

The Stratal Uniqueness Law and Double Object Constructions in Standard Arabic

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Abstract

Wright (1974) and Comrie (1976) make the strong claim that Standard Arabic (SA) tolerates "double direct object" constructions. Accordingly, such constructions violate a universal posited in the theory of Relational Grammar (RG), the Stratal Uniqueness Law (SUL), which maintains that no more than one nominal can bear a given grammatical relation like direct object in a single level of structure. Taking RG as a framework, I argue in this paper against their claim, demonstrating that such constructions in SA support the SUL. SA has clauses which involve two nominals marked for the accusative case. Further, such nominals result from the advancement of indirect object to direct object, and display different syntactic behavior.

Introduction

Wright (1974) and Comrie (1976), among others, claim that Standard Arabic (SA) allows double direct object constructions. Wright (47—50) states:

Many verbs take two objective complements in the accusative, either both of the person, or both of the thing, or the one of the person and the other of the thing. These verbs form two classes, according to the relation of their objects to one another; the first class consisting of those whose objects stand to one another in the relation of subject and predicate. (a) To the first class belong all causatives of the second and fourth verbal forms, whose ground-form is transitive and governs an accusative; as also verbs that signify **to fill or satisfy , give, deprive, forbid, ask, entreat**, and the like, the most of which have likewise a causative meaning. . . (b) To the second class belong (a) verbs which mean to **make, appoint, call, name**, and the like; and (b) **those verbs which are called by the Arab grammarians áf^{ca}: lu l-qulu: bi verbs of the heart**, i.e., which signify an act that takes place in the mind, or **áf^{ca}: lu l-Yaqi: ni wa-š - s^vakki áwi r-rujha: ni verbs of certainty and doubt or preponderance (of probability)** . . . Of the two objective complements, that which is the subject is called 'al-maf^{cu} : lu l-áwwalu **the first object**, and the other, or predicate, **ál-maf^{cu} : lu' aḡ - ḡ a:ni the second object**.

Similarly, discussing doubling on direct object in causatives and quoting Wright (1974) and Kautzsch (1910), Comrie (1976: 285-86) says:

In Arabic and Hebrew, . . . the causative of a transitive verb takes two direct objects, but from the literature on these languages it is not clear to me that this is a particularly productive construction; conceivably, these “causatives” are listed separately in the lexicon, having the same degree of relatedness as, say, English **sit** and **seat**.

This claim is elucidated in clauses like (1-2):

(1) 'a^{ca}ṭa l - walad - u l - bint - a l - ḥaqi: bat-a
gave the-boy-Nom the-girl-Acc the-bag-Acc
'The boy gave the girl the bag.'

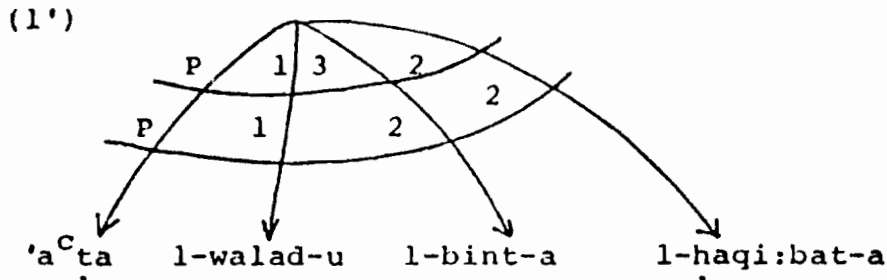
(2) kattaba l-mu^callim-u ṭ-ṭa: lib-a
cause to write the-teacher-Nom the-student-Acc d-dars-a
the-lesson-Acc
'The teacher made the student write the lesson.'

in which the nominals **l-bint-a** and **l-ḥaḳi:bat-a** of (1) and **ṭ-ṭa:lib-a** and **d-dars-a** of (2) are two direct objects marked with the accusative case marker **-a**.¹ Such clauses thus violate the stratal Uniqueness Law (SUL), a universal posited in the theory of Relational Grammar and given in (3):

(3) The Stratal Uniqueness Law:

No more than one nominal can head an arc with a given term R-sign in a given stratum, (Perlmutter 1980:211).

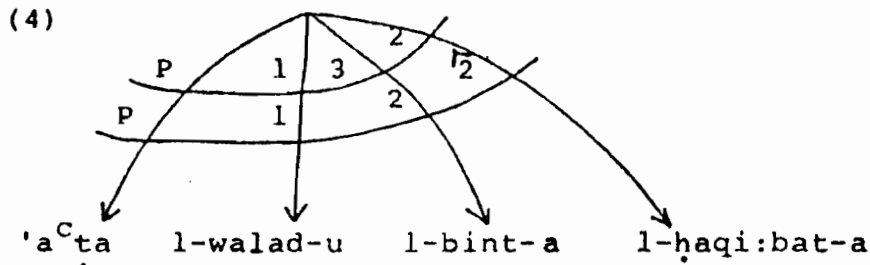
The SUL states that in a single stratum or structural level there could not be more than one 1-arc, one 2-arc, or one 3-arc. That is, no sentence or clause can contain more than one subject, one direct object, or one indirect object in a single stratum. This law can be exemplified for sentence (1) above involving, as I will show later, 3-2 advancement and represented in (1'):



(1') 'aḥṭa l-walad-u l-bint-a l-ḥaḳi:bat-a

Under the analysis of such linguists as Wright and Comrie, a clause like (1, 1') violates, as I have maintained, the SUL because it contains two 2-arcs in the second stratum; these two 2-arcs are, respectively, headed by **l-bint-a** and **l-ḥaḳi:bat-a**.

Taking the theory of RG as a frame of reference,² I claim that such clauses with double direct objects result from the 3-2 advancement rule which operates on both clauses having direct and indirect objects—in RG these objects are referred to as 2 and 3 respectively—and the output of the causative clause union (CCU), resulting in advancing the nominal that bears the 3-relation to 2, an advancement which gives two nominals having the same case marking in the same clause. My claim is exemplified in the following stratal diagram which represents clause (1):



Evidence for this analysis comes from the fact that the double object or the double accusative nominals, as will be shown later, display different syntactic behavior. Consequently, Comrie's and Wright's claim should be rejected in favor of my analysis which saves the SUL, thus bolstering the adequacy of the RG theory and pinpointing some significant features associated with those objects that have gone unnoticed.

The following discussion elaborates on and argues for my claim. Section 2 presents an overview of the types of double object constructions considered by Arab grammarians, Section 3 deals with 3-2 advancement construction in SA. Subsection 3.1 supplies arguments for the final 2-hood or direct objecthood of an advancee like **l-bint-a** in (4). Similarly, subsection 3.2 examines the fate of the initial 2 or patient like **l-ḥaqi: bat-a** in (4) in the final stratum, arguing that the patient is no longer a "real" object, but is rather a chomeur. Section 4 gives a brief idea about causative clauses in SA, showing how 3-2 advancement can interact with causatives. The last section posits and argues against two alternative analyses to double object clauses.

2.0 Types of Double Object Constructions in Arabic Grammar

Arab grammarians like Sibawayhi (n. d.), Ibn Hisham (n.d.), Al-Ghalayini (n.d.) and Hassan (1973), to mention only a few, have divided such constructions into two types. The first includes double-object constructions which are originally "subject and predicate"; the second is composed of those constructions which are not originally "subject and predicate". The former is governed by two verb classes: "the verbs of the heart"—**'af^ḥa: lu-l-qulu:bi-including the verbs of certainty, doubt and probability, and the "verbs of change"—'af^ḥa:lu-t-tahwi:li**. The second type of such constructions is governed by verbs like **'a^ḥṭā**: 'to give', **manaha** 'to grant', etc. In this paper, I only deal with double-object constructions which are not originally "subject and predicate" since constructions which are originally "subject and predicate" do not seem to lend themselves to the 3-2 advancement analysis. The second type, however, needs future research in the light of the RG framework.

3.0 3-2 Advancement Construction

The purpose of this section is to discuss 3-2 advancement in SA; that is, the advancement of a nominal which is semantically “recipient” to direct object or 2.

The 3-2 advancement construction is illustrated in clauses like (1) above. In the case of (1), the GR of **I-bint-a** is a 3 or indirect object at the initial level on the ground that GRs are determined by semantic roles in the first stratum.³ Similarly, **I-ḥaqi: bat-a** bears the 2-or direct object-relation in the first stratum since its semantic role is “patient”.

Accounting for the syntax of such clauses, I propose that the nominals bearing the initial 3-relation advance to 2 in the next stratum as shown in diagram (4) above. That diagram manifests the 3-2 advancement of the recipient nominal **I-bint-a**, resulting in having two nominals **I-bint-a** and **I-ḥaqi: bat-a**, assigned the same case; i.e. the accusative case.

Based on clauses like (1), one can identify several characteristics of the 3-2 advancement construction that should be stated in SA grammar. First, the advancement is optional: whether or not the recipient advances to 2 has no effect on the grammaticality of a clause. Thus, clauses like (5) below are as grammatical and acceptable as those where advancement does occur:

- (5) 'a^cṭa I-walad-u I-ḥaqi: bat-a li
 gave the-boy-Nom the-bag-Acc to
 I-bint-i
 the-girl-obl
 'The boy gave the bag to the girl.'

Second, in clauses where 3-2 advancement occurs, the preposition **li** ‘to, for’ does not occur as is shown in (1). Otherwise, such clauses would be ill-formed as can be seen in (6):

- (6) 'a^cṭa I-walad-u li I-bint-i I-ḥaqi: bat-a
 to the-girl-Obl
 (The boy gave to the girl the bag.)

Finally, such advancement is lexically-governed. It occurs with such verbs as those given in (7):

- (7) Verbs Governing 3-2 Advancement:

'a ^c ṭa	'to give'
manaḥa	'to award, to grant'

'albasa	'to offer a dress to someone, to dress someone'
kasa:	'to buy someone a dress'
'arsala	'to send'
ba ^C a a	'to send'
sa'ala	'to ask'
sallama	'to deliver'
kattaba	'to cause to write'
ḥammala	'to cause to carry'

Illustrative sentences are the following:

(8) 'albasa l-mu^Callim-u ṭ-ṭa:libat-a
 offered as a dress the-teacher-Nom the-f. student-Acc
 qami: ṣ-an
 Shirt-Acc
 'The teacher offered the female student a shirt.'

(9) kasa r-rajul-u l-mar'at-a
 bought as a dress the-man-Nom the-woman-Acc
 qubba^Cat-an
 hat-Acc
 'The man gave the woman a hat.'

(10) 'arsal-tu l-bint-a risa: lat-an
 sent-1s the-girl-Acc letter-Acc
 'I sent the girl a letter.'

(11) ḥammal-tu r-rajul-a ṣ-ṣundu:q-a
 cause to carry-1s the-man-Acc the-box-Acc
 'I made the man carry the box.'

Further, I know of no verbs that obligatorily govern 3-2 advancement; that is, there are no verbs which occur in a 3-2 advancement construction, but which do not occur with a superficial 3.⁴

In what follows, I provide evidence for the proposed analysis, thus establishing the 3-2 advancement phenomenon in SA. First, I present arguments for the final 2-hood of the advancee. Then I discuss the fate of the initial 2 in the final stratum, showing that it is a final 2-chomeur.

3.1. Evidence For The Final 2-Hood of The Advancee

This subsection supplies evidence that the recipient nominal like **l-bint-a**

in (1) above which is a double object clause is a final 2. The evidence draws upon nominal case, passive, pronominal cliticization, ascension and topicalization.

3.1.1. Nominal Case

Salih (1985 a, Forthcoming) formulates the rule for SA nominal case marking as follows:

(12) Nominal Case Rule:

- a. Final 1s are in the nominative case.
- b. Final 2s are in the accusative case.
- c. Others are in the oblique case.

As such if the recipient is a final 2, it should be marked accusative in accord with rule (12). The prediction is borne out. The nominal **I-bint-a** in (1) is in the accusative case as is indicated by the suffix **-a**. Thus, the fact that such nominals bearing the 3-relation in the initial stratum is in the accusative case in the final stratum manifests that they are final 2s.

3.1.2. Passive

Passives promote only 2s to 1s (Perlmutter and Postal 1983c). If this claim is true, we expect that nominals heading 3-arcs but final 2-arcs can advance to I via passive. That this prediction is valid is shown in the passive clause (13), the counterpart to the non-passive (1) above:

- (13) 'u^cṭiyati I-bint-u I-ḥaqi: bat-a
 Pass + gave the-girl-Nom the-bag-Acc
 'The girl was given the bag.'

In the case of (13), **I-bint-u** which is assumed to be a 3-2 advancee has advanced to I. The ability of such a nominal to advance to I, therefore, provides another piece of evidence for the final 2-hood of advancees in 3-2 advancement clauses.

3.1.3. Pronominal Cliticization

When pronominalized, nominals bearing the final 2-relation cliticize to the predicate of the clause (Salih 1985a, forthcoming). Consequently, if a nominal like **I-bint-a** is truly a final 2 in (1) above, it should be able, if pronominalized, to appear as a clitic on predicates like **'a^cṭa**. That the claim holds is manifested in clause (14):

- (14) 'a^cṭa:-ha: I-walad-u I-ḥaqi:bat-a

gave- her the-boy-Nom the-bag-Acc
'The boy gave her the bag.'

where the pronominal **-ha:**, replacing **l-bint-a**, does cliticize to the predicate. Thus, pronominal cliticization supplies a further argument that initial 3s are really final 2s.

3.1.4. Topicalization

Any nominal bearing a final GR can topicalize in SA (Salih 1985a, 1985b). Accordingly, if the advancee nominal heads a final 2-arc, it must topicalize. That this prediction holds can be seen in (15) where the 3-2 advancee '**al-bint-u**' has topicalized:

(15) 'al-bint-u, 'a^cṭa:.-ha l-walad-u
 the-girl-Nom gave-her the-boy-Nom
 l-ḥaqi:bat-a
 the-bag-Acc
 'The girl, the boy gave her the bag.'

Therefore, that advancee nominals like **l-bint-a** can topicalize shows that they are final 2s. Their final 2-hood is evident in that final 2s when topicalized leave pronominal copies of themselves like **-ha:**, cliticizing to the predicate of the clause.

3.1.5. Summary

The foregoing subsection has argued for an advancement analysis of clauses involving two accusatives or objects. Specifically, it has been proposed that nominals whose semantic role is recipient in the initial stratum are final 2s in the final stratum. The proposal has been supported by arguments drawing upon nominal case marking, passives, pronominal cliticization and topicalization.

3.2 The Fate of The Patient

So far I have established the final 2-hood of the recipient in double object clauses. In this subsection, I discuss the fate of the patient, again showing that it heads a 2-chomeur arc in the final stratum. Arguments draw upon passives and pronominal cliticization.

3.2.1. Passive

We have stated that passive has the effect of advancing nominals heading 2-arcs to I. Thus, if the patient like **l-ḥaqi:bat-a** in (l) above really heads a 2-arc, it should be able to advance to I in a passive clause. This is not eventually the case as illustrated in clause (16), the counterpart to the active clause (l):

- (16) * 'u^cṭiyati 1-ḥaqi: bat-u l-bint-a
 Pass + gave the-bag-Nom the-girl-Acc
 (The bag was given the girl.)

Clause (16) is ill-formed due to the advancement to I of the patient nominal **l-ḥaqi: bat-u** in the final stratum. Thus, that such nominals cannot promote to 1 gives one piece of evidence that they are not 2s in the final level of 3-2 advancement clauses.

3.2.2. Pronominal Cliticization

We have noticed that a nominal bearing a final 2-relation cliticizes to the verb if pronominalized. Accordingly, if the patient is a final 2 in the construction under investigation, its corresponding pronominal form should appear as a clitic on the verb. That the predication is not borne out can be shown in the ill-formed clause (17) contrasted with (18) in which the nominal **l-ḥaqi: bat-a** of (I) above is replaced by the independent pronominal **'iyya:ha:** 'it':

- (17) * 'a^cṭa-iyya:ha: l-walad-u l-bint-a
 gave-it the-boy-Nom the-girl-Acc
 (The boy gave it to the girl)

- (18) 'a^cṭa l-walad-u l-bint-a 'iyya:ha:
 'The boy gave it to the girl.'

The ill-formedness of (17) is attributable to the cliticization of **'iyya:ha:** to **'a^cṭa-**, a slot which is only filled by a final 2 nominal. The fact that the patient cannot cliticize to the predicate in the final level of structure, thus, supplies another argument for final non-objecthood.

3.2.3. Summary

The preceding discussion has furnished evidence to the effect that the patient is not a final 2. We have demonstrated that it is inaccessible to passive and pronominal cliticization. I conclude, therefore, that the patient is not a final term and must thus be a final 2-chomeur written as $\bar{2}$.

3.3 Summary

The foregoing section has motivated the 3-2 advancement construction in SA. It has been indicated that clauses with two accusative nominals or two objects are best analyzed as involving the advancement of the "recipient" nominal to 2 in the following stratum, thus putting the "patient" nominal en chomage. Evidence for the final 2-hood of the advancee as well as for the final chomage of the patient has also been provided, drawing upon several syntactic features internal to the language.

4.0 Causative Clause Union

Causative clause union (CCU) in SA is demonstrated in the following clauses:

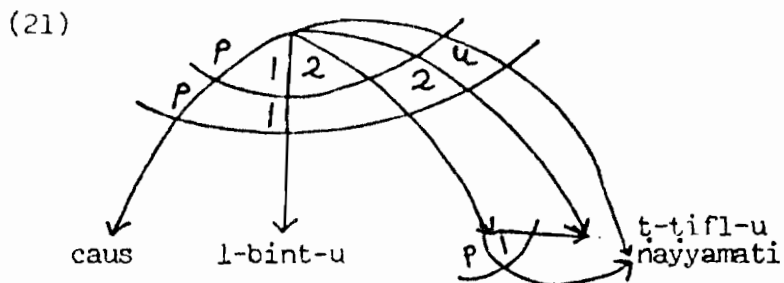
(19) a. na:ma t-tifl-u
 slept The-baby-nom
 'The baby slept.'

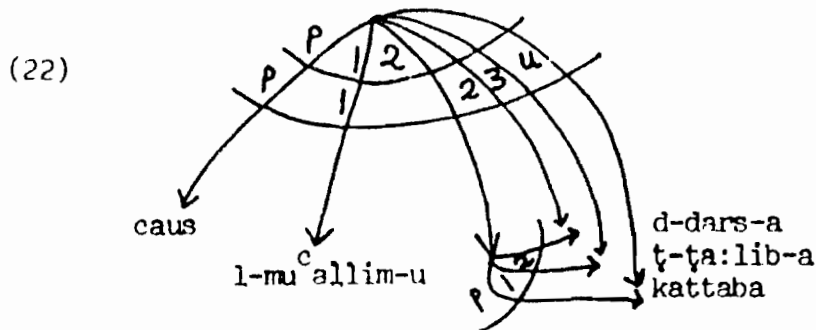
b. nayyamati l-bint-u t-tifl-a
 cause to sleep the-girl-Nom the-baby-Acc
 'The girl made the baby sleep.'

(20) a. kataba t-ta:lib-u d-dars-a
 wrote the-student-Nom the-lesson-Acc
 'The student wrote the lesson.'

b. kattaba 1-mu^c allim-u d-dars-a
 cause to write the-teacher-Nom the-lesson-Acc
 li t-ta:lib-i
 to the-student-Obl
 'The teacher made the student write the lesson.'

The basic idea of clause union is that two clauses collapse into a single clause, thus all the dependents of the embedded or downstairs (DS) clause are assigned relations in the matrix or upstairs clause.⁵ The stratum in which the DS dependents first bear GRs in the upstairs clause is the union (U) stratum. As such, clauses like (19-20b) are representable in diagrams (21-22) respectively:





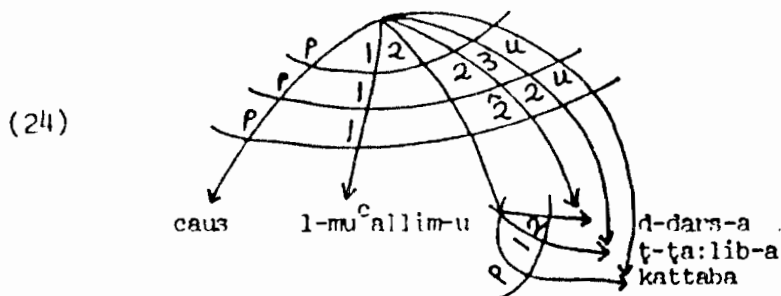
As is shown in (21-22), the transitivity of the DS clause determines what GR a nominal assumes in the union stratum. In (21), the DS subject **t-tifl-u** of the predicate **na:ma** bears the final 2 relation in the union stratum since the DS clause is intransitive. By the same token, the DS subject **t-ta:lib-u** in (22) bears the final 3-relation in the upstairs clause due to the fact that the DS clause is transitive; furthermore, the DS 2 inherits its relation in the union stratum.⁶

Overlooking causatives like (19) since they are irrelevant to the purpose of this paper, I can now proceed to take up the issue of how 3-2 advancement occurs in causative clauses, resulting in double object clauses in SA. Recall that such clauses denote those involving two nominals marked accusative.

Causative clauses with both direct and indirect objects like (20b) can have the alternating form (23) where the indirect object has advanced to 2:

- (23) Kattaba 1-mu^callim-u t-ta:lib-a
 cause to write the-teacher-Nom- the-student-Acc
 d-dars-a
 the-lesson-Acc
 'The teacher made the student write the lesson.'

For a discussion of this pattern, see the references cited in note (5) below. Accordingly, (23) could be represented in (24):



In the case of (24), the upstairs 3, **t-ṭa:lib-a**, has advanced to 2, thus putting **d-dars-a**, the 2 in the union stratum, en chomage in conformity with the Chomeur Condition informally given in (25):

- (25) The Chomeur Condition:
 If some nominal, N_a , bears a given term relation in a given stratum, S_i , and some other nominal, N_b , bears the same term relation in the following stratum, $S_i + 1$ then N_a bears the Chomeur relation in $S_i + 1$. (Perlmutter and Postal 1983c:20).

What the Chomeur Condition claims is the following. Since **t-ṭa: lib-a** bears the 2-relation in the second union stratum, it follows from the SUL that **d-dars-a** ceases to bear the 2-relation in this stratum. The relation borne by **d-dars-a** in the second union stratum is the Chomeur relation written as $\hat{2}$ as is stipulated by the Chomeur Condition.

Arguments for this analysis and the final GRs borne by nominals like **t-ṭa: lib-a** and **d-dars-a** of (24) are the same arguments given to support the 3-2 advancement constructions discussed in the previous section.

5.0 Other Alternatives to Double Object Constructions

The present section is meant to look upon two alternatives to the analysis presented so far to account for double object clauses. These are called for convenience the "Double 2-Analysis" and the "Object Doubling Analysis". The first is posited as an alternative to the analysis given in section 3.0 to double object constructions that do not involve clause union; and the second is postulated as an alternative to the analysis of clauses involving CCU provided in section 4.0. I argue against these alternatives, thus lending further support to the Stratal Uniqueness Law superficially threatened by these alternative analyses.

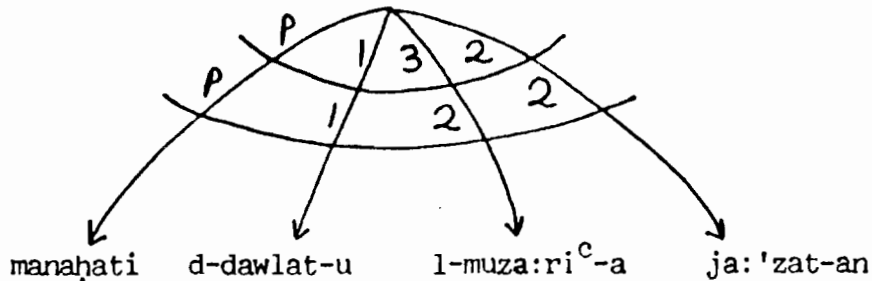
5.1. The Double 2- Analysis

In section 3.2, I have shown that the patient is a final 2-chomeur in clauses with 3-2 advancement; that analysis, I will refer to as the "Chomage Analysis." In this subsection, I discuss an alternative to the chomage analysis; the alternative, called the double 2-analysis, represents Wright's view of SA 3-2 advancement constructions.

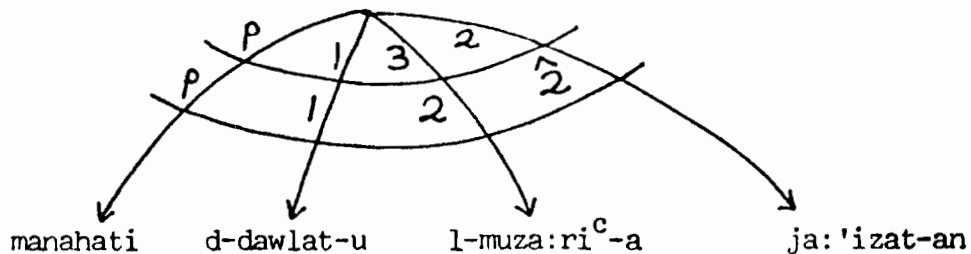
The double 2-analysis claims that the patient is not a final 2-chomeur, but rather a final 2. Under this analysis, a clause like (26) would have the structure (27) rather than (28):

- (26) Manahati d-dawlat-u l-muza:ri^C-a
 granted the-government-Nom the-farmer-Acc
 ja:'izat-an
 prize-Acc
 'The government granted the farmer a prize.'

(27) **Double 2-Analysis**



(28) **Chomage Analysis**



The advancee **l-muza:ri^C-a** as well as the patient **ja:'izat-an** in (27) are superficially final 2s; hence (26) violates the SUL which rules out any such a structure as ill-formed since two nominals head a 2-arc in one stratum. The double 2-analysis is thus compatible with the claim that 3-2 advancement clauses have "two objects": the first which is called the advancee in my analysis is termed the "first object," and the second the "second object."

In what follows, I argue against this alternative, showing that the SUL is not violated by data from SA.

One piece of evidence favors the double 2-analysis. It is case marking, saying that final 2s are marked accusative in SA. Like **l-muza:ri^C-a**, the patient **ja:'izat-an** is in the accusative case as is indicated by the suffix **-a**, and as

such is a final 2 under the double 2-analysis. Nominal case seems to have misled Wright and others who, having realized that such two nominals have the same case, conclude that SA permits two objects.

Contrary to these linguists' conclusion, investigating the syntactic behavior of the patient in the final stratum proves that it is not a 2. Arguments against the double 2-analysis can be furnished on the basis of passives and pronominal cliticization.

In section 3.0, I have shown that the patient like **ja:'izat-an** in (26) can be accessible to none of those syntactic constructions. The patient cannot advance to I via passive, nor can it cliticize to the verb if it is pronominalized. The double 2-analysis, however, falsely predicts that the patient should be accessible to passives and pronominal cliticization.

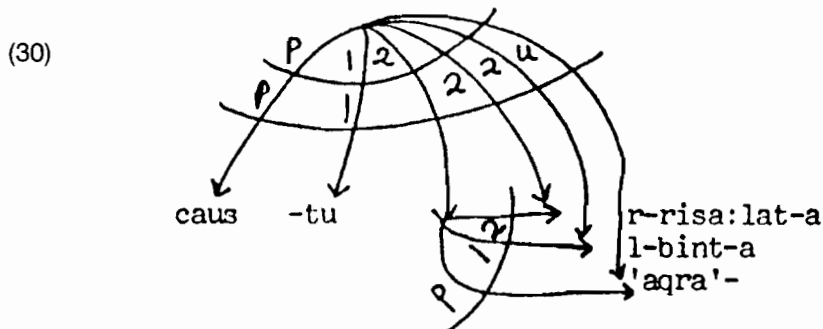
The fact that the patient is not eventually a final 2 to make it eligible for those constructions provides crucial evidence against the double 2-analysis, but for the chomage analysis which correctly predicts that the patient is a final 2-chomeur. If this conclusion is valid, the notion of "double objects" should be rejected; it cannot account for the syntactic behavior of the two accusative nominals. Its rejection is thus significant not only to SA grammar, but also to the theory of RG since the SUL is, hence, saved.

5.2, The Object Doubling Analysis

Researching the syntax of causative clauses cross-linguistically, Comrie (1976) claims that a number of languages allow doubling on the direct object position. He cites Arabic, among other languages, as an instance of this phenomenon. In Arabic, according to him, "the causative of a transitive verb takes two direct objects," In this subsection, I examine his claim and show that it is not valid.

Under Comrie's analysis, causative clauses like (29) are representable in the stratal diagram (30) rather than in (31):

- (29) 'aqrā'-tu l-bint-a r-risā:lat-a
 cause to read-Is the-girl-Acc the-letter-Acc
 'I made the girl read the letter.'



Notes

* This paper was presented at the XIV International Congress of Linguists held in Berlin, August 10-15, 1987. A five-page summary of the paper will appear in the proceedings of that Congress.

1. The term "nominal" is used throughout this paper to stand for any group of words that could make up what is widely referred to as a noun phrase (NP).
2. Relational Grammar takes grammatical relations (GRs) like subject, direct object and indirect object as primitives in linguistic theory. These relations referred to as 1, 2 and 3 are named Term relations, Others like benefactive (Ben), locative (Loc), chomeur (Cho), etc., are Non-Term relations. For a comprehensive view of this theory, see Perlmutter (1980, 1983), Perlmutter and Postal (1983a, 1984b) and Perlmutter and Rosen (1984).
3. The assignment of GRs at the initial level is governed by Perlmutter and Postal's (1983b) principle which says:

Our ultimate claim is that the justification of such assignments is universally determined by principles referring to the semantic role of the nominal. Thus, as traditionally recognized, agent nominals are initially (although, of course, not all represent agents), patients 2s, etc.

4. For a more comprehensive presentation of the verbs governing 3-2 advancement in SA, see Sibawayhi (n.d.), Ibn Hisham (n.d.), Al-Ghalayini (n.d.), and Hassan (1973), among others.
5. For a detailed discussion of clause union, see Perlmutter and Postal (1974), Gibson (1980), Aissen and Perlmutter (1983) and Gibson and Raposo (1986).
6. SA causative clause union conforms to Perlmutter and Postal's (1974) pattern of clause union given as the following:

(i) Clause Union Pattern:
DS Final GR Union Relation
 Transitive 1 —————> 3
 Intransitive 1 —————> 2

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