

WH-movement asymmetries and anti-connectivity effects in Berber clefts

Noureddine Elouazizi
LUCL, Leiden University
n.elouazizi@let.leidenuniv.nl

The phenomenon: In this paper, I offer a solution to a long-standing puzzle in the syntax and semantics of anti-agreement effect in Berber (Henceforth AAE) (Cf. Ouhalla 1993). Anti-agreement is the phenomenon whereby verbal/inflectional morphology is sensitive to WH-subject extraction from a postverbal position in A-bar movement contexts of relativization and clefting (Cf., e.g., 1 and 2). In particular, the canonical subject agreement inflectional morphology that is found in a declarative matrix clause undergoes a process of *agreement suppression* and cannot occur if one of the aforementioned A-bar movement processes has occurred (Cf. 4.a-b). The puzzling nature of this process is intriguing from both of a theoretical and empirical perspective. Empirically, this paper discusses cases from Berber (as well as other AAE languages) where it is observed that the occurrence of AAE is accompanied by a process of *suppressing phi-features' specifications* in the sense that once the process of WH-subject extraction has taken place, full subject agreement features switch into zero agreement (Cf. 1-4). Theoretically, this suppression of phi-features' specification in AAE contexts runs against the expectations of the mechanics of the Minimalist copy-theory-of-movement (Chomsky 2001) as well as those of the connectivity effects (Higgins 1979). Both of these requirements necessitate that the copy of the moved constituent be identical to its antecedent and as such allow for the recoverability of its referential properties.

Previous accounts: The first analysis of Berber AAE in Ouhalla (1993) attributes the obligatory lack of agreement between the verb and the subject to the local extraction of the latter. More recently, Richards (2001) derives AAE effect from a PF rule which bans the occurrence of two strong features in a single chain, it follows that one part of the chain should include a weak feature. On the other hand, Phillips (2001) and Ouhalla (2004) propose that AAE is the reflex of the failure of V to raise to a functional head where agreement features with the subject are checked. I claim that the explanation of Richards (2001) is circular as it can not motivate the pseudocleft character of AAE in (Cf. 3.a-c). I equally claim that the analyses of Phillips (2001) and Ouhalla (2004), though attractive, incorrectly predict that in the cases which attest the inability of the verb to raise to an agreement projection and where the verb always follows object clitics, the order [CL-V] is expected to always induce AAE effect. As the examples in (5.a-b) show, this is not born out.

The proposal and its consequences: Stepping on some of the insights of question-in-disguise theory (Cf. Ross 2000, 2001, den Dikken 2001 a.o.), I propose that AAE effect is a clefting strategy used by Berber (and languages which have AAE) to establish a non-movement connectivity between a 'dislocated' WH-subject and its corresponding trace copy. This connectivity effect in AAE context maps a referential dependency in which an analogous of reconstruction effect is found, even if the positions in the dependency chain are not transformationally related. I start by developing an analysis of verb movement that derives the relative order of the verb and the cartography of the preverbal as well as the postverbal subject positions. I complement this, by an analysis of WH-movement constructions in Berber and where I show that both of WH-constructions and relative clause constructions are clefts in disguise (Cf. 3.a-c). They invariably have a quantificational reading irrespective of the context they occur in. The relative clause marker and the agreement on the verb are unspecified for phi-features. I identify at least three arguments which support this analysis and which further indicates that cleft constructions with AAE effect attests to anti-connectivity (absence of movement-based connectivity effect): (i) there is no movement of WH-subjects in AAE clefts because the WH-subject and the site of its extraction do not share any phi-features' specification (Cf. 1&2), (ii) the fact that the reflexive cannot be interpreted as being bound by the subject of the clause as shown in (6) strongly argues for an analysis of WH-subjects which does not involve movement and (iii) WH-objects extract across WH-subjects as shown in (7.b). Under the classical analysis of WH-island effects, the fact that (7.b) does not exhibit an island effect indicates that the WH-subject in the embedded clause does not occupy a [Spec, CP] position, thereby does not block successive-cyclic movement of "*which book (man lktab)*". This analysis correctly predicts the existence of a wh-asymmetry, namely that the extracted WH-subject in Berber differs in its referential and connectivity properties from WH-object. This prediction is born out by the fact that (in Berber) while extracted WH-object can remain in-situ, is always definite and establishes a

binding chain with a object resumptive clitic in the intermediate landing sites of WH-movement and with a ‘parasitic’ gap in the site of extraction, the WH-subject always requires extraction and is interpreted as indefinite, bears a quantificational reading and does not license resumptives.

Conclusion: This analysis is the first to provide a principled account of the connectivity effect in AAE constructions, where the WH-subjects’ interpretative dependencies are analyzed as not following entirely from syntactic movement. Rather, AAE is analyzed as connectivity mechanism, with a last resort character and which represents a case of an unbounded referential dependency.

Data

Relative clause constructions

- (1) zri-x [DP a^r yaz [CP Op_i i (g) [vP y-ssqad-n t_i /*y-ssqad lktab i Mena]]]
 see.PERF-1S man RM X PART-send.PERF-PART /*3S.M-send.PERF book to Mena
 ‘I saw the man who sent the book to Mena.’

Cleft constructions

- (2) (ð) [DP Jamal [CP Op_i i (g) [vP y-sqad-n t_i /*y-sqad θabrat]]]
 COP Jamal CM X PART-send.PERF-PART /*3S.M-send.PERF letter
 ‘It is Jamal who sent the letter.’

Derivation of AAE constructions and their clefting character

- (3) a. COP [f. XP^{Subject} [CP Op_i i^{zero agreement} [vP^{zero agreement} t_i]]] (Subject cleft construction)
 b. ~~COP~~ [f. XP^{Subject} [CP Op_i i^{zero agreement} [vP^{zero agreement} t_i]]] (Subject relative clauses)
 c. ~~COP~~ [f. XP^{Subject} [CP Op_i i^{zero agreement} [vP^{zero agreement} t_i]]] (Subject wh-clauses)

Suppression of agreement morphology=Anti-agreement effect

- (4) a. [vP θ-sqad θamatuθ rfrus i w-a^rba]
 3S.F-send.PERF woman money to CS-boy
 ‘The/a woman sent money to the boy.’ (Full agreement of Subj. and V)
 b. [DP t tamatuθ [CP Op_i i (g) [vP y-sqad-n t_i /*θ-sqad rfrus i w-a^rba]]]
 COP woman RM X PART-send.PERF-PART /*3S.F-send.PERF money to CS-boy
 ‘It is the woman who sent money to the boy.’ (Anti-agreement of Subj. and V)

Against deriving AAE from verb movement

- (5) a. mri (ð) Jamal i s t id y-nda-n iri i-ttffi t
 if COP J. CM CL,CL,CL PART-throw.PERF-PART then 3S.M.catch.PERF CL
 ‘If it is Jamal who threw it to him, he could have been able to catch it’
 b. mri s t id y-nda Jamal iri i-ttffi t
 if CL,CL,CL 3S.M-throw.PERF Jamal then 3S.M.catch.PERF CL_{ACC}
 ‘If Jamal threw it to him, he could have been able to catch it.’

Reflexive binding

- (6) ??man n ttswairθ ng ixefiness_{ij} i (g) i-txis muhand_i
 which of picture of himself RM X 3S.M-like.IMPERF M.
 ‘Which picture of himself does Muhand like?’

Extraction of wh-object across wh-subject

- (7) a. sqssa-n ma ð a^r yaz i (g) y-wfi-n lktab i w-arba
 ask.PERF-3PL.M whether COP man RM X PART-give.PERF-PART book to CS-boy
 ‘They asked whether it is the man gave the book to the boy.’
 b. man lktab ixef sqssa-n ma ð a^r yaz i [θ] y-wfi-n <_> (gap) i w-arba
 which book about ask.PERF-3PL.M whether COP man RM CL PART-give.PERF-PART to CS-boy
 ‘Which book did they wonder whether it is the man who gave it to the boy?’

Selected bibliography

Chomsky, N. (2000). Minimalist Inquiries: the framework. In *Step by Step: Essays in honor of Howard Lasnik*. R.Martin,D. Michaels and J. Uriagereka (eds), 89-155. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.; **den Dikken, M.(2001/to appear).** Specificational copular sentences and pseudoclefts. In *The Syntax Companion*. Ed. Martin Everaert & Henk van Riemsdijk; **Higgins, F.R. (1979).** *The pseudo-cleft construction in English*. New York: Garland; **Ouhalla, J. (1993).** Subject Extraction, Negation and the Anti-agreement Effect. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 11, 477-518; **Ross, J. R. (2000).** ‘The Frozenness of Pseudoclefts–Towards an Inequality-based Syntax’, in John P. Boyle and Arika Okrent (eds.), *CLS 36*, Chicago, pp. 385–426.