Agreement in Qassimi Spoken Arabi

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Abstract

This paper discusses the agreement system in one of the most distinguished Saudi dialects. Qassimi Spoken Arabic is a dialect, which is spoken by around 931,085 people living mainly in Al-Qassim Province, which is located in the center of Saudi Arabia. Prochazka (1988) claims that QSA has many noticeable and distinguishable features make the dialect different from other Najdi dialects. QSA is different from MSA in its phonological, morphological, syntactic levels. QSA does not accept all word orders, which are present in either MSA or other Saudi dialects. They prefer VS order. However, they use the SV order when they have SVO structure due to the absence of case marking which might lead to ambiguity determining the subject and/or the object. QSA shows that the subject controls the agreement system in both the verbal clauses and in the equational clauses. QSA also shows to produce a different form of the passive verb like *ʔkissarat*: 'is broken', which is a form that is not seen to be used except in QSA. It has two different subject agreement markers suffixes: /*-tin*/ (second person non-singular feminine) and /*-n*/ (third person non-singular feminine) as in *katab-**tin***: 'You (2PF) wrote' and *katab-**n***: 'They (3PF) wrote'. Native speakers of QSA use the direct object /*-an*/ or /*-atan*/ as a masculine or feminine pronoun respectively to replace masculine or feminine noun. Interestingly, QSA uses /*-an*/ with the copula verb *ka:n*: "be" as an agreement to the feminine subject. Thus, QSA shows to have some differences in the agreement system in the sentence level.

KEY WORDS: ARABIC, SAUDI DIALECTS, QASSIMI SPOKEN ARABIC, MORPHOLOGY, SYNTAX, AGREEMENT SYSTEM

المستخلص

تناقش هذه الورقة العلمية النظام الصرفي لواحدة من أميز اللهجات السعودية، هي اللهجة القصيمية التي يسكن متحدثوها البالغ عددهم ما يقارب ٩٣١٠٨٥ متحدثًا منطقة القصيم مركز الجزيرة العربية. يدعي بورخاسا (١٩٨٨) بأن اللهجة تتميز بخصائص تجعلها مختلفة عن بقية اللهجات النجدية؛ فتختلف اللهجة عن اللغة العربية الفصحى في نواحي شتى سواء أكانت صوتية أم صرفية أم نحوية، وإحدى أبرز تلك الخصائص التي تركز عليها هذه الورقة مسألة ترتيب المفردات نحويًا في الجملة، إذ أن اللهجة لا تسمح إلا بعدد يسير حيث يبدأ التركيب بالفعل، فهي لا تستخدم الاسم (الفاعل) في المقدمة إلا عندما يقصد بالتركيب التفريق بين الفاعل والمفعول به كون اللهجة لا تستخدم أي نوع من أنواع علامات الإعراب، ويتضح أيضًا من خلال الدراسة أن اللهجة تسمح للاسم الأول فقط -الفاعل- أن يحدد نوع الملحقات الصرفية التي تظهر على الفعل في الجملة الفعلية أو على الخبر في الجمل الاسمية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تستخدم اللهجة فعل مختلف عند وجود المبني للمجهول (إكسرت) ولم يلاحظ مثل هذا الفعل في لهجات سعودية أخرى، وتحافظ اللهجة على استخدام الفعل في شكله الصحيح عند التحدث عن الفعل المؤنث مثل: كتبتن، أو كتبن وهو غير ملاحظ في اللهجات السعودية الأخرى، ومن أبرز الاختلافات أيضًا أن اللهجة تستبدل الفعل على سبيل المثال: زارني بزران؛ عندما يكون الفاعل مذكرًا، أو زارتن عوضًا عن زارتني عندما يكون الفاعل مؤنثًا؛ فمن الملاحظ أن اللهجة القصيمية تستخدم نظامًا صرفيًا مختلفًا على مستوى الجملة سواء الفعلية أو الاسمية ويمكن تتبع ذلك في الأفعال في الجمل الفعلية أو في الخبر ضمن الجمل الاسمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة العربية، اللهجات السعودية، لهجة القصيم، النظام النحوي والصرفي.

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1. Introduction

Arabic is a Semitic language, which is widespread. It belongs to a wider family known as Afro-asiatic. This group is also called Hamito-Semitic (Greenberg, 1952), and divided into six sub-families: Tamazight, Egyptian, Chadic, Cushitic, Semitic and Omotic (Brown & Ogilvie, 2009).

Arabic is related to a number of other languages spoken in the Middle East and Ethiopia. Biblical Hebrew, Akkadian, Aramaic and many other languages. Some of these languages are extinct, such as Akkadian, Canaanite and Phoenician which are only known in written forms. Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic and Amharic are examples of those Semitic languages, which are still spoken. Arabic has more than 250 million speakers (Owens, 2005). It has gone through many different stages, and it has many different varieties.

Arabic shows to contain Classical Arabic (CA) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as two varieties of Arabic that are together called Standard Arabic. They share similar phonological, morphological and syntactic features (Badawi, Carter, & Gully, 2004; Harrama, 1983; Ryding, 2005); however, they differ in their lexical items.

Arabic also has a number of varieties differ significantly from one region to another (Abd-el-Jawad, 1992; Davies & Bentahila, 2012; Feghali, 1997; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). They are used at the western end of the continuum, such as in Morocco and Algeria, Western Africa, and the varieties spoken in Yemen, at the South-Eastern end. This significant difference between the different varieties also applies to the Saudi dialects (Kaye & Rosenhouse, 1997; Versteegh, 1997).

1.1. The Saudi Dialects

Saudi Arabia has five main dialects, which are known as Hijazi in the Western Province, Najdi in the Central Province, Gulf in the Eastern Province and Southern Province and Northern Provinces (see Map 1). Each dialect can be divided into sub-dialects. For example, NA has QSA as a sub-dialect, which contain two main other sub-dialects, namely, Buraydah and Unaisah. It is claimed that Saudi Arabia has only four main dialects by some linguists like Almalki (2012) and Ingham (2006). This division is based on the linguistic categorization of the main features of each dialect as well as the geographic location of its native speakers.

QSA is a colloquial Arabic dialect spoken by approximately 931,085 people living mainly in Al-Qassim Province, which is located in the center of Saudi Arabia. It belongs to the Najdi Arabic (NA) (Ingham, 1982), (see Map 2). Najd is divided into three administrative regions: Ha'il, Al-Qassim, and Riyadh (Alkhazy, 2016). QSA's geographical location helps the variety to preserve its local characteristics because it has little contact with other dialects to a minimum (Holes, 2004). It is also claimed by Prochazka (1988) that QSA has many noticeable and distinguishable features make the dialect stands out among other Najdi dialects. It differs from MSA in lexicon, style, phonology, morphology, syntax, and sociolinguistic function. This work shows some of these differences with regard to its phonology, morphology, and syntax.

The distribution of the principal regional varieties of colloquial Arabic spoken in Saudi Arabia is shown in Map 1 below.

Map 1: Saudi Main Dialects (Adapted from Alzahrani, 2009)
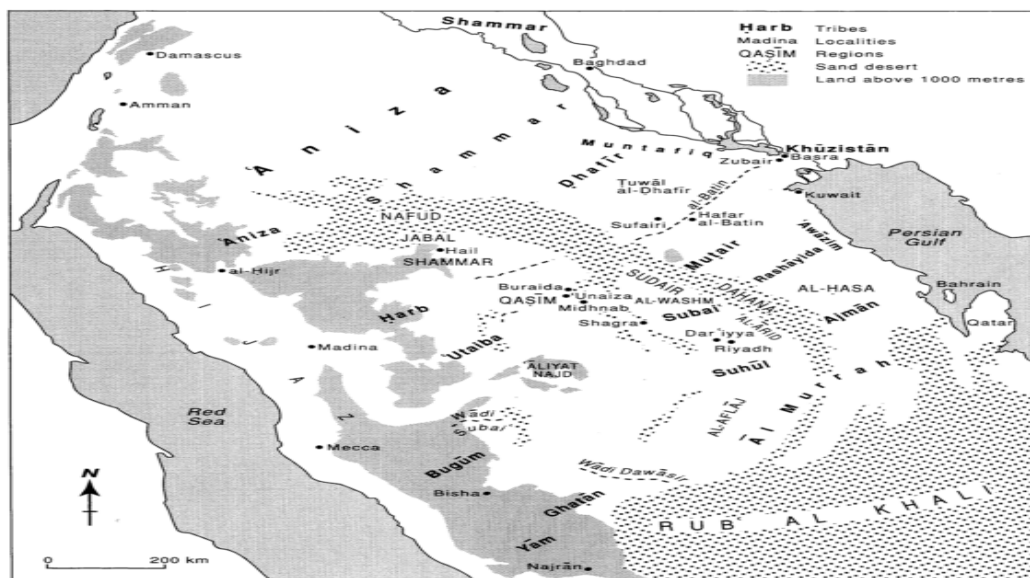
Map 2. Najdi Arabic. (Adapted from Ingham, 1994).

2. Verbal clauses

Unlike MSA, a verbal clause in QSA may only appear in two different word orders due to the absence of case marking in the dialect.[1] It can appear as either a VSO structure or a SVO one. According to QSA native speakers, they prefer VSO and use it except when the meaning is unclear, as will be discussed below. Thus, the verb and the subject are the two fundamental elements, which must occur, in any verbal clause: the verb by which the action of the sentence is expressed and the subject, which is simply the doer of the action (Agent). Consider the following examples:

(1) a. *ra:ħ-at*   *al-bint.*
           go-3SGF.PFV   DEF-girl.SGF
           'The lady went.'
     b. *al-bint.*   *ra:ħ-at.*
           DEF-girl-SGF   go-3SGF.PFV
           'The girl went.'

Although the subject is core in the verbal sentence, a sentence may contain only the verb in which the subject is identified by a personal agreement attached to it as shown in the following example:

(2) a. *ra:ħ-at.*
           go-3SGF.PFV
           'She went.'
     b. *ra:ħ-u:.*
           go-3PLM.PFV
           'They went.'

The above examples show that the verb in both examples (1) and (2) is intransitive *ra:ħ*: "go". Clauses in (1) show the pre-verbal subject and the post-verbal subject in which both clauses exhibit no difference in regard to the meaning.

Verbal clauses may have three elements represented in both the VSO and the SVO constructions. Although the case marking is absent in QSA, the first noun or noun phrase in the VSO construction is determined as the subject and the second is the object. Verbal clauses can have different structures containing different complements. For example, the verb can be followed by either an NP (3) or a complement clause (3) where the verb must be transitive.

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[1] MSA show different word orders because it determines the subject from the object by means of case marking. Any noun phrase, which carries the nominative case marking, is the subject and the one, which has an accusative case marking, is the object regardless of its position in the sentence.

(3) a.   *tˤabaχ-at*   *al-bint.*   *al-laħam.*
           cook-3SGM.PFV   DEF-girl.SGF   DEF-meat.SGM
           'The girl cooked the meat.'

       b.   *al-bint.*   *tˤabaχ-at*   *al-laħam.*
           DEF-girl.SGF   cook-3SGF.PFV   DEF-meat.SGM
           'The girl cooked the meat.'

       c.   *simiʕ-t*   *ʔan*   *al-ħari:m*   *ʒi:nah.*
           hear-1SGM/F.PFV   that   DEF-woman.PLF   come.3PLM
           'I heard that the women came.'

QSA shows examples where the verbal clauses come containing three elements in their structures in which the verb is intransitive verb. They may have adjuncts either a prepositional phrase (4) or an adverbial modifier (4).

(4) a.   *ra:ħ-u:*   *al-ʕiya:l*   *al-madrasah.*
           go-3PLM.PFV   DEF-boy-PLM   DEF-school.SGF
           'The boys went to the school.'

       b.   *zħlag*   *al-bazur*   *hinja:jah.*
           slide.3SGM.PFV   DEF-boy.SGM   here
           'The boy slided here.'

       c.   *zħlag-at*   *al-bint*   *hinja:jah.*
           slide.3SGF.PFV   DEF-girl.SGF   here
           'The boy slided here.'

In the case where verbal clauses contain ditransitive verbs, they show different structures depending on the types of the two NP (the direct object and the indirect object). They (NPs) may appear as nouns (definite or indefinite) or pronouns. Consider the following clauses:

(5) a.   *ʕata*   *Ali*   *as-sajjarah*   *li*   *ar-raʒa:l.*
           give.3SGM.PFV   Ali   DEF-car.SGF   to   DEF-man.SGM
           'Ali gave the car to the man.'

       b.   *ʕata*   *Ali*   *ar-raʒa:l*   *as-sajjarah.*
           give.3SGM.PFV   Ali   DEF-man.SGM   DEF-car.SGF
           'Ali gave the car to the man.'

       c.   **ʕata*   *li*   *ar-raʒa:l*   *Ali*   *as-sajjarah.*
           give.3SGM.PFV   to   DEF-man.SGM   Ali   DEF-car.SGF
           'Ali gave the car to the man.'

       d.   **ʕata*   *li*   *ar-raʒa:l*   *as-sajjarah*   *Ali.*
           give.3SGM.PFV   to   DEF-man.SGM   DEF-car.SGF   Ali
           'Ali gave the car to the man.'

       e.   **ʕata*   *as-sajjarah*   *li*   *ar-raʒa:l*   *Ali.*
           give.3SGM.PFV   DEF-car.SGF   to   DEF-man.SGM   Ali
           'Ali gave the car to the man.'

There are only two possible grammatical word orders in QSA if the verb takes two nouns as objects. In (5), the clauses show various structures with regard to the subject, the direct object (DO) and the indirect object (IO): VS (DO)(IO),VS (IO)(DO), V(IO) S (DO) and V (IO) (DO) S, V (DO) (IO) S respectively. According the QSA speakers, statements (5) are not grammatical. They prefer (5) although they accept the other structures (5).

On the other hand, if one of the object NPs that follow the verb is a pronoun, it results in the same possibilities in (5) as shown in (6). However, clause (6) is the most frequent and acceptable rather than all the other clauses.

(6) a. *ʕata*   *Ali*   *as-sajjarah*   *lu-hum.*
      give.3SGM.PFV   Ali   DEF-car.SGF   to-3PLM.OBJ
      'Ali gave the car to them.'

     b. **ʕata*   *Ali*   *lu-hum*   *as-sajjarah.*
       give.3SGM.PFV   Ali   to-3PLM.OBJ   DEF-car.SGF
       'Ali gave the car to them.'

     c. **ʕata*   *lu-hum*   *Ali*   *as-sajjarah.*
       give.3SGM.PFV   to-3PLM.OBJ   Ali   DEF-car.SGF
       'Ali gave the car to them.'

     d. **ʕata*   *lu-hum*   *as-sajjarah*   *Ali.*
       give.3SGM.PFV   to-3PLM.OBJ   DEF-car.SGF   Ali
       'Ali gave the car to them.'

     e. **ʕata*   *as-sajjarah*   *lu-hum*   *Ali.*
       give.3SGM.PFV   DEF-car.SGF   to-3PLM.OBJ   Ali
       'Ali gave the car to them.'

When the two object NPs are pronouns, the situation is also different. Consider the following examples:

(7) a. *ʕata-h (as-sajjarah)*   *Ali*   *lu-hum.*
      give.3SGM.PFV-3SGF.OBJ.F   Ali   to-3PLM.OBJ
      'Ali gave it (car)to them.'

     b. *ʕata-uh (al-miftaħ)*   *Ali*   *lu-hum.*
       give.3SGM.PFV-3SGF.OBJ.M   Ali   to-3PLM.OBJ
       'Ali gave it (key)to them.'

     c.   *Ali.*
       *ʕata-h (as-sajjarah)   *lu-hum*
       give.3SGM.PFV-3SGF.OBJ.F   to-3PLM.OBJ   Ali
       'Ali gave it to them.'

     d. **ʕata-uh (al-miftaħ)*   *lu-hum*   *Ali.*
       give.3SGM.PFV-3SGF.OBJ.M   to-3PLM.OBJ   Ali
       'Ali gave it to them.'

     e. *ʕata-h (as-sajjarah)*   *lu-hum.*
       give.3SGM.PFV-3SGF.OBJ.F   to-3PLM.OBJ

'Ali gave it to them.'

   f.   *ʕata-uh (al-miftaħ)*   *lu-hum.*
       give.3SGM.PFV-3SGF.OBJ.M   to-3PLM.OBJ
       'Ali gave it to them.'

In all the possibilities mentioned above in (7), the direct object is attached to the verb as a morpheme *–ah/auh* in *ʕata-ah/auh*: 'gave it' followed by either the subject or the indirect object. In example (7), it shows other possible structures existed in other Saudi dialects. Yet, they are not acceptable in QSA. In addition, the above examples provide an evidence that QSA is a pro-drop language.

2.1. Passive construction

Passive construction shows the passive subject of the verb (the patient) with only the verb. It precedes or follows the verb but the most common structure VS (the patient). QSA has two different ways to express the passive voice: by using the inflectional verbs or by using the derivational verbs. The most common structure is the VS where S stands for the object of the transitive verb. Consider the following examples:

(8) a.   *kassar*   *Ali*   *ad-diriʃah.*
       break.3SGM.PFV   Ali   DEF-window.SGF
       'Ali broke the window.'

     b.   *ʔin-kassar-at*   *ad-diriʃah.*
       PASS-break-3SGF   DEF-window.SGF
       'The window was broken.'

     c.   **ta-kassar-at*   *ad-diriʃah.*
       PASS-break-3SGF   DEF-window.SGF
       'The window was broken.'

     d.   **ta-kassar-at*   *ad-diriʃah.*   *ba-Ali*
       PASS-break-3SGF   DEF-window.SGF   by-Ali
       'The window was broken by Ali.'

(9) a.   *Ali*   *fataħ*   *ad-diriʃah.*
       Ali   open.3SGF.PFV   DEF-window.SGF
       'Ali opened the window.'

     b.   *ʔin-fataħ-at*   *ad-diriʃah.*
       PASS-open-3SGF   DEF-window.SGF
       'The window was opened.'

     c.   **ʔin-fataħ-at*   *ad-diriʃah.*   *ba-Ali*
       PASS-open-3SGF   DEF-window.SGF   by-Ali
       'The window was opened by Ali.'

     d.   **ta-fataħ-at*   *ad-diriʃah.*
       PASS-open-3SGF   DEF-window.SGF

'The window was opened.'

e. *ta-fataħ-at   ad-diriʃah.   ba-Ali
PASS-open-3SGF   DEF-window.SGF   by-Ali
'The window was opened by Ali.'

(10 a. mala   Ali   al-beit   ruz.
fill.3SGM.PFV   Ali   DEF-house.SGF   rice. SGM-
'Ali filled the house with rice.'

b. ʔi-mtala   al-beit   ruz.
PASS-fill in.3SGF.SBJ   DEF-house.SGF   rice. SGM
'The house was filled with rice.'

c. *ʔi-mtala   al-beit   ruz.   ba-Ali
PASS-fill in.3SGF.SBJ   DEF-house.SGF   rice. SGM by-Ali
'The house was filled with rice by Ali.'

(11 a. mala   Ali   ad-da:r   ruz.
fill.3SGM.PFV   Ali   DEF-house.SGF   rice. SGM-
'Ali filled the house with rice.'

b. ʔi-mtala   ad-da:r   ruz.
PASS-fill in.3SGF.SBJ   DEF-house.SGF   rice. SGM
'The house was filled with rice.'

c. *ʔi-mtala   ad-da:r   ruz.   ba-Ali
PASS-fill in.3SGF.SBJ   DEF-house.SGF   rice. SGM by-Ali
'The house was filled with rice by Ali.'

The above examples show three different forms of verbs expressing passive. So, in QSA, the most common passive form is represented by using either as in Form Ⅶ as in (8.b) and (9) or Form Ⅷ as in (10) and (11.b).[2] The last sentence exhibits a ditransitive verb *mala:* 'filled' where it has a direct object and an indirect object. Unlike other Saudi dialects, the verb in (10) and (11.b) does not show the third singular feminine suffix as an agreement marker to the direct object *adda:r* and *albeit*: 'the house' which becomes the subject of the passive verb *ʔimtala:* 'be filled'.

It is worth noting that all the given examples in (8), (9), (10) and (11.c) are ungrammatical because they contain "By-phrase" at the end of the clauses. This cannot be seen in Arabic.

Interestingly, QSA shows a different form to express passive voice which is not noticed in other Saudi dialects such as FSA, ZSA and HA. Consider the following examples:

(12 a. kassar   Ali   ad-diriʃah.

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[2] See Alzahrani (2015) for more details about the forms of the verbs in Saudi dialects.

break.3SGM.PFV   Ali   DEF-window.SGF
'Ali broke the window.'

b. *ʔ-kissar-at   ad-diriʃah.*
   PASS-break-3SGF   DEF-window.SGF
   'The window was broken.'

ʔkissar-at: 'is broken' is a form that is not seen to be used except in NA and or QSA. In addition, QSA does not show to have Form Ⅴ *ta-kissar-at*: 'is broken' which is present in other Saudi dialects.

2.2. Agreement in verbal clauses

The subject agreement markers in QSA appear as bound morphemes to express person, number and gender. They are always attached to the verb stem in both VSO and SVO orders in verbal clauses. Subject agreement markers are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Subject agreement markers in QSA[3]

Person Number	1	2		3	
	Gender				
	M/F	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**
Singular	-t	-t	-ti:	Ø	-at
non-singular[4]	-na:	-tum	-tin	-u:	-an

Firstly, it is necessary to note what controls the agreement markers on the verb. Consider the following examples:

(13 a. *za:r-an*   *ar-raʒa:l*
        visit.3SGM.PFV-1SGM/F.OBJ   DEF-man.SGM
        'The man visited me.'

   b. *za:r-atan*   *al-marrah*
      visit-3SGF.PFV-1SGM/F.OBJ   DEF-woman-SGF
      'The woman visited me.'

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[3] QSA also has a dual marker /-e:n/, however it is only used when the noun is preceded by the number (ie, two). When a sentence has a dual subject, instead of the dual marker, the appropriate non-singular agreement marker is used.

[4] I am using the term "Non-singular" because there is no dual in QSA, at least, in the verbal system.

c. *za:r*   *ar-ra3a:l*   *al-madras-ah.*
visit.3SGM.PFV   DEF-man.SGM   DEF-school-SGF
'The man visited the school.'

d. *za:r-at*   *al-marrah*   *al-mata:r.*
Visit-3SGF.PFV   DEF-woman-SGF   DEF-airport-SGM
'The woman visited airport.'

Like MSA and all other Saudi dialects, example (13), above, shows that the subject controls the agreement marker which is attached to *za:r*: 'visit'. When the masculine subject *arra3a:l*: 'the man' in (13) was replaced by the feminine one *almarrah*: 'the woman', the /-atan/ marker appears on the verb to express gender.

However, if the direct object /-an/ or /-atan/ as a masculine or feminine pronoun, was replaced by a feminine one such as *almadras-ah*: 'the school' as in (13) or by a masculine one like *almata:r*: 'the airport' as in (13), it does not influence the agreement marker on the verb. Therefore, the subject is the only agreement controller in QSA.

Moreover, the preverbal subject agrees with its verb in person, number and gender. Consider the following examples:

(14 a. *al-bazur*   *ðˤarab*   *Ali.*
DEF-boy.SGM   hit.3SGM.PFV   Ali
'The boy hit Ali.'

b. *al-bint*   *ðˤarab-at*   *Ali.*
DEF-girl.SGF   hit.3SGF.PFV   Ali
'The girl hit Ali.'

c. *al-bizr-a:n*   *ðˤarab-u:*   *Ali.*
DEF-boy.PLM   hit-3PLM.PFV   Ali
'The boys hit Ali.'

d. *al-bana:t*   *ðˤarab-n*   *Ali.*
DEF-boy.PLF   hit-3PLF.PFV   Ali
'The girls hit Ali.'

(15 a.   *hu:*   *ðˤarab*   *Ali.*
           3SGM.SBJ   hit.3SGM.PFV   Ali
           'He hit Ali.'

     b.   *hi:*   *ðˤarab-at*   *Ali.*
           3SGF.SBJ   hit-3SGF.PFV   Ali
           'She hit Ali.'

     c.   *hum*   *ðˤarab-u:*   *Ali.*
           3PLM.SBJ   hit-3PLM.PFV   Ali
           'They hit Ali.'

     d.   *hunah*   *ðˤarab-n*   *Ali.*
           3PLF.SBJ   hit-3PLF.PFV   Ali
           'They hit Ali.'

It is seen, in the above examples, that the masculine subject *albazu/ albizr-a:n r*: 'the boy/ the boys' and the feminine subject *al-bint/al-bana:t*: 'the girl/the girls' are followed by four different inflectional verbs in which they are controlled by their subjects' person, number and gender. This applies to subject pronouns as well, as noticed in (15).

In addition, when the subject is dual either masculine or feminine,[5] they do not have any dual agreement marking on the verb in QSA. Therefore, they take the plural marker (the non-singular marker) instead as shown in the following examples:[6]

(16 a.   *al-walad-e:n*   *ðˤarab-u:*   *Ali.*
           DEF-boy-DLM   hit-3PLM.PFV   Ali
           'The two boys hit Ali.'

     b.   *al-bint-e:n*   *ðˤarab-n*   *Ali.*
           DEF-girl-DLF   hit-3PLF.PFV   Ali
           'The two girls hit Ali.'

Like other Saudi dialects, QSA also show full agreement in person, gender and number if the verb precedes the subject. Therefore, number agreement is noticed in QSA regardless of the position of the subject.

(17 a.   *ṣawat*   *al-bazur.*
           shout.3SGM.PFV   DEF-boy.SGM
           'The boy shouted.'

     b.   *al-bazur*   *ṣawat*
           DEF-boy.SGM   shout.3SGM.PFV
           'The boy shouted.'

     c.   *ṣawat-at*   *al-bint.*

---

[5] QSA does not have dual pronouns.

[6] The absence of the dual marker in agreement allows Table 1 to contain either singular or non-singular subject markers.

      shout-3SGF.PFV   DEF-girl.SGF
      'The girl shouted.'

    d.   *al-bint*   *ṣawat-at.*
        DEF-girl.SGF   shout-3SGF.PFV
        'The girl shouted.'

(18   a.   *ṣawat-u:*   *al-bizr-*a:n.
        shout-3PLM.PFV   DEF-boy.PLM
        'The boys shouted.'

    b.   *al-bizr-*a:n   *ṣawat-u:.*
        DEF-boy.PLM   shout-3PLM.PFV
        'The boys shouted.'

    c.   *ṣawat-an*   *al-bana:t.*
        shout-3PLF.PFV   DEF-girl.PLM
        'The girls shouted.'

    d.   *al-bana:t*   *ṣawat-an.*
        DEF-girl.PLM   shout-3PLF.PFV
        'The girls shouted.'

2.2.1. Agreement with a multiple subject

Some verbal clauses contain a co-joined subject following the verb. When these compound nouns (the subject) are different in gender, QSA shows a different case from that one noted in some Saudi dialects. That is, Saudi dialects appear to have the verb containing full agreement with the first of the conjuncts in the subject. QSA, on the other hand, shows to have separate agreement attaching to the verb before each noun of the compound nouns. So, they repeat the same verb with different agreement matching the followed noun, as shown in (19) below:

(19   a.   *ṣajaħ*   *Ali*   *wa*   *ṣajaħ-at*   *Sarah.*
        cry.3SGM.PFV   Ali   and   cry-3SGF.PFV   Sarah
        'Ali and Sarah cried.'

    b.   *ṣajaħ-at*   *Sarah*   *wa*   *ṣajaħ*   *Ali.*
        cry-3SGF.PFV   Sarah   and   cry.3SGM.PFV   Ali
        'Sarah and Ali cried.'

    c.   *ṣajaħ-u:*   *al-wirʕ-a:n*   *wa*   *al-bana:t*
        cry-3PLM.PFV   DEF-boy-PLM   and   DEF-girl.PLF
        'The boys and the girls dried.'

    d.   *ṣajaħ-u:*   *al-bana:t*   *wa*   *al-wirʕ-a:n*
        cry-3PLM.PFV   DEF-girl.PLF   and   DEF-boy-PLM
        'The girls and the boys cried.'

The above examples illustrate that the first noun or NP does not control the agreement system in this structure where the verb is initial (VS). However, if the verb comes

after the subject, the co-joined subject does not have any impact on the following verb. The third masculine plural agreement marker /-u: / is used, as shown in the following examples:

(20 a. *Ali   wa   Sarah   ṣajaħ-u:.*
　　　 Ali   and   Sarah   cry-3PLM.PFV
　　　 'Ali and Sarah cried.'

　　b. *Sarah   wa   Ali   ṣajaħ-u:.*
　　　 Sarah   and   Ali   cry-3PLM.PFV
　　　 'Sarah and Ali cried.'

　　c. *al-bizr-a:n   wa   al-bana:t   ṣajaħ-u:.*
　　　 DEF-boy-PLM   and   DEF-girl. PLF   cry-3PLM.PFV
　　　 'The boys and the girls dried.'

　　d. *al-bana:t   wa   al-bizr-a:n   ṣajaħ-u:.*
　　　 DEF-girl.PLF   and   DEF-boy-PLM   cry-3PLM.PFV
　　　 'The girls and the boys cried.'

2.2.2. Agreement with the subject of the passive

As stated above, the subject controls the agreement marker, which attaches to the verb both in the pre-verbal subject band post-verbal subject structures. However, the agreement marker, which attaches to the verb, agrees fully with the direct object (the patient) which becomes the subject of the verb as shown below:

(21 a. *Sarah   ṣak-at   ad-duka:n.*
　　　 Sarah   close.3SGF.PFV   DEF-shop.SGM
　　　 'Sarah closed the shop.'

　　b. *ʔin-ṣak   ad-duka:n.*
　　　 PASS-close-3SGM   DEF-shop.SGM
　　　 'The shop was closed.'

　　c. *ʔin-ṣak-**at**   al-bagalah*
　　　 PASS-close-3SGM   DEF-shop.SGF
　　　 'The shop was closed.'

The above example shows that the verb ṣakat: 'closed' agrees in person, gender and number with the subject in the active verbal sentence *Sarah*. However, the passive form of the verb *ʔinṣak*: 'be closed' shows full agreement with *adduka:n*: 'the shop' as the subject of the passive sentence. Also, the passive form of the verb *ʔinṣakat*: 'be closed' shows full agreement with *albagalah*: 'the shop' Ditransitive verbs (in the passive form) show agreement to the direct object when it becomes the subject of the passive clause. Consider the following example:

(22 a. *mala   Ali   al-ʁurfah   gaʃ.*
　　　 fill.3SGM.PFV   Ali   DEF-room.SGF   luggage.PLM

'Ali filled the room with luggage.'
b.　*ʔi-mtal-at*　　　　　*al-ʁurfah*　　　*gaʃ.*
　　PASS-fill in.3SGF.SBJ　　DEF-room.SGF　　luggage.PLM
　　'The room was filled with luggage.'

The subject of the passive is usually post-verbal in QSA, as is the case in the active strcuture; however, that does not mean it cannot appear pre-verbal. So, clause (23.a and 23.C) are the common structures used by QSA native speakers. The position of the subject does not have any impact on the agreement system. Therefore, verb in the passive form shows full agreement with its subject regardless of its position, as shown below:

(23　a.　*ʔin-ṣak*　　　　　*ad-duka:n.*
　　　　PASS-close-3SGM　　DEF-shop.SGM
　　　　'The shop was closed.'
　　b.　*ad-duka:n*　　　*ʔin-ṣak.*
　　　　DEF-shop.SGM　　PASS-close-3SGM
　　　　'The shop was closed.'
　　c.　*ʔi-mtal-at*　　　　　*al-ʁurfah*　　　*gaʃ.*
　　　　PASS-fill in.3SGM.SBJ　DEF-room.SGF　　luggage.PLM-INDF
　　　　'The room was filled with luggage.'
　　d.　*al-ʁurfah*　　　*ʔi-mtal-at*　　　　　*gaʃ.*
　　　　DEF-room.SGF　　PASS-fill in.3SGM.SBJ　luggage.PLM-INDF
　　　　'The room was filled with luggage.'

3. Equational clauses

This section discusses equational clauses[7] in which a verb is absent in their structure. Like other Saudi dialects, QSA does not use the copula in the imperfective aspect form. It is recognized by the indicative form, as shown below:

(24　a.　*Ali　mista:nis.*
　　　　Ali　happy.3SGM
　　　　'Ali (is) happy.'
　　b.　*Sarah　mista:nis-ah.*
　　　　Sarah　happy.3SGF

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[7] I am using the term "equational clauses" not nominal clauses to avoid the discussion about the different schools regarding the structure of Arabic clauses. This is out of the scope of this paper.

'Sarah (is) happy.'

  c. *al-bizr-a:n mista:nis-i:n.*
   DEF-boy-PLM happy-3PLM
   'The boys (are) happy.'

  d. *al-bana:t mista:nis-a:t.*
   DEF-girl.PLF happy-3PLF
   'The girls (are) happy.'

Moreover, the perfective aspect form of the copula verb *ka:n:* "be" is always seen in equational clauses in QSA.

  (25 a. *Ali ka:n   mista:nis.*
     Ali be.3SGM.PFV happy.3SGM
     'Ali (is) happy.'

    b. *Sarah ka:n-at mista:nis-ah.*
     Sarah be-3SGF.PFV happy-3SGF
     'Sarah (is) happy.'

    c. *al-bizr-a:n ka:n-u: mista:nis-i:n.*
     DEF-boy-PLM be-3PLM.PFV happy-3PLM
     'The boys (are) happy.'

    d. *al-bana:t kun-**an** mista:nis-a:t.*
     DEF-girl. PLF be-3PLF.PFV happy-3PLF
     'The girls (are) happy.'

The above examples show that equational clauses consist of two main parts which are the subject or the topic (*mubtadʔ*) by which a sentence is begun and the predicate or comment (*χabar*) in which piece of information is given (Ryding, 2005). Both the subject and the predicate appear in various forms and/or word classes, as will be discussed below.

3.1. Agreement in equational clauses

Following Cantarino (1975), it is seen that the position of the subject does not have any impact on the agreement system noted between the subject and its predicate in Saudi dialects, however; QSA shows to have only subject- predicate structure (26.a). The subject is also the element that controls the agreement in equational clauses.

Being said that, both verbal clauses and equational clauses have the same system of agreement in QSA.[8]

3.1.1. Gender and number agreement

Subject-predicate structure show to contain gender and number agreement. That is, the gender and the number of the subjects controls the gender and the number of the predicate, as shown in the following examples:

(26 a.   *al-bazur*   *tsibi:r*
    DEF-boy.SGM   big.SGM
    'The boy (is) big.'

    b.   **tsibi:r-un*   *al-bazur*
    old.SGM-INDF   DEF-boy.SGM
    'The boy (is) big.'

    c.   *al-bint*   *tsibi:r-ah*
    DEF-girl.SGF   big-SGF
    'The girl (is) big.'

    d.   **tsibi:r-ah*   *al-bint*
    big-SGF   DEF-girl.SGF
    'The girl (is) big.'

(27 a.   *al-bizr-a:n*   *ʕuga:l*
    DEF-boy.PLM   mature.PLM
    'The boys (are) mature.'

    b.   **ʕuga:l*   *al-bizr-a:n*
    mature.PLM   DEF-boy.PLM
    'The boys (are) mature.'

    c.   *al-bana:t*   *ʕagil-a:t*
    DEF-girl.PLF   mature-PLF
    'The girls (are) mature.'

    d.   **ʕagil-a:t*   *al-bana:t*
    mature-PLF   DEF-girl.PLF
    'The girls (are) mature.'

Examples in (26) show that the masculine singular subject *albazur*: 'the boy' is unmarked. Thus, it has the unmarked singular masculine predicate adjective *tsibi:r*: 'big'. On the other hand, the singular feminine marker /-*ah*/ is attached to the same predicate adjective *tsibi:rah*: 'big' when the feminine singular noun *albint*: 'the girl' is used as its subject. Clauses (26.b and 26.d) are not acceptable in QSA.

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[8] In MSA, the VSO order show a full agreement whereas the SVO order shows only person and gender agreement. There is a big debate on agreement in Arabic. See, for instance, Ryding (2005) for more details about agreement system in MSA.

Moreover, examples in (27) show that masculine plural subject *albizra:n*: 'the boys' takes the plural masculine predicate adjective *ʕuga:l*: 'mature'. The plural feminine marker /-*a:t*/ is attached to the predicate adjective *ʕagila:t*: 'mature' when the subject is the feminine plural noun *al-bana:t*: 'the girls'. Also, clauses (27.b and 27.d) are not acceptable because they appear having Predicate-subject structure.

In addition, it is mentioned above that equational clauses may contain auxiliaries to indicate aspect. The subject agrees fully with these auxiliaries. In example (28.a) , the verb 'to be' *ka:n*: 'be' (the default unmarked form) shows the third singular masculine agreement when the subject is the singular masculine demonstrative pronoun *haða*: 'this'. However, *ka:nat:* 'be' has the third singular feminine suffix /-*at*/ because the subject is the singular feminine demonstrative pronoun *haði*: 'this'. Consider the following examples:

(28 a.   *haða*   *ka:n*   *Ali.*
         DEM.this.SGM   be.3SGM.PFV   Ali
         'This was Ali.'

    b.   *haði*   *ka:n-at*   *Sarah.*
         DEM.this.SGF   be-3SGF.PFV   Sarah
         'This was Sarah.'

    c.   *ðulla*   *ka:n-u:*   *bizr-a:n*
         DEM.this.PLM/F   be-3PLM/F.PFV   young-PLM/F
         'These wre young.'

3.1.2. Exceptions

It is obvious from the previous section that equational clauses exhibit gender and number agreement. However, they may have only number agreement as is the case in (29.c-e) having only one form *kuba:r*: 'big' regardless of the gender of the subjects. Consider the following examples:

(29 a.   *al-maktab*   *zain.*
         DEF-office.SGM   nice.SGF
         'The office is nice.'

    b.   *al-madrasah*   *zain-ah.*
         DEF-school.SGF   nice.SGF
         'The school is nice.'

    c.   *al-bizr-a:n*   *kuba:r.*
         DEF-boy-PLM   big.PLM
         'The boys are big.'

    d.   *al-bana:t*   *kuba:r.*

DEF-girl.PLF   big.PLM
'The girls are big.'
e.   *al-ħadayig*   *kuba:r*
DEF-garden.PLF   big.PLM
'The gardens are big.'

Clauses in example (29) above show that the singular feminine predicate adjective *zain*: 'nice' is used with both the singular masculine subject *almaktab*: 'the office' in (29) and the singular feminine subject *al-madrasah*: 'the school' in (29). However, the plural masculine predicate adjective *kuba:r*: 'big' is used with both the masculine plural subject *albizra:n*: 'the boys' in (29) and the feminine plural subject *albana:t*: 'the girls' in (29). Thus, it is important to say that QSA lost gender agreement in these examples.

In contrast, QSA may also show gender agreement. In the following example, the plural feminine predicate adjective *zaina:t*: 'nice' agrees in gender as well as number with its subject *albana:t*: 'the girls' in number (30). However, in (29) above, *kuba:r*: 'big' does not show any gender agreement. Examine the following examples:

(30   a.   *al-bana:t*   *zain-a:t.*
DEF-girl.PLF   nice.PLF
'The girls are nice.'
b.   **al-bint*   *zain-a:t.*
DEF-girl.SGF   nice.PLF
'The girl is mature.'
c.   **al-wirʕ-a:n*   *ʕa:gil.*
DEF-boy-PLM   mature.SGM
'The boys are mature.'
d.   **al-wirʕ*   *ʕa:gil-i:n.*
DEF-boy.SGM   mature.PLM
'The boy is mature.'

Example (31) shows that the singular feminine predicate adjective *zainah*: 'nice' disagrees in number with its plural masculine subject *almaka:tib*: 'the offices' and *al-mada:ris*: 'the school'.

(31   a.   *al-maka:tib*   *zain-ah.*
DEF-office.PLM   nice.SGF
'The offices are nice.'

b. *al-mada:ris*   *kibi:r-ah..*
DEF-school.PLF   big.PLF
'The schools are big.'

4. Conclusion

This paper shows a detailed description about QSA as one of the unique dialects in Saudi Arabia. The focus was on the agreement system, particularly on the sentential level. QSA shows to contain only two word orders; however, VS order is the most prominent word order. Like other Saudi dialects, QSA shows that the subject controls the agreement system in both the verbal clauses and in the equational clauses. The subject agreement markers in QSA appear as bound morphemes to express person, number and gender. It is noted that QSA has two different subject agreement markers suffixes /-*tin*/ and /-*an*/ like *katab-**tin***: 'You (2PF) wrote' and *katab-**n***: 'They (3PF) wrote'. Direct object pronouns /-*an*/ (3SGM) or /-*atan*/ (3SGF) to replace masculine or feminine noun(s). Interestingly, QSA uses /-*an*/, which is used as third person singular masculine object pronoun with the copula verb *ka:n*: "be" as an agreement to the third person plural feminine subject. In addition, QSA also shows to produce a different form of the passive verb like *ʔkissarat*: 'is broken', which is not found in other dialects such HA and NA, among many other Saudi dialects. QSA does not show to have Form **V**   *ta-kissar-at*: 'is broken', which is used in many Arabic dialects. Thus, I suggest to have a deeper investigation studying other structures in QSA such the nominal structures which might show interesting facts about this dialect.

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TRAN SLITERATION SYMBOLS

Consonants			
b	Voiced bilabial stop	k	Voiceless velar stop
m	Bilabial nasal	g	Voiced velar stop
f	Voiceless labiodental fricative	χ	Voiceless uvular fricative
θ	Voiceless dental fricative	ʁ	Voiced uvular fricative
ð	Voiced dental fricative	ħ	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative
ðˤ	Pharyngealized voiced dental fricative	ʕ	Voiced pharyngeal fricative
t	Voiceless alveolar stop	h	Voiceless glottal fricative
tˤ	Pharyngealized voiceless alveolar stop	ʔ	Voiceless glottal stop
d	Voiced alveolar stop		
n	Alveolar nasal		
s	Voiceless alveolar fricative	r	Alveolar trill
z	Voiced alveolar fricative	l	Alveolar lateral approximant
sˤ	Pharyngealized voiceless alveolar fricative		
ʃ	Voiceless palato-alveolar fricative	j	Palatal glide
dʒ	Voiced palato-alveolar fricative	w	Velar glide
Vowels			
i	Short high front unrounded	u	Short high back rounded
i:	Long high front unrounded	u:	Long high back rounded
a	Short low front unrounded	e:	Long mid front unrounded
a:	Long low front unrounded		