

Against Multiple Agreement – Evidence from Standard Arabic

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Abstract

This paper provides evidence, based on the Case properties of verbless copular clauses in Standard Arabic (SA), against the Multiple Agreement Hypothesis proposed for languages such as Japanese (Hiraiwa, 2001), English (Chomsky, 2005b; Radford, 2006), and SA double-accusative structures (Al-Horais, 2013). It argues that the mismatch in Case value between the two nominal constituents – the DP “subject” and the DP or AP predicate - of verbless copular clauses is incompatible with the claim that a single probe can simultaneously agree with more than one goal. Rather, the Case phenomenon within the copular contexts considered appears to be consistent with, and follows from, an Agree relation between a single active probe and a single active matching goal. Some SA copular clauses which include a modal-like negative element - *laysa* - will also be used to address the key issue under investigation.

Key Words: agree, goal, multiple agree, probe, ω -features

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