



مجالات التنمية والتعاون المشترك للعراق مع محيطه الاقليمي والدولي وسبل تطويرها

وقائع وبحوث

المؤتمر العلمي الدولي العاشر

لمركز دراسات البصرة والخليج العربي بجامعة البصرة
بالتعاون مع الشركة العامة لموانئ العراق

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A Contrastive Analysis of the Expletive It in English and Dhameerlsh?an huwa in Arabic

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Abstract

The term expletive in English refers to a word that is used in a sentence without contributing to its meaning due to its contentless. This is best exemplified in the dummy pronoun it whose pivotal role in the sentence is mostly syntactic rather than semantic due to its unreferentiality. As this study is a contrastive study, then its main purpose is to detect whether or not there is like this dummy pronoun in Arabic. Concerning the methodology adopted in this study is basically of Haegeman (1994) which involves proving via syntactic and semantic evidence represented in theta-theory (θ -theory) and the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) respectively, the fact that expletives are intrinsically devoid of meaning. The study has shown that the term expletive does in fact exist in Arabic (i.e. Modern Standard Arabic) and it is best represented in the third person pronoun called dhameerlsh?an i.e. pronoun of magnitude which is a counterpart of the dummy it due to its unreferentiality. In view of this, it is no small wonder finding out that languages such as English and Arabic, which are totally different in respect to their linguistic families, to exhibit similarities in respect to this aspect of grammar viz. expletives , and perhaps to other grammatical aspects .

Key Words: dummy arguments theta-theory theta-criterion extended projection principle

التحليل المقارن لضمير الحشو "هو" في الإنجليزية وضمير الشأن في العربية

المستخلص

يراد بمصطلح الحشو في اللغة الإنجليزية الكلمة التي تدخل في بناء القواعدي للجملة دون أن تشارك في تركيبها الدلالي؛ وذلك لخلوها من المعنى أصلاً. ويتمثل هذا بشكل واضح بضمير الغائب "هو" اللاإشاري الذي يتمحور دوره في الجملة من حيث البناء لا من حيث المعنى. وبما أن هذه الدراسة هي دراسة تقابليه بين الانجليزية والعربية فهي تسعى للكشف عن ما إذا كان لمثل هذا المصطلح وجود في اللغة العربية أم لا. أما بالنسبة للمنهجية التي تبنتها هذه الدراسة فهي تعود أصلاً الى هيجمن (١٩٩٤) والتي تتضمن أثبات حقيقة خلو مصطلح الحشو من المعنى وذلك من خلال الأدلة النحوية والدلالية المتمثلة بنظرية المحور ومبدأ الأسقاط الموسع. قد يكون الامر مستغرباً لأول وهلة الحصول على وجود لمثل هذا المصطلح في العربية؛ وذلك للتباعد النسبي بين اللغتين. لقد كشفت هذه الدراسة ان مصطلح الحشو في اللغة الإنجليزية المتمثل بالضمير هو اللاإشاري له ما يناظره أو ما يشابهه في العربية (اللغة العربية الحديثة المعاصرة المنطوقة أو المكتوبة) ألا وهو ضمير الشأن هو الذي لا يعود على اسم أصلاً؛ أي أنه خال من الإحالة. وفي ضوء هذا يتضح أن لا غرابة في أن تظهر هاتان اللغتان أوجهاً من الشبه في ما بينها بالنسبة لمصطلح الحشو أو أي موضوع آخر من مواضيع النحو بالرغم من التباين الكبير في انتماءاتهما اللغوية كون اللغة الانجليزية تنتمي الى العائلة اللغوية المسماة بالهندية الاوربية في حين تنتمي اللغو العربية الى العائلة المسماة باللغات السامية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الحشو، المواضيع ، نظرية المحور، المبدأ المحوري، مبدأ الأسقاط الموسع

Section I

1. Introduction

It is natural for words used in a sentence to participate in its syntax and its semantic make-up as well; however, this is not always true. That is to say there are some words that are used in a sentence without actually contributing to its meaning. There is no astonishment in this simply because there does exist such words which are used just for their syntactic requirement due to their contentless. Such words are called *expletives*. Amazingly, expletives constitute a phenomenon in English because of the many structures in which they are used as shown below. Typical examples of expletives in English are represented in the dummy pronoun *it* and the non-deictic *there*. The focus however will be on the dummy *it* in correspondence with the title of this work. The dummy pronoun *it* is defined as:

(1) " a semantically empty element often a noun phrase , which is required for well-formedness in certain positions in certain structures' (Trask,1993:87). This fact is maintained by Praninskas (1973:133) who describes the pronoun *it* as it is not always a personal pronoun; sometimes it is a kind of expletive that does not refer to anything; it just fills a position in a sentence pattern. Therefore, she calls it **impersonal** *it* which is used in statements about *time, weather, distance, and identification* as exemplified respectively:

(2) Is it late? No, it is early.

(3) Is it raining? No, but, it looks like rain.

(4) How far is it to George's school? It's about three miles.

(5) Someone is at the door. Who is it? I don't know who it is.

In addition to these structures, the dummy pronoun *it* is also used in *cleft sentences* as in (6):

(6) It was Spanish that he wanted to learn.

Quirk and Greenbaum(1973: 414 -15) show that a *cleft sentence* is so called because it divides a single clause into two separate sections, each is with its own verb. The first includes the *pronoun it* followed by the verb which is then followed by the element on which the focus falls or is thrown. Another structure in which the dummy pronoun *it* is used is as in (7):

(7) It makes me sad to see people scavenging the garbage for a living.

The pronoun *it* in (7) is called *anticipatory pronoun it*.

This pronoun replaces a postponed or an extraposed clause which has been moved to final position because it is more usual. Hence (7) with the dummy *it* is more usual than where the clause appears in its position: *To see people scavenging the garbage for living makes me sad*. (7) is then characterised as having two subjects: the postponed subject which is the notional (real) clausal subject and the anticipatory subject *it* (Quirk and Greenbaum,1973: 423). Quirk et al (1985: 89) in their manipulation of the anticipatory pronoun *it* shows that it is totally needed for structural requirement as it carries no information by itself. All it does is that it supplies the structural requirement for an initial subject. They add that its only semantic function is merely to signal that the content of the subject is

expressed in a later position in the sentence. This idea is maintained by Hasselgård et al (2012: 5) in which he describes the anticipatory *it* as it carries little or no independent meaning, and that it points forward to the 'notional subject' which is placed later in the sentence for reasons of end weight or emphasis.

There is of course like this dummy pronoun in behaviour in Arabic, that is, *dhameerish?an huwa*. This pronoun is also syntactically rather than semantically required because of its contentless. This study then consists of three sections: the first is for the description of the dummy pronoun *it* in English, the second is for the description of *dhameerish?an huwa* in Arabic and that the third is for the comparison between the two pronouns followed by the conclusions.

I. I Literature Review

There have been a relatively large number of studies that focused on the dummy pronoun 'it' in the field of linguistics. The concept of the dummy pronoun 'it' has been supported by many studies, particularly those that investigated non-native languages from cross-linguistic perspectives based on formal linguistic theory (Hilles, 1986; 1991; Liceras, et al., 1999; Montrul, 1997; O' Grady, 2002; Phinney; 1987).

Burizo (1986) investigated expletive 'there' in Italian language. He concluded that expletive 'there' ends up in an object position rather than in an ordinary subject position. Another study has been done by Kayne (2008) who dealt with expletive "it" in French language. The result of the study showed that existential sentences contain both object 'there' and a

second expletive 'it'. Kayne (2008) concluded that that expletive 'it' is similar to expletive 'there' is not true.

All in all, these studies on expletive "it" phenomenon, which are directly relevant to our study, may lead us to hypothesize that the term expletive does participate in the structure of the sentence without contributing to its meaning. To our knowledge, no previous study has dealt with the expletive 'it' in both English and Arabic in the way this study has dealt with.

1.2 Definition of expletive

The term **expletive** (also called **pleonastic**) refers to "a 'dummy' constituent with no inherent semantic content", such as the pronoun *it* in the sentence '**It is unclear why he resigned.**' (Radford, 2004:451). **Expletives** are defined as "elements in NP positions which are not arguments and to which no *theta role* is assigned" (Haegeman (1994:62). In view of this, expletives add nothing to the meaning of the sentence --- all they do is filling out a slot in the sentence without contributing to its meaning. The fact that an expletive just fills out a slot in the sentence can be traced in its origin which is taken from Late Latin *expletivus*, from *explere* 'fill out', from *ex* -'out' + 'plere' 'fill' (Oxford Dictionary Online, 2017).

1.3 The hypothesis of the study

In the light of the definitions of expletives above, it is hypothesized that some elements that enter in the composition of the sentence do not actually contribute to its semantic make-up due to their contentless. Though this might seem a little bit bizarre, it is natural with expletives such as the dummy pronoun *it*. The fact that expletives are devoid of meaning is verified

via both of **theta-theory** and **Extended Projection Principle** which render good support to our postulation.

1.4 Theta-theory

"*Theta-theory* is concerned with the assignment of thematic roles such as agent-of-action, etc. (henceforth θ -roles)"(Chomsky, 1981: 5-6). "*Theta-roles* are described as the semantic properties assigned by heads" (Chomsky, 1986: 93). A category that bears a *theta-role* is an **argument** (Roberts, 1997: 59). An argument is a 'referring expression', i.e. an expression which corresponds to (picks out) an individual or an entity in a given world (or discourse domain). (Ouhalla,1999:149). How many arguments does a head take depends on its meaning? The set of arguments selected by the verb, including the subject constitutes its **Argument structure**". (Culicover,1997: 17).

According to *theta-theory* every argument in the sentence must receive a *theta-role* assigned to it by the verb and that no argument is left unassigned, or else the sentence is ruled out. This amounts to saying that the number of arguments must match the number of the *theta-roles* and that the violation of this would filter out the sentence. This can be summed up in the *theta criterion* upon which *theta-theory* is built.

(8) Theta criterion

Each argument bears one and only one *theta-role*, and each *theta-role* is assigned to one and only one argument. (Chomsky,1981: 36).

Thematic-roles are *agent* (actor or causer) (the instigator of action); *theme* (the person or thing undergoing the action); *experiencer* (the entity

experiencing some psychological state) ; *benefactive*/ beneficiary (the person or entity benefits from the action expressed by the predicate) ; *Goal* (the entity towards which the activity expressed by the predicate is directed); *source* (the entity from which something is moved as a result of the activity expressed by the predicate), and *location* (the place in which the action or state expressed by the predicate is situated). (Fillmore, 1968). All these semantic roles are illustrated in the following scenario:

(9) Mary saw a fly on the wall.

EXPERIENCER THEME LOCATION

(10) She borrowed a magazine from George.

AGENT THEME SOURCE

(11) She squashed the bug with a magazine.

AGENT THEME INSTRUMENT

(12) She handed the magazine back to George.

AGENT THEME GOAL (or a benefactive)

(13) Gee thanks said George.

AGENT (Yule, 2014: 113)

The scenario shows that arguments are assigned theta-roles depending on their relationships with the predicate i.e. the verb. It also shows that the agent theta – role (except in 9) is assigned to the subject as it is the instigator of the action, while the other theta- roles such as theme, goal, etc. are assigned to the objects or complements depending on their syntactic function.

Theta-roles are distinguished as internal- theta roles i.e. those assigned within the VP and are thereby called **internal arguments** and external-theta

role i.e. the one assigned to the subject outside the VP and is thus called **external argument**.(Culicove,1997: 21).

Theta-roles assigned to arguments can be represented in the form of a theta-grid which is part of the lexical entry of the predicate. (Haegeman,1994: 51). Below is the theta- grid of the verb *borrow* in (10) as appears in (14):

(14) borrow: verb

<u>AGENT</u> NP	THEME NP	SOURCE NP

The theta-grid in (14) shows that *borrow* assigns three theta-roles to the arguments that it takes--- each is assigned to its corresponding argument ; hence the theta-roles of the verb *borrow* are saturated. Further illustration that the respective *theta-roles* are assigned to their corresponding arguments, linguists such as Haegeman(1994), Carnie (2007) etc. suggest inserting indexes in the slots under their corresponding arguments. Hence another version of the theta- grid of the verb *borrow* in (14) appears in (15):

(15) borrow: verb

<u>AGENT</u> NP	THEME NP	SOURCE NP
I	j	K

Having known this, it is relevant to find out whether this is also applicable to the dummy pronoun *it* or not. This is dealt with in the coming section.

1.5 Theta-criterion and the dummy pronoun it

In the preceding section, we witnessed how verbs assign theta-roles to the arguments they take. However, not all verbs can assign theta-roles; of these verbs which do not seem to assign any theta-roles are *weather verbs*:

(16) a. It rained

b. It snowed

c. It hailed Carnie (2007: 228)

What goes on in (16a, b, and c) is that the pronoun *it* is not assigned a theta-role simply because the verbs with which it is used cannot assign a theta-role. As this violates theta-criterion which stipulates that each argument must bear a theta-role, it is logical to ask why these sentences are not accordingly ruled out. The answer is simply because the pronoun *it* in (16) is not an argument. What prevents the pronoun *it* in (16) not to be an argument is simply because it is a dummy pronoun i.e. a pronoun with no referring expression to which a theta-role must be assigned. The fact that the pronoun *it* in (16) is a dummy pronoun i.e. a pronoun with no referring expression is manifested in (17) which shows that there is no possibility of enquiring about its reference:

(17) *What rained? Borsley (1999:86)

Other verbs that do not assign theta-roles are those called **raising verbs/ predicates** (Ouhalla,1999:84). Typical examples of these verbs are *seem*, *appear* and complex predicates such as *be likely*. The main characteristic of these verbs is that they do not have an external theta-role of their own to assign. As such, the subject position of the root clause which

includes a raising predicate, can be occupied either by the subject moved from the embedded clause within it as appears in (18) or by the expletive *it* as appears in (19):

(18) Mary seems [to have solved the problem].

(19) It seems [that Mary has solved the problem.] (Ouhalla (1999: 84)

What goes on in (18) is that the subject position occupied by the NP *Mary* is assigned the theta-role *agent* by virtue of the verb *solve* of the embedded clause and not by the verb *seem* which is already identified as a raising verb i.e. a verb that cannot assign a theta-role, while in (19) the subject position is occupied by the expletive *it* whose insertion comes as a result of movement of the NP *Mary* to its original subject position in the embedded clause. The insertion of the expletive *it* seems to be plausible on two bases: first, because it is not an argument that requires to be assigned a theta-role; second, it fills the empty subject position that results due to the movement of the NP *Mary* to the subject position of the embedded clause— without the insertion of the dummy pronoun *it*, (19) would be excluded because it would be left without a subject and thus violating EPP (see 1.6):

(20) *Seems [that Mary has solved the problem.]

This is more illustrated within the theta-grid of each of *seem* and *solve*.

(21) seem

--

(22) solve

<u>AGENT</u> NP	THEME NP
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In (21) the theta-grid of *seem* is empty; this means that the verb *seem* cannot assign theta-roles, while in (22) the theta-grid of *solve* is with two theta-roles: the *agent* is assigned to the subject *Mary* and that the *theme* is assigned to the NP *the problem*. This emphasises that the subject *Mary* in (18) is assigned the theta-role *agent* by virtue of the verb *solve* and not by the verb *seem* which is a raising verb i.e. a verb that cannot assign theta-roles.

Haegeman(1994: 62) maintains that the insertion of the pronoun *it* in the subject position in (19) is done for some structural reason, that is, English sentences must have an overt subject (see the following section). Hence the presence of *it* does not seem to contribute to the semantic make-up of the sentence --- all it does is that it is a place-holder for the otherwise unfilled subject position.

In the next section we will discuss why it is necessary to fill the subject position rather than leaving it empty or unfilled.

1.6 The Extended Projection Principle (EPP)

In the preceding section we argued that the need for the dummy pronoun *it* is simply for some structural reason. This means that its presence or absence has no impact on the semantic make-up of the sentence. Given this, it is then plausible to ask why its presence is mandatory though it is semantically-empty. The answer to this question is represented in the principle known as the **Extended Projection Principle** (henceforth EPP) which is defined as in (23):

(23) Every sentence must have a subject (Culicover, 104: 1997).

The term *subject* in (23) refers to ‘formal subject’ which is distinguished from ‘logical subject’ (i.e. semantic subject). Formal subject is ‘a category that occupies the subject position of a clause, irrespective of whether it is semantically empty or not (Ouhalla (1999: 125). The concept of subject in (23) makes it easy to the subject position to be filled with the dummy pronoun *it* in compliance with EPP. The same concept of subject in (23) is adopted by Cook (1988: 115) who uses the term ‘grammatical subject’ which is specified as it may be assigned a theta- role, but need not.

Another picture of EPP is encoded in the form a phrase structure rule as in (24):

(24) **Extended projection principle**

$\text{S} \rightarrow \text{NP} - \text{AUX} - \text{VP}$ Haegeman (1994: 69)

The NP in (24) refers to the subject whose existence is mandatory as in (25):

(25) Maigret accused Poirot.

The attempt to leaving out the subject causes the sentence to be ill-formed as in (26):

(26) *Accused poirot Maigret.

It is obvious that the ill- formedness of (26) follows from EPP i.e. having a sentence without a subject or, say, a subjectless sentence.

Section II

Expletives in Arabic

2.1 Introduction

Generally speaking, expletives refer to words which are devoid of meaning. Nonetheless, they are still required because they participate in assigning the sense of greatness or magnification to the content of the sentence with which they are used as true with *dhameerish?an huwa*. The fact that this pronoun adds or assigns greatness to the matter in question is manifested in that it is not used unless the content of the sentence to which it is added is worthy of greatness. Therefore, it is not possible to use this pronoun with a sentence such as:

(27) Huwal-thubaabu yaTeeru

It the flies fly

"It is that flies can fly." (Al- Istrabady, : 464)

In addition to its semantic role, *dhameerish?an* sometimes plays a central role in the structure of some sentences to the extent that those sentences cannot be made without it. These points besides other points concerning this pronoun are dealt with in detail within the following sections.

2.2. Definition of expletive

The term expletive in Arabic is lexically known as *heshoo* i.e. *pleonasm* which refers to "a thing or a person that is used merely to fill a slot." www.almanny.com/ar/dict/ar-en/expletive/). The notion of filling which is a major characteristic of the term *heshoo* is essentially taken from the

verb *ḥashaa* which means "filling something", of which is filling a pillow (Al-Jurjāny, 1995:50).

Linguistically speaking, the term expletive refers to "any word which is used in a structure (i.e. sentence structure) without causing any change in its original meaning except assigning strength or emphasis to it." (Besandi, 2005: 25). Being so, expletives add nothing to the overall meaning of the structure of the sentence due to their contentless. There is almost a consensus among Arab grammarians upon this concept of expletives. An excellent example of the term expletive in Arabic is represented in *dhameerishʿan huwa* which is dealt with within the coming section.

2.3 Dhameerishʿan (Pronoun of Magnitude)

Dhameerishʿan is a third person masculine or feminine singular pronoun placed before a sentence to which it assigns greatness or exaggeration (Al-Istrabady, 1975 : 464). Compare the following:

(28) a ʿalamīr-u qādim-un

the prince coming

"The prince is coming."

b huwa-ʿamīr-u qādim-un

it the prince coming

"It is that the prince is coming."

(28a & b) are two sentences with the same meaning except that in (28b) the meaning is exaggerated or magnified due to *dhameerishʔan huwa* which is placed before it.

This pronoun is a dummy pronoun i.e. it is with no referring expression from which it takes reference. Accordingly, Kufa school grammarians called it *dhameerl-majhōl* , **the anonymous pronoun** i.e. a pronoun with no referring expression (Ibn Yaʕeesh, :65). In my opinion, Kufa school grammarians are completely accurate calling it so, simply because of the anonymity of its reference i.e. it is with no referring expression from which it takes reference.

Anonymity, which is typical of this pronoun, seems to be intended simply because it causes a sense of suspense inside the listener who aspires to know what that anonymous pronoun refers to (Al- Alawi, 745 : 142).

The fact that this pronoun is an anonymous pronoun is expressed in the way it is interpreted, that is, *alshʔan* or *alamar* i.e. *the matter* which is still unknown unless it is explained by the sentence coming after it (?ibn Ya'yeesh: 65) . Hence another way of rendering (28b) is given in (29):

(29) ʔal-shaʔan-u al-amīr-u qādim-un

"The matter is that the prince is coming."

There is of course a correspondence between *dhameerishʔan huwa* being a third person masculine singular pronoun and the word *alshʔan* or *alamar* by which it is interpreted. This indicates that this pronoun cannot be other than a third person masculine singular as in (29), or a third person feminine

singular due to which it is interpreted as *alqisah* when the sentence has a feminine NP (? ibn Ya'yeesh: 64). Accordingly, (30) can be rendered as in (31):

(30) Hiyal ?amīrat-u qādimat-un

she the princess coming

"It is that the princess is coming."

(31)? al-qīsat-u al-amīrat-u qādimat-un

"The story is that the princess is coming."

Dhameerish?an , being a third person pronoun, might be confused with the normal third person pronoun *huwa* (he). This confusion is soon dissipated by the fact that the normal third person pronoun is being referential, unlike *dhameerish?an* which is not as appears in its definition:

32. It is a pronoun with no antecedent which is interpreted by the word *matter* or *state* (Al- Saraj,1983:143). Compare the following:

(33) (a) huwal zemān-u ghadāru-un

it the prince coming

"It is that time is coming."

(b)? al-zemān-u huwal ghadāru-n

def- time he treacherous

"It is time which is treacherous."

Both of (33a&b) include a third person masculine singular pronoun *huwa*. However, the two pronouns are totally different: the one in (33a) is *dhameerlsh?an* i.e. a pronoun with no antecedent from which it takes reference, while the one in (33b) is a normal third person pronoun as it has an antecedent before it ,that is, the NP *al zemān* (time) from which it takes reference. By the way, this type of pronoun is called *dhameerlfasal*, *separating pronoun* i.e. a pronoun that occurs between the subject (inchoative) and its predicate (enunciative) to indicate that the NP coming after it is a predicate and not an adjective (Al-Samarai, 1987: 51).

2.4 Dhameerlsh?an and theta-criterion

Mentioned earlier that theta-criterion expressed in (8) stipulates that each argument must be assigned a theta-role. As such *dhameerlsh?an* is not subject to this condition simply because it is not an argument to which a theta-role must be assigned. This quick conclusion raises the question of why *dhameerlsh?an* cannot be an argument. The answer is that an argument as argued before implies having a referring expression whether an individual or entity to which a theta-role is assigned. Since *dhameerlsh?an* is with no referring expression, then it is a non-argument pronoun i.e. a pronoun to which no theta-role is assigned. This is obvious in its definition given in (32) repeated here for convenience as in (34):

34. It is a pronoun with no antecedent which is interpreted by the word *matter* or *state*. According to (34) *dhameerlsh?an* cannot be an argument simply because it is with no antecedent to which a theta-role must be assigned. This is verified by the term by which it is known amongst

adherents of Kufa school, that is, the **anonymous pronoun** i.e. a pronoun with no referring expression.

Another reason for *dhameerish?an* not to be an argument and consequently not assigned a theta-role is manifested in its second main function as described in (35):

(35) Another major function of *dhameerish?an* is allowing semi-verbal particles to be used with verbal sentences without which this wouldn't happen (Al-Samarāi, 1987:65).

This is exemplified in (36):

(36) ?inna-hu la yanjaḥu-l-kasool-u

particle it not succeed def lazy

"It is that the lazy does not succeed. "

It is obvious that the verbal sentence *la yanjaḥu-l-kasool-u* in (36) is preceded by the particle *?inna*. This is not allowed in Arabic grammar except with the existence of *dhameerish?an*. Put differently, *dhameerish?an* gives license to the particle *?inna* to be used with verbal sentences--- this wouldn't happen in case *dhameerish?an* were a normal pronoun i.e. a pronoun with a referring expression and thus being an argument.

2.5 Extended Projection Principle(EPP) and *dhameerish?an*

Despite its contentless, *dhameerish?an* is still required for some syntactic reason represented in EPP as expressed in (23). Consider the following:

(37) [huwa] [ʔamīr-u qādim-un]

Topic comment

The pronoun *huwa* in (37) is *dhameerlshʔan* in the topic position followed by a sentence functioning as its comment. Despite its contentless, it is still required for some syntactic reason. Let us suppose that the pronoun *huwa* in (37) were deleted while keeping the topic-comment sentence in its comment position as shown in (38):

38. * _____ [ʔalamīr-u qādim-un]

Topic comment

(37) is excluded because it is without a topic or let's say a topicless sentence. This shows that *dhameerlshʔan* is not optional despite its contentless. Putting it in terms of EPP which stipulates that each sentence must have a subject, (37) is ruled out because it is violating EPP.

Another situation where *dhameerlshʔan* is required due to EPP is shown in (39):

39. ʔ innahu la yufluḥu-l-dhālim-u

particle it not prosper def just

" It is that the unjust will not prosper."

(39) is a special kind of a nominal sentence simply because it is essentially a verbal sentence before changing it into a nominal sentence as shown in (40):

(40) la yufluḥu-l-dhālim-u.

Negation particle prosper the unjust

"The unjust will not prosper."

The scenario of changing the verbal sentence in (40) into a nominal sentence or, say, a topic–comment sentence as in (39) is represented in preceding it by the particle *?inna*, which is typically used with nominal sentences. Accordingly, (40) would be as in (41):

(41) *?inna _____ [la yufluḥu–l–dhālim.]

Particle topic comment

It is obvious that (41) is ruled out because it is violating EPP i.e. it is without a subject. The only candidate to occupy the topic position in (41) as well as allowing the particle *?inna* to be used with the bracketed verbal sentence is using *dhameerlsh?an huwa*; this time *dhameerlsh?an huwa* appears in its bound form rather than in its free form that requires to be attached to the particle *?inna* as in (42):

(42) ?innahu lan yufluḥu–l–dhālim

particle it not prosper def just

" It is that the unjust will not prosper."

Dhameerlsh?an in (42) hence does two functions: first, filling the empty topic position as stipulated by EPP ; second, allowing the particle *?inna* to be used with the verbal sentence due to which it is changed into a nominal sentence.

Bergsträsser (2003:91) describes how Arabic changes a verbal sentence into a nominal sentence as in (42) as a merit of Arabic. Arabic as such, as he says, has invented a way of changing a verbal sentence into a nominal sentence by placing semi-verbal particles before it as typical with nominal sentences without changing its structure; this, however, does not occur directly but only by means of *dhameerlsh?an*. Hence is the necessity of *dhameerlsh?an*.

Section III

Contrastive Analysis

Having finished the process of description of both of the dummy pronoun *it* and *dhameerlsh?an huwa*, the time is ripe to start comparing them in order to find out how far English and Arabic are similar or dissimilar in respect to these two expletive pronouns. The process of comparison involves the juxtaposition of the item being described in each language in order to see whether the two languages agree or disagree upon it.

3. 1 What is meant by expletives?

The picture of expletives in both English and Arabic is almost the same, i.e. being slot fillers. Both languages agree that expletives are no more than slot fillers to the subject position they occupy. This role they play is as a result of their contentless which is true in both languages.

3. 2 Syntactic position of expletives

A cursory look at the examples with expletives viz. the dummy pronoun *it* and *dhameerlsh?an huwa* soon reveals that these two

pronouns always appear in the subject position. This might be attributed to the fact that the subject position is the only position that tolerates having such a pronoun. It might as well be attributed to the fact that a sentence whether in English or Arabic accepts or tolerates the subject position to be filled with a dummy pronoun rather than leaving it unfilled. This is further maintained by EPP which is true in both languages as shown below.

3.3 Theta-criterion and the dummy pronoun *it*

The dummy pronoun *it* does not seem to submit to theta-criterion which stipulates that every argument must be assigned a theta-role. This is because it is not actually an argument to which a theta-role must be assigned. This is evidenced by the types of verbs with which this pronoun is used, namely *weather verbs* and *raising verbs / predicates*. Such verbs cannot assign theta-roles to the NPs they take. This consequently explains why they take the dummy pronoun *it* as their subject.

3.4 Theta-criterion and dhameerish?an huwa

like the dummy pronoun *it*, this pronoun is not conditioned by theta-criterion. By the same token that the dummy pronoun *it* is not assigned a theta-role, this pronoun is not assigned a theta-role either; this is because both pronouns are not arguments. Hence in the same way that there is one or more than one reason that averts the dummy pronoun *it* not to be an argument, there is also more than one reason that averts this pronoun not to be an argument. First, this pronoun is essentially added to assign greatness or magnification to the matter in question.

Such a thing cannot be obtained unless with this type of pronoun i.e. being an unreferential type of pronoun. Second, this type of pronoun allows the particle *?inna*, which is typically used with nominal sentences, to be used with verbal sentences--- without this pronoun this would never happen.

The fact that this pronoun is not an argument which in turn means that it is not assigned a theta-role is best represented in the term by which it is known amongst adherents of Kufa school, that is, *dhameerl- majhōl* , the anonymous pronoun i.e. a pronoun with no referring expression. This is similar to the term **impersonal it** used by Praninskas (1973) in her manipulation of pronouns.

3. 5 The dummy pronoun *it* and *dhameerlsh?an huwa*

These two pronouns exhibit a lot of similarities due to which they are considered as counterparts. For example, they are both dummy pronouns i.e. with no referring expression. This is evident via their definitions (cf.1&32).This of course has its impact on their participation in the sentence--- they both participate in the structure of the sentence without contributing to its meaning. That is to say, their participation does not add to the overall meaning of the sentence. It is true that in some examples in English (cf.6&7), the dummy pronoun *it* adds emphasis or end weight to the sentence; this, however, does not add anything to the overall meaning of the sentence. Similarly *dhameerlsh?an huwa* that adds greatness or magnification to the sentence with which it is used (cf.28b); nonetheless, it adds nothing to the overall meaning of the sentence. They are also similar in terms of the initial position they occupy in the

sentence. In all of the examples in both English and Arabic, the two pronouns appear only and only in the subject position.

3.6 Extended Projection Principle (EPP)

English and Arabic are similar in their attitude towards EPP. In both languages, a sentence that violates EPP is ruled out. (26) in English and (40) in Arabic are ruled out on the basis that they both lack a subject i.e. violating EPP.

4. Conclusions

This study has investigated the dummy pronoun *it* in English and dhameerish *an huwa* in Arabic in attempt to find out how far these two languages converge or diverge upon these two dummy pronouns. It is naturally assumed that the two languages would exhibit more differences than similarities due to their different language families. However, the study has surprisingly disclosed that the two languages showed more similarities than differences. One of the similarities being shown by this study is related to the position that these two pronouns occupy in the sentence. The two languages totally agree that these two pronouns always appear in the subject position. It seems to be that in both languages no other position accepts to be filled with such a pronoun except the subject position. A quick glance at the examples having these two pronouns would soon reveal this.

Another similarity between English and Arabic as far as these two pronouns is related to their contentless. In both languages, none of these two pronouns contribute to the semantic make-up of the sentence. It might be argued that in English the dummy pronoun *it* sometime assigns the

sense of emphasis or end weight to the sentence to which it is added; so does *dhameeralsha?an huwa* in Arabic which is essentially added for the sake of assigning magnification or greatness to the content of the sentence to which it is added. This, however, does not add to the overall meaning of the sentence. The fact that these two pronouns are contentless is best shown in that they cannot be arguments to which thematic-roles must be assigned.

The two languages are also similar with respect to the significance of these two pronouns to the syntax of the sentence. Despite their contentless, they are indispensable in the sense that their deletion causes the sentence to be ungrammatical (cf. 20, 40).

The two languages yet differ in the frequency of occurrence of these two pronouns. It seems to be that the dummy pronoun *it* constitutes a phenomenon in English unlike *dhameeralsha?an* in Arabic. This is obvious throughout the number of structures in which the dummy pronoun *it* is used. In English, for example, the dummy pronoun *it* is used in structures to express *time, weather, distance*, etc. (cf. 2-4), while in Arabic these notions are rendered as lexical items as appears in (43), (44), and (45) respectively. In each of the sentences below, the equivalent lexical word of each of the notions above has been intentionally underlined for the sake of illustration:

43. Hal-lwaqt-u muta?akhar-un? Kala, alwaqt-u mubakarun.

44. Hal-asamā?a-u tamTur-u? Kala, lakinaha yabdu ka?anah-u maTar.

45. Kem hiyal-masāfat-u limadrasatiJorge? Hawallay thalat-u ?amyāl.

In addition to these structures, the dummy pronoun *it* is also used in the *cleft sentence* i.e. a sentence whose first part includes the dummy pronoun *it* followed by a verb, followed by the element to be emphasized (cf. 6). The dummy pronoun *it* is also used in structures where it occupies the position of the real clause subject which has been relegated or postponed since the sentence looks more usual with it (cf.7). *Dhameeralshaʿan*, on the other hand, is not widely used as its counterpart in English. The number of structures in which *dhameeralshaʿan* is used seems to be limited. This might be attributed to the nature of the language. English seems to encourage the use of expletives more than Arabic.

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