

khalid-Nom in the-university-Gen
 ?msi
 yesterday

(3) a. sa-yakuunu xalid-un
 will-be khalid-Nom
 fii al-Jamiʿat-i ghadan
 in the-university-Gen tomorrow
 “khalid will be in the university tomorrow.”

b. * xalid-un fii al-Jamiʿat-i
 khalid-Nom in the-university-Gen
 ghadan
 tomorrow

From the previous data, it is obvious that in Arabic (and other languages with this feature), Zero Copular Constructions (verbless sentences) do not require any further elements beyond a subject and a basic predicate for their syntactic structure.

The major goal of the current paper is to analyse the ‘underlying structure’ of verbless sentences in Arabic via addressing the following questions: (i) does this structure have a deleted or null copula? or (ii) is it a type of small clause in which there is no verb but an explicit element capable assigning nominative case to the subject or just a default nominative case with no overt or covert assigner?

In the linguistic literature, two analyses are put forward to answer these two questions. The first one is what I call the Null’s Analysis proposed by Bakir (1980) and Fassi Fehri (1993). Whereas, the second one is the non-Null’s Analysis proposed first by Sibawayhi (8th Century, 1977 edn,), and later by Benmamoun (2000), Al-Horais (2006) and Aoun et al.(2010).

To this end, the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 discusses some data of a cross-linguistic variation in the form and properties of copular constructions. Section 3 briefly demonstrates the syntactic typology of copula

constructions in Arabic. Section 4 considers the previous accounts analyzing the underlying structure of verbless sentences, namely Null’s Analysis and non-Null’s Analysis. Section 5 provides a number of compelling evidence, favouring the non-Null’s Analysis and adopts the theory of Agree relation proposed by Chomsky (2001), to prove that the derivation can be formed without assuming a null or deleted copula in the underlying structure of Arabic Zero Copular Constructions headed by the negative *laysa*. Finally, section 6 concludes the paper.

2. A Cross-linguistic Typology of Copular Constructions

Cross-linguistically, a copular construction is defined as the most basic construction which implies no action at all, but rather a link of identification of two participants normally encoded as the Copula subject and the Copula complement (Schachter 1984, Curnow 1999, den Dikken and O’Neill 2017).

In his study about the grammatical descriptions of approximately seventy languages, Curnow (1999) outlines four strategies which languages use to encode identity and classification. A very common strategy which languages use to encode copula relations is a copula verb construction, where the copula is phonetically expressed with its subject and its complement. As it well-known, this is the only strategy English uses to encode identity and group membership relations. Examples of this common strategy from others languages are:

(4) a. kamre(vi)ch garmii hai.
 room-Loc heat be-Pres
 “It is hot in the room.”

b. sumbal da kamra saaf hai.
 sumbal.Gen room clean be-Pers
 “Sumbal’s room is clean.”
 (Punjabi) (Akhtar 2000: 18)

- (5) ten chlopiec jest moim uczniem.
 this.Nom boy.Nom is my.Instr
 pupil.Instr
 “This boy is my pupil.”
 (Polish) (Comrie 1997: 40).

- (6) ystävä-ni on pappi.
 friend-my Cop.3s.Pres vicar
 “My friend is a vicar.”
 (Finnish) (Fromm and Sadeniemi 1956: 115)

A second construction which some languages use to indicate copula relations is similar to the preceding, but the copula in this strategy is not a verb, it is rather a particle that does not inflect. Consequently, this construction is called by Curnow ‘a particle copula construction’. This type of copula is typically found in Modern Irish, with the particle copula *Is* which is inflected for tense/aspect as (7) below shows.

- (7) Is dochtúir-í Beverly Crusher.
 Cop doctor.3s Beverly Crusher
 “Beverly Crusher is a doctor.”
 (Carnie 1995: 150)

Other languages encode copula relations via not having a copula verb. Instead, the Copula complement is treated as a verb via being inflected in a way which is somewhat similar to that in which verbs are normally inflected. Accordingly, Curnow dubs this construction ‘an inflectional copula construction’. In this regard, he cited the following example from Pipil, spoken in El Salvador, where in this language the Copula complement, like the verb, takes prefixes that denote the Copula subject's person and number:

- (8) ni-ta:kat. (Pipil)
 1S-man
 “I am a man.”

This type of copula can be also found in Turkish as the example in (9), cited in Curnow (1999: 4), indicates:

- (9) ben ^gretmen-im.
 I teacher-1s
 “I am a teacher.”

The final type of copula construction which a language may have is the ‘zero copula construction’. In the majority of languages using this strategy, The use of the zero copula is restricted by some constraint. The distinction between present and non-present tense is a well-known and common occurrence in this regard. In some languages, such as Russian (10) and Hungarian (11), a zero copula is used in the present tense, while a visibility of a full copula is required in all other tenses⁽¹⁾.

- (10)(a) On krasivyj.
 he-ms handsome-ms
 “He is handsome.”
 b. On byl studentom.
 he be-Past student-Instr
 “He was a student.”
 (Soschen 2002: 77)

In Hungarian, the picture is more complicated. In this language, zero copula encoding is limited not just to the present tense, but also to sentences with third-person subjects.. In all other contexts, the appearance of the full copula *vagy* is mandatory

- (11)a. Mari okos.
 Mary clever
 “Mary is clever.”
 b. Okos vagy.
 clever Cop.2s.Pres
 “You are clever.”
 (de Croot 1994: 147,149)

The remaining strategy, presumably not found in Curnow's data, is the pronominal copula

⁽¹⁾ See Stassen (2013) for more discussion about this kind copula strategy.

strategy. This strategy is best reflected in Hebrew as exemplified in (12) below. In this strategy the copula is a nominative third person pronoun acting as a link between the subject and the predicate nominal of the present tense copula.

- (12) a. Dani (hu) nexmad.
 Dani-ms Pron-3ms nice
 “Dani is nice.”

- b. Dani *(hu) Mar Levin.
 Dani-ms Pron-3ms Mr. Levin
 “Dani is Mr. Levin.”
 (Soschen 2002: 63)

Pronominal Copula Construction can be also found in Russian, where the construction involves a demonstrative pronoun, *eto* = ‘this’, inserted between the subject and the predicate (Markman 2007, cf. Letuchiy 2015). The sentence in (13) is a good example:

- (13) Denis *eto* moj brat.
 Denis *this* my-nom brother-nom
 “Denis is my brother.”

3. Copular Constructions in Arabic

Among the above strategies, two patterns of Copular Constructions can be discerned in Arabic⁽²⁾. (i) Zero copular constructions “Verbless Sentences”, in which a lack of an overt form of the present tense copula is obligatory, whereas the presence of a full copula for all other tenses is required as the contrast between (14) and (15,16) shows.

- (14) a. xalid-un muʕallim-un
 khalid-Nom teacher-Nom
 “Khalid is a teacher.”
 b. xalid-u (*ya-kuunu) muʕallim-un
 Khalid-Nom is teacher-Nom

- (15) xalid-u *(kana) huna ʔamsi.
 Khalid -Nom be.past here yesterday
 “Khalid was here yesterday.”

- (16) *(sa-yakuunu) l-walad-u huna ghadan.
 fut-be the-boy-Nom here-Acc tomorrow
 “The boy will be here tomorrow.”

(ii) The second one is the overt copula constructions, where the present tense form of the copula is phonetically realized. As observed by Fassi Fehri (1993: 155-56, 205), the appearance of present copula form is required in what might be taken as ageneral/habitual meaning expressed by specified moods (17) complex tenses (18) and aspectuo-temporal (19), or politeness (20).

- (17) Laa t-akun ghbiyy-an
 not 2-be.ms silly-Acc
 “Do not be silly.”

- (18) t-akuun-u ʔaxta-ta l-hadaf-a
 you-are missed-you the-goal-Acc
 “You are missed the goal.”

- (19) ʔindamaa *(yakuunu) r-rajul-u
 when is the-man-Nom
 mariidh-an fa-ʔinna-hu
 sick-Acc then -that- him
 laa y-ubaalii.
 not 3ms-care
 “When the man is sick, he does not care.”
 (Fassi Fehri 1993: 155)

- (20) ʔa-kuunu saʕeed-an bi-liQaaʔika.
 am I-Nom happy-Acc with-meeting-you
 “I would be happy to meet you.”
 (Fassi Fehri 1993: 205)

Bahloul (1993: 219) adds other instances that necessitate the presence of the copula in the present tense. And these include “modality with *qad* (may), *yajibu* ʔan (must), *yastatirʕu* ʔan

⁽²⁾ For recent detailed studies about the typology of Copular Constructions in Arabic and related issues, see Alsaedi (2015) Alharbi (2017) and Tayalati & Danckaert (2020).

(can)". These are demonstrated in (21)-(23), respectively.

(21) a. al-walad-u fii al-bayt-i
the-boy-NOM in the-house-GEN
"The boy is at home."

b.* qad al-walad-u fii al-bayt-i
may the-boy-NOM in the-house-GEN

c. qad yakuunu al-walad-u fii al-bayt-i
may is the-boy-NOM in the-house-GEN

(22) a.* yajibu ?an al-walad-u fii al-bayt-i
must the-boy-NOM in the-house-GEN

b. yajibu ?an yakuuna al-walad-u fii al-bayt-i
must be the-boy-NOM in the-house-GEN

"The boy must be at home."

"The boy may be at home."

(23) a. huwa mudiir-un
he director-NOM

"He is a director."

b.* yastatir?u ?an mudiir-un
can director-NOM

c. yastatii?u ?an yakuuna mudiir-an
can is director-ACC

"He can be a director."

(Bahloul 1993: 119-20)

Having demonstrated the two typological syntactic classification of copula constructions in Arabic, the next section discusses the internal structure of the verbless sentences.

4. Deep Structure of Verbless Sentences

4.1. Abstract Functional Category's

Analysis

As previously stated, traditional Arabic grammar holds that in verbless sentences, predication can be conducted without the use of an inflected verb (Sibawayhi 8th Century, 1977 edn); a valid interpretation of the sentence relies on recognizing the subject, and the the predicate. As a result, all predication is classified into two types: verbal sentences, in which the verb is the first element in the phrase, and nominal sentences, in which the nominal element is the first element in the phrase (Miller 1999). Now, how does the subject in (24), for example, obtain its nominative case if prediction works without an inflected verbal form?

(24) xalid-un mu?allim-un.

Khalid-Nom teacher-Nom

"Khalid (is) a teacher."

The suggestive response is that the abstract governor, known traditionally as the *ibtida* 'inception'⁽³⁾, assigns the nominative case to the subject in (24). Whereas the predicate is valued with nominative as a result of a direct agreement relation with the subject⁽⁴⁾ (Sibawayhi 8th Century, 1938 edn). This is demonstrated in the following tree in (25) below, (taken from Al-Horais (2006: 108) where the null abstract functional category postioned in C⁽⁵⁾ assigns nominative to the subject.

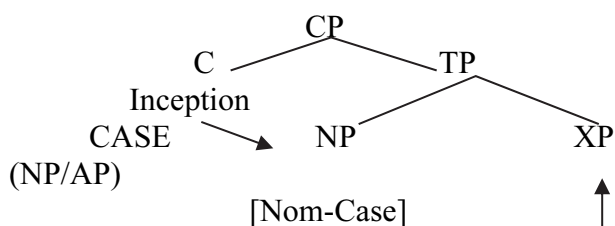
(25)

⁽³⁾ In the Arabic traditional theory of government (called "the Theory of Al Aamil", the abstract governor is an element that does not appear in the surface structure of a sentence (Sibawayhi 8th Century, 1977 edn). This element is known as *al-aamil al-maanawi*, which is a term established by Ancient Arab Grammarians to explain parsing signs (*alamat al-eraab*) "whenever the apparent structure of the sentence does not

include an explicit element capable of governing the other parts" (Alliheibi 1999: 136).

⁽⁴⁾ For a full discussion about agreement and case in verbless sentences, see Al-Horais (2006, 2009).

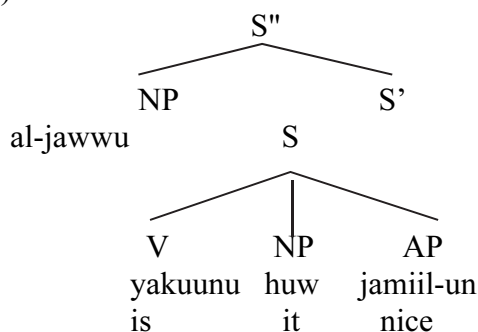
⁽⁵⁾ Some modern Arab grammarians, like Fassi Fehri (1993) and Ouhalla (1994), argue that the default case in Arabic, which is the nominative, is resorted to only when no case assigners are available as in the case with verbless sentences.



4.2. Null Copula's Analysis

Null Copula's Analysis argues that verbless sentences have a verbal copula, but it is phonologically deleted or null. This analysis is adopted by Bakir (1980) who considers verbless sentences to be topic-comment structures, with a topic, a verbal copula, and a pronominal subject located immediately after the copula. Two deletion rules may be used here to produce the right output: "subject-pronoun deletion, because the subject pronoun *huwa* is co-referential with the topic-NP; and [...] a copula-deletion rule" (Bakir 1980: 176). The following derivation in (26) will be used in Bakir's analysis (p. 177):

(26)



The interpretation in (26) is based on the fact that the *wh*-word lies to the right, rather than to the left of the subject as demonstrated in (27), cited in Bakir (1980: 177).

(27) al-jaww-u kayfa yakuunu
the-weather-Nom how is

⁽⁶⁾ Having given the copula rule in (28), Fassi Fehri goes further and argues for a functional projection that hosts tense in order to differentiate such sentences, which are well-formed sentences, from small clauses. Moreover, as pointed out by

fii Š-Šita?-i?
in the-winter-Gen
"The weather, how is it in winter?"

This analysis is supported by Fassi Fehri (1993) who argues that there is a copula, but it is inserted as null rather than deleted (as argued by Bakir). This is due to the fact that the copula is **spelt out** in some cases as in the past tense and in what is considered as certain moods, tenses, or aspects (see section 3) that force the occurrence of the present or future form of the copula. He, then, proposes the following copula rule (p. 156):

(28) "Spell out the copula as *kwn* when Mood, Aspect, and/or Tenses are specified, otherwise spell it out as zero"⁽⁶⁾.

4.3. Non-Null's Analysis

The Null's Analysis, according to Benmamoun (2000), is problematic because a copula in Arabic assigns accusative case to the predicate when it is overt, as shown in (29):

(29) kaana xalid-un mušallim-an.
be.past.3ms khalid-Nom teacher-Acc
"Khalid was teacher."

By contrast, the predicate in is nominative as in (1), reproduced here once again in (30):

(30) xalid-un mušallim-un.
khalid-Nom teacher-Nom
"Khalid is tall."

If the null copula's assumption is tenable, the null copula should not assign a case that differs from the case assigned by the overt copula. "This in turn amounts to a contradiction: why would the copula assign two different cases, nominative when overt, and accusative when

Abdel-Ghafer (2004), the agreement patterns that hold between the subject and predicate need to be mediated by a functional head.

covert?” (Abdel-Ghafer 2004: 33). Benmamoun’s objection is consistent with the principle that is adopted by early Arab grammarians in (31):

(31) **Governing words, whether null or deleted, bear Case-assigning capacity.**

Take the following Classical Arabic sentence in (32), for instance.

- (32) (*ihdhar*) al-asad-a
 (beware) the-lion-Acc
 “Beware of the lion.”
 (Alliheibi 1999: 173)

In (32), the verb *ihdhar* is omitted from the surface structure of the sentence, but it is expressed in its deep structure and this can be evidenced by its capability to assign the accusative case to the object. Otherwise, the object must be nominative.

Shlonsky (1997: 102) dismisses the null’s analysis arguing that “the language has a binary tense system in which the present tense is expressed, in the unmarked case, by the imperfect form of be ‘ya-kuun’, which is morphologically regular (i.e., phonetically realized)”. His dismissal, however, can be supported by the above data in (19-23) representing the second type of copula strategy in Arabic, where the present tense occurrence of the copula is phonetically realized. The Arabic negative marker *Laysa*, functioning as a copular verb, also provides strong evidence contra the Null’s Analysis as will be discussed in the next section.

5. Evidence from Agreement on *laysa*

The Arabic negative marker *laysa*, functioning as a copular verb, provides strong evidence contra the null’s analysis. As proposed by Al-

Tamari (2001), the evidence comes from the example in (33) below, where *laysa* can be replaced with *laa* and the present copular verb *yakuunu* without any grammatical change:

- (33) a. *laysa* T-Taqs-u
 Neg.Cop.3ms the-weather-Nom
 jamiil-an fi S-Sayf-i.
 beautiful-Acc in the-summer-gen
 “The weather is not beautiful in the summer.”

- b. *laa ya-kuunu* T-Taqs-u *jamiil-an*
 Neg 3m-is the-weather-Nom beautiful-Acc
 fi S-Sayf-i.
 in the-summer-gen

“The weather is not beautiful in the summer.”

(Al-Tamari 2001: 128)

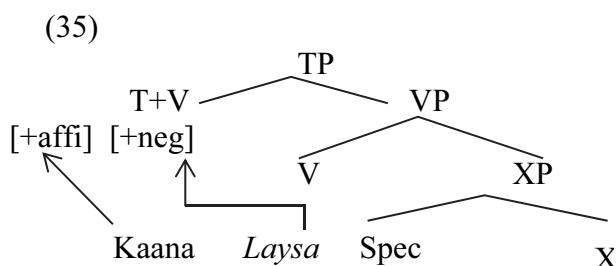
(33) strongly proves that *laysa* being a ‘negative copular verb⁽⁷⁾’ adds compelling evidence favouring the analysis that Arabic zero copular constructions do not have a null or deleted copula. This evidence comes from the fact that *laysa* cannot replace *laa* alone in order to directly precede the present copular verb *ya-kuunu* as the ungrammaticality of (34) below shows. What is of interest here is that *laysa* and *ya-kuunu* are in complementary distribution. Thus, if the null or deleted copula analysis is correct, the use of *laysa* in copular constructions with nonverbal predicates must be precluded. The data given in (33) & (34), however, show that this is not the case and hence cast serious doubt on the null copula analysis of present tense verbless sentences.

- (34) **laysa* ya-kuunu T-Taqs-u
 Neg.Cop Pres-be the-weather-Nom
 jamiil-an fi S-Sayf-i.
 beautiful-Acc in the-summer-gen

⁽⁷⁾ According to Al-Horais (2009), there are several pieces of evidence that indicate the function of *laysa* as a copular negative verb. One is based on history, which indicates that the negative was originally made up of the negative particle *laa* and the word *ʔysa* (existence) which conveys the meaning of the

copula, albeit this word is abandoned in Arabic and its varieties. Moreover, Early Classical Syriac evidences this historical fact as its negative marker *layt* is a contraction of the negative *laa* and the copula *it*.

Keeping in mind all of these facts, *laysa* being in complementary distribution with the present copular verb *ya-kuunu*, leads us to assume, following Al-Tamari (2001: 128), that *laysa* in copular constructions is generated in the same position as the copula *kana*, and in this case, we have two forms of copula in Arabic. (i) affirmative copula as in the case of *kaana/ya-kuunu* and (ii) negative copula as in the case of *laysa*. This means that T in Arabic copular constructions can be valued with an affirmative feature or a negative feature according to which type of copula is inserted under V that takes the verbless sentence as its complement. This complement is dominated by the maximal projection of the predicate in verbless sentence, with the subject in the specifier of XP position. Whereas, both VP and XP are headed by TP since Arabic verbless sentences are well-formed independent sentences (see Fassi Fehri 1993: 156, cf, Al-Horais 2013). The contrast in (35), below, illustrates the derivation with both copulas:



Agreement on *laysa* adds increasing evidence in favour of treating *laysa* in such contexts as a copular negative verb and dismissing the existence of null or deleted copula hypothesis as argued by the null's analysis. This is because the typical copular verb *kaana* can replace *laysa* in all the agreement examples with no change in grammaticality. Consider the following contrast in (36-39) with *laysa* replaced by *kaana*:

(36) a. ahmad-u kaana Sadiq-ii.

Ahmad.Nom was.3ms friend-Acc.my-Gen
"Ahmad was my friend."

b. laysa ahmad-u Sadiq-ii.
Neg.Cop.3ms Ahmad.Nom friend-Acc.my-Gen
"Ahmad is not my friend."

(37) a. zaynab-u kaan-at jamilat-an.
Zaynab-Nom was.3fs beautiful-Acc
"Zaynab was beautiful."

b. lays-at zaynab-u jamilat-an.
Neg.Cop.3fs Zaynab-Nom beautiful-Acc
"Zaynab is not beautiful."

(38) a. ?al-?awlaad-u kaan-uu
the-children. mp-Nom were-3mp
fii l-bayt-i.
in the-house-Gen
"The children were in the house."

b. laysa l-?awlaad-u
Neg.Cop-3ms the-children-Nom
fii l-bayt-i.
in the-house-Gen

"The children are not in the house."

(39) a. ?aT-Taalibaat-u kun-na
the-students.fp-Nom were-3mp
fii l-mdrasat-i.
in the-school-Gen

"The students were in the school."

b. lays-at T-Taalibaat-u
Neg.Cop-3fs the-students.fp-Nom
fii l-mdrasat-i.
in the-school-Gen

"The students are not in the school."

The grammaticality of replacing *laysa* by *kaana* in the previous examples adds strong evidence regarding the fact that *laysa*, in this particular usage, should be treated "as a portmanteau morpheme with the function of Neg and copula combined" (Al-Tamari 2001:128). This straightforwardly explains why *laysa* and the copula are in complementary distribution as previously illustrated by (34) above and also

explains why *laysa* cannot occur with another negative in the same sentence as shown in the following example, taken from Onizan (2005: 36):

- (40) **Laysa l-walad-u lam*
 Neg.Cop.3ms the-boy-Nom Neg
ya-drus.
 3m-study-Juss

More importantly, accounting for how agreement is manifested by the copula *laysa* provides much support to the non-Null Analysis. I assume, adopting the Theory of Agree relation (Chomsky 2001), formulated in (41) below, that the full agreement relation in verbless sentences headed by *laysa* is valued as a result of a direct feature-valuing relation between the subject and its predicate.

- (41) The relation Agree is established between a probe and goal iff:
- the probe has one interpretable and one uninterpretable feature, F and uG, and the goal has the same features but with reversed values for interpretability, uF and G and
 - the probe c-commands the goal and
 - there is no element closer to the probe than the goal with the relevant feature-values.

This direct feature-valuing relation works as follows the u-features of the predicate are valued by -features of the subject. This direct feature-valuing relation is born immediately after merging the two elements throughout an immediate Agree relation. Accordingly, it can be said that the agreement relation here behaves similarly as the adjectival agreement inside a DP (see Carstens 2000 for more discussion about the agreement in a DP). It should be, however, noted that the subject (whether it is overt or covert) and the predicate are still waiting for their case feature to be valued. This case requirement of the predicate is satisfied by

the head neg copula *laysa* before it moves higher to T, whereas the nominative case of the subject is valued by T as a direct effect of Agree. T headed by *laysa* serves as a probe valued with case and has unvalued -features since the negative is inheritably inflected for agreement. These unvalued -features have to be valued in the course of the syntactic derivation. Taking (42), as an example, feature-valuing under the operation Agree works as follows. The unvalued -feature of T starts to search down for a closest matching goal feature within its c-command domain and matches with a closer goal; here the subject *zaynab-u*. In return, the goal receives the nominative case from T.

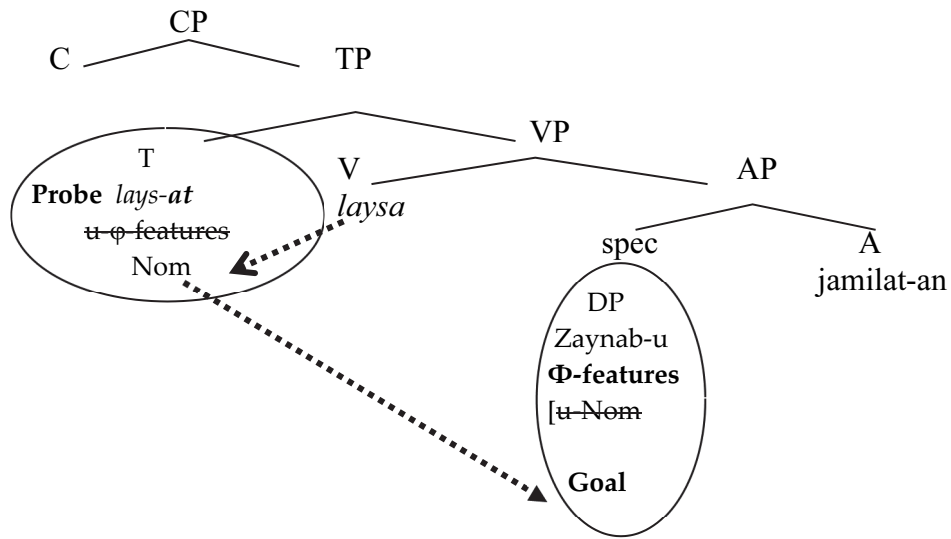
- (42) *lays-at zaynab-u jamilat-an.*
 Neg.Cop.3fs Zaynab-Nom beautiful-Acc
 “Zaynab is not beautiful.”

Finally, when unvalued features: ‘-features of the probe and the case’ of the goal are assigned values, they are removed from the syntactic derivation being handed over to phonology, the derivation of PF (Chomsky 2000); (43), above, represents how the theory of agree relation headed by *laysa* works in (42) above.

The same operation applies when *laysa* shows full agreement with its null subject. That is, the null subject is probed by T headed by *laysa*. But the divergent between full and partial agreement lies in whether the subject can be incorporated in T or not. With full agreement, it indeed does, but it does not do so with the partial one. Basically, this works as follows. T has a set of unvalued -features, and therefore probes for a category with matching valued features. The null subject pronoun has the required valued -features, and therefore values T’s u -features via the incorporation process. That is, the -feature values of the null subject pronoun are copied by T. At the same time neg values the subject’s unvalued case feature, which is nominative. According to this

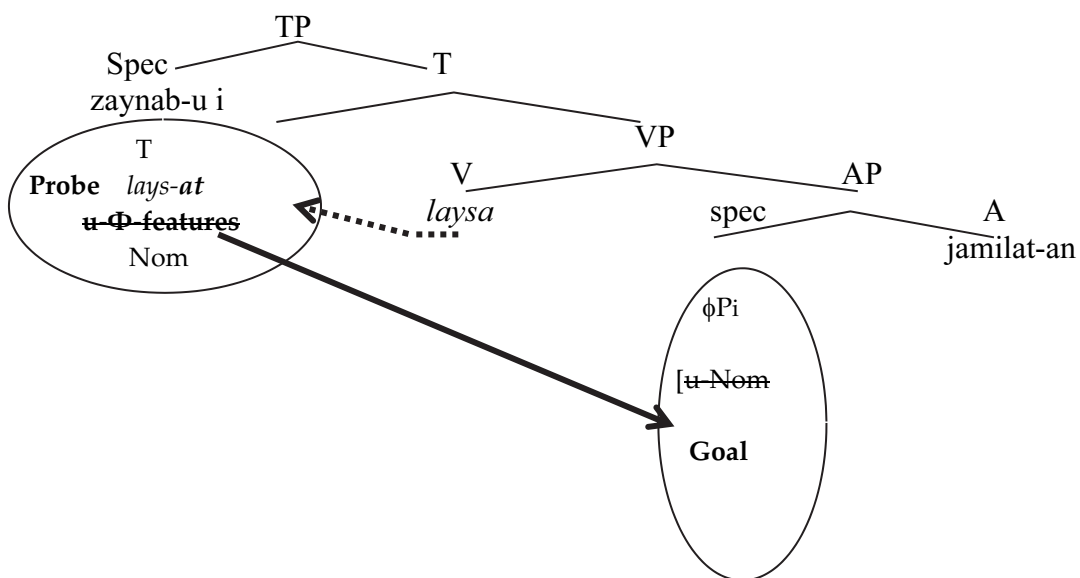
analysis, (44) will have a derivation along the lines of (45) below

(43)



(44) *zaynab-u* *lays-at* *jamilat-an*.
 Zaynab-Nom Neg.Cop.3fs beautiful-Acc
 “Zaynab is not beautiful.”

(45)



6. Conclusion

To sum up, assuming the theory of Agree to analyse Case and agreement in verbless sentences headed by *laysa* casts grave doubts on Null Copula's Analysis since the derivation can be formed without assuming a null or deleted copula in the underlying structure of Arabic Zero Copular Constructions. Moreover, what this, also, implies is that if the null or deleted copula analysis is on the right track, then the availability of *laysa* in copular constructions with nonverbal predicates should be precluded. Needless to say that adopting the theory of Agree provides a costless explanation of how case and agreement on *laysa* operate by assuming minimal steps. And this is worth pursuing since it is compatible with economy conditions that, from a minimalist perspective, require syntactic representations formed in the course of a derivation should be as simple as possible, consisting of a minimal number of syntactic objects (Chomsky 1995, Collins 2001).

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التركيب النحوي لجمل الكينونة فارغة الفعل في العربية المعاصرة

ناصر الحرّيص

أستاذ اللسانيات في قسم اللغة العربية وآدابها

بكلية اللغة العربية والدراسات الاجتماعية في جامعة القصيم

المستخلص. يهدف البحث إلى تقديم مراجعة نقدية للمقاربات التي حاولت دراسة البنية العميقة لأبنية جمل الكينونة الخالية من فعل الربط (يكون) في العربية المعاصرة. ويقدم البحث بعض الأدلة التي تناصر المقاربة التي تؤيد خلو بنية هذا النوع من التراكيب من الفعل (يكون) في أصل بنيته العميقة والسطحية على عكس ما تذهب إليه مقاربة وجود فعل كون (رابط) في بنيته العميقة ولكنه غير منطوق في بنيته السطحية. ومن أهم الأدلة التي انتكأ عليها البحث الحالي في تأييد الرأي الأول الدور الإعرابي لأداة النفي (ليس) في تغيير إعراب (المسند=الخبر) مما يدل على عدم وجود فعل الكون (يكون) في أصل بنية التركيب العميقة؛ إذ لو وجد لكان هو أولى بتغيير إعراب (المسند) من (ليس). ويقوي هذا الدليل أن (يكون) و(ليس) لا يلتقيان في البنية السطحية لتراكيب الكينونة في زمن المضارع البسيط فلا يقال: *ليس يكون الجو معتدلاً. ومما يدل علمياً على عدم وجود فعل الكون (يكون)، أن جمل هذا النوع من التركيب المنفية بليس يمكن أن تشتق نحويًا وتفسر فيها عمليات الإعراب والمطابقة دون الحاجة إلى افتراض فعل كون محذوف عبر تبني فرضيات نظرية طابق، إحدى نظريات البرنامج الأدنوي لتشومسكي (١٩٩٥، ٢٠٠١).

الكلمات المفتاحية: تراكيب الكينونة؛ الجمل صفرية فعل الربط (يكون)؛ العامل المعنوي؛ فعل كينونة فارغ، ليس.

