

## Two types of subject doubling in Tunisian Arabic (TA)

- **Type 1: Contrastive Topic subject doubling**
- **Type 2: Non-topic subject (thetic) doubling**

### Type1: Contrastive Topic subject doubling

#### •Lexical-pronominal doubling

**1a.le-wled HUWWA** msh-a: l- el-masrah, mush  
the-boy he go-PER-3SM to-the-theatre,  
not  
e-tufla  
the-girl

"THE BOY went to the theatre, and not the girl."

#### •Pronominal doubling

**b.'inti HUWWA** el-mas'u:l, mush huma  
you he the-responsible not them  
"YOU are the responsible, and not them."

#### •Difference from Cleft constructions

**2a.LE-WLED huwwa illi** msh-a: l-el masrah,  
the-boy he that go-PER-3SM to-the-  
theatre

mush e-tufla  
not the-girl

"THE BOY is the one who went to the theatre, but  
not the girl."

**b.\*'INTI huwwa illi** el- mas'u:l, mush huma  
you he that the-responsible, not them  
"Intended: It is YOU who is the responsible, but  
not them."

#### •Differences from cleft constructions

**1: the cleft is a bi-clausal construction.**  
**huwwa** in the cleft is not a doubling  
pronoun, but a copula; compare (1b,2b).

**1: le-wled = contrastive topic**

**2: LE-WLED = exhaustive focus**

**1: HUWWA = subject doubling pronoun**

### Type2: Non-topic subject (thetic) doubling

#### •Lexical-Pronominal doubling

**huwwa le-wled** msh-a: l- el-masrah  
he the-boy go- PER-3SM to the-theatre  
"The boy went to the theatre."

#### •Pronominal doubling:

**huwwa** ☐ **inti** ji: -t  
he-3sm you come-PER-2 SM/F  
"You came."

•**huwwa = expletive pronoun**

•**le-wled/☐inti = informational focus**

## Syntax of subject doubling:

- The higher subject is in[Spec,TopP].
- The lower subject is in [Spec, FinP].
- Top has EPP feature.
- Fin has a contrast feature.

. **TA clause structure:** motivating the  
**Multiple Subject Construction (MSC):**  
[Spec, TopP] and [Spec, FinP] in TA.

### Diagnostics

**1.Placement of CP adverb birrasmi: 'truly'**  
and TP adverb za:da 'also'.

**2.Movement of ke:n 'was' auxiliary to  
Fin.**

[<sub>CP</sub>[<sub>TopP</sub> **birrasmi:**[<sub>TopP</sub> **mahbu:l**[<sub>FinP</sub> **ke:n+F**  
**in** [<sub>TP</sub> **Ali**[<sub>TP</sub> **za:da**[<sub>VP</sub> **ṣaddaq-hum**]]]]]]]  
"Truly a crazy person if Ali believed  
them."

**3.Movement of contrastive Focus Ali to  
value contrast feature in [Spec, FinP].**

[<sub>CP</sub>[<sub>TopP</sub> **birrasmi:**[<sub>TopP</sub> **mahbu:l**[<sub>FinP</sub> **ALI**  
**ke:n+Fin**[<sub>TP</sub>[<sub>TP</sub> **za:da**[<sub>VP</sub> **ṣaddaqhum**]]]]]]]  
"Truly a crazy person ALI if he believed  
them."

### Syntax of subject doubling:

\*[<sub>CP</sub> **za:da** [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>TopP</sub> **le-wled/ ☐inti** [<sub>FinP</sub>  
**HUWWA** [<sub>TP</sub> **birrasmi:**[<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> msh-a: l-el-  
masrah]]]]]]]

. [<sub>CP</sub> **birrasmi:**[<sub>CP</sub>[<sub>TopP</sub> **huwwa** [<sub>FinP</sub> **le-  
wled / ☐inti** [<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> msh-a: l-el-masrah]]]]]]]

## Findings and conclusions

- **Subject doubling** is not a cleft structure
- **MSC** : [Spec, TopP] & [Spec,FinP]
- **EPP** in [Spec,TopP]
- **Focus features** in [Spec,FinP]
- **FinP=Focus domain** in Arabic

### Selected references

Holmberg, A & U. Nikanne (2008). Subject  
doubling in Finnish: the role of deficient  
Pronouns. In Microvariation in syntactic  
doubling (Syntax and Semantics 36)  
Barbiers et al. (eds.). Bingley: Emerald.