Subject Verb Agreement in Iraqi Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic: A comparative Study

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Abstract: The present study deals with a comparative study of subject verb agreement in modern standard Arabic and Iraqi Arabic. It aims to show the differences and similarities between these two varieties. It is hypothesized that Iraqi dialect has full agreement between the subject and the verb whereas Modern Standard Arabic in has only partial agreement. Data were collected from authentic books of Arabic and from native speakers of Iraqi Arabic in Baghdad. The goal of this study then, is to raise the awareness of Learners as natives on the issues of sounds, grammar, and vocabulary since Arabic language lacks such dialectal research. The study concludes that there are similarities and differences in both varieties. The findings and conclusions arrived at in this study are expected to be worthy to pedagogical planners and planning, and for other academic purposes.

خلاصة: يتناول هذا البحث دراسة تقابلية حول التوافق بين الفعل والفاعل في اللهجة العراقية والعربية واللغة العربية الفصحى. إن الأساليب المستخدمة للتعبير عن هذا الموضوع في اللغتين مختلفة من الناحية اللغوية. حيث تقوم هذه الدراسة بتسليط الضوء على الجوانب النحوية المتشابهة والاختلافات الخاصة بالتوافق بين الفعل والفاعل في اللغتين المذكورتين، حيث تأخذ بالحسبان التوافق النحوي، التقاربي بين الفعل والفاعل لوصول إلى أهم الصفات النحوية التي تميز اللغتين من هذه الناحية. تفترض الدراسة بان هناك توافق جزئي بين الفعل والفاعل إذا
كانت الجملة اسمية في اللغة العربية والتوافق كلياً، إذا كانت الجملة فعلية. أما في اللهجة العراقية فإن التوافق يكون متطابقة كلية سواء كانت الجملة اسمية أو فعلية. وقد تم اختيار مجموعة من المتكلمين باللهجة العراقية من بغداد فضلاً عن المصادر في اللغة العربية الفصحى تخلص الدراسة إلى أن هناك أوجه التشابه والاختلاف في كل الأصناف. وتسعى أن تكون جدراً للمهندسين في المناهج التربوية، وللأساليب الأخرى وتوصلت الدراسة إلى نتائج واستنتاجات قيمة للمهتمين بدراسات مقارنة وخاصة اللهجات المحلية.

Keys to Abbreviations and Notations

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<td>VS</td>
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<td>2ps</td>
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<td>3ps</td>
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1. Introduction:
Agreement is a term used in the grammatical theory to show the relationship between two grammatical units. (Quirk et al., 1985: 755). This study concerns of two syntactic categories viz subject and verb. In other words, agreement or 'concord' is the
relationship between two grammatical units such that one of them displays a particular feature that accords with a displayed (or semantically implicit) feature in the other. The subject-verb agreement means choosing the correct singular or plural verb after the subject (Quirk et al., 1985: 755; Crystal, 1997: 71).

Modern Standard Arabic and Iraqi Arabic varieties share certain grammatical features regarding subject-verb agreement. In both varieties the subject and the verb agree in number and person. Yet these two varieties differ in the type of tense and inflections for agreement. In Modern Standard Arabic, the verbs are inflected for the 3rd person singular in the present tense only except for verb “to be” which shows lexical change in the past also, whereas the verbs in Iraqi are not inflected for the 3rd Person but for all personal pronouns. Moreover, they are inflected for transitive/intransitive verb in the present and past. This study aims at showing the similarities and differences of the grammatical features of subject-verb agreement in both Modern Standard Arabic and Iraqi Arabic. The paper is limited to the study of subject-verb agreement in both Modern standard Arabic and Iraqi Arabic. Full agreement is only found with preverbal subjects. Moreover, Iraqi Arabic shows full agreement with preverbal subjects and even with post-verbal subjects. One particularly interesting area where this agreement asymmetry occurs is the case of conjoined subjects. Here Iraqi Arabic, and reportedly other Arabic dialects, differentiates between preverbal and post verbal subjects.

In VS order, the agreement is with the first conjunct DP while in SV order there is full agreement with whole conjoined DP.

1.2 The Problem of the Study:

1. Though Arabic learners (whether native or non-native) spend too much time learning MSA, still they find difficulty mastering different syntactic cases which are determined by Arabic morphology. This could partly be attributed to the influence of the dialect over the standard. It could also be a result of lack of practicing learning skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking).

2. The IA (represented by different dialects used in Iraq building on geographical distribution) shows huge differences if compared with the standard. A lot of fixed morpho-syntactic rules of the standard are removed, and replaced by semi-rules.

3. Building on (1) and (2) above, certain difficulties might face learners of the IA, the non-native in particular.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study is to give an account and to study subject verb agreement in Iraqi Arabic and modern standard Arabic. The importance of the study lies in clarifying the syntactic aspects of agreement and its manifestation in both varieties. The goal of this study then, is to raise the awareness of Learners as natives on the issues of sounds, grammar, and vocabulary since the Arabic language lacks such dialectal research.

1.4 The Scope of the Study:

The study is limited to the Iraqi Arabic used by native speakers of some educated people in Baghdad. The data of MSA are collected from authentic books. This study shows only subject verb agreement in both Modern Standard Arabic and Iraqi Arabic.

1.5 Model of Study

This study is adopted to the analysis of some standard Arabic authentic grammar books. For this purpose, I have mainly decided to concentrate on this book "Iraqi Dialect Versus Standard Arabic by (Al- Bazi: 2006)". The main tenet of which is that agreement, particularly subject-verb agreement, is a surface phenomenon, in which
the verb copies a feature of the subject. The study will be based on samples collected from native speakers of Iraqi Arabic used by Baghdadi people.

1.6 Hypothesis:
The study hypothesizes that in Standard Arabic there is partial subject verb agreement when the subject is post verbal (VS) so, the verb agrees with gender only and it is full agreement with its subject in number, gender and person where it is preverbal (SV) whereas in Iraqi Arabic there is full subject verb agreement in both constructions. The study discusses the problem of agreement asymmetry in these two different word-orders

2.1 Definition of Agreement
Trask (1993:12) defines Agreement as “grammatical phenomenon by which the appearance of one item in a sentence termed ‘the controller’, in a particular form requires a second item termed ‘the agreeing element or the controllee’, which is grammatically linked with it to appear in a particular form”. It occurs within the choices of one or more grammatical categories (such as number, person, gender, case, or tense) which are morphologically marked on certain form classes (such as nouns, verbs, adjectives…etc). Boskany(2001:24)Therefore, AGR refers to “a syntactic process whereby one constituent must have the same value for certain grammatical features (such as person, number, and gender) as another constituent that it bears a particular grammatical relation to.” (Fromkin et al 2000: 684), i.e. it is a formal relationship between sentence elements (constituents) whereby ‘the form of one item requires a certain corresponding form of another’ (Crystal 1991:13). Many other terms have also been used for the same phenomenon, such as “concord, congruence and correspondence” (Hartmann and Stork 1972: 8). Agreement plays a great part in many languages (Bloomfield 1933:191).

2.2 The structure in MSA
The structure of the sentence in MSA and IA is very important for the discussion of agreement. The explanations of the possible word orders in MSA and focus on the most important orders which are VSO versus SVO. Fassi Fehri (1993:121) assumes that the preverbal NP is ambiguous between two functions when it is definite. The preverbal NP can be a subject or topic when it is definite. However, when the preverbal NP is indefinite, it must be analysed as a subject. Analysing the preverbal NP as a subject will make a problem in explaining the asymmetry in agreement between the two word orders because the verb agrees in person, gender and number with the preverbal subject, but it only agrees in person and gender with the postverbal subject.

2.3 Subject-Verb Agreement in Modern Standard Arabic
MSA shows the familiar subject verb-agreement associated with word order alternation: SV order shows full agreement between subject and verb in all features (1a), while VS order shows only partial agreement, typically in gender features (1b).1 No other mix-and-match of agreement pattern and word order is permissible (1c,d):

(1) a. al-ʔawlaad-u qaraʔ-u d-dars-a      SV+full agreement
    the-boys-NOM read 3plM the-lesson-ACC
 b. qaraʔa l-ʔawlaad-u d-dars-a        VS+partial agreement
    read 3sgmas the-boys-NOM the-lesson-ACC
 c. *ʔal-ʔawlaad-u qaraʔa d-dars-a      *SV+partial agreement
    the-boys-NOM read 3sgM the-lesson-ACC
 d. *qaraʔ-u l-ʔawlaad-u d-dars-a      *VS+full agreement
    read 3plM the-boys-NOM the-lesson-ACC
Agreement is “partial” in VS orders because even though the number feature surfacing on the verb is always singular in this context, the verb still shows gender agreement with the post verbal DP. In (1b) such gender agreement is not morphologically manifest, since the masculine agreement morpheme is null in this language. If the post verbal DP is feminine, a gender suffix (the traditionally called femininity marker –t) obligatorily appears on the verb, as the paradigm of data in (2) below illustrates:

(2) a. ?al-fatayaat-u qara?-na d-dars-a
    the-girls-NOM read-3plfem the-lesson-ACC
    b. qara?a-t 'l-fatayaat-u d-dars-a
    read-3sgfem the-girls-NOM the-lesson-ACC
    c. *qara?a l-fatayaat-u d-dars-a
    read-3sg the-girls-NOM the-lesson-ACC

2.4 Differences between MSA and Iraqi Arabic

There are many linguistic differences between SA and IA, through phonological, lexical, syntactic, and morphological differences between the two varieties. The intent is to highlight the dichotomy between the two forms. SA and IA differ in their phonological systems.

On the syntactic level, there is a major difference between SA and IA in terms of subject-verb number agreement. When the order of the verbal sentence in SA is (VSO) i.e. verb → subject → object, the verb is always singular regardless of whether the subject is singular or plural. In IA, there is more restriction since the verb always agrees with the subject, i.e. it is singular when the subject is singular and plural when the subject is plural (Al-Toma, 1969:77-78). The following are two examples of SA and IA to clarify the difference:

3. katab-a al-awlād-u al-qissa
   write.perfect-3sg.M the-boys-nom.pl the-story
   “The boys wrote the story”.

4. kitbaw al-wilad al-qissa
   write.perfect-3pl.M the-boys.pl the-story
   “The boys wrote the story”.

The two examples above show a syntactic difference between SA and IA. However, the syntactic order of verbal sentences in SA is not only VSO. It can also take the order of SVO. When the order of verbal sentences is SVO, the verb agrees with the subject, similar to the case in IA. The sentence in the first example above could be grammatically re-ordered as shown in the following example:

5. al-awlād-u katab-u al-qissa
   the-boys-nom.pl write.perfect-3 pl.masc the-story
   “The boys wrote the story”.

On the morphological as well as syntactic level, MSA and IA differ in their treatment of the dual. While MSA marks dual forms for verbs and adjectives, IA provides singular and plural forms only, even when the subject of the sentence is dual. Many Arabic linguists consider IA treatment of the dual as a violation of linguistic rules of Arabic. The difference becomes clear in the following two examples from the two varieties:

6. al-bint-āni jamīla-tān
   the-girl-nom.dual beautiful-nom.dual
   “The two girls are beautiful”

7. al-bint-en jamīlā-t
   the-girl-nom.dual beautiful-nom.pl
“The two girls are beautiful”

The situation of Arabic in Iraq is not considerably different from language situations across the Arab world. The coexistence of standard and dialect forms of Arabic characterizes the main linguistic scene in Iraq and other Arab countries. MSA is the official language of Iraq and is widely used in a variety of formal domains, such as written and spoken media, education and governmental institutions. MSA is not spoken in casual interaction; however, some of its forms are occasionally used by Iraqi speakers. IA is predominantly spoken in everyday face-to-face interaction. There is no tradition of writing in IA. Sometimes, however, vernacular poetry is written in IA. The foregoing demonstrates that MSA and IA each has its own distinct domains. Yet in certain speech contexts, forms of both varieties are mixed. (Murad:2007:10)

2.5 Variation in Word Order:

Occasionally, the subject of a verbal sentence or clause precedes the verb. In that case the verb agrees with it in gender and in number:

2.5.1 Subject–Verb–Object (SVO):

The writer may begin a sentence with a noun or noun phrase for stylistic reasons or for emphasis within the body of a text. This inverted word order also happens in embedded clauses. Moreover, certain fixed expressions are in the SVO order. When the subject precedes the verb, the verb agrees with it in gender and in number. Technically, this word order converts a jumla fi?liyya (verbal sentence) into a jumla ismiyya (nominal sentence). Aoun et al. (2010:247)

8. al tajiru ya-mlik-u thawatan-an kABirat-an.

The merchant possesses a great wealth.

The headline in Arabic newspapers is SVO whereas the first or lead sentence in the article, recapping the same thing, will be VSO. This shift in word order illustrates the attention-getting function of the SVO word order.


France warns Islamic activists.

Lead sentence: VSO:


France yesterday warned Islamic extremists.

2.5.3 Preposed direct object (topic and comment):

An object of a verb or preposition in MSA may be preposed at the beginning of a sentence. In this case, a transitive verb (or prepositional phrase) requires a pronoun object to replace and refer to the preposed noun object. The pronoun object on the verb agrees with the noun it refers to in gender and number. (ibid:247)

11. hadhihi l-furSat-u laa na-jid-u-haa illaa fii l-qaahirat-i.

This opportunity can only be found in Cairo.

‘This opportunity, we do not find it except in Cairo.’

2.5.4 Verb–Object–Subject (VOS):

In some cases, the verb will come first, and the object will come before the subject of the verb. This is especially true if the object is substantially shorter than the subject. Consider the following Example:

12. naqasha al bahtha majmootan min al akhsaiin.

‘Discussed the research a group of specialists.’

Mohammad,1985, Fassi Fehri ,1993 and Ouhalla,1994) among many others argue that the basic word orders in MSA are VSO and SVO. However, the two word orders received most of the attention in the literature because of the debate in the principle and parameters framework about the positions that genuine subjects can occupy. In
the principle and parameters framework, Aoun et al. (2010:261) state that there are two analyses for the two orders in MSA (The first assumes that there are two positions that can be occupied by genuine subjects within the clause. It is assumed that the SVO is derived from the VSO, whereby the subject is originated in the specifier position of the VP in both orders. In the VSO order, the subject remains in-situ while it raises to the specifier of the IP in the SVO order. The second assumes that the only genuine subject occurs in the VSO order and it occupies the specifier position of the VP. In this case, the preverbal subject is not a genuine subject, rather it is a topic that is related to a resumptive pronoun. In this analysis, it is argued that the agreement between the verb and the subject in number when the subject precedes the verb is evidence that the subject is a topic.

Fassi Fehri (1993:121) assumes that the preverbal NP can be a topic or subject when it is definite. On the other hand, when the preverbal NP is indefinite, it must be a subject. When the preverbal NP is definite, the sentence is ambiguous between two interpretations, namely, the preverbal NP can be a subject or topic. (ibid: 1993) For example:

(13) al awladu dahabu ila al madrasati.

   DEF-children-NOM go.PFV.3PLM to DEF-school-GEN

   'The children, they went to the school/The children went to the school'

Fassi Fehri (1993:122) argues that sentences such as the sentence in (13) are ambiguous between two meanings. The sentence in (13) can mean that the children, they went to the school or the children went to the school. In the first meaning, the children is a topic and the subject is the pronoun they. In contrast, the children in the second meaning is the subject (ibid). On the other hand, the preverbal NP can be analysed as a topic or subject without ambiguity. If the preverbal NP has a nominative case and it is not the subject, it is a topic. For example:

(14) al awlad-u qabal-tu-hum.

   DEF-children-NOM meet PFV-1SGM.SBJ-3PLM.OBJ

   'The children, I met them'.

In the Government Binding framework, it is assumed that the agreement between the subject and verb is the result of a configurational relation between a head and specifier. Within this framework, there are some analyses for the asymmetry in the agreement in MSA. One analysis is the null expletive analysis which is proposed by Mohammad (1990, 2000), Ouhalla (1994) and others. Under this analysis, the full agreement with the preverbal subject is the result of the relationship between the head which is occupied by the verb and its specifier which is occupied by the lexical subject which is not a topic. In contrast, the partial agreement between the verb and the postverbal subject is also the result of the relationship between the head and the specifier, however, the specifier in this case is occupied by a null expletive.

2.6 Types of Agreement

2.6.1 Full Agreement

As for full agreement (in gender and number), it is always associated with pronominal subjects whether these pronominals are null (which is the unmarked case) or overt, and whether these pronominals precede or follow the verb. Consider the following examples, taken from Soltan (2006: 248):

(15a) (hum) qara?-uu d-dars-a. SV+full agreement
   (they) read.3mp the-lesson-Acc
   "They read the lesson."

(15b) qara?-uu (hum) d-dars-a. VS+full agreement
read.3mp (they) the-lesson-Acc
(15c). alrijalu safaru
the man.NOM leavepast. 3s.g.
" The man left". (SV)
16. safara alrajalu
leave. past 3s.g. the man.NOM
" The man left."
(15d). alrijalu
leavepast. 3s.g. the man.NOM
" The man left."

2.6.2. Partial Agreement
Al-Horais(2009:4) points out that subject verb agreement in Arabic is well-known as having agreement asymmetries that are sensitive to word order. In VSO order, the unmarked word order, the verb agrees with the subject in gender only (partial agreement), if it is a full lexical DP. (17) and (18) are illustrative examples:

(17) jaʔ- at Taalibaat-u
  came.3fs the- students.fp-Nom
  "The students came."
(18) akala ?al-walad-u at-tufaahat-a
  past- ate.3ms the-boy-Nom the-apple-Acc
  "The boy ate the apple."

The above two examples clearly show that the verb in VS orders is impoverished and involves only gender agreement with the postverbal DP but not person and number. This gender agreement can be morphologically realized if the postverbal subject is feminine, by a gender suffix -t as in (17) above. In (18), by contrast, such gender agreement is not morphologically manifested since the masculine agreement morpheme is null in this language. Al-Horais (2009:6). Some linguists (Al-Horais: 2009, Attia: 2008) among many others mention that Arabic has rich agreement morphology, there are five morphosyntactic features involved in agreement
– Number: singular, dual and plural
– Gender: feminine and masculine
– Person: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd
– Case: nominative, accusative and genitive
– Definiteness: definite and indefinite.

Take the following examples (1) through (5) from Attia (2008), to show different types of agreement relationships.

1. haʔha ar-ragulu
  this.sg.masc the-man.sg.masc
  ‘This man’.

2. raait-u ar-ragula-ini al-karama-ini
  Saw-1st s.g the-man.dual.acc. the-generous.dual.masc.acc.
  ‘I saw the two generous men.’

3. aʔ-ʔalibatani allatani naʔaatat
  the-student.dual.fem.nom who.dual.fem.nom succeed.past.dual.fem.3
  ‘The two students who succeeded.’

4. aʔ-ʔalibatu ḍakarna duruʔa-hunna
  the-student.pl.fem.3.nom study.past.pl.fem.3 lessons-their.pl.fem.3
  ‘The students studied their lessons.’

5. ar-ragulu karimun
  the-man.sg.masc generous.sg.masc
  ‘The man is generous.’
Regarding verb–subject agreement, when subjects are in the pre-verbal position, verbs have full (rich) agreement as they are required to agree with their subjects in number, gender and person, as shown in the example:

(19) al-banātu ḏahabna ʿilā al-ḥadīqati
    the-girl.pl.fem.3 go.past.pl.fem.3 to the-garden
    ‘The girls went to the garden.’

In Standard Arabic, partial agreement (Person, Gender) holds between the verb and the subject in VSO order as in (20) below; whereas in SVO order, full agreement (Person, Number, Gender) holds between the subject and the verb: (Attia: 2008:1-4)

(20) hadhara at-tullaab-u an-nadwat-a (VSO)
    attended-3.s.m the-students-nom the-seminar-acc
    ‘The students attended the seminar.’

(21) at-tullaab-u hadhar-uu an-nadwat-a (SVO)
    the-students-nom attended-3.p.m the-seminar-acc
    ‘The students attended the seminar.’

If the subject is pronominal, then it usually gets dropped in the course of computation, since Standard Arabic is a null-subject language ((Attia: 2008:1-4, Al-Horais: 2009), consider the following example:

(22) Hadhar-na an-nadwat-a
    Attended-3.p.f the-seminar-acc
    ‘they attended the seminar’.

### 3.1 Data Analysis

In this section the analysis of Iraqi Dialect Versus Standard Arabic by which adopted by (Al- Bazi: 2006)” will be the main tenet of which is that agreement, particularly subject–verb agreement, is a surface phenomenon, in which the verb copies a feature of the subject. The study is based on samples collected from native speakers of Iraqi Arabic used by Baghdadi people. Researchers who analyse the preverbal NP as a topic use the asymmetry in agreement between the verb and the subject in the two orders VSO and SVO as evidence supporting their analysis (Soltan,2006 and Aoun et al, 2010). In the VS (O), the verb agrees with the subject in person and gender, but not in number. In contrast, the agreement between the preverbal subject and the verb in SV(O) order is full agreement.

(Assi Runak Nashaat: UD and Boskany.2001 )

(23a) awalad-un thahab-_u
    INDF.boys.3PLM-NOM go.PFV-3PLM
    "Boys went"

(23b) thahaba awadun
    go.PFV.3M INDF.boys.3PLM-NOM
    "Boys went".

### 3.2. Subject Verb Agreement in IA

Arabic dialects lost case marking which gives MSA the freedom to have various word orders. Aoun et al. (2010:239) state that there are three possible word orders in all Arabic dialects, namely, they are SVO, VSO and VOS. They give some examples from Palestinian, Lebanese and Moroccan Arabic illustrating the three orders. However, IA only allows two orders, namely, SVO and VSO. The third order that is allowed in the three Arabic dialects is not possible in IA. Like MSA, the preverbal NP can be a topic or a subject in IA when it is definite. The preverbal NP in the following example is ambiguous between the two interpretations:
(24) al-t ullah rahau li-al-madrasah.
   DEF-student.3PLM go.PFV-3PLM to-DEF-school
"The student, they went to the school. The student went to the school".
The preverbal NP al-tullab `the students' can be a topic and the sentence means the
students, they went to the school. In this case, the topic is linked to the pronoun which
is suffixed to the verb and it functions as a subject. In contrast, the preverbal NP can
be the subject and the sentence means the students went to the school. On the other
hand, the preverbal NP must be the subject when it is indefinite and IA in this case is
like MSA. In addition, IA is like MSA in that it shows asymmetry in agreement
between the two word orders: VSO and SVO. It means that the agreement between
the verb and the preverbal subject is full agreement while it is partial agreement
between the verb and the postverbal subject. For example:
(25a) al-tullab gaw min al-madrasah.
   DEF-student.3PLM come.PFV-3PLM from DEF-school
   `The student came back from the school'
(25b) ga al-t ull_ab min al-madrasah.
   come.PFV.3M DEF-student.3PLM from DEF-school
   "The student came back from the school"
In example (25a), the verb agrees with the preverbal subject in person, gender and
number. However, the verb in (25b) agrees with the postverbal subject in person and
gender only. This interpretation for agreement in IA is the subject-verb merger like
Benmamoun (2000) for MSA. The reason of partial agreement in the VSO order is
that the verb merges with the postverbal subject which is inected for number.
Interestingly, the verb in IA shows full agreement when some elements intervene
between it and its postverbal subject. IA doesn't allow partial agreement when the
subject is a noun or pronoun. This is in contrast with the MSA data which uses partial
agreement obligatorily with postverbal subject noun.
(26). nihna dhirbna zeki
   We. NOM hit. past Zeki
   " We hit Zeki".
(27). dharbha.hu nihna
   hit.past he. ACC. we.NOM.
   " We hit him"
Syntactically, there is a major difference between SA and IA in terms of subject-verb
number agreement. When the order of the verbal sentence in SA is (VSO) i.e. verb →
subject → object, the verb is always singular regardless of whether the subject is
singular or plural. In IA, there is more restriction since the verb always agrees with
the subject. The following are two examples of SA and IA to clarify the difference:
28. dhahaba-a al-awlåd-u ila aswqi
   go.past-pl.M the-boys-nom.pl to. Preposition the- market
   “The boys went to the market”
29. mehwa al-wila
d li-swak
   go.past-pl.M the-boys-nom.pl to. Preposition the- market
   “The boys went to the market”.
The two examples above show a syntactic difference between SA and IA. However,
the syntactic order of verbal sentences in SA is not only VSO. It can also take the
order of SVO. When the order of verbal sentences is SVO, the verb agrees with the
subject, similar to the case in IA. The sentence in the first example above could be
grammatically re-ordered as shown in the following example:
30. al-awlådu dhahabau ila aswqi
   MSA)
The boys.pl.M. NOM go.past to. Preposition the- market
“The boys went to the market”
31. al-wilad mehwa li-swak (IA)
the-boys-nom.pl go.past-pl.M to. Preposition the- market
“The boys went to the market”.
Morphologically, MSA and IA differ in their treatment of the dual. IA provides singular and plural forms only, even when the subject of the sentence is dual. The difference becomes clear in the following two examples from the two varieties:
32. al-bint-tān jamila-tān (MSA)
the-girl-nom.dual beautiful-nom.dual
“The two girls are beautiful”
33. al-bint-en helwat (IA)
the-girl-nom.dual beautiful-nom.pl
“The two girls are beautiful”.
The above examples clarifies the most important syntactic categories viz subject verb agreement in Iraqi Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic.

4. Conclusions
It is understood that in IA whether the subject is pre or post verbal, the verb has to be in full agreement all the time. IA does not allow partial agreement in whatever position the subject may be. On the other hand, MSA offers only full agreement whenever the subject (the noun object) is post verbal, it offers only partial agreement. When the subject is pronominal, we can see that there are crucial differences between IA and MSA, as far as subject verb agreement is concerned. The former always requires full agreement whatever the order of the subject in relation to the verb is. MSA on the other hand, requires full agreement only in the case of VSO order. However, when the subject is a pronoun, both varieties never allow partial agreement. The grammatical mechanism of this type of agreement is called case theory.

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