



The Syntax and the Nature of the Wh-Clause in Modern Standard Arabic Specificational and Predicational Pseudoclefts

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Abstract: This paper discusses the syntax and the nature of the wh-clause in specificational and predicational pseudocleft constructions. These two types differ in their syntactic properties. I argue that these differences are related to the nature of the wh-clause and the counterweight in these constructions. The wh-clause in MSA specificational pseudocleft shows interrogative-like properties, such as allowing wh-else forms and disallowing wh- ever forms, multiplicity, and wh-pied-piping. Predicational pseudocleft shows FRs properties, such as allowing WH- ever forms and not permitting sluicing and pied piping. Regarding their syntax, this paper shows that the wh-clause occupies the structural subject position (i.e., Spec-TP) in predicational pseudocleft constructions, and topic position (i.e., Spec-Top) in specificational pseudoclefts.

Keywords: Modern Standard Arabic, specificational Pseudocleft, Predicational pseudocleft, Wh-clauses, Interrogatives clauses, free relative clauses.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cleft sentences are classified into different groups depending on their syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties. The most well-known division is between it-cleft (termed cleft) in (1) and wh-clefts (termed pseudocleft), in (2).

- (1) a. It + copula+ XP + cleft clause
b. It is the girl who broke the window.
- (2) a. Wh-clause + copula +clefted XP
b. What they did was fight. Den Dikken (2017:3)

In the following quote, Higgins (1979:1-2) recognizes two significant characteristics of pseudocleft constructions:

"(i) a semantic kinship to cleft sentences, and a consequent semi-formal requirement that pseudo- cleft sentences should have a bipartite form, looking like a broken-up form of a simple sentence, with a "focal" constituent which in

some sense is being emphasized, and a remainder; (ii) a formal requirement that the sentence is a popular sentence having a subject that consists of a clause introduced by a Wh-item, usually what, this subject clause constituting the remainder of the simple sentence, and a portion which follows the copula and constitutes the focal constituent, the constituent which is being emphasized."

In pseudocleft structures, the subject is *wh*-clause, while the predicate can be a full clause (3a) or NP (3b) AdjP (3c) AdvP (3d). This paper discusses the syntax of pseudocleft constructions in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) illustrated in (5). MSA pseudocleft structure in (4) consists of wh-clause + the copular pronoun (PRON) *huwa* 'he' (MSA does not have a present tense copula. It uses a copular pronoun in specificational pseudoclefts) or the past simple copula *kan* 'was' + the clefted XP. This paper focuses on pseudoclefts in Modern Standard Arabic.

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- (3) a. $XP_1 = CP/DP, XP_2 = IP$
 What happened is they fought.
 b. $XP_1 = CP/DP, XP_2 = VP$
 What they did was fight.
 c. $XP_1 = CP/DP, YP_2 = AP$
 What John is is important to himself. Den Dikken (2017:3)
- (4) *ma zaraḡ-t hiyya haḏih al-fazarah*
 What planted-I PRON(3.F.SG) this the-tree(3.F.SG)
 'What I planted is/was this tree.'

2. Predicational pseudoclefts vs. Specificational pseudoclefts

According to Higgins (1979), there are two types of pseudocleft constructions: predicational pseudoclefts and specificational pseudoclefts. Predicational pseudoclefts are attributive (i.e., the counterweight assigns a property or an attribute to the wh-clause, see (5a)). Specificational pseudoclefts are "superscriptional", i.e., the wh-clause is "variable" which is exhaustively specified by the "value" (the clefted XP) in (5b). Akmajian (1979), Higgins (1979), Declerck (1988), and Den Dikken (2017), among others, point out that specificational pseudoclefts exhibit syntactic and semantic properties not found in predicational pseudoclefts. The following discusses some of the differences between MSA predicational pseudoclefts (6a) and MSA specificational pseudoclefts (6b).

- (5) a. What we watched yesterday was boring.
 b. What we watched yesterday was the Titanic.
- (6) a. *ma zaraḡ-t (huwa*) / kan-a zamil*
 what planted-I (*PRON)/ was(3.M.SG) beautiful
 'What I planted is/ was beautiful.'
 b. *ma zaraḡ-t hiyya/kan-at haḏih al-fazarah*
 what planted-I PRON/was(3.F.SG) this the-tree(3.F.SG)
 'What I planted is/was this tree.'

2.1 Reversibility

Khatatneh (2020) notes that MSA specificational pseudocleft sentences are reversible in (8) and can have two-word orders: wh <XP and XP <wh. Predicational pseudoclefts, on the other hand, are irreversible and can highlight the wh <XP word order only, (9) is illustrative. See also Akmajian (1979), Higgins (1979), Akmajian (1979), Higgins (1979), Declerck (1988), and Den Dikken (2017) for English in (10) and (11).

- (8) a. *haḏih al-fazarah hiyya/kan-at ma zaraḡ-t*
 This the-tree (3.F.SG) PRON/was (3.F.SG) what planted-I
 'This tree is/was what I planted.'
 b. *ma zaraḡ-t hiyya/kan-at haḏih al-fazarah*

- What planted-I PRON/was(3.F.SG) this the-tree (3.F.SG)
 'What I planted is/was this tree.'
- (9) a. *ma zaraḡ-t (huwa*) / kan-a zamil*
 what planted-I (*PRON)/ was (3.M.SG) beautiful
 'What I planted is/ was beautiful.'
 b. **zamil (huwa*) / kan-a ma zaraḡ-t*
 beautiful (*PRON)/was(3.M.SG) what planted-I
 '*beautiful is/ was what I planted.'
- (10) a. What John opened was the door.
 b. The door was what John opened
- (11) a. What John ate was delicious
 b. * Delicious was what John ate. Khatatneh (2020)

2.2 Connectivity

Akmajian (1979), Higgins (1979), Declerck (1988), Heycock & Kroch (1999) and Den Dikken *et al.*, (2000) among others, note that specificational pseudoclefts exhibit connectivity effects (i.e., anaphor-antecedent binding reference restrictions). They show reflexive connectivity in (12) and reciprocal connectivity in (13). Declerck also notes that the linear word order of specificational pseudoclefts sentences does not affect connectivity, see (13b). Khatatneh (2020) also note that MSA specificational pseudoclefts also show reflexive connectivity (14), reciprocal connectivity (15). Furthermore, the word order does not affect the grammaticality of the sentences, as the sentences which highlight the XP <wh in (15b) are well-formed.

- (12) a. What *John* is is important to *himself*. (specificational)
 b. What *John* is is important to *him*. (predicational) Higgins (1979:61)
- (13) a. What they_i decided was meeting each other_i. (specificational)
 b. Meeting each other_i was what they decided_i. (specificational)
 c. *What they_i decided was impressed each other_i. (predicational)
- (14) a. *man ḡ-ḏhaito kan-a nafsi / *nafseh*
 Who I-hurt was(3.M.SG) myself / *himself
 'The one I hurt was myself/ *himself.'
 Khatatneh (2020:84)
- (15) a. *Ma fḡluh kan-a taqbil bḡḏm albḡḏ*
 what They-did was(3.M.SG) kiss each other
 'What they did was kiss each other.'
 b. *Taqbil bḡḏm albḡḏ kan-a ma fḡl-uh*
 Kiss each other was (3.M.SG) what they-did
 'Kissing each other was what they did.'
 Khatatneh (2020:84)

2.3 Agreement

Moro (1997) and Heycock (1992) and Declerck (1988), among others, specificational and

predicational pseudocleft constructions differ in their agreement patterns. They note that the copula agrees with the *wh*-clause in *wh*<XP>specificational pseudocleft structure, see (16a). On the other hand, in the predicational clause, the copula agrees with the predicate XP, as illustrated in (16b). Heycock (2012) also observes that the value governs the agreement with the copula in some languages, e.g., German (17).

- (16) a. What you have bought *is* fake jewels. (specificational)
 b. What you have bought *are* fake jewels. (predicational) Declerck (1988: 79) cited in Den Dikken (2017:30)
- (17) German
 Die Unfallsursache *waren*/**war* defekte Bremsen.
 the accident.cause were/was defective brakes. Heycock (2012) cited in Den Dikken (2017:32)

As stated earlier, MSA uses the copular pronoun (PRON) *huwa* 'he' or the past copula *kan* 'was' in specificational pseudocleft construction. Furthermore, the copula and the copular pronoun agree with the post-copular XP, see (18). In present tense predicational pseudoclefts (19), using the pronoun is ungrammatical; however: the past copula agrees with the *wh*-clause.

- (18) a. *ma zaraḥ-t hiyya/kan-at haḍih al-fazarat*
 what planted-I PRON/was(3.F.SG) this tree(3.F.SG)
 'What I planted is/was this tree.'
- (19) *Ma ḥṭ'a Adam l-mariam kan ḥlwan w zameelon zdan*
 What offered Adam to-Mariam was(3.F.SG) sweet and pretty very
 'What Adam offered Mariam was so sweet and pretty.' Khatatneh (2020:84)

2.4 Quantifier Connectivity

Declerck (1988), Sportiche (1988), Pavey (2004) and Den Dikken (2017) note that quantifier connectivity emphasizes the similarity between specificational pseudoclefts in (20a) and their simple clause counterpart in (20b). They note that a quantifier operating on a noun phrase in the *wh*-clause can be shifted to the counterweight XP in pseudocleft constructions. Predicational pseudoclefts, however, do not show quantifier connectivity, as illustrated in (20c).

- (20) a. What the little bastards did was all get in the tub at the same time.
 b. The little bastards all got in the tub at the same time.

c. *What *the little bastards* did was all surprising to us. Hankamer (1974: 223) cited in Den Dikken (2017:26)

MSA specificational pseudocleft constructions exhibit quantifier connectivity as well in (21a). On the other hand, the predicational structure does not, as illustrated in (21b).

- (21) a. *ma faʔlah al-tʕullab kan-a klhm rasib-u fi al-imtihan*
 What they-did the-students was (3.M.SG) all they-failed in the-exam
 'What the students did was all failed the exam'
- b. **ma faʔlah al-tʕullab kan-a saban ʔla-yna*
 What they-did the-students was (3.M.SG) impressive on-us
 '*What the students did was impressive to us.'

2.5 Selectional Connectivity

Peters & Bach (1968), Hankamer (1974), Heggie (1988), and Den Dikken (2017) point out that specificational pseudoclefts also feature what they call selectional connectivity. To illustrate, because of its lexical selectional properties, the verb count requires a plural countable object as its complement (e.g., the pigeons, not the pigeon in (22)). Furthermore, the selectional properties of the verb *wonder* are reflected in the presence of a *wh*-clause complement in the specificational pseudocleft clause in (23).

- (22) What John counted was the pigeons/*the pigeon.
 (cf. John counted the pigeons/*the pigeon.) Den Dikken (2017:27)
- (23) a. What John wondered was whether/*that it was raining.
 (cf. John wondered whether/*that it was raining.) Den Dikken (2017:27)

MSA specificational pseudoclefts also show selectional connectivity. In (24) the verb *count* requires a plural countable object, *alnuzum* 'The-stars', not *al-nuzmah* 'The-star' according to its lexical selectional properties. Similar facts are confirmed with verbs like *sʔal* 'ask' and *yataʔjab* 'wonders' in (25a) and (25b). Both of these verbs require embedded *wh*-question.

- (24) *ma ḥṭ sʔa Adam kan-a al-nuzum /al-nuzmah*
 What counted Adam was (3.M.SG) the-stars /the-star.
 'What Adam counted was the stars/ the star.'

- (25) a. *ma tasa?l Adam huwa ma*
?ða/an kunt qad hasal-t ðla al-risala
 What wondered Adam PRON(3.M.SG)
 whether/*that you-got on the-letter
 'What Adam wondered whether / * that you
 got the letter.'
 b. *ma tasa?al Adam huwa ma ?ða/ann kunt*
qad hasalt ðla al-risala
 What asked Adam PRON(3.M.SG)
 whether/*that you got on the-letter
 'What Adam asked is whether / * that you
 got the letter.'

In summary, MSA specificational pseudocleft show many properties that are not available in predicational pseudoclefts. These properties are reversibility, connectivity, and agreement effects. It should be noted that both structures show other differences such as movement restriction. For a comprehensive examination of pseudocleft properties reader is referred to Den Dikken (2017). In the following section, I will discuss the syntax of MSA predicational and specificational pseudoclefts. The nature of the wh-clause in these structures will be discussed in section three and their syntax will be discussed in sections six and seven.

3. The Nature of the Wh-clause in MSA Predicational and Specificational Pseudocleft constructions

Regarding the nature of the wh-clause in MSA pseudocleft construction, this paper makes two proposals. First, the wh-clause in Arabic predicational pseudocleft is a Free-relative clause as it exhibits free-relative-like properties. Second, the wh-clause in specificational pseudoclefts is an embedded-interrogative clause as it shows interrogative-like properties, such as allowing *wh-else* forms and multiplicity. This proposal supports Heggie (1988), Moro (1997), Mikkelsen (2005), Den Dikken (2006), Akmajian (1979), Higgins (1979), Den Dikken *et al.* (2000), Schlenker (2003) proposals for English Pseudoclefts.

First, free-relative clauses (26a) and the wh-clause of predicational pseudocleft (26b) allow *wh-ever* forms, while embedded-interrogative (27a) and the wh-clause of specificational pseudocleft (21b) allow *wh-else* forms. This indicates that the wh-clause is relative in predicational pseudocleft and interrogative in specificational pseudocleft. See Heggie (1988), Moro (1997), Mikkelsen (2005), Gerbl (2008), and Den Dikken (2006) for similar observations regarding English pseudoclefts in (28). This indicates that the wh-clause in Arabic predicational pseudocleft is a Free- relative clause, and the wh-clause in specificational pseudoclefts is an embedded-interrogative clause

- (26) a. *ana ?uħibu kula ma yatbixu-h Adam.*
 I like (ever) what cook-it Adam
 'I like whatever Adam cooked.'
 b. *(kulu) ma tabaxa-h Adam kan-a lõyðan.*
 ever what cooked-it Adam was(3.M.SG)
 delicious.
 'What (ever) Adam cooked was delicious.'
- (27) a. *huwa yřrif ma qal-uu ?y d'an*
 He knew what said-they else
 He knew what-else they said.
 b. *ma qal-uu-h ?ayr ðalek huwa mafhum*
 what said-they-it else that PRON(3.M.SG)
 understood
 'What else they said is understood.'
- (28) a. I like whatever adam cooks. (FR)
 b. What (ever) Adam cooked was delicious.
 (predicational pseudocleft)
 c. He knows [what else they said].
 (Interrogative)
 d. [what else they said] is understood.
 (Specificational Pseudoclefts)

Second, Baker (1968), and Ross (1999) note that multiple wh-elements are not permitted in free relative clauses (29a), but they are allowed in interrogative clauses (29b). Den Dikken *et al.*, (2000) and Gerbl (2008) observe that multiple wh-words can appear in specificational pseudoclefts (30a) while they are unacceptable in predicational pseudoclefts, see (30b). Similarly, the wh-clause of MSA specificational pseudocleft allows multiple wh-elements (31a) and embedded interrogative clauses in (31b). Multiple wh-words, however, cannot appear in MSA predicational pseudoclefts (32a) and free-relative clauses (32b). This indicates that the wh-clause in Arabic predicational pseudocleft is a Free-relative clause, and the wh-clause in specificational pseudoclefts is an embedded-interrogative clause.

- (29) a. *[Who ordered what] should come and
 fetch it at the counter. (Free relative)
 b. I would like to know [who ordered what].
 (Interrogative) (Baker 1968)
- (30) a. ?[What John gave to whom] was [a book to
 Mary a CD to Sue]. (specificational
 pseudoclefts) Den Dikken *et al.*, (2000)
 b. *Whoever ordered what was rude and
 expensive. pseudoclefts)Van Luven (2018,
 81)
- (31) a. *man qatal man kan-a al-su?al alaði taraħah*
al-muħaqiq
 who killed-he who was(3.M.SG) the-question
 that asked the-detective
 'Who killed who was the question asked by
 the detective.'
 b. *sa?alt man qatal man?*
 I-asked who killed who
 'I asked who killed who?'

- (32) a. **man tʿalab ma kan-a fðʿ*.
Who ordered what was(3.M.SG) rude.
'*Whoever ordered what was rude.'
b. **ana ?hibu kula ma tʿah man*.
I like every what he-cooked who
'*I like what who cooked.'

Third, the wh-clause of MSA specificational pseudoclefts exhibit interrogative-like properties in that it allows sluicing (c.f., (33a) and (33b)). This shows that the wh-clause of MSA specificational pseudoclefts is interrogative similarly to English specificational pseudoclefts in (34). In addition, predicational pseudocleft and free relatives do not permit sluicing in (35a) and (35b), respectively. Declerck (1988:72), Den Dikken *et al.*, (2000), and Iatridou and Varlokosta (1999) also show that the wh-clause of English predicational pseudocleft do not permit sluicing similarly to free relative, see (36). This indicates that the wh-clause in Arabic predicational pseudocleft is a Free-relative clause, and the wh-clause in specificational pseudoclefts is an embedded-interrogative clause

- (33) a. *ma zaraʿ Adam kan-u zaraʿ Adam hatayn al-fazarahain*.
What Adam planted were(3.F.DU)—planted Adam these the-trees(3.F.DU)
'What Adam planted were—Adam planted these trees.'
b. *qara Adam fayʿan , lakin-ani la ?srif ma huwa qara?-hu*.
read Adam something, but-I not know what PRON(3.M.SG) read he
'Adam read something, but I don't know what he read.'
(34) a. John bought something, but I don't know what he bought. Van Luven (2018:82)
b. John bought something, and ?what he bought is a book. Van Luven (2018:82)
(35) a. **tʿaha Adam faiʿan , w-kan-a ma tʿaha-h lðidān*
cooked Adam something, and-was what he-cooked-it-delicious
'*Adam cooked something, and what he cooked was delicious.'
b. **tʿaha Adam faiʿan , w ana ?hibu ma tʿaha*
cooked Adam something, and I like what cooked-he
'*Adam cooked something, and I like what he cooked.'
(36) a. Mary bought something, and *what(ever) she bought was expensive.
b. John read something, and *I read what(ever) he read. Ross (2000:551)

Forth, wh pied-piping is grammatical in MSA interrogative sentences (37a) and

specificational pseudoclefts (37b). Pied-piping can thus be used as empirical support for the aforementioned interrogative analysis. MSA FRs does not allow pied piping in (38a). Similarly, pied piping is ungrammatical in predicational pseudoclefts, as illustrated in (38b). Heggie (1988) and Van Luven (2018) also note that performing PP pied piping is possible in English specificational pseudoclefts in (39) and impossible in predicational pseudoclefts and free relatives, see (40).

- (37) a. *Saal-t Ahmad ʿin ma hadaθ [ti]*
Asked-I Ahmad about what happened
'I asked Ahmad about what happened'
b. *mʿ man safar-at kan-a mʿ Adam*
with whom she-traveled was(3.M.SG) with Adam
'With whom she traveled to Paris was with Adam'
(38) a. **wazadt ʿin-h ma; kun-t ?bħaθ*
I-found for-it what was-(3.M.SG) looking
'* I found for what I was looking'.
b. **mʿ man safar Adam kan-a mozʿzan*
with whom traveled Adam was annoying
'*With whom Adam traveled was annoying.'
(39) mit wem Maria gesprochen hatte kam gerade ins Zimmer hinein
with whom M. spoken had come just (into) the room inside den Dikken *et al.*, (2000:72)
(40) a* With whom he goes to the cinema is important to him.
b.*With whom she traveled to Paris was with Adam. Den Dikken (2017:47)

To summarize, the wh-clause in MSA specificational pseudocleft shows interrogative-like properties, such as allowing wh-else forms and disallowing wh-ever forms, multiplicity, and wh-pied-piping. Predicational pseudocleft shows FRs properties, such as allowing WH-ever forms and not permitting sluicing and pied piping. It should also be noted that this agrees with the literature on pseudoclefts Akmajian (1979), Heycock and Kroch (1999), Mikkelsen (2005), and den Dikken (2006). The following section will provide a syntactic analysis for MSA predicational in section four and specificational pseudoclefts in section five.

4. MSA Predicational Pseudoclefts

I propose analysis for MSA predicational pseudocleft in (41), following Heggie (1988), Moro (1997), Mikkelsen (2005), and Den Dikken (2006) for English predicational pseudoclefts, that the subject (the wh-clause) and the predicate are base generated in a small clause in their underlying syntactic structure with the copula as a functional head, accommodating the subject and the predicate in its minimal domain., see (42a). I also suggested that the copula moves from their base position in the

small clause to the head T. The wh-clause then moves to Spec-TP to satisfy the EPP feature on T. Then, the wh-clause move to Spec-TP to satisfy the EPP feature on T, see (42b).

- (41) *ma zaraḥ-t kan-a zamil*
what planted-I was(3.M.SG) beautiful
'What I planted was beautiful.'
- (42) a. be [SC [Subj XP] [Pred YP]] Den Dikken (2017:63)
b. [_{TP} [_{DP} ma zaraḥ-t]_i [_{IN} T+X=COPj/∅ [_{XP} X=t_i [_{XP} zamil]]]]

The proposition that the copula occupies the T position in MSA is also shared by Aoun, Benmamoun & Sportiche (1994), Bahloul (1994), Ouhalla (1994, 1999), and Aoun *et al.*, (2010), and several pieces of evidence can support it.

First, the copula in MSA predicational pseudocleft structures has the characteristics of a standard copula in English and MSA copular sentences. For instance, they are inflected for ϕ -features of the structural subject. In (43), the copula inflects for the ϕ -features of the wh-clause. This point also supports the proposal that the wh-clause move to the structural subject position (i.e., Spec-TP) as we will see below.

- (43) *Ma ḥṭṭa Adam l-mariam kan-a Hlwan w zameelon zdan*
What offered Adam to-Mariam was-(3.M.SG) sweet and pretty very
'What Adam offered Mariam was so sweet and pretty.' Khatatneh (2020)

Second, MSA employs different forms of future markers: the auxiliary *sawfa* 'will' and the bound morpheme *-sa*. Ouhalla (1994) states these future markers occupies the head T. In (44a) the copula stays in its base position because it is already occupied by *sawfa*. However, in the case of the future morpheme *-sa*, the copula raises to T to support the affixal morpheme, see (44b). We can conclude from this that the copula moves from the head of the small clause to T.

- (44) a. *Ma s-ḥṭṭa Adam l-mariam sawfa yakon Hlwan w zameelon zdan*
What will-offer Adam to-Mariam will be.Fut (3.M.SG) sweet and pretty very
'What Adam will offer Mariam will be so sweet and pretty.'
- b. *Ma s-ḥṭṭa Adam l-mariam sa-yakon Hlwan w zameelon zdan*
What will-offer Adam to-Mariam be.Fut. (3.M.SG) sweet and pretty very
'What Adam will offer Mariam will be so sweet and pretty.'

Concerning the position occupied by the wh-clause, I propose that the wh-clause raises from the subject of the small clause position to Spec-TP to satisfy the EPP feature on T in MSA predicational pseudoclefts. To prove this, I will show that the wh-clause shows properties similar to those displayed by subjects in MSA.

Mohammad (2000), Fassi-Fehri (1993), Soltan (2007, Aoun *et al.*, (2010), and Alazzawie (2016) among others, note that SVO and VSO word orders in MSA exhibit agreement asymmetries. In SVO word order, the verb must match the phi-features (person, gender, and number) of the subject in (39a). However, in VSO word order, the verb agrees with the subject in person and gender but not in number, see (45b). In predicational pseudoclefts also, the copula matches the phi-features of the wh-clause, see (43) above.

- (45) *Al-ṭṭalab qara-u al-keṭab*
The-student read (3.M.PL) the-book
'The student read the book.' Alazzawie (2016:32)
b. *qara al-ṭṭalab al-keṭab*
read (3.M.SG) the-students the-book
'The student read the book.' Alazzawie (2016:32)

Second, the position occupied by the free relative wh-clause, i.e., spec-TP, is consistent with the observation that the topicalization of the wh-clause in MSA predicational pseudocleft is grammatical in (46b). The topicalization of the subject is also grammatical in MSA, see (47b). This indicates that the subject and the wh-clause occupy an A (argument) position, not a non-argument position (i.e. A'), see Alazzawie (2016) for a detailed discussion. This contrasts with the wh-clause in specificational pseudoclefts as we will see below.

- (46) a. *ma zaraḥ-t kan-a zamil*
what planted-I was(3.M.SG) beautiful
'What I planted was beautiful.'
- b. [*ma zaraḥt]_t, Adam yaataqad, kan t_i zamil*
what planted-I, Adam think, kan beautiful
'What I planted, Adam think, was beautiful.'
- (47) a. *al-tulaab katab-u al-dars*
The-students wrote(3.M.PL)the-lesson
The students wrote the lesson
b. *al-tulaab, al-dars katab-u-h*
The-students, the-lesson wrote-(3.M.PL)-it
'The students, they wrote the lesson'
Alazzawie. (2016)

Finally, as discussed earlier, predicational pseudoclefts differ from their specificational counterpart in reversibility. The proposed structure

in (42b) above demonstrates why predicational pseudoclefts cannot be reversed, i.e., only the free relative wh-clause is acceptable to fill the spec-TP position. In contrast, the AdjP predicates cannot. Therefore, the XP<Wh word order is ungrammatical in predicational pseudoclefts (48).

- (48) **zamil kan-a ma zaraḥ-t*
 beautiful (*PRON)/ was what planted-I
 ‘*beautiful was what I planted’

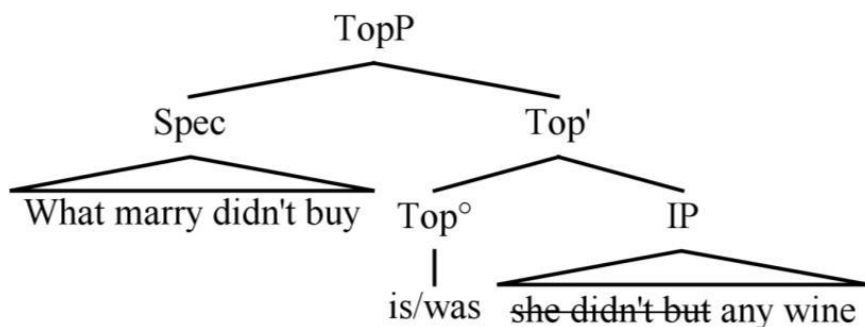
To summarize, I have shown that the wh-clause in Arabic predicational pseudocleft shows FRs properties, such as allowing WH-ever forms and not permitting sluicing and pied piping. I also went through the syntax of the free relative wh-clause in MSA predicational pseudoclefts. I also adapted Den Dikken’s relators and linkers (2006) framework, which derives the copular clause from a small predicational clause. I argued that the subject (the wh-clause) and the predicate are base generated in a small clause in their underlying syntactic structure with a relator, i.e., a functional head, accommodating

the subject and the predicate in its minimal domain. The wh-clause then moves to Spec-TP to satisfy the EPP feature on T. Next section will analyze MSA specificational pseudoclefts.

5. Specificational Pseudoclefts

Khatatneh (2020) proposes, following Den Dikken *et al.*, (2000) for English, see (49) that MSA specificational pseudoclefts in (50) are topic-comment structures in which the wh-clause is an interrogative, and the counterweight is a full IP that involves optional ellipses of the constituents already available in the wh-clause, see (51). The copula, in this analysis, is a relator’ (in the terminology of Den Dikken (2006)), i.e., a functional head establishing a predicational relationship and accommodating the wh-clause and counterweight in its minimal domain (51). This further supports the embedded interrogative analysis provided to the wh-clause of specificational pseudoclefts in section three above.

- (49) Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder (2000:62)



- (50) *ma zaraḥ Adam kanu [zaraḥ-Adam] hatayn al-ḥazarahtain.*
 What Adam planted were [planted Adam] these trees (3.F.DU)
 ‘what Adam planted were [Adam planted] these trees.’

- b. **[ma zaraḥ-t-h] i, Adam yaataqed,t_i hiyya haḍih alshajarah*
 What planted-I-it, Adam thinks, PRON (3.F.SG) this the-tree (3.F.SG)
 ‘*What I planted, Adam thinks, is this tree.’

- (51) [_{TopP} [_{CP} ma zaraḥ-] [_{Top'} Top=COP [_{IP}= zaraḥ-t haḍih al-ḥazarah]]]

Khatatneh (2020) provides several pieces of evidence to support the Topic-Comment analysis, such as topicalization restriction, case marking, and embedding. For example, he notes that MSA specificational pseudoclefts restrict the topicalization of the wh-clause (c.f. (52a) and (52b)). This indicates that the position occupied by the wh-clause is in the A’ domain.

- (52) a. *ma zaraḥ-t-h hiyya haḍih al-fajarah*
 What planted-I-it PRON(3.F.SG) this tree(3.F.SG)
 ‘What I planted is this tree.’

This paper provides further support for the Topic-comment analysis. Compared with predicational pseudoclefts in which the copula agrees with the wh-clause (53), the copula in specificational pseudoclefts always agrees with the post-copular counterweight (54). Recall that I argue that the wh-clause predicational pseudoclefts occupy the structural subject position. Therefore, agreement in these structures is Spec-Head (upward) agreement. However, in reversed specificational pseudoclefts, the agreement is (downward) because the wh-clause occupies the Spec-Top position. See Den Dikken (2021) for a detailed discussion.

- (53) *Ma ḥṭṭa Adam l-mariam kan-a Hlwan w zameelon zdan*
What offered Adam to-Mariam was(3.M.SG) sweet and pretty very
'What Adam offered Mariam was so sweet and pretty.'
- (54) *ma zaraḥ-t huma hatayn al-fazarahtain*
what planted-I PRON(3.F.DU) these two trees(3.F.DU)
'What I planted were these trees.'

Second, as stated earlier, MSA employs different forms of future markers: the auxiliary *sawfa* 'will' and the bound morpheme *-sa*. These future markers occupy the head T. Both markers can appear in MSA predicational pseudocleft constructions, see (44) above. However, using them is ungrammatical in MSA specificational pseudocleft constructions as can be seen in (55). I explain this by proposing that the pronoun and the copula do not occupy the head T but Top. This also explains the (downward) agreement found in this structure.

- (55) a. *Ma s-ḥṭṭa Adam l-mariam sawfa yakon Hlwan w zameelon zdan*
What will-offer Adam to-Mariam will be.Fut (3.M.SG) sweet and pretty very
'What Adam will offer Mariam will be so sweet and pretty.'
- b. *Ma s-ḥṭṭa Adam l-mariam sa-yakon Hlwan w zameelon zdan*
What will-offer Adam to-Mariam be.Fut. (3.M.SG) sweet and pretty very
'What Adam will offer Mariam will be so sweet and pretty.'

Third, specificational and predicational pseudoclefts in MSA highlight the sensitivity of ECM constructions. For example, predicational pseudoclefts can be embedded under ECM constructions (see (56a)). However, embedding reversed specificational pseudoclefts is ungrammatical, as illustrated in (56b). These data support the hypothesis that the *wh*-constituent occupies A'-position, which conflicts with the ECM predicate's selectional requirements. In short, ECM constructions make no appropriate landing site available for Topic-Comment construction. Therefore, the ungrammaticality embedding under ECM constructions provides evidence for the Topic-Comment proposed structure.

- (56) a. *ḏnant haḏih al-fazarah hiyya ma/ilaḏi zaraḥ-t*
I-consider.PST this the-tree (3.F.SG) PRON (3.F.SG) what/that planted-I
'I considered this tree is/was what I planted.'

- b. ** ḏnant ma/ilaḏi zaraḥ-t hiyya haḏih al-fazarah*
I consider.PST what/that PRON (3.F.SG) planted-I the-tree (3.F.SG)
'I considered what I planted is this tree.'

In sum, this paper provide further support Den Dikken *et al.*, (2000) and Khatatneh (2020) that MSA specificational pseudoclefts topic-comment structures in which the *wh*-clause is an interrogative, and the counterweight is a full IP that involves optional ellipses of the constituents already available in the *wh*-clause. This further supports the embedded interrogative analysis provided to the *wh*-clause of specificational pseudoclefts in section three above.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper investigated the syntax of predicational and specificational pseudoclefts in Modern Standard Arabic. I have shown that the *wh*-clause in MSA predicational pseudocleft shows FRs properties, such as allowing *WH*-ever forms and not permitting sluicing and pied piping. I also argued that the subject (the *wh*-clause) and the predicate are base generated in a small clause in their underlying syntactic structure with a relator, i.e., a functional head, accommodating the subject and the predicate in its minimal domain. The *wh*-clause then moves to Spec-TP to satisfy the EPP feature on T. I also provided analysis for MSA specificational pseudoclefts. I propose that these structures are topic-comment structures in which the *wh*-clause is the topic, and the counterweight is the comment. I also show that the *wh*-clause in specificational pseudoclefts is an interrogative clause as it shows interrogative-like properties, such as allowing *wh-else* forms and multiplicity.

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