Article

Privileged Syntactic Argument and Discourse-Pragmatics in Arabic

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Abstract: Privileged syntactic argument (PSA henceforth) is a concept postulated by Role and Reference Grammar (RRG henceforth) to substitute the traditional notion of subject. It constitutes the only grammatical relation within the RRG theory which claims that PSA is construction specific. PSA is defined as syntactic restrictions on NPs and PPs (arguments and non-arguments) that can trigger agreement and supply the interpretation for missing argument. RRG differs from other approaches in this respect in that it denies the existence of grammatical relations while maintains that PSA is the only universal relation that has solid evidence. Moreover, it is a grammatical that is affected by discourse-pragmatic factors such as topicality, prominence and focus. Arabic is among the languages that has not been studied through this typological perspective. Thus, there is a paucity in the literature concerning the types of PSA and criteria of PSA selection in Arabic. The results show that Arabic treats the actor of transitive verb, subject of intransitive verb and derived subject of passive alike. Besides, PSA in Arabic is not necessarily a macro-role, i.e. non-macro-role arguments can be PSA.

1. Introduction

The concept of PSA is developed by RRG (Van Valin, 2005) to replace the traditional notion of subject and to argue against the universality of grammatical relations. It is a concept that goes beyond the mere idea that subject is the topic of discourse. It has grammatical properties and is affected by discourse-pragmatics. Moreover, it is not only language specific but also construction-specific and it should be understood and analysed in the constructions in which it manifests itself.

The notion of subject is an ambiguous one and includes several related terms. Quirk et. al (1985) states that the subject is theme (given information). It is the topic about which the predicate states new information. Another term is the logical subject which refers to agent. Prague school attempt to differentiate between grammatical subject and psychological subject. The latter is defined as either a topic or theme (Lapolla, 2023, p. 269).

Subject in generative grammar received an extensive analysis in terms of its structural position. It is defined in two ways. The first one is structural subject which a constituent that is dominated by S (sentence). The second one is thematic subject which is an argument that holds a thematic relation with its predicate (Graffi, 1988).

Structural subject attracted the attention of researchers who are interested in analysing subject-verb asymmetry in Arabic (Mohammed, 1990; Fassi Fehri, 1993; Harbert & Bahloul, 2002; Soltan, 2007, 2021; Aoun et al., 2010 among others). The diversity of proposals and the different analyses of subject-verb asymmetry in Arabic results in a highly complicated approaches. Aoun et al. concludes that the notion of subject is conceptually vague and grammatically not well defined (2010, p. 72).

The problem of the present study is twofold. Firstly, Arabic subject-verb asymmetry is extensively analysed from the generative perspective but with conflicting results. Secondly, there is a paucity in the literature with respect to other approaches to the notion of subject. In other words, another approach is needed to analyse the notion of subject and subject-verb asymmetry. In this respect, RRG is adopted to provide a new account for subject in Arabic.

As a result, the present study is motivated by two reasons. Firstly, it attempts to investigate PSA in Arabic as a replacement to the traditional notion of subject. Secondly, it provides a new perspective (RRG) to the problem of subject-verb asymmetry.

The present paper addresses the following questions

1. Do Actor of transitive verb, subject of intransitive verb derived subject of passive have the same syntactic behaviour in Arabic?
2. What is the effect of discourse-pragmatics on PSA in Arabic?
3. What are the types of PSA in Arabic?

2. Materials and Methods

The research methodology for this study involved a qualitative analysis of Arabic linguistic data, focusing on the interaction between syntax and discourse-pragmatics within the framework of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG). The study aimed to identify and analyze the Privileged Syntactic Argument (PSA) in Arabic sentences, considering both syntactic and pragmatic factors. Data were collected from various Arabic texts, including classical and modern literature, to ensure a comprehensive examination of language use across different contexts and time periods. The analysis involved detailed examination of sentence structures, paying close attention to subject-verb agreement, word order, and the role of focus and topic in sentence formation. The study also incorporated a review of existing literature on Arabic syntax and pragmatics to contextualize findings within broader linguistic theories. This methodology allowed for an in-depth understanding of how syntactic structures are influenced by discourse-pragmatic considerations in Arabic, contributing to the ongoing discussion on the interplay between syntax and semantics in natural language.

3. Results and Discussion
The Generative Perspective

Arabic subject verb agreement represents one of the most fertile sample that attracts the attention of researchers who are interested in finding a sophisticated explanation to the puzzle of agreement asymmetry. Arabic displays subject verb agreement asymmetry with VSO word order while maintains full agreement with SVO.

1- al-banaat-u daras-na fii l-maktabat-i[(1)]
   the-girls nom. studied-3f.pl. in the-library-gen.
   'The girls studied in the library.'
2- daras-at al-banaat-u fii l-maktabat-i
   studied-3f.sg. the-girls-nom. in the-library-gen.
   'The girls studied in the library.'

This observation produces a plethora of analyses on Arabic subject verb agreement and remains one of the interesting phenomena in Arabic linguistics. Almost all the researches about subject verb agreement in Arabic are generativists. This is because

generative grammar concentrates on idiosyncrasies and Arabic agreement asymmetry displays this in (2). Secondly, the mechanisms of generative grammar allow researchers to speculate and generate different explanations based on the three main operations of Move, Merge and Agree.

The following is a brief sketch of the main stream studies of subject in Arabic. Although the following sketch is not directly related to the present paper, it is necessary for two reasons. Firstly, it represents the contrast between the generative approach to grammatical relations (specifically subject verb agreement) and the RRG one. Secondly, it constitutes the point of the departure and the significance of the current research by pointing out the problematic nature of subject as a linguistics concept.

Word order and Subject Position

Arabic is flexible word order language which gives raise to different combinations of word order such as VSO and SVO. Other word order such as OVS, OSV, and SOV are permissible if the object is a clitic pronoun attached to the verb or when the object receives focal stress (Aoun et al., 2010, p. 48).

The available literature is restricted to VSO and SVO word order because these are the typical patterns of Arabic while the others are special structures. Given the existence of two-word orders, the natural starting point for any research working with the generative perspective to raise a question about the genuine subject position.

According to Koopman & Sportiche (1991) and McCloskey (1997), there are two possible positions to the subject within the clause: the first one is within the thematic shell and the second is the specifier of TP.

Following the above-mentioned positions of subject, there are three main proposals [2] for the distribution of subject in Arabic:

1- Genuine subject position is after the verb (VSO) within the thematic shell so that it can receive thematic role, while the specifier of TP is occupied by null expletive. In this case, the subject in SVO is related to a trace in the specifier of VP (Mohammed, 1990).

2- Genuine subject position is postverbal (VSO), while preverbal subject in SVO is treated as a topic or left-dislocated element (Fassi Fehri, 1993; Soltan, 2007).

1- Abbreviations: nom (nominative), acc (accusative), gen (genitive), sg (singular), 3 (third person), f (feminine), pass (passive), m (masculine), pl (plural), past (past tense), indef (indefinite), p.p. (past participle)
2) See Harbert & Bahloul (2002) for a detailed review of the available proposals.

3- Full agreement is the result of specifier head relationship while partial agreement is the result of post syntactic merge in which number feature is not spelled out (Benmamoun, 2000).

Of course, the problem is bigger than this and each proposal has a shortcoming. The first proposal must explain why the verb agrees with preverbal null expletive in number only while ignoring gender and person. Secondly, how the subject in SVO order receive its thematic role while it is outside the VP. The second proposal has been challenged on the basis that preverbal subject displays a true subject property such as case, agreement and binding (Aoun et al., 2010, p. 50).

The third proposal suffers from the intervening elements such as VOS order in which the object separates the verb from the subject. In this order there is no post syntactic merge operation and still the agreement is partial (Soltan, 2021, p. 376). The above-mentioned proposals are not exhaustive. It should be noted that there are other proposals such as (Aoun et al., 1994) which proposes that agreement may be lost because of further movement out of specifier head relationship.

In a different vein, Ohalla (1997, p. 205) prefers to characterize the problem in terms of rich agreement and poor agreement appealing to the attested facts that languages with poor agreement "tend to be identical with the third person singular agreement morpheme."

The suggested proposals and the available analyses attempt to find an appropriate explanation to agreement asymmetry in Arabic. Nonetheless, there is no general consensus about why Arabic displays such asymmetry. On the other hand, the suggested proposals are specifically developed to Arabic (not generalizable). What is more important, they suffer from shortcomings that render them to mere speculations. The next section will highlight a possible solution to agreement asymmetry in which preverbal subject is considered a left-dislocation element (topic). This will deny the existence of preverbal subject in Arabic and restrict the subject to post verbal position which means that Arabic verb agrees with the subject in gender and person only. Number agreement is invariably singular (default).

Subject Properties

Some examples in Arabic suggest that preverbal subject is in fact a peripheral element. This statement is based on two observations: agreement asymmetry and the distribution of indefinite subject.

3- a.   kataba   l-talib-u   l-darsa
    wrote.3m.sg   the-student-nom   -the-homework-acc
    'The student wrote the homework.'

3-b.l-talib-u   kataba   l-darsa
    the-student-nom   wrote.3m.sg   the-homework-acc
    'The student wrote the homework.'

4-   a. za ˇ ʔa walad-un
       came.past.3m.sg boy-nom.indef
          'A boy came.'

4-b. *walad-un za ˇ ʔa
    boy-nom.indef came. past.3m.sg

Arabic verb lacks number agreement whether the subject is plural or singular as stated in (2). The other example (3) shows that there is restriction on preverbal subject when it is indefinite. This observation indicates that the preverbal requires special rules. It is not regular for the subject to be preverbal.

The indefinite subject lacks the regular properties rendering the preverbal position ungrammatical. While (3-a) the subject is in its regular position and possesses the required properties. It triggers agreement in gender and person. The regular situation is, then, triggering gender and person. Triggering full agreement in gender, person and number is irregular.

It is important to mention that all the generative analyses targeting agreement asymmetry in Arabic is restricted to human subjects. When the subject is animate non-human or inanimate agreement is invariably singular (Ryding, 2014, p. 130).

5- a. al-Suquur-u ʔakal-at al-samakat-a
  the-hawks-nom. ate-3f.sg. the-fish-acc.
'The hawks ate the fish'

                                    b.   ʔakal-at al-Suquur-u al-samakat-a
    ate-3f.sg. the-hawks-nom. the-fish-acc.
     'The hawks ate the fish'

6- a. Saqat al-kitab-u
    fell.3m.sg the-book-nom.
    'The book fell down'
    b. Saqtatt-at al-kutub-u
    fell-3f.pl the-books-nom.
    'The books fell down'

The above examples demonstrate the regular and default agreement pattern in Arabic lacks number. It is only with human subjects that asymmetry appears. Nonetheless, the problem remains unsolved with respect to agreement asymmetry. The main stream trends seem to reach vague results because none of them provide a sophisticated

explanation. Post verbal subject does not have any restriction whether it is definite or not, explicit or expletive. Preverbal subject, on the other hand, is restricted when it is indefinite.

The conflicting results and the diversity of analyses indicate the problematic nature of subject. The notion of subject in generative grammar is conceptually vague and grammatically not well defined (Aoun et al., 2010, p. 72). To this end, a new concept is needed to replace the notion of subject.

Privileged Syntactic Argument

With the observations and the available facts that are introduced in the previous section, this section will be devoted to the explication of the notion of privileged syntactic argument and its application in Arabic, showing how PSA is different form subject and the effect of discourse-pragmatics on PSA. According to Van Valin (2005, p. 107) PSA is:

1- A grammatical relation that is clause internal. It supplies the interpretation of the missing argument in construction.

2- Affected by discourse pragmatic factors which alters the selection of the privileged syntactic argument. It is clause internal mechanism that is pragmatically motivated when the grammar of language gives a choice of more than one argument are available.

3- A semantic predicate-argument relation that is important to pose in addition to syntactic relations because, in some languages, the syntactic relations are neutralized (Van Valin, 2005, p. 89).

Lapolla (2023, p. 272) states that the notion of PSA refers to an argument (controller or pivot) that is restricted by semantic roles for grammatical purposes. It is one of the mechanics of referent tracking "i.e. keeping track of who is doing what in discourse. No other grammatical relations are recognized in this approach."

RRG claims that grammatical relations are construction-specific which limits the interpretation of the participant in the clause. (Van Valin, 2005; Lapolla, 2023). And it can be semantically defined as in Acehnese or syntactically defined as in English Icelandic and Dyirbal (Van Valin, 2005, p. 94).

There are different types of restricted neutralizations. They define the PSA of a given construction. The neutralization can be characterized as the following. The actor and the undergoer of intransitive verb is called intransitive subject abbreviated as 'S'. 'A$_T$' stands for the actor of a transitive verb, and 'U$_T$' stands for the undergoer of a transitive verb. 'd-S' stands for derived subject which is the core argument of passive construction. Consider the following examples.

7. a. qara' almudaris-u (S) aldars   Actor of transitive verb
    read.past.3m.sg the-teacher-nom the-lesson-acc.
    'The teacher read the lesson'

   b. kharaj almudaris-u (S)   Actor of intransitive verb
    left-past.3m.sg. the-teacher-nom.
    'The teacher left'

  c. taeab almudaris-u (S)   Undergoer of intransitive verb
    faint-past.3m.sg. the-teacher-nom.
    'The teacher has fainted'

d. qra'at almudaris-u alkalimati*   Undergoer of transitive verb
(active)
    read-past.3f.sg. the-teacher-nom. the-words-acc.
    'The teacher have read the words'

e. qur't alklmat-u (d-S)   Undergoer of transitive verb (passive)
    read-pass.3.sg. the-words-3f.pl.nom.
    'The words were read'

g. 'autaa Muhamad-u (d-S) alkutub   Undergoer of transitive verb
(passive)
    give-pass.3.sg. muhamed-nom. the-books-acc.

‘Muhamad was given the books’

    h. 'autaa Muhamad-a alkutub-u (d-S)   Undergoer of transitive verb (passive)

        give-pass.3.sg. muhamed-acc. the-books-3m.pl.nom.

       ‘The books were given to Muhamed’

The above examples show that PSA is syntactically defined in Arabic. The semantic role of the subject has no effect on agreement. It always agrees with the syntactic subject. PSA in Arabic is syntactically neutralized whether it is actor or undergoer of transitive or intransitive verb (7. a-d). It is also neutralized when it is subject of passive construction (7. e-g). This means that (S, A_T, d-S) syntactically function alike while the undergoer (U_T) does not function as PSA.

The PSAs in (7) are syntactically neutral in that they trigger agreement. However, they are semantically different because they show contrast between actor and undergoer. The grammatical relation in such construction is missing in (7. b-c) because there is only one core argument. In (7.a), although there are two core arguments the actor and the undergoer, which is an evidence for the existence of grammatical relation, RRG does not claim that such construction bears a grammatical relation. According to RRG grammatical relation is clause internal that controllers the interpretation of the missing argument. There are grammatical restrictions associated with PSA selection and the interpretation of the missing argument. These restrictions are associated with semantic roles. Consider the following examples.

    8. a. salam-a Khalid -u (AT) Muhamed almal wa ghadir----(S) (A_T,S)

        hand-past.3m.sg. Khalid-nom. muhamed-acc. the-money-acc.

         and left-past.3m.sg.

      ‘Khalid controller handed Muhamed the money and Pivot left’

    b. sulim-a Khalid -u (d-S) almal wa ghadir ----(S) (d-S, S)

     hand-pass.3m.sg. Khalid-nom. the-money-acc and left.3m.sg.

     ‘Khalid controller was handed the money and Pivot left’

    c. sulim-a almal-u (d-S) li-Khalid wa lam yaraa ---(S) baed dhalik (d-S, S)

     hand-pass.3m.sg. the-money-nom. to Khalid-gen. and not seen.p.p. again

     ‘The money controller was handed to Khalid and Pivot not seen again’

    d. 'akhadh Khalid-u AT almal wa shuhid ---(S) lahqan wa hu yashtari sayaarat. (A_T, S)

      Took-past.3m.sg. Khalid-nom. the-money-acc and was seen buying a car.

      ‘Khalid controller took the money and pivot was seen buying a care’

    e. 'akhadh Khalid-u AT almal wa shakar ---AT Muhamed ealaa dhalik (A_T, A_T)

     took-past.3m.sg.   Khalid-nom.   the-money-acc   and   thanked-past.3m.sg. muhamed-acc. for it.

     ‘Khalid controller took the money and Pivot thanked Muhamed for it’

    f. abtasam Khalid (S) wa 'akhadh (AT) almal. (S, A_T)

     smiled-past.3m.sg. Khalid-nom. and took-past.3m.sg. the-money-acc.

     ‘Khalid controller smiled and pivot took the money’

    g. aiqnae zayd-u(AT) khalid-a(U) li-ziarat fatim-a

     persuade-past.3m.sg. Zaid-nom. Khalid-acc. to visit Fatima-acc

     ‘Zaid persuaded Khalid controller (Pivot to visit Fatima)’

In the above examples, each clause has PSA which has two types: controller and pivot. The immediate clause co-reference is the controller while the implied one (omitted) in the second clause is the pivot. Grammatical relations, according to RRG, are the ones that are manifested in the clause internal co-reference. It holds between (S, A_T, d-S). There are grammatical restrictions on co-reference in Arabic which control the interpretation of the missing argument based on syntactic relations and semantic roles. The co-reference relation of PSA is summarized in the following table.

    Table (1) PSA and co-reference relation in Arabic

Construction	PSA controller	PSA Pivot	Co-reference relation
8. a, b	A_T	S	A_T, S
8. b, c	d-S	S	d-S, S
8. e	A_T	A_T	A_T, A_T
8.f	S	A_T	S, A_T

As the table shows, the undergoer (U_T) does not participate in co-reference relation in active clause except in constructions like *persuade* when it is not PSA. That is, Arabic has a construction specific semantic controller as in (8.g). on the other hand, when (U_T) participates as PSA in passive clause, it receives the same treatment as 'S'. Thus, to avoid confusion and miss interpretation, the restricted neutralization mentioned earlier needs modification. Following Lapolla (2023), the restriction on d-S and S are neutralized because they are referring to the same participant in (8. b, c). In this way, the number of restriction decreases to three instead of four. The new restricted neutralization in Arabic is (S, A_T) which yields four different pattern of co-reference:

1. A_T, S (8. a, d)
2. S, S (8. b, c)
3. A_T, A_T (8. e)
4. S, A_T (8.f)

The co-reference in (8.g) between the (U and A_T) is not mentioned with the four patterns above because (U_T) is not PSA. It is an instance of semantic controller and it represents an exception to the above patterns because the controller is not the PSA of the construction. This is not a regular rule of Arabic. As the examples showed, PSA in Arabic is syntactically defined and the existence of a semantic controller is exceptional.

Agreement asymmetry

The concept of PSA in RRG can explain agreement asymmetry in Arabic on the basis of restrictions neutralization. It is a clause internal relation that holds between the controller and pivot. This analysis is similar to the position that in SVO order, S is not subject rather a topic which binds a resumptive pronoun (Fassi Fehri, 1993; Soltan, 2007).

The basic idea of PSA is that grammatical relations are restricted by semantic roles. It is a relation that holds between two clauses or it is the trigger of agreement when there is one clause. The example in (1) and its counterpart (2) repeated here for convenience are typical ones of the agreement asymmetry.

1. al-banaat-u daras-na fii l-maktabat-i
    the-girls nom. studied 3f.pl. in the-library-gen.
    'The girls studied in the library.'
2. daras-at al-banaat-u fii l-maktabat-i
    studied 3f. sing. the-girls-nom. in the-library-gen.
    'The girls studied in the library.

In (1), 'al-banaat-u' is the PSA of the construction because it triggers agreement suffix '-na' on the verb 'daras'. It indicates that the PSA of the construction is plural feminine. While in (2), the verb 'daras' is marked with the suffix '-at' which indicates gender and person agreement only. The latter is the default agreement rules in Arabic and the former is a special construction. Arabic verbs show agreement in gender and person only and there is no agreement in number. This means that verbs in Arabic are invariably singular. The existence of plural morpheme is not an indicator of number agreement. It is a bundle of features including gender, case, number and person. Secondly, the construction in (1) is affected by discourse-pragmatics because it represents argument focus structure (Lambrechts, 1994).

9. a. man daras fi almaktabati?
    who study-past.3.sg. in the-library-gen
    'Who studied in the library?'
    b. al-banaat-u

the-girls-3f.pl.nom.

In (9), the PSA 'al-banaat-u' is in focus position which is the primary topic of the question in (9. a). Being the topic of discourse, the PSA receives focus and the rest of the clause is usually omitted because it is understood from the context. Secondly, the PSA changes its position from being postverbal to preverbal. When full answer is given, the controller PSA 'al-banaat-u' triggers agreement and supplies the interpretation for the pronoun '-na' (acting as antecedent). Without these two functions (triggering agreement and supplying interpretation), the clause will be ambiguous. This clearly shows the effect of discourse-pragmatics on PSA in terms of clause structure and disambiguating the meaning.

This phenomenon in (9) is construction-specific and limited to the existence of + human feature (Ryding, 2014, p. 130) as shown in the examples in (5 and 6). This is a fundamental difference between the notion of PSA and the traditional notion of subject. PSA is construction-specific, affected by discourse-pragmatics and has properties beyond the notion of subject. PSA is defined in the construction in which it is manifested.

PSA Selection in Passive Clause

Core Argument

Arabic allows core arguments (undergoer) and PPs (non-arguments) to be PSA in passive. These are demonstrated in (8.b) in which the undergoer "Khalid-u" is selected as the PSA of the passive clause. While in (8.c), "almal-u" is selected as PSA. This is similar to English in which both objects (direct, indirect) can be the PSA of passive clause. However, there are some instances in which the selection of PSA is restricted to the undergoer.

10. a. 'autaa Muhamad-u fariqan min aleumaal

   give-pass.3m.sg. Muhamad-nom. a-team-acc. of the-workers-gen.

   'Muhamad was given a team of workers.'

   b. munnht alsharikat-u muhandis-an

   award-pass.3m.sg. the-company-nom. an-engineer-acc.

   'The company was awarded an engineer'

   c. auelam almuhandis-u zamilah-u muhmalan

   inform-pass.3m.sg. the-engineer-nom. his-friend-acc careless-acc

   'The engineer was informed that his friend is careless'

There are semantic restrictions on the above examples which limits the PSA to the undergoer only. This is because choosing the second object makes the clause ambiguous. The semantic constrain here is defined in terms of "give and take". The two objects, for example in (10.a), have the grammatical properties of taking "Muhamad was given a team" and "A team was given Muhamad". This ambiguity is the result of the semantic properties of the two objects.

Non-arguments

Verbal Noun (maSdar)

Verbal noun can be PSA of passive clause. It refers to the noun that denotes an action such as wuSuul 'arrival', idaara 'administration, alfahm 'understanding'. Verbal nouns in Arabic are similar to infinitive in English. However, they differ, among others, in their ability to be PSA in passive clause.

11. a. ulam-a ealam-u nafie-u

   teach-pass. Knowledge-nom. useful-nom.

   'A useful knowledge was taught'

   b. ulam-at ealam-u nafie-u

   teach-pass-her. knowledge-nom. useful-nom.

   'A useful knowledge was taught to her'

   c. auqbl aqbal-u kabir-u li-shira' alkitab

   attract-pass. attraction-nom huge-nom to buy the book

   'There was a huge attraction for buying the book'

In (11), the first direct core argument is selected as the PSA of the construction. This is marked through the nominative case '-u' as demonstrated by 'ealam-u' in (11, a) and 'aqbal-u' in (11, c). It is important to note that when the pronoun 'her' is dropped in (11, b), the verbal noun "ealam-u" takes place to function as PSA. This is important to show that clauses with verbal noun in Arabic possesses PSA as shown by gender agreement. PSA in such constructions should trigger agreement and since Arabic verb is invariably singular, gender can be used to show which argument triggers agreement. In this respect, a feminine suffix is need to indicate it.

The ability of verbal noun to function as PSA represents important difference between Arabic and English, since English does not allow other than the object to be PSA in passive clause.

Adverb

Adverbs of time can function as PSA in certain conditions. It is a restricted phenomenon that occurs when a new meaning can be cast on the adverb.

12. a. qudi shahr-u jamil-u

   spend-pass. month-nom. beautiful-nom.

   'A beautiful month was spent'

   b. nudi   saeat-u albaye

   announce-pass. hour-nom. sale-acc.

   'The hour of sale was announced'

Although "shahr-u" and "saeat-u" refer to time, in strictly syntactic terms, they are not adverbs. Arabic grammarians treat them as adverbs in such constructions because of their meaning which refers to a period of time. However, they are evidently objects as they are demonstrated by their English counterparts which does not permit other than the object to be PSA in passive clause. To put it differently, if "shahr-u" and "saeat-u" are true adverbs, then English also allows adverbs to be PSA in passive clause which is not true.

Prepositional Phrase

PPs can also function as PSA in Arabic.

13. a. qaead fi alhadiqat aljamila

   Sit-pass. in-the-garden-gen. beautiful-gen.

   'It was set in the beautiful garden'

   b. akhidh min alhaql

   take-pass. from-the-field-gen.

   "It was taken from the field"

   c. qate fi altariq alma'

   cut-pass. in-the-road water-acc.

   "It was cut in the rode the water"

In the above examples, the PPs (non-arguments) are not marked with nominative case unlike the previous examples. This is because the noun in PPs in Arabic is marked with genitive case. The PSA in (13) is then configurational which is determined by its position immediately after the verb.

Discourse-Pragmatics and PSA Selection

Arabic allows various elements to access PSA selection which indicates that PSA in Arabic is affected by discourse-pragmatic factors. This does not mean that PSA is pragmatically salient. Rather, Arabic provides different choices to fill the PSA position. The following example illustrate the fact.

14. suraqat amam-u alraakibin alhaqiba

   steal-pass in front-nom the-passengers-acc. the-bag-acc

   "The bag was stolen in front of the passengers"

The PSA here is the adverb "amam-u" which is selected instead of the object "alhaqiba". This is because the event happens in in front of the passengers which is surprising. The translation of the same example shows that PSA in English is not affected by discourse-pragmatic factors due to its inability to select other than the object.

Additionally, discourse-pragmatics influences the choice of PSA in topic chains. PSA is the primary topical participant in the following example.

15. a. dakhalat   mari (S)   'iilaa almatajari, wa nazart (S)   'iilaa fistanina,
        entered-3f.sg. Mary-nom. into the-store   and looked-3f.sg at some dresses

    wa shtarat (AT)   wahdan, wa dhahabt (S) 'iilaa almaqhaa, wa talabt (AT)
    and bought-3f.sg. one   and went-3f.sg. to   the cafe   and ordered-3f.sg.

    fnjanan min alqahwat wa   'arahat (AT) qadamayha almurhaqatayni.
    a cup   of   coffee   and rested-3f.sg. feet-her   weary

    "Mary entered into the story, looked at some dresses, bought one and went up to the café, ordered a cup of coffee and rested her weary feet"

15. b dakhal   zayd (S)   'iilaa almaqhaa wa hu (AT)   yartadi   lihyat
        entered-3m-sg. Zaid-nom into the café   and he-3m-sg.nom. was wearing beard

    muzayafatan wa shaer mustaear wa nazaaratin, walakin tuaurifa   ealayh(S)
    fake   and wig   and glasses   but   was recognized-pass on-him

    ealaa alfawr wa alqiu ealayh (S) alqabd.
    immediately and was on-him   arrested-pass.

'Zaid entered the café and he was wearing a fake beard, wig and glasses, but he was recognized immediately and arrested.'

Referent tracking in (15. a, b) depicts the same restricted neutralization in table (1). In (14. a), the PSA 'Mari' is restricted to the either (S or A$_T$) which is the same restriction found in (15, b) for the PSA 'Zayd'. The presentation of PSA in topic chains is then motivated by discourse-pragmatic factors to keep the PSA in unmarked focus position. All the clauses in (15) are predicate focus structure which explain the unmarked focus position of the PSA. In other words, when a clause has predicate focus, the PSA is in unmarked focus position.

16. a. hadha   fatima   wa hi   tuqaraa   alkitab
        this   Fatima-nom and she-nom read-ing.3f.sg. the book
        'This is Fatima and she is reading the book'
    b. hadha   fatima   wa tuqaraa   alkitab *
        This   Fatima-nom and   read-ing.3f.sg. the book
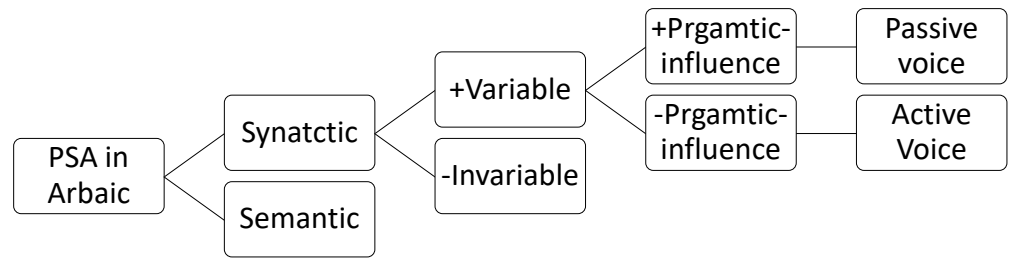   'This is Fatima controller and pivot is reading the book*'

As shown above, predicate focus strongly affects PSA. This is demonstrated through topic chains which include a number of clauses. Zero anaphora is then motivated by discourse-pragmatic to keep the primary participant unmarked. When the PSA is unmarked, it must be the primary participant of topic chains.

Types of PSA in Arabic

This section summarizes the types of PSA according to RRG. PSA is divided into two types: syntactic and semantic. The semantic PSA is not a common one and through the analysis of PSA Van Valin (2005) mentioned one language in which PSA is purely semantic one.

Syntactically, PSA is divided into variable and invariable. Invariable PSA is the one that is restricted to one semantic role such as the actor in Kambera. In other words, only the actor can function as PSA in Kambera and no other semantic role can be PSA (Van Valin, 2005, p. 102). This type of PSA is not found in Arabic as demonstrated in (7). On the other hand, variable PSA is divided into +pragmatic influence and –pragmatic influence. The former occurs with passive voice in which the selection of PSA depends on discourse-pragmatic factors. Unlike English, Arabic allows non-core arguments can be PSA such as PP, Adv and verbal noun as shown in (11,12,13). While in active voice, PSA is –pragmatic influence because the speaker has no choice which argument can be PSA. The following diagram summarizes the types of PSA found in Arabic.

Diagram (1) Types of PSA in Arabic

```
                                                    ┌─ +Prgamtic-  ── Passive
                                                    │   influence       voice
                                       ┌─ +Variable ┤
                     ┌─ Synatctic ─────┤            └─ -Prgamtic-  ── Active
         PSA in  ────┤                 └─ -Invariable   influence      Voice
         Arbaic      └─ Semantic
```

4. Conclusion

RRG provides a different view to the analysis of subject in comparison to the Generative one. The concept of PSA is developed to achieve consistency and capture universally attested relations. To this end, there are three positions to approach this problem: (1) grammatical relations are universal (Generative Grammar), (2) grammatical relations are construction-specific (RRG), there is no grammatical relations (Radical Construction Grammar) (Lapolla, 2023, 270).The analysis of PSA is different from subject in that discourse-pragmatics plays an important role in clause structure (15). In other words, agreement asymmetry (2) and the ungrammaticality of (16, b) is attributed to discourse-pragmatics rather than to abstract operations like merge move and agree. Discourse-pragmatic constrains are stronger than syntactic operations because they are meaningful.In a different vein, RRG predicates grammatical relations in Arabic correctly.

Arabic is an accusative language which means UT does not participate in co-reference and cannot function as PSA in active clause. When it does (8.g), it is not the PSA of the construction. It is an instance of semantic controller. According to RRG, agreement asymmetry in Arabic is the result of argument focus (Lambrecht, 1994). SVO word order in Arabic is highly pragmatic in that it forces the subject to shift its position from the unmarked (default) to the marked one. It becomes the focal element of the sentence. When this happens, it triggers full agreement and provides the interpretation for following anaphora. Zero anaphor, in this respect, renders the clause ungrammatical.

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