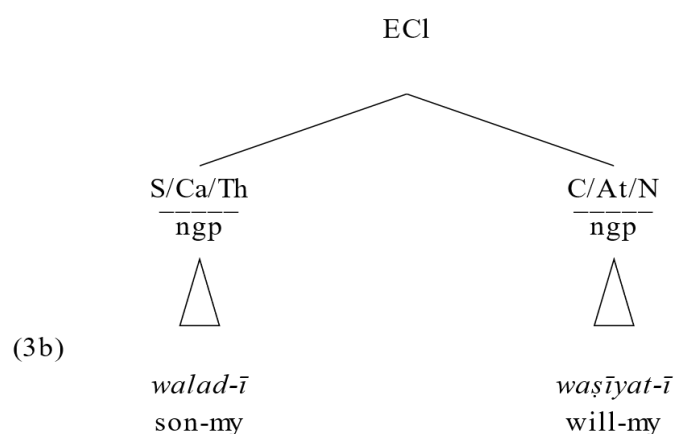
(al-Qazwini, 2014, April 4)

These two pairs of ECIs express a relational attributive meaning between an identity and its quality. They are made of two definite referential items *al-ṣabru* (the patient) and *qabru-nā al-khālidu* (our eternal grave) in the first pair and *waṣīyat-ī* (my will) and *walad-ī* (my son) in the second pair. Experientially, in example (a) of each pair, the initial ngp is the Subject which is conflated with the Carrier, while the second is the Complement conflated with the Attribute. In terms of the thematic and informational meanings, the Subject realizes the Theme while the Complement is marked as the New. When the elements are reversed in example (b) of each pair, it would be difficult to decide which element is the identity and which is the quality. That is because they are both definite referential ngps. Examples (3a) and (3b) are selected for the tree diagram representation.



My will is my son.

FIGURE 2. Functional analysis of example (3a)



My son is my will.

FIGURE 3. Functional analysis of example (3b)

As Figures (2) and (3) illustrate, the initial word is acting as the Subject conflated with the Carrier followed by its Complement that is conflated with the Attribute. This change in the clause order involves a change in the thematic and informational features as well. The initial word acts as the Theme, whereas the Complement represents the New. Consequently, the discourse purpose that motivates selecting either element to be the Subject Theme is simply to point out what the ECI is about.

There are two cases of optional reversibility where the type of theme is the Marked PR Theme because the reversed elements retain their syntactic and experiential functions even after being reversed. Both elements are definite, but the initial fronted thematized element is analyzed as the Complement while the postposed element is the Subject. Thus, whilst their syntactic and experiential functions are kept intact, they might or might not reflect the same thematic and informational meanings in relation to the contexts where they occur. In the first

case, the elements retain all their syntactic, semantic, and contextual functions providing the Subject and Complement express an identity relationship, and a pronoun fills the postposed Subject. Let us consider example (4) represented by Figure 4.^d

(4) *al-'ālamu*
the-world
'The world is you.'

anta
you

(al-Matiri, 2019, April 5)

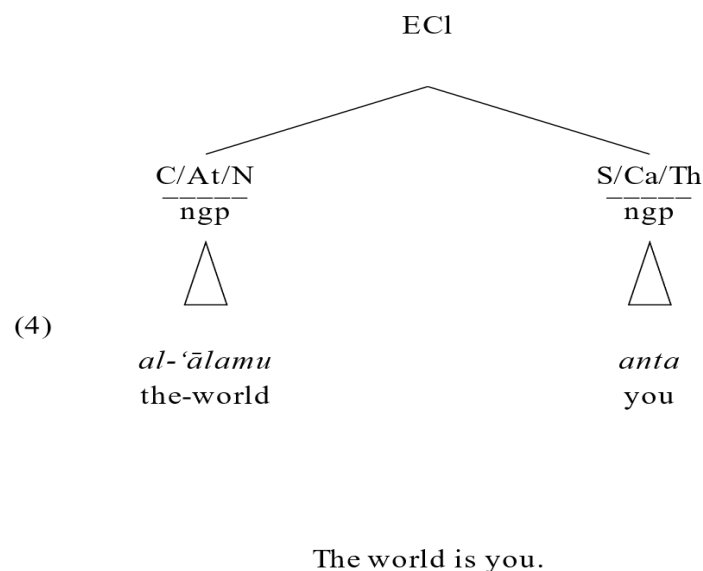


FIGURE 4. Functional analysis of example (4)

As discussed in Table 1, pronouns are the most definite items in MSA, so they always occur clause-initially functioning as the Subjects. Even though the pronoun *anta* (you) occurs second in the clause, it retains its function as the Subject of the clause. Therefore, it retains its semantic meaning in realizing the Carrier in terms of Transitivity, leaving the pre-posed Complement filled by the definite item *al-'ālamu* (the world) to be conflated with the Attribute. Contextually, the Complement is conflated with the New whilst the pronoun *anta* (you) is the Theme. The clause elements are reversed here to express a strong affective feeling about her father, i.e., the topic, as she was talking about what father means to her. According to Cantarino (1974, p. 31) this type of inversion is made to give the Complement an emphatic effect. This accords with Fawcett's (2007) proposal that the choice to select the Marked PR Theme is motivated by affective and contrastive factors. In other words, placing the Complement clause-initially is associated with the performer's feeling and emotional involvement with the referent. It also occurs when the thematized PR element is contrastively new as it is expressed overtly by the performer in the discourse.

The second case wherein the elements retain their syntactic, semantic, and contextual functions is when the fronted Complement is an indefinite item. While reversibility is claimed not to occur in the ascriptive predicational clauses in which the Complement is an indefinite noun or adjective (Wetzer, 1996), MSA exhibits structures where the indefinite Complement precedes its definite Subject. Likewise, the clause reflects the Marked PR Theme. Let us examine examples (5) and (6).

^d This example was deliberately reversed to show the affective feelings of the performer.

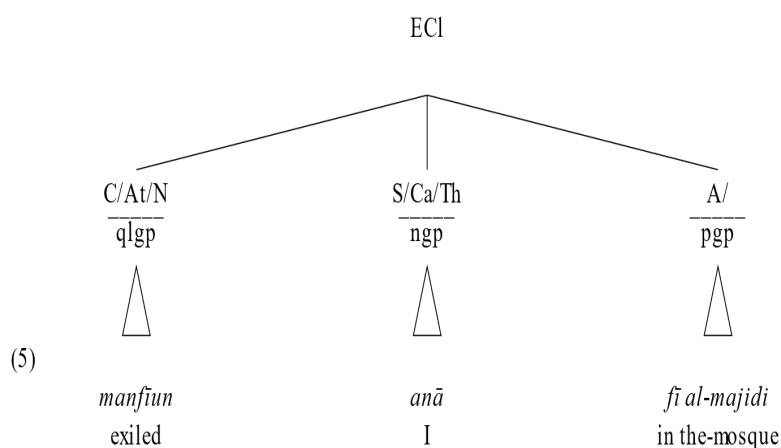
- (5) *manfūn* *anā* *fī* *al-masjidi*
 exiled I in the-mosque
 ‘Exiled I am in the mosque.’

(al-Kuwari, 2017, October 24)

- (6) *maṭlūbun* *lil-‘amali* *ma‘a-nā* *wazīfatu* *ṣāni‘i* *amal*
 needed to-working with-us a job maker a hope
 ‘Needed to work with us is a job of a hope maker.’

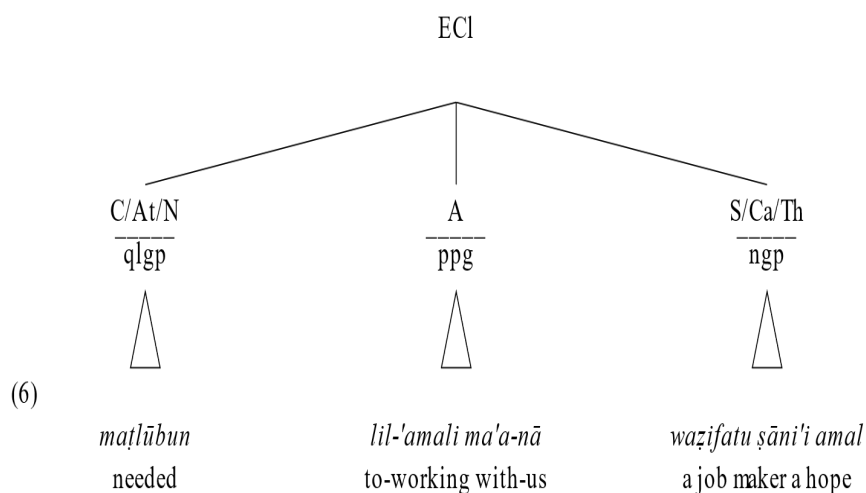
(Kamal al-Din, 2018, March 18)

Examples (5) and (6) are initially introduced by indefinite Complements that come in the form of qlgps: *manfūn* (exiled) and the passive participle *maṭlūbun* (needed). These Complements express Marked PR Theme because they are thematized to express the performers’ affective feelings towards a specific event or thing. In detail, the performer in example (5) was describing how aggressively people around him treated him due to his opposing attitudes and anti-government political views. He was too misunderstood that people doubted his faith and even affiliated him to divergent religious groups. Thus, he fronted the adjective that summarizes and describes his miserable status, realizing it as the clause’s New informational meaning. The Subject filled by the pronoun *anā* (I) is recoverable from previous sentences, see Figure (5) below. The clause in example (6) is the first clause in the selected article. What was referred to in the title of the article is that there is a vacant *wazīfatu* (a job/post). As a result, the passive participle *maṭlūbun* (needed) is fronted to mark the prominent New information intended to deliver to the readers. At the same time, the actual type of work, which is the postposed Subject *wazīfatu ṣāni‘i ‘amal* (a job of a hope maker), is treated as the Theme that the whole article is about, see Figure (6) below. Therefore, the occurrence of the Complement in the early slot of the clause does not necessarily mean that it is the clause Theme. Let see how examples (5) and (6) are functionally represented.



Exiled I am in the mosque.

FIGURE 5. Functional analysis of example (5)



Needed to work with us is a job of a hope maker.

FIGURE 6. Functional analysis of example (6)

In the fourth optional case of reversibility, the ECIs' elements reserve only their syntactic and experiential meaning. This occurs when the Subject is definite, and the Complement is filled by a prepositional group (ppg) or the existential items *hunāka/thammata/thamma* (there) or *hunā* (here). The performer is free to select either element to occupy the first slot to achieve discourse purposes. The elements still retain their syntactic and experiential functions, but not their thematic and informational functions. Let us consider examples below (7) and (8) represented by Figures (7) and (8) below.

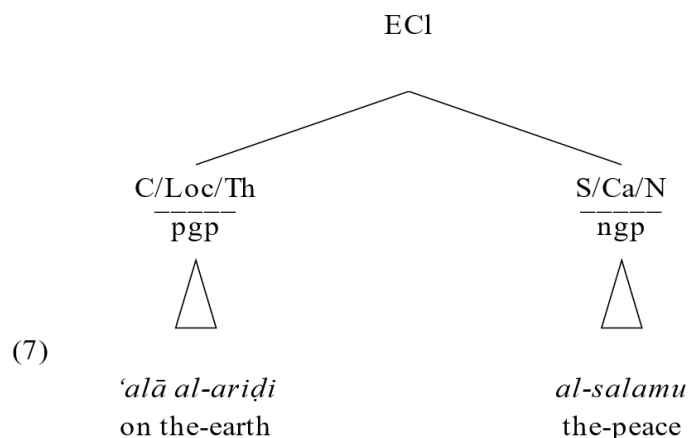
- (7) *'alā* *al-ariḍi* *al-salamu*
 on the-earth the-peace
 'On the earth is peace.'

(Abdulrahman, 2017, December 24)

- (8) *hunāka* *al-tadāwī* *bi-l-mūsīqā*
 there the-therapy with-the-music
 'There is the music therapy.'

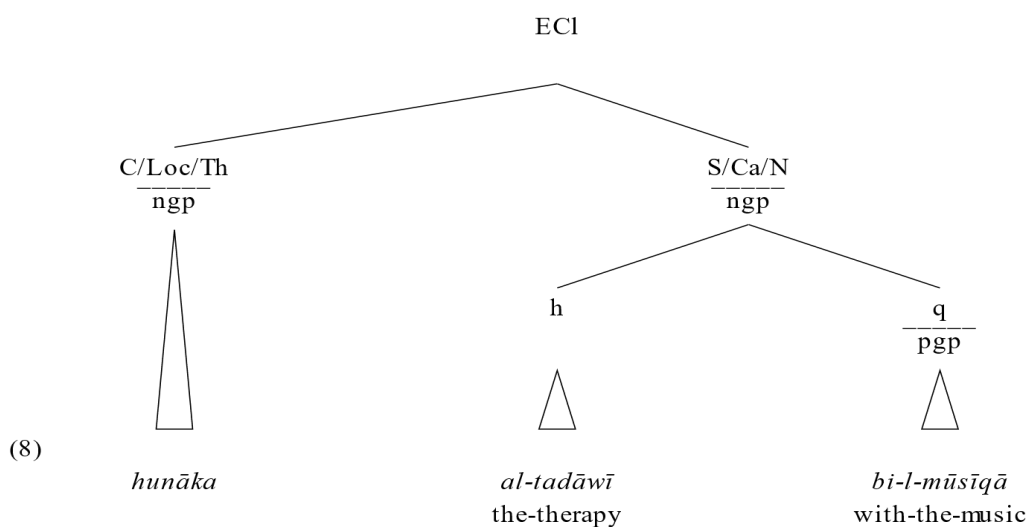
(al-Mall', 2018, August 23)

Examples (7) is introduced by the prepositional group '*alā al-ariḍi* (on the earth) and example (8) by the existential item *hunāka* (there). Both examples express relational locational meaning, which entails the Subject to be conflated with the Carrier and the Complement with the Location. The item *There* in English has neither experiential meaning nor a real thematic meaning because it is treated as an empty Subject selected to introduce a new object or referent that is analyzed as 'Existential Enhanced Theme. So the initial *There* in an English clause like '*There is a book*' is not syntactically, experientially, and textually analyzed as the final *there* in '*The book is not there*' (Fawcett, 2007). However, in Arabic ECIs, the initial and final *hunāka* (there) is treated alike since it retains its syntactic and semantic functions despite being placed clause-initially. That is, it still has an experiential and thematic meaning because it functions as the pre-posed thematized Complement that is conflated with the semantic role of Location, see Figures 7 and 8.



On the earth is peace.

FIGURE 7. Functional analysis of example (7)



There is the music therapy.

FIGURE 8. Functional analysis of example (8)

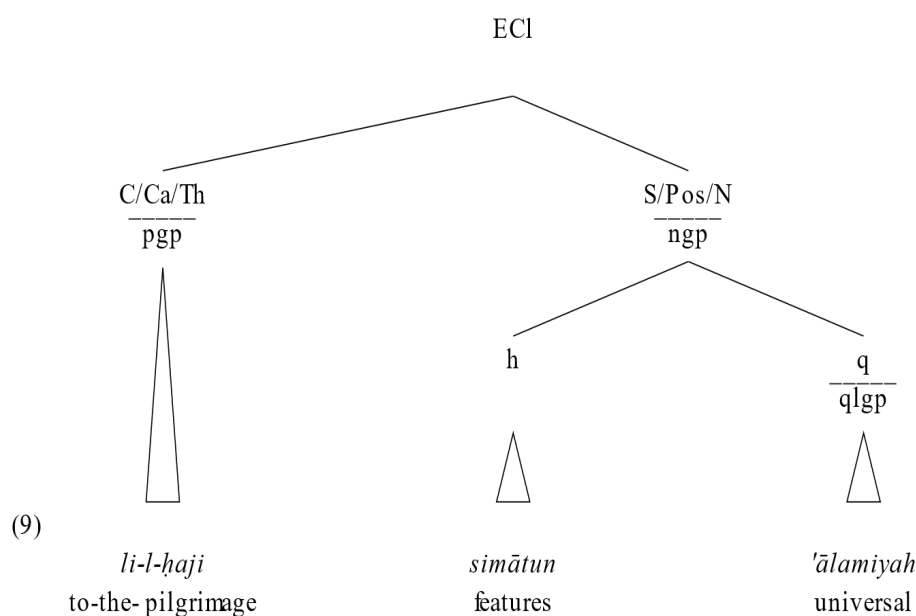
The pre-posed *pgp* ‘*alā al-ariḏi* (on the earth) in example (7) and *hunāka* (there) in example (8) are thematized as they were referred to in the preceding discourse. As a result, the definite Subjects posited in the second slots, *al-salamu* (the peace) in example (7) and *al-tadāwī bi-l-mūsīqā* (the music therapy) in example (8), are conflated with the New for being the essential part of the message that contains the unknown information for the addressee. The

Theme type is also Marked PR Theme because reversibility does not influence the syntactic functions of the reversed elements. We argue that the locative item *hunāka* (there) is pragmatically thematized to introduce a new referent to the discourse, but this does not mean it expresses Enhance Existential Theme in MSA.

The last case of optional reversibility is when the Subject is an indefinite noun but post-qualified by a qlgp or ngp. In contrast, the Complement comes in the form of a pgp or existential item. The qualifier here is claimed to make this indefinite Subject specified or identifiable, a fact that allows for the performer to choose Complement-Subject order to achieve discourse purposes (Marogy, 2010). Let us investigate examples (9).

- (9) *li-l-ḥaji* *simātun* *'ālamiyah*
to-the- pilgrimage features universal
'Pilgrimage has universal features.'

(al-Najar, 2018, August 9)



Pilgrimage has universal features.

FIGURE 9. Functional analysis of example (9)

As Figure (9) demonstrates, the clause displays a reversed order of a thematized pgp which retains its syntactic function as the Complement. The postposed Subject is an indefinite noun realized by *simātun* (features). Yet, this indefinite Subject is specified by being qualified by the adjective *'ālamiyah* (universal). In terms of Transitivity meaning, example (9) expresses a relational possessive sense wherein the thematized Complement is conflated with the Theme and Carrier since it is the identity that owns the universal features. In contrast, the Subject is conflated with the Possessed and New for being the unknown part of the message. Therefore, in terms of thematization, the pgp functioning as the Complement represents the Marked PR Theme.

In brief, it is highly possible for the typical sequence of Subject-Complement in ECIs to be reversed based on pragmatic, contextual considerations. The result of such an inversion

is a change in the constituents' usual positions rather than a change in their syntactic and experiential meanings. This change in the linear positions of the constituents could be associated with changes in their thematic and informational meanings.

OPTIONAL REVERSIBILITY

Reversibility in ECIs can obligatorily take place, resulting in the Marked PR Theme type. The most traditional typical case of obligatory reversibility is when the definiteness clause norm is violated in that the Subject comes in the form of an indefinite noun, while a prepositional group always realizes the Complement. The indefinite Subject is not qualified by either an adjective or by a noun group, as it is the case in example (9). Therefore, it is moved away from its typical initial slot and instead replaced by the Complement that occupies the clause-initial position. In this paper, we argue that placing the indefinite Subject after the locative Complement is not only constrained by the syntactic violation of the definiteness norm of the Subject, but it is triggered from specific pragmatic and contextual grounds. Let us consider examples (10) and (11) below, which realize different thematic and informational meanings despite having the same construction.

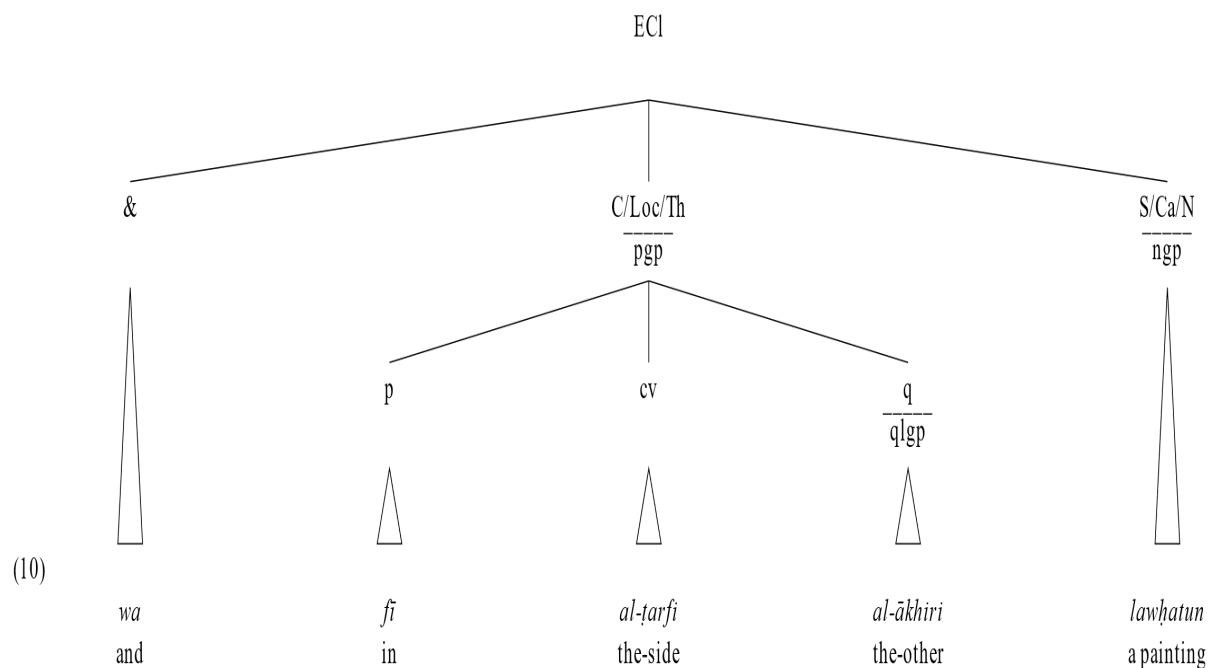
- (10) *wa* *fī* *al-ṭarfī* *al-ākhirī* *lawḥatun*
and in the-side the-other a painting
'And on the other side was a painting.'

(al-Mutawa, 2017, December 2)

- (11) *fī* *al-alimī* *ḥikmatun*
in the pain wisdom
'In pain is wisdom.'

(al-Kuwari, 2018, January 14)

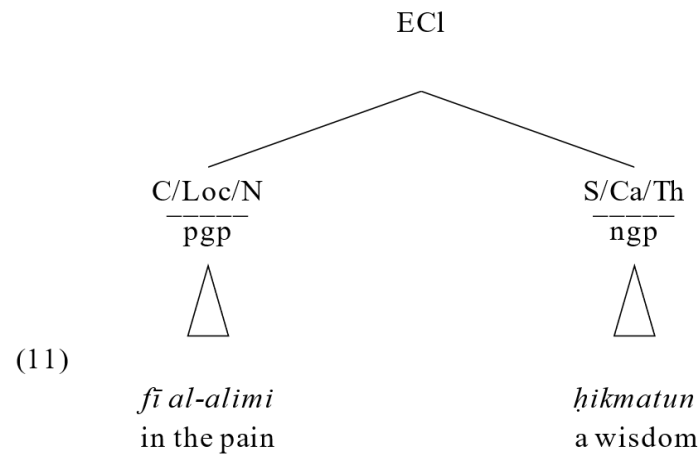
Examples (10) and (11) show obligatory Complement-Subject structure where the Subjects occur in the form of indefinite nouns, namely *lawḥatun* (a painting) and *ḥikmatun* (wisdom), whereas the Complements come as pgps. According to traditional Arabic syntax, to reconcile the violation of the Subject definiteness norm that does not allow indefinite words to occur initially, the indefinite Subject is posited second to its Complement. Nevertheless, in studying the contextual aspects of both examples, we found out that discourse motivations also stand behind such reversed structures. In example (10), the fronted phrasal Complement has implicitly been referred to in the previous descriptive discourse. In other words, the performer was describing the beautiful view on the beach, moving spatially from one side to the other. That makes the Complement *wa fī al-ṭarfī al-ākhirī* (and on the other side) given as the recoverable information, so it is thematically conflated with the Theme. Furthermore, the occurrence of the Subject *lawḥatun* (a painting) as indefinite nouns increases their potential to be the New; especially there was not any reference to it in the preceding sentences, see Figure 10.



And on the other side was a painting.

FIGURE 10. Functional analysis of example (10)

On the contrary, example (11) illustrates a further functional analysis of a similar structure. The performer here was arguing that there is hidden wisdom out of horrible incidents and experiences. After that, the performer started to give examples of wisdom types we get out of our sad experiences. One of these is the wisdom we obtain from pain. The phrasal Complement *fi al-alimi* (in pain) is thus fronted not only to compensate for the syntactic violation of definiteness but also to mark it as the New knowledge needed to transfer to the addressee. Therefore, the Subject posited in the second slot is conflated with the Theme for being explicitly mentioned in the previous discourse, as illustrated by Figure (11) below.



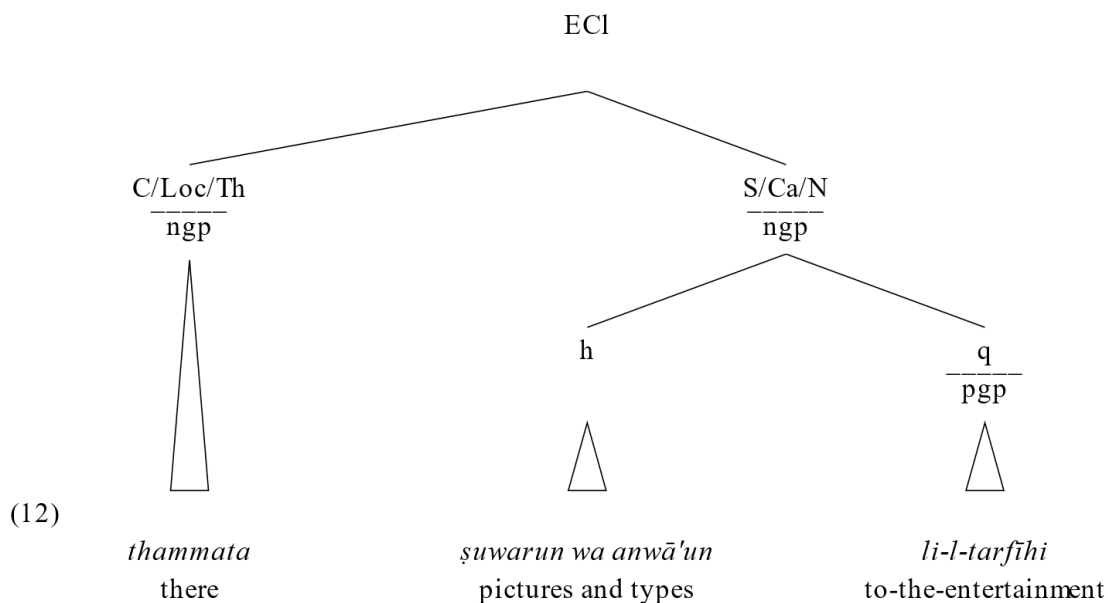
In pain is wisdom.

FIGURE 11. Functional analysis of example (11)

The second case of obligatory reversibility is when the clause commences with the existential locative item *hunāka/thammata* (there) followed by an indefinite ngp. This clause represents a mandatory Complement-Subject structure with the Complement experientially realized as the Location and thematically as the Theme, see example (12) illustrate by Figure 12 below.

- (12) *thammata* *ṣuwarun* *wa* *anwā'un* *li-tarfīhi*
 there pictures and types to-entertainment
 'There are forms and types for entertainment.'

(al-Matiri, 2019, September 20)



There are forms and types for entertainment.

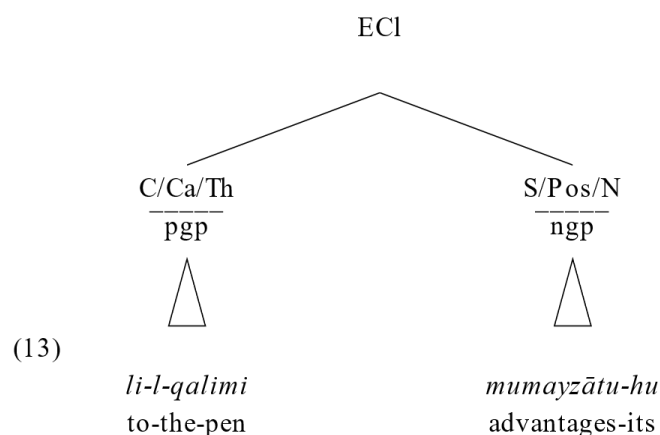
FIGURE 12. Functional analysis of example (12)

When the Complement is filled by the existential locative item *hunāka/thammata* (there), it also reflects the Marked PR Theme rather than the Enhanced Existential Theme. Therefore, not only is the Subject syntactically postposed for being indefinite, but also the Complement is pragmatically pre-posed because it is the Theme that introduces the new information. The New knowledge is realized by the Subject *ṣuwarun wa anwā'un li-l-tarfīhi* (forms and types for entertainment).

The third case of obligatory Complement-Subject structure occurs when the Subject is suffixed to a possessive pronoun referring to the Complement that comes as a pgp. At thus, the Complement must be placed before the Subject, which has the coreferential possessive pronoun, see example (13) and its functional syntax in Figure (13).

- (13) *lil-qalimi* *mumayzātu-hu*
 to-the pen advantages-its
 'The pen has its advantages.'

(al-Sinan, 2020, September 22)



The pen has its advantages.

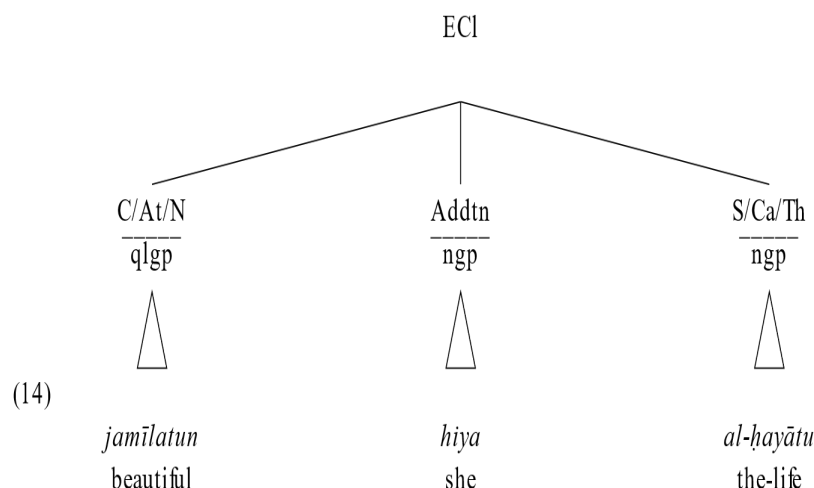
FIGURE 13. Functional analysis of example (13)

As Figure (13) demonstrates, there is a suffixed possessive pronoun *-hu* (its) attached to the Subject *mumayzātu-* (advantages). The presence of the attached possessive pronoun that refers back to the Complement *li-l-qalimi* (to the pen) makes the Complement's fronting obligatory. Equally important, the pre-posed Complement was described in the previous discourse, so the Complement realizes Marked PR Theme which is experientially conflated with the Carrier, and the Subject realizes the New and the experiential meaning of the Possessed.

There is a construction that we consider a modern instance of obligatory reversibility as traditional grammarians did not discuss it in Classical Arabic. Such a construction is made of a fronted Complement filled by an indefinite adjective followed by a third-person pronoun separating it from its definite postposed Subject. In terms of syntax, the presence of that third-person pronoun makes fronting the Complement an obligatory selection. Let us examine example (14).

- (14) *jamīlatun* *hiya* *al-ḥayātu*
 beautiful She3SGF the-life
 'Beautiful is life.'

(al-Mutawa, 2017, December 2)



Beautiful is life.

FIGURE 14. Functional analysis of example (14)

Mohammad (2000) considered this pronoun as *ḍamīr al-faṣl* (separation pronoun), because it is used as an emphatic device, yet we disagree with such an analysis for two reasons. First, *ḍamīr al-faṣl* (separation pronoun) is inserted between two definite elements to determine the first element as the Subject and the second as the Complement. But the Complement in examples (14) is entirely indefinite adjective. Another reason is that when this pronoun is added, it becomes grammatically accepted to reverse both referential elements and select one of them as the Subject occupying the first slot of the clause. However, in examples (14), it is not grammatically correct to bring the Subject to their initial position with the presence of this pronoun. Therefore, we analyze this pronoun as extra (addtn) with a pragmatic emphatic function. Cantarino (1974) attributed the postposing of the Subject in such a structure to its structural length. To put it in a different way, the Subject is usually modified by another clause, a fact that makes it heavy to be placed clause-initially.

Having examined the discourse factors that motivate the performer to select such an uncommon structure, we found out that example (14) textually comes close to the end of the article to summarize the descriptive facts about the beauty of the beach view. In addition to the fact that the Subject is syntactically heavy, the performers utilize such construction to place more emphasis on the unknown information they want to share with the addressee, the Complement here. At the same time, placing the adjective clause-initially reflects the emotional status of the performer in emphasizing the beauty of life. Therefore, the fronted indefinite adjective functioning as the Complement is conflated with the New while the postposed Subject is conflated with the Theme.

In sum, acknowledging definiteness as the only key factor behind the obligatory reversal structure in ECl provides an insufficient and incomprehensive account of reversibility. That is because non-linguistic pragmatic factors have an essential role in inverting the typical ECl structure of Subject-Complement into a Complement-Subject structure. Besides, the theme is not necessarily related to what comes early in the clause. Rather, it is the situational reading of a given context that maps out what could be construed as the Given and what could be interpreted as the New.

CONCLUSION

This paper is an account of Complement-Subject structure in Modern Standard Arabic by investigating the interaction of the syntactic, experiential, thematic, and informational features in verbless Equational clauses within the Cardiff Grammar approach. The paper has shown that optional reversibility is always motivated by pragmatic constraints reflecting two types of themes. The first type of theme is the Unmarked Participle Role Theme, in which neither the Subject nor the Complement reserves their syntactic, experiential, thematic, and information meanings after being permuted. The second theme type is the Marked Participle Role Theme, wherein both elements always retain their syntactic and experiential meanings, but not necessarily their thematic and informational meanings. In accounting for obligatory reversibility, the findings have shown it to be equally motivated by syntactic and pragmatic constraints with Marked Participle Role Theme, including structures introduced by the existential item *hunāka* (there). In addition, to prove the inadequacy of considering the definiteness principle as the only base to account for obligatory reversibility in ECLs, the paper casts doubt on the universality of the notion of ‘Theme’ as an element associated with the start of the clause. The paper’s findings could hopefully help Arabic learners better understand the syntactic and textual motivations behind reversing the clause elements in ECLs. They could also be helpful to admit that pure structural norms are no longer the solid alone grounds on which reversibility should be rested in MSA. Although the paper presents a triangular novel account on reversibility in ECLs, i. e., syntactic, experiential, and textual, future research could investigate reversibility either in negative and interrogative ECLs or in the ECLs whose Subject or Complement is filled by nominal clauses rather than single items or phrases. Another prominent further work is proposed to conduct a quantitative study to explore the probabilities of optional and obligatory reversed ECLs and their corresponding syntactic and semantic features.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Prof Robin Fawcett for encouraging the CG’s application to MSA and providing the authors with his published and unpublished works. Our sincere appreciation is also extended to the Arabic-native professor Abudl Malek Al-Husami who was the reliable reference for verifying the Arabic analysis. Finally, we are deeply indebted to Dr. John Keating and his student Colm Rourk, Department of Computer Science, Maynooth University, Ireland, who have developed the software program utilized to generate the functional analysis of the paper’s examples, accessible on <http://jkeatingsrv.cs.nuim.ie:8098/>.

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