The Ergative Unaccusative Predicate

in Cairene Arabic

By

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Abstract

In the search for universality in the languages of the world, this study has sought to find an ergative predicate in Cairene Arabic that coheres with the notion of ergativity. Having shown in H. Ghaly ((2002ş); i.e. in *Unergative versus Ergative Verbs in Cairene Arabic*) that there are no ergative verbs in CA, the search for ergativity in this same variety of Arabic has been restricted to predicates with nominal heads. This search has eventually lead to the conclusion that it is the predicate with a noun head that most coheres with ergativity, as described in the literature. All the other nominal predicates are found not to be coherent with the notion of ergativity; i.e. predicates with active participial heads cannot be regarded as ergatives because they have agent subjects. Predicates with passive participial heads cannot be regarded as ergatives because ergativity is associated with the active voice. Finally, predicates with adjective heads are not ergatives because they are the middle construction in this variety of Arabic, as shown in H. Ghaly (2002?.); i.e. in "*Middles in Cairene Arabic*.

After having described the ergative predicate in CA, it is shown that such a predicate should actually be called "an ergative unaccusative predicate" due to its Case system which is a marked Case system in comparison with its accusative Case system. The former Case system is associated with nominal predicates; while the latter Case system is associated with verbal predicates. In this respect, the CA ergative predicate is similar to the English ergative predicate in that its associated NP does not have ergative Case marking. Rather, in CA this marked Case system is that of nominative Case which is assigned to all nominal predicates justifying the addition of the term "unaccusativity".

Finally, the CA ergative predicate is similar to the English one in that it does not involve predicate raising. It represents the unmarked predicate structure in CA.

1: Introduction

S. Miyagawa (1989) says that the Ergative Hypothesis groups intransitive verbs into two sets. The first set is the unergative verb, which has an agentive subject. The second set has an ergative verb, which is associated with a nonagentive subject.

Putting it in a slightly different way, G. Lock (1996) says that "verbs which may be used both in Affected-only clauses and in Affected + Causer clauses are called ergative verbs". (100) That is, an ergative verb has an "Affected participant and may or may not have a Causer (instead of an action which has an Actor and may or may not have Goal)". (100) In a similar way, Hagit Borer (1986) describes middle verbs, which are also active verbs, as having superficial subjects that are both subject and object in D-structure. In this respect, middle verbs have subjects just like the subjects of reflexive verbs; i.e. middle and reflexive verbs are syntactically intransitive. With this view of ergativity in verbs, it has been shown that Qur?anic Arabic (see H. Ghaly 2001) has an ergative verb; whereas Cariene Arabic (i.e.CA) (see H.Ghaly 2002b) does not.

In this study, it is to be shown that CA nonetheless does have a predicate structure that may be described as an ergative unaccusative predicate. It is a predicate with a specific type of nominal head. Accordingly, we must first discuss the basic types of predicates with nominal heads in CA showing how and why they differ from the structure that may be regarded as the ergative unaccusative predicate. In section two, there is a review of the basic literature showing that ergativity is related to nominals, rather than just to verbals, and that unaccusativity is different from ergativity. Section three describes nominal predicates with active participial and passive participial heads, showing that they cannot be regarded as ergative predicates. Section four starts by referring to the equational sentence structure that has a predicate with an adjective head showing that it is the middle construction in CA (see H. Ghaly 2002b)); and, in turn, is not semantically equivalent to the ergative predicate. The rest of section four describes the predicate structure in CA that coheres most with the basic descriptions of ergativity in the literature. This predicate structure is found in the equational sentence that has a predicate with a noun head. Section four also shows why such predicates may be described as unaccusatives in addition to ergatives. Section five shows that the ergative predicate does not involve predicate raising, in which case the ergative predicate in CA is like the one found in English. Section six describes the Case checking and theta marking of the nominals associated with the CA ergative predicate.

II: Review of the Literature:

That ergativity is associated with nominals is voiced by S. Miyagawa (1989), who maintains that "the Ergative Hypothesis is manifested in nominals as well as in verbs in Japanese." He says that since this is a hypothesis between thematic relations and structural position, it "should come into play whenever a theta role bearing item is involved regardless of lexical category."(667) Likewise, in the analysis of Japanese S. Miyagawa (1989) maintains that there are "ergative nominals" (664) and that "the theta roles of the nominal clearly transfer to the light verb from the nominal". (665) He goes on to say that "if a nominal can occur in the unincorporated construction, it is unergative or transitive. If it cannot, it is ergative". (665) S. Miyagawa (1989) accounts for the ungrammatical sentences in Japanese by assuming that "if the nominal is ergative, no external thematic role transfers to the light verb" (665); and in turn "the light verb assigns Case, but cannot assign an external thematic role in violation of Burzio's Generalization", (665) which maintains that a verb assigns an external thematic role iff it can assign Case. Thus, nominals with "an ergative argument structure "(664) must incorporate into the light verb so that it does not assign an external thematic role, whereby the sentences are grammatical in Japanese.

Similarly, for Natsuko Tsujimura (1990) it is the presence of an ergative noun that distinguishes between ergative and unergative verbs. Natsuko Tsujimura (1990) believes in the ergativity of nouns; i.e. when the sole argument of the noun is transferred to the argument structure of the light verb, the verb also inherits the noun's inability to assign a subject θ- role; and when the verb is unable to assign a subject θ-role, it is also unable to assign accusative case to its object, in keeping with Burzio's generalization. Following Grimshaw and Mester (1988), Natsuko Tsujimura (1990) believes that the light verb in Japanese has an empty argument structure in its lexical entry and when the light verb cooccurs with a nominal that has argument structure, the θ- role of the nominal can be transferred to the light verb, whereby the verb acquires the noun's θ- marking ability. Thus, in accordance with Grimshaw and Mester (1988) the light verb changes its theta marking properties because it originally has the ability to assign a θ- role to the **Agent**, **Goal**, and **Theme** arguments in addition to its original ability to assign *accusative case*.

A. Garrett (1990) says that "if a language has ergative and absolutive cases, they ordinarily appear only in a subset of its clause types or with a subset of its NPs; the others use nominative and accusative cases." (261) He continues saying that it is now recognized that most split-ergative systems fall into one of several types. The first type is known as the NP split, in which a core argument's semantic or syntactic features determine whether it inflects ergatively or accusatively; e.g., nouns and free pronouns inflect ergatively, but bound pronominal elements like crossreferencing verbal affixes pattern accusatively. He argues that "since ergative morphology is often triggered by perfective aspect in particular, it has been argued that the two have some intrinsic connection or share some inherent feature," (262) adding that "tense /aspect splits arise when a passive verbal or deverbal form is reinterpreted diachronically as an active, transitive verb." (263)
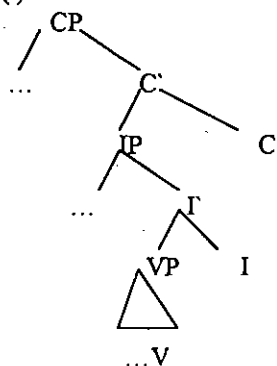
He continues saying that as ergative and intrumental case-marking are identical in many languages, "it seems natural enough to speculate that in such situations ergatives have originated in old instrumentals." (264) This split between ergative and intrumental case-marking may be morphologically inflectional and functionally syntactic; e.g. most NPs inflect accusatively but the morphologized inanimates inflect ergatively. Thus, he maintains that the development of NP split ergative systems is through the reinterpretation of instrumentals in transitive null subject clause" (285) and that "ergative case-marking in tense/aspect splits is at first confined just to the verbal or deverbal form whose reanalysis introduced ergativity." He concludes saying that "just as tense/aspect splits may originate in a single formation and spread throughout the verbal system, likewise NP splits may be expected to have a more limited distribution initially " (286) and that "ergative case-marking in NP splits should parallel that of its immediate antecedent, intrumental case-marking." (286)

That ergativity is basically associated with nominals is also voiced by R.M.W. Dixon (1994). He says that it pertains to the **case marking on constituents of a noun phrase**; i.e. he describes the term ergativity as a grammatical pattern in which the **subject** of an intransitive clause is treated in the same way as the **object** of a transitive clause and differently from transitive subject and that this term was first used to refer to the **case marking on constituents of a noun phrase**. Dixon (1994) describes ergativity as the **case marking** of the transitive subject, contrasting with another Case, which was originally called 'nominative' but nowadays 'absolutive'. This ergative Case marks the intransitive subject and transitive object. Ergativity is thus
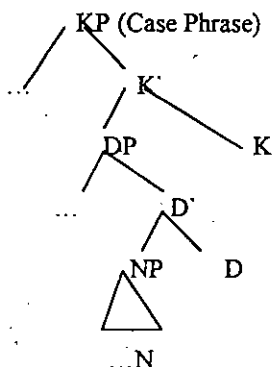
complementary to the familiar grammatical pattern of accusativity, in which nominative Case marks both intransitive and transitive subject, and accusative Case is employed for transitive object. R.M.W. Dixon (1994) goes on to say that "no language has thus far been reported that is fully ergative at both morphological and syntactic levels", (14) even Dyirbal has a split system as "its pronouns inflect in an accusative paradigm." (14); i.e. it has "split ergative morphology but entirely ergative syntax." (15)

Believing in the ergativity of nominals, Bittner and Hale (1996) try to account for the assignment of ergative Case, saying that " in addition to being assigned by I, ergative Case may also be assigned by D, the nominal counterpart of I."(541) According to the theory of Case and agreement presented in Bittner and Hale (1996), structural Case is a functional head; i.e. it is the nominal counterpart of the verbal category C; i.e., functional categories are C (a verbal category) and Case (a nominal category). , as shown in 2.1.

2.1.(i)

```
        CP
       /   \
      ...    C'
           /   \
          IP     C
         /  \
        ...   I'
            /   \
          VP     I
         /__\
          ...V
```

(ii)

```
        KP (Case Phrase)
       /    \
      ..      K'
            /   \
          DP     K
         /  \
        ...   D'
            /   \
          NP     D
         /__\
          ...N
```

They go on to say that "nominals in morphologically marked Cases are KPs, whereas nominals in the nominative Case are K-less" (536) and that. a K-less nominal must be c-commanded and governed by a 'K-equivalent' either C or K – to satisfy the *K Filter*. "This explains why nominative normally lacks any Case morphology, and why it tends to raise to [Spec,IP] " (536), where it is assigned Case. He maintains that the overt Case categories, headed by K, embrace two distinct types corresponding to the traditional categories marked structural Case and inherent case and that they, accordingly, must likewise be licensed. Marked structural Cases are Ks that originate empty and must therefore be antecedent-governed at S-structure, to satisfy the Empty Category Principle (ECP). For each empty K, the antecedent governor ("Case assigner") determines its overt realization as accusative, ergative, or oblique. Inherent Cases, on the other hand, are underlyingly filled Ks that are selected ("assigned") by governing X^o heads; therefore, "inherent Case assignment must take place at D-structure, in order to satisfy the Projection Principle." (537) These heads must be lexical because KP, a fully extended projection, can only be selected by a lexical category. This distribution is shown in 2.2.

2.2.

	Unmarked Case	Marked Structural Case	Inherent Case
K present	no	yes	yes
K at D-Structure	---------	empty	filled
Licensing condition	K-Filter	ECP	Projection Principle

Hoekstra & Mulder (1990) start by differentiating between an ergative verb and a copular verb, saying that a verb that does not assign an external thematic role and does not assign Case to its complement is ergative; whereas a verb that does not assign an external thematic role and takes a clausal complement is called copular. They go on to say that the most neutral verbal element which has these properties is English *be* and its equivalent in other languages. But a verb such as *fly* in *John flew into rage* has its lexical meaning not actualized: it simply shows that the change of state took place quickly. The change in the meaning of *fly* as a copular is "by virtue of suspending the thematic role that the verb assigns as a lexical or full verb." (2); i.e. " the lexical meaning of these verbs is projected into the syntax in a significantly

different way, as a result of which these verbs syntactically function as a particular kind of copular verb." (2)

Then, Hoekstra & Mulder (1990) go on to maintain that "existential constructions in English and other languages can be regarded as specific instances of locative preposing." (2), in which case existential sentences usually have ergative or unaccusative verbs. They also argue that *there* in English is an instance of locative preposing; preposing of the predicate of an SC argument to the main verb, as shown in 2.3.

2.3.

   (i)   *There may not exist a solution (to this problem).*

   (ii)   *There occurred a catastrophe (in that century)*

   (iii)   *There still seem to remain some problems (in this regard)*

In addition to claiming that the NPs in 2.3. are ergatives rather than accusative, Hoekstra & Mulder (1990) say that unergative verbs may be changed to ergatives only when they syntactically co-occur with locative PPs, as shown in 2.4., in which sentences 2.4.. (iii) and (iv) are ungrammatical because there are no locative PPs.

2.4.

   (i)   *Out of the barn ran a horse.*

   (ii)   *Into the room walked a man.*

   (iii) **There walked a man with a dog.*

   (iv) **There jumped a horse right at the queen's arrival.*

They say that the PP in these sentences occupies the subject position and Nominative Case is assigned to the PP in this position, by way of its trace. This Case is shared with the postverbal NP since sharing of Case features between subject and predicate is a general phenomenon. This shows that there are NPs that basically appear with ergative verbs; but may also appear with other verbs (i.e. unergatives) with some constraints that have an ergativizing effect on the verb; i.e. the presence of locatives has an ergativizing effect on the unergative verb.

Discussing impersonal constructions, Hoekstra & Mulder (1990) say that they involve pronominal elements that differ from the dummy adverb *there* in English.

Such an impersonal pronominal is found in the French *il*, which triggers third person singular agreement on the finite verb. In the French impersonal construction, the finite verb shows agreement with a dummy subject *il*, instead of the understood subject., as shown in 2.5. It is found with passive and with ergative verbs, both of which are subject to the definiteness effect, familiar with the English *there* construction

2.5

> (i)   *Il a ete mange des pommes*
> (ii)   *Il est venu quelques hommes*

According to this analysis, the Case of the verb is not absorbed with passivization: we have two arguments the dummy pronominal and the postverbal NP both requiring Case. In answering the question why the postverbal NP escapes the effect of the Case Filter, they say that the postverbal NP does not receive Nominative because the occupant of {SPEC,IP] is not an adverb such as *there*, but rather a genuine pronominal, which may therefore be assumed to need Case itself. This assumption that the Nominative of *il* is not shared by with the postverbal NP means that this NP must receive an internal Case.

Following Pollock (1989) and Gueron (1986), who both argue that the postverbal subjects in the impersonal construction are assigned Case by the verb directly, these NPs are assumed by Hoekstra & Mulder (1990) to be in object position. This, in turn, explains the fact that the occurrence of this impersonal construction is limited to intransitive, in effect ergative verbs. They conclude that this leads to the situation in which "a basically unergative verb occurs in an ergative syntactic construction; i.e. in a VP where it c-commands its sole argument." (Hoekstra & Mulder, 1990: 49) It is in this respect that they claim "that locative preposing and impersonal constructions are essentially similar from a thematic point of view; i.e. they have the same DS:" (53), as shown in 2.6.

2.6.

[$_{IP}$ *np* I [$_{VP}$ V [$_{SC}$ NP PP $_{loc}$]]]

This structure yields an impersonal construction if np_i is filled with a pronominal 'expletive', absorbing Nominative Case, in which case the verb then assigns Accusative Case to its complement. It is a mechanism which is not unavailable in English. The second option is that the PP_{loc} is moved into the np position, where it receives NOM, which is assigned to the SC-subject via Head-Spec agreement with its trace. Contrary to English *there*-constructions, there is no coindexation relation between *il* and the postverbal subject.

Therefore, Hoekstra & Mulder (1990) believe that such impersonal constructions are limited to ergative constructions, which forces a SC-complement analysis on to verbs that appear to be basically unergative. Thus, "unergative verbs may become ergative by virtue of a locative".(60) ;i.e. when unergative verbs are ergativized, they subsume to certain constraints that bring about this ergativizing effect: this is the presence of locative PPs.. In other words, *there* is a one place predicate, which is not an external argument but an internal argument with the structure in 2.7.

2.7.

NP AGR [sc t AGR AP]

In summation, for Hoekstra & Mulder (1990) the basic unergative verbs are in effect ergatives taking SC-complement so that they cannot assign accusative Case. It is accordingly believed that locative preposing can be seen as an alternative strategy to verb raising. The effect of both operations is that the NP which must be licensed with Nominative Case can remain inside VP; i.e. nominative Case is either picked up by the verb or by the preposing of the predicate.

A. Radford's (1997) distinguishes between ergative verbs and unaccusatives in English. He is different in this respect from Perlmutter (1978), whose unaccusatives are the ergative verbs. Explaining Perlmutter's (1978) unaccusative hypothesis (UH) before going to expound his distinction between ergatives and unaccusatives, A. Radford's (1979) says that the unaccusative hypothesis (UH) has led to the division of intransitive verbs into unergatives and unaccusatives on the basis of the kind of subject each verb type takes differentiating between verbs such as *He speaks very quickly* and *The glass broke*. In other words, such a division between intransitive verbs, as proposed by Perlmutter (1978), classified unaccusatives or ergatives as one class, and unergatives as another class even though it has always been maintained that
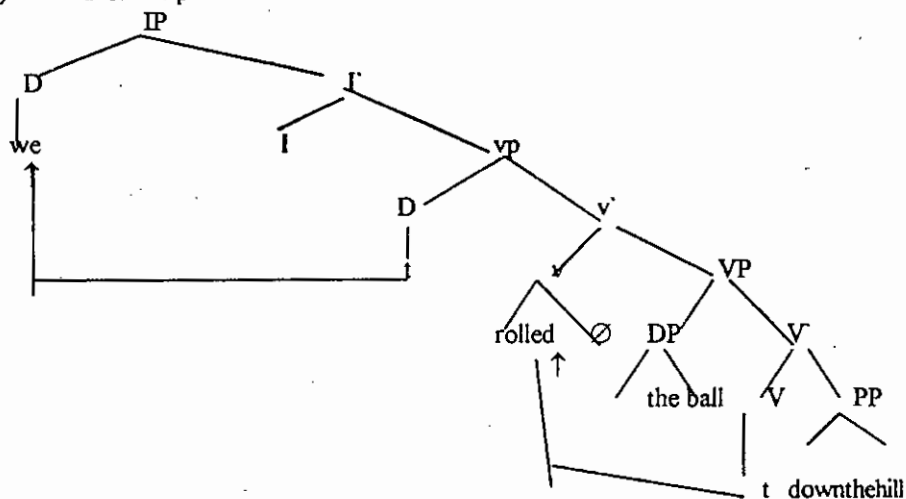
such a division is heavily dependent on the semantics of the lexical item, as shown by the ungrammaticality of *The film watched and *The offer accepted.

In describing the ergative predicate in English, A. Radford's (1979) gives us the tree in 2.8. (i), which is distinct from the causative predicate in 2.8. (ii).

2.8. (i) Ergative Predicate
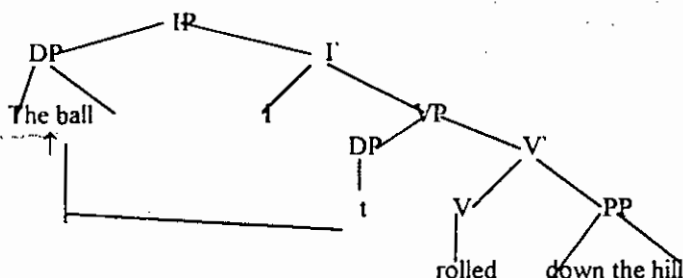
(ii) The Causative predicate

For Radford (1997), the ergative predicate is not only distinguished from the causative predicate semantically but also syntactically; i.e. it is the ergative predicates that does not undergo the VP shell analysis, as shown from the tree in 2.8 (i). The tree in 2.8. (ii), on the other hand, has a causative predicate in the sense that the sentence We rolled the ball down the hill has a similar interpretation to We made the

ball roll down the hill, in which case it is assumed to have "an abstract causative light verb ∅- i.e. a null verb with very much the same causative interpretation as a verb like *make.*" (Radford, 1997: 201)

But in describing the unaccusative predicate, Radford (1997) cites the sentences in 2.9.

2.9.

- (i) *There arose an unfortunate misunderstanding.*
- (ii) *There came a cry of anguish from inside the house.*
- (iii) *There appeared a ghostly face at the window.*
- (iv) **There has apologized the man for his mistake.*
- (v) *A cry of anguish came from inside the house.*

Sentences 2.9. are regarded as having unaccusatives because they can have postverbal subjects; i.e. when there is the expletive **there**, the subject is postverbal. In other words, unaccusatives are associated with sentences that have copular verbs that are linking verbs such as *arose, came,* and *appeared* and that may have postverbal subjects.

The unaccusative predicates for Radford (1997) are not only completely different from the ergative predicates semantically but they are also different syntactically, as shown by 2.10. Unlike the ergative predicates, unaccusative predicates subsume to the VP shell analysis,

2.10.

(i)

(ii)
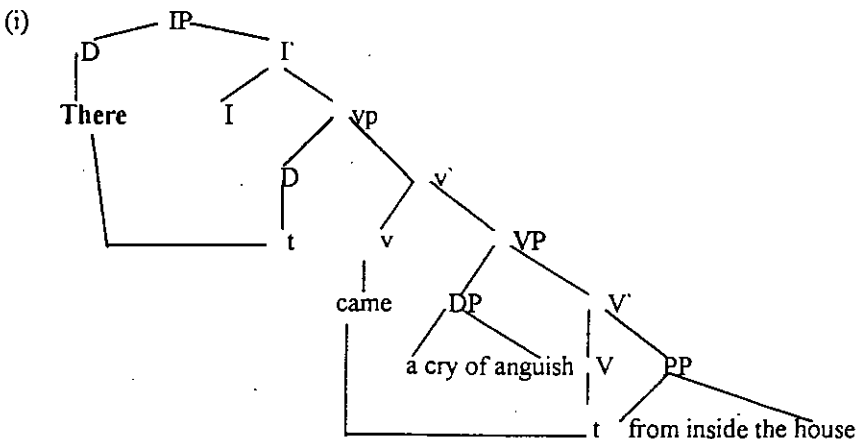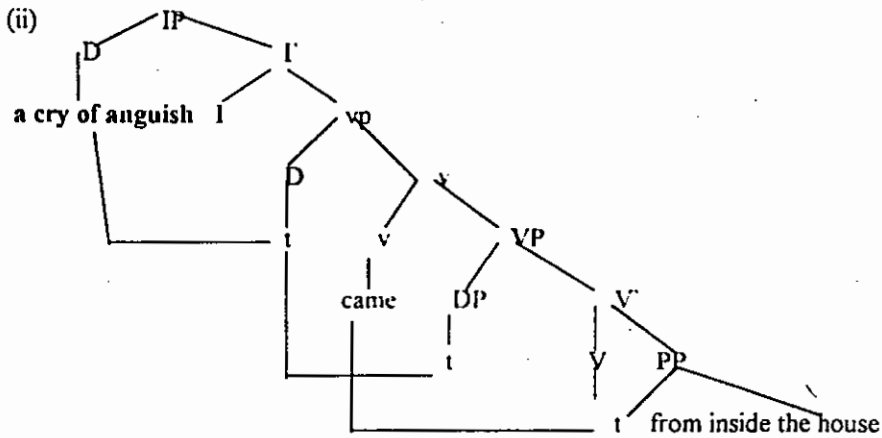
Unlike the tree of 2.8 (i), both the trees of 2.10. involve the VP shell analysis; this, in turn, differentiates between the ergative predicates and the unaccusative predicates not only semantically but also syntactically. The unaccusative predicates are regarded by Radford (1997) as unaccusatives because they may have postverbal subjects, as shown in 2.10. (i). That is, in 2.10. (i) the subject a cry of anguish remains *in situ* so that the expletive there raises to spec- IP. That a cry of anguish is indeed the subject is seen from the fact that it may be raised to be the spec. of IP when there is no expletive there, as shown in 2.10. (ii). Thus, even though a cry of anguish in 2.10. (i). is postverbal, it is assigned nominative Case, rather than accusative Case, because it is a subject.

The unaccusative predicates are also distinguished by Radford (1997) from the unergative verbs (which have AGENT subjects and no overt object.) and transitive verbs in that it is only the unaccusative predicate that has a subject that originates in spec-VP, as shown in 2.10. That is, unaccusative predicates have subjects to a lexical verb that can have a postverbal subject; but unergative verbs, like transitive verbs (see Radford (1997)) have subjects that originate in spec-vp in the sense that they have subjects to agentive light verbs

III: Nominal Predicates with Active and Passive Participial heads in Cairene Arabic

Having had a look at some of the literature and seen that ergativity is related to nominals and that ergativity is different from unaccusativity, let us now have a look at sentences in CA which have nominal predicates. There are basically four different types of nominal predicates in CA: (i) predicates with active participial heads; (ii) predicates with passive active participial heads; (iii) predicates with adjective heads; and (iv) predicates with noun heads. In differentiating between the different types of nominals in CA, Cowan's (1982) description of modern literary Arabic has been made use of.

Making use of the above definitions of ergativity, let us have a look at equational sentences with predicates with active participial heads, as shown by sentences 3.1., and equational sentences with predicates with passive participial heads, as in sentences 3.2. Despite the fact that "Arabic makes no grammatical distinction between noun and adjective, and any adjective may be used as a noun" (Cowan, 1982:39), the active participle is taken to generally have "the pattern /faa9il/ in simple three-radical verbs". (Cowan, 1982: 78) *1*

3.1.
   (i)   /?ilbank faatiḫ / *The bank is open*
           The bank (MS)+pron.infl. (MS)+active participle+ infl. (MS)+*is open*

   (ii)   /?ilmarkib ɣar?aana / *The ship is in a state of sinking*
           The ship (FS)+pron.infl. (FS) + active participle+ infl. (FS) + *is in a state of sinking*

   (iii)/?ittalg saayiḫ/ *The ice is in a state of melting*
           The ice (MS)+pron.infl. (MS) + active participle+ infl. (MS)+ *is in a state of melteing*

   (iv)/?il9arabeyya barda/ *The car is cool*
   The car (FS)+pron.infl. (FS) active participle+ infl. (FS)+ *cool*

   (v)/* ?ilbaab faatiḫ (fag?a) / *The door opened (suddenly)*
           The door (MS)+pron.infl. (MS) + active participle+ infl. (MS)+ *is open*

   (vi)/* ?iššibbaak ?aafil (fag?a) / *The window closed (suddenly)*
   The window (MS)+pron.infl. (MS) + active participle+ infl. (MS)+ *is closed*

(vii)/huwwa ?aafil 9ala nafsu xaali_s_/*He is extremely closed on himself/ He is an introvert*
strong pron(MS)+pron.infl. (MS) + active participle+ infl. (MS)+PP

Sentences 3.1. show that sentences 3 1 (i) to (iv) are grammatical; whereas those of 3.1. (v) and (vi) are regarded by most native speakers as ungrammatical. The grammaticality of sentences 3.1. (i) to (iv) is because their subjects have inherent lexical properties that allow them to function as agents of the actions described by their predicates, contrary to the subjects of sentences 3.1. (v) and (vi). Whether there is an adverb or not, the sentences of 3.1. (v) and (vi) are ungrammatical because neither the *door* nor the *window* can be regarded as *opening* or *closing* themselves. On the other hand, *the bank, the ship, the ice,* and *the car* may be regarded as being agents of the actions described by their active participial predicates due to their inherent lexical properties. That is, *the bank* may be open because the people in it have opened it, *the ship* may have sunk by itself and not by an exterior cause, *the ice* is in a melted state by itself, and *the car* is in a cool state, most probably by cooling itself down and not by an exterior agent. This emphasis on the Agency played by the subject in a sentence with an active participial predicate is clearly brought out by sentence 3.1. (vii), in which this man is described as an introvert with the implication that he has brought this enclosure on himself by his own accord. This is why this Agency on the part of the subject goes away once the active participle is changed to a passive participle, as shown in sentence 3.2. (vii). Therefore, sentences with active participial predicates cannot be regarded as ergative predicates because their subjects exercise Agency and this goes counter to the requirement for ergative predicates.

Let us now have a look at the CA equational sentences with nominal predicates that have passive participial heads. This structure is illustrated by sentences 3.2.

3.2.
    (i)   /?ilbank maftuu_h_ / *The bank is opened.*
        The bank (MS)+pron.infl. (MS)+passive participle+ infl. (MS)+ *is open*

    (ii)   /?ittalg mitsayya_h_/ *The ice is melted.*
        The ice (MS)+pron.infl. (MS) + passive participle+ infl. (MS)+*has been made to melt*

    (iii)   /?ilmarkib mityarra?a /*The ship is sunk.*

The ship (FS)+pron.infl. (FS) + passive, participle+ infl. (FS) +*drenched in water*

(iv)   /?il9arabeyya mitbarrada/ **The car is cooled down.*
The car (FS)+pron.infl. (FS) passive participle+ infl. (FS)+ *has been made cool*

(v)   /?ilbaab maftuu<u>h</u> / **The door is opened.*
   The door (MS)+pron.infl. (MS) + passive participle+ infl. (MS)+ *is open*

(vi)   /?iššibbaak ma?fuul / **The window is closed*
The window (MS)+pron.infl. (MS) + passive participle+ infl. (MS)+ *is closed*

(vii)/*huwwa ma?fuul 9ala nafsu xaali<u>s</u>/ **He is an enclosed person; i. e. .He is extremely closed on himself*
strong pron(MS)+pron.infl. (MS) + passiveparticiple+ infl. (MS)+PP

Unlike the subject NPs of sentences 3.1., the subject NPs of sentences 3.2.are internal arguments with the theta role **Patient.** This is demonstrated by the fact that subject NPs in these sentences (i.e. of 3.2.) i.e. *the bank, the ice, the ship, the car, the door and the window* have had the action inflicted on them by an exterior Agent, rather than by themselves. This is why sentences 3.2. (i)-(vii) have a different meaning from those of 3.1. (i)-(vii). Sentence 3.2. (i) means that *the bank is a state of closure by someone;* sentence 3.2. (ii) means that *the ice is in a state in which it has been purposely melted by someone;* and sentence 3.2. (iii) means that *the ship is in a state in which it has been purposely submerged in water by someone.* It is to be noted that it is this focusing on an exterior agent that makes sentence 3.2. (iii) mean that the ship is submerged in water, rather than it has actually sunk.

Likewise, sentence 3.2. (iv) means that *the car is in a state in which it has been purposely cooled by someone.* Note that sentence 3. 2. (iv) sounds funny if compared with sentence 3.1. (iv) since the act of cooling is usually self-inflicted, rather than imposed from outside. That is, the notion of an exterior agent, rather than a reflexive one, does change the meaning of sentences 3.2., making them different from those of 3.1. This is why sentences 3.2. (v) and (vi) are grammatical, unlike their counterparts in 3.1. (v) and (vi). This grammaticality is because the subjects of these sentences are the **Patient** of their respective actions, rather than their Agent.; i.e. *the door* and *the window* have been closed by someone, rather than by themselves. Similarly, it is this notion of an exterior agent that makes sentence 3.2. (vii) sound quite strange, contrary to sentence 3.1. (vii). This is because it is more logically plausible that *one would*

enclose oneself, rather than an *outsider would cage oneself up.* It is the latter meaning that is conveyed by sentence 3.2. (vii); whereas it is the former meaning that is conveyed by sentence 3.1. (vii). Therefore, sentences 3.2. are different from those of sentences 3.1 in that they have two argument predicates and their subject NP is the **Patient** while the **Agent** is an exterior one, rather than a reflexive one.

In conclusion, it may be maintained that the predicates of sentences 3.2. cannot be regarded as ergatives since ergatives have been described by Natsuko Tsujimura (1990) as having the theta role **Theme**, rather than **Patient**. Also, the predicates of sentences 3.2. cannot be regarded as ergative predicates since "active verbs are sorted into accusative and ergative " (Hagit Borer ,1984 : 415) and ergative predicates are one argument predicates in accordance with Keyser, S. J. & T. Roeper (1984).

Moreover, the predicates of sentences 3.2. have been shown to be two argument predicates in keeping with the literature on passivity. It is in this respect that their external arguments are regarded as being absorbed by the passive morphology carried by their passive forms. This passive morphological marker is the prefix /mv(t)-/, which is the passive marker associated with passive nominal predicates in CA (See H. Ghaly (1994) for further discussion of the passive nominal predicates in CA). It is to be noted that the assumption that the external argument is absorbed by the passive morphology carried by the passive form is semantically reflected by the non-reflexivity of the external argument with the internal argument in these sentences.

IV: Predicates with Noun and Adjective heads in Cairene Arabic

Having seen that neither the nominal predicate with the active participial head nor the nominal predicate with the passive participial head can be regarded as an ergative predicate in CA, let us now have a look at the nominal predicates with an adjective head and the nominal predicates with a noun head. Sentences 4.1. exemplify predicates with an adjective head:

4.1.

(i)   [?iraayit ?ikkitaab dah] _AP_ [sahla]
         Reading the-book this (MS) easy (FS)
This book reads easily. The literal meaning of this sentence is *The reading of this book is easy*

(ii)   [kasr ?ikkubbaya dih] AP [sahl]
        Breaking the –glass this (MS) easy (MS)
This glass breaks easily The literal meaning of this sentence is *The breaking of this glass is easy*

(iii)   [?afl ?ilbaab dah] AP [sahl]
        Closing the –door this (MS) easy (MS)
This door closes easily The literal meaning of this sentence is *The closing of this door is easy*

(iv)   [fath ?ilbaab dah] AP [sahl]
        Opening the –door this (MS) easy (MS)
This door opens easily The literal meaning of this sentence is *The opening of this door is easy*

In H. Ghaly (2002.), it has been shown that equational sentences with the predicate structure as shown in sentences 4.1. represent the middle construction in CA. The adverbial *easily* which is characteristic of the middle predicate in English becomes an adjectival predicate in the CA middles; i.e. AP [sahl]. It is this structure in CA, as shown in sentences 4.1, that conveys the generic interpretation that is the prevailing element in the middle construction.

Accordingly, if equational sentences with adjectival predicates are middles in CA and equational sentences with predicates with active participial heads have subjects that are agents, it follows that neither of these equational sentences can be regarded as the ergative predicate in CA. As for equational sentences with predicates with passive participial heads, these predicates, as we have seen, cannot be regarded as the ergative predicate since the latter predicates must be in the active voice. It follows that the only feasible candidate for ergativity is the equational sentence with a predicate with a noun head.

However, let us first reiterate some of the basic definitions made by linguists in the literature in the description of ergativity, specially as there is no unanimous agreement on the phenomenon. In distinguishing between ergative and accusative language, Alana Johns (1992) says that " a language is said to display ergativity when rules of case assignment and/or agreement treat the subject of a transitive clause differently from the subject of an intransitive clause and the object of a transitive clause." (57) J. Keyser, & T. Roeper (1984) give a different description of ergativity, saying that with an ergative there is absolutely no implied agent, unlike with the middle verb. Natsuko

Tsujimura (1990) uses the term "**inchoative verbs**", which incorporates ergative verbs; and he says that the subjects of these verbs have the theta role **Theme**. Hoekstra & Mulder (1990) say that existential sentences usually have ergative or unaccusative verbs and that *there* is a one place predicate with an internal argument, and not an external argument.

Deducing from this diversity of the descriptions of the phenomenon, one could maintain that ergative predicates could more or less be described as active one argument predicates with **Theme** subjects. And in differentiating between external and internal arguments, we could make use of Hoekstra & Mulder's (1990) description, who say that "if a referent is independent of a predicate in this sense, it is by that reason external to it, while its dependence is sufficient for it to qualify as an internal argument." (76) "Arguments that qualify as agents are always external "(75); while "SC is therefore an internal argument." (76) Therefore, if we make use of the above description of ergativity, the sentences in 4.2. may be regarded as having ergative predicates in CA.

4.2.
    (i)   /huwwa doktoor biṣaḥiiḥ /
Strong pron(MS)+nominal predicate(MS) +prepositional phrase
    He really is a doctor.

    (ii)   /dah beet/
Demon.pron(MS)+nominal predicate
    This is a house

    (iii)   /dih handasa/
Demon.pron(MS)+nominal predicate
    This is geometry

    (iv)   /huwwa raagil biṣaḥiiḥ/
Strong pron(MS)+nominal predicate(MS)+prepositional phrase
    He is really a man

    (v)   /dih ?agmal gineena/
Demon.pron(FS)+nominal predicate(superlativeadj.+noun) (FS)
This is the most beautiful garden

    (vi)   /heyya ?agmal bint/
Strong pron(FS)+nominal predicate(superlativeadj.+noun) (FS)
She is the most beautiful girl

    (vii)   /dih fidiiha/

Demon.pron(FS)+nominal predicate (FS)
This is a scandal.

(viii)   /dih naar/
Demon.pron(FS)+nominal predicate (FS)
This is fire

As can be seen from sentences 4.2., we have existential sentences that have one argument predicates that have **thematic** subjects.; and there is absolutely no implied agent in these sentences. These sentences do not only fit the above descriptions of ergative predicates but they are also in keeping with Dixon's (1994) description of ergativity. Dixon (1994) says that "ergative is more likely to be found ...[in] non-controlled activity... which typically just describe[s] what happened, without focusing on any propensity of the agent." (203) For example, in sentence 4.2.(i) / huwwa/ is the thematic subject with / doktoor bisahiih/ as the predicate; i.e. it simply describes the subject without focusing on any propensity of the agent. Likewise in sentences 4.2.(ii) and .(iii), the predicates /beet/ and /handasa/ just describe the subjects; i.e. /dah/ and /dih/ respectively. We have the same structure in the rest of the sentences from 4.2. (iv) – (viii); i. e . predicates with noun heads describing a **thematic** subject.

However, it must be noted that the predicates that have been taken to be ergatives in CA are nonetheless different from their English counterparts. But this seems to be natural as regards ergativity, since it is a phenomenon that has been so vastly and differently described in the literature that even within the same language different linguists have described ergativity differently. For example, in English the sentences *The window broke* and *The ball rolled down the hill* have both been described by different linguists as having ergative predicates, even though it is only the first sentence that is a one argument predicate. **2**

Now we need to see why the ergative predicates of CA should also be regarded as unaccusatives. The Case markings of the nominals heading such predicates represent a marked option in the sense that they are assigned an unaccusative Case, rather than an accusative Case. This unaccusative Case that is assigned to them is nominative Case. In this respect, sentences with predicates with nominal heads differ from sentences with predicate with verbal heads. In the latter predicate, the nominal which is the complement of the verb is assigned accusative Case, rather than a nominative Case; but in the former predicate the predicate nominal itself is assigned nominative

Case, rather than an accusative Case. In other words, in CA the Case assigning rules associated with predicates with nominal heads are different from those associated with predicates with verbal heads. It follows that the predicates with nominal heads in CA may be said to display ergativity. in keeping with Alana Johns' (1992) description of ergative languages as being those that have rules of Case assignment that differ from those in which accusative Case assignment takes place. Therefore, it is the fact that CA has a system of Case assignment that does not involve accusative Case marking that makes it a language displaying ergativity.

It is also by making use of Hoekstra & Mulder's (1990) assumption that existential sentences are in effect ergatives in their inability to assign accusative Case that we may assume that CA displays ergativity. But whereas the ergative or unaccusative verbs in existential sentences in English cannot assign accusative Case because they have a SC, the ergative unaccusative predicates in CA cannot assign accusative Case because of a general rule in the Arabic language that requires the predicate nominal in the equational sentence to be assigned an unaccusative Case, which is nominative Case. It is this inability to assign accusative Case that characterizes all the nominal predicates in CA and as such they are regarded as unaccusatives. It follows that the nominal predicates as illustrated in sentences 4.2. are ergative unaccusative predicates in CA, since they are the nearest semantic equivalence to the ergative predicates as described in the literature and they conform to the structural description of unaccusativity, as a linguistic phenomenon pertaining to nominal predicates.

The assumption that CA is an ergative language is also in keeping with A. Garrett (1990), who believes that languages that have split-ergative systems allow a nominative-accusative Case system in addition to an unaccusative Case system; i.e., as CA has an unaccusative Case system in addition to an accusative Case system, it is regarded as displaying ergativity. This view is also voiced by Dixon's (1994) belief that no language is fully ergative, and that ergativity is complementary to the familiar grammatical pattern of accusativity Therefore, as CA has a sentence structure that allows an unaccusative Case marking system that is complementary to the familiar grammatical pattern of accusativity, we can maintain that such predicates, as shown in sentences 4.2., are ergative unaccusative predicates in keeping with Radford's (1997) use of the term "unaccusative".
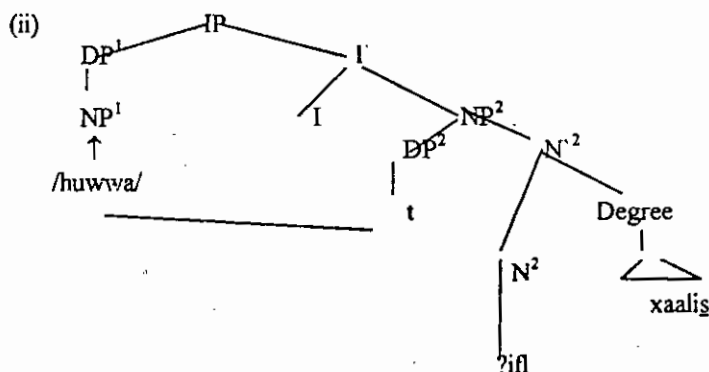
V: No Predicate -raising of the Ergative Unaccusative Predicates of CA

Following A. Radford's (1997) assumption that the ergative predicates are the only predicates that do not have verb raising since they do not have a light verb to be raised to, it is maintained that it is the ergative unaccusative predicate in CA likewise that does not involve predicate raising. It is in this respect that the tree in 5.1.(ii) is proposed for sentence 5.1 (i), which is a sentence with an ergative unaccusative predicate. '

5..1. (i) /huwwa ?ifl xaalis̲/
    Strong pron(MS)+nominal predicate(MS)
      He really is an introvert (lit. He is a real padlock)

(ii)

Extending the assumption that the ergative unaccusative predicates do not involve predicate raising, I would like to maintain that the ergative unaccusative predicates are the **unmarked predicates** in the syntax of CA from which all the other nominal predicates are derived. Therefore, from such a basic predicate structure, as shown in 5.1.(ii), other nominal predicates may be derived such as nominal predicates with active participles; i.e. it is from the ergative unaccusative predicate that we derive other unaccusative predicates such as those with active participial predicates. This is achieved by means of a causative light predicate, as shown in 5. 2. (ii) of the sentence in 5..2.(i).

5. 2.(i)./huwwa ?aafil 9ala nafsu xaalis̲/

Strong pron(MS)+nominal predicate(MS) of active. participle+reflexive.pron. (MS)+Degree
He is closing on himself completely (i.e. He really is an introvert)

(ii)
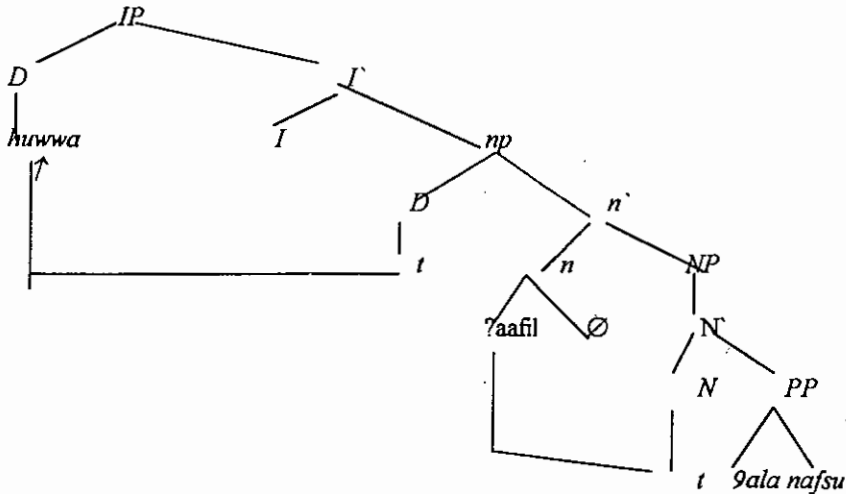
Structure 5.2.(ii) shows that the active participial predicate is derived by means of predicate raising of this predicate to a nominal causative light predicate. This predicate raising of 5. 2(ii) is because the subject of 5. 2 (ii) is the Agent or Causer of the action; while this Agency is missing in 5.1.(ii). This Agency of the subject with the active participle predicate in sentence 5.2. (i) is made quite evident by the reflexive pronominal structure /nafsu/, which is coreferential with /huwwa/; i.e. the **Agent** of the act of closing up on himself. The relation between 5.1.(ii) and 5..2.(ii) is similar to that proposed by Radford (1997) for the ergative predicates as opposed to the causative construction; i.e. *The ball rolled down the hill* and *We rolled the ball down the hill*. Accordingly, structure 5.2 (ii) differs from that of 5. 1. (ii) in that it is only the former predicate that involves predicate raising.

As regards the derivation of the passive participial predicate, this involves a process of passivization that accounts for the passivization of both verbal passives and nominal passives in CA. This has been dealt with in a separate study (the interested reader may refer to H. Ghaly (1994a)) In this study, we are only dealing with active predicates, since ergative predicates are always in the active voice.

VI: The Case-marking and the theta-marking of the Nominals associated with the Ergative Unaccusative Predicates in CA

6.1: The Case-marking of the Nominals

Along the lines maintained in H. Ghaly (1988) that equational sentences in Arabic have an agreement node, it is maintained that there is an I node, as shown in 5..1 (ii). It is the projection of this node; i.e I' that checks the Case of its subject (i.e. /huwwa/) after it has raised to the specifier of I'. Therefore, the Case checking of the subject NP in 5.1.(ii) is due to a specifier-head relation. Likewise, the Case checking of the predicate NP in 5.1. (ii) is due to a specifier-head relation; i.e., the Case checking of the head nominal of the predicate is still via I, which checks the Case of NP^2 in a specifier head relation assigning to it nominative Case. This nominative Case then percolates from NP^2 down to N'^2. In turn, nominative Case then percolates from N'^2 to N (i.e./?ifl/) and its modifying adjectival of degree (i.e. xaali$\underline{s}$) .

The assumption that it is I that assigns Case to both the subject nominal and the predicate nominal is in keeping with the fact that both NPs are assigned nominative Case in the Arabic language and the fact that there is agreement between the subject nominal and its nominal predicate. This analysis is similar to Manning's (1996) citation of Bok-Bennema's (1991) assumption that I assigns both cases to the NPs in its sentence even with verbs. Bok-Bennema (1991) maintains that "the NP of an intransitive clause has the D-structure position of either of the NPs in the transitive clause depending on whether the verb is unergative or unaccusative." (161) Likewise, Hoekstra & Mulder (1990) say that Case is shared with the postverbal NP since sharing of Case features between subject and predicate is a general phenomenon. For Hoekstra & Mulder (1990), existential sentences usually have ergative or unaccusative verbs with ergative NPs.

Therefore, this analysis of the Case checking of the NPs in the equational sentence in CA is in keeping with those proposed in the literature on ergativity with one basic difference which is that the unaccusative Case that is checked in CA is nominative, rather than ergative. But the presence of an ergative Case marker is not a prerequisite for the assumption that there is syntactic ergativity, as we have seen in the literature. In English, for example, there is no ergative marker associated with the NP associated with the ergative predicate.

6.2: The theta-marking of the Nominals

Since ergative predicates are one argument predicates, the predicate /?ifl xaalis/ in sentence 5. 1. (i) has only one argument, which is / huwwa/ and which is assigned the theta role **theme** : Since theta marking is the property of the base, N^2 in 5. 1. (ii) assigns or checks the theta role **theme** to its specifier DP^2, which base-generates /huwwa/ before subject raising.

As for the theta marking of the nominal (i.e. /?ifl /) we have two options. We could maintain that it is not theta marked since it is itself the predicator, rather than an argument of the predicate. But if we still wish to theta mark it as a nominal, this theta marking must be achieved in a different way characterizing the fact that it is a predicate nominal, rather than an argument of the predicate. Thus, we could assume that N^2 assigns a theta role to the head nominal of the predicate, which is N^2 (i.e. /?ifl /) by means of percolation from N^2 to N^2. Note that such percolation is only from a higher projection to the head of that projection. It is to be noted that while the subject NP is assigned the theta role **theme**; the predicate NP is assigned the theta role **indentifier**. Accordingly, there is no violation of the theta criterion, since each argument is assigned a different thematic role and by a different theta marking process:. the theta marking of the nomimal predicator is by percolation; while that of subject nominal is by a head- specifier relation.

Conclusion

The conclusion that the researcher has deduced from this study in collaboration with the previous ones is the confirmation that each variety of a language has its own system which is different from the other. This is probably due to the fact that living languages undergo constant change. Despite the fact that there is an ergative verb in Qur?anic Arabic (as shown in H. Ghaly (2001)), this study has shown that Cairene Arabic has an ergative predicate with a nominal predicator. Due to language change the verb form utilized in Qur?anic Arabic for ergativity is no longer an option in CA, necessitating another predicate structure to function as ergativity in its system.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that there is always a symmetrical pattern in each variety of a language, making it not coincidental that both the ergative predicate and the middle predicate (see H.Ghaly (2002b)) in CA are different types of equational sentences since there are no ergative verbs in this variety of Arabic. Accordingly, it may be assumed that there must be a middle verb in Qur?anic Arabic since it has an ergative verb (see Ghaly (2001)); but this assumption is, naturally, pending on further research on Qur?anic Arabic. The main point deduced is that since the verb form that functions in Qur?anic Arabic as the ergative verb has a different function in CA (i.e. it indicates passivity as shown in H.Ghaly (1994a)), ergativity and middles in CA are symmetrically realized by equational sentences, differing only in their predicate structure; i.e. the ergative predicate has a nominal head; while the middle predicate has an adjectival head. This is in keeping with the literature in that a language is said to have an ergative predicate when this structure is not identical with the passive structure; i.e. since the verb of Form VIII in CA has a passive function, it is the predicate that has a nominal head, as shown above, that assumes the function of an ergative predicate. This, naturally, displays a symmetrical pattern with the middle predicate in CA.

Finally, it is implicit that equational sentences in Classical Arabic must have different functions from those that have been found in CA; but what these functions are in Classical Arabic requires a separate study that may be undertaken hopefully in the near future by linguists.

1. Unlike Mitchell (1956), Cowan (1982) differentiates between the form of active participle, and passive participle. The active participle in CA is similar

2. See H.Ghaly's "Unergative versus Ergative Verbs in Cairene Arabic".

Notations used for this study

Consonantal Phonemes:

.Stops:

/b/ voiced bilabial stop

/t/ and /d/ voiceless and voiced apical dental stops

/k/ and /g/ voiceless and voiced velar stops

/?/ voiceless glottal stop

/q/ voiceless uvular stop

Fricatives

/f/ voiceless labio-dental fricative

/s/ and /z/ voiceless and voiced dental   grooved   fricatives

/š/ voiceless palatal fricative

to that of Modern Literary Arabic except for the nunation in pre-pausal position; ie /faaɡil/ instead of /faaɡilun/.

/h/ voiceless glottal fricative

/x/ and / ɣ / voiceless and voiced uvular fricatives

/ḥ/ and /9/ voiceless and voiced pharyngeal fricatives

Emphatics

/ṭ/ and /ḍ/ voiceless and voiced dental ,apical emphatic stops

/ṣ/ voiceless dental emphatic fricative

/ẓ/ voiced dental emphatic fricative

Resonants

/r/ trilled resonant

/ l / lateral resonant

Nasals

/m/ bilabial nasal

. /n/ dental nasal

Semi- Vowels

/w/ velar semi- vowel

/y/ palatal semi- vowel

The /q/ is used in some words in Cairene Arabic as in /ʔalqaahira/ "Cairo", /ʔalqurʔaan/ the "Qurʔaan".

Vocalic Phonemes

/i/ and /ii/ high front, unrounded short and long vowels respectively.

/u/ and /uu/ high back, rounded short and long vowels respectively.

/e/ and /ee/ mid front, unrounded short and long vowels respectively

/o/ and /oo/ mid back, rounded short and long vowels respectively

/a/ and /aa/ low central, unrounded short and long vowels respectively

There are a great variety of allophonic realizations of each phoneme, but they are not our concern in this study.

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