ABED AL-SAMEAI

C AS A LOCUS OF CASE/AGREEMENT IN MODERN STANDARD ARABIC*

ABSTRACT: This paper aims to contribute to the ongoing debate triggered by Chomsky’s (2004a) suggestion that C is a locus of Case/Agreement by investigating the issue in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Based on a detailed investigation of Complementizer Agreement (CA) and Case facts related to complementizers in Arabic, it is concluded that the Arabic C does not exhibit CA. However, C bears an Accusative Case feature and enters into an AGREE relation, independently of T, with the embedded subject in [Spec, TP], overwriting a Case feature previously-assigned by T. Thus, the present paper argues for the need to add the functional head C(omplementizer) to the inventory of functional heads that are independently specified for the Case feature and, thus, have the ability to value the Case of a DP in their c-command domain. It also argues, contra Chomsky (2004a, b, 2005), that C and T should have their own set of inflectional features each to initiate an AGREE operation independently accessing the subject of a clause/sentence (cf. Carstens 2003; van Koppen 2005; Haegeman & van Koppen 2009). The argument is based on a detailed investigation of the syntactic behaviour of complementizers in Arabic and an extension of this analysis to a class of elements popularly known in Arabic grammar as ََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََََ* I am greatly indebted to two anonymous reviewers whose remarks, questions and suggestions have greatly improved this paper.

KEYWORDS: Complementizer Agreement (CA), Case, C(omplementizer), AGREE, Multiple AGREE.

0. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Complementizer Agreement (henceforth CA) as in (1) below, is a syntactic phenomenon whereby a complementizer agrees in phi-features with the embedded subject. The fact that some languages actually display agreement morphology on a C°-related element like the complementizer is advanced in support of this idea:

©2011 The English and Foreign Languages University.

Several of these analyses argue that the \textit{phi}-features originate in \textit{T}° and that CA reflects the movement of \textit{T}° to \textit{C}° (cf. Zwart 1993, 1997; Hoekstra & Marácz 1989; Watanabe 2000). These features are then spelled out on both the finite verb and the complementizer. Watanabe (2000), for example, assumes that CA results from a two-step operation in which the subject’s \textit{phi}-features are first copied onto \textit{T} (as a result of \textit{AGREE}) and then carried along with head movement of the T-complex to \textit{C}.

Carstens (2003), however, proposes that \textit{C} hosts its own set of uninterpretable \textit{phi}-features which acts as a \textit{probe} (in the sense of Chomsky 2000), accessing the interpretable \textit{phi}-set of the subject in [\textit{Spec, TP}] under closest command (an instance of the operation \textit{AGREE}). As a result, \textit{C}’s \textit{phi}-set is identified with the relevant values of the subject’s \textit{phi}-features.

Chomsky (2004a, b, 2005) also suggests that \textit{C} is a locus of Case/Agreement and that the \textit{phi}-features originate in \textit{C}°. Chomsky (2004b), however, proposes that \textit{C} as a locus of Case/Agreement does not enter into a ‘direct’ AGREE relation with the embedded subject but assigns its uninterpretable \textit{phi}-features to \textit{T}, and the subject enters into an AGREE relation with \textit{T} and raises to [\textit{Spec, TP}]. (Chomsky does not directly offer a solution to the CA problem.)
Analyses of this phenomenon following Chomsky’s (2004a, b, 2005) suggestion have focused on whether there is a phi-feature dependency between C and T.

Tanaka (2005), extending his paper of (2003), for example, argues that C is a locus of Case/Agreement and that the C-T configuration is responsible for Case assignment to the subject of both finite and non-finite clauses as “Nominative vs. Accusative depending on the properties of C as a probe.” He argues (p.103) that “T with complete ϕ-features is not only insufficient but also unnecessary for Case assignment to subjects, as opposed to the standard analysis of Chomsky (2000, 2001).” For Tanaka (2005: 92), CA is “simply an overt realization of the uninterpretable phi-features of C valued under agreement with the subject in the [Spec, TP].”

Haegeman and van Koppen (2009), on the other hand, argue that “there is no phi-feature dependency between T° and C°” and conclude that “CA results from an Agree relation initiated by unvalued phi-features in the CP-domain, whereas verbal agreement spells out the Agree relation between T° and the subject.”

Fuß (2008:3), proposing yet a different account for CA, claims that “complementizer agreement results from the post-syntactic insertion of a so-called dissociated agreement morpheme, the licensing of which is parasitic on the presence of a syntactic agreement morpheme that has been evaluated during the syntactic derivation.” Similarly, Ackema and Neeleman (2005) propose that complementizer agreement results from a checking rule which applies at PF.

In all the syntactic analyses above (of CA), C is argued to be responsible for the Case on the embedded subject, but only as a by-product of the phi-feature Agreement of C with the embedded subject, irrespective of how this Agreement takes place; i.e., whether there is an independent AGREE relation between C and the subject in the [Spec, TP] (e.g. Haegeman & van Koppen 2009, Carstens 2003), or via feature inheritance of C by T and then AGREE with the Subject (e.g. Zwart 1993; Chomsky 2004b, 2005; Tanaka 2003, 2005). But Arabic presents a different picture.
1. LITERATURE REVIEW ON C IN MODERN STANDARD ARABIC (MSA)

What I hope to achieve in this paper is to contribute to the current discussion on C as a locus of Case/Agreement by providing a detailed investigation of the phenomenon in Arabic whereby the complementizer induces Accusative case on the embedded subject. Arabic is a language that is typologically different from the languages that have been at the centre of this discussion. The syntactic behavior of complementizers in Arabic has not received much attention in the modern syntactic literature.

Aoun (1981) and Fassi Fehri (1993) provide descriptive accounts of the complementizers ʔinna and ʔanna which are just like those of medieval Arab grammarians without accounting for the exceptional status of the Accusative subjects after ʔinna and ʔanna.

Masroor (2005:256) discusses complementizers as part of an investigation of subordinate clauses in Arabic. In his analysis, the complementizers ʔinna and ʔanna assign structural Accusative Case to the embedded subject in [Spec, TopP], which is an A-bar position to which a theta role cannot be assigned. He reserves [Spec, IP] for nominative or null subjects and leaves open the question whether the topic NP shares a theta role with its co-referential resumptive pronoun, when there is one, or remains without a theta role.

Homeidi (2003:49) just touches upon this class of elements in passing, dealing with ‘ʔinna and sisters’ as part of various Case-assigning ‘particles’ in Arabic (p. 56), but does not investigate the syntactic class of these elements, the question where they are generated and the exact mechanism or syntactic configuration in which they ‘assign’ Case to an adjacent NP.

The next section of this paper, Section (2), provides a description of the syntactic facts about complementizers in Arabic. Section (3) presents an analysis and also compares and contrasts the syntactic facts of the Arabic complementizers with those of the languages discussed in the literature. Section (4) extends this analysis to other C elements, specifically, to the rest of the class ‘ʔinna and sisters’, as well as the subordinator liʔanna ‘because.’ The last section of the paper presents the conclusions.
2. THE BASIC FACTS

Arabic uses \( ?\text{anna} \) and \( ?\text{an} \) as complementizers to introduce a non-interrogative embedded clause.\(^2\) These two complementizers are in complementary distribution. \( ?\text{anna} \) introduces only clauses of the SV(O/C) type, including the so-called nominal clauses (clauses that do not have a lexical verb but consist simply of two nouns, a subject and a predicate). It goes with a factitive verb, i.e. a verb that takes an asserted, or realis, complement. \( ?\text{an} \), on the other hand, introduces only clauses of the VS(O/C) type and occurs with a verb that takes an irrealis complement. This distinction is realized in many languages as an indicative/subjunctive mood distinction corresponding to different verb forms; or as a finite/non-finite distinction. However, in Arabic, both complementizers introduce ‘finite’ clauses, as non-finite clauses do not exist in Arabic.\(^3\) I, therefore, gloss both these complementizers as ‘that’ in the examples throughout:

\[(2) \text{a. } \text{?a}[\text{ rif-u } \text{anna r-rajul-a kari:m-u-n} \text{'I know that the man (is) generous.' (Nominal embedded clause)}] \\
\text{b. } \text{?a}[\text{ taqid-u } \text{anna r-rajul-a yu-Hibu al-madi:H-a} \text{'I think that the man loves praise.' (SVO embedded clause)}]\
\]

\(^2\) Arabic also has other complementizers, viz. \( ?\text{ithakaana} \) ‘if’, \( maa?\text{ithakaana} \) ‘whether’, and \( sawaa?\text{an} \) ‘whether’. However, these complementizers are not of interest to us in this paper because they do not exhibit the interesting Case facts that \( ?\text{anna} \) and \( ?\text{an} \) have. \( ?\text{anna} \) and \( ?\text{an} \) can also be used to introduce a subject clause but their syntactic behaviour remains the same.

Consider the following examples:

- \( ?\text{anna r-rajul-a kari:m-u-n laisa mustaghfraban} \text{ 'That the man (is) generous (is) not strange.'} \\
\text{that the-man-Acc generous-Nom-Indef not strange} \\
\text{'That the man (is) generous (is) not strange.'}\
- \( ?\text{an ya?ti r-rajul-u ba:kiran shai?u-n ra:7e} \text{ 'That the man comes early (is) a good thing.'} \\
\text{that 3.Sg.M.Imperf-come the-man-Nom early thing- Nom-Indef great} \\
\text{'That the man comes early (is) a good thing.'}\

\(^3\) For more on subordinate clauses in Arabic, see Masroor (2005).
The reader must have noticed the morphological similarity between َان and َان ‘that’. In morphological terms, they can be considered as allomorphs that realize the Arabic morpheme َن {Complementizer}. Interchanging these complementizers results in ungrammaticality:

(4) a. *؟اَرِفٍ-ُع َان َرِجَلٍ-ُا َكاَرِمٍ-ُا َنِس
   know-I that the-man-Acc generous-Nom-Indef
   ‘I know that he (is) generous.’

b. *واَدٍ-ُع َان َيَتٍ-ِتٍ َغَدَان
   promised-3.Sg.M.Perf that 3.Sg.M. Imperf-come tomorrow
   ‘I expected that the man (would) come early.’

The subject of the (embedded) clause introduced by َان can be dropped, but in this case a clitic pronoun encoding all the phi-features of the dropped subject is obligatorily attached to the complementizer:

(5) a. َاَتِقٍ-ُع َان ٍ-ِع َكَاِرِمٍ-ُا َنِس
   think-I that-3.Sg.M loves the-praise-Acc
   ‘I think that he loves praise.’

b. َاَتِقٍ-ُع َان ٍ-ِع َكَاِرِمٍ-ُا َنِس
   think-I that-3.Sg.M loves the-praise-Acc
   ‘I think that he loves praise.’

Deleting َان is not allowed as the following example shows:

(6) *اَتِقٍ-ُع َرِجَلٍ-ُا َكاَرِمٍ-ُا َنِس
   think-I the-man-Acc loves the-praise-Acc
   ‘I think that the man loves praise.’
Notice that in all the examples introduced by *anna ‘that’, the embedded subject has to be strictly adjacent to this complementizer (as in West Flemish and Frisian (cf. Fuß 2008:9)), and has to bear Accusative Case. Furthermore, a lexical subject and a pronominal clitic cannot co-occur in the same structure. Failing to obey any of these conditions leads to ungrammaticality:


b. *?a.qtaqid-u *anna r-rajul-u yuHibu al-madi:H-a think-I that the-man-Nom loves the-praise-Acc


Unlike in the case of *anna, the subject of an embedded clause introduced by *an does not, and cannot, appear in the accusative; it can only appear in the nominative, just like the subject of any ordinary main (finite) clause. This fact will play a major role in the analysis.

3. THE ANALYSIS

3.1 C as a locus of agreement in Arabic

Let us start with an account of Complementizer Agreement (CA) in Arabic. Unlike the languages discussed in the literature with regard to CA (see the introduction section above), the Arabic complementizer does not carry any morphological agreement markers such as subject-verb agreement markers in the language:

(8) *?a.qtaqid-u *anna -at al-bint-a katab-at r-risa:lat-a think-I that-3.Sg.F the-girl-Acc wrote-3.Sg.F the-letter-Acc

Example (8) is ungrammatical simply because the complementizer carries a verbal agreement marker that is typical of subject-verb agreement in Arabic. One could assume, following Chomsky (2005), that C always
has phi-features but “sometimes the phi-features of C are morphologically expressed, as in the famous West Flemish examples” (p.10, n 2) and sometimes they are not. Arabic belongs to the latter type of languages. On the other hand, one could argue that the Arabic C lacks phi-features and that is why CA is not attested. Arabic is a morphologically rich language and one would expect morphological realization of such features on C, if there were any. The theoretical adjustment that needs to be made then is to allow functional heads in human languages to vary with regard to their phi-feature specification.

Arabic, like West Flemish (cf. Fuß 2008), requires the presence of a (subject) clitic on C in the absence of a full DP subject, as in (9a), and in the presence of an ‘emphatic/appositive’ subject pronoun as in (9b) below. But this clitic is not an agreement marker:

(9) a. ạraft-u ạpanna -ha ạitaSala-t
    knew-I that-3.Sg.F called-F
    ‘I knew that she called.’

    b. ạraft-u ạpanna -ha hiya llati ạitaSala-t
    knew-I that-3.Sg.F she who called-F
    ‘I knew that it was she who called.’

    c. *ạraft-u ạpanna -ha maryam ạitaSala-t
    knew-I that-3.Sg.F Mariam called-F
    ‘I knew that Mariam called.’

First, unlike in West Flemish and other Germanic dialects (Fuß 2008), the inflection on C in (9a) is not the same agreement marker that is attested on verbs. Second, this clitic cannot co-occur with a lexical subject as is clear from (9c), arguing that this pronominal clitic is ‘an argument’ in its own right, and not an agreement marker. An agreement marker on the complementizer would have co-occurred with a lexical subject, as is typical of subject-verb agreement. Furthermore, the clitics that appear on the complementizer when the lexical subject is null are the typical pronominal arguments that appear obligatorily attached (i) to the verb
when the object is null (10a), (ii) to the preposition when its object is null (10b), and (iii) to the noun as the possessor (10c):

(10) a. (huwa) q:abala\-ha
   he met\-\-3.Sg.F
   ‘He met her.’

   b. ġali taHadaθa ̱ilai\-ha
   Ali talked to\-3.Sg.F
   ‘Ali talked to her.’

   c. kita:b-u\-ha
   book-Nom\-3.Sg.F.Poss
   ‘her book’

A free (or detached) pronoun is not allowed as the subject of an embedded clause introduced by a complementizer, as the following example shows:

(11) *a\-taqid-u ̱anna huwa yuHibu al-madi:H-a
    think-I that he loves the-praise-Acc

Therefore, CA is not attested in Arabic.

3.2 C as a locus of Case in Arabic

It is a well-known fact of Arabic grammar that the lexical subject of an embedded clause introduced by the complementizer ̱anna has to obligatorily be in the Accusative case.\(^5\) Consider the following example ((12) = (2b)):

(12) a\-taqid-u ̱anna r-rajul-a yuHibu al-madi:H-a
    think-I that the-man\-Acc loves the-praise-Acc
    ‘I think that the man loves praise.’

\(^4\) See also Masroor (to appear), who argues that clitic pronouns in Arabic are full-fledged arguments, base-generated in the head position of their respective arguments. He provides several pieces of evidence from relative clauses, complement clauses, and genitive constructions to support his position.

\(^5\) This is also true about the other members of the class of ‘\(^\)amna and sisters’, as we will see shortly.
I shall now argue that C in Arabic has an [acc] Case feature value and this Case feature is deleted under AGREE with the embedded subject in [Spec, TP].

The fact that the Arabic complementizer values the Case feature of the embedded subject in spite of not showing any agreement with this subject argues that Case valuation should not be tied to phi-feature valuation/Agreement.  

3.2.1 Exploring different accounts of the [acc] case feature on the embedded subject

I now refer to the different proposals regarding Case valuation available in the literature and explore different possibilities to account for the Accusative Case on the embedded subject of a clause introduced by َanna in Arabic.

In Chomsky’s (2000, 2001) system of feature valuation, T is specified for a [nom] Case value and thus has the ability to value the Case feature of the subject DP as [nom] while C is not specified for any Case feature and thus cannot value a Case feature in its c-command domain. It is clear that this system fails to account for the Accusative Case on the Subject DP in clauses introduced by َanna.

A second possibility is to assume Chomsky’s (2004a, b, 2005) proposal that C assigns its features, including Case, to T, which in turn assigns Case to the embedded subject DP. However, this proposal implies that C will always carry the same agreement and Case features as T, and that T does not have any of these features and it always gets them from C. Another implication is that the Case on the subject DP will always have one value, whether in root clauses or in embedded clauses. We have seen that both these implications are untrue for Arabic.

Therefore, we have to acknowledge that C in Arabic (and probably in other languages) is a functional head that is specified for its own Accusative Case feature and thus can value the Case feature of a DP in its c-command domain as [acc]. That C is a locus of Case has been argued for by many syntacticians (cf. Carstens 2003; Chomsky 2004a,b, 2005; Tanaka 2005, among others).

It is assumed in the literature that Case valuing takes place as a by-product of the relation AGREE between the probe and its matching goal (cf. Chomsky, 2000, 2001; Adger 2003).
My argument that C in Arabic is a locus for an [acc] Case feature is based on two facts. First, the subject DP of an embedded clause introduced by ُanna can only appear in the Accusative. Second, the fact that pronouns functioning as the subject of an embedded clause can only appear as a clitic attached to the complementizer is an additional argument that C in Arabic, like v, is specified for [acc] Case and has to delete this uninterpretable feature under \textit{AGREE} with a DP in its c-command domain.\footnote{One could ask if C bears a Genitive Case feature when it comes to clitics, because these clitics typically appear in a Genitive position in Arabic (e.g., the object of a preposition or a possessor). But the fact is that one cannot tell the case of clitics, since they do not show overt morphological Case marking; and when the embedded subject is a lexical DP, it can only appear in the Accusative. This suggests that C bears Accusative Case, not Genitive.}

Expanding Chomsky’s (2000, 2001) system to include C as a locus of Case will account for the Accusative Case on the embedded subject. However, this proposal meets one theoretical problem. Under Chomsky’s (2000, 2001) system, the Case feature on the embedded subject DP has already been valued by T as [nom] under \textit{AGREE}. Therefore, the Case feature on the subject DP is not supposed to be \textit{active} to enter into an \textit{AGREE} relation with the \textit{probe} of C. Moreover, even if the DP is allowed to enter into an \textit{AGREE} relation with the \textit{probe} of C, the only way to value the Case feature of the subject DP as [acc] is to allow the \textit{probe} of C to ‘change/re-value/overwrite’ the value of this feature; from [nom] to [acc].

Bejar & Massam (1999), Pesetsky & Torrego (2001), Carstens (2003), and Fuß (2008) have argued that features do not delete immediately after being valued but remain available for further Agreement with other heads in the phase and that all operations including feature deletion/valuation on a DP can only be effected by a phase head, provided that PIC is respected. Adopting this proposal to account for the Arabic data, the subject of the embedded clause should then be able to enter into an \textit{AGREE} relation with the \textit{probe} of C, because the deletion of features will not yet have taken place: this will be done only after C is merged and has performed its operations. Note also that the subject is already in [Spec, TP], where no potential Case valuer structurally intervenes between C and this embedded subject.
However, C will still have to overwrite the Case feature of the subject DP, which is already valued as [nom]. I shall argue that this should be allowed because this is the only way to save the structure. As a last resort operation, this ‘re-writing’ operation on the DP subject’s Case value allows C to delete its Case feature; the Subject DP anyway ends up with a valued Case feature at PF, giving us a win-win situation. The system demands that the subject should have a Case but not necessarily Nominative Case.

The advantages of this ‘overwriting’ proposal are many. First, under this proposal, T is still a head that is responsible for valuing the Case of the Subject, something we independently need to account for three other facts: one, the Case of the subject of an embedded clause introduced by the complementizer ʔan is [nom], and we do not want to say that T is only optionally a Case valuer, the choice depending on the choice of C. Two, the subject of root clauses which are not introduced by a C element is [nom]. Three, we get both [acc] and [nom] (on different elements) in the complement of ʔanna when that complement is a verbless copular (‘nominal’) clause; (see example (2a), section 2 above, and the discussion in Section 4.2 below on the other C elements). Second, this proposal allows both C and T to act independently, something that is supported by the empirical facts of Arabic and the languages discussed in the literature (cf. Haegeman & Koppen, 2009; Fuß, 2008).

Therefore, to account for the syntactic facts relating to the derivation and feature valuation of an embedded clause like the one in (13a) below, I shall adopt the syntactic configuration and derivation in (13b):

(13) a. ʔaṣtaqād-u ʔanna r-rajul-a yuHibu al-madi:H-a
   think-I that the-man-ACC loves the-praise-ACC
   ‘I think that the man loves praise.’

Fuß (2008) argues that in varieties that exhibit obligatory First Conjoint Agreement (FCA) on C, the feature content of Agr-on-T copied to C is overwritten with the relevant phi- feature values of the first conjunct under adjacency, presumably due to a language-specific PF feature copying rule along the lines proposed by Ackema & Neeleman (2005). Plunkett (1993) also proposes that the Case assigned by ʔanna ‘supersedes’ the default Nominative Case assigned earlier by the functional head T. So ‘overwriting’ features is not really a novel idea.
As is clear from the tree diagram above, I assume, following standard assumptions, that the subject of the sentence is base-generated in the [Spec, vP] and the Predicate/Object is base-generated in the Complement position of V, and that C takes TP as a complement. I also adopt the AGREE relation (a la Chomsky 2000, 2001, and subsequent work) as the mechanism under which the feature valuation takes place.

3.2.2 The second Arabic complementizer

We saw in Section 2 above that Arabic has another complementizer that introduces subjunctive clausal complements of verbs with the meaning ‘will’, ‘wish’, and ‘hope’. However, the embedded subject can only appear after the verb of the embedded clause, not adjacent to ḥan. Correlated with this is the fact that in the VSO clauses introduced by ḥan, the subject appears in the Nominative case. Consider the following examples:

(14) a. tawaqā-ṭu ḥan yaḥ-t-i r-rajul-u ba:kiran expected-I that 3.Sg.M.Imper-come the-man-Nom early ‘I expected that the man (would) come early.’

I shall now suggest that the lexical complementizer that is merged under C is the deciding factor whether the Case feature on C will be activated or not. The Arabic C is always specified for an [acc] Case feature. When ?anna is merged under C, the [acc] Case feature on C is activated; when ?an is merged under C, however, the Case feature on C is not activated. This has to do with the lexical features of these complementizers.

I would also like to argue that the T head of a clause introduced by ?an lacks an EPP feature. The subject of the embedded clause does not need then to move to the [Spec, TP], and, for economy reasons, it stays in [Spec, vP]. Staying in this position, the subject DP is expected to appear in the Nominative Case after its Case has been valued by T as [nom]. Note that ?an will not be able to assign its Case feature to the subject DP even if it wanted to, since there is an intervening Case assigner.

One more argument comes from the fact that a pronominal clitic functioning as the subject of the embedded clause is not allowed on ?an, which is different from what we saw with ?anna. The following example is ungrammatical just because a pronominal clitic is attached to ?an:

(15) *tawaqa-tu ?an-hu ya?t-i ba:kiran

The ungrammaticality of this example is predicted by our proposal; as clitic pronouns can only attach to a (non-nominative) Case bearing head, this example is ungrammatical because the clitic pronoun is attached to ?an which does not have Case to give to this clitic.

4. EXTENDING THE ANALYSIS TO OTHER C ELEMENTS

4.1 ?inna and its sisters

In Arabic, the complementizer ?anna is not the only C element that triggers an Accusative Case on the subject of the embedded clause. A host of other C elements do the same. These elements include ?inna ‘indeed’, ka?anna ‘as/ as if’, la:kinna ‘but’, la’aila ‘wishfully’, la’alla
‘hopefully’, and liʔanna ‘because’. The first five elements, together with the complementizer ʔanna, are grouped in Arabic grammar into a class popularly known as ʔinna wa ʔakhwatuha ‘ʔinna and sisters’. liʔanna ‘because’ is not classified by the Arab grammarians as a member of this class despite the fact that it has exactly the same syntactic behaviour exhibited by the members of this class. This is why I have decided to include it in the discussion in this section.

Sibawayh (1973:279 and 768) points out that ʔinna and sisters are similar to verbs because the subjects occurring to their right get Accusative Case. Ibn Aqil (1979:346) also mentions that Sibawayh believes that ʔinna is the original form and ʔanna is derived from it. Sibawayh and all other Arab grammarians characterize ʔinna and ʔanna as emphatic particles that assign Accusative case to the following NP (Hasan 1986:633).


However, all these elements exhibit the same syntactic behaviour as ʔanna; they require the DP immediately following them to appear in the Accusative Case. Consider the following examples:

(16) a. ʔinna  r-rajul-a yaqraʔu dawaman
   verily the-man-Acc reads always
   ‘Indeed, the man always reads.’

   b. ..... laːkinna  r-rajul-a ya-quːl-u S-Sidq-a
           but the-man-Acc Prog- tell-3.Sg.M the-truth-Acc
   ‘But the man is telling the truth.’

Arab grammarians classify these particles as Harf ‘particle’ (which is the third word class category, according to Arab grammarians, beside Noun and Verb), but they still treat them as verb-like elements on a semantic and formal basis. For them, ʔinna and ʔanna mean Haqqaqtu ‘be sure’, kaʔanna means shabbahtu ‘looks like,’, laːkinna means ʔistadraktu ‘exclude’, laːta  means tamanaitu ‘wish’, laːzalla meaning rajawtu ‘I hoped’. Formally, like verbs, they end in the vowel /a/ like most verbs in their past form, they can host a pronominal clitic, and they assign Case to nouns.
The reader must have also noticed the morphological similarity between most of these elements; ʔanna, ʔinna, kaʔanna, la:kinna, liʔanna. All these five elements share the morpheme ʔanna (with -a- realized in two cases as -i-). In morphological terms, let’s say these are allomorphs that realize the morpheme ʔN {Comp}. These allomorphs have the following complementary distribution: ʔanna introduces an embedded clause, ʔinna introduces a main/independent clause, kaʔanna introduces a comparative clause, la:kinna introduces an adversative clause, and liʔanna introduces a reason clause.

I shall assume that these elements, popularly known as ‘ʔinna and sisters’, are generated under the CP projection. Since these elements are mutually exclusive it means that there is only one position to host them; the head C in a CP projection.

The same analysis presented above for ʔanna in Arabic can straightforwardly and easily be applied to them without any modifications.

The syntactic derivation and feature valuation just outlined work perfectly well for SV clauses/sentences with a lexical verb and introduced by ʔinna or one of its sisters. However, verbless copular sentences (also known as nominal sentences) present a little twist to the proposed analysis; although the subject DP in these sentences appears in the Accusative Case, just like the subject DP of an SV clause/sentence, the Predicate DP appears in the Nominative Case. This issue is taken up in the next section.
4.2 Verbless Copular sentences introduced by ‘?inna and sisters’

Copular sentences are actually the centre point of any discussion on ‘?inna and sisters.’ Consider the following examples:

(17) a. s-sama:?-u 
    sa:fiyat-u-n 
    the-sky-Nom clear-Nom-Indef 
    ‘The sky (is) clear.’

    b. ?inna 
    s-sama:?-a 
    verily the-sky-Acc 
    clear-Nom-Indef 
    ‘Indeed, the sky (is) clear.’

In the verbless copular sentence (17a), both the subject and the predicate are in the Nominative. However, when ?inna is used to introduce this sentence (17b), the subject carries the Accusative Case while the Predicate retains its Nominative Case.

Al-Sameai (2010) argues that since there is no verb in the numeration of verbless copular sentences in Arabic, vP (or VP) is not projected in the structure. T, however, is projected and values the DPs in its c-command domain as [nom]. We show the proposed structure below:

(18)
I shall assume this structure, in which two DPs are base-generated within a PredP which houses the subject in its specifier position and the predicate in the complement position of Pred. One could assume multiple valuing of the Case of these two DPs by the probe of T along the lines suggested by Bejar & Massam (1999) as already mentioned earlier in this paper.¹⁰

Syntactic tests like the position of an adverb, as in (19) below, show that the subject ultimately moves from [Spec, PredP] to [Spec, TP]:

(19) s-sama:ʔ-u daaʔ-iman sa:fiyat-u-n
      the-sky-Nom always clear-Nom-Indef

‘The sky (is) always clear.’

Now, as in the Case of SV clauses, the subject in [Spec, TP] becomes available for C as a matching goal, as T no longer intervenes between C and the subject DP. However, the Subject DP has already got its Case feature valued as [nom] under AGREE with the probe of T. But C still needs to delete its Case feature so that it does not constitute an uninterpretable feature that survives into PF. The probe of C, therefore, overwrites/revalues the value of the Case feature on the subject DP as [acc]; this is indicated on the diagram below with a strikethrough, thus, [Case: nom acc]. The predicate remains within PredP in the complement position of T and that is why it appears in the Nominative, the Case value it received from the probe of T under AGREE. Moreover, even under a multiple valuation approach, T intervenes between the probe of C and the ‘predicate DP’, preventing the former from valuing the Case feature of the latter as [acc]. The syntactic derivation and feature valuation of a sentence like the one in (17b), repeated below as (20a), is sketched below:

¹⁰ The structure in (18) differs from Bowers’ (1993) proposal for small clauses, in that PredP does not c-select in this case a VP because there is simply no verbal element in the numeration. It rather gets c-selected by T and it is this selection of PredP by T that anchors this nominal phrase in Time and gives it the present tense interpretation that native speakers of Arabic get. Specifying the categorial status of the projection housing the two nouns in the structure as PredP also helps in specifying the exact relation between them and explains why verbless copular structures differ from GEN-NOM structures like John(‘s) doctor or coordinated structures like John (and) a doctor. The presence of T and PredP in the structure enables the conceptual-intentional interface to interpret NOM-NOM structures as copular clauses, rather than as genitive or coordinated structures.
a.  ?inna  s-sama:?

    verily

    the-sky-Acc clear-Nom-Indef

    ‘Indeed, the sky (is) clear.

This recasting of the Case facts of these structures makes sense unlike the accounts of traditional grammarians who say that when ‘?inna and sisters’ are used with nominal sentences, these ‘particles’ assign Accusative to the Subject and Nominative to the Predicate. The problem with this account, as the reader can easily see, is how these particles can simultaneously assign two different Cases to the DPs in their c-command domain. The present analysis, on the other hand, neatly explains the Case facts in these sentences.

Note that the Case marking in the nominal complements of ‘?inna and sisters’ constitutes the strongest argument for our ‘overwriting’ proposal. For suppose we had said, following Tanaka (2005), that T does not have a Case feature at all but inherits it from C. One could then try to account for Arabic by saying that ?amaa and ?an differ in their inherent Case feature: ?amaa has [acc] and ?an has [nom]; T simply passes on these features to the subject DP. But there is no way in this account to generate the two different Cases on the DPs in the nominal complements.

b.  C as a locus of Case/Agreement in Modern Standard Arabic
5. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have shown that Complementizer Agreement (CA) is not attested in Arabic. I have also shown that C is responsible for the Accusative Case that appears on the subject of an SVO (embedded) clause introduced by ʔanna or one of its sisters. It was also argued that in the case of the Complementizer ʔan, the Case feature on C is not activated and hence C does not have to delete this feature by valuing it against the Case of the embedded subject. I argued that the lexical and syntactic features of a lexical item determine whether certain features of the functional head under which it is merged are activated or not. The analysis offered for ʔanna was successfully extended to ‘ʔinna and sisters’, the other members of the class to which ʔanna belongs. It was clearly shown that the analysis presented in this paper neatly explains the Case facts in the sentences introduced by these elements.

REFERENCES


Aoun, J. 1981. The formal nature of anaphoric relations. Doctoral dissertation, MIT.


Haegeman, L. & van Koppen, M. 2009. The non-existence of a phi-feature dependency between C° and T°. can be retrieved at: www.web.mit.edu/nels40/program/abstracts/NELS40Haegeman_vanKoppen.pdf


Abed Al-Sameai
Assistant Professor of English Language and Linguistics
Department of English
Faculty of Arts, Taiz University, Yemen
abednaji@yahoo.com