Formal and Functional Analysis of Dependent Clauses in Arabic

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Abstract:

The clause is a unit lower than the sentence in the hierarchical rank scale of units though, like the sentence, it has a subject and a predicate. Some sentences may contain only one clause and are, therefore, called simple sentences, while others that include more than one clause are called non-simple sentences (compound, complex). The current study focuses on the second type and specifically the complex sentence where one clause is the main clause while the other is dependent since it functions in the structure of the main clause to realize one of four functions, namely, S, O, C or A. Dependent clauses (DCs) can be classified into two categories: nominal dependent clauses (NDCs) and adverbial dependent clauses (ADCs). The former can function as subject (S), object (O) or complement (C) whereas the latter can function as adverbial (A) only. The study proves that DCs exist in Arabic and can also realize nominal and adverbial functions. It aims at listing the categories of DCs in Arabic and the functions that can be achieved by each of these categories.

Key Words: Subject, Predicate, Independent Clauses, Complex Sentence, Arabic,

1. Introduction

The clause is a unit lower than the sentence in the hierarchical rank scale of units though, like the sentence, it has a subject and a predicate. It works in the sentence structure sometimes just to realize one of the sentential functions and in this case it is called dependent. However, some sentences may contain only one clause and are, therefore, called simple sentences, while others include more than one clause are called non-simple sentences (compound, complex). The current study focuses on the second type and specifically the complex sentence where one clause is the main clause while the other clause is a dependent one since it functions in the structure of the main clause to realize S, O, C or A. DCs are classified into two main types: nominal dependent clauses (NDCs) and adverbial dependent clauses (ADCs). The former can function as subject (S), object (O) or complement (C) whereas the latter can function as adverbial (A) only (See Quirk et al 1973: 319-322; and Leech, 2006: 27). The study proves that DCs exist in Arabic and can also realize
nominal and adverbial functions. It aims at listing the categories of DCs in Arabic and the functions that can be achieved by each of these categories.

The study is based on the hypothesis that the clause unit exists in Arabic and that DCs in Arabic can realize both nominal and adverbial functions just as their counterparts in English. It is restricted to written sentences only where DCs are assigned different sentential functions.

In the study, different types of dependent clauses shall be discussed with examples taken from Glorious Quran and other non Quranic examples. The non Quranic examples are invented by the authors. The examples shall be analyzed depending on the Bloomfieldian (1933) Immediate Constituent Analysis (ICA) theory that takes into consideration the formal and functional parameters. According to this model, there are five sentential functions: S, V, O, C and A all of which except V can be realized by dependent clauses.

2. Nominal Dependent Clauses

Nominal dependent clauses (NDCs) can achieve phrasal nominal functions, namely S, O and C (see Crystal, 1985: 207 and Leech, 2006: 68). In this section, NDCs will be investigated and analyzed to reveal their number and structure. The conjunctions that introduce each of these categories will also be focused on.

2.1 Particle-Infinitive NDCs

Particle infinitive NDCs are introduced by such particles asﺍﻥْ (an, to) and ﻝﻮ (lau, if) followed by the base form of the verb (Ibn ‘Aqĩl, 1964: 178) as in the following examples:

1. ﺍﻟﺒﻘﺮﺓ: 184 ﴿ﻭَﺍﻥْ ﺃَﺩِصْوَﺃ ﺧَﻴْﺮٌ ﻟَﻜُﻢ ﴾ 1.

C S

"And that you fast is better for you" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:37).

2. ﻞُو ﺃُﺳﺎﻓِر ﺍﻟِّصِّبِينَ (I wish I could travel to China.)

O SV

It is to be noted that an -infinitive NDCs are different from ﺍﻥْ- NDCs since the latter is followed by a noun phrase as its مِبْتِدَأ (inchoative) and another noun phrase, adjectival phrase or adverbial phrase as its ﺧَِبَر (comment) (see 2. 2 below). Besides, an- infinitive clause is different from an-ADC since the latter should be followed by the past form of the verb to realize an A function (see 3. 6 below).
2.2 anna NDCs

The anna-clause is another type of NDCs in which the conjunction أنّ (anna, that) and its variant بَأُنّ (bi'anna) are followed by a nominal clause consisting of مِبْتِدَأ (an inchoative) and خِبَر (a comment) (Sibawayh, 1988: 131).

anna-NDCs cannot start sentences because it always comes after the main clause to realize O or C but not S. In fact, it is the indirect rendering of a statement beginning with أنّ (anna, that) as in the following:

3. A. قال رَيِّد إنَّ الجو حَا (Zaid said ‘the climate is hot’.)
    B. قال رَيِّد أنَّ الجو حَا (Zaid said that the climate was hot.)

2.3 Participle NDCs

Participle NDCs are nominal forms derived from dynamic verbs to indicate the process implied in the verbs from which they are derived (Biber et al, 1999: 458). Thus, the participle form ذَهَب (going) is derived from the verb يَذَهَب (go) and the form قاتِل (fighting) is derived from the verb يقاتِل (fight) and so on. In fact, it seems as if these forms are variants of an NDCs. Compare the following pairs of examples:

4. A: لا أُدَّد إنْ انتظَر طَوِيلاً (I do not want to wait long.)
    B: لا أُدَّد الانتظَر طَوِيلاً (I do not want waiting long.)

A distinction should be made between dynamic participle NDCs and stative constructions that represent the result of the action implied in such forms. Thus, we should distinguish between, for instance, تطوير الزّراعة (developing agriculture) represents an NDC while تطور الزّراعة (agricultural development) represents a noun phrase in the following pair of sentences:

5. (The government wanted to develop agriculture.)

6. (Agricultural development happened in Iraq.)

The difference between 5 and 6 above is that 5 is a complex sentence in which the DC is an NDC realizing the O function, while 6 is a simple sentence because it includes one clause only.
2. 4 Relative NDCs

Relative NDCs are those introduced by such conjunctions as یا (aeyyu, which), ما (ma, what), من (man, who), الذي (allâî, which, who (singular)), الذين (allađîna, who, whom (plural)), etc. where the conjunction (the relative pronoun) assumes the S function in the NDC (Sîbaweyh, 1988:80). Consider the following examples:

7. "He who emigrates (from his home) in the Cause of Allah, will find on earth many dwelling places and plenty to live by" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:126).

8. "Know the (Jews) not that Allah knows what they conceal and what they reveal" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:16).

In 8 above, there are three clauses: the first is the main clause and the other two are dependent. The ?nna-NDC ئلا يعْلَمُونَ which functions as O in the main clause contains another dependent clause (ما يُسَرِّوَنَ وما يُعْلَنُونَ) which is a relative NDC functioning as O in its internal structure.

Further, relative NDCs, especially those introduced by الذي (alâî), الذين (alâdinâ), اللواتي (alwate), etc., can be transhifted to work as a qualifier of the head in a complex noun phrase as in the following example:

9. "Successful are indeed the believers. Those who offer their Salât with all solemnity and full submissiveness" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:455).

In 9 above, the relative NDC الذين هُمُ في صلاتِهِمْ خَاشِعَونَ functions as a qualifier of the noun phrase head (المؤمنون). Both the head and its modifying clause realize the S function in the main clause structure.

2. 5 Interrogative NDCs

Interrogative NDCs are indirect questions used to realize nominal functions. They are introduced by pronominal question words such as لماذا (limâđa, why), كيف (kayfa, how), متى (mata, when), اين (ayna, where), etc. whose function in the NDC varies according to semantic-syntactic
parameters. Thus, the question word من (man, who) may fulfills the S or O functions while the question words كيف (how) can realize the A function:

10. "Do they not look at the camels, how they are created?" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:832).

11. (I asked the boy who broke the window.)

2. 6 na'am-la NDCs

na'am-la NDCs are those that imply indirect na'am-la question introduced by such conjunctions as (؟نما, if), هل (hal, ?), فيما إذا (fema ada whether), أ (?, ?), etc. Such NDCs can realize the O or C functions but they cannot realize the S function, e.g.

12. "[Sulaiman (Solomon)] said: "We shall see whether you speak the truth or you are (one) of the liars" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:507).

13. "So when she came, it was said (to her): "Is your throne like this?" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:509).

na ?am-la NDCs can be used to realize the A function when they indicate conditional-concessive meanings. Here, the complex correlative سواء ... أو/oأ (؟م، sawa أ whether... or) is often used and the dependent clause is mobile unlike its nominal indications where it occupies a fixed position in the complex sentence structure, e.g.

14. "It is the same to them whether you warn them or you warn them not, they will not believe" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:588).

2. 7 Bare-Infinitive NDCs

Bare infinitive NDCs can also realize nominal functions in the complex sentence structure. In such clauses, the present form of the verb with its implied subject is used to realize a nominal
function (typically O) especially after verbs that indicate initiating actions such as بدأ (bad a, start), راح (ra ha, started), شرع (šara c, set off), أخذ (ʔxda, start), طفق (tafaka, began). Consider the following examples:

15. (الاعراب:22) ﻉُﻔْﻨَـا ﻛُنْ نُظَـرِ ٱلْجَـبَـلِ
O                  SV
"and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of Paradise" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:202).

16. (The man began towards the forest.)
O          S        V
"and he remained clapping his hands (with sorrow) over what he had spent upon it" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:391).

There are, however, rare examples in Arabic where bare infinitive NDCs are used to realize S, e.g.:

17. ﺗَـسَـمَـعُ ﺑِمَعْـيَـدِي ﺧَـبَرُ ﻣِنَ ﺍٰنَ ﺗَـرَاٰहُ
C             S
((to) hear of the Muʾaedi is better that to see him) (Sibaweyh, 1975: 44)

18. ﺗَـزَـعَمُوا ﻝِـلْـنَـاَٰذِرِ ﺑِنَـةَ ﺳَـرَٰعَاءٍ
V            S
("They alleged" is the boat of lying.)

3. Adverbial Dependent Clauses

Adverbial dependent clauses (ADCs) are introduced by different types of subordinating conjunctions whether these conjunctions are simple (one word), compound (more than two words) or correlative (two separate parts) (Quirk et al, 1985: 1546). They are used to realize just one function, that is A; therefore, they can be used in different places in the sentence (initially, medially, finally). There are ten categories of ADCs in Arabic and the coming subsections are dedicated to investigating these categories.

3.1 Time ADCs

Time ADCs indicate the time in which the action implied in the verb of the main clause takes place (Eisele, 1999: 173). They can be introduced by such conjunctions as عندنا (ʔandama, when), بينما (baynama, while), حينما (heenama, when), حتى (ʔδ, when), حتى (hatta, till), بعد (baʾda, after), قبل (qabla, before), etc. Consider the following examples:
"So when Zaid had accomplished his desire from her (i.e. discovered her), We gave her to you in marriage" (Al-Hilālī and Khān, 1419:567).

"and glorify the Praises of your Lord when you get up from sleep" (Al-Hilālī and Khān, 1419:717).

"If only, those who do wrong could see, when they will see the torment that all power belongs to Allah" (Al-Hilālī and Khān, 1419:33).

In 23 above, both A and O are realized by dependent clauses. A is realized by an ADC of time while O is realized by ?nna-NDC.

Sometimes, time ADCs can be introduced by lexical expressions having temporal indications, such as حَذَاء (lāhāzata, moment), يوم (yaum, day), ساعة (sa at, hour) etc.

"Verily, (Allah) is Able to bring him back (to life)! The Day when all the secrets (deeds, prayers, fasting, etc.) will be examined (as to their truth)" (Al-Hilālī and Khān, 1419:829).

Besides, some conjunctions (e.g. حَتَى) can introduce different ADCs and, in this case, the context can be relied on in deciding the type of the ADC. In 27 below, for example, حَتَى introduces a time ADC.

"and if they testify, confine them (i.e. women) to houses until death comes to them" (Al-Hilālī and Khān, 1419:109).

3. 2 Place ADCs

Place ADCs are those that indicate the place of the action or state implied in the V of the main clause. They are introduced by such conjunctions as حَيْثُ (haythu, anywhere), حَيْثَماً (haythuma,
wherever),  عـند (ئا nda, at), قـرب  (qurb, near), etc (Abu-Haidar 1991: 144). Consider the following examples:

(النساء:89)  ﴿إِذَاَ فَلَمْ يَفْتَرَّوْا فَخُذُوهُمْ ﭧَاجَدُوهُمْ﴾ 26.

A  V(S)O  V(S)O  A

"But if they turn back (from Islam), take (hold of) them and kill them where you find them" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:124).

3. 3 Condition ADCs

Condition ADCs refer to the condition on which the occurrence of the action in the V of the main clause depends (Abu-Chacra, 2007: 309). They are introduced by such conjunctions as إذا (ئا, if), إن (ئن, if) لما (lamma, when), حتى (hatta), طالما (talama, as long as), لو (lau, if), لتن (la?in, as), etc. Consider the following examples:

(البقرة: 221) ﴿لا تنكحوا الشركات حتى يؤمنون﴾ 28.

A  O  V(S)

"And do not marry Al-Mushrikat (idolatresses, etc.) till they believe (worship Allah alone)" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:47).

( البقرة:20) ﴿فَإِنْ طَلَقْهَا فَتَحْلَّ فَلَا حَرَّمَهُ ﺑَعْدُ مِنْ هَٰذَا ﻏَيْر﴾ 29.

A  A  A  V(S)  A

Using the conjunction إن (ئن) to introduce an ADC that requires using the particle ـا (fa, if) at the beginning of the main clause as in the following examples:

( البقرة:196) ﴿فَإِنَّ أَخْصَرْتُمْ فَلاَ أَخْصِرُواَ ﻣِنْ أَهْلِهِ﴾ 30.

A  V(S)  A

"But if you are prevented (from completing them), sacrifice a Hady (animal, i.e. sheep, cow or a camel)" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:41).

(Chain of Bukhari) ﴿إن لم تستح ﻓَأَسْتَنْع ﻣَا نَشْتَكَى ﻣَا صَبَرَ ﻣَا نَعْمَ إِنَّا ﺟَاءَيْنِ ﻣِنْ أَهْلِهِ﴾ 31.

O  V(S)  A

(If you have no shame, then do whatever you want.

Sometimes, the conjunction ﻣَن (man, whoever) is used to introduce a condition ADC rather than a relative NDC and this can be discerned through meaning as in the following examples:

(فاطر: 10) ﴿إِنَّ ﻣَنْ كَانَ يَرِيدُ ﻣَنْ أَهْلَ ﺍлْمَرْأَةَ ﻓَلْهَا ﺍلْمَرْأَةَ ﺻَمِيمًّا﴾ 32.
“Whosoever desires honor, (power and glory), then to Allah belong all honor” (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:582).

(He who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him show hospitality to his guest) (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Negative condition can be introduced by such conjunctions as  "unless", (malam, unless), "if not" (?lam, if not), "however") (?nn, however), etc. e.g.

“but do not make a promise of contract with them in secret except that you will speak an honorable saying” (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:52).

3. 4 Concession ADCs

According to Rudolph (1996:90), concession ADCs denotes a contrast between two propositions so that the proposition implied in the main clause is contrasted with that in the ADCs. They are introduced by such conjunctions as  "even though", (ruxma anna, even though), "even though") (?nn, even though), "whatever") (Hma, whatever), "while") (eehen, while), "albeit") (walau, albeit), etc. Consider the following examples:

"Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in fortresses built up strong and high!” (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:121).
3. 5 Conditional-Concessive ADCs

Conditional-Concessive ADCs combine conditional and concessive ends (Quintero, 2002:73). They can either be alternative or universal.

Alternative conditional-concessive ADCs can best be introduced by the correlative subordinators: سواء ... ام (saw a c .....am, whether....or ), ان ... او (saw a c ..... au, whether ....or ), etc. e.g.

"It is the same to them whether you warn them or you do not, they will not believe" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:588).

Universal conditional-concessive ADCs can be introduced by such subordinators as مهما (maHma, whatever), كيفما (kaefma, how), ايها (?ea, whatever), etc.

Sometimes, conditional-concessive ADCs can be introduced by zero subordinators where the subordinator is omitted and the context can be adopted in deducing the kind of the ADC. In 41 below, the conditional-concessive ADC is introduced by zero subordinators.

3. 6 Reason ADCs

Snow (1965:33) demonstrates that reason ADCs denote the reason behind the action or state implied in the V of the main clause. They can be introduced by such conjunctions as لان (lanna, because), (an, that), بسبب (bisabab, because of), إذ (؟د, thus), لكون (likaun, because), etc.

Consider the following examples:
Reason ADCs introduced by أن (an) requires past form verbs after أن directly. This distinguishes these ADCs from an-infinitive ADCs since the latter require present form verbs after an directly (see 2.1 above).

Further, though the conjunction بسبب introduces the phrasal adverb of reason (e.g. بسبب المطر), it can also introduce a clausal adverb of reason if it is followed by a dynamic derivative form involving action (e.g. بسبب قوط المطر).

3.7 Purpose ADCs

Purpose ADCs express the purpose behind the action or state involved in the V of the main clause (Bravmann, 1977: 228). They can be introduced by conjunctions such as لكي (لأن) (l?ay la, so that (not)), from أجل أن (من أجل أن) (min ajil an, in order to), حتى (لأن) (l?jli an, so that), حتى (لأن) (hatta la, so as (not)), لـ (ле, to), etc.. Consider the following examples:

البقرة: 263 (وقالوا: حتى لا تكون قنة ويعكون الذين كلهما): 44.
A VSO
"And fight them until there is no more Fitnah (disbelief and worshipping of others along with Allah) and (all and every kind) of worship is for Allah (alone)" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:40).

O VS
"They said: "We have been sent to a people who are Mujrimun (polytheists, sinners, criminals, unbelievers in Allah) to send down upon them stones of baked clay" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:710).

Sometimes, purpose ADCs can be expressed by lexical borderline subordinators as participle forms such as قاسدا (qasidan, intending), داعيا إلى (da ?yani e le, so as to), قصدا (qasda, in order to), رغبة في (r?xباتان fee, wishing for), etc. where the lexical subordinator is often followed by a non-finite form denoting action as in the following example:

46. ذهب إلى الموصل رغبة في شراء بعض الكتب (I went to Mosul to buy some books.)
A A VS

Further, purpose ADCs can be introduced by zero subordinators where the latter can be deduced from the context, e.g.

47. "And (remember) when you (Muhammad ﷺ) left your household in the morning to post the believers at their stations for the battle (of Uhud). (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:91).
3.8 Result ADCs

Result ADCs entail the result of the action or state implied in the V of the main clause (Gary, & Gamal-Eldin, 1982: 22). They can be introduced by such subordinators as (mimma, of which), (حتى, till), (ف, then), (إلى أن, till), (bihayθ, where) etc. Consider the following examples:

"Oh! I wish I had been with them; then I would have achieved a great success (a good share of booty)" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:120).

(A financial crisis happened which propelled the government to announce emergency.)

Further, result ADCs can also be introduced by complex subordinators such as (mimma ada ila, which lead to) (mma nataja, which resulted in) and correlative subordinators such as (jiddan...بيحث, very... where) where the first part of the correlative (e.g. جدا) belongs to the main clause while the other part belongs to the ADC, e.g.

(The exam was too difficult that we failed in passing it.)

It is to be noted that the subordinator (حتى) is versatile as it can introduce different types of ADCs such as time, purpose, concession, result, etc. where only the context can be adopted in discerning the type of the ADC. In 51 below, for instance, (حتى, that) introduces the result ADC.

"They were afflicted with severe poverty and
ailments and were so shaken that even the Messenger and those who believed along with him said, "When (will come) the Help of Allah?" Yes! Certainly, the Help of Allah is near!" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:45).

3.9 Manner and Comparison ADCs

Manner and Comparison ADCs indicate the way in which the action or state involved in the V of the main clause is experienced or the criterion of comparison between two propositions the first of which exists in the main clause and the other in the ADC (Watson 1993: 361). They can be introduced by such subordinators as كانا كا (kan’na, was/were), كا كما (kama, as such), مثلما (miθlama, as), ك (ka, as) etc. Consider the following examples:

"So stand (ask Allah to make) you (Muhammad ﷺ) firm and straight (on the religion of the Islamic Monotheism) as you are commanded" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:301).

"Then by the Lord of the heaven and the earth, it is the truth (i.e. what has been promised to you), just as it is the truth that you can speak" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:708).

"The Day when they will come out of the graves quickly as racing to a goal" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:787).

The subordinators كيف (kayfa, how) and كيفا (kayfama, whatever) can also introduce manner ADCs as in the following example:

"He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He wills" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:68).

3.10 Proposition ADCs

Proposition ADCs denote propositionality, or equivalence or respective relations between the proposition implied in the main clause and that implied in the ADC. They can be introduced by
such subordinators as *kullama* (whenever), مع (*ma'a, and*), etc. Consider the following examples:

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{903} {642} {56} {56}

(۴۰:۸) وَﻛُلْـلَـا مِّرْأَـٰءٖ ﻋَلَـٰـی اَنَاَمَـّـ۸

A VS A

"Whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him, they mocked at him" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:291).

{903} {642} {56} {56}

(۴۰:۲۰) يَكَّـدُ ﻃَـئِرَـٰـٰءٖ ﺑَـخُـطَـتْ أَنْـ۸ـ۸ ﻴْـٰـَـٰءٖ ﺑَـخُـطَـتْ أَنْـ۸ـ۸ ﺑَـخُـطَـتْ أَنْـ۸ـ۸ ﺑَـخُـطَـتْ أَنْـ۸ـ۸ ﺑَـخُـطَـتْ أَنْـ۸ـ۸ ﺑَـخُـطَـتْ أَنْـ۸ـ۸ ﺑَـخُـطَـتْ أَنْـ۸ـ۸ 

A C S V

"The lightening almost snatches away their sight, whenever it flashes from them they walk therein" (Al-Hilâlî and Khân, 1419:5).

Furthermore, the conjunction مع (*ma'a, and*) is always followed by a non-finite participle form derived from a dynamic verb to indicate time as in the following example:

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{903} {642} {56} {56}

{903} {642} {56} {56}

A C S V

Conclusions

In doing this work, the following conclusions have been inferred:

1. Arabic has simple and nonsimple sentences; therefore, dependent clauses exist in Arabic and they can either be nominal or adverbial.
2. Nominal dependent clauses can be represented by particle infinitive NDCs, ?nna NDCs, participle NDCs, relative NDCS, interrogative NDCS, na’am-la NDCsand bare-infinitive NDCs.
3. Adverbial dependent clauses can represent time, place, condition, concession, condition-concessive, reason, result, manner and comparison and proposition.
4. Arabic uses not only function words (conjunctions) in introducing dependent clauses but lexical expressions as well.
5. Arabic uses dynamic derived forms such as ismu-l-fa'il and ismu-l-maf'uul (present and past participles) to represent the V function in some dependent clauses.
7. Some conjunctions in Arabic can introduce different categories of dependent clauses.

8. The structure of the dependent clause is important in deciding its category. Thus, for instance, if the conjunction او (an) is followed by the present form of the verb, the clause is nominal, but if it is followed by a past form of the verb, it is adverbial.

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