

## Subject positions in Arabic once more: evidence from doubling constructions

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There exist in many Arabic varieties, such as Tunisian Arabic (TA), constructions similar to (1) and (2), where the subject is made of two independent yet semantically related elements rather than one. They make up what is in the generative literature now known as Subject doubling constructions (*cf.* Barbiers et al., 2008; Belletti, 2005; Holmberg & Nikanne, 2008, among many).

- (1) a. **le-wled HUWWA** msh-a: l- el-masrah, mush e-ṭufla  
the-boy he go-PER-3SM to the-theatre not the-girl  
“THE BOY went to the theatre, and not the girl.”
- b. **huwwa le-wled** msh-a: l- el-masrah  
he the-boy go-PER-3SM to the-theatre  
“The boy went to the theatre.”
- (2) a. **'inti HUWWA** ji:-t, mush huma  
you 2SM/F he-3SM come-PER-2SM/F not them  
“YOU came, and not them.”
- b. **huwwa 'inti** ji:-t  
he-3SM you 2SM/F come-PER-2SM/F  
“You came.”

The existence of two elements in the subject position is also motivated by information structure reasons, in that (1a) and (2a) are pragmatically structured following Lambrecht's (1994) theory of information structure as topic-comment structures, while (1b) and (2b) arethetic constructions or sentential focus constructions. This in turn motivates a syntactic analysis that should derive the subject doublet constituents differently from a single subject constituent; therefore, locating them in two subject positions. The Multiple Subject Constructions (MSCs) is the term given in the literature to account for more than one subject (*cf.* Chomsky, 1995; Ura, 1996 and Doron & Heycock 1999). Accordingly, the Nominative Case of the subject constituents is possibly licensed in two positions. The literature on MSCs has though concerned itself with examining unrelated--in discourse at least--subject elements. Unlike most of MSCs approaches, however, Holmberg & Nikanne's (2008) analysis of Finnish subject doubling can be distinguished by mending that gap in claiming the MSC to hold a potential location for doubled subject elements as well. In their multiple spell-out of chain links approach to argument doubling, the positions of the MSC are made to host two subject constituents with one reduplicating a copy of the other standing for a semantically and pragmatically relevant entity. In Arabic, given (1) and (2), it is possible to claim a similar analysis to that of Holmberg & Nikanne (2008) of Finnish, except that in TA the doubling pair is base-generated in a big constituent, following the big DP theory of Torrego (1988)-Uriagereka (1995). It will be demonstrated that the doubling constructions in TA can be distributed in a sort of a MSC or recursive specifier positions along the lines of Doron & Heycock (1999). But, they differ here in attesting evidence to these specifier positions from subject doubling constructions, rather than the semantically and discursively distinct subject elements as in Doron & Heycock's. Therefore, the talk comes back on crucial issues in Arabic word order and clause structure. The purpose is to set out the issue anew, but on the basis of a very different type of data, from the point of view of syntax and information structure.