

The Strategies of Relative Clause Formation in English and Arabic: A Contrastive Study

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Abstract

This study is an endeavour to find out the strategies of relative clause formation in both English and*Arabic and to discover as well the default strategy (the common one) in each language.

The study has shown that there are two strategies used in the formation of relative clauses: the **resumptive** pronoun strategy and the **gap** strategy. Each one has its own principles and properties by which it is recognized.

The study has also shown that the two languages vary in the exploitation of these two strategies: while Arabic tends to use the resumptive pronoun strategy, English uses the gap theory more extensively--- this is basically attributed to the nature of each language.

Key words: resumptive gap cliticisation trace vacuous

*Modern Standard Arabic (also known as Modern Written Arabic) refers to 'the form of the language which, throughout the Arab world from Iraq to Morocco, is found in the prose of books, newspapers, periodicals, and letters. This form is also employed in formal public address, over radio and television, and in religious ceremonial' (Cowan, 1974: vii).

1.1 Introduction

Relative clause formation in English and Arabic appears to be similar in many aspects as it also appears to be distinct. To verify this, a contrastive analysis has therefore been made for this purpose throughout this study. The major areas to be compared include the concept of relative clause, its formation, its types, its function, and finally the strategies of its formation.

Following the methodology of contrastive studies, a description of the point to be compared is first made in the two languages followed by a contrastive analysis of the point which is either done within a separate chapter or within the same section as adopted here. In this study almost all the sections start from English except in one or two sections where we start with Arabic as it is more convenient. This is true in sections 1.4 and 1.6.1 as shown in the body of this research.

1.2 The Concept of Relative Clause

"The term relative clause is used for various types of subclause (subordinate clause) which are linked to all or part of the main clause by a back pointing element usually a relative pronoun" (Leech & Svartvik 1975: 285).

Besides the idea of linkage or relation that is prominent in the name of the relative clause, it has over and above a main function, that is, its modifying function (ibid.). This is verified by the fact that a relative clause is also known as adjective clause or attributive clause (see Eckersley and Eckersley 1960 for the terms). Hence in (1):

1. She lost her wedding ring *which her fiancé gave*

the italicized clause is a relative clause which is joined to the main clause *She lost her wedding ring* or more exactly to the head noun *ring* with which it establishes immediate relation by means of the relativiser *which*. More importantly, the relative clause modifies the NP *ring* i.e. it identifies it.

The idea of modification seems to be essential to the relative clause. This is obvious within Radford's (2004: 474) gloss of relative clause in which he states that a relative clause is so called because it 'relates to' (modifies, or restricts the reference of) the head noun. Thus in the example sentence that he renders: '*He's someone [who you can trust]*', the bracketed clause is said to be a relative clause because it 'relates to', i.e. modifies or restricts the reference of the pronoun *someone*.

In Arabic these two properties of the relative clause, i.e. linkage or relation (i.e. waṣṣl) and modification are manifested in the so-called (šilatil mawṣūl) --- a sentence named after the relative pronoun within it that joins it to the head noun¹; this is in addition to its modifying function that narrows down the reference of the head noun preceding it as clear in (2):

2. qedima [allaḏi ʔakrama xalidu-n]

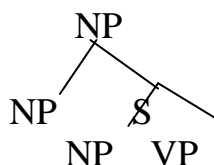
"The one who honoured Khalid came "

The bracketed clause in (2) represents a relative clause containing the relative pronoun *allaḏi* that refers to the head noun (i.e. *the person who honoured Khalid*) and subsequently specifies its reference (see Al-Samarraʔi 1987 : 131).

1.3. Relative clause formation

"According to transformational grammar, a relative clause is a surface structure realization of an embedded sentence following a definite or an indefinite head noun called the antecedent and containing an NP coreferential with this antecedent" (Hamdallah and Tushyeh, 1998:141). The story of how these two NPs are coreferential is given by Bornstein (1984:177) which he starts with the phrase structure rule responsible for relative clause production as stated in (3) along with required transformations:

3. NP → NP + S



The phrase structure rule in (3) shows that a relative clause essentially consists of an NP that contains an NP plus a sentence following that NP. The sentence following that NP (i.e. its antecedent) must contain an NP which is identical to that antecedent. How the NP in the embedded sentence is identical to the antecedent is demonstrated by the relative pronoun replacing the embedded NP. If, for example, the antecedent has the feature [+ human] the embedded NP is substituted for *who(m)* or *that*; if on the other hand the antecedent has the

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feature [-human], the embedded NP is substituted for *which* or *that* ; if it has the feature [+place] or [+time] , it is substituted for *where* or *when* :

4. The man you saw whom is friendly.
5. The car you bought which is expensive.
6. The hotel they are staying where is very costly.
7. The time they arrived when it was raining.

The deep-structures in (4, 5, 6, and, 7) also show the positions of the relative pronouns before they undergo movement. Relative clause transformations then move the relative pronoun to the front of the clause. The transformation responsible for relative pronoun movement can be stated formally as:

$$8. \quad X + NP_1 + A + NP_2 + B + Y \Leftrightarrow X + NP_1 + \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{who} \\ \text{which} \\ \text{that} \\ \text{where} \\ \text{when} \end{array} \right\} + A + B + Y$$

A + NP₂ + B = sentence (my relative clause)

A = anything that precedes the relativised NP (the embedded NP)

B = anything that follows the relativised NP

NP₁ = NP₂

Applying this transformation to the deep-structures in (4), (5), (6) and (7), their respective versions would be like those in (9), (10), (11) and (12) respectively:

9. The man whom you saw is friendly.
10. The car which you bought is expensive.
- 11 The hotel where they are staying is very costly.
12. The time when they arrived it was raining. (ibid.)

By the same token we derive relative clauses in Arabic. Thus the deep structure in 13:

13. ?a-rajul-u [?a-rajul-u qābalt-u ?a-rajul-a]?aḥmad-un
 NP₁ S NP₂

the NP² ?a-rajul-a appears before being substituted for the relative pronoun *allaḏi*; hence replacing it by *allaḏi*, it would be as in (14) :

14. ?alrajul-u [?alrajul-u qābalt-u *allaḏi*]?aḥmad-un
 NP₁ S NP₂

By means of movement transformation given in (8) above the relative pronoun is moved to the front of the relative clause according to which (14) would be as in (15):

15. ?alrajul-u [*allaḏi* qabaltu-(hu)]?aḥmad-un.

Interestingly, the relative pronoun in Arabic, when moved to the front position of the relative clause, leaves a small or reduced pronoun behind it, which is usually cliticised (i.e. attached) to the word preceding it; this reduced pronoun is called the resumptive or returning pronoun. (see Hamdallah and Tushyeh, 1998:144).

The same, however, does not hold in English, i.e. the location from which the relative pronoun is extracted remains empty and is technically designated as the gap². More light will be shed on this point in due course.

1.4. Types of relative clause

Both English and Arabic possess two types of relative clause: restrictive (definite) and non-restrictive (indefinite) relatives. (see Aoun, et al (2012) and Farghal (1986)). The two

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languages are almost similar in the first type, but they completely differ in the second as we shall see in the description of each. The beginning is with Arabic as it is more relevant.

A definite relative clause in Arabic always occurs with the relativiser (thamīr waṣal) such as *allaḍi* (masculine singular) or *allati* (feminine singular) or any of their various forms, namely *allaḍān* (masculine dual) *allaḍīna* (masculine plural) *allatān* (feminine dual), *allāʔi*, or *allāti* (feminine plural) etc. , while an indefinite clause does not occur with any of those relativisers (Farghal, 1986: 112-113). This is illustrated in (16a) and (16b):³

- (16) a. *jāʔa l-Tālib-u allaḍi faqada hawyata-hu*
came 3ms the- student nom who lost 3ms identity card it acc
'The student who lost his identity card came.'
- b. *jāʔa Tālib-un faqada hawyata-hu*
came 3ms student nom lost 3ms identity card it acc
'A student who lost his identity card came.'

It is obvious that (16a) has a definite relative clause due to the presence of the relativiser (*allaḍi*), while (16b) has an indefinite clause due to its absence.

The type of the relative clause in Arabic must agree with the type of its antecedent, viz. a definite relative clause takes a definite antecedent and that an indefinite clause takes an indefinite one. Putting it in terms of the dichotomies *nekirah* (indefinite) and *maʿrifah* (definite), we can say that a definite relative takes a *maʿrifah* antecedent, whereas an indefinite relative takes a *nekira* antecedent. Hence in (16a), the antecedent *al-Tālib* is said to be *maʿrifah* because it is marked with the definite particle *ʔal* and it is thus followed by the definite relative (*allaḍi faqada hawyata-hu*), while in (16b) the antecedent *Talibun* is indefinite (*nekirah*), as it is marked with nunation (*tanween*), and it is subsequently followed by the indefinite clause (*faqada hawyata-hu*).

Besides its role in determining the definiteness and the indefiniteness of the relative clause, the presence/absence of the relativiser (*allaḍi*) in Arabic has its impact on the linkage between the antecedent and the clause following it: in a definite clause, the linkage is said to be *syndetic*, i.e. being linked by a conjunctive pronoun (thamīr waṣl), while in an indefinite clause it is said to be *asyndetic* (i.e. the link takes place without the conjunctive pronoun (cf. Holes, 1995 for the terms). Accordingly, (16a) is a *syndetic* type of linkage due to the presence of the conjunctive pronoun *allaḍi* whereas (16b) is an *asyndetic* type of linkage due to its absence.

With respect to English, the criterion for distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relatives completely differs from that in Arabic: it is more semantically than syntactically based. That is to say, in English, the distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relatives is ultimately based on whether or not they restrict the reference of the antecedent. (Ouhalla, 1999: 77). This is unlike Arabic in which the criterion for distinction is established on whether or not they appear with a relativiser. In English if a relative clause narrows down the reference of the antecedent to a particular instance, it is called a **restrictive relative**, if on the other hand, a relative clause does not restrict the reference of the antecedent as it is already restricted or known; it is then called a **non-restrictive** or an **appositive** relative clause (ibid. : 77 -8) as illustrated in (17a) and (17b):

- (17) a. The man **who lives next door** is very friendly.
b. My father, **who died in 1987**, was suffering from cardiac problems.

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In (17a) the relative clause (**who lives next door**) is said to be restrictive because it identifies the antecedent *the man*, i.e. it tells us which *man* the speaker means. This is similar to the definite relative in (16a), that is, *allađi faqada hawiyata-hu* as it also tells us which *Talib* (student) the speaker means; hence the similarity between English and Arabic in this regard. In (17b) the relative clause *who died in 1987* is a non-restrictive clause because it plays no role in identifying the antecedent *My father* as it is already known; therefore, its deletion will have no bearing on the definiteness of the antecedent as true in (18):

(18) My father was suffering from cardiac problems.

1.5. Relative clause function

Both of definite and indefinite relatives in English and Arabic can act as modifiers to the antecedent to which they are linked, i.e. be as adjectives. The two languages yet differ in whether or not they impose a restriction on sentences working as modifiers. English, for example, set no restrictions on sentences working as modifiers; by this I mean that a relative clause in English can occur after an antecedent no matter whether it is definite or indefinite; hence both of the following examples naturally occur in English:

19. (a) The boy who was running very fast won the race.

(b) A boy who was running very fast won the race.

Arabic, on the other hand, DOES set a restriction on sentences working as modifiers, that is, they can only modify *nekira* head nouns, but not *ma^crifah* ones. Accordingly, only indefinite relatives can work as modifiers simply because they occur after a *nekira* antecedent (cf.16b). Hence, it is no small wonder asking the following: "then how come definite relatives occur after *ma^crifah* antecedents as in (16a) and be their modifiers albeit the restriction that forbids such a thing?" This problem has been resolved by the insertion of a relative pronoun via which sentences can modify *ma^crifah* antecedents. This situation as Al-Samara'i (1987:133) states resembles that of the definite article *al* which is added to nouns to make them definite. This means that the significance of the relative pronoun to sentences equals that of the definite article *al* to single nouns. The process of adding a relative pronoun to sentences has resulted in a type of clause or sentence called *jumlatl wašil* (relative or conjunctive clause) which is distinguished from another type of sentence known as *jumlatl wašif* *adjectival* or *descriptive sentence* which is free of a relativiser. In view of this, the definite clause in (16a) is called *jumlatl wašil*, while the indefinite clause in (16b) is called *jumlatl wašif*. ((Hamdallah and Tushyeh, 1998:142).

Though these two types of sentences function as modifiers to the antecedent preceding it, they still differ in the degree of identification: in *jumlatl wašil* the antecedent is *ma^crifah* which means that the addressee already knows who the antecedent is and the information carried by the relative is to further acquaint him with the antecedent, while in *jumlatl wašif* whose antecedent is *nekira*, the antecedent does not know who the antecedent is talking about. It is then natural for the addressee in *jumlatl wašif* to ask the addresser about the antecedent whom he does not know before. According to (Ibn Ya^cīsh, vol III: 154) a sentence that functions as a relative clause (*jumlatl wašil*) must be known by the addressee; this is because its purpose is to supply the addressee with more information about the antecedent whom he already knows.⁴ Thus his comment on the sentence:

20. *jā?ani allađi qām.*

came to me he who stood up

'He who stood up came to me.'

is that: it is not said to someone unless he already knows who the one who stood up.

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(Ibn Al-Sarraj, 1973: 30, 272) best summaries the argument above as follows: sentences are held to be inherently indefinite, that is why they suit to modify *nekirah* antecedents; hence a way of allowing them to modify *ma^crifah* antecedents, a relative pronoun has to be inserted.

1.6. The Strategies of Relative Clause Formation

Relative clauses in Arabic and English are formed or derived by two main strategies: the resumptive pronoun strategy (henceforth the resumptive strategy) and the gap-strategy. However, these two strategies are not equally used in both languages; in Arabic both strategies are used though the resumptive strategy is more common than the gap strategy, while in English the reverse is true, viz. the gap strategy is the standard strategy while the resumptive strategy (when used) it is not necessarily deemed standard. Each one of these strategies has its own properties that make it distinct from the other. I shall first start with the resumptive strategy.

1.6.1. The Resumptive Strategy

The resumptive strategy is named after the resumptive pronoun that a relative clause contains. This strategy stipulates that a relative clause must have this pronoun (also called returning pronoun) because it is significant to the well-formedness of the sentence.⁵ Built on this, a sentence whose relative clause fails to exhibit such a pronoun will naturally be deemed ungrammatical as shown below:

- (21) a. wajadtu l- kitāb-a allađi faqadtu-hu (direct object)
found I-nom def- book acc that lost I nom it acc
'I found the book that I lost.'
b. wajadtu l-kitāb-a allađi faqadt-u-(h)
found I-nom def book acc that lost I nom
'I found the book that I lost.'
- (22) a. jā?a-r-ajul-u allađi ?a^cartah-u l-kitāb-a (indirect object)
came def- man-nom whom lent I-nom him-acc book acc
'The man whom I lent the book came.'
b. *jā?a-r-r ajul-u allađi ?a^crt-a Ø l- kitāb-a
came def- man-nom whom lent I-nom book-acc
'The man whom I lent the book came.'
- (23) a. faqadt-u l-maḥfathat-a ?allat-i ?atha^c-u fiha nuqud-i (object of the preposition)
lost I nom def wallet which put I nom in it acc money my
'I lost the wallet in which I put my money.'
b. *faqadt-u l-maḥfathat-a ?allati ?atha^c-u fi Ø nuqūdi
lost I nom def wallet which put I nom in it acc money my
'I lost the wallet in which I put my money.'
- (24) a. ^cazayat-u l- rajul-a llađi māṭ-a walada-h (genitive)
consoled I nom def-man acc whose died son-his
'I consoled the man whose son died.'
b. ^cazayt-u l- rajul-a allađi māṭ-a walad-a -Ø
console I nom def-man nom whose died son-his
'I consoled the man whose son died.'

The reason why (21a), (22a), (23a) and (24a) are grammatically ruled in while their versions except for (21b) (where the resumptive pronoun is optional), namely (22b), (23b) and (24b) are ruled out, is due to the presence of the resumptive pronoun in the former and its absence in the latter as indicated by the sign (Ø).

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The significance of the resumptive pronoun to the structure of relative clauses in Arabic stems from the fact that it is one of the main components of which the relative clause is made (Hassan 2007 (vol I): 216). This is especially needed when the resumptive pronoun occurs in positions (apart from the direct object position represented by (21b) where it is optional) such as indirect object, object of the preposition (oblique), and the genitive. Since (22b - 24b), which respectively represent the aforementioned positions, appear without a resumptive pronoun, this in turn justifies their ill-formedness.

The presence of the resumptive pronoun by itself is not sufficient for the well-formedness of the sentence unless being coreferential with its antecedent. Therefore, special care should also be assigned to coreferentiality. Coreferentiality stipulates that the resumptive pronoun must agree with its antecedent in the aspects of number, gender and case. Put differently, the resumptive pronoun should establish anaphoric relation with its antecedent---the lack of this type of relation will certainly result in syntactically and semantically ill-formed sentences. (Bakir, 1979: 156) states that since anaphors (under which resumptive pronouns are subsumed) are inherently dependent, i.e. they depend on other NPs for their interpretation, it is then essential that they establish coreferential relationship with their antecedents. Hence the violation of any of these aspects will naturally come out with sentences that are rejected both syntactically and semantically as the following examples illustrate :

- (25) a. *sallamt-ū ^ʿla r-rajul-i allaḏi sā^ʿdtu-hum
greeted I nom def man (sing) whom I nom helped them (plu)
'I greeted the man whom I helped.'
b. *qābalt-u-lmarʔata allati sā^ʿatu-h-u
met I nom def woman (fem) acc whom helped I nom him (mas)
'I met the woman whom I helped.'

The reason due to which (25a) and (25b) are rejected is not because of the absence of the resumptive pronoun, but because of the lack of disagreement between the resumptive pronoun and its antecedent: in (25a) the antecedent (*al-rajul*) (man) is singular while its resumptive pronoun (*hum*) is plural; in (25b) the antecedent (*al-maraʔata*) (woman) is feminine while its resumptive pronoun is masculine.⁶

The resumptive pronoun as shown above always appears as a reduced (weak) pronoun rather than a full pronoun. This reduced form has the property that "it must cliticise (i.e. attached itself to) an appropriate kind of **host** (i.e., another word or phrase)" (Radford, 2009:447). The lexical heads (*the hosts*) that precede the resumptive pronoun to which it is cliticised can be a *verb*, a *noun* or a *preposition* as respectively shown:

- (26) a. wajadt-u l-kitāb-a allaḏi faqadtu-hu
found I nom def book acc which lost I nom it acc
'I found the book which I lost.'
b. ^ʿazayat-u l-rajul-a allaḏi māta ʔabu-hu
consoled I nom def man whose died father his
'I consoled the man whose father died.'
c. wajadt-u l-kitāb-a allaḏi saʔaltu-ka ^ʿn-hu
found I nom def book acc which asked I nom you acc about it acc
'I found the book which I asked you about.'

The resumptive pronoun is equally (if not more) needed in indefinite relatives. In point of fact, indefinite relatives can never occur without a resumptive pronoun. This explains beforehand why (27a) is permitted while (27b) is barred:

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- (27) a. ishtarayt-u kitāba-n lam ?aqra?u- hu min qabli
bought I nom book acc not read before
'I bought a book which I haven't read before.'
b. * ?ishtarayt-u kitāba-n lam ?aqra?u-Ø min qablu
bought I nom book acc not read before
'I bought a book which I haven't read before.'

Surprisingly, the resumptive strategy is also used in English, yet it is not the standard strategy as in Arabic. Haegeman (1991:372) describes it as a *substandard strategy*, i.e. the relative clauses made by this strategy cannot be used in Standard English. Chomsky (1982: 11) describes the resumptive strategy "as marginal in Standard English ... and is fairly common in colloquial English" as appears in the example that he presents:

28. the man [who_i John saw him_i]
29. the man[who_i they think that if Mary marry him_i, then everyone will be happy]
30. I wonder [who_i they think that if Mary marries him_i, then everyone will be happy]

Chomsky's elaboration on the examples above is that the resumptive pronoun *him* is understood as a variable that is bound by the relativiser *who* through coindexation (ibid.).

Before closing this section, it is noteworthy that resumptive pronouns in English cannot be reduced and subsequently cannot be cliticised like those in Arabic.

1.6.1.1 Resumptive Pronoun Deletion

Earlier we argued in favour of the presence of the resumptive pronoun in relative clauses and how far it is significant to the well-formedness of the sentence. In this section, the argument is switched to be totally the reverse; that is, instead of its appearance, it is its disappearance that is focused on:

31. ?a^cjaban-i l-lTālib-u allaḏi ?ajāb-a (Ø)^cala su?āl-i
admired I nom def student nom who answered (Ø) def question
'I admired the student who answered the question.'
32. šakart-u l-lTālibat-a allati najaha-t (Ø) fi-l ?ixtibār
thanked I nom student fem acc who passed (Ø) def exam
'I thanked the student who passed the exam.'

It is obvious that (31) and (32) contain no resumptive pronoun as indicated by the sign (Ø). Hence judging them in terms of the discussion in §1.6.1., they should be marked unacceptable; as this does not happen, we soon conclude that the need for the resumptive pronoun is not always essential to the structure of the relative. Therefore, contrary to the argument above that stipulates the presence of the resumptive pronoun, the argument is now shifted towards its deletion or suppression as it becomes necessary to the well-formedness of the sentence. In view of this it is plausible to ask the following: 'how come the resumptive pronoun is deleted without actually affecting the well-formedness of the sentence?' To answer this question, let us compare the following:

33. al-rajul-u (allaḏi qābaltu-hu) muḥammad-un
def man nom who nom met I him muhammad
'The man whom I met is Muhammad.'
34. al-Tālibu (allaḏi ?ajāb-a Ø^cala su?āl-i) muḥammad-un
def student nom who nom answered def question muhammad
'The student who answered the question is Muhammad.'

A moment's reflection would reveal that the positions that the resumptive pronoun occupies in (33) is different from that in (34): in (33) the resumptive pronoun stands in the object position (more exactly the direct object), whose appearance is optional (cf. 21),

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while in (34) it stands in the subject position where it shouldn't appear. Farghal (1986: 70-71) illustrates this distinction via the following two formulas:

35. X [NP_i Comp Y NP_i] Z
 [+Rel] [+ pro]
 [+ acc]
 1 2 3 4 5 6 ⇨ 1 2 3 4 Ø 6 "optional"

36. X [NP_i (Comp) Y NP_i] Z
 [+Rel] [+pro]
 [+nom]
 1 2 3 4 5 6 ⇨ 1 2 3 4 Ø 6 "obligatory"

Condition: 2 = 5

(35) reveals that number (5) which represents the resumptive pronoun is optionally replaced by Ø because it stands in the object position, while in (36) it is obligatorily replaced by Ø because it stands in the subject position.

Hence the attempt to adding a resumptive pronoun to (31) and (32) they would respectively be as:

(37) ?a^cjabani l-Tālibu allaḏi ?ajāba **huwa** ^calal-sua? ā l-i
 admired I nom def student nom who answered huwa def al question
 'I admired the student who answered the question.'

(38) šakart-u l-Tālibata allati najahaḥt **hiya** fil?ixtibār-i
 thanked I nom student fem acc who passed hiya def exam
 'I thanked the student who passed the exam.'

(Bakir 1979 and Farghal 1986) in their treatment of this point state that (37) and (38) and similar examples, are acceptable only when they are used for emphasis or to show more care in the subject; otherwise they are deemed awkward.

The argument above begs asking the following: "why is the resumptive pronoun dropped in subject position?" Knowing the following fact about languages can be an appropriate answer: according to Chomsky's (1981) binary division of languages, viz. *pro-drop* languages (or subject-drop) languages and *non-pro drop* languages, Arabic belong to the first type of languages which are able to drop or dispense with their subject. Again, this might raise asking the following: "what then makes a language belongs to any of the above divisions? This ultimately depends on whether the language is richly or poorly inflected (Ali, 2006: 221-2). Since Arabic is richly inflected, this enables the speaker of Arabic to easily recover or detect the subject dropped; hence, its appearance makes it superfluous and consequently yielding an awkward sentence⁷. Hence a casual glance at (31) and (32) above would soon reveal that the dropped subject pronoun in (31) is a third person masculine singular and that the one in (32) is a third person feminine singular. In (32) the verb najahaḥ-t has the femininity marker (tā? il-t?anīΘ l-sākinah) that helps to recover the dropped subject.

The deletion of the subject pronoun is also intuitively justified. That is to say, by virtue of intuition, it is so easy for a native speaker of Arabic to infer the subject pronoun dropped. The simplicity of inferring the deleted pronoun in subject position makes its suppression obligatory and its appearance redundant. Bakir (1979 : 184) in his discussion of subject pronoun deletion in topic-comment sentences, also draws on resumptive pronoun deletion within relative clauses. He states that subject- pronoun deletion in relative clauses is done by

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analogy with subject-pronoun deletion in topic –comment sentences⁸. The rule for deletion or retention of the resumptive pronoun in both structures as he explains depends on how far or near the resumptive pronoun is from the antecedent; this means that the resumptive pronoun is sensitive to distance from its antecedent, i.e. when the resumptive pronoun is coreferential with the nearest antecedent, it does not appear on the surface, but if, on the other hand, it is coreferential with a higher NP (antecedent) it DOES surface as obvious in the following examples that he presents:

39. nasiya muḥammadun ?isma r-rajul-a allaḏi reḥeba bi-hi

forgot Muhammad name def –man who welcomed with- him

'Muhammed forgot the name of the man who welcomed him.'

40. nasiya muḥammadun ?isma r-rijula allaḏi raḥaba huwa bi-hi

forgot Muhammad name def –man who welcomed he with- him

'Muhammed forgot the name of the man whom he welcomed him.'

In (39), the subject resumptive pronoun does not need to surface as it is coreferential with a *r-rajula* which is close to it, while in (40) as it is coreferential with *muḥammadun*, which is far from it, it has to surface. The deletion of the resumptive pronoun in (39) and its retention in (40) has its impact on the interpretation of the sentences: in (39) it is the man (*al rajula*) who welcomed Muhammad while in (40) it is Muhammad who welcomed the man (*al rajula*). (ibid.)

With respect to English there is no such argument simply because its relative clauses ultimately appear with no resumptive pronouns.

1.6.1.2. Two Facts about the Resumptive Pronoun

So far the focus has been on the significance of the resumptive pronoun to the syntax of the relative clause and how its deletion results in sentences that are grammatically unacceptable. The focus is now geared towards knowing these two facts: first, knowing whether where it normally appears, namely after the antecedent is its original site or is moved to it by the transformational process known as wh-movement ; second, knowing whether it is first generated as a pronoun or as an NP that is pronominalised.

To find out about these two facts related to the resumptive pronoun, we can capitalize on the argument presented in § 1.2 that talks about the structure of the relative clause. Though actually there is no direct reference to the resumptive pronoun there, but we can detect the following: first, the resumptive pronoun first originates as an NP that is subject to certain transformational processes. This is true via the deep structure of the relative clause given in (3) that shows it as an NP that is structured of an NP plus a sentence. Accordingly, the sentence must contain an NP that corresponds with the NP preceding it as shown in the deep structure in (4) repeated here for convenience as (39), but before the NP being substituted:

41. The man you saw the man is friendly.

The deep structure in (41) shows that the antecedent *the man* is itself in the embedded sentence and cannot be somebody else. This is verified via coindexation in which the two NPs are given the same sign as shown in (42):

42. The man_j you saw the man_j is friendly.

This is further verified by the fact that the relative pronoun that substitutes the second NP is basically chosen in correspondence with the first. (Details of selecting a relative pronoun are given in § 1.2.) Thus in (42) the relative pronoun that suits to substitute the second NP must be *whom* because the NP it substitutes is a person and it is in the object position as appears in (43):

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43. The man_j you saw whom_j is friendly

Relative clause transformations stated in (8) (repeated here as (44)) then move the relative pronoun to the front of the clause according to which (43) would appear as in (45):

44. $X + NP_1 + A + NP_2 + B + Y \Rightarrow X + NP_1 + \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{who} \\ \text{which} \\ \text{that} \\ \text{where} \\ \text{when} \end{array} \right\} + A + B + Y$

45. The man whom you saw is friendly.

When the relative pronoun is moved from its original position, it will determinedly leave a space behind it technically known as **the gap**.⁹ It is easy to notice this in (45) in which the verb *saw* is followed by a gap rather than by an object as it is a transitive verb. I shall return to this point again in the ensuing section.

The picture is not like this in Arabic, i.e. the relative pronoun when moved does not leave its original place or position vacant as in English; rather it leaves a pronoun behind it called a resumptive pronoun or a returning pronoun. This returning pronoun is a mini picture of the relative pronoun moved as we argued above.

In view of the argument above, we conclude that the resumptive pronoun is base-generated then it undergoes movement, i.e. the place where it normally appears, namely immediately after the antecedent, is not its original place but is moved to it via the process known as wh-movement. What we also conclude is that the resumptive pronoun is originally a noun that has been pronominalised .

1.7. The Gap Strategy

The gap strategy is named after the gap that the relative clause contains. However, it is implausible to think of the gap as a mere slot that stands for nothing; in point of fact, it represents the structural position of a missing component that corresponds in meaning to the antecedent. As such, the gap occupies a position in the gap strategy parallel to that occupied by the resumptive pronoun in the resumptive strategy.

Douglas et al (1999: 608) in their description of relative clauses refer to the *gap* as one of the three major constituents of which the relative clause is made, i.e. the *head noun* and the *relativiser*. But, what actually characterises the gap is that it is zero realised, i.e. there is nothing in the relative clause that leads to it as shown in (46):

46. The diamond ring that **Mary wore**

The noun phrase *The diamond ring* is the head noun, *that* is the relativiser that refers to the head noun, and *the gap* that occurs in the object position after the verb *wore*; however, there is nothing after the verb *wore* that refers to the gap.

Hence to show that the gap really represents an element in the surface structure of the relative clause, syntacticians in their manipulation of this point try to insert *t* (for *trace*) in the gap in order to mark the position of an NP element that was moved as required by relative clause formation. Hence, a new version of (46) is given in (47):

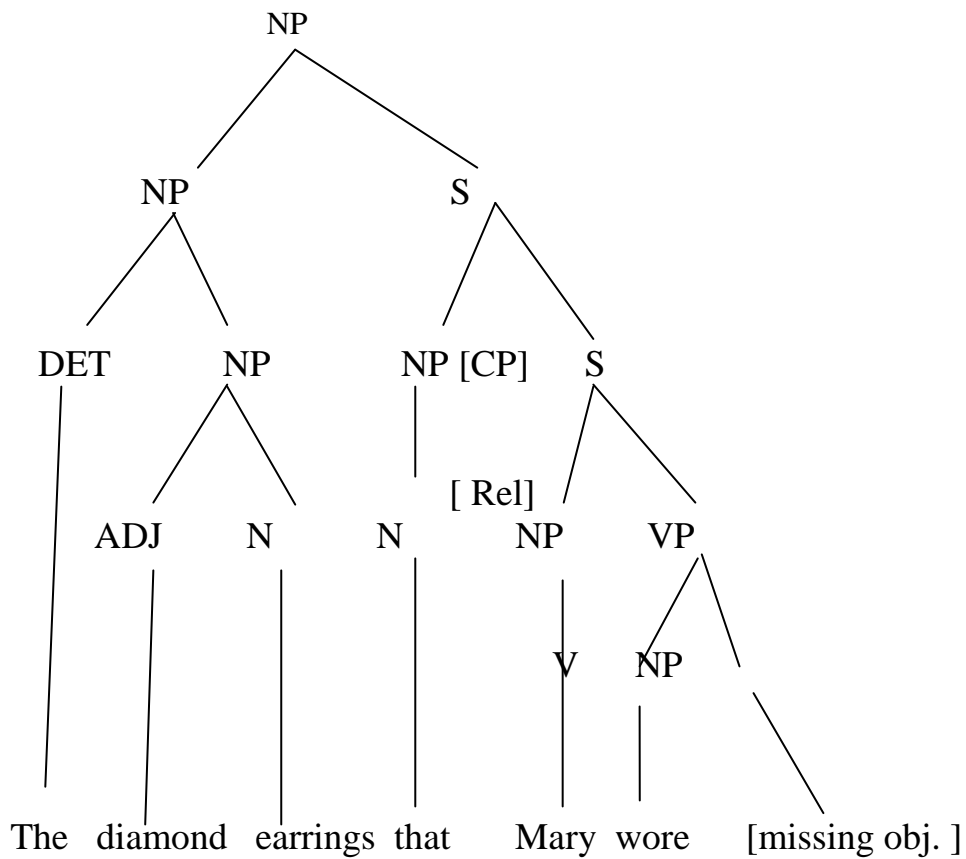
47. The diamond earrings **that Mary wore t**

This is further illustrated within the constituent structure trees of both (46) and (47) given as (48) and (49) respectively:

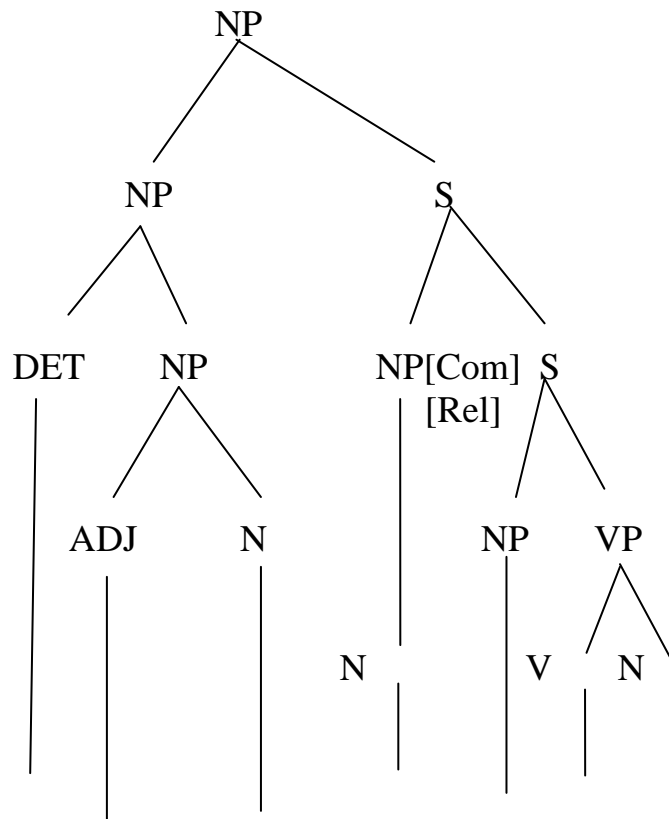
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(48)



(49)



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The phrase structure in (52) with the help of the arrow shows that the relative pronoun does not remain **in situ** (i.e. in place) but is moved to its new location without leaving anything behind as indicated by the symbol *t*. The arrow also shows that the original location of the relative pronoun is not where it appears (i.e. immediately following the antecedent) but where it is marked with a (*t*).

The fact that the gap in relative clauses DOES imply an element that has undergone movement can further be maintained by *WH*-movement which Chomsky (1977) and subsequent literature assume as shown in the following examples:

53. The woman whom you criticised came this morning.

The sentence in (53) is derived from the d-structure in (54):

54. The man [Com [you criticised whom]] came this morning.
[+wh] S

Then how the gap is generated can be shown through the s-structure of (53) given in (55) that witnesses *wh*-movement according to which the relative pronoun *whom* moves to the front of the clause:

55. The man [whom_i [you criticised t_i]] came this morning.
[+wh] S

The examples that we have rendered so far exhibit movement or more exactly *wh*-movement from object position; this of course begs asking the following: are there also examples of *wh*-movement from subject position? That is to say: does the subject also experience the same thing that occurs to the object? Let us start with the following examples taken from Haegeman (1991: 361) in which the subject is questioned:

56. Who_i do you think [t_i will arrive first]?

57. [Cp Who_i [IP t_i will arrive first]]?

(56) exhibits a long subject movement (as the arrow indicates (it is my arrow)) in which the subject is extracted from the subject position in the lower clause to the subject position in the higher clause leaving a co-indexed trace behind. In (57) movement does not seem so obvious. But by analogy with object movement and long subject movement, the subject *wh*-phrase in (57) also witnesses movement, but in contrast with long subject movement in (56), the effect of short movement in (57) cannot be observed on the surface string and that t_i has no phonetic content. Such a movement whose effect cannot be observed is referred to as instance of **vacuous movement** (see Haegeman 1991 for the term).

Since relative clauses are considered as an aspect of *WH*-construction as they also contain *WH*-words, then in the same way that subject movement that we have observed within questions, we can observe subject movement within relative clause as true in the following example:

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58. The letter which surprised Peter .

(58) is similar to (57) as it also witnesses subject movement of the type labelled **vacuous movement** as seen in its s-structure:

59. [NP The letter [Cp which_i [IP t_i surprised Peter]]

Let us now shift to Arabic to see whether its relative clauses are also made by the gap strategy as well as the resumptive strategy.

Aoun et al (2010: 166) mention that the gap strategy is allowed only and only in definite relative clauses and especially the direct object position:

60. alkitabu allađi sayashtari sāmi mawjūdun fil-maktabati

the- book that buy.fut. 3ms Sami exist. ms in- the- bookstore

'The book that Sami will buy is available in the bookstore.'

61. ra?ayt-u l-lawḥat-a allati qulta ?anna-ka satashtari

saw I the-painting that said you that you buy fut.

'I saw the painting that you said you will buy.'

It is easy to observe that verb *sayashtari* in both (60) and (61) is followed by a gap which is an indication that relative clauses in Arabic also make use of the gap strategy which is exclusively used in the object position --- more exactly the direct position.

Conclusions

Relative clauses in English and Arabic are derived by means of two strategies, namely the resumptive strategy and the gap strategy. Each strategy conditions movement of the relative pronoun from its original position to the new position. In the resumptive strategy the relative pronoun leaves a small pronoun behind it called the resumptive pronoun and after which it is named, while in the gap strategy it leaves a space behind which is a *silent copy* of it and after which it is named.

These two strategies are not equally exploited by the two languages: Arabic uses the resumptive strategy far more than English, while English uses the gap strategy far more than Arabic. This means that the resumptive strategy is the default strategy in Arabic while the Gap strategy is the default strategy in English. This, however, does not mean that the language that adopts one strategy as its default strategy never uses the other strategy as an alternative strategy at all. There are examples of the Gap strategy in Arabic and examples of resumptive strategy in English.

Why English adopts the Gap strategy while Arabic adopts the resumptive strategy is of no doubt attributed to the nature of the language as demonstrated in the following fact: languages which are rich in inflections (such as Arabic) adopt the resumptive strategy while those which are poor in inflections adopt the gap strategy.

What else can be added that can be accounted for in terms of the nature of the language as expressed above is that Arabic but not English DOES allow or require additional object pronoun in a relative clause when a relative clause is functioning as object. This is further maintained by Kay (1987) quoted in Lock (1996:58) through his example that we are citing below:

Kataba lkiātb-a allđi qara?tu-hu

'He wrote the book which I read it.'

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End notes

1. Wright (1975) uses the term conjunctive pronoun to mean a relative pronoun.
2. Sometimes, the moved relative pronoun in English also leaves a resumptive pronoun behind it like the one in Arabic; this, however, is not in Standard English as will be shown later.
3. The distinction between definite and indefinite relative clauses is seemingly similar to the distinction between definite and indefinite nouns in the sense that definite nouns contain the definite determiner *ʔal* unlike indefinite nouns which they totally lack it as illustrated in (i) and (ii):

i. al-bayt-u l-jadīd-u
the- house the-new

'The new house.'

ii. baytu-n jadīd

house new

'A new house.' (cf. Aoun et al., 2010)

Or we can say that the role of the relativiser *allaḏi* is parallel to the role of the definite article *ʔal* which is added to the adjective modifying a definite noun.

4. The relative pronoun (relativiser) in both English and Arabic stands for the third person in particular rather than the first or second. The fact is that pronouns in general (including relative pronouns) are referentially vague, i.e. they cannot refer by themselves. It follows that they desperately need to get rid of that vagueness. It seems to be that vagueness within the first and second person is already removed by the presence of both the addresser and the addressee. This, however, does not happen to the third person pronoun that seriously needs a noun (antecedent) that helps in clarifying its referentiality. (see Hassan ,2007 vol , 216).

5. This, however, has to be taken with some caution. By this I mean that in the same way that we are going to argue in favour of the surfacing of the resumptive pronoun , we are also going to argue against this, i.e. its deletion.

6. As for case the agreement between the resumptive pronoun and its antecedent is not as significant as the other two aspects i.e. number and gender. This means that it is quite natural for the antecedent to be in the nominative case while the resumptive pronoun is in the accusative; the disagreement in case does not harm coreferentially. Another way of putting it is that the resumptive pronoun does not have to agree with the case of its antecedent. This is by analogy with the topic in the topic-comment sentence and its resumptive pronoun (see Bakir 1979) .

7. This, however, should not be understood that it is not needed in the structure of the sentence; rather it means that it does not surface in the s- structure as it can easily be detected due to the nature of the language.

8. This means that the resumptive pronoun element is recurrent in structures other than relative clauses such as topic-comment structures as below:

al bayat-u ʔshtra-hu ʔaxu- ka
def –home- nom bought-it brother-your

'The house y, your brother bought it.'

For further discussion of the point (see Bakir, 1979).

9. The term **gap** should be kept distinct from the term **gapping** (ellipsis) despite the similarity in form. (see Radford 2004 and 2009 for further illustration)

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ستراتيجيات بناء جملة الوصل في اللغتين الإنجليزية و العربية: دراسة مقارنة

الخلاصة

هذه الدراسة هي محاولة للكشف عن استراتيجيات بناء جملة الصلة في اللغتين *العربية والإنجليزية، وبيان الاستراتيجية التي تتبناها كل منهما. أظهرت الدراسة أن هناك استراتيجيتين في بناء جملة الصلة، هما: استراتيجية "الضمير العائد"، واستراتيجية "الأثر"، ولكل واحدة منهما أسسها وخصائصها. كما أظهرت أيضاً أن هناك تفاوتاً في استخدام هاتين الاستراتيجيتين، فاللغة العربية تميل إلى تغليب استراتيجية "الضمير العائد" في حين تميل اللغة الإنجليزية إلى تغليب استراتيجية "الأثر"، وهذا ناتج أساساً من طبيعة كل منهما.

* المقصود بالعربية هنا: "اللغة العربية الحديثة المعاصرة المنطوقة أو المكتوبة"، وهي شكل من أشكال اللغة العربية الممتدة من العراق إلى المغرب، الموجودة في الكتب، والمجلات والدوريات وفي الرسائل. كما تستعمل في الخطابات الرسمية العامة في الراديو والتلفزيون وفي المناسبات الدينية (أنظر كوان ١٩٧٤ ص ٧).