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# *Unergatives versus Ergative Verbs in Cairene Arabic*

by

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## **Abstract**

In this study, the presence of ergative verbs in CA is questioned; and it is shown that these verbs are actually unergatives, as described in the literature. This is demonstrated by the fact that the CA translations of the ergative verbs in English are subject to more semantic and syntactic restrictions than their English counterparts. Moreover, the unergativity of these verbs is demonstrated by the fact that their subjects are actually the Agents of the actions conveyed by the verb forms. Accordingly, these verbs do not subsume to the definitions made by various linguists as regards ergativity, rather they subsume to the definitions of unergativity in the literature. It is simply idiosyncratic properties inherent to the verb in question that makes some unergative verbs seem to be ergative. This is due to an inherent reflexivity between the subject and its object, which is an idiosyncratic property that is found in many intransitive verbs; i.e., it is lexically dependent on the semantics of each particular verb with no morphological properties distinguishing such verbs from the rest of the intransitive verbs.

The unergative nature of these verbs is also demonstrated by comparing them with the passive verb forms in this variety of Arabic (i.e. CA). Unlike the passive verb forms whose subjects are always the internal argument, the unergative verbs have subjects that are the external argument. Also, the unergative verbs are one argument predicates; whereas the passive verbs are two argument predicates in accordance with the literature.



Finally, the unergative verb differs from the passive verb in that its external argument is not an exterior element as it is associated with reflexivity. The external argument of the passive verb, on the other hand, must be an exterior element.

Accordingly, C(ariene) A(rabic) is different from Qurʿanic Arabic, which does have an ergative verb as shown in H. Ghaly (2001). This difference between these different varieties of Arabic is because they represent distinct systems. As CA makes use of the /-t-/ affixed verb forms for the indication of passivity (as shown by H. Ghaly (1994)), such verb forms are not available for the indication of ergativity. But in Qurʿanic Arabic one of the /-t-/ affixed forms, which is Form VIII, conveys ergativity since passivity in this variety of Arabic is expressed by intervocalic alterations associated with this very verb form (i. e. Form VIII). This state of affairs does not exist in CA since its Form VIII only indicates passivity and there is no Form VIII with intervocalic alterations. 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.

## 1. Introduction

In pursuit of the fact that different varieties of a language have different and distinct systems, this study is to show that there is no ergative verb in CA. This demonstrates a difference between CA and Qurʿanic Arabic, in which there is an ergative verb (see Ghaly (2001)). To do this we must first review the literature on ergative verbs, and then show why the CA intransitive verbs are not semantically and syntactically equivalent to the ergative verbs as described in the literature. We must also compare the unergative verbs with the passive verbs in CA since the /-t-/ affix is a passive



marker in CA, unlike in Qur'anic Arabic. Accordingly, this article is divided into the following sections. Section two has a review of the literature; and section three describes the various intransitive verbs in CA showing that they are unergatives, rather than ergatives. Section four describes the passive verbal predicates in CA showing that they differ semantically and syntactically from the unergative verbs. In section five, it is shown that the rule(s) of verb raising are applicable to the unergative verbs in CA. In this respect, CA is similar to English since the unergative verbs in both language do subsume to verb raising. Section five also discusses the theta marking properties of the argument associated with the unergative verb and the Case marking of its argument.

## **2: Review of the Literature**

Perlmutter (1978) seeing that intransitive verbs do not constitute a homogenous class introduced the unaccusative hypothesis (UH), which has led to the division of intransitive verbs into unergatives and unaccusatives on the basis of the kind of subject each verb type takes. The unergatives verb has a subject like that of the transitive verb; whereas the unaccusatives has a subject that is like the object of the transitive verb. Thus, unaccusatives are different from the transitive verb, which is believed to have an Agent subject. These differences between these verb types are illustrated by sentences 2.1. 2.2., and 2.3.

### **2.1. Transitives**

- (i) Tom opened the door
- (ii) Harry broke the glass
- (iii) Mike melted the butter
- (iv) John watched the film
- (v) Marry accepted the offer

## 2.2. Unergatives

- (i) She is knitting
- (ii) He speaking very quickly.
- (iii) He eats very fast

## 2.3. Unaccusatives (ergatives)

- (i) The door opened
- (ii) The glass broke.
- (iii) The butter melted
- (iv) The film watched
- (v) The offer accepted

In sentences 2.1, we have transitive verbs, which are described as having Agent subjects. In sentences 2.2, we have unergative verbs whose subject is like that of the transitive verb; and in sentences 2.3 we have unaccusative verbs (ergative verbs) whose subject is like the object of the transitive verb. The ungrammaticality of sentences 2.3. (iv) and (v) shows that it is not the case that every object of the transitive verb can be the subject of unaccusative verbs; i.e. it is a process that is heavily dependent on the semantics of the lexical item.

Alana Johns (1992) follows Borer (1984) and Chomsky's (1991) proposition that all parametrization may reduce to lexical variation in the sense that "individual grammars result from variation in lexical properties across languages." (82) Accordingly, for her "ergative patterning results from the presence of the passive participle morpheme in the transitive construction." (79) Alana Johns (1992) accounts for the similarities between the passive participle morpheme and those containing the transitive indicative morpheme phonologically, by assuming that "it is probable that the transitive indicative morpheme historically derives from the passive participle morpheme through whatever



processes creates portmanteaux morpheme.” (81) Central to these features are the distribution and properties of the passive participle morpheme, and it therefore is not surprising that this morpheme is implicated in ergativity in other languages” (82) and that there are “split ergative languages”, which “display ergativity in only a portion of grammar, the remainder displaying a nominative-accusative pattern.” (78) Analogously, it may be pursued in line with Alana Johns (1992) description of ergativity that different varieties of the same language may even display ergativity differently as they represent different systems.

As regards Inuktitut and Dyirbal, Alana Johns (1992) shows that ergativity in the former language is the outcome of universal principles interacting with language-specific lexical properties. This leads to the assumption that “quite different lexical properties could result in a grammar that appears to single out the transitive subject from the intransitive subject and the transitive object”. (82) In Dyirbal, she says that we have “an ergative language whose transitive verb contains an obligatory morpheme that is arguably the passive morpheme,” (Alana Johns, 1992: 83), in contrast with Inuktitut. She is following Comrie’s (1988) claim that the ergative construction (*read* transitive clause) of Dyirbal is the most ‘passive-like of ergative constructions since the language consistently treats the **Patient** as subject. Alana Johns (1992) contrasts this with Inuktitut, where the **Patient** does not consistently have the properties associated with subjects.

Natsuko Tsujimura (1990) says that the inchoative/ causative distinction is broader than ergatives, which is a sub-branch of inchoative verbs and that an ergative verb cannot involve accusative case assignment; while an unergative verb like *laugh* can if such an object NP is

available; e.g. *John laughed a laugh*. Natsuko Tsujimura (1990) adds that the causative/inchoative pairs in Japanese are not formally identical, as they are in English. The subject of the inchoative verb is the object of its causative counterpart and the sole argument of inchoative verbs is **Theme**. Likewise, J. Marc Authier, and Lisa Reed (1990) believe that the syntactic aspect of ergativity is in having subjects base-generated in object position. But Marc Authier and Lisa Reed (1990) distinguish ergative predicates as those predicates that do not assign the feature [Control], a feature exclusively associated with the external  $\theta$ -role.

In distinguishing syntactically ergative languages, Manning (1996) believes that "synchronic morphology reflects the syntax of earlier forms of the language, because in general syntactic change precedes morphological change" (71) and that "a synchronic grammar should not seek to explain all case marking facts since some of them will reflect the history of the language and will be arbitrary from a synchronic perspective." (71) It follows, accordingly, that the different varieties of the same language should not be expected to have the same parametric variation, specially if one of these varieties precedes the other in time so that it may be said to reflect the history of that language. Such is the case as regards Qur'anic Arabic and CA in relation to the phenomenon of ergativity.

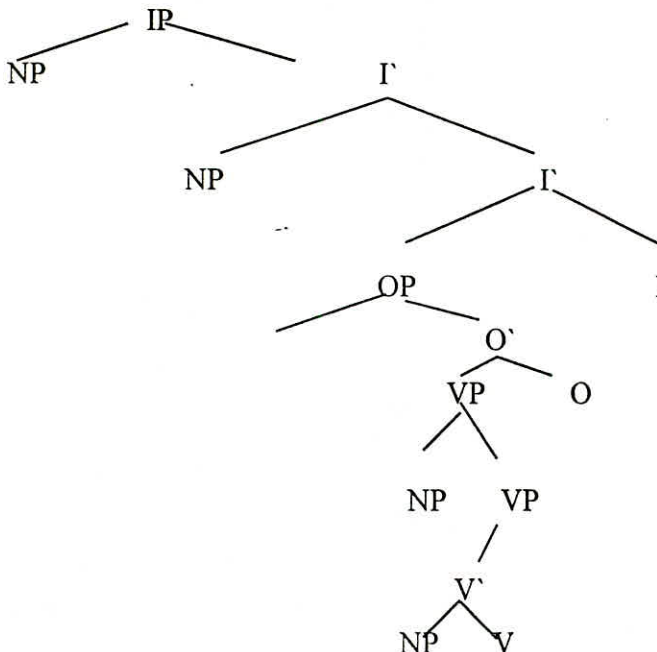
In describing ergativity, Manning (1996) stresses two levels: one in which "the verb cannot assign accusative case in ergative languages" (176) and in the other "the apparently accusative properties are ones like binding, imperative addressee and control which are sensitive to argument structure" (33) and to the notion of (deep) subject. Following Jespersen (1924), Manning (1996) says that "the logical



subject is the highest argument at argument structure of the basic form of the predicate, normally the agent or experiencer of transitive verbs.” (7) Other phenomena, such as coordination, specificity, relativization, and topicalization are sensitive to a level of grammatical relations, and at this level the absolutive is the pivot in all these languages because they are syntactically ergative.” (3)

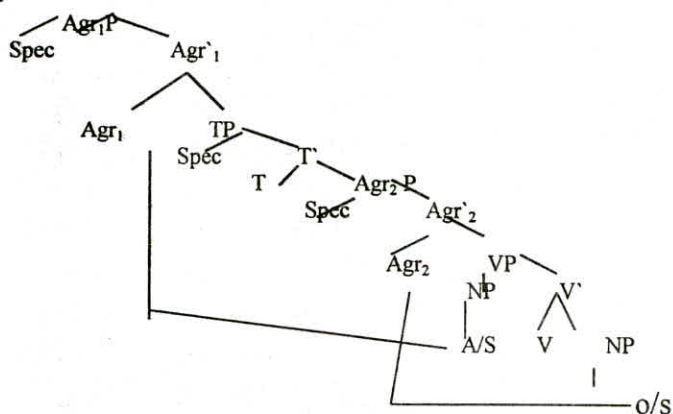
Manning (1996) cites Bok-Bennema’s (1991) structure in 2.4. for simple intransitive and transitive clauses at S-structure, where “the NP of an intransitive clause has the D-structure position of either of the NPs in the transitive clause depending on whether the verb is unergative or unaccusative.” (161) Accordingly, it is suggested by Bok-Bennema (1991) that I assigns both ergative and absolutive Case and that the ergative argument moves to [Spec, IP] since it is in the same A position as intransitive subjects.

2.4.



Following Bittner (1994), Manning (1996) says that “no verb is inherently able to assign Case, and [that] verbs only gain the ability to assign case if a case competitor (a  $D^0$ ) is adjoined to them. He continues saying that. “this adjunction occurs in accusative languages, but not in ergative languages.” (177) Again, following Bittner (1994), Manning (1996) maintains that case assignment occurs in a structural configuration that allows a head to assign Case only to an NP that it governs if it can also ‘see’ another NP which can serve as a case competitor for the first NP. This in turn means that” heads can gain and lose their Case assigning potential depending on what NPs are generated in or move through their projection,” (Manning, 1996: 174) as shown by the structure in 2.5.

2.5.



He maintains that while in transitive sentences, A always moves to  $Agr_1$  and O always moves to  $Agr_2$ , for intransitive sentences in an accusative language, S moves to  $Agr_1$ , but in an ergative language S moves to  $Agr_2$ . This movement is forced by which Agr is active. These different movements yield the different Case-marking patterns so that nominative Case is checked by  $Agr_1$ , while accusative Case is checked by  $Agr_2$ . Bittner (1994b) acknowledges that nominative and absolutive resemble each other as being the



Case that is always (at least abstractly) realized, and as **being** generally the morphologically unmarked case.

In presenting a synopsis of the Role and Reference Grammar Theory of semantic roles, Van Valen, Jr. **R. D.** (1990) says that RRG differs from the generative theories under consideration in that (i) it posits only a single level of syntactic representation (ii) the semantic representation in RRG is founded on the theory of verb semantics and lexical representation presented in Dowty 1979. Dowty's lexical semantic theory of verb classification is Vendler's 1967 classification of verbs into **states** (e.g. *know, have, be broken etc.*), **achievements** (e.g. *learn, arrive, die, break (intr.) etc.*), **activities** (e.g. *teach, kill, die, break (tr.) etc.*), and **accomplishments** (e.g. *run, dance, swim etc.*) Each verb class is given a formal representation called its *Logical Structure (LS)*. The operators and connectives used are **BECOME**, which signals **inchoativeness** deriving **Achievemnt** verbs, **DO**, an optional operator which encodes **agentiveness** deriving **Activity** verbs, and **CAUSE**, which indicates a causal relation between two events deriving **Accomplishment** verbs. RRG postulates two tiers of semantic roles- one corresponds to the thematic relations of other theories; and the other tier consists of the two macroroles **ACTOR** and **UNDERGOER**. These are the two primary arguments of a transitive predication, either **one** of which may be the single argument of an intransitive verb. They are called **macroroles** because each subsumes to a number of specific thematic relations. The **prototypical actor** is the **agent** and the **prototypical undergoer** is **patient**, but **effectors** and **experiencers** with verbs of cognition and perception can also be **actor**, and **locatives** and **themes** can also be **undergoer**; this depends on the LS of the particular verb.

Van Valen, Jr. R. D. (1990) believes that the split – intransitive phenomena are better explained in semantic terms depending on two semantic parameters which underlie split intransitivity crosslinguistically. These two semantic parameters are the inherent lexical aspect and agentivity. He (1990) calls the unergative, intransitive (i.e.  $S_A$ ) and the unaccusative, ergative (i.e.  $S_O$ ). He defines  $S_A$  as the situation when the subject of the intransitive verb receives the same morphosyntactic treatment as the subject of the transitive verb.  $S_O$  is defined as the situation when the subject of the intransitive verb receives the same morphosyntactic treatment as the object of a transitive verb. Identifying the identified inherent lexical aspect and agentiveness as the primary semantic parameters governing split intransitivity, Van Valen, Jr. R. D. (1990) goes on to say that languages vary with respect to which parameter governs the split. The subject of class  $S_A$  verbs is always **agent**, while that of class  $S_O$  verbs is always a **theme/patient**. In concluding, he says that “one of the goals of this paper has in fact been to show that, given a theory of semantic roles and lexical semantics like that of RRG, split – intransitive phenomena provide no evidence for analyzing subject of class  $S_O$  verbs as underlying syntactic objects.” (256)

Likewise, David Dowty (1991) believes that “identifying a surface syntactic or lexical category of unaccusative intransitives with underlying objects that have been promoted to subjects” (David Dowty, 1991: 611) has “much less naturalness” (David Dowty, 1991: 611) than is often assumed. David Dowty (1991) goes on to say that in discussing argument selection in ergative languages, it should be noted that “an ergative NP combines with a transitive verb to form a VP, having the syntactic and semantic properties of VPs in other languages”. (582) This



means in effect treating the transitive Patient as a grammatical subject and the transitive Agent as analogous to an object. He adds that Proto-Agent and Proto-Patient are arguably the two (fuzzy) categories of arguments that semantically characterize unergatives versus unaccusatives and that "the cut between unergatives and unaccusative arguments is indeterminate." (David Dowty, 1991: 607) "Predicates that are high in agentivity and low in patient properties are invariably unergative, while those low in agent properties and high in patient properties are invariably unaccusative." (David Dowty, 1991:608).

Bittner and Hale (1996) claim that their theory of ergativity makes a general predication about ergative Case systems, maintaining that. an ergative system arises when the transitive verb fails to Case-bind its object because it does not govern any Case competitor for that argument. Thus, the object is nominative and the subject is ergative. Within these limits there is variation: the nominative object may satisfy the K Filter either by raising to [Spec,IP] like the nominative in English or in situ like in Miskiu. The object is licensed in its underlying position within VP if the clause at S-structure is a position for C to govern. Therefore there are two types of ergative languages, *raising* and *transparent*, which equate with the traditional typological categories of syntactic and morphological ergativity. There is syntactic ergativity due to raising; and there is morphological ergativity due to transparency. They say that in *transparency* C governs into VP at S-structure.; i.e. IP is rendered transparent to government from C by syntactic incorporation of I into C. In such languages, the trace of I and V jointly form a discontinuous head; therefore, the entire clause is transparent to government from C. Their definition of government is shown in 2.6.

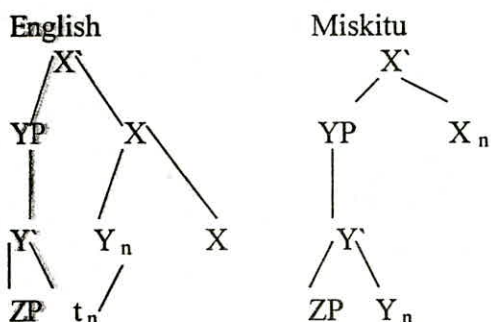
## 2.6.

**Definition**

$\alpha$  antecedent-governs  $\beta$ , iff  $\alpha$  governs and either binds or Case-binds  $\beta$ .

Maximal projections are rendered transparent by syntactic processes. Deriving 'discontinuous heads' and head movement are examples of such processes; along with head binding (i.e., c-command and coindexation). This differentiates English from Miskitu, as shown in 2.7.

## 2.7.



In English, the nominative subject satisfies the F Filter by raising to [Spec,IP]. In Miskitu, the VP adjoined subject position is governed by C, because C binds I at S-structure, rendering IP transparent. Thus, the antecedent-governor is the Case assigner or licenser of marked structural Case; whereas Inherent Case licensing takes place at D-structure selected by a  $X^0$  governing head which is lexical. Apart from being assigned by I, another option they propose is that ergative Case may also be assigned by D, the nominal counterpart of I. Accordingly, they propose the *direct Case realization* in 2.8. and the *K Filter* in 2.9.

2.8.

**Direct Case realization**

If  $\alpha$  Case –binds an overt empty-headed KP  $\beta$ , then the empty K of  $\beta$  is realized as

- i. ERG, if  $\alpha$  is I ( or D)
- ii. ACC,  $\alpha$  is V ( or P) and has an adjoined D.

2.9.

**K Filter**

Let  $\alpha$  be a K-less nominal (DP or NP), and let  $\alpha$  head an argument chain  $\beta$ . Then

- i.  $\alpha$  is c-commanded and governed by K or C, and
- ii.  $\beta$  does not contain any Case-bound position

They draw our attention to the fact that “structural Case and pronominal agreement are independent phenomena” (601) and that structural Case assignment does not entail pronominal agreement; i.e. an agreeing functional head need not participate in the assignment of any structural Case. They define pronominal agreement syntactically as a relation between an argument and a local functional head. It is a relation between an argument chain and a functional head that *canonically* antecedent-governs a designated position in that chain. Canonical antecedent-government is defined as  $\alpha$  *canonically antecedent-governs*  $\beta$ , iff  $\alpha$  governs and binds  $\beta$ . The designated position for agreement is either the head of the argument chain (giving *head agreement*, as in Miskitu) or the foot (giving *foot agreement*, as in English). The latter option may give rise to the appearance of “specifier-head” agreement with I, if the argument involved has raised from



the VP-adjoined subject position to [Spec,IP]. In either type of agreement system, an accusative object may agree with its Case competitor, the V-adjoined D since the object is governed and c-commanded by this functional head. It follows that accusative object agreement (with the V-adjoined D) must be adjacent to the verb, whereas nominative subject agreement (with I or C) may be more peripheral.

They conclude saying that the theory of ergativity they have presented is fundamentally a matter of the syntactic relations that hold at S-structure and that universally the ERG\_NOM array is determined when a transitive verb does not govern any Case competitor for the object and therefore fails to Case-bind this argument, while I Case-binds the VP adjoined subject. What makes ergative languages a heterogeneous class in their opinion is the circumstance that this general description is compatible with a number of different structures such as the situation in which the nominative object satisfies the K Filter in situ, because C, I and V jointly form a discontinuous head and thus renders the entire clause transparent to government from C. This situation characterizes languages of the morphologically ergative. Alternately, if C does not govern into VP, then the need to satisfy the K Filter will force the nominative object to raise to [Spec,IP]. This A'-raising distinguishes syntactically ergative.

Therefore, this language phenomenon (i.e. ergativity) has been so diversely described in the literature that it ceases to have unanimously agreed upon characteristics, which in turn differentiate them clearly from the unergative verbs, as

described in 2.2. In this respect, let us now have a look at the different types of intransitive verbal predicates that are found in CA and see how they fare in the light of the above descriptions.

### 3. Intransitive Verbal Predicates in Cairene Arabic

Let us start by looking at intransitive verbs of the type found in 2.2. in CA (i.e. the unergatives), as shown in sentences 3.1.

#### 3.1.

- (i) / heyya bitit~~et~~al kitiir/ *She works a lot*  
 Strong pron.(FS)+pron.infl. (FS)+imperfective  
 verb+adverb
- (ii) / heyya bititkallim bisur9a/ *She speaks quickly*  
 Strong pron.(FS)+pron.infl. (FS)+imperfective  
 verb+PP
- (iii) / huwwa biyaakul bisur9a / *He eats very fast*  
 Strong pron.(MS)+pron.infl. (MS)+imperfective  
 verb+PP

It is obvious from sentences 3.1. that the subjects are the Agents of the actions conveyed by the verbs. Thus, the subject of the unergative verb in CA is like that of the transitive verb, as shown in 2.1. and 2.2. in the literature. That is, both verbs require an external argument as subject. The basic difference is that the unergative verb is a one argument predicate; whereas the transitive verb is a two argument predicate. The question that remains to be answered is whether CA has an ergative or unaccusative verb as well. Another question that should be answered is whether the semantic distinction between unergative verbs and ergative verbs in CA is reflected by a morphosyntactic distinction as well. Such is the case with the ergative verb in Qur'anic Arabic, the fact which makes Qur'anic Arabic

different from English since in the latter language the ergative verb is identical in form with the unergative verb.

In order to see if we also have ergative verbs in CA, let us start by looking at the translation in CA of the ergative verbs in English and see how they fare in the syntax of the former language. Sentences 3.2. have verbs of the 1<sup>st</sup> or root forms that are translations of sentences that have ergative verbs in English, as cited in the literature (see Hoekstra, 1984, Radford, 1997 etc.).

### 3.2.

- (i) /ʔilbank fatah/ *The bank opened*  
*The bank* (MS)+pron.infl. (MS)+perfective verb  
*opened*
- (ii) /ʔilmarkib yiriʔit/ *The boat sank*.  
*The ship* (FS)+pron.infl. (FS) +perfective verb *sank*
- (iii) /ʔittalg saah/ *The ice melted*  
*The ice* (MS)+pron.infl. (MS) +perfective verb  
*melted*
- (iv) /ʔilbaab fatah fagʔa/ *The door opened suddenly*  
*The door* (MS)+pron.infl. (MS) +perfective verb  
*opened suddenly*
- (v) /ʔilbaab ʔafal fagʔa/ *The door closed suddenly*  
*The door* (MS)+pron.infl. (MS) +perfective verb  
*closed suddenly*
- (vi) /ʔil9arabeyya ʔaxiiran birdit/ *The car finally cooled down*  
*The car* (FS)+pron.infl. (FS)+ *finally* +perfective verb  
*cooled down*

Even though the sentences in 3.2. seem to have verbs that are semantically equivalent to the ergative verbs in English, they are nonetheless different from their English counterparts. For example, sentences 3.2 (iv)-(vi) require



adverbs, else the meaning would be funny. This requirement that there be an adverb is one of the basic distinctions between middle verbs and ergative verbs, as pointed out by Keyser, & T. Roeper (1984) and D. Messam, (1992). In other words, it is the middle verb in English that requires an adverb and not the ergative verb. Furthermore, sentences 3.2. (iv) and (v) are only acceptable if they are taken to be a situation of story telling. Likewise, sentence 3.2.(vi) is used as a kind of idiom; i.e. the *car* has the ability to *cool itself down*; i.e. it is as if there is reflexivity. In other words, sentences 3.2.(iv)-(vi) are highly context specific and are not grammatical without the adverbs. This is not the case with their English counterparts, as cited in the literature.

As a matter of fact, it is the presence of an adverb in sentences 3.2. (iv)-(vi) that endows the subjects of these verbs with some degree of **Agency** because it sets them in a highly specific context in which their subjects may function as Agents. As for sentences 3.2.(i)-(iii), these are grammatical without adverbs because their subjects by themselves convey a degree of **Agency**; i.e., it is the presence of the people in the bank that makes the subject in sentence 3. 2.(i) a feasible Agent for the opening of the bank. It is also the notion that the ship sank by itself and that no one caused it to sink purposely that allows the subject of sentence 3. 2.(ii) to have the notion of **Agency**. Likewise, it is the notion that the ice melts by itself and that no one caused it to melt on purpose that allows the subject of sentence 3. 2.(iii) to have the notion of **Agency**. It follows that as the verbs in sentences 3. 2. do require varying degrees of **Agency**, they cannot be regarded as ergative verbs in the syntax of CA. in keeping with Van Valen's (1990) assumption that if the subject has any degree of **Agency**, the verb cannot belong to  $S_0$ . Rather, these verbs are unergatives.

Recall that Van Valen, Jr. R. D. (1990) has identified the inherent lexical aspect and agentiveness as the primary semantic parameters governing split intransitivity and that languages vary with respect to which parameter governs the split. It is by making use of the second semantic parameters that the split in the CA intransitive verbs has been determined, whereby they have been found to be unergatives, rather than ergatives. Also, it is by making use of Marc Authier and Lisa Reed's (1990) feature of [Control], which is regarded as being exclusively associated with the external  $\theta$ - role distinguishing between ergative predicates and unergative predicates, that has added in our determining that the predicates of sentences 3. 2. are unergatives, rather than ergatives; i.e. the subjects in sentences 3. 2. do have this feature of [Control], as shown by the above interpretation of these sentences.

As for Keyser, & T. Roeper's (1984) assumption that sometimes ergative verbs have the nuance that the **theme** is also the **agent** due to the notion of reflexivity, this is not restricted to ergative verbs as this nuance may be found in many unergative verbs, as shown in sentences 3.3.

3.3.

(i) /mi~~ɛ~~i/ He (made) (himself) walk

(ii) /yasal/ He washed (himself)

(iii) /giri/ He (made) (himself) run

(iv) /?akal/ He (made) (himself) eat

In sentences 3. 3.. (i), it is assumed that *he walked himself*; in sentence 3. 3. (ii) it is assumed that *he washed himself*; in sentence 3.2. (iii) it is assumed that *he ran himself*; and in sentence 3. 3. (iv) it is assumed that *he fed himself*. These sentences show that the reflexive



interpretation in sentences 3. 3. is lexically determined. Therefore, if subject may be the **agent** or the **theme/patient** of the action on the basis of inherent lexical characteristics pertaining to the verb in question, the distinction between ergative and unergative verbs ceases. Recall that Van Valen's (1990) first semantic parameter underlying the split in intransitivity crosslinguistically has been Agentivity. Such a parameter has enabled us to differentiate between the verbs in 3.2.(iv)-(vi) and those of 3. .2.(i)-(iii). In other words, the verbs in 3. .2. and 3.3. are all unergative verbs but idiosyncratic properties pertaining to specific verbs, due to their inherent lexical characteristics, makes this **agent** or **theme/patient** subject distinction fuzzy; and, as shown in the literature, such semantic distinctions are never clear-cut.

It is to be noted that Keyser, & T. Roeper (1984), who assume that there is no external agent with ergative verbs, have to admit that at times the ergative structure gives the nuance that the **theme** is also the **agent**, citing the example *The boat sank all by itself*. In other words, even for Keyser, & T. Roeper (1984) the ergative structure gives the nuance that the **theme** is also the **agent**. One cannot help but say that this is a kind of retreat on the basic semantic distinction between ergative and unergative verbs. And as we have seen in sentences 3.3., such idiosyncratic properties pertaining to different verbs are not restricted to the ergative verbs. Rather, such idiosyncratic properties pertaining to different verbs are also found in many verbs which are regarded as unergative verbs even in English. In sentences 3.3., we have unergative verbs in English and their translation in CA; and in both languages these verbs have idiosyncratic properties requiring there be a reflexive interpretation between their subjects and objects leading to the nuance that the **agent** is also the **patient** of the action.



In an attempt at making use of a syntactic distinction between unergative verbs and ergative verbs in CA, Natsuko Tsujimura's (1990) assumption has been applied to the verbs in 3.2. Natsuko Tsujimura (1990) assumes that an ergative verb cannot involve accusative case assignment while an unergative verb can if such an object NP is available. Sentences 3.4. show that any of the verbs in sentences 3.2. can involve accusative case assignment if such an object NP is available.

### 3.4.

- (i) / fatahha / *He opened it*  
pron.infl. (MS)+perfective verb + pron.infl. (FS)
- (ii) / ?afalha / *He closed it*  
pron.infl. (MS) +perfective verb + pron.infl. (FS)
- (iii) / yarra?ha / *He made it sink.*  
pron.infl. (MS) +perfective verb + pron.infl. (FS)
- (iv) / sayyahha / *He made it melt*  
pron.infl. (MS) +perfective verb + pron.infl. (FS)
- (v) / barradha<sup>1</sup> / *He made it cool down*  
+perfective verb + pron.infl. (FS)

Since the verbs in sentences 3.4. are active verbs that involve accusative Case assignment when an object is available, they are accordingly regarded as unergative in accordance with Natsuko Tsujimura's (1990) assumption. How accusative Case is to be assigned to the object pronominals in general (i.e. small *pro*) in CA. will also not be dealt with here (see H. Ghaly (1994a) for a discussion on the matter). What basically concerns us here is that such verbs do involve accusative Case assignment when an object is available.

Let us now look at some more examples of ergative predicates in English as cited by Radford (1997) and shown in sentences 3.5, and look at their translations in CA, as shown in sentences 3.6.

## 3.5.

- (i) They rolled the ball down the hill/ The ball **rolled** down the hill
- (ii) He broke the vase into pieces / The vase **broke** into pieces
- (iii) They closed the store down / The store **closed** down
- (iv) He filled the bath with water / The bath **filled** with water

## 3.6.

- (i) /dahragu kkoora 9ala -ssillim / ~ /\* ?ikkoora ddahragit  
9ala -ssillim /  
*They rolled the ball down the stairs/ The ball rolled down the stairs*
- (ii) /kasaru lvaaza/ ~ /\*?ilvaaza kkasarit/  
*He broke the vase / The vase broke*
- (iii) /malu lbanyo mayya/ ~ /\* ?ilbanyo mala mayya/  
*He filled the bath with water / The bath filled with water*
- (iv) /?afalu -lmahal/ ~ /\*?ilmahal ?afal/  
*They closed the store down / The store closed down*

As can be seen from sentences 3.6., it is only sentence 3.6. (iv) that allows an ergative counterpart to these causative verbs. Again, it is because of idiosyncratic



properties that fall under the inherent lexical aspect of the verb in sentences 3.6. (iii) that makes this sentence grammatical in the syntax of CA. The subject in sentences 3.6. (iii) (i.e. *the store*) can assume **Agency** because there are people inside it. On the other hand, the ergative counterpart of the causative verbs of sentences 3.6. (i)–(iii) are ungrammatical because no **Agency** can be assumed of their subjects. Thus, the verbs that are the counterparts of the causative verbs in sentences 3.6. are indeed unergatives, rather than ergatives. This is because the intransitivization of these verbs is only possible when their subjects have the notion of an **Agent**. This conclusion is in keeping with David Dowty (1991), who says that predicates that are high in **agentivity** and low in **patient** properties are invariably **unergative**, while those that are low in **agent** properties and high in **patient** properties are invariably **ergative**.

#### 4. Passive Verbal Predicates in CA

Having shown that the intransitive verbal predicates in CA are unergatives, rather than ergatives, let us now have a look at the verbal forms that have the /-t-/ affix, as shown in sentences 4.1.

##### 4.1.

- (i) /ʔilkoora –tdahragit 9ala –ssilim/

*noun( FS)+/-t-/ affix+perfective verb(FS)+PP*

*The ball was rolled down the stairs*

- (ii) /ʔilvaza –tkasarit/ *The vase was broken*

*noun( FS)+/-t-/ affix+perfective verb(FS)*

- (iii) /ʔil9adma –tkasarit/ *The bone was broken*

*noun( FS)+/-t-/ affix+perfective verb(FS)*

- (iv) /ʔilkobbaya -tmalit bilmayya/ *The glass was filled with water*

*noun( FS)+/-t-/ affix+perfective verb(FS)+PP*

It is noticeable that the ungrammatical sentences in 3.5. are grammatical in sentences 4.1. This is because the sentences in 4.1. have passive verb forms, which require an internal argument as subject. In H. Ghaly (1994a), it has been shown that /-t-/ affixed verb forms indicate passivity in CA in accordance with the definition of passivity in the literature. The passive verb is believed in the literature to be a two argument predicate with its external argument absorbed by passive morphology (see T. Hoekstra.,(1986)). Unlike sentences 3.1. and 3.2. where the subjects are  $S_A$ , the sentences of 4.1. have subjects of  $S_O$ . For example, in sentence 4.1.. (i) *the ball* is the subject NP (i.e. $S_O$ ) and the external argument has been absorbed by the passive morphology carried by the verb form, which is the /-t-/ affix. Likewise, in sentence 4.1. (ii) *the vase* is the subject NP (i.e. $S_O$ ) and in sentences 4.1. (iii) and (iv) the subject NPs are *the bone* and *the glass* with the external argument being absorbed by the passive morphology carried by the verb forms. The fact that in sentences 4.1. there are two argument predicates, rather than one argument predicates as in sentences 3.1. and 3.2., is reflected by the meaning found in all of these sentences in that such actions are not self imposed; i.e. there is no reflexive interpretation. The actions in sentences 4.1. have been imposed by an exterior Agent, which is not the subject. This is why the external argument with the passive verb is regarded as being absorbed by the passive morphology carried by the verb form.

Let us look at some more examples of sentences with /-t-/ affixed verb forms in CA, as shown in sentences 4.2., in order to show how they differ from the sentences in 3.1. and 3.2.

## 4.1

- (i) /ʔil9arabeyya ʔaxiiran ʔitbarradit/ *The car finally was cooled down by an exterior agent (someone)*
- (ii) /ʔilmarkib ʔityarraʔit/ *The boat was drenched with water by someone (an exterior agent); i.e. it may not have sunk.*
- (iii) /ʔittalg ʔitsayyah/ *The ice was melted by an exterior agent.*
- (iv) /ʔilbaab ʔitfatah / *The door was opened by someone(an exterior agent)*
- (v) /ʔiEEibbaak ʔitfatah/ *The window was opened by someone(an exterior agent)*
- (vi) /ʔilbaab ʔitʔafal / *The door was closed by someone (an exterior agent)*

Likewise, the subject NPs in sentences 4.2.. are *The car*, *The ice*, *The door*, and *The window* respectively despite the fact that there is an exterior agent, which has been absorbed by the passive morphology carried by the verb forms: the /-t-/ affixed to these verbs. Thus, in all of the sentences of 4.1 and 4.2., the subject is  $S_0$  with a thematic role of **patient** even though there is an **agent** of the action. As a matter of fact, it is the fact that the agent is an exterior one that makes sentence 4.2.(i) sound rather funny as the act of cooling is something that is internally achieved by the car by itself. It is also this notion that the agent is an exterior entity that gives sentence 4.2.(ii)a different meaning from that in sentence 4.2.(ii). While in the latter sentence the ship sank by itself; in



the former sentence the ship may not necessarily have sunk: it was just drenched in water by an exterior agent. Similarly, 4.2.(iii) has a different meaning from that in sentence 4.2.(ii). While in the latter sentence the ice melted by itself; in the former sentence the ice was made to melt purposely by an exterior agent. Likewise, in sentences 4.2.(iv) –(vi) *the door* and *the window* are made *to open* or *close* by an exterior agent, and not by themselves. Accordingly, the verbs of sentences 4.2. are regarded as being two argument predicates; but the verbs of sentences 3.1. and 3.2. are regarded as being one argument predicates. This assumption also accounts for the reflexive interpretation that is found in sentences 3.2. and not found in sentences 4.1. and 4.2. Therefore, the subjects in sentences 3.2. are  $S_A$ , rather than  $S_O$ .

Let us now look at the verbs of Form VIII and see how they fare in CA syntax. It is to be noted that the verbs of Form VIII have been shown in H. Ghaly (2001) to be the ergative verb form in Qurʾānic Arabic. Let us start by looking at David Cowan's (1982) description of the verbs of Form VIII in Modern Literary Arabic. He says that these verbs are formed by inserting /-ta-/ after the first and second radicals, according to which the first radical is preceded by a glottal stop since it has become vowelless. He cites the sentences in (4.3.) as examples of this form and adds that "Form VIII is usually the reflexive of the 1<sup>st</sup> or root form." (161)

#### 4.3.

- (i) /jama9a/ He collected      /ʔijutama9a –nnaasu/ The  
people collected, assembled
- (ii) /faraqa/ He separated      /ʔiftaraqa –nnaasu / The  
people separated

(iii)/ʔara/ He bought      /ʔiʔara/ He bought

He also adds that we can distinguish between Form VIII and Form VII even though both forms give a **reflexive interpretation**. This distinction is based on the fact that Form VIII may take a direct object; whereas Form VII does not. David Cowan (1982), however, does not explain how the verbs of Form VIII convey reflexivity and how the reflexivity of this form differs from that which is found in the other derived forms that also convey reflexivity. He does not even distinguish between the verbs of the root form and those of Form VIII semantically and this is why in the sentences of 4.3. (iii) he gives both verb forms exactly the same translation.

H. Ghaly (2001) has attempted to make a semantic distinction between the verbs of the 1<sup>st</sup> or root form and those of Form VIII in Qurʾanic Arabic, whereby showing that the reflexivity associated with Form VIII is semantically equivalent to the ergative verb, as discussed in the literature. In other words, the verbs of Form VIII in Qurʾanic Arabic are three argument predicates in which there is an amalgamation of S and O in accordance with Dixon's description of ergativity. This amalgamation between S and O of the verbs of Form VIII in Qurʾanic Arabic is not dependent on idiosyncratic and inherent lexical properties of each particular verb. Rather, this amalgamation between S and O is structurally based; i.e. the verb form in Qurʾanic Arabic that has been found to be semantically equivalent to the ergative verb in the literature is morphologically distinct from the other verb forms. This makes the ergative verb in Qurʾanic Arabic different in structure from the other active verb forms that are not of Form VIII including those verb forms that do have the /-t-/ affix because the /-t-/ affix in Form VIII is after the first radical.. In this respect, Qurʾanic Arabic is similar to

Japanese as described by Natsuko Tsujimura's (1990) in that the causative/ inchoative pairs in Japanese are not formally identical, as they are in English..<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is the fact that the verb in Qur'anic Arabic that is semantically equivalent to the ergative verb in the literature is also **structurally** distinct that has prompted our regarding it as constituting a distinct verb class in the syntax of Qur'anic Arabic.

In CA, on the other hand, we have a different situation as it is a distinct system from Qur'anic Arabic. Let us start first by comparing the productivity of the verbs of Form VIII in CA in comparison with Qur'anic Arabic, as illustrated by sentences 4.4.

#### 4.4.

- (i) /wa~~ʔ~~ta9ala -rraaʔsu ʔayban/ surat mariam ,  
verse no.4  
" and my head is shining with grey hair" .Pickthall,  
p. 289.

In CA, we have /ʔilbeet walla9/  
def.art.-noun+ pron. Infl. (MS)- perfective verb(non-  
form VIII)  
*The house set fire*

- (ii) ʔi9tamara / surat ʔalbaqarah verse no.158.  
"... who is on pilgrimage to the House (of God) or  
visiteth it," Pickthall p.25

In CA, we /9amalu 9umra/  
pron. Infl. (MS)- perfective verb+ noun. (FS)  
He did a voyage to Mecca

- (iii) /ʔihtazzat / surat ʔalhajj , verse no.5  
"it doth thrill and swell and put forth every lovely  
kind of growth." Pickthall, p. 318.



In CA, we have /ʔithazzit ʔawi/

pron. Infl. (FS)- perfective verb (passive form in CA)+adverb

*She was really moved*

- (iv) ./ʔiytarafa yurfatan biyadih/ surat -albaqarah (The Cow) ,verse no.249

"him who taketh ( thereof) in the hollow of his hand." Pickthall,p.41.

In CA, we have /kulli waahid yiyri linafsu/

universal noun+ pron. Infl. (MS)\_ imperfective verb(-form VIII)+ prep-noun- pron. Infl. (MS)

*Everyone serves himself*

- (v) /fahtamala -ssaylu zabadan / surat ʔarra9d, verse no.17

"and the flood beareth (on its surface) a swelling foam "Pickthall p. 233.

In CA, we have / ʔithammil kitiir/

pron. Infl. (MS)- perfective verb (passive form in CA)+adverb

*A lot was born by him.*

- (vi) ./ʔi9tazaluukum/ surat ʔannisaa? , verse no.90

"they hold aloof from you". Pickthall,p.86.

In CA, we have /ʔi9tazalhum/ , which has the religious meaning of a husband having nothing to do with his wives when he is angry with them

As can be seen from sentences 4.4. (i)- (vi), there is a general tendency in CA to replace some verbs of Form VIII with verbs of other Forms whether this replacement is the root form or other derived verb forms. For example, /ʔihtazzit/ becomes the passive form in CA /ʔithazzat/,

/ʔiytarafa/ becomes /yiyrif linafsu/, and /waɛta9ala/ is replaced by /walla9/. Some of these verbs of Form VIII are even changed into a noun as in /9umra/ *a pilgrimage*, instead of /ʔi9tamara/ *to go on pilgrimage*; and in some cases the Qurʔanic verb form is retained because it conveys a religious meaning, as in 4.4. (vi). This difference in productivity between CA and Qurʔanic Arabic as regards Form VIII is not surprising, as they represent different systems with different syntactic and morphological rules, one of which has been the fact that /-t-/ affixed verbs in CA represent the passive verb forms in this variety of Arabic, as mentioned earlier.

However, there are nonetheless verbs of Form VIII in CA and they are different from the other /-t-/ affixed verb forms in CA. The verbs of Form VIII in CA have roughly the same structure as that of Qurʔanic Arabic in that they have the /-t-/ affix after the first radical in keeping with Cowan's (1982) description. Maintaining the assumption that a difference in structure reflects a semantic difference, H. Ghaly (1994a) has shown that the verbs of Form VIII in CA represent **Agentive** passives, in which case they differ from the other /-t-/ affixed verbs. It is, accordingly, necessary to give a very brief description of the verbs of Form VIII in CA showing that they cannot function as ergatives in the syntax of CA because they already function as **Agentive** passives.

Let us have now a brief look at the verb forms of Form VIII in CA, as shown in 4.5.

#### 4.5.

(i) /ʔirtakab ilgariima dih/

Pron. Infl.- (MS) perfective verb (form VIII)  
+noun+dem.pron (FS)

*He committed this crime. (The crime was committed by him(self))*

- (ii) /ʔintahal ɛaxseyit raagil ʔaxar/

Pron. Infl.- (MS) perfective verb (form VIII) +noun(F)  
+noun +noun

*He forfeited the personality of another man (The forgery of another man was made by him(self))*

- (iii) /ʔixtartak ʔinta/

pron. Infl. (MS)- perfective verb(formVIII)+strong  
pron.

*You are the chosen one by myself*

- (v) /ʔigtama9 biihum/

Pron. Infl.- (MS) perfective verb (form VIII)+ prep -  
Pron. Infl(pl.)

*He met with them (The meeting was convened by him(self))*

- (vi) /ʔiɛtayal kitiir/

Pron. Infl.- (MS) perfective verb (form  
VIII)+adjective (MS)

*He worked hard (The working a lot was made by him(self))*

- (vii) /ʔiɛtarak filmaɛruu9/

Pron. Infl.- (MS) perfective verb (form  
VIII)+prep+det.art+noun

*He participated in the project (The participation in the project was made by him(self))*

- (viii) /ʔi9tazar 9an -ilmi9aad/

Pron. Infl.- (MS) perfective verb (form  
VIII)+prep+det.art+noun

*He apologized for the appointment (The apology for the appointment was made by (himself)).*



- (ix) /ʔinnaas bitixtilif ma9a ba9diiha/

Def art.- noun + progressive prefix-imperfective  
verb (form VIII)+ prep + reciprocal noun – pron.  
Infl. (FS)

*People are at variance with one other*

- (x) /ʔixtalat binaas kitiir/

pron. Infl. (MS)- perfective verb(form VIII)+prep-  
def.art-noun+adverb

*He made himself to be in touch with people a lot*

- (ix) /ʔi9taqad ʔinnu kaddaab/

Pron. Infl.- (MS) perfective verb (form  
VIII)+comp+pron.infl. (MS)+noun

*He believed that he was a liar (The belief that he is  
a liar was made by him(self))*

- (x) /ʔiftarad ʔinnu miwaafiʔ/

Pron. Infl.- (MS) perfective verb (form  
VIII)+comp+pron.infl. (MS)+noun

*He assumed that he had agreed (The assumption that  
he agreed was made by him(self))*

Looking first at sentences 4.5.(i)-(ii), we find that the subject NPs are /ʔilgariima dih/ and /ʔaxaxeyyit raagil ʔaxar/ respectively in accordance with the rules of passivity found in the literature, requiring that the internal arguments be the subjects. Also, in accordance with the literature, the external argument is absorbed by the passive morphology carried by the verb form; i.e., it is absorbed by the /-t-/ affix after the first radical. But the verbs of Form VIII in CA also convey a **reflexive interpretation**, as described by David Cowan (1982). In turn, the pronominal forms generated in the verb forms can be taken as referring to instrumental **agents** of the actions of /ʔirtakab/ and /ʔintahal/. In this respect, these pronominal forms generated in the verb forms are coreferential to the external arguments that have been

absorbed by the passive morphology carried by these respective verb forms. It is in this respect that the verbs of **this** form are regarded as **by passive** in the syntax of CA; i.e., they are coreferential to the external arguments that have been absorbed by the passive morphology.

The same analysis is found in sentence 4.5.(iii), which provides further evidence that the internal argument is the subject NP. The internal argument in this sentence is a small *pro*<sup>3</sup>, which is generated by a local determiner which is the object bound pronominal. That the internal argument is the subject in sentence 3.9.(iii) is also seen from subject pronominal form of the strong pronoun /*?inta*/, which is generated as an emphatic pronoun to emphasize the internal argument which is the subject of the sentence. As for the external argument of sentence 3.9.(iii), it is absorbed by the passive morphology carried by the verb form (i.e. the /-t-/ affix); but this external argument which is absorbed by the passive morphology carried by the verb form has a coreferential pronominal which is the subject pronominal carried by the verb form. It is this coreferential subject pronominal that represents the **Agentive** passive. In other words, the passive external argument is absorbed by the passive morphology (i.e. /-t-/ affix) and the Agentive or instrumental argument which is coreferential with the passive external argument is a subject small *pro*, which is locally determined by the subject bound pronominal form. How these arguments cohere with the theta criterion is expounded in H.Ghaly (1994a); our main concern here is that the verbs of Form VIII in CA are passive **Agentive** verbs; therefore, cannot function as ergatives in CA syntax.

With intransitive verbs as shown in sentences 4.5.(v)-(x), we still have three argument predicates: the concept conveyed by the verb form is its internal argument, the



external argument is absorbed by passive morphology, and the coreferential external argument, which is locally determined by the subject bound pronominal. It is the concept that is conveyed by the verb that becomes the subject of these passive verbs as it is the internal argument in these sentences. Such an analysis helps us account for the fact that some languages such as Arabic allow the passivization of intransitive verbs. In turn, the bound pronominal form in the verb leads to the generation of the external argument that is coreferential with the external argument that has been absorbed by the passive morphology carried by the verb form. For example, in sentence 4.5. (v), it is the noun derived from the verb /?igtama9/ that is the internal argument and it is the subject of this passive verb. The external argument of this sentence is likewise absorbed by the passive morphology and the other coreferential external argument is locally determined by the subject bound pronominal carried by the verb form.

Maintaining the same pattern of analysis, the concepts derived from the verb forms of sentences 4.5. (vi)-(x) represent the internal argument, whereby they are the subjects of these sentences. The subject bound pronominals locally determine for the generation of external arguments that are coreferential with external arguments that have been absorbed by the passive morphology carried by the verb forms. Therefore, it is the presence of these coreferential pronominals that represents the Agent of the action and this is why these sentences have been called **Agentive passives** in the syntax of CA. Such an assumption coheres with other linguists' view that "that languages can differ with respect to a lexical property of the passive participle" and that "some languages have more than one passive morpheme, each figuring in a slightly different construction." (Alana Johns, 1992: 63) In other words, CA has two passive



verbs of Form VIII do not have distinct passive forms because they themselves represent passivity; but as the verbs of Form VIII in Classical Arabic represent active verb forms, they do have distinct passive forms and it is these passive forms that represent **Agentive** passives. It is therefore not accidental that the verbs of Form VIII in CA convey **Agentive** passives. The generalization is that the verbs of Form VIII represent **Agentive** passives in both Classical Arabic and CA; but as this verb form in the former variety of Arabic is an active verb form, it is its passive verb form that conveys an **Agentive** passive.

In order to see how the passive verbs of Form VIII in Classical Arabic are **Agentive** passives, let us have a quick look at some examples of the passive verbs of Form VIII in Classical Arabic in general. Then, let us compare these passive verbs of Form VIII with the passive verb forms which are not of Form VIII, and see if there is any semantic difference between them. This is illustrated by sentences 4.8. 4.8.

- (i) /*γurifa lahu*/ *He has been served*  
       /*?uyturafat mil9aqatun min -al?urz*/ *A scoop of*  
       *rice has been served by*  
       *someone*
- (ii) /*xuyyira*/ *He was given a choice*  
       /*?uxtiira*/ *He was chosen by somebody*
- (iii) /*?amrun nuheya 9anhu*/ *A matter that has been*  
       *prohibited*  
       /*?amrun ?intuhiya minhu*/ *This matter has been*  
       *finished by someone*
- (iv) / *xulita -tta9aamu*/ *The food was mixed*  
       /*yuxtalatu ?al?amru 9aleyhi*/ *The matter was*  
       *perplexing for him*

(v) / **huzzat ?aEEajaratu** *The tree has been shaken*  
 / **tuhtazzu suuratuhu** *His image has been shaken by something*

(vi) / **junniba –lmawduu9u/** *The subject was set aside.*  
 / **?ujtunibat ?alkabaa?iru/** *The great sins have been avoided by the believers,*

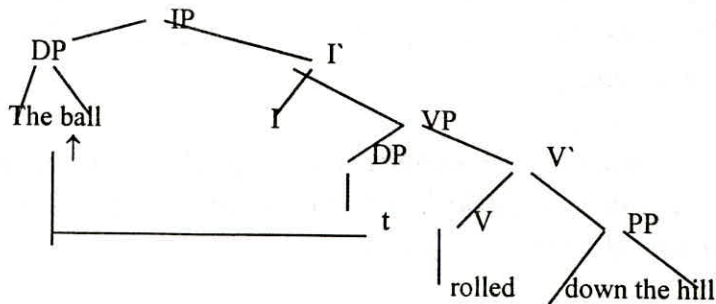
Making use of the intuitions of many native speakers of Arabic and specially speakers who are well-versed in Classical Arabic, it has been found that the passive forms of Form VIII convey a kind of *by-passive* which is not found in the other passive forms, as shown by their respective translations. This discussion of *by-passive* in Classical Arabic will not be pursued any further as our main concern in this study is with CA. However, this very brief discussion is meant to show that it is not surprising to find that the verbs of Form VIII convey **Agentive** passives in CA, since even in Classical Arabic the passive forms of Form VIII can be said to convey an Agentive passive. And if the verbs of Form VIII are shown to be Agentive passives in the syntax of CA, they cannot function as ergatives. 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.

## 5. Verb-raising, Case-marking, and theta-marking of the Unergative Verbs of CA

### 5.1: Verb-Raising

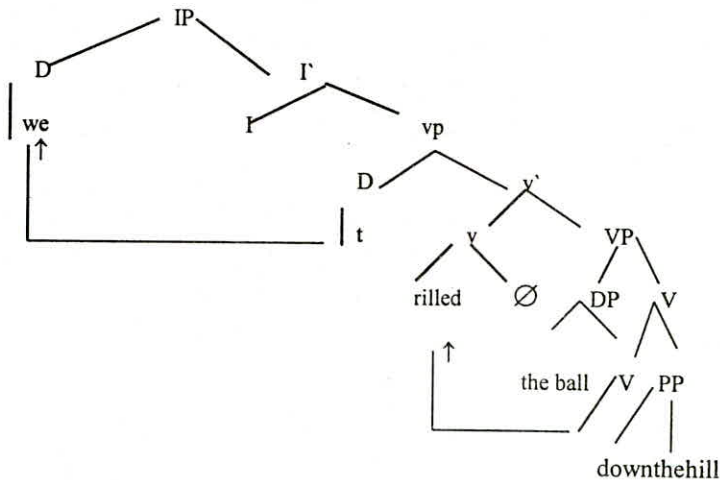
A. Radford (1997) maintains that the ergative predicates are the only predicates that do not have verb raising since they do not have a light verb to be raised to. This is shown in 5.1.1.

## 5.1.1.



On the other hand, for A. Radford (1997) the transitive counterpart for the ergative verb involves verb raising to a causative light verb, as shown in 5.1.2.

## 5.1.2.



Therefore, following Radford (1997), it is to be maintained that the unergative verbs in CA do involve verb raising.

Also, following Radford (1997), it is maintained that even the verbs that appear to have no complements do subsume to the VP shell analysis in which they are adjoined to an agentive light verb, as shown in the tree in 5.1.5. In 5.1.3, we have the verbs after adjunction and in 5.1.4., we have the verbs before adjunction.



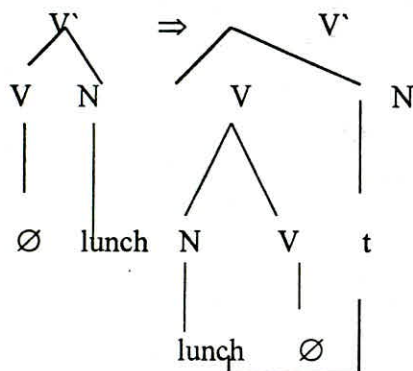
## 5.1.3.

- (i) *They are lunching.*
- (ii) *Let's party!*
- (iii) *He was lying.*
- (iv) *He was fishing.*

## 5.1.4.

- (i) *They are having lunch.*
- (ii) *He was telling lies.*
- (iii) *He was catching fish.*
- (iv) *Let's have a party!*

## 5.1.5.



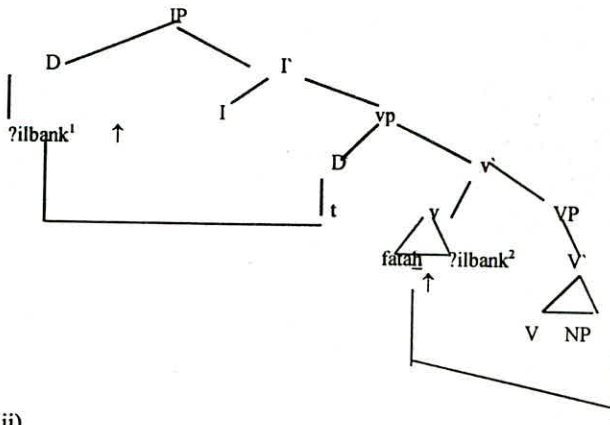
That is, for Radford (1997) all types of predicates that have an external argument as their syntactic subject (whether they have their complements incorporated in them or not) subsume to the VP shell analysis, in which case they are adjoined to an agentive light verb. Therefore, it is only the ergative predicate that is adjoined to a light verb.

Applying this to the CA unergatives, it is maintained that these verbs are formed by the incorporation of the complement into the verb form and then the incorporated verb form is raised to an abstract agentive light verb. It is in this respect that these verbs are "implicitly transitive." (

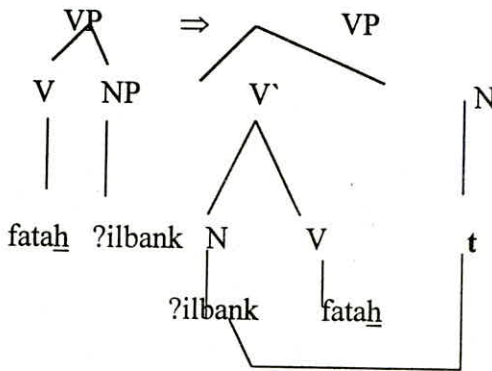
Radford, 1997: 210). This is illustrated by sentence 5.1.6.(i) and the trees in 5.1.6.(ii) and 5.1.6.(iii).

(i) /ʔilbank fatahu/ *The bank has opened*

(ii)



(iii)



Such an incorporation of the complement into the verb form, as shown in 5.1.6.(iii), is possible due to the inherent reflexivity between the subject and the object of the verb in question. It is only after this verb incorporation has taken place that the rule of verb raising takes place, as shown in 5.1.6.(ii). That is, /?ilbank<sup>1</sup>/ in 5.1.6.(ii) is raised to the specifier of IP; whereas /?ilbank<sup>2</sup>/ is incorporated within V

Recall that the Agency associated with the unergative verbs in CA is different from that associated with the passive verb verbs in that with the former verbs it is self-inflicted in the sense that it is not an exterior Agent but more like a reflexive Agent. This is why when the semantics of the verb in question allows such an interpretation, the sentence is grammatical; but otherwise, the sentence is highly context specific, as shown in 3.2. It is in this respect that it is maintained the verb raising of the unergative verbs involves complement incorporation in addition to this VP shell analysis.

## 5.2. Case checking of the arguments

The Case checking of the specifier of IP is fairly straightforward: the I node in 5.1.6.(ii) checks the nominative Case of /?ilbank<sup>1</sup>/. As for /?ilbank<sup>2</sup>/, it is not Case checked since it has been incorporated within V'. This is in keeping with the fact that unergative verbs are intransitives and the fact that they are verbs whose subject has a degree of Agency.

## 5.3. Theta checking of the external argument

Since theta marking is the property of the base, **v'** in 5.1.6.(ii) theta marks its specifier **D**, which base-generates /?ilbank<sup>1</sup>/ before subject raising. It assigns to it a thematic role that has Agency. As for /?ilbank<sup>2</sup>/, we may assume that it is not theta marked in order to avoid a violation of the theta criterion since unergative verbs are one argument predicates. But since theta marking is the property of the base, we may assume that the rule of verb incorporation is a lexical rule and that theta marking takes place after /?ilbank<sup>2</sup>/ has been incorporated within the verb. Consequently, at the base, as shown in 5.1.6.(ii), there is no argument to be theta marked since it has been incorporated within the verb form in the lexicon.



## Conclusion

Maintaining Perlmutter's (1978) assumption that it is not the case that every object of the transitive verb can be the subject of unaccusative verbs; i.e. it is a process that is heavily dependent on the semantics of the lexical item, this study has tried to show that in CA there are no ergative verbs (i.e. unaccusative verbs). It is this dependence on the semantics of the lexical item that has made even Keyser, & T. Roeper (1984) maintain that sometimes ergative verbs have the nuance that the **theme** is also the **agent** due to the notion of reflexivity. With this state of affairs as regards the definition regards ergative verbs that makes the distinction between unergative verbs and ergative verbs far from clear cut. In turn, it does not withstand the test of universality, as shown by its non-existence in the verbal structures of CA, as has been shown in this study.

However, the non-existence of an ergative verb in CA does not mean that there may not be another predicate structure which is not verbal that is semantically equivalent to the notion of an unaccusative in the literature. It is to be noted that the notion of unaccusatives basically pertains to nouns, as shown by some of the literature since there is a marked diversity in the literature in the description of this language phenomenon. But this is an investigation that requires a study of its own that is hopefully to be undertaken in the near future.

## End Notes

1. It is to be noted that the verbs of sentences 3.4. (iii) –(v) are different from those of sentences 3.4. (i) –(ii) in that the latter group of verbs are of Forms II, which has been

shown to be the causative verb form in CA in H. Ghaly (1994b).

2. It is to be noted that for Natsuko Tsujimura (1990) the inchoative/ causative distinction is broader than ergatives, which is a sub-branch of inchoative verbs.
3. How this local determination takes place has not been discussed here (interested readers are kindly advised to see Chomsky (1982), and for its application to CA, see H.Ghaly (1994a).
4. For a discussion of the reflexive pronominals in CA, see H. Ghaly (1995a).

### **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

/ʔ/ voiceless glottal stop

/q/ voiceless uvular stop

##### **Fricatives**

/f/ voiceless labio-dental fricative

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

/ɛ/ voiceless palatal fricative

/ħ/ voiceless glottal fricative

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

/ħ/ and /ʁ/ voiceless and voiced pharyngeal fricatives

### **Emphatics**

/t̤/ and /d̤/ voiceless and voiced dental, apical emphatic stops

/s̤/ voiceless dental emphatic fricative

/z̤/ 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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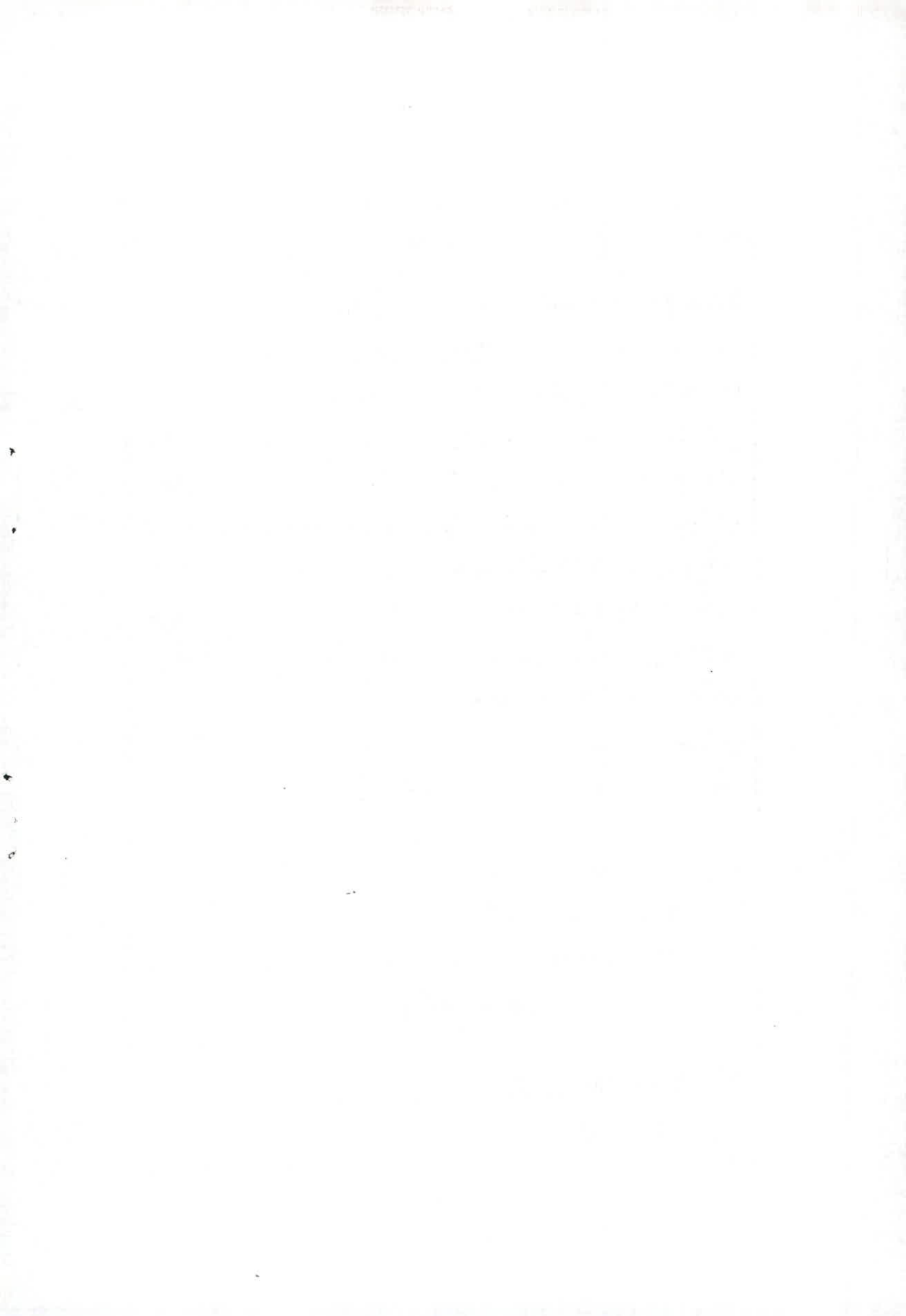
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## تقديم

يسعد قسم علم النفس ومركز البحوث النفسية أن يقدم للسادة الكرام من المتخصصين في العلوم والدراسات الإنسانية المجلد الثالث عشر لمجلة علم النفس المعاصر والعلوم الإنسانية بعد أن توقفت لفترة لظروف طارئة لتعود مرة ثانية وبقوة خاصة بعد أن اتسع مجال علم النفس ليصل إلى ثلاثة وخمسين فرعاً من فروع العلم وتداخلت هذه الفروع مع العلوم الإنسانية الأخرى الذي أصبح لزاماً علينا أن يتم نشر جميع العلوم الإنسانية لما لها علاقة بشكل أو بآخر بمجال النفس البشرية . والان يصدر المجلد الجديد والذي يتكون من أربع أجزاء فعلية الآن متضمناً أبحاث عديدة متميزة في مجالات مختلفة سواء في مصر أو دول عربية شقيقه خاصة دولة الكويت والمملكة العربية السعودية ونحن آمل أن يكون النشر شهرياً في المستقبل القريب وفقاً لترخيص المجلة لإقبال النشر بقوة عليها عندما تتوفر الإمكانيات الفنية والبشرية .

ونود أن نؤكد أن المجلة ترزق مجاناً علي الجامعات والمراكز والجان العلمية لتشجيع النشر والمساهمة في إثراء المكتبة العربية بأبحاث ودراسات مختلفة ، نأمل أن تكون إضافة علمية جادة .

والله الموفق

أ.د / محمد سمير عبد الفتاح  
رئيس التحرير

## ( قواعد النشر لمجلة علم النفس المعاصر )

- ١ - مرخص لهذه المجلة من المجلس الأعلى للصحافة بالصدور شهريا.
- ٢ - تصدر أربع أعداد في كل عام.
- تصدر المجلة إصدارات خاصة لبحوث منفردة ذات حجم أكبر من المسموح به للنشر بالمجلة.
- تقبل للنشر البحوث النظرية والتطبيقية في فروع العلوم الإنسانية.
- ينبغي أن تكون البحوث مكتوبة على الكمبيوتر من أصل وصورتين على أن تكون بنط ١٤ مقاس ١٢ × ١٩ سم على أن يكون عدد الأسطر في حدود ٢٥ سطرا. والعنوان أعلى أول صفحة في البحث.
- يخطر الباحث بتاريخ تسلم البحث.
- في حالة قبول نشر البحث يخطر الباحث ولا ترد إليه النسخة.
- الحجم الأمثل للبحث المقبول هو تسعة آلاف كلمة (٩٠٠٠) وفي حدود ٣٠ صفحة فقط.
- تحصل تكلفة الطباعة فقط من الباحث وتوزع مجاني من الجامعات ومراكز البحوث واللجان العلمية.
- يحصل الباحث عن نسخة من المجلة المنشور بها بحثه بالإضافة إلى ١٠ مستلآت من البحث.
- البحوث التجريبية تتضمن ٤ إجراءات:
- أ - إطار نظري      ب - الإجراءات المنهجية
- ج - النتائج      د - العائد النظري والتطبيقات للنتائج
- طريقة كتابة المراجع في نهاية البحث على أن يشار للمرجع برقمه وسنة نشر واسم الشهرة بين القوسين داخل متن البحث.
- الاسم، التاريخ، عنوان الكتاب وتحت خطه أو بنط مغاير - مدينة النشر، ودار النشر
- يرفق ملخصان الأول باللغة العربية والثاني باللغة الإنجليزية على أن لا يتجاوز كل منهما ١٥٠ كلمة وبحيث يتضمن الملخص مشكلة البحث - الإجراءات المنهجية - النتائج.
- يسمح بنشر ملخصات الرسائل العلمية بعد منح الدرجة والعرض على هيئة التحرير.
- تنشر المجلة للأستاذة (Professors) دراساتهم دون مقابل والمهتمين بقيمة التكلفة الفعلية للطباعة.

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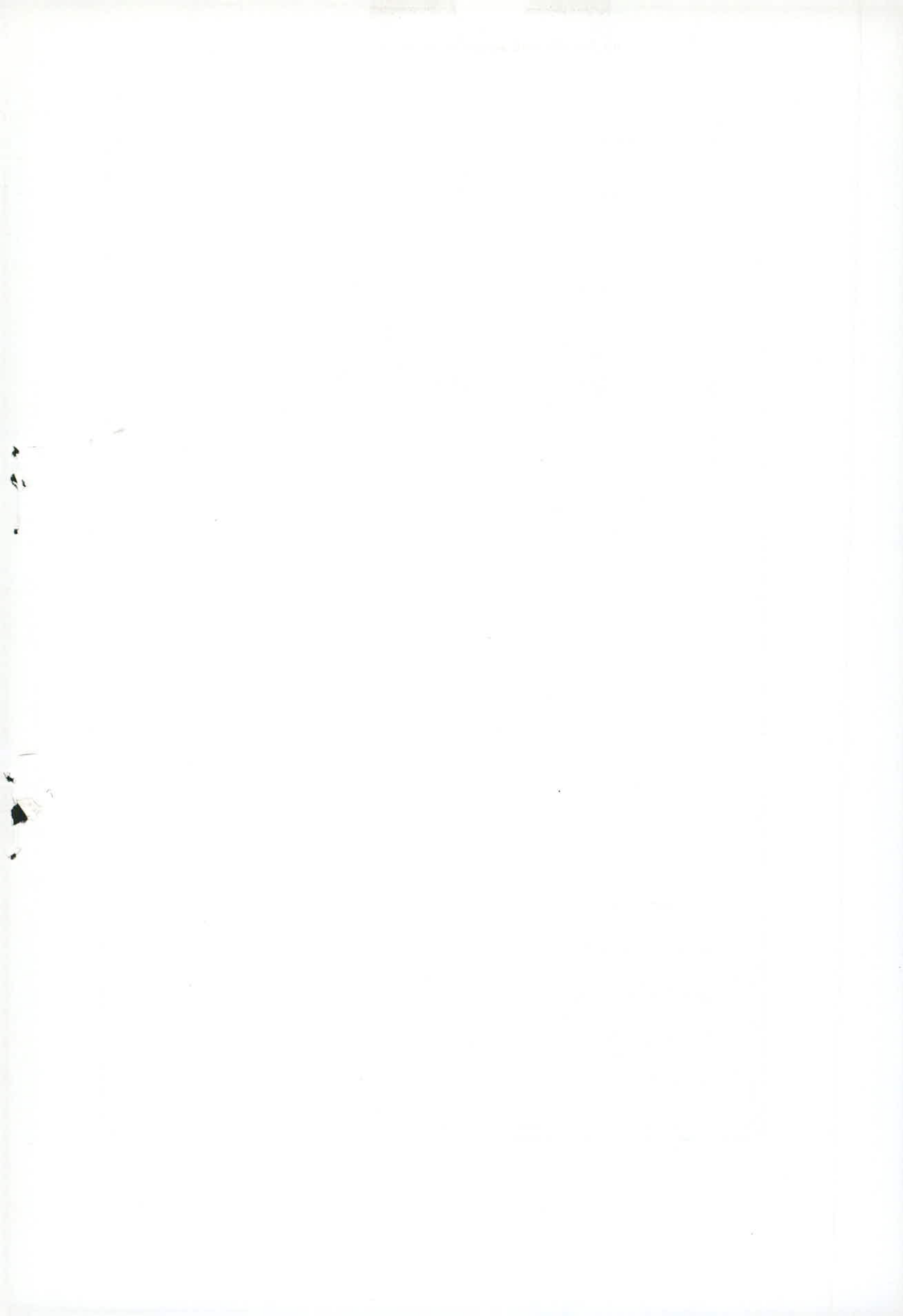
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