Agreement in Qassimi Spoken Arabic

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Abstract
This paper discusses the agreement system in one of the most distinguished Saudi dialects. Qassimi Spoken Arabic is a dialect, which is spoken by around 931,085 people living mainly in Al-Qassim Province, which is located in the center of Saudi Arabia. Prochazka (1988) claims that QSA has many noticeable and distinguishable features make the dialect different from other Najdi dialects. QSA is different from MSA in its phonological, morphological, syntactic levels. QSA does not accept all word orders, which are present in either MSA or other Saudi dialects. They prefer VS order. However, they use the SV order when they have SVO structure due to the absence of case marking which might lead to ambiguity determining the subject and/or the object. QSA shows that the subject controls the agreement system in both the verbal clauses and in the equational clauses. QSA also shows to produce a different form of the passive verb like ʔkissarat: ‘is broken’, which is a form that is not seen to be used except in QSA. It has two different subject agreement markers suffixes: /-tin/ (second person non-singular feminine) and /-n/ (third person non-singular feminine) as in katab-tin: ‘You (2PF) wrote’ and katab-n: ‘They (3PF) wrote’. Native speakers of QSA use the direct object /-an/ or /-atan/ as a masculine or feminine pronoun respectively to replace masculine or feminine noun. Interestingly, QSA uses /-an/ with the copula verb ka:n: “be” as an agreement to the feminine subject. Thus, QSA shows to have some differences in the agreement system in the sentence level.

KEY WORDS: ARABIC, SAUDI DIALECTS, QASSIMI SPOKEN ARABIC, MORPHOLOGY, SYNTAX, AGREEMENT SYSTEM
المستخلص

تناقش هذه الورقة العلمية النظام الصرفي لواحة من أميز اللهجات السعودية، هي اللغة القضيمة التي يمكن متحدثها البالغ عددهم ما يقرب 931,085 متحدثًا، منطقة القسم مركز الجزيرة العربية. يدعى بورخاسا (1988) بأن اللغة تتميز بخصائص تجعلها مختلفة عن بقية اللهجات النجدية؛ تتغلف اللغة عن اللغة العربية القصصية في نواحي شتى سواء أكانت صوتية أم صرفية أم نحوية، وإحدى أبرز تلك الخصائص التي تركز عليها هذه الورقة مسألة ترتيب المفردات نحوي في الجملة، إذ أن اللغة لا تسمح إلا بعد يسير حيث يبدأ الترتيب بالفعل، فهي لا تستخدم الاسم (الفاعل) في المقدمة إلا عندما يقصد بالتركيب التفريق بين الفاعل والمفعول به كون اللهجة لا تستخدم أي نوع من أنواع علامات الإعراب، ويتضح أيضًا من خلال الدراسة أن اللهجة تسمح للاسم الأول فقط -الفاعل- أن يحدد نوع الملحقات الصرفية التي تظهر على الفعل في الجملة الفعلية أو على الخبر في الجمل الاسمية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تستخدم اللغة فعل مختلف عند وجود المبني للمجهول (أكرمت) ولifiant مثل هذا الفعل في لهجات سعودية أخرى، وتحافظ اللغة على استخدام الفعل في شكل الصحيح عند التحدث عن الفعل المؤنث مثل: كتبّه، أو كتب، أو غير ملاحظ في اللهجات السعودية الأخرى، ومن أبرز الاختلافات أيضًا أن اللهجة تستبدل الفعل على سبيل المثال: زارني بزران، بينما يكون الفاعل مذكرًا، أو زارته عوضًا عن زارتها عندما يكون الفاعل مؤنثًا، فمن الملاحظ أن اللغة القضيمة تستخدم نظامًا صرفيًا مختلفًا على مستوى الجمل سواء الفعلية أو الاسمية ويمكن تتبع ذلك في الأفعال في الجمل الفعلية أو في الخبر ضمن الجمل الاسمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة العربية، اللهجات السعودية، اللغة القضيمة، النظام الصرفي.
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1. Introduction

Arabic is a Semitic language, which is widespread. It belongs to a wider family known as Afro-asiatic. This group is also called Hamito-Semitic (Greenberg, 1952), and divided into six sub-families: Tamazight, Egyptian, Chadic, Cushitic, Semitic and Omotic (Brown & Ogilvie, 2009).

Arabic is related to a number of other languages spoken in the Middle East and Ethiopia. Biblical Hebrew, Akkadian, Aramaic and many other languages. Some of these languages are extinct, such as Akkadian, Canaanite and Phoenician which are only known in written forms. Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic and Amharic are examples of those Semitic languages, which are still spoken. Arabic has more than 250 million speakers (Owens, 2005). It has gone through many different stages, and it has many different varieties.

Arabic shows to contain Classical Arabic (CA) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as two varieties of Arabic that are together called Standard Arabic. They share similar phonological, morphological and syntactic features (Badawi, Carter, & Gully, 2004; Harrama, 1983; Ryding, 2005); however, they differ in their lexical items.

Arabic also has a number of varieties differ significantly from one region to another (Abd-el-Jawad, 1992; Davies & Bentahila, 2012; Feghali, 1997; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). They are used at the western end of the continuum, such as in Morocco and Algeria, Western Africa, and the varieties spoken in Yemen, at the South-Eastern end. This significant difference between the different varieties also applies to the Saudi dialects (Kaye & Rosenhouse, 1997; Versteegh, 1997).
1.1. The Saudi Dialects

Saudi Arabia has five main dialects, which are known as Hijazi in the Western Province, Najdi in the Central Province, Gulf in the Eastern Province and Southern Province and Northern Provinces (see Map 1). Each dialect can be divided into sub-dialects. For example, NA has QSA as a sub-dialect, which contain two main other sub-dialects, namely, Buraydah and Unaisah. It is claimed that Saudi Arabia has only four main dialects by some linguists like Almalki (2012) and Ingham (2006). This division is based on the linguistic categorization of the main features of each dialect as well as the geographic location of its native speakers.

QSA is a colloquial Arabic dialect spoken by approximately 931,085 people living mainly in Al-Qassim Province, which is located in the center of Saudi Arabia. It belongs to the Najdi Arabic (NA) (Ingham, 1982), (see Map 2). Najd is divided into three administrative regions: Ha'il, Al-Qassim, and Riyadh (Alkhazy, 2016). QSA’s geographical location helps the variety to preserve its local characteristics because it has little contact with other dialects to a minimum (Holes, 2004). It is also claimed by Prochazka (1988) that QSA has many noticeable and distinguishable features make the dialect stands out among other Najdi dialects. It differs from MSA in lexicon, style, phonology, morphology, syntax, and sociolinguistic function. This work shows some of these differences with regard to its phonology, morphology, and syntax.

The distribution of the principal regional varieties of colloquial Arabic spoken in Saudi Arabia is shown in Map 1 below.
Map 1: Saudi Main Dialects (Adapted from Alzahrani, 2009)
Map 2. Najdi Arabic. (Adapted from Ingham, 1994).
2. Verbal clauses

Unlike MSA, a verbal clause in QSA may only appear in two different word orders due to the absence of case marking in the dialect.\(^1\) It can appear as either a VSO structure or a SVO one. According to QSA native speakers, they prefer VSO and use it except when the meaning is unclear, as will be discussed below. Thus, the verb and the subject are the two fundamental elements, which must occur, in any verbal clause: the verb by which the action of the sentence is expressed and the subject, which is simply the doer of the action (Agent). Consider the following examples:

\[(1)\]
\begin{align*}
a. \quad & ra:h-at \quad al-bint. \\
& go-3SGF.PFV \quad DEF-girl.SGF \\
& \text{‘The lady went.’} \\
\hline
b. \quad & al-bint. \quad ra:h-at. \\
& DEF-girl-SGF \quad go-3SGF.PFV \\
& \text{‘The girl went.’} \\
\end{align*}

Although the subject is core in the verbal sentence, a sentence may contain only the verb in which the subject is identified by a personal agreement attached to it as shown in the following example:

\[(2)\]
\begin{align*}
a. \quad & ra:h-at. \\
& go-3SGF.PFV \\
& \text{‘She went.’} \\
\hline
b. \quad & ra:h-u:. \\
& go-3PLM.PFV \\
& \text{‘They went.’} \\
\end{align*}

The above examples show that the verb in both examples (1) and (2) is intransitive \(ra:h\): "go". Clauses in (1) show the pre-verbal subject and the post-verbal subject in which both clauses exhibit no difference in regard to the meaning.

Verbal clauses may have three elements represented in both the VSO and the SVO constructions. Although the case marking is absent in QSA, the first noun or noun phrase in the VSO construction is determined as the subject and the second is the object. Verbal clauses can have different structures containing different complements. For example, the verb can be followed by either an NP (3) or a complement clause (3) where the verb must be transitive.

\(^1\) MSA show different word orders because it determines the subject from the object by means of case marking. Any noun phrase, which carries the nominative case marking, is the subject and the one, which has an accusative case marking, is the object regardless of its position in the sentence.
QSA shows examples where the verbal clauses come containing three elements in their structures in which the verb is intransitive verb. They may have adjuncts either a prepositional phrase (4) or an adverbial modifier (4).

In the case where verbal clauses contain ditransitive verbs, they show different structures depending on the types of the two NP (the direct object and the indirect object). They (NPs) may appear as nouns (definite or indefinite) or pronouns.

Consider the following clauses:
There are only two possible grammatical word orders in QSA if the verb takes two nouns as objects. In (5), the clauses show various structures with regard to the subject, the direct object (DO) and the indirect object (IO): VS (DO)(IO), VS (IO)(DO), V(IO) S (DO) and V (IO) (DO) S, V (DO) (IO) S respectively. According to the QSA speakers, statements (5) are not grammatical. They prefer (5) although they accept the other structures (5).

On the other hand, if one of the object NPs that follow the verb is a pronoun, it results in the same possibilities in (5) as shown in (6). However, clause (6) is the most frequent and acceptable rather than all the other clauses.

(6) a. ʕata Ali as-sajjarah lu-hum.
give.3SGM.PFV Ali DEF-car.SGF to-3PLM.OBJ
‘Ali gave the car to them.’
give.3SGM.PFV Ali to-3PLM.OBJ DEF-car.SGF
‘Ali gave the car to them.’
give.3SGM.PFV to-3PLM.OBJ Ali DEF-car.SGF
‘Ali gave the car to them.’
d. *ʕata lu-hum as-sajjarah Ali.
give.3SGM.PFV to-3PLM.OBJ DEF-car.SGF Ali
‘Ali gave the car to them.’
e. *ʕata as-sajjarah lu-hum Ali.
give.3SGM.PFV DEF-car.SGF to-3PLM.OBJ Ali
‘Ali gave the car to them.’

When the two object NPs are pronouns, the situation is also different. Consider the following examples:

(7) a. ʕata-h (as-sajjarah) Ali lu-hum.
give.3SGM.PFV-3SGF.OBJF Ali to-3PLM.OBJ
‘Ali gave it (car)to them.’
give.3SGM.PFV-3SGF.OBJM Ali to-3PLM.OBJ
‘Ali gave it (key)to them.’
c. *ʕata-h (as-sajjarah) lu-hum Ali.
give.3SGM.PFV-3SGF.OBJF to-3PLM.OBJ Ali
‘Ali gave it to them.’
give.3SGM.PFV-3SGF.OBJM to-3PLM.OBJ Ali
‘Ali gave it to them.’
e. ʕata-h (as-sajjarah) lu-hum.
give.3SGM.PFV-3SGF.OBJF to-3PLM.OBJ
In all the possibilities mentioned above in (7), the direct object is attached to the verb as a morpheme –ah/auh in ṣata-ah/ahu: ‘gave it’ followed by either the subject or the indirect object. In example (7), it shows other possible structures existed in other Saudi dialects. Yet, they are not acceptable in QSA. In addition, the above examples provide an evidence that QSA is a pro-drop language.

2.1. Passive construction

Passive construction shows the passive subject of the verb (the patient) with only the verb. It precedes or follows the verb but the most common structure VS (the patient). QSA has two different ways to express the passive voice: by using the inflectional verbs or by using the derivational verbs. The most common structure is the VS where S stands for the object of the transitive verb. Consider the following examples:

(8) a. kassar Ali ad-dirifah.
   break.3SGM.PVF Ali DEF-window.SGF
   ‘Ali broke the window.’

   b. ṣin-kassar-at ad-dirifah.
      PASS-break-3SGF DEF-window.SGF
      ‘The window was broken.’

   c. *ṭa-kassar-at ad-dirifah.
      PASS-break-3SGF DEF-window.SGF
      ‘The window was broken.’

   d. *ṭa-kassar-at ad-dirifah. ba-Ali
      PASS-break-3SGF DEF-window.SGF by-Ali
      ‘The window was broken by Ali.’

(9) a. Ali fataḥ ad-dirifah.
    Ali open.3SGF.PVF DEF-window.SGF
    ‘Ali opened the window.’

   b. ṣin-fataḥ-at ad-dirifah.
      PASS-open-3SGF DEF-window.SGF
      ‘The window was opened.’

   c. *ṭin-fataḥ-at ad-dirifah. ba-Ali
      PASS-open-3SGF DEF-window.SGF by-Ali
      ‘The window was opened by Ali.’

   d. *ṭa-fataḥ-at ad-dirifah.
      PASS-open-3SGF DEF-window.SGF
The above examples show three different forms of verbs expressing passive. So, in QSA, the most common passive form is represented by using either as in Form Ⅶ as in (8.b) and (9) or Form Ⅷ as in (10) and (11.b). The last sentence exhibits a ditransitive verb mala: ‘filled’ where it has a direct object and an indirect object. Unlike other Saudi dialects, the verb in (10) and (11.b) does not show the third singular feminine suffix as an agreement marker to the direct object adda:r and albeit: ‘the house’ which becomes the subject of the passive verb ʔimtala: ‘be filled’.

It is worth noting that all the given examples in (8), (9), (10) and (11.c) are ungrammatical because they contain “By-phrase” at the end of the clauses. This cannot be seen in Arabic.

Interestingly, QSA shows a different form to express passive voice which is not noticed in other Saudi dialects such as FSA, ZSA and HA. Consider the following examples:

(12) a. kassar Ali ad-dirifah.


\( \ddot{\text{kissar}}-\text{at} \): ‘is broken’ is a form that is not seen to be used except in NA and or QSA. In addition, QSA does not show to have Form \( V \) \( \ddot{\text{a}}\text{-kissar}-\text{at} \): ‘is broken’ which is present in other Saudi dialects.

2.2. Agreement in verbal clauses

The subject agreement markers in QSA appear as bound morphemes to express person, number and gender. They are always attached to the verb stem in both VSO and SVO orders in verbal clauses. Subject agreement markers are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Subject agreement markers in QSA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M/F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>-t</td>
<td>-t</td>
<td>-ti:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-singular ( ^4 )</td>
<td>-na:</td>
<td>-tum</td>
<td>-tin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Firstly, it is necessary to note what controls the agreement markers on the verb. Consider the following examples:

(1) a. \( \ddot{\text{za}}:\text{r-an} \)
\( \text{visit.3SGM.PFV-1SGM/F.OBJ} \)
‘The man visited me.’

(1) b. \( \ddot{\text{za}}:\text{r-at-an} \)
\( \text{visit-3SGF.PFV-1SGM/F.OBJ} \)
‘The woman visited me.’

\( ^3 \) QSA also has a dual marker \( l-e:\text{n}l \), however it is only used when the noun is preceded by the number (ie, two). When a sentence has a dual subject, instead of the dual marker, the appropriate non-singular agreement marker is used.

\( ^4 \) I am using the term “Non-singular” because there is no dual in QSA, at least, in the verbal system.
Like MSA and all other Saudi dialects, example (13), above, shows that the subject controls the agreement marker which is attached to za:r: ‘visit’. When the masculine subject arra3a:l: ‘the man’ in (13) was replaced by the feminine one almarrah: ‘the woman’, the /-atan/ marker appears on the verb to express gender.

However, if the direct object /-an/ or /-atan/ as a masculine or feminine pronoun, was replaced by a feminine one such as almadras-ah: ‘the school’ as in (13) or by a masculine one like almata:r: ‘the airport’ as in (13), it does not influence the agreement marker on the verb. Therefore, the subject is the only agreement controller in QSA.

Moreover, the preverbal subject agrees with its verb in person, number and gender. Consider the following examples:

(14) a. al-bazur δ‘arab Ali.
   DEF-boy.SGM hit.3SGM.PFV Ali
   ‘The boy hit Ali.’

b. al-bint δ‘arab-at Ali.
   DEF-girl.SGF hit.3SGF.PFV Ali
   ‘The girl hit Ali.’

   DEF-boy.PLM hit-3PLM.PFV Ali
   ‘The boys hit Ali.’

d. al-bana:t δ‘arab-n Ali.
   DEF-boy.PLF hit-3PLF.PFV Ali
   ‘The girls hit Ali.’
It is seen, in the above examples, that the masculine subject albazu/albizr-a:n r: ‘the boy/ the boys’ and the feminine subject al-bint/al-bana:t: ‘the girl/the girls’ are followed by four different inflectional verbs in which they are controlled by their subjects’ person, number and gender. This applies to subject pronouns as well, as noticed in (15).

In addition, when the subject is dual either masculine or feminine, they do not have any dual agreement marking on the verb in QSA. Therefore, they take the plural marker (the non-singular marker) instead as shown in the following examples:

   DEF-boy-DLM hit-3PLM.PFV Ali
   ‘The two boys hit Ali.’

   b. al-bint-e:n  δ’arab-n Ali.
   DEF-girl-DLF hit-3PLF.PFV Ali
   ‘The two girls hit Ali.’

Like other Saudi dialects, QSA also show full agreement in person, gender and number if the verb precedes the subject. Therefore, number agreement is noticed in QSA regardless of the position of the subject.

(17) a. sawat  al-bazur.
   shout.3SGM.PFV DEF-boy.SGM
   ‘The boy shouted.’

   b. al-bazur  sawat
   DEF-boy.SGM shout.3SGM.PFV
   ‘The boy shouted.’

   c. sawat-at  al-bint.

5 QSA does not have dual pronouns.

6 The absence of the dual marker in agreement allows Table 1 to contain either singular or non-singular subject markers.
2.2.1. Agreement with a multiple subject

Some verbal clauses contain a co-joined subject following the verb. When these compound nouns (the subject) are different in gender, QSA shows a different case from that one noted in some Saudi dialects. That is, Saudi dialects appear to have the verb containing full agreement with the first of the conjuncts in the subject. QSA, on the other hand, shows to have separate agreement attaching to the verb before each noun of the compound nouns. So, they repeat the same verb with different agreement matching the followed noun, as shown in (19) below:

(18) a. šawat-u: al-bizr-a:n.
shout-3PLM.PFV DEF-boy.PLM
‘The boys shouted.’
b. al-bizr-a:n šawat-u:.
DEF-boy.PLM shout-3PLM.PFV
‘The boys shouted.’
c. šawat-an al-bana:t.
shout-3PLF.PFV DEF-girl.PLM
‘The girls shouted.’
d. al-bana:t šawat-an.
DEF-girl.PLM shout-3PLF.PFV
‘The girls shouted.’

(19) a. ṣajaḥ Ali wa ṣajaḥ-at Sarah.
cry.3SGM.PFV Ali and cry-3SGF.PFV Sarah
‘Ali and Sarah cried.’
b. ṣajaḥ-at Sarah wa ṣajaḥ Ali.
cry-3SGF.PFV Sarah and cry.3SGM.PFV Ali
‘Sarah and Ali cried.’
c. ṣajaḥ-u: al-wirf-a:n wa al-bana:t
cry-3PLM.PFV DEF-boy.PLM and DEF-girl.PLF
‘The boys and the girls dried.’
d. ṣajaḥ-u: al-bana:t wa al-wirf-a:n
cry-3PLM.PFV DEF-girl.PLF and DEF-boy.PLM
‘The girls and the boys cried.’

The above examples illustrate that the first noun or NP does not control the agreement system in this structure where the verb is initial (VS). However, if the verb comes
after the subject, the co-joined subject does not have any impact on the following verb. The third masculine plural agreement marker /-u:/ is used, as shown in the following examples:

(20) a. Ali wa Sarah ṣajah-u:.
Ali and Sarah cry-3PLM.PFV
‘Ali and Sarah cried.’
b. Sarah wa Ali ṣajah-u:.
Sarah and Ali cry-3PLM.PFV
‘Sarah and Ali cried.’
c. al-ḥizr-a:n wa al-banaːt ṣajah-u:.
def-boy-PLM and def-girl PLF cry-3PLM.PFV
‘The boys and the girls dried.’
d. al-banaːt wa al-ḥizr-aːn ṣajah-u:.
def-girl PLF and def-boy-PLM cry-3PLM.PFV
‘The girls and the boys cried.’

2.2.2. Agreement with the subject of the passive

As stated above, the subject controls the agreement marker, which attaches to the verb both in the pre-verbal subject band post-verbal subject structures. However, the agreement marker, which attaches to the verb, agrees fully with the direct object (the patient) which becomes the subject of the verb as shown below:

(21) a. Sarah ṣak-at ad-dukaːn.
sarah close.3SGF.PFV def-shop.SGM
‘Sarah closed the shop.’
b. ṭin-ṣak ad-dukaːn.
pass-close-3SGM def-shop.SGM
‘The shop was closed.’
c. ṭin-ṣak-at al-bagalah
pass-close-3SGM def-shop.SGF
‘The shop was closed.’

The above example shows that the verb ṣakat: ‘closed’ agrees in person, gender and number with the subject in the active verbal sentence Sarah. However, the passive form of the verb ṭinṣak: ‘be closed’ shows full agreement with adduka:n: ‘the shop’ as the subject of the passive sentence. Also, the passive form of the verb ṭinṣakat: ‘be closed’ shows full agreement with albagalah: ‘the shop’ Ditransitive verbs (in the passive form) show agreement to the direct object when it becomes the subject of the passive clause. Consider the following example:

(22) a. mala Ali al-ṭurfah gaf: fill.3SGM.PFV ali def-room.SGF luggage.PLM
The subject of the passive is usually post-verbal in QSA, as is the case in the active structure; however, that does not mean it cannot appear pre-verbal. So, clause (23.a and 23.C) are the common structures used by QSA native speakers. The position of the subject does not have any impact on the agreement system. Therefore, verb in the passive form shows full agreement with its subject regardless of its position, as shown below:

\[(23) \]

\[a. \] اَل-قَصِّ \ al-ṣak\[\]PASS-close-3SGM DEF-shop.SGM
\[b. \] بَيْن-المَلْتَ \ bi-mtal-at\[\]PASS-fill in.3SGM.SBJ DEF-room.SGF luggage.PLM

\[b. \] بَيْن-المَلْتَ \ bi-mtal-at \ al-surfah \ gaf.\[\]PASS-fill in.3SGM.SBJ DEF-room.SGF luggage.PLM

\[c. \] بَيْن-المَلْتَ \ bi-mtal-at \ al-surfah \ gaf.\[\]PASS-fill in.3SGM.SBJ DEF-room.SGF luggage.PLM

\[d. \] بَيْن-المَلْتَ \ bi-mtal-at \ al-surfah \ gaf.\[\]PASS-fill in.3SGM.SBJ DEF-room.SGF luggage.PLM

3. Equational clauses

This section discusses equational clauses\(^7\) in which a verb is absent in their structure.

Like other Saudi dialects, QSA does not use the copula in the imperfective aspect form. It is recognized by the indicative form, as shown below:

\[(24) \]

\[a. \] اِعْلَامٌ \ mista:nis\[\]Ali happy.3SGM

\[b. \] اِعْلَامٌ \ mista:nis-ah\[\]Sarah happy.3SGF

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\(^7\) I am using the term "equational clauses" not nominal clauses to avoid the discussion about the different schools regarding the structure of Arabic clauses. This is out of the scope of this paper.
Moreover, the perfective aspect form of the copula verb *ka:n* “be” is always seen in equational clauses in QSA.

   Ali be.3SGM.PFV happy.3SGM
   ‘Ali (is) happy.’
b. Sarah *ka:n-at mista:nis-ah.*
   Sarah be-3SGF.PFV happy-3SGF
   ‘Sarah (is) happy.’
   DEF-boy-PLM be-3PLM.PFV happy-3PLM
   ‘The boys (are) happy.’
   DEF-girl.PLF be-3PLF.PFV happy-3PLF
   ‘The girls (are) happy.’

The above examples show that equational clauses consist of two main parts which are the subject or the topic (*mubtad*?) by which a sentence is begun and the predicate or comment (*ḥabar*) in which piece of information is given (Ryding, 2005). Both the subject and the predicate appear in various forms and/or word classes, as will be discussed below.

3.1. Agreement in equational clauses

Following Cantarino (1975), it is seen that the position of the subject does not have any impact on the agreement system noted between the subject and its predicate in Saudi dialects, however; QSA shows to have only subject- predicate structure (26.a). The subject is also the element that controls the agreement in equational clauses.
Being said that, both verbal clauses and equational clauses have the same system of agreement in QSA.⁸

3.1.1. Gender and number agreement

Subject-predicate structure show to contain gender and number agreement. That is, the gender and the number of the subjects controls the gender and the number of the predicate, as shown in the following examples:

\[(26)\]
\[a. \quad al-bazur \quad tsibi: \text{r} \]
\[\text{DEF-boy.SGM} \quad \text{big.SGM} \]
\[\text{‘The boy (is) big.’} \]
\[b. \quad \text{tsibi: r-un} \quad al-bazur \]
\[\text{old.SGM-INDF} \quad \text{DEF-boy.SGM} \]
\[\text{‘The boy (is) big.’} \]
\[c. \quad al-bint \quad tsibi: r-ah \]
\[\text{DEF-girl.SGF} \quad \text{big-SGF} \]
\[\text{‘The girl (is) big.’} \]
\[d. \quad \text{tsibi: r-ah} \quad al-bint \]
\[\text{big-SGF} \quad \text{DEF-girl.SGF} \]
\[\text{‘The girl (is) big.’} \]

\[(27)\]
\[a. \quad al-bizr-\text{a:n} \quad \text{ısuga: l} \]
\[\text{DEF-boy.PLM} \quad \text{mature.PLM} \]
\[\text{‘The boys (are) mature.’} \]
\[b. \quad \text{ısuga: l} \quad al-bizr-\text{a:n} \]
\[\text{mature.PLM} \quad \text{DEF-boy.PLM} \]
\[\text{‘The boys (are) mature.’} \]
\[c. \quad al-bana:t \quad \text{ısagil-\text{a:t} } \]
\[\text{DEF-girl.PLF} \quad \text{mature-PLF} \]
\[\text{‘The girls (are) mature.’} \]
\[d. \quad \text{ısagil-\text{a:t} } \quad al-bana:t \]
\[\text{mature-PLF} \quad \text{DEF-girl.PLF} \]
\[\text{‘The girls (are) mature.’} \]

Examples in (26) show that the masculine singular subject \textit{albazur}: ‘the boy’ is unmarked. Thus, it has the unmarked singular masculine predicate adjective \textit{tsibi: r}: ‘big’. On the other hand, the singular feminine marker /-ahl/ is attached to the same predicate adjective \textit{tsibi: rah}: ‘big’ when the feminine singular noun \textit{albint}: ‘the girl’ is used as its subject. Clauses (26.b and 26.d) are not acceptable in QSA.

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⁸ In MSA, the VSO order show a full agreement whereas the SVO order shows only person and gender agreement. There is a big debate on agreement in Arabic. See, for instance, Ryding (2005) for more details about agreement system in MSA.
Moreover, examples in (27) show that masculine plural subject *albizraːn* ‘the boys’ takes the plural masculine predicate adjective *ʕugaːl* ‘mature’. The plural feminine marker /-aːtl is attached to the predicate adjective *ʕagilaːt* ‘mature’ when the subject is the feminine plural noun *al-banaːt* ‘the girls’. Also, clauses (27.b and 27.d) are not acceptable because they appear having Predicate-subject structure.

In addition, it is mentioned above that equational clauses may contain auxiliaries to indicate aspect. The subject agrees fully with these auxiliaries. In example (28.a), the verb ‘to be’ *kaːn* ‘be’ (the default unmarked form) shows the third singular masculine agreement when the subject is the singular masculine demonstrative pronoun *haðaː* ‘this’. However, *kaːnat* ‘be’ has the third singular feminine suffix /-at/ because the subject is the singular feminine demonstrative pronoun *haðiː* ‘this’. Consider the following examples:

\[(28)\]

a.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>haðaː</th>
<th>kaːn</th>
<th>Ali.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEM.this.SGM</td>
<td>be.3SGM.PFV</td>
<td>Ali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘This was Ali.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>haðiː</th>
<th>kaːn-at</th>
<th>Sarah.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEM.this.SGF</td>
<td>be-3SGF.PFV</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘This was Sarah.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ðulla</th>
<th>kaːn-uː</th>
<th>bizr-aːn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEM.this.PLM/F</td>
<td>be-3PLM/F.PFV</td>
<td>young-PLM/F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘These were young.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.1.2. Exceptions

It is obvious from the previous section that equational clauses exhibit gender and number agreement. However, they may have only number agreement as is the case in (29.c-e) having only one form *kubaːr* ‘big’ regardless of the gender of the subjects. Consider the following examples:

\[(29)\]

a.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>al-maktab</th>
<th>zain.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEF-office.SGM</td>
<td>nice.SGF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The office is nice.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>al-madrasah</th>
<th>zain-ah.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEF-school.SGF</td>
<td>nice.SGF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The school is nice.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>al-bizr-aːn</th>
<th>kubaːr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEF-boy-PLM</td>
<td>big.PLM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The boys are big.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>al-banaːt</th>
<th>kubaːr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Clauses in example (29) above show that the singular feminine predicate adjective *zain*: ‘nice’ is used with both the singular masculine subject *almaktab*: ‘the office’ in (29) and the singular feminine subject *al-madrasah*: ‘the school’ in (29). However, the plural masculine predicate adjective *kuba:r*: ‘big’ is used with both the masculine plural subject *albiza:n*: ‘the boys’ in (29) and the feminine plural subject *albana:t*: ‘the girls’ in (29). Thus, it is important to say that QSA lost gender agreement in these examples.

In contrast, QSA may also show gender agreement. In the following example, the plural feminine predicate adjective *zaina:t*: ‘nice’ agrees in gender as well as number with its subject *albana:t*: ‘the girls’ in number (30). However, in (29) above, *kuba:r*: ‘big’ does not show any gender agreement. Examine the following examples:

\[(30)\]
\begin{align*}
a. & \quad \text{al-bana:t} \quad zain-a:t. \\
& \quad \text{DEF-girl.PLF nice.PLF} \\
& \quad ‘The girls are nice.’ \\
b. & \quad *al-bint \quad zain-a:t. \\
& \quad \text{DEF-girl.SGF nice.PLF} \\
& \quad ‘The girl is mature.’ \\
c. & \quad *al-wirf-a:n \quad \text{s}a:gil. \\
& \quad \text{DEF-boy-PLM mature.SGM} \\
& \quad ‘The boys are mature.’ \\
d. & \quad *al-wirf \quad \text{s}a:gil-i:n. \\
& \quad \text{DEF-boy.SGM mature.PLM} \\
& \quad ‘The boy is mature.’
\end{align*}

Example (31) shows that the singular feminine predicate adjective *zainah*: ‘nice’ disagrees in number with its plural masculine subject *almaka:tib*: ‘the offices’ and *al-mada:ris*: ‘the school’.

\[(31)\]
\begin{align*}
a. & \quad \text{al-maka:tib} \quad zain-ah. \\
& \quad \text{DEF-office.PLM nice.SGF} \\
& \quad ‘The offices are nice.’
\end{align*}
b. *al-mada:ris kibi:r-ah.*
    DEF-school.PLF big PLF
    ‘The schools are big.’

4. Conclusion

This paper shows a detailed description about QSA as one of the unique dialects in Saudi Arabia. The focus was on the agreement system, particularly on the sentential level. QSA shows to contain only two word orders; however, VS order is the most prominent word order. Like other Saudi dialects, QSA shows that the subject controls the agreement system in both the verbal clauses and in the equational clauses. The subject agreement markers in QSA appear as bound morphemes to express person, number and gender. It is noted that QSA has two different subject agreement markers suffixes /*-tin*/ and /*-an*/ like *katab-tin*: ‘You (2PF) wrote’ and *katab-n*: ‘They (3PF) wrote’. Direct object pronouns /*-an*/ (3SGM) or /*-atan*/ (3SGF) to replace masculine or feminine noun(s). Interestingly, QSA uses /*-anl*/, which is used as third person singular masculine object pronoun with the copula verb *ka:n*: “be” as an agreement to the third person plural feminine subject. In addition, QSA also shows to produce a different form of the passive verb like *ʔkissarat*: ‘is broken’, which is not found in other dialects such HA and NA, among many other Saudi dialects. QSA does not show to have Form V *ta-kissar-at*: ‘is broken’, which is used in many Arabic dialects. Thus, I suggest to have a deeper investigation studying other structures in QSA such the nominal structures which might show interesting facts about this dialect.
REFERENCES


**TRANSLITERATION SYMBOLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonants</th>
<th>Vowels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b Voiced bilabial stop</td>
<td>i Short high front unrounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m Bilabial nasal</td>
<td>i: Long high front unrounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f Voiceless labiodental fricative</td>
<td>a Short low front unrounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ Voiceless dental fricative</td>
<td>a: Long low front unrounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>δ Voiced dental fricative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>δʰ Pharyngealized voiced dental fricative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Voiceless alveolar stop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʰ Pharyngealized voiceless alveolar stop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d Voiced alveolar stop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n Alveolar nasal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s Voiceless alveolar fricative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z Voiced alveolar fricative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sʰ Pharyngealized voiceless alveolar fricative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḥ Voiceless palato-alveolar fricative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j Voiceless palato-alveolar fricative</td>
<td>j Palatal glide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒ Voiced palato-alveolar fricative</td>
<td>w Velar glide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k Voiceless velar stop</td>
<td>u Short high back rounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g Voiced velar stop</td>
<td>u: Long high back rounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>χ Voiceless uvular fricative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h Voiceless pharyngeal fricative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z’h Voiced pharyngeal fricative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h’ Voiceless glottal fricative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w Velar glide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>