

The Analysis of the Thematic Structure of the Standard Arabic Clause: A Special Focus on Verb-initial Structures

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present paper is to give a detailed presentation of how the thematic structure is expressed in Standard Arabic (SA) and how different it is from that of English language. SA is a language which displays different linguistic properties in comparison to English, the language around which the Systemic Functional Grammar theory (SFG) was first developed (Halliday, 1994). Very few studies have been carried out to study the thematic structure of SA and none of them deals with all types of sentence structures in this language. Abdul-Raof's study is a case in point (Abdul-Raof, 1998); he is mainly concerned with studying the thematic structure of nominal clauses i.e. clauses starting with nouns, despite the fact that Arabic is a language where VSO structures are frequently used. It is precisely at the level of VSO structures that the analysis of thematic structure in Arabic becomes problematic. Contrary to what previous studies in this area of enquiry say, I will mainly argue that the verb cannot be considered Theme in SA. It is also worth noting that the present work is part of a general endeavour to develop a Systemic Functional Grammar of SA.

1. Introduction

Compared to English, Standard Arabic (SA) is a language which displays major structural differences, with many implications for the applicability of the Functional Grammar method to analyse the textual function of Arabic texts. This is mainly due to the fact that it is a language, which does not only display greater flexibility as far as word order is concerned, but it is also an inflecting language. The aim of the present paper is to study the thematic function of the SA clause and to provide a systemic functional account of how this function is fulfilled in this language, which is structurally very different from a language such as English. For this to be achieved, it is essential to start first by analysing the structure of the Arabic clause in terms of the two major structural characteristics of SA which are of direct relevance to the study of the Theme as suggested by Halliday. The linguistic features in question are word order and verb inflection in the SA clause. The thematic structure of the Arabic clause will then be analysed, to see how it is differently expressed from that of the English language. I will most importantly argue against the view that the verb can be the topical Theme in VSO (Verb-Subject-Object) structures in the SA i.e clauses starting with a verb (Adul-Raof, 1998; Thalji, 1982).

2. Literature review

2.1 Textual function

Besides the experiential function, related to what discourse is about (the content of language), and the interpersonal function, which is concerned with "what the clause is doing, as a verbal exchange between speaker-writer and audience" (Halliday, 1994, p. 179), the textual function is related to the way discourse is organised and involves two systems: the system of Theme and the system of information. The first system, which is thematisation, is concerned with the way constituents making up the clause are ordered, whereas the second, which is the information structure, is about the way information units, which correspond to tone groups, are organised in the clause. The element of the clause which gets tonic prominence

is considered to be the new element whereas the part which is not as intonationally salient is said to be the Given element. (Butler, 2003; Eggins, 1994; Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessens, 2004; Martin et al., 1997).

In spite of the differences in the way these two structures are expressed, thematic structure and information structure can be conceived of as being the two sides of the same coin by being complementary to each other. The relationship between them stems from the generally held belief in Systemic Functional Grammar that the thematic structure is the grammatical resource through which information units are packaged in discourse (Martin et al., 1997, p. 53). In other words, although the information unit is realised through intonation; the New element is given tonic prominence whereas the Given element is less prominent in comparison to it; Theme corresponds to the Given element the clause in the unmarked case¹ (Butler, 2003, p. 113; Halliday, 1994, p. 296). The New element in the clause, on the other hand, normally corresponds to the Rheme. There are, however, cases which diverge from the rule and where the Theme corresponds to the New element in the information structure, creating a marked combination with a particular meaning (see section 2.3 on the notion of marking).

Since the aim of the present study is to investigate the thematic structure in SA, I will put the information structure aside for the present and start instead by briefly setting out Halliday's view of the thematic structure in English, providing by this the background against which the SA thematic structure will be compared and analysed.

2.2 Thematic Structure

The thematic structure finds its expression in the general ordering of the constituent parts of the clause and "gives the clause its character as a message" (Halliday, 1994, p. 37). At this level, the clause is seen as a communicative event made up of two elements whose status depends on where they are located in the clause. The element that the clause starts with has a special status and is called the Theme (Halliday, 1994, p. 37). The remainder of the message which is the part of the message located after the Theme, is the Rheme. For Example:

(1)	<u>Sugar</u>	<u>could be addictive</u>
	↑	↑
	Theme	Rheme

First position is, however, not the criterion relied upon in SFG for the definition of Theme (Halliday, 1994, p. 38). This is mainly because the latter does not necessarily take first position in other languages and still be the element that the clause departs from. Initial position is rather used for its identification, because Theme is realized through first position in the English language, it is however not defined by it (Halliday, 1994, p. 38).

The meaning conveyed by opting for a certain element to be placed in the Theme position rather than another one is that it is an element having a special status in the thematic structure (Halliday 1994:48) that should be 'prioritised' or 'foregrounded'. "Prioritising is intended to cover all and any means of indicating that a particular type of meaning is especially important" (Berry, 1996, p. 27). Thematisation, though by no means the only way used to foreground clause elements (Berry, 1996, p. 28), is one of the most important means that the textual structure puts at the disposal of language users to prioritise meaning.

The thematic structure enables the speaker to arrange clause constituents in different ways resulting in a different organisation of meaning potential. These various ways of organizing the clause is bound to result in a change in its meaning, thereby achieving different effects on the receiver (Eggins, 1994, p. 272; Thompson, 1996, p. 119; Lock, 1996, p. 219). The following examples, adapted from Thompson's 'Introducing Functional Grammar' (1996, p. 118-119), aim to clarify this point:

- a. For centuries, yellow canaries have been used to 'test' the air in mining.
- b. Yellow canaries have been used to 'test' the air in mining for centuries
- c. Miners have used yellow canaries to 'test' the air for centuries.
- d. In mining, yellow canaries have been used to 'test' the air for centuries.
- e. To 'test' the air in mining, yellow canaries have been used for centuries.
- f. The air has been 'tested' in mining for centuries by using yellow canaries.

Even though there is a slight change in the wording of some of the sentences above especially in sentences (c) where 'miners' is used instead of 'mining' to obtain the active form of the original sentence, the experiential content of the sentences remains intact as the constituents carrying lexical content are exactly the same in all sentences. The major difference one can speak of is at the level of the thematic structure, i.e. the way constituent parts are ordered. Each one of

the examples above has its own starting point or a different Theme from which the clause departs, prioritising by this a different meaning in each one of them. In other words, “the different choice of Theme...has contributed to a different meaning.” (Thompson, 1996, p. 119).

Clauses containing only one element before the predicate, which usually conflates with the grammatical subject of the sentence, are said to have a simple Theme (see example 1 above). “The Subject is the element that is chosen as Theme unless there is good reason for choosing something else” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 73). There are, however, some cases of clauses having in their pre-predicate position more than one element, creating ambiguity as to which element to consider Theme. For instance, clauses can have as their starting point, elements whose function is not ideational, but rather textual, like conjunctions or continuatives. For example:

(2) Mary ate her dinner. *Then, she* called her mother.

In example (2) above, even though both ‘then’ and ‘she’ in the second clause occur before the predicate, each one of them has a different role to fulfil. ‘Then’ serves the role of relating the clause to a previous one in the text, acquiring, by this, an attenuated thematic status which “may not exhaust the thematic potential of the clause” (Halliday, 1994, p.52). This leaves the next element ‘she’ still thematic in the clause. To solve this ambiguity, Halliday talks about multiple Themes: a clause can contain a topical Theme, an interpersonal Theme and a textual Theme.

The topical Theme is the type of Theme, which every clause (except for minor clauses) should contain. He identifies it as the element of the clause, which is: 1) placed initially in the clause and 2) to which a transitivity role can be assigned. In example (2), ‘The man’ is the topical Theme:

(3) *The man* was helping police inquiries.

In example (3) above, ‘the man’ is the element that the clause starts from and which has the transitivity role of the Actor in the clause.

The interpersonal Theme is identified as the element which takes the initial position and to which a Mood function can be assigned. Halliday talks about: vocative, modal, and mood marking. What is referred to as a vocative is an item used as a means of address and is typically a personal name. It can be called Theme if it is placed before the topical Theme in the clause (Halliday, 1994, p.53). In sentence (4), ‘ladies and gentlemen’ belongs to the category of interpersonal Theme, as it is a means of address:

(4) *Well, ladies and gentlemen,* the programme is about to finish.

Modal Adjuncts on the other hand are the items used to express the speaker's or writer's judgement, for example, the adverb ‘frankly’.

The textual is expressed by devices such as continuatives, conjunctions and conjunctive adjuncts. They serve the purpose of linking parts of text together and are considered Themes if they precede the topical Theme. In the example above, ‘well’ is a textual Theme. Not only is it a discourse marker signalling the end of what the speaker wants to say, but it also links the utterance with what has been said previously. But it does not say anything about what the clause is about, so has no topical role.

2.3 Theme in non-declarative clauses

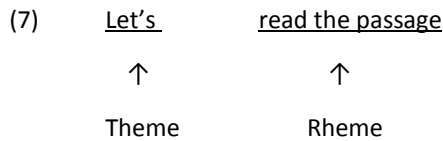
The freedom allowed in declaratives is no longer maintained in other clause types, which are restricted by structural pressures imposing a definite way to order constituent parts in the clause (Halliday, 1994, p.61). In interrogative structures, the WH-word is placed in the thematic position of the clause because it is the missing information that the question is seeking to find:

(5) *Where* did Mary go?

(6) *What* did they have for lunch?

“Indeed, the clause structure of WH-questions has evolved as different from that of declaratives precisely in order to allow the thematisation of the WH-element” (Thompson, 1996, p.122).

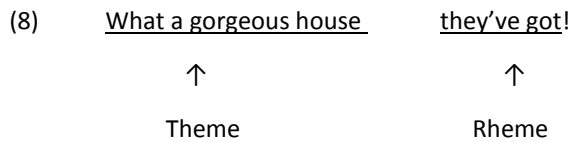
Imperatives is the only sentence type where the Predicator expressing the action is the topical Theme (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 77). It is seen as the unmarked Theme choice in this type of structures and the main reason for this is the communicative aim of the message: "This is normally to get the other person to carry out the action, and the natural starting-point is therefore the Predicator, which expresses the action" (Thompson, 1996, p. 124). In the subcategory of 1st person imperatives, however, 'me and you' is said to be part of the topical Theme which is 'Let's':



This type of imperatives contains a notional subject in the objective case (us) which occurs after the verb (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1990, p. 242). And even if the clause is made up of the verb 'to let', followed by the subject, Halliday argues that 'let's' make one single thematic unit in the clause and the reason he provides in support of this is that 'let's' behaves like a Subject in sentences such as 'Don't let's go', where 'let's' can be easily replaced by 'you' to become: 'Don't you go' (Halliday, 1994, p. 87).

The Predicator together with the Subject 'us' form the Theme and not just the Predicator 'to let', like in 2nd person unmarked imperatives. This extends to yet another imperative structure, which is the marked negative imperative such as 'Don't you dare say that to me'. The Subject 'you' is interestingly included in the topical Theme area in spite of it being placed after the auxiliary verb, which is the element the clause starts with (Halliday, 1994).

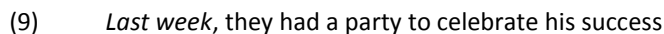
As far as exclamative clauses are concerned, only the ones containing a Predicator are said to have a thematic structure (Halliday, 1994; Thompson, 1996, p. 124). They can be analysed in the same way WH-interrogatives are, since they usually start with the WH element, which contains the entity that the exclamative clause talks about. Example (8) shows this:



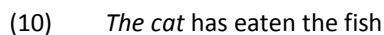
The status of verbless exclamative expressions such as 'how wonderful' 'great' 'cheers', does not rise to that of a grammatical clause and therefore do not have a thematic structure (Halliday, 1994).

2.4 Marked and unmarked theme

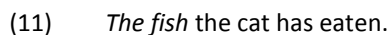
There are some elements in the clause, which, if placed in the Theme position, are considered to be in their 'normal' position because of their participant role in the clause. When, for instance, the Subject in the English language is chosen to be in the initial position of a clause, it is placed in its 'normal' position, and is said to be an unmarked Theme. However, there are some other constituents, like adjuncts, which frequently occur in the Theme position. Although these constituents are considered as thematically marked, they are still not as marked as complements when placed in the Theme position (Thompson, 1996, p. 120).



The subject and complement take, most of the time, fixed positions in the clause. And if, for instance, the complement is placed in the initial position, it is said to be a marked Theme. Sentence (10) exemplifies this:



The 'cat' in this instance is an unmarked Theme in the clause as it is the Subject. But if 'fish' is located initially in the clause, it will result in a marked Theme:



'The fish' is a marked Theme in clause (11) above: it is unusual for the complement to be placed in the Theme position, unless the writer/speaker wants to highlight it for some particular reason. In section 3, I will discuss some aspects where the SA

language differs from English, having some implications for the Thematic structure study of Standard Arabic texts as suggested by Halliday.

3. SA sentence structure

Because thematic structure is related to the ordering of constituent parts in the clause, it is of paramount importance to start considering the way elements are ordered in the Arabic clause. This will equally involve dealing with verb inflection, as it is another main characteristic of SA with a major impact on the way clause constituents are presented and therefore on the way information units are packaged in the message.

3.1 Word order

SA is a language which displays a higher level of flexibility as far a word order is concerned in comparison to a language such as English. While the normal word order in English² in verbal clauses is the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) structure, a clause in Arabic can be structured in many different ways. It can have diverse structures, namely VSO, SVO, VOS, OVS. Although this flexibility in clause word order is usually encountered at its highest levels in old classical Arabic, more particularly in literary writing and poetry, it can also be found to a lesser extent in SA which is used in the mainstream media and other official institutions. However, VSO word order is considered to be the basic, most frequent and unmarked one in SA (Abdul-Raof, 1998; Fassi Fehri, 1993; Mohammad, 2000; Ouhalla, 1994)

Unlike English where the use of SVO is the unmarked word order, the SA norm is VSO. It is true that SVO structure is also used but not with the same frequency as VSO structures. The VSO word order is agreed by many Arab linguists to be the unmarked form in Arabic, while other ways of ordering constituent parts are considered derived structures, including the SVO (Abdul-Raof, 1998, p. 45, Thalji, 1982, p. 10). This is not to say that verb-initial word order is a rigid one. VSO word order is considered to be the basic one on the grounds that it is the structure frequently used in SA (Abdul-Raof, 1998, p. 46). It is also neutral and less ambiguous in some contexts (Abdul-Raof, 1998, p. 47).

There are very few studies whose main concern is the SA Thematic structure. Abdul-Raof's study (1998) is a case in point but it is restricted to clauses with a DO ('derived order' which is the SVO word order) and does not include the Thematic structure of clauses starting with the process. The thematic structure of basic word order clauses (VSO word order) was briefly talked about by Thalji (1982, p.11). He considers the verb to be the topical Theme in VSO structures, since it is the initial element that the clause as a message starts from. However, in FG, as formulated by Halliday for his analysis of English, the process in declarative sentences is not the Theme of the message, which has to be instead a participant in the clause. "...the Theme of a clause consists of just one structural element, and that element is represented by just one unit; one nominal group, adverbial group, or prepositional phrase." (Halliday, 1994, p. 39). The Predicator is considered Theme only in imperative structures or in highly marked clauses as explained earlier.

Another important characteristic of SA makes the analysis of the textual function of Arabic texts intricate is verb inflection.

3.2 Verb inflection

Although lexicalised subjects and objects are used and also freestanding pronouns, the use of inflected verbs is very frequent in SA. This can result in the absence of freestanding linguistic items fulfilling the function of the Subject and/or Object. Instead, Subject and/or Object most of the time, appear as enclitics annexed to the verb for the majority of persons. These enclitics express the person, number and gender of the participant they represent in the clause. The following example shows this:

- (12) خَاطَبَتِ النَّاسَ
 xa:t'aba-ti n'a:sa
 addressed-NOM.3SG.F people
 she addressed people.

The enclitic –ti 'تـ' which is used for feminine third person singular is a pronoun which has to be attached to the verb forming one word. It cannot stand by itself in the sentence. When the third person masculine verb form is used, the pronoun appears neither as freestanding pronoun nor as an enclitic, as the following example shows:

- a 'pronoun of separation' to avoid a possible ambiguity in equational sentences:

- (19) هَذِهِ هِيَ الْبِنْتُ
 haḏi-hi hiya lbintu
 this-3SG.F 3SG.F the girl
 This is the girl.

In verbal sentences, the pronoun takes the form of a suffix as clause (20) illustrates:

- (20) أَكَلَتِ الْفَاحَةَ
 ʔakala-ti t'uf'a:ħata
 ate-NOM.3SG.F the apple
 she ate the apple

In example (20), the pronoun has the form of the enclitic -ti 'ت' which is the third feminine singular pronoun. Verb inflection allows the process to be placed in the initial position of the clause, whereas the agent of the process takes the form of a suffix attached to the verb. By contrast, in English, the use of a freestanding pronoun in the sentence would put the agent in the initial Theme position and the verb in the rhematic position:

- (21) She ate the apple
 ↑ ↑
 Theme Rheme

The thematic division of a clause in SA proves problematic if one follows the method suggested in FG. The following instance, which is in fact a complete clause containing Subject, Verb and Object and expressed in one single word, shows how complicated thematic division can be of some clause structures in SA:

- (22) أَكَلَتْهَا
 ʔakala-t-ha:
 ate- NOM.3SG.F-ACC.3SG.F
 She ate it

When the Theme takes the form of an enclitic attached to the verb, like in example (22), it does not mean that it cannot be retrieved. The reader or hearer can still unambiguously identify the element that the clause is talking about.

4. Thematic structure of SA

Being a language that has the VSO word order as the basic order raises the question of whether to consider the verb topical Theme in SA. As mentioned earlier, Thalji (1982) did just that and the reason he provided to support his claim is that it is the element which takes the initial position in the VSO structure. In addition, the English imperative clause discussed earlier, can be seen as providing a good argument in support of this claim. But, in a language such as SA, whose clauses predominantly start with the Predicator, this is not as simple and straightforward as the analysis will subsequently show. The position the present paper will defend is that the Predicator, in SA VSO structures, belongs to the Rheme part of the message, whereas the Theme is a participant in the clause rather than the process in VSO structures. In the following, I will proceed to providing the reasons for taking this position and for not considering the verb in VSO structures the Theme of the clause.

4.1 Theme is the element that the clause is concerned with and the orienter

The first reason is based on Halliday's idea which states that "the Theme is a function of the clause as a message. It is what the message is concerned with: the point of departure for what the speaker is going to say." (Halliday, 1985, p. 36). In non-imperative sentences, it "consists of just one structural element, and that that element is represented by just one unit - one nominal group, adverbial group, or prepositional phrase." (Halliday, 1994, p.39). Even though the verb that unmarked

imperative clauses start with, is considered topical Theme in English, the process in a declarative clause having the VSO structure in SA will still not be considered the topical Theme and one of the reasons is the following: The process, because of the function it serves within the clause, cannot be said to be the element that the clause is concerned with, despite the fact that, in these structures, it is the element that comes first by order.

Not only is the process not the element that the clause talks about, it is also not the element which provides the orientation which is one of the main functions of Theme. As Fries states, "Theme is the orienter to the message conveyed by the clause" (Fries, 1994, p. 234). The Predicator belongs to the part of the clause where Theme is developed, which often correlates with the new information (Fries, 1994, p. 233) (see more on information structure in section 4.2). The verb occurring initially in the SA clause is therefore not reason enough to consider it Theme or in Fries words, the orienter.

4.2 Information structure

Considering the process as being the Theme of the SA clause on the grounds that it is the element that the clause starts from is also problematic if one takes the information structure of the clause into account. The verb is the new information because it is the element that typically gets tonic prominence in VSO and VsO³ structure. Knowing that the Theme in FG typically coincides with the Given and the Rheme with the New, the process in a VSO structure will be considered as the Rheme of the message because it is intonationally stressed. "...the verb normally carries primary stress...and is therefore the Rheme, the nominal element acts as the theme" (Yowell, 1988, p.119).

4.3 Method of development

Another main reason why the process cannot be considered the Theme in SA is the method of development. It is important to point out that studying the thematic structure involves looking at the text as a single unit, not just at isolated clauses. By doing so, the analysis would uncover the pattern that a text displays through thematic choices: "...the information contained within the Themes of all the sentences of a paragraph creates the method of development of that paragraph" (Fries, 1981, p. 135). In other words, it is the pattern by which a text develops and which emerges from the way sentences are linguistically connected to the preceding discourse based on the element chosen to be Theme (Thematic choice), also called thematic progression⁴. The latter can be of three main types:

1) Linear thematic progression: it is the kind of progression which is carried out by selecting a Theme from the Rheme of the previous clause.

2) Constant thematic progression or what is also referred to as Thematic iteration consists of keeping the same Theme as the one in the preceding clause. The result of this type of thematic progression is the creation of chains of co-referential items (similarity chains can also occur).

3) Derived pattern is another type of thematic progression. It takes place when the text is about one notion or what is also called a hypertheme; the Themes selected for various clauses are derived from this general notion, although they are not identical (Fries, 1995, p. 320).

If the method of development of two texts takes different patterns, the two texts would be different even if their content is similar. (Fries, 1995, p. 323). A text expressing a simple method of development establishes its development by the use of just a few Themes containing a particular experiential content. "...if we change the experiential content of the Themes of a text, we will change readers' perceptions of how the ideas in that text are developed" (Fries, 1995, p. 324).

It is important to point out that in the present paper I adhere to the Hallidayan view that thematisation "plays a fundamental part in the way discourse is organized" (Halliday 1985, p. 62) and contributes towards making a piece of discourse coherent (Thompson, 1996, p. 117). It is true that the validity of the method of development as a useful concept in discourse analysis has been questioned by scholars such as Crompton. In his study, which is limited to argumentative prose only, he argues that most texts falling within this writing genre do not have a method of development. He, at the same time, mentions a number of studies which show that narratives do generally display a clear method of development emerging from constant thematic progression (Crompton, 2004). It is also worth adding that the unit of analysis that Crompton's study is based on is not the independent clause but the orthographic sentence (Crompton, 2004, p. 232) which is bound to have led to different results when compared to other studies by other scholars in SFL. It is, however, beyond the scope of the present study to go in depth into the extent to which the chosen unit of analysis affects the results of the method of development analysis.

Knowing that the SA clause basic word order is the VSO structure and that SA texts contain a frequent use of structures with the verb taking the initial position, a text will not have any particular method of development of the aforementioned types. This is due to the fact that processes would differ from one clause to another, not allowing any pattern, such as linear

thematic progression or reiteration to emerge. The following Arabic short narrative text entitled ‘ʔalqamlatu wa lbarʕu:θu’ (the louse and the flea)⁵ will clarify this point (see the Arabic text and its translation in the appendix):

ʔalqamlatu wa lbarʕu:θu’

The louse and the flea

a) Zaʕam-u: ʔan’a qamlatan lazima-t fira:ʃa rajulin mina lʔaʃra:fi zama:nan⁶

-claimed-NOM.3PL.M that a louse stayed-NOM.3SG.F⁶ in the bed of a man from the nobles some time

b) wa ka:na-t to-sʕi:bu min damihi wa huwa na:ʔimun,

- and was-NOM.3SG.F NOM.IPFV.3SG.F-sucking from blood- GEN.3SG.M and 3SG.M asleep

c) wa ta-dib’u ʃalay-hi dabi:ban rʕafi:qan,

- and NOM.IPFV.3SG.F-biting on-3SG.M biting light

d) wa ʔinna barʕu:tan ʔadʕa:fa-t-hu ḏa:ta laylatin fi: fira:ʃhi ḏa:lika ʃʕari:fi,

- and verily a flea invited-NOM.3SG.F-ACC.3SG.M one night in the bed of that nobleman

e) fa-laḏaba-∅-hu laḏkatan ʔayqaḏʕa-t-hu wa ʔatʕa:ra-ti nʕawma min ʕaynay-hi,

- and-bit-NOM.3SG.M-ACC.3SG.M a bite woke-NOM.3SG.F-ACC.3SG.M and

wiped –NOM.3SG.F sleep from eyes-GEN.3SG.M

f) fa-ʔamara-∅ rʕajulu bitafti:ʃi fira:ʃi-hi

- then-ordered-NOM.3SG.M the man to-checking bed-GEN.3SG.M

g) fa-nuḏʕa diʕa fi:-hi

- and-checked-NOM.PASS.3SG.M in-3SG.M

h) fa-ḏʕahara-∅ lbarʕu:θu

- then-appeared- NOM.3SG.M the flea

i) wa far’a-∅

- and fled- NOM.3SG.M

j) wa ʔuxiḏa-ti lqamlatu

- and taken- NOM.PASS.3SG.F the louse

k) fa-qusʕiʕa-t

- and-crushed- NOM.PASS.3SG.F

4.3.2 Unit of analysis

Prior to studying the text above for its method of development patterning, a note on the unit of analysis on which the thematic analysis of the text above will be based should be made. Following the Systemic functional Grammar tradition, I have opted for Fries’s method (Fries, 1981; 1995) by taking the independent clause, or what is also called the T-unit as the basic unit of analysis which is the independent clause. This means that clauses that are paratactically related will be analysed separately for their thematic structure. In cases of hypotactically linked clauses, if the clause starts with a subordinate clause, the latter will be considered the Theme of the entire independent structure. If on the other hand the subordinate structure does not occur sentence initially and is mentioned after the predicate, it will be considered part of the Rheme whereas the Theme is what the superordinate clause is about, which is generally the sentence initial element in English structure.

Focusing the independent clause, as a unit of analysis is deemed important in the present study. The first reason behind this choice is the one generally mentioned by Systemic Functional linguists: independent clauses allow for more thematic freedom in comparison to dependent ones as these are more constrained due to structural pressures (Halliday, 1985, p. 61). Language users are generally less free to make meaningful thematic choices in subordinate structures. Secondly, independent clauses' status in the text as superordinate structures make them more important in the overall structure of a given text, compared to dependent subordinate clauses, the role of which is less prominent in the text. Taking the independent clause as a unit of analysis would enable the study of the general pattern created by the method of development in a given text at the superordinate level. A third reason for taking it as a unit of analysis is that it would allow for comparable findings to be reached and therefore valid comparisons to be drawn between different studies into the method of development. Herriman shares the same point of view by stating that "What is used as the unit of analysis will, of course, affect the empirical results of the investigation and the comparisons that can be made between them." (2011, p.3). Finally, the independent clause is the unit of analysis that the majority of linguists use to investigate the method of development of texts (Thompson & Thompson, 2009, p. 46)

4.3.3 The method of development analysis of 'the louse and the flea'

The Arabic text above overwhelmingly contains VSO structures, as a simple clause count reveals: out of eleven independent clauses making up the text above, ten start with the process. If the latter is considered Theme, no discernible pattern will appear from the method of development analysis for the simple reason that we will have the process as Theme for the majority of clauses. What this might suggest is that the text above has no identifiable underlying coherence and this is, certainly, not the case.

It is well-known in SFG that thematic choice helps 'speakers construct their messages in a way which makes them fit smoothly into the unfolding language event.' (Thompson 1996: 117) A given sentence "functions as a coherent continuation" (Thompson, 1996, p. 117) of the one preceding it. All this happens through thematic choice which gives a text a particular method of development. The clauses contained in the Arabic text above certainly make a single coherent whole and thematisation has an important role to play in creating a clear pattern.

If Halliday's functional criteria are used to identify the topical Theme in the text in hand, the way in which the text is organised thematically will be clearly seen as the following shows ('T': Theme; 'R': Rheme):

(a) They (**T1**) → a louse... some time (**R1**)

↓

(b) It (**T2**) → was.... asleep (**R2**)

↓

(a) It (**T2**) → was biting...light bites (**R3**)

(d) a flea (**T3**) → it nobleman (**R4**)

↓

(e) It (The flea)(**T4**) → bit... him (**R5**)

↓

(f) The man (**T5**) → ordered...checking his bed (**R6**)

↓

(g) unknown subject (**T6**) → checked it (**R6**)

(h) The flea (**T7**) → appeared (**R8**)

↓

(i) it (the flea) (**T7**) → fled (**R9**)

(j) The louse (T8) → taken (R10)



(k) it (the louse) (T8) → crushed (R11)

Figure 1: The Thematic development of ‘?alqamlatu wa lbarʿu:θu’ (the louse and the flea) text. From clause (a) to (b): Linear progression; from (b) to (c): constant thematic progression; from (d) to (e): constant progression from (e) to (g): Linear thematic progression; from (h) to (i): constant progression; from (j) to (k): constant progression.

The method of development that the text above displays oscillates between constant progression (Thematic iteration) and the linear thematic progression, with a general tendency towards the constant thematic progression being predominantly used: The text starts with linear thematic progression, as ‘louse’ which is part of the Rheme of the first clause, is used as topical Theme for the clause occurring after it. In clauses (b) and (c), there is thematic iteration as the same topical Theme, which the pronoun standing for ‘louse’ is what the clauses are about. As for clauses (d) to (e), they contain constant thematic progression followed by the linear type of thematic progression which is, once again, found from clause (e) to (g). It is fulfilled by selecting the topical Theme from the Rheme of the previous clause. Interestingly, these clauses constituting the longest chain of clauses having the linear thematic pattern in the text belong to the part of the narrative where the short story reaches its climax. It is also noteworthy that in clause (g), the topical Theme conflates with the unknown subject and agent of ‘checked’ (*fanuḏʿiḅa* فَنظَرُ) which is in the passive form. It is linear progression since the Theme is selected from the doer of the action of the nominalised process of ‘checking’ (*tafti:j* تَفْتِيشُ), which is part of the Rheme of clause (f).

It is also worth pointing out that the last four clauses of the passage, thematisation happens in reverse order by selecting ‘the flea’ as Theme for clauses (h) and (i), and finally, ‘the louse’ for (j) and (k). By this, the thematic structure comes full circle drawing the narrative to a close. This effect is achieved by choosing ‘the louse’ as topical Theme for the last two clauses creating a textual link between the two first clauses of the text and the two last ones.

As can be clearly seen from the analysis, taking into account Halliday’s criteria to identify Theme in SA helps in revealing a definite pattern as far as the method of development is concerned. This would, otherwise, not have been possible if the process was taken as topical Theme. ‘what the clause talks about’, which is one of the definitions of Theme in FG, does not always take the initial position, especially when we know that participants in a SA clause do not occur initially most of the time. We come to the conclusion that Theme in SA, where the VSO structure is the basic order, is not necessarily what the clause starts from. Theme can be detached from initial position because it is defined as ‘pragmatic aboutness’ and is typically treated as ‘given’.

5. Thematic structure in SA

The definition of Theme in SA that the present paper provides will be based primarily on the criteria suggested by FG, although the definition of ‘what the clause starts from’ is not always valid for SA. Theme is ‘what the clause is about’ or ‘the starting point of the message’. And even if it is not always the element that takes the initial position of the clause, it does take a particular place in it: it is the element that most of the time occurs at the vicinity of the verb. SA, having a different and more flexible clause structure, allows the Theme to be pre-verbal, post-verbal and concealed and does not rigidly restrict it to clause initial position.

5.1 Post-verbal Theme

Theme in SA can take a post-verbal position and still fully remain what the clause is talking about, without necessarily being the sequential point that the clause starts from. In a clause like the following, the Theme is *lwaladu* الْوَلَدُ (the boy), although it is not the starting point of the clause:

- (23) ضَرَبَ الْوَلَدُ الْكَلْبَ
 dʿaraba-∅ lwaladu lkalba
 hit-NOM.3SG.M the boy the dog
 The boy hit the dog

The clause as a message is ‘pragmatically about’ the boy, not the ‘hitting’.

5.2 Pre-verbal Theme

The Theme is not always excluded from being in the initial position of the clause and can occur as a pre-verbal Theme in marked cases. The SVO structure occurs as well, although it is considered a more marked word order, marking the Theme in this case. The SVO structure is a derived word order and the subject in this type of structure is fronted (placed in the initial position of the clause), being by this marked. It is made prominent in discourse for some pragmatic purposes:

- (24) مَرِيْمٌ بَكَتْ
 Maryamu baka-t
 Maryam cried-NOM.3SG.F
 Maryam cried

Furthermore, cases of extraposed constituents⁸ also occur (Abdul-Raof, 1998, p. 65, 74) which make a participant part in the initial position of the clause. The difference between element fronting and extraposed elements is that the fronted constituent keeps its underlying grammatical category by retaining the same case ending corresponding to its grammatical function, while the extraposed constituent does not keep the same case marking if placed initially in the clause. It is definite, nominative, separated from the rest of the clause by intonation and have a resumptive coreferential pronoun in the clause (Abdul-Raof, 1998, p. 74). The attached pronoun -hu (it) in أَشْتَرَاهُ [ʃtara:-hu (bought it)], is the resumptive pronoun in the example below. The following are respective examples of extraposed (25) and fronted (26) elements:

- (25) الْمَنْزِلُ اشْتَرَاهُ الرَّجُلُ
 ?almanzilu ʃtara:-∅-hu rʻa ʒulu
 the house bought-NOM.3SG.M-ACC.3SG.M the man
 the house, the man bought it

- (26) الْمَنْزِلُ اشْتَرَى الرَّجُلُ
 ?almanzila ʃtara:-∅ rʻa ʒulu
 The house bought-NOM.3SG.M the man
 The house the man bought

If a clause contains two participants preceding the process, the topical Theme is the element that takes the initial position:

- (27) الْمَنْزِلُ الرَّجُلُ اشْتَرَى
 ?almanzila rʻa ʒulu ʃtara:-∅
 the house the man bought-NOM.3SG.M
 The house the man bought

The Theme in the case above is marked because it is unusual to have a Theme in the initial position preceding another NP which is rʻa ʒulu الرَّجُلُ (the man) in clause (27) above. There is a case where the initial NP in the Arabic clause is considered an unmarked Theme. This happens in equative clauses where there is no verb, making the first NP an unmarked Theme and the remaining part of the clause, the Rheme. The first element in this kind of clauses is called in Arabic *mubtadaʾ* مبتدأ (beginning) while the second is the *xabar* خبر (the news) (Abdul-Raof, 1998, p. 17).

It is also worth noting that structures with adverbial and prepositional phrases also take the initial position. Adverbial phrases can be intermediately marked if placed initially in the sentence, as it is common to have adverbial sentences occupying the initial position in the SA clause. They are however, more marked than adverbials placed at the end of the clause:

- (28) عَدَا سَيَسَافِرُ أَحْمَدُ
 ʔadan sa-yu-sa:firu ʔaħmadu

tomorrow	will-NOM.3SG.M-travel	Ahmed
Tomorrow Ahmed will travel		
(29)	سَيَسَافِرُ أَحْمَدٌ غَدًا	
sa-yu-sa:fir	ʔaħmadu	ʁadan
will-NOM.3SG.M-travel	Ahmed	<u>tomorrow</u>
Ahmed will travel tomorrow		

5.3 Concealed Theme

Theme in SA can also take the form of an enclitic attached to the verb. In this case, it is inferred as the point of departure of the message or 'what the message is about'. It is retrieved even if it takes the form of an enclitic. This type of Theme does not have the same strength as a lexically independent Theme from the verb. It is an unmarked Theme because it is treated as given in discourse: the use of the enclitic indicates that the speaker considers the Theme as a given element in the information unit. The verb belongs to the Rheme and is a new element in the information unit. The following is an example of the concealed topical Theme:

(30)	ذَهَبَ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ		
ḏahaba-∅	ʔila:	Imadrasati	
went-NOM.3SG.M	to	school	
He went to school.			

In example (30), the Theme is concealed, as it is not freestanding in the clause and takes the form of a concealed pronoun in the verb. From this, one can see that the realisation of the topical Theme in SA is not consistent like English, where it takes the initial position of the clause. In SA, what constitutes the pragmatic aboutness of the clause does not necessarily coincide with the initial position of the clause. It is worth noting that the use of some particles in the SA clause restricts thematic choice.

5.4 Elements restricting thematic structure in SA:

The use of some particles such as ʔin'a إِنَّ (verily) introduces a clause starting with an NP as in ʔin'a ʕali:yan ḏahaba ʔila: s'u:qi إِنَّ عَلِيًّا ذَهَبَ إِلَى السُّوقِ (literally: verily Ali went to the souk). The complementiser ʔan'a أَنَّ used to introduce an embedded clause, requires a pre-verbal Theme. This particle ʔan'a أَنَّ is used in a factual clause which starts with an NP. There are two complementisers in Arabic, which are ʔan'a أَنَّ and ʔan اَنَّ are equivalent to 'that' in English. The main difference between the two complementizers is that ʔan'a أَنَّ is followed by a S(V)COMP structure, introducing a factual action/state either complete or incomplete (ongoing or habitual), whereas the complementiser ʔan اَنَّ precedes a VSCOMP structure (Holes, 1995). The latter is used for actions/states that are non-factual, or describing actions that are in the future relative to the main verb (Holes, 1995, p. 226). The embedded clause ʔan'a أَنَّ (that) introduces has to start with an NP.

Similarly, the adversative particle la:kin'a لَكِنْ (but), which is one of the sisters of ʔan'a أَنَّ, introduces a clause starting with an NP, and is a pre-verbal theme if the clause is a verbal one. The particles ʔam'a: أَمَّا (as to) as in ʔamma: ʕali, faʔatat ʔum'uhu

أَمَّا عَلِي فَاتَتْ أُمَّهُ (As to Ali, his mother came), also serves to introduce the topical theme initially in the clause before the verb and is also highly marked. The use of the adverb laʕal'a لَعَلَّ (probably) introduces an NP or a pronoun affixed to it as in laʕal'a ʕali ḏahaba لَعَلَّ عَلِيًّا ذَهَبَ (probably Ali went). The following section will move on to discussing the realisation of theme in SA non-declarative clauses.

5.5 Theme in SA non-declarative clauses

5.5.1 Interrogatives

The thematic structure of interrogative structures in SA is similar to their counterparts in English in the sense that the Arabic equivalent of the WH-element representing the missing information is put initially in the clause and is therefore the Theme. "The interrogative element (the one which requires an answer) is put in a 'privileged' position (i.e. initially)" (Abdul-Raof, 1998, p. 54). The following interrogatives exemplify this:

- (31) ماذا قال لك ؟
 ma:ða: qa:la-∅ la-ka ? (what)
What say-NOM.3SG.M to-you
 ↑ ↑
 Theme Rheme
 what did he say to you?

- (32) أين ذهبت ؟
 ʔayna ðahaba-t ? (where)
where go-NOM.3SG.F ?
 ↑ ↑
 Theme Rheme
 where did she go?

In questions where no interrogative particle is used and where only the tone of the voice is an indicator of it being an interrogative (Wright, 1980, II, p.306), the interrogative can take one of the following forms:

- (33) ذهبت هند؟
 ðahaba-t hind ?
 went-NOM.3SG.F Hind?
 did Hind go?
- (34) هند ذهبت ؟
 hind ðahaba-t ?
 Hind went-NOM.3SG.F?
 did Hind go?
- (35) ذهبت ؟
 ðahaba-t ?
 went-NOM.3SG.F ?
 did she go?

The missing information in this case is polarity. In the English equivalent of the interrogative above, it is the verbal operator in the finite, which is in the Theme position. However, the subject is also included in the Theme (Thompson, 1996, p.137). SA does not have the same mood structure as English. The interrogative clause above does not have an independent finite like the English 'did'. It is fused instead with the process, and takes the form of a suffix attached to the verb, which, in a declarative clause, expresses that the action is in the perfective.

The grammatical structure of the interrogative above is that of a declarative, the only difference is that the interrogative is said with a rising intonation indicating that it is a question. Unlike English where the verbal operator is placed initially to indicate that the clause is an interrogative, putting the verb first in SA is not to signal that the clause is an interrogative. The thematic analysis of this clause will be based on the thematic structure of declarative clauses as previously discussed. In the first example above (33), the Theme is post-verbal one, the second (34) is a pre-verbal and the last one (35) Hind takes the form of an enclitic attached to the verb and is a concealed Theme. The verb is the Rheme.

It is worth noting that the interrogative particle *hal* هَلْ can be added in the initial position to the interrogatives above. This particle is not a verb but can be said to replace the verbal operator of the English interrogative. If it is used, it is Theme in the interrogative clause. Similarly to English, where both the verbal operator and the subject are considered as topical Theme in interrogatives such as ‘Did Hind go?’ (Thompson, 1996, p. 123), ‘Hind’ will also be included as a topical Theme together with *hal* هَلْ .

5.5.2 Imperatives

The verb in the imperative in English takes only one form, regardless of the person, number and gender, of the addressee(s); whereas the form of the verb in the SA imperative changes depending on those grammatical categories. The addressee in this type of SA clauses appears as an enclitic attached to the verb and can take the following forms for verb *fa3ala* فَعَلَ (to do) for example: *ʔif3al* اِفْعَلْ (2nd masculine singular), *ʔif3al-a*: اِفْعَلَا (2nd dual), *ʔif3al-i*: اِفْعَلِي (3rd feminine singular), *ʔif3al-na* اِفْعَلْنَ (3rd feminine plural), *ʔif3al-u*: اِفْعَلُوا (3rd masculine plural).

As can be seen, the Subject is made manifest through the use of these enclitics. The SA imperative structure can be compared to the English subcategory of imperatives, which is ‘let’s’, where ‘us’ refers to the addressee and the speaker. As we have seen earlier, ‘us’, which, comes after the Predicator, is analysed as the topical Theme (Thompson, 1996, p. 124). In the SA imperative, similarly ‘let’s’ (see section 2.2 above), the enclitic will be considered part of the topical Theme which includes both the verb and the Subject.

5.5.3 Exclamatives

In SA, exclamatives having a thematic structure can be divided into two types verbal and verbless exclamatives. The first type consists of exclamatives containing a verb and can take two forms: exclamative sentences starting with the particle *ma*: مَا and imperative exclamatives. As far as verbless exclamatives are concerned, they do not include a Predicator as their name implies.

In verbal exclamatives, *ma*: مَا in SA is an indefinite particle which in the example below, stands for the subject referring to a nonhuman entity. It is followed by the verb *ʔaḥsana* (beautify) which is a verb in the past tense:

- (36) مَا أَحْسَنَ الْمُصْطَافِ !
ma: ʔaḥsana lmuṣtʔa:fa
 What beautified the camp
 what a beautiful camp.

Sentence (36) has the surface structure of an interrogative which is: ‘what a beautified the camp?’ and is one of the idiomatic ways used to express admiration in SA. As far as its thematic structure is concerned, it is not ‘The camp’ which is thematised but the indefinite particle *ma*: مَا, used to ask about the agent associated with the action of ‘beautifying’. When one takes a closer look at the communicative aim of the sentence in hand, however, it becomes clear that the real purpose of the utterance is not to ask the question about what beautified the camp, it is more to stress the idea that it is a beautiful place, hence the choice of this structure. So the particle *ma*: مَا does not really have an ideational role in the sentence, it rather fulfils an interpersonal role since it is used to exhibit the feelings of admiration. *ma*: مَا is then an interpersonal Theme followed by the action of ‘beautifying’ which is here the topical Theme since the main aim of the utterance is to talk about the beauty of the camp, being by this what the clause is about.

Imperative exclamatives is another way of expressing feelings of admiration:

- (37) أَحْبِبْ بِأَيَّامِ الصَّبِيِّ !
ʔaḥbib biʔaya:mi sʔiba:
 love days childhood
 Such beautiful childhood days!

In this instance, the clause starts with the 2nd person imperative verb ‘love’ is therefore thematised. The speaker, however, is not using this command to give a real order, as the surface structure might suggest, but rather to show appreciation and to reminisce about how beautiful childhood days were, hence asking the speaker to love them. The real function that the

imperative serves then is interpersonal, as it is used mainly, to emphasize the idea that those days were so great that they deserve to be loved and appreciated. This leads to the conclusion that both the interpersonal and ideational Theme are fused in the initial element which is the Predicator in the imperative form.

The following two verbless exclamative structures have a thematic structure even if they do not contain a verb. They are not minor clauses, because in Arabic, verbless structures having the status of a complete grammatical clause exist. Besides, the following exclamative can be turned into a declarative sentence keeping the same elements to have: ha: ḏa Imanḏʿaru zami:lun هذا المنظرُ جميلٌ , (this is a beautiful sight) which shows that the exclamative sentence (38) can be analysed thematically:

(38)	يا لجمالِ هذا المنظرِ !			
	ja:	lazama:li	ha: ḏa:	Imanḏʿari !
	<u>EXCLA</u>	<u>beauty (of)</u>	<u>this</u>	<u>sight !</u>
	↑			↑
	T h e m e		R h e m e	
	What a beautiful sight this is !			

The Theme of the clause (38) is the exclamative particle ya: يا and it is of the interpersonal type since it is used purely to show the speaker's feeling of admiration and does not carry an ideational content in the clause. The element triggering the feeling admiration, which is the beauty, is placed immediately after it and is therefore topical Theme. Another exclamative structure starts with the interrogative particle kam كَمْ (how much):

(39)	كَمْ جَمِيلٌ هُوَ !			
	kam	zami:lun	huwa	
	<u>EXCLA</u>	<u>beautiful</u>	<u>3SG.M</u>	
	↑		↑	
	T h e m e		R h e m e	
	How beautiful it is !			

Sentence (39) starts with the quantifier kam كَمْ (how much) and it is by this thematised. This is in keeping with the communicative aim of the utterance since the clause is not about the beauty of the entity only, but also the extent to which it is beautiful. The speaker shows, through its use, the degree of admiration they feel towards the entity. Here again, kam كَمْ is related to the interpersonal feeling of the speaker because by using it, their real aim is not to quantify the beauty but to show how great the admiration they feel towards it. It will therefore be considered an interpersonal Theme. The adjective 'beautiful', on the other hand, is the topical Theme of the clause since this is the participant role that the exclamative is mainly about.

Not all verbless exclamatives in SA have a thematic structure though. There are some exclamative sentences which can be said to be minor clauses. This is because these cannot be turned into declarative sentences using their sentence components only:

(40) !	يَا لَهُ مِنْ رَجُلٍ			
	ja:	la-hu	min	razulin !
	EXCLA	to-him	of	man !
	What a man !			

5.6 Marked and unmarked theme

There is a scale of markedness as far as the SA thematic structure is concerned. The type of Theme that is located in the most unmarked end of the scale is the concealed Theme, whereas in the other extreme related to the marked theme, there are

extensively, reducing clause elements into enclitics attached to the verb. When SFG criteria for Theme identification were applied for the SA clause, not all of them proved to be always valid, especially the one pertaining to Theme realisation which is generally fulfilled by means of initial position in English. This is mainly due to the aforementioned structural differences that SA displays.

The criteria associated with how Theme is defined in English are the ones that the present study mainly took into account. They are the ones that are said to be more oriented towards looking at Theme as a functional element “in a particular structural configuration which, taken as a whole, organises the clause as a message” (Halliday, 1994, p. 38) and “locates and orients the clause within its context.” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 64). According to Halliday, it is not necessarily the element that takes first position and as there is “no automatic reason why the Theme function should be realised in this way” (Halliday, 1994, p. 38). Initial position is only the means by which finds its realisation and is not defined by it (Halliday, 1994, p. 38).

Based upon this, the solution I advanced in the present paper for the thematic structure of the SA clause is that the SA topical Theme can have a different realisation from its English counterpart by not always taking the initial position of the message. What the message is about, which represents the pragmatic aboutness of the clause is not tied to the initial position and can be pre-verbal, post-verbal, and concealed (see section 5). And in spite of having these three possible locations in the clause, Theme has a specific position whereby it is realised in the SA clause; it occurs at the vicinity of the verb, and is therefore also expressed by the order. This conclusion that the present paper reached was further confirmed by putting it to the test and using it to investigate the method of development of a short Arabic narrative, where it was shown to reveal a clear discernible thematic pattern. This would not have been possible, if the process in verb initial sentences is considered topical Theme in SA.

NOTES

Note that information is concerned with tone group and tone group equals one clause only in unmarked cases.

1. In marked cases, English can also reorder its elements. Besides, the use of the passive voice and cleft sentences allow reordering (Huddleston, 1988).
2. The small letter 's' is used in VsO to show that the subject is cliticised.
3. The concept of Thematic progression was first used by Daneš (1974) and then adopted by Fries in his studies of the method of development.
4. 'The louse and the flea' text is taken from 'The Book of Kalila wa Dimna'
5. Each clause of the Arabic text is transliterated, then glossed and translated.
6. In Arabic, 'louse' is feminine whereas 'the flea' is masculine.
7. Extraposition in this research refers to the process by which an element is placed initially in the clause without retaining the case marking corresponding to its grammatical function. It also has a coreferential pronoun in the clause (Abdul-Raof, 1998).
8. Communicative dynamism of clause elements refers to the extent to which it contributes to the process of pushing communication forward. The more the element is context dependent the less is its communicative dynamism. If the element is context independent, its communicative dynamism is higher as it contributes more to the development of the message by bringing new information (Firbas, 1992).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1SG :	1st person singular
2SG :	2 nd person singular
3SG :	3person singular
3PL :	3rd person plural
ACC :	Accusative
EXCLA :	Exclamative
F :	Feminine
GEN :	Genitive
IPFV :	Imperfective
M :	Masculine
NOM :	Nominative
PASS :	Passive
∅ :	No enclitic used (concealed pronoun)

A. APPENDIXE

The Consonants	Phonological Descriptions	Arabic Letters
/ʔ/	glottal stop	أ
/b/	voiced bilabial stop	ب
/t/	voiceless alveolar stop	ت
/θ/	voiceless dental fricative	ث
/ʒ/	voiced palatal affricate	ج
/ħ/	voiceless pharyngeal fricative	ح
/x/	voiceless uvular fricative	خ
/d/	voiced alveolar stop	د
/ð/	voiced dental fricative	ذ
/rˢ/	voiced alveolar flap	ر
/z/	voiced alveolar fricative	ز
/s/	voiceless alveolar fricative	س
/ʃ/	voiced palato-alveolar fricative	ش
/sˢ/	voiceless velarized alveolar fricative	ص
/dˢ/	voiced velarized alveolar stop	ض
/tˢ/	voiceless velarized alveolar stop	ط
/ðˢ/	voiced velarized dental fricative	ظ
/ʕ/	voiced pharyngeal fricative	ع
/ʁ/	voiced uvular fricative	غ
/f/	voiceless labiodental fricative	ف
/q/	voiceless uvular stop	ق
/k/	voiceless velar stop	ك
/l/	voiced (or voiceless) alveolar lateral	ل
/m/	voiced bilabial nasal	م
/n/	voiced alveolar nasal	ن
/h/	voiceless glottal fricative	ه
/w/	voiced bilabial semi-vowel	و
/j/	voiced palatal semi-vowel	ي
‘	stress mark	

Table A.1: Phonological descriptions of Arabic sounds

B. APPENDIXE

B.1 The translation of the Arabic short story entitled 'The louse and the flea'

There was a louse which stayed in a nobleman's bed for a long time. It was peacefully feeding on his blood while he slept. It used to bite him very lightly without him taking any notice of its act. One night, it invited a flea to the nobleman's bed, which bit the man so sharply that it woke him up and left him sleepless that night. The man, then, ordered that his bed be checked, something which was, at once, carried out. The flea appeared but jumped out and fled, the louse, on the other hand, was easily picked out and crushed.

B.2 The original story in Arabic

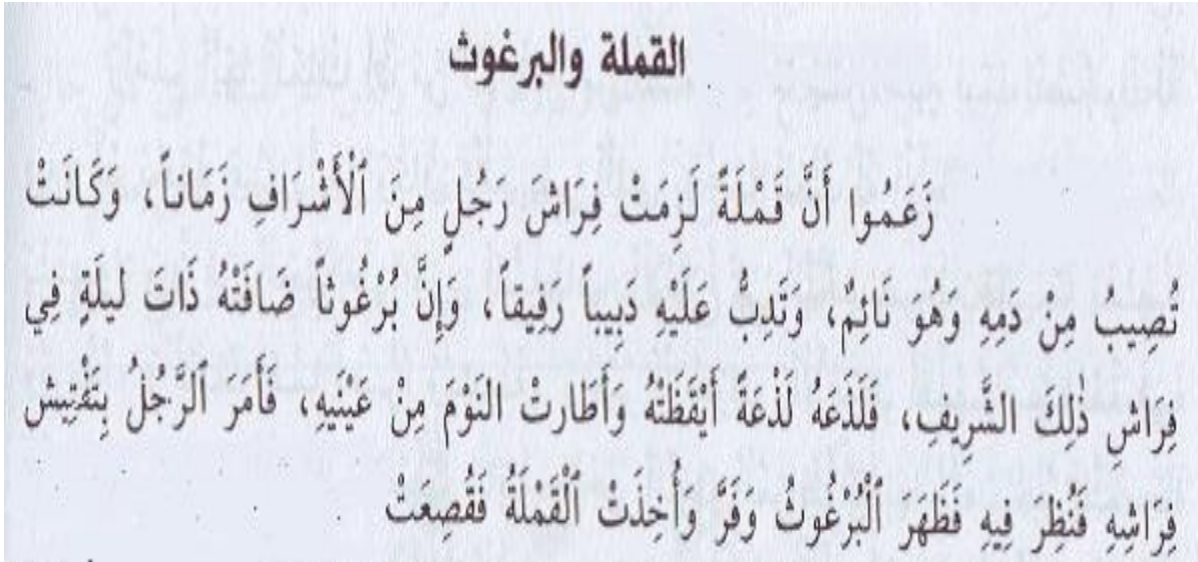


Figure B.1: The original Arabic text

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