



**Ain Shams University**

**Faculty of Women for Arts, Science and Education**

**The Department of English Language and Literature**

## **Multiple Agree in Classical Arabic: A Minimalist Approach**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that the Minimalist concept of Multiple Agree (Hiraiwa, 2001) provides a unified analysis of two unrelated phenomena that pervade the syntax of Classical Arabic (CA). The first phenomenon concerns with multiple case assignment within the CA vP. However, the second one deals with Concord within the CA DP. Multiplicity within the CA vP is caused by case assignment between a single probe and several goals. However, in the case of Concord in the CA DP, the multiplicity is a result of copying the gender, person, number, case and (in)definiteness features of the head noun to its single-word modifier(s). This study provides that the verb assigns the accusative case to its dependents (i.e. items within the domain of the verb) regardless the fact whether the verb is transitive, intransitive, or unaccusative. The researcher claims that multiple case assignment within the CA verb phrase as a phase (i.e. transitive verb phrase) occurs via Multiple Agree. However, the accusative case is assigned within the CA verb phrase as a non-phase (i.e. intransitive and passive verb phrase) applies through the feature percolation operation. Unlike the head verb in multiple case assignment within the vP, the head noun in the DP is not a case assigner. However, phi-features, case, and (in)definite feature carried by the head noun are copied by all its single-word modifiers. The researcher argues that Concord between a modified head noun and its multiple modifiers in phi-features and definite feature occurs via Parallel Merge (i.e. Multiple Agree between multiple probes and a single goal). Nevertheless, feature percolation operation is responsible for Concord in case feature between them in CA.

**Key words:** Minimalist Approach, Features, Agree, Multiple Agree, Locality Constraint, C-command Relation, Transfer, Phase.



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### List of Abbreviations and Symbols

| <b>Abbreviation/Symbol</b> | <b>Full Form</b>                  |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>+Def</b>                | Definite                          |
| <b>+V</b>                  | Voiced                            |
| <b>A</b>                   | Adjective                         |
| <b>-acc</b>                | Unaccusative                      |
| <b>ACCc</b>                | Accusative Case                   |
| <b>Adv</b>                 | Adverb                            |
| <b>AdvP</b>                | Adverb Phrase                     |
| <b>A-movement</b>          | Head-to-Head movement             |
| <b>AP</b>                  | Adjective phrase                  |
| <b>C</b>                   | Complementizer                    |
| <b>C</b>                   | Case                              |
| <b>CA</b>                  | Classical Arabic                  |
| <b>CP</b>                  | Complementizer phrase             |
| <b>D</b>                   | Determiner                        |
| <b>Def</b>                 | Definite feature                  |
| <b>-Def</b>                | Indefinite                        |
| <b>DIC</b>                 | Defective Intervention Constraint |
| <b>DP</b>                  | Determiner Phrase                 |
| <b>EPP</b>                 | Extended Projection Principle     |
| <b>Fem.</b>                | Feminine Gender                   |
| <b>FI</b>                  | Feature Inheritance               |
| <b>FIFA</b>                | Feature Inheritance From Above    |
| <b>FIFB</b>                | Feature Inheritance From Below    |
| <b>GB</b>                  | Government and Binding            |
| <b>HMC</b>                 | Head Movement Constraint          |
| <b>Masc.</b>               | Masculine Gender                  |
| <b>N</b>                   | Noun                              |
| <b>Nom.</b>                | Nominative                        |
| <b>NOMc</b>                | Nominative case                   |
| <b>NP</b>                  | Noun Phrase                       |
| <b>Oblc</b>                | Oblique Case                      |
| <b>PIC</b>                 | Phase Impenetrability Condition   |
| <b>PF</b>                  | Phonetic Form                     |
| <b>Pl.</b>                 | Plural                            |

|               |                                           |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>PP</b>     | Prepositional phrase                      |
| <b>Pr</b>     | Predicate                                 |
| <b>Prep</b>   | Preposition                               |
| <b>PRO</b>    | Null Big Pronoun                          |
| <b>PrP</b>    | Predicate Phrase                          |
| <b>SPH</b>    | Structure Preserving Hypothesis           |
| <b>T</b>      | Tense                                     |
| <b>-tense</b> | Tenseless                                 |
| <b>TG</b>     | Transformational Grammar                  |
| <b>TP</b>     | Tense Phrase                              |
| <b>Uc</b>     | Unvalued case                             |
| <b>UG</b>     | Universal Grammar                         |
| <b>UTAH</b>   | Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis |
| <b>V</b>      | Verb                                      |
| <b>-V</b>     | Voiceless                                 |
| <b>Val</b>    | Valued                                    |
| <b>Valc</b>   | Valued case                               |
| <b>vP</b>     | Light verb phrase                         |
| <b>VP</b>     | Lexical verb phrase                       |
| <b>VPISH</b>  | Verb Phrase Internal Subject Hypothesis   |
| <b>∅</b>      | Null                                      |
| <b>Φ</b>      | Phi-Features                              |

**Table 1. Abbreviations and Symbols mentioned in the Thesis**

**Table of Symbols Used in the Phonemic Transliteration of Classical Arabic Consonant Forms**

|                    | Bilabial    | Labio-Dental | Inter-Dental               | Dental                     | Dento-Alveolar             | Palatal     | Post-Alveolar | velar                      | Uvular      | glottal     |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Plosive            | b ب<br>(+v) |              |                            | t ت<br>(-v)<br>d د<br>(+v) |                            |             |               | K ك<br>(-v)<br>g ج<br>(+v) | q ق<br>(-v) | ? ء<br>(-v) |
| Plosive Emphatic   |             |              |                            | ṭ ط<br>(-v)<br>ḍ ض<br>(+v) |                            |             |               |                            |             |             |
| Fricative          |             | f ف<br>(-v)  | θ ث<br>(-v)<br>ð ذ<br>(+v) |                            | z ز<br>(+v)<br>s س<br>(-v) |             | sh ش<br>(-v)  | ɣ غ<br>(+v)<br>x خ<br>(-v) |             | h ه<br>(-v) |
| Fricative Emphatic |             |              | ẓ ظ<br>(+v)                |                            | ṣ ص<br>(-v)                |             |               |                            |             |             |
| Nasal              | m م<br>(+v) |              |                            |                            | n ن<br>(+v)                |             |               |                            |             |             |
| Trill              |             |              |                            |                            | r ر<br>(+v)                |             |               |                            |             |             |
| Lateral            |             |              |                            |                            | l ل<br>(+v)                |             |               |                            |             |             |
| Glide              |             |              |                            |                            |                            | y ي<br>(+v) |               |                            |             |             |

**Table 2. Symbols of Classical Arabic Consonants**

(Ezzat, 1973, XI-XIII)

Due to space configurations, the following symbols are not present in table 2:

- The symbol for the Pharyngeal Voiced fricative (ʕ ع).
- The symbol for the Pharyngeal Voiceless fricative (ħ ح).

(Ezzat, 1973, XI-XIII)

**Table of Symbols Used in the Phonemic Transliteration of Classical Arabic Vowels**

| <b>Vowels</b> | <b>Description</b>              | <b>Examples</b> | <b>Translation</b> |
|---------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| /i/           | short high unrounded vowel      | xil-t           | thought- I         |
| /i:/          | long high front unrounded vowel | Kariim          | Generous           |
| /u/           | short high back rounded vowel   | shugaaʕ         | brave              |
| /u:/          | back close rounded vowel        | Nuquud          | Money              |
| /a/           | short mid unrounded vowel       | ʕala            | On                 |
| /a:/          | long mid unrounded vowel        | ʕaaqil          | Reasonable         |

**Table 3. Symbols of Classical Arabic Vowels**

(Ezzat, 1973, XI-XIII)

- Vowel Lengthening is indicated by doubling the vowel as ʕaaqil (i.e. reasonable).
- Gemination is indicated by doubling the consonant letter, as ʕadda (i.e. counted).

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **Theoretical Background**