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Specificational Pseudoclefts in Standard Arabic

Abstract

Arabic wh-clefts use a strategy that involves a focused XP in the initial position, followed by the pronoun *hu* ‘he’ or the past simple copula *kaan* ‘was’, and a relative clause introduced by a wh-phrase or the relative marker *lla* ‘that’. This schema was claimed by different Arab scholars to match English clefts. In this paper, I show that such an account is problematic and that this construction shows specificational pseudocleft properties, such as reversibility and connectivity. Furthermore, reversibility will be shown to be superficial and that the two structures highlighting wh<XP and XP<wh orders have two different underlying structures, i.e. two different types of specificational pseudoclefts. Besides, an analysis will also be provided for the pronoun which appears in copular sentences and pseudoclefts as a relator as defined in Den Dikken (2006).

Keywords: Syntax, Clefts, Pseudoclefts, Arabic, Copular sentences,

1 Introduction

1.1 Pseudoclefts

The term “pseudocleft” traces back to Jespersen’s (1969) “cleft” structure. Cleft constructions have the following pattern in English: pronoun it + copula + focused phrase + relative clause, as illustrated in (1a). English pseudoclefts, on the other hand, consist of a wh-relative clause, a copula and a focused constituent (see (1b-f), Den Dikken (2017: 13-14)). Languages differ according to the availability of the pseudocleft construction types illustrated in (1). For example, Akmajian (1979:83) notes that many native speakers do not accept (1g) as opposed to the other examples of pseudoclefts. Ross (1999) also notes that the counterpart of (1f) is ungrammatical in Japanese.

- (1)
- a. It was a magazine that Adam borrowed.
 - b. What Adam borrowed was this magazine.
 - c. Where John finally ended up was in Berkeley.
 - d. When John arrived was at five o’clock.
 - e. Why John went to the bookstore was to buy a book about pseudoclefts.
 - f. How John did it was by using a decoder.
 - g. %Who John visited was Bill.
 - f. What John is is tall.

Collins (1991) extends the term pseudocleft to include two other subclasses, namely, “*th-clefts*” and “*all-clefts*”. The term *th-clefts* refers to the construction in which the relative clause is introduced by “*the*” + “*pro-nouns*” such as *thing, one, place, time, reason, way* and an optional *wh*-element, (2a)-(2b) are illustrative. However, in *all-cleft* constructions, *all* introduces the relative clause, see (2c).

- (2) a. The place (where) Tom saw Sue was in front of the bank
 b. The things (which) John does not eat are food for the dog.
 c. All he wanted was a hamburger

Collins (1991: 27)

Scholars identify additional types of pseudoclefts. In particular, Higgins (1979) distinguishes between two types of pseudoclefts: predicational pseudoclefts and specificational pseudoclefts. Specificational pseudoclefts are identifying constructions. **That is, in (3a)** the focused element ‘*the magazine*’ is the “value”, which exhaustively specifies the “variable”, i.e. the relative clause ‘*what Adam borrowed*’. Predicational pseudoclefts, on the other hand, are attributive because the relationship within the two constituents is an indication of class membership, quality, or role, as illustrated in (3b).

- (3) a. What Adam borrowed was the magazine.
 b. What we watched yesterday was boring.

Furthermore, Declerck (1988) argues for two additional types of pseudoclefts, namely, identity statement pseudoclefts and definitional pseudocleft sentences illustrated in (4a) and (4b), respectively.

- (4) a. What I did WAS what you told me to do.
 b. A pyramid is what the Egyptians built to bury their pharaohs in.

Declerck (1988:70)

2 Specificational Pseudocleft Properties

Specificational pseudoclefts show interpretive properties such as identification, exclusiveness implicature and existential presupposition. They also show syntactic properties such as reversibility and connectivity. These characteristics will be demonstrated below.

2.1 Interpretive Properties

2.1.1 Identification

Huddleston (1971) points out that clefts and pseudo-clefts are recognised as identifying constructions. He labels the relative clause as the “*variable*”. The focus, on the other hand, is labeled as the “*value*”. The value exclusively specifies the value for that variable.

2.1.2 *Exclusiveness Implicature*

Collins (1991) observes that exclusiveness implicature is associated with both cleft and pseudocleft constructions. The meaning indicated in the specificational pseudocleft sentence in (5a) is as follows: ‘*the thing that Adam bought was a book and nothing else*’. The simple sentence in (5b), on the other hand, means that ‘*Adam bought the book with no indication that he bought anything else*’.

- (5) a. What Adam bought was the book.
 b. Adam bought the book.

Declerck (1988) observes that the exclusiveness implicature arises exclusively in copular sentences with the condition that the variable is a definite NP, “uniquely defined” in his terminology. For instance, he observes that the specificational sentences in ((6) from Declerck (1988:31)) do not imply exclusiveness because their subjects are indefinite, i.e., not ‘uniquely defined’. Therefore, he concludes that if a sentence implies exhaustivity, it is undoubtedly specificational, but not all specificational sentences imply exhaustivity.

- (6) a. An example of this kind is World War II.
 b. Typical instances of this are Julius Caesar and Napoleon.

Declerck (1988, 31)

2.1.3 *Existential Presupposition*

The third semantic feature of cleft and pseudo-cleft sentences is existential presupposition. Keenan (1971:45) observes that the presuppositionality indicated in clefts and pseudoclefts is typically invoked in transformational grammar: ‘a sentence S presupposes a sentence S’ just in case S logically implies S’ and the negation of S, ~ S, also logically implies S’’. For instance, the sentence in (7a) presupposes the existence of the event of ‘borrowing’. This event cannot be deleted in a negated version of the sentence, see (7b), which implies that ‘*Adam did not borrow the magazine but something else*’, e.g., *a book*. Compare with the negated simple sentence in (7c).

- (7) a. What Adam borrowed was the magazine.
 b. What Adam borrowed was not the magazine.
 c. Adam didn’t borrow the magazine.

2.2 *Syntactic Properties*

2.2.1 *Connectivity effects*

Connectivity (Akmajian (1979) and Higgins (1979)) refers to the co-occurrence restrictions between elements across the copula, such as anaphor-antecedent binding relationship. Declerck (1988) observes that specificational copular sentences and specificational pseudoclefts share this property. Therefore, connectivity effects are used to differentiate between specificational and predicational pseudoclefts. Higgins (1979) points out that the sentence in (8a) has two readings: the specificational reading means that ‘*John is important*’,

and the predicational reading means that ‘*what John stands for is important*’. Furthermore, he observes that the sentence highlighting reflexive connectivity in (8b) is unambiguously specificational while (8c) is predicational.

- (8) a. What John is is important.
 b. What *John* is is important to *himself*. [specificational]
 c. What *John* is is important to *him*. [predicational]
- Higgins (1979)

Specificational pseudoclefts also show a variety of other types of connectivity effects such as reciprocal connectivity (see (9) (from Declerck 1988: 52)), reflexive connectivity (see (10) Higgins 1979), principle C connectivity (see (11) Heycock and Kroch (1999) and negative polarity item connectivity in (12) from Akmajian (1979). However, negative polarity item connectivity differs from other types of connectivity effects in that it can exclusively appear in specificational pseudoclefts, in which the relative clause precedes the highlighted element (cf. (12a) and (12c) from Den Dikken (2017: 24)). Specificational pseudoclefts also show other types of connectivity effects such as case connectivity, quantifier connectivity, scope connectivity, see Den Dikken (2017) for the discussion.

- (9) a. What they did was kiss each other. [specificational]
 b. *What they did was surprising to each other. [*predicational]
- (10) a. What *John* is is important to *himself*. [specificational]
 b. What *John* is is important to *him*. [predicational]
- (11) a. *What *he* had said to Mary was that she had been lying to *John*. [specificational]
 b. What *he* had said to Mary was an embarrassment to *John*. [predicational]
- (12) a. What I have never noticed is any signs of dissatisfaction. [specificational]
 b. *What I had never noticed was noticed by any of us. [*predicational]
 c. *Any signs of dissatisfaction is What I have never noticed

2.2.2 Reversibility

Reversibility is a process in which the predicate of the sentence appears before the subject. Specificational pseudoclefts show two orders, wh<XP illustrated in (13a) and XP < wh illustrated in (13b). Predicational pseudoclefts, on the other hand, are not reversible (cf. (13c) and (13d)).

- (13) a. What Adam borrowed was the magazine.
 b. The magazine was what Adam borrowed.
 c. What we watched yesterday was boring.
 d. *Boring was what we watched yesterday.

3 Arabic Clefts

Standard Arabic (SA) wh-clefts have a structure which consists of the focus phrase, followed by a copular pronoun *hu* ‘he’ or the past simple copula *kan* ‘was’ (which are in complementary distribution), followed by a free relative or the relative marker (RM) *ilađi* ‘that’, (14) is illustrative. Different scholars, namely Cheng (1991), Ouhalla (1999) and Abdel-Razaq (2015) proposed that this schema matches English clefts. In the next subsections, I will address two of these proposals, namely Ouhalla (1999) and Abdel-Razaq (2015), and I will point out that such accounts are problematic. *More specifically*, I will argue that the label “clefts” in SA is a misnomer and that the structure in (14) represents specificational pseudoclefts.

- (14) *đlk al-kitab-u hu/kan ma/ ilađi ashtar-at-hu Mariam*
 This the-book-NOM PRON/was what/that buy-(it) Mariam
 ‘This book is/was what Mariam bought.’

3.1 Previous Accounts

3.1.1 Ouhalla (1999)

Ouhalla (1999) proposes that the structure in (14) above is similar to English clefts. In his analysis, he identifies *it* as an expletive subject, of which SA has no equivalent. He also suggests that SA clefts have a structure similar to specificational copular sentences. *In particular, he provides an analysis* based on Moros (1990) small clause structure featuring the focused constituent and the relative clause. The focused constituent is then proposed to move to the subject position. According to this analysis, the difference between English and SA clefts is associated with the movement process. He demonstrates that the focused XP does not move in English. *As a result*, expletive *it* is inserted in the subject position (Chomsky 1986). *In SA clefts, on the other hand*, no expletive is inserted because the focused constituent moves to the subject position.

Ouhalla also investigated the relationship between PRON and information structure. Specifically, he suggests following Doron’s (1986) proposal for Hebrew, that the pronoun is the realization of the focus feature. He supports his claims by showing that in some SA dialects, e.g. Moroccan Arabic, PRON can carry the focal stress, (15) is illustrative (from Ouhalla (1999):354). Ouhalla also proposes that the PRON is a realization of agreement/inflection. These proposals have much to commend on but also raise many problems.

- (15) Ana HIYYA allti llafat l-ktab
 I.1sf PRON.3sf that wrote the-book
 ‘I am the one who wrote the book.’

Edwards (2006) discusses these arguments proposed by Ouhalla. Edwards shows that PRON cannot be a realization of INFL. PRON shows agreement for gender and number while the person feature is neutralized, i.e. invariably shows 3rd person agreement (see (15) above), which contrasts with the standard subject-verb and verbal copula agreement (cf. 16). As opposed to the PRON, the copula inflects for person number and gender. He also observes that in SA specificational copular sentences, not only the PRON can be focused, but also any

of the NPs featured in the sentence. In (17), for instance, ‘*Nadia*’ can be focused to assert that ‘*Nadia is the winner, not anyone else*’. Likewise, ‘*the winner*’ can also be focused to indicate that ‘*Nadia is not the loser*’, for example. Therefore, he concludes that PRON cannot be associated with focus.

(16) Nhn kona n-aqr?
 We.1pm PRON.1pm read
 ‘We were reading.’

(17) Al-fa2zah HIYYA Nadia
 The winner PRON Nadia
 ‘The winner is Nadia.’

Edwards (2006:15)

3.1.2 *Abdel-Razaq (2015)*

Abdel-Razaq’s (2015) analysis draws an analogy between left dislocated equative copular sentences (see (18)) and the cleft structure, which consists of focus + pronoun+ relative clause, in (19). His analysis capitalizes on the fact that the pronoun appears in both of the structures. Abdel-Razaq adopts the predicational shell framework (PredP), proposed by Bowers (1993, 2001), Chomsky (2000), and Adger and Ramchand (2003).

(18) Ali hu l-muddarise
 Ali PRON the-teacher
 ‘Ali is the teacher.’

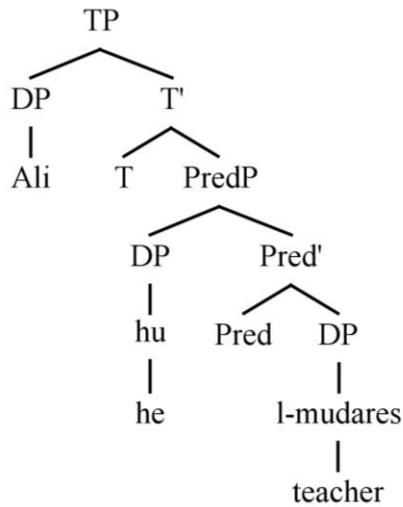
Abdel-Razaq (2015:194)

(19) **Nada hii Illi Majdi tjwaaz-ha**
 Nada PRON that Majdi married-her
 ‘It is Nada that Majdi married’

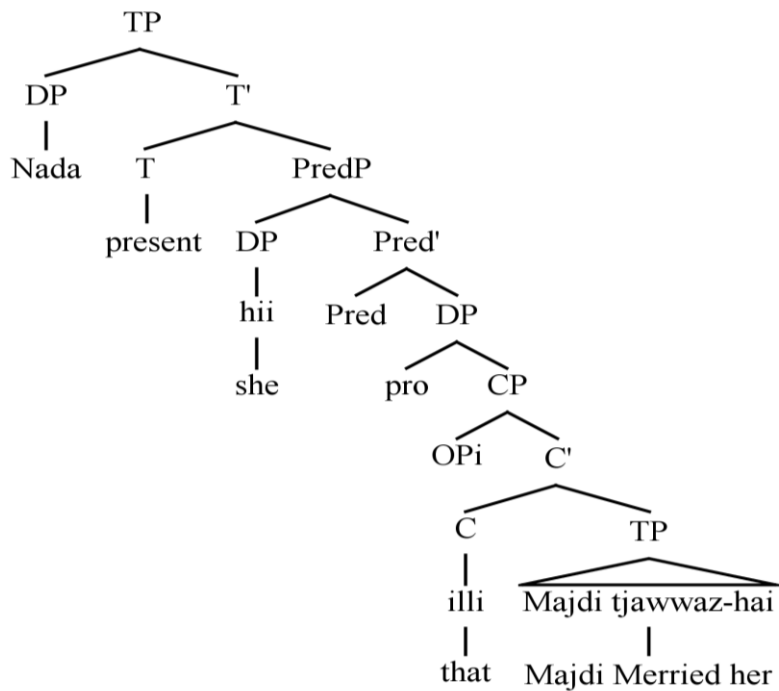
Abdel-Razaq (2015:194)

Abdel-Razaq (2015) claims that the subject of the copular sentence is base-generated in Spec,TP while the pronoun is base-generated in Spec,PredP, as illustrated in (20a). Concerning the structure of wh-clefts, he suggests a similar structure, with the difference that the predicate is a free relative DP, see (20b).

(20) a. Arabic dislocated equative copular structure (Abdel-Razaq (2015:197))



b. Arabic cleft structure (Abdel-Razaq (2015:197))



This analysis overcomes some problematic issues in Ouhalla's analysis, e.g. that the PRON is the realization of agreement or inflection. However, it does not account for the fact that the pronoun *hu* 'he' and the past copula *kan* 'was' are in complementary distribution, (as (14) repeated below shows). Furthermore, neither analyses cited above, namely Ouhalla (1999) or Abdel-Razaq (2015) accounts for the specificational pseudocleft properties that SA clefts show, as we will see in section (3.2) below.

- (14) *ðlk al-kitab-u hu/kan ma/ ilaði ashtar-at-hu Mariam*
 This the-book-NOM PRON/was what/that buy-(it) Mariam
 ‘This book is/was what Mariam bought.’

3.2 Investigation of Specificational Pseudocleft Properties

In this section, I shall investigate the syntactic and semantic properties of the structure in (14). Section (3.2.1) investigates the interpretive properties: the exclusiveness implicature and the existential presupposition. Section (3.2.2) investigates the syntactic properties: reversibility and connectivity.

3.2.1 Interpretive Properties

The exhaustivity implicature (see section (2.1.2)) and existential presupposition (see section (2.1.3)) are shared properties of clefts and pseudoclefts. Therefore, these two semantic features can not be used to prove if the structure in (14) represents cleft or pseudocleft. However, according to the exhaustivity implicature, the sentence in (14) implies that ‘*Mariam bought this book and nothing else*’. The simple sentence in (21), on the other hand, means that Mariam bought this book with no indication that she bought anything else.

- (21) *Mariam ashtar-at-ðlk al-kitab-u*
 Mariam bought that the-book
 ‘Mariam bought this book’

The structure in (14) is also associated with existential presupposition. It presupposes the event of ‘*buying*’. This event cannot be deleted in a negated version of the sentence (see (22a)). The sentence in (22a) implies that ‘*Mariam did not buy that book but something else*’, e.g., *newspaper*. Compare also with the negated simple sentence (cf. (22b)) in which negating the verb deletes the whole event.

- (22) a. *ðlk al-kitab-u laysa hu ma/ ilaðiashtar-at-hu Mariam*
 This the-book-NOM not PRON what/that buy-(it) Mariam
 ‘This book is not what Mariam bought.’
 b. *Mariam lam tashtari ðlk al-kitab*
 Mariam not bought that the-book
 ‘Mariam did not buy that book.’

3.2.2 Syntactic Properties

Just like English specificational pseudoclefts, SA clefts can have two patterns: XP < wh order (illustrated in (23a)) and wh < XP order (illustrated in (23b)). I will revisit this issue in section four in more detail. SA predicational pseudoclefts, on the other hand, are irreversible, just like those of English (cf. (24a) and (24b)).

- (23) a. *ðlk al-kitab-u hu/kan ma/ ilaði ashtar-at-hu Mariam*
 This the-book-NOM PRON/was what/that buy-(it) Mariam
 ‘This book is/was what Mariam bought.’

b. ma/ iladð ashtarat-hu Mariam hua/kan ðlk al-kitab-u
 what/that buy-(it) Mariam PRON/ was this -thebook
 ‘What Mariam bought is/was this book.’

- (24) a. Ma ʔʕtʕa Adam l-mariam (hu*) / kan ʕlwan dʒdan
 What offered Adam to-Mariam (PRON*)/ was sweet very
 ‘What adam offered Mariam (is*)/was so sweet.’
 b. *ʕlwan dʒdan (hu*) / kan Ma ʔʕtʕa Adam l-mariam
 sweet very (PRON*)/ was what offered Adam to-Mariam
 ‘*Too sweet is/was what Tom offered Sue’

The structure I argue as specificational pseudoclefts also show reflexive connectivity (see (25)) and reciprocal connectivity (see (26)) in wh<XP and XP<wh orders. Negative polarity item connectivity in (27), on the other hand, is exclusively licensed in the structure which features wh<XP exclusively.

- (25) a. man ʔ-ðhaito kann nafsi / *nafseh
 Who I-hurt Was myself / *himslef
 ‘The one I hurt was myself/ *himself’
 b. nafsi / *nafseh (hu*)/kan man ʔ-ðhaito
 myself / *himself (PRON*)/was who I-hurt
 ‘Myself/ *Himself’ was the one I hurt’
- (26) a. Ma fʕluh kan taqbil bʕdʕm albʕd
 what They-did was kiss each other
 ‘What they did was kissing each other.’
 b. Taqbil bʕdʕm albʕd kan ma fʕluh
 Kiss each other was what they-did
 ‘Kissing each other was what they did.’
- (27) a. ma lam ʔlahizh hu ʔy ʕlamat ʕdm alrada
 what not I-noticed PRON any signs no satisfaction
 ‘What I have never noticed is any signs of dissatisfaction.’
 b. *ʔy ʕlamat ʕdm alrada hu ma lam ʔlahizh
 any signs no satisfaction PRON what not I-noticed
 ‘*Any signs of dissatisfaction is what I have never noticed.’

To recap, these properties discussed above are distinctive features particular to specificational pseudoclefts. Since the structure under study, which was analyzed by Arab scholars as clefts, shows reversibility and connectivity, I conclude that the term ‘SA cleft’ is a misnomer and that this structure represents specificational pseudoclefts.

4 Reversibility Revisited

Though at first sight the reverse patterns may fall out straightforwardly of the reversibility property associated with specificational predication, in this section, I advance a different analysis to account for the reversibility and NPI connectivity facts demonstrated in section (3.2). In particular, I will argue that the reversibility claimed above is only superficial and that the two specificational pseudocleft structures with XP<wh (23a) and wh<XP (23b) orders, have different sources.

- (23) a. ðlk al-kitab-u hu/kan ma/ ilađi ashtar-at-hu Mariam
 This the-book-NOM PRON/was what/that buy-(it) Mariam
 ‘This book is/was what Mariam bought.’
 b. ma/ iladđ ashtar-at-hu Mariam hua/kan ðlk al-kitab-u
 what/that buy-(it) Mariam PRON/ was this -thebook
 ‘What Mariam bought is/was this book.’

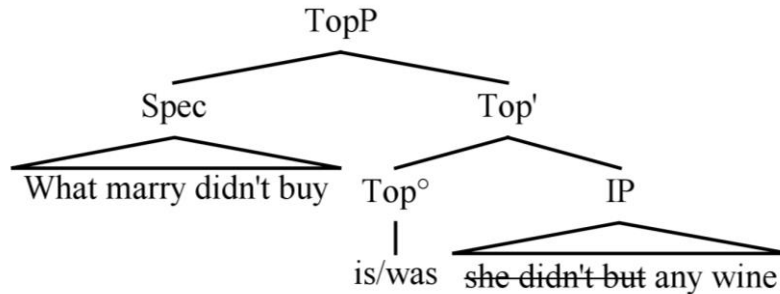
To account for the two structures in (23a) and (23b), I adopt an analysis proposed by Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder (2000) (see (28)); according to which the two orders in (28a) and (28b) of specificational pseudoclefts have two representations: ‘Type A’ and ‘Type B’.

- (28) Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder (2000:44):
- “Type A” specificational pseudoclefts
- feature as their major constituents a *wh*-clause and a full IP (which is subject to optional ellipsis);
 - have *wh* < XP orders only;
 - exhibit connectivity effects for negative polarity and case.
 Ex. *what John didn’t buy was any wine.*
- “Type B” specificational pseudoclefts
- feature as their major constituents a *wh*-clause and some XP
 - have XP < *wh* orders only;
 Ex. *The magazine was what Adam borrowed.*
 - do not exhibit connectivity effects for negative polarity.
 Ex. **Any wine was what nobody bought.*

4.1 Specificational Pseudoclefts with *wh*<XP word order

Type A specificational pseudoclefts, according to Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder, are ‘topic-comment’ constructions in which the *wh*-clause acts as the topic and the value as the comment, the value is also a full IP involving optional PF ellipsis to the repeated material. The copula, in this analysis, is a ‘relator’ (in the terminology of Den Dikken (2006)), i.e. a functional head establishing a predication that, in the cases under investigation accommodates the *wh*-clause and the focused material in its minimal domain (29). Relators will be discussed in more detail in section (4.3).

(29) Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder (2000:62)



This approach of specificational pseudoclefts takes the special status of NPI connectivity into consideration, as noted in sections 2.2.1 for English and 3.2.2 for SA. When the structure is reversed, connectivity is generally preserved (see reflexive connectivity in English (30)) and SA (25) repeated below). In the case of NPI, on the other hand, connectivity breaks down (cf. (31a) and (31b) from Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder (2000:3)) and SA (cf. (27a) and (27b) repeated below). Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilde notes that specificational pseudoclefts behave like simple clauses in that NPIs must be licensed by a c-commanding negation, as illustrated in (32). The same can be said to be true for SA, as demonstrated (33). Nevertheless, they observe that specificational pseudoclefts refers to a strategy to establish the c-command relation across the copula differently from the one used by simple clauses.

(30) a. What John is is important to himself. (Reflexive connectivity)
 b. Important to himself is what John is.

(25) a. man ?-ðhaito kann nafsi / *nafseh
 Who I-hurt Was myself / *himslef
 ‘The one I hurt was myself/ *himself’
 b. nafsi / *nafseh (hu*) /kan man ?-ðhaito
 myself / *himself (PRON*) /was who I-hurt
 ‘Myself/ *Himself’ was the one I hurt’

(31) a. what John didn’t buy was any wine. (NPI connectivity)
 b. *Any wine was what nobody bought.

(27) a. ma lam ?lahizh hu ?y ?lamat ?dm alrada
 what not I-noticed PRON any signs no satisfaction
 ‘What I have never noticed is any signs of dissatisfaction.’
 b. *?y ?lamat ?dm alrada hu ma lam ?lahizh
 any signs no satisfaction PRON what not I-noticed
 ‘*Any signs of dissatisfaction is what I have never noticed.’

(32) * Any student did not come.

(33) *?y muhandes lam j?mel b-al-mashroo
 any engineer not work in-the-project
 ‘*any engineer didn’t work in the project’.

They propose an ellipsis approach, in which the counterweight is a full IP reduced by PF ellipsis (see (34) from Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder (2000:44)). This approach ensures that a c-commanding negation licenses NPI within the focused constituent (the value).

(34) ? what John didn't buy was [_{IP} ~~he didn't buy~~ any wine]

The status of the Wh-clause as Topic and the focused XP as a comment can also be validated for SA. First, SA specificational pseudoclefts restrict extraction from the wh-clause in ((23b) repeated below). This indicates that the position occupied by the wh-clause is in the A' domain, as illustrated in (35).

(23) b. ma/ iladð ashtarāt-hu Mariam hua/kan ðlk al-kitab-u
 what/that buy-(it) Mariam PRON/ was this -the-book
 'What Mariam bought is/was this book.'

(35) *man_i ta-ataqed [Ma aatayt t_i] hu al-ketab
 who you-think what I-gave PRON -the-book
 '*Who_i do you think [what I gave t_i] is the-Book?'

Furthermore, the counterweight of the 'topic-comment structure', e.g. *Ali* in ((36) from Farghal (1992:53)) is assigned the nominative case. The same is true for the value in (23b), i.e. *al-kitab* 'this the-book' is also assigned the nominative case. By comparison, it contrasts with the accusative case assigned to the post copular element *muṣallim* 'teacher' in simple copular sentences in SA, (37) is illustrative.

(36) Omar-un darbi-h Ali-un
 Omar-Nom beat-him Ali-Nom
 'Omar, Ali beat him.'

(37) al-rajul kann muṣallim-an
 the-man-Nom was teacher-Acc
 'the man was a teacher.'

Besides, Farghal (1992) observes that embedding a topic-comment structure is grammatical in SA (see (38a)), I note the same observation for SA "type A" specificational pseudoclefts, as illustrated in (38b).

(38) a.ʔ-zʕunu ʔna ʕmar-an darba-h ali-un
 I-think that omar-ACC beat-him ali-Nom
 'I think that Omar, Ali beat him.'
 b.ʔ-zʕunu ʔna ma/ iladð ashtarāt-hu Mariam hua/kan ðlk al-kitab-u
 I-think that what/that buy-(it) Mariam PRON/ was this-the-book-NOM
 'I think that what Mariam bought was this book.'

4.2 *Specificational Pseudoclefts with XP<wh word order*

Den Dikken (2017) notes that there is considerable confusion in the literature about the position occupied by the focused XP. For example, Heggie (1988) argues that the highlighted (focused) XP is raised to SpecCP. Heycock (1994), Moro (1997), Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder (2000) (for their “type B” structure), Mikkelsen (2005), Den Dikken (2006), on the other hand, argue that the focused XP occupies the structural subject position (SpecIP).

I propose an analysis of the SA specificational pseudoclefts featuring XP<wh order similar to Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder (2000) “Type B” specificational pseudoclefts. They propose a structure in which the focused phrase and the relative clause generate a small clause, see (39). On the surface, however, the underlying subject of the small clause is claimed to be raised to the pre-copular position of the sentence, i.e. the structural subject position.

(39) ... *be* [SC [Subj XP] [Pred *Wh*-clause]]

Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder (2000: 48)

Similarly, the focused XP in XP<wh pattern shows properties analogous to the structural subject. First, in SA definite NP subjects can occur in preverbal position (Subject Verb Object (SVO)) and postverbal position (Verb Subject Object (VSO)). However, indefinite subjects have a more restricted distribution than definite subjects. In particular, indefinite NP subjects in SA are not allowed in the preverbal position (cf. (40a) and (40b)). SA pseudoclefts impose similar restrictions on the focused XP in the initial position, as illustrated in (41).

(40) a. *l-walad* /**walad* *qara al-ketab* (SVO)

the-boy/ boy read the-book

b. *qara l-walad* / *walad al-ketab*

read the-boy/ boy al-ketab (VSO)

(41) * *ketab-u hu ma ashtarat-hu Mariam*

book-NOM PRON what buy-(it) Mariam

‘a book is what Mariam bought’.

Furthermore, the extraction of the focused XP is permitted, which proves that the position occupied by the focused XP is an A-position, as illustrated in (42).

(42) *ma_i [t_i]Hu ma ashtarat-hu Mariam*

What [t_i] PRON what buy-(it) Mariam

‘What is the thing which Mariam buy?’

4.3 *The Pronoun as Relator*

I have pointed out in section (4.1) that Den Dikken, Meinunger, and Wilder (2000) acknowledge the copula as a relator or a functional head that accommodates the subject and the predicate of the sentences in its minimal domain. Den Dikken (2006) notes that copular sentences of all types should feature this relator, which also mediates the semantic relation between the two constituents. On the nature of the relator, Den Dikken observes that any

functional head can be a relator, e.g. copulas, null aspectual heads or prepositions (see (43) from Den Dikken (2006:16)).

- (43) a. The earth must be round (copula)
 b. They take him for a fool (preposition)
 c. John walks (Tense)

In fact, different elements are assumed to perform the function of the relator cross-linguistically, such as personal pronouns in Berber and Hebrew (see (44) and (45), respectively) and demonstrative pronouns in Russian (see (46)).

- (44) TAMGHART-A ay yzrin Mohand
 woman-DEM PRON.INDEF see.PST.PART Mohand
 ‘THIS WOMAN saw Mohand’
 (Berber, Ouhalla (1993: 479))

- (45) dani *(hu) mar yosef.
 dani PronMasc.Sg mr yosef
 ‘Dani is Mr Yosef.’
 (Hebrew, Rothstein (2001:207))

- (46) Mark Twain – *(èto) Samuel Clemens.
 Mark T.Nom this Samuel C.Nom
 ‘Mark Twain is Samuel Clemens.’
 (Russian, Geist : (2008: 11)).

Adopting this analysis for the pronoun in SA specificational pseudoclefts has advantages over other analyses, such as Ouhalla (1999) and Abdel-Razaq (2015) proposals discussed in section (3.1). Realizing the pronoun as a functional head ‘relator’ can better account for the distributional facts noted above between the pronoun and the past simple copular *kan* ‘was’, see (23b) repeated below.

- (23) b. ma/ iladð ashtarat-hu Mariam hua/kan ðlk al-kitab-u
 what/that buy-(it) Mariam PRON/ was this -thebook
 ‘What Mariam bought is/was this book.’

However, the argument for the pronoun as a relator may raise a problem for SA and Russian, given that in some types of copular sentences, the pronoun and demonstrative pronoun are excluded. Notably, in SA present simple copular sentences, the pronoun *hu* ‘he’ is excluded in predicational sentences (47a) and available in specificational and equative copular sentences (47b) and (47c), respectively. In Russian, on the other hand, the demonstrative pronoun *èto* ‘this’ is excluded in predicational and specificational sentences (48a) and (48b), respectively. The pronoun is only available in equative copular sentences. Furthermore, in SA and Russian past simple copular sentences, a form of the copula is used. Table (1) below shows the distribution of pronoun *hu* ‘he’ and the past copula *kan* ‘was’ in SA, and the demonstrative pronoun *èto* ‘this’ and the past copula *byla* ‘was’ in predicational, specificational and equative copular sentences.

- (47) a. Adam (*hu) / *(kan) lateef (Predicational)
 Adam PRON / was Nice
 ‘Adam is/was nice.’
- b. a-tabeeb *(hu) / *(kan) Adam (specificational)
 A-tabeeb PRON / was Adam
 ‘The doctor is/was Adam.’
- c. Ali Esber *(hu) / *(kan) Adunis (Equative)
 Ali Esber PRON/was Adunis
 ‘Ali Esber is Adunis.’
- (48) a. Mark Twain(*èto)/*(byl) pisatel’ po professii (Predicational)
 Mark T. this / was Writer-Nom by profession
 ‘Mark Twain is a writer by profession.’
- b. Ubijca staruxi (*èto) / *(byl) Raskolnikov (specificational)
 murdererNom of-old-lady (*èto) / *(byl)
 ‘The murderer of the old lady is Raskolnikov.’
- c. Mark Twain *(èto) Samuel Clemens.
 Mark T.Nom this Samuel C.Nom
 ‘Mark Twain is Samuel Clemens.’

Geist (2008)

Type of Copular Sentence	SA Pronoun (hu)	SA past copula (kan)	Russian Demonstrative (Èto)	Russian past copula (byla)
Specificational	+	+	-	+
Predicational	-	+	-	+
Equative	+	+	+	+

* The data used for Russian are adopted form (Geist 2008).

Table 1. predicational, specificational and equative copular sentences in SA and Russian.

For Russian, Geist (2008) points out that in equative sentences, both NP1 and NP2 are referential and that the demonstrative pronoun is needed to convey that both noun phrases denote the same reference. The demonstrative pronoun performs a semantic process of ‘type-shift’ (suggested by Partee (1987)) needed when two unrelated referential NPs comprise copular sentences. Geist claims that this process is not available for predicational and specificational copular sentences in Russian. Furthermore, she observes that in Russian specificational copular sentences, NP1 is not referential and that the agreement marking of the copula displays an inverted agreement pattern. Therefore, NP2 serves as the syntactic subject (see (49)). Reeve (2010) also proposes that that syntax of equative sentences in Russian involves a functional head (Eq) that has the semantic effect of applying Partee’s (1987) “ident-type-shift” operation to copular sentences and giving rise to an equative reading.

- (49) Pričinoj avarii (*byla /byli) neispravnye tormoza
 reasonSg. Fem.Ins of-accident wasSg.Fem/werePl broken brakesPl
 ‘The reason for the accident was broken brakes.’

Geist (2008: 16)

For SA, I also propose that the insertion of the pronoun in equative copular sentences is also a requirement of Partee's (1987) "ident-type-shift" operation. For specificational copular sentences, which also include a pronoun, if the pronoun in SA specificational sentences is a requirement of "ident-type-shift" operation, NP1 should be referential. Heycock and Kroch (1999) show that in English specificational sentences, NP1 is referential given that it can be modified by non-restrictive relative clauses, as illustrated in (50). A non-restrictive relative clause can also modify NP1 in SA specificational sentences; hence, NP1 is referential, see (51b). Similarly, the past tense copula *kan* 'was' can also perform the "ident-type-shift" operation in equative and specificational sentences.

(50) The duty nurse, who is very efficient, is Rina, who I am very fond of.
 (Heycock and Kroch 1999:374)

- (51) a. *alles^ʕ-u hu Adam*
 the-thief-Nom PRON Adam
 'The thief is Adam'
 b. *alles^ʕ-u, l-aḏi saraq l-bank hu Adam*
 the-thief-Nom that robbed the-bank PRON Adam
 'The thief, who robbed the bank, is Adam.'

In predicational sentences, on the other hand, NP1 is referential, and NP2 is non-referential. Therefore, no "ident-type-shift" operation is involved, so the pronoun is excluded, see (52a). It is noteworthy that in predicational pseudoclefts the personal pronoun *hu* 'he' is also excluded, see (24a) repeated below. However, this has no negative consequence on the assumption of the availability of the relator in SA present tense predicational copular sentences. Alternatively, assuming a null relator in SA present tense predicational copular sentences provides a uniform structure for copular sentences despite the tense of the sentence. This also makes SA resemble English and minimize the difference between them to whether the relator has phonological content or not. It should be noted that Den Dikken (2006) also suggests that the 'relator' could be either present or absent in (53a) and obligatorily absent in (53b). This is what we find in predicational copular sentences in SA.

- (52) a. *Adam (*hu) lateef*
 Adam PRON Nice
 'Adam is nice.'
 b. *Adam *(kan) lateef*
 Adam was nice
 'Adam was nice.'

(24) a. *Ma ʔʕtʕa Adam l-mariam (hu*) / kan Ḥlwan dʒdan*
 What offered Adam to-Mariam (PRON*)/ was sweet very
 'What adam offered Mariam (is*)/was so sweet.'

- (52) a. Imogen considers Brian (as) a nice guy.
 b. Imogen finds Brian (*as) a nice guy.

In this section, I advanced an alternative analysis to account for the reversibility facts presented in section two. In particular, I argued for two types of specificational pseudocleft structures. Furthermore, an analysis has been provided for the pronoun as a relator, which is found in copular sentences and pseudoclefts, and examples from different languages were presented to verify this analysis.

5 Conclusion

The present study aimed to provide a specificational pseudocleft analysis for a structure widely assumed by different Arab scholars to match English clefts. I showed that such an account is problematic and that this construction shows specificational pseudocleft properties, such as reversibility and connectivity.

In section one, I demonstrated different types and classes of pseudoclefts in English, and the different syntactic and interpretive properties, which pseudocleft structures feature. Based on the syntactic properties which the structure shows, a specificational pseudocleft analysis was proposed, and two types of specificational pseudoclefts were claimed to be available in SA: “Type A” specificational pseudoclefts and “Type B” specificational pseudoclefts, in line with cross-linguistic observations. I also proposed an analysis for the pronoun as a connector ‘relator’ based on observations from SA and Russian in section four further supporting the claim that relators can be functional projections belonging to various functional categories.

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Glossary

1	First Person
2	Second Person
3	Third Person
S	Singular
P	Plural
M	Masculine
F	Feminine
Acc	Accusative
Nom	Nominative

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