

A neo–Minimalist Account of *Shift* in number and gender in the Ever–Glorious Qur'ān

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Abstract

The present paper is a linguistic study of *ʔiltifāt* i.e., shift in number and gender between the *fāʿil* (subject) or *mubtadaʿ*, (i.e. theme) and the verb in the Ever–Glorious Qur'ān. The paper starts with three hypotheses: the first is that *Shift* is only a rhetorical phenomenon; the second is that *Shift* in number and gender is a case of subject–verb “partial agreement”; the third is that minimalist approaches (Chomsky: 1995) can account for these cases of *Shift*. To test these hypotheses, two different cases of *Shift* in number and one case of *Shift* in gender in some Qur'ānic ayahs are studied. The examination shows that it is determined by word order or adjacency. It is a type of ‘semantic agreement’ which is determined by semantic factors, i.e. the context, and the semantic properties of the verb. Instead of being a type of ‘partial agreement’, *Shift* is a type of ‘full agreement’ that takes place between the verb and a semantic referent (SR)–underlying the surface subject (SS). The underlying semantic referent’s (SR) phi–features copied onto the verb are different from those of the surface subject (SS), thus resulting in *Shift* in number and gender. The study also shows that minimalist accounts of agreement fail to capture such aspects of *Shift* in the Ever–Glorious Qur'ān. Instead a new approach termed the ‘neo–minimalist account’ which is based on minimalism and takes into account the semantic and syntactic aspects of *Shift*, is set up.

1. Introduction

The present paper is divided into three parts: an introduction, an analysis of cases of *Shift* in number and gender, and a conclusion. The introduction is further subdivided into two sections. The first section of the introduction surveys *Shift* in Arabic, its various terms, definitions

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and its various types. It also reviews old and modern studies of *Shift* in the Ever-Glorious Qurʾān. Attention is focused on cases of *Shift* in number and gender between the *fāʿil* (subject) or *mubtadaʿ*, (i.e. the theme) and the verb. The fact that *Shift* may appear on the surface to be similar to ‘partial agreement’ requires an investigation of agreement in Arabic. This leads to the second section of the introduction which looks into agreement in Arabic with a special focus on studies of ‘partial agreement’. It reviews studies conducted by both Arab and non-Arab linguists on ‘partial agreement’ to determine first whether *Shift* is a type of ‘partial agreement’; second, which of the syntactic approaches described in these studies can adequately account for *Shift* in number and gender. The second part looks into two cases of *fāʿil* or *mubtadaʿ* and verb *Shift* in number and gender in the Ever-Glorious Qurʾān. Close attention is paid to Qurʾānic ayahs displaying shift in number and gender. To ensure clarity, each ayah is provided in Arabic followed by a translation of its meaning into English. The paper finally ends with a conclusion.

1.1. *Shift* in Arabic

Early and modern studies of *Shift* in the Ever-Glorious Qurʾān focus on the origin, definition and function of *Shift*, though they differ in their classification of the phenomenon. Early studies started with a look into the nature of *Shift*. Literally the term is derived from the verb *Shift* that is to shift or direct attention or speaking from one person to another. The phenomenon has been assigned different Arabic terms: *ʿudūl* (i.e. transition or shift) by al-Farrāʾ (1955: 33), *al-Ṣarf* (i.e. diverting) by Ibn Munqidh (1960: 25), and *shajāʿatu al-ʿarabiyyah* (i.e. the valour of Arabic) by Ibn Jinnī (1952: 23). Arab rhetoricians used these terms to refer to the phenomenon in which there is a certain shift from one stylistic or grammatical pattern to another within the same sentence. The phenomenon has been used to denote “the shift that takes place from one meaning to another within the same sentence” (Ibn al-Muʿtazz 1967: 14), or “the following of a statement with a separate statement similar to it in meaning but with a shift to another style” (al-Zarkashī 2004:197). Based on the definition of *Shift* as occurring within the same sentence, early rhetoricians identified only two types of *Shift*, namely shift in number from single to dual or

plural or vice-versa; or from one pronoun (first person to second or third person pronouns, or vice-versa) to another. On the basis of this definition, early rhetoricians pointed out *Shift* in number and pronoun as two different types of *Shift*. They viewed shift as a rhetorical technique used especially in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān to fulfill certain rhetorical purposes, such as “drawing the attention of the listener to a certain meaning, involving him by making him enjoy what he is listening to” and “activating his memory” (al-Zarkashī 2004:197).

In approaching *Shift*, modern Arab rhetoricians as well as non-Arab grammarians followed in the same line of early Arab rhetoricians in defining its nature and purpose. They, however, differed in how they classified it. Like early Arab rhetoricians, modern Arab rhetoricians considered it a rhetorical technique employed to “draw the attention of the listener to a certain meaning”, or “to involve him, to make him enjoy what he is listening to and activate his memory” (Hussein 1984:34; al-Zawba'ī 1996:88–90; Ṭabl 1998:55). The term used in the present paper is the one assigned to it by Ibn al-Mu'taz (1967:392) as *Shift*, since it is the most comprehensive one adopted by early and modern Arab rhetoricians: (al-Zarkashī (1957), Hussein (1984), Fayyūd (1992) al-Zawba'ī (1996) and Ṭabl (1998)). Unlike early rhetoricians' narrow classification of *Shift*, modern rhetoricians' classification is broad. The difference lies in the criterion on which each classification is made. Based on AlZawba'ī's (1996) definition of *Shift* as a shift in the use of one pattern to another within the same sentence or from one sentence to another, it was proposed that *Shift* is not only the shift that occurs between the parts of the same sentence but that it includes also the shift that occurs between two separate sentences. As such, it may include “any and all shifts from one pattern to another without damaging the original meaning or the deep structure of the first sentence” (Ṭabl 1998:55). Modern Arab rhetoricians widened the scope of *Shift* to include not only shift in number and pronouns but also to include shift in other grammatical structures such as verb forms or particles as well. The classification adopted in the present paper and discussed in detail below is a comprehensive one based on both old and modern rhetoricians' classification and distinguishes six types of *Shift*. These are shifts in pronouns (person), number, verb forms, grammatical structures, particles and lexical items, each of which is discussed below with illustrations from Qur'ānic ayahs.

The first type of *Shift* is that of person in pronouns. The shift in pronoun is used to produce various aesthetic and rhetorical effects, e.g. warning disbelievers, or encouraging believers to perform good deeds or to draw people's attention to something (Hussein 1977:281). Different subtypes of shift in the use of pronouns are distinguished. So for instance there is shift from first person plural to second person singular as in the following ayah:

﴿إِنَّا أَنْعَمْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ * فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ﴾ [سورة الكوثر: ١، ٢]

Verily, We have granted you (O Muhammad) Al-Kawthar (a River in Paradise) (Sūrat alKawthar:1–2)¹. Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only).

Here the pronoun shifts from the first person plural pronoun *-nā* in the verb to the second person singular pronoun as indicated in *-ka* attached to the noun *rabbi-ka*. The second subtype is the shift from the second person to the first person as in the following Qur'ānic ayah:

﴿قُلْ اللَّهُ أَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا إِنَّ رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُونَ مَا نَمْكُرُونَ﴾ [سورة يونس: ٢١]

(Say: "Allah is more swift in planning". Certainly, Our Messengers (angels) record all of that which you plot. (Sūrat Yūnis: 21) where a shift occurs from second person singular in the verb *qul* (you) say to the first person plural *-nā* in *rusula-nā*, i.e. (Our) Messengers. The purpose of the shift is to denote the greatness of Allah, the Almighty, the Creator and that He is All-Knowing in the first part of the Qur'ānic ayah, as opposed to people's unawareness and obliviousness of Allah, the Almighty's Greatness in the second part of the Qur'ānic ayah (Ṭabl 1998: 106).

A third subtype is the shift from the third person to the second person as in the following Qur'ānic ayah from sūrat al-Isrā':

﴿سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾ [سورة الإسراء: ١]

1 The translation used throughout this paper is taken from Al-Hilali and Khan's *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language* (1996).

Glorified (and Exalted) is He (Allah) [above all that (evil) they associate with Him) who took His slave (Muhammad) for a journey by night from al-Masjid al-Harām (in Jerusalem), the neighborhood whereof We have blessed) (Sūrat al-Isrā': 1). Here the shift from the implicit third person singular *huwa* in the verb *asrā* and *hi* in *'abdi-hi*, i.e. *slave* to the first person plural *-nā* in *bāraknā* i.e. (*We have*) *blessed* draws attention to the great blessings endowed on al-Aqṣā Mosque by Allah, the Almighty (Fayūd 1992:160). Note that in all the above examples the shift in pronoun is employed to achieve various rhetorical effects, e.g. creating freshness and variety to renew the reader's interest and keep his mind from boredom.

The second type is that of *Shift* in number. It should be noted that Hussein (1984: 288) and al-Zarkashī (2004: 198) point out to the shift in number not as a type of *Shift* but rather as a type of *'udūl* or *khurūj al-kalām 'an muqadā al-zāhir*, (i.e. shift from explicit and apparent meaning to implicit and hidden meaning). It may be further subdivided into shift from singular to plural and vice versa, or singular to dual and vice versa, or dual to plural or vice versa. The following Qur'ānic ayah shows some examples of this type of *Shift*. In this example the shift is from singular *sam*^c, (i.e. *hearing*) to plural noun *absār* i.e., *eye sights* as in

﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَرَعَهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ مَنِ إِلَهُ غَيْرَ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ أَنْظِرْكُمْ كَيْفَ نَصِرُفُ
الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصْذِفُونَ﴾ [سورة الأنعام: ٤٦]

Say to the disbelievers: Tell me, if Allah took away your hearing and your sights and sealed up your hearts, is there – an *ilāh* (a god) other than Allah who could restore them to you? See how variously We explain the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), yet they turn aside. (Sūrat al-An'ām: 46). According to al-Zarkashī, the shift is due to the fact that *sam*^c, i.e. *hearing* is used as a *maṣḍar*, i.e. a deverbal noun which is never inflected for plural in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān, though in non-Qur'ānic Arabic the plural form *asmā*^c may be found, while *absār* i.e. *eye sights* is considered a concrete countable noun that can be made plural (al-Zarkashī, 2004: 199). Other exegetes believe that the shift is semantically based. According to al-Sha'rāwī, people view the same thing differently. That is why *eye-sight* is a plural

noun. But when it comes to hearing, people can hear the same thing the same way. That is why hearing is used here as a singular noun (al-Sha'arāwī: 1991 vol.5: 25).

Another example of shift from singular to plural is found in this Qur'ānic ayah:

﴿قَاتِبَا فِي عَوْنِ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ [سورة الشعراء: ١٦]

And go both of you to Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and say: 'We are the Messengers of the Lord of the *'ālamīn* (mankind, jinn, and all that exists) (Sūrat al-Shu'arā': 16). The above Qur'ānic ayah shows a shift from the dual *-ā* in *'itiyā* go (both of you), *qulā. say* (both of you) and *innā*(both) of us to singular pronoun in *rasūl* i.e. the Messenger, as a single individual. Shift from plural to dual is found in the following Qur'ānic ayah:

﴿ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ﴾ [سورة

فصلت: ١١]

Then He rose over towards the heaven when it was smoke, and said to it and to the earth: "Come both of you willingly or unwillingly". They both said: "We come willingly" (Sūrat Fuṣṣilat). Here there is a shift from the dual pronoun *-ā* attached to the verbs *'itiyā* i.e. (the two) came, and *qālatā* that is, (the two) said to the masculine plural in *Tā'ī'in* i.e. (they) came obediently, or willingly. In this verse, shift to plurality gives the impression that both heaven and earth are midful, animate creatures thus setting them in contrast with the idleness and mindlessness of the unbelievers in the first part of the Qur'ānic ayah. Like *Shift* in pronoun, *Shift* in number abounds with rhetorical meanings.

The third type is that of *Shift* in verb forms. It should be noted that this type was not considered a type of *Shift*. It was both al-Zawba'i (1996) and Tabl (1998) who had included it as a subtype of *Shift*. Examples of this type of *Shift* are found in the shift from the augmented form of the verb *nazzala*, i.e. (He) sent down to *anzala* i.e. to make something drop in the following ayah:

﴿نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ﴾ [سورة آل عمران: ٣]

It is He Who has sent down the Book (the Qur'ān) to you (Muhammad ﷺ) with truth, confirming what came before it. And he sent down the Taurat (Torah) and the Injiil the (Gospel) (Sūrat āl-Imrān: 3).

The shift in this ayah from the augmented perfect form of the verb *nazzala*, i.e. *He sent down* in the context of revelation of the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān for Prophet Muhammad to the perfect form of the verb *anzala* i.e. *(He) sent down*, in the context of the revelation of the Torah and the Bible to Prophets Musā and 'Īsā, respectively, is related to the form of the verb. Since the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān was revealed in parts over a span of twenty three years. This is denoted by the augmented form of the verb. The Torah and the Bible, on the other hand were both revealed as whole texts as denoted by the use of the regular form of the verb (Tabl 1998: 56). Like *Shift* in number, *Shift* in verb form is also semantically based (Tabl 1998: 67).

In addition to *Shift* in verb forms, rhetoricians (Hussein: 1984; Tabl 1998) distinguished another subtype which is shift in the tense of the verb. This involves a shift from the perfect (past) to the imperfect (present) as in the following Qur'ānic ayah:

﴿الَّذِينَ تَرَأَى اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَافِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَيُمْسِكُ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾ [سورة الحج: ٦٥]

See you not that Allah has subjected to you (mankind) all that is on the earth, and the ships that sail through the sea by his Command? Verily, Allah is, for mankind, full of kindness, Most Merciful. (Sūrat Al-Ḥajj: 65) Here is a case of shift from the perfect in *sakhhkhara*, i.e. *to harness* or *to subject* to the imperfect verb *yumisuku* i.e. *to withhold* denotes a shift from something that has actually happened to something that repeatedly happens (Tabl 1998: 79).

Another case is the use of perfect to express an action or event that will take place in the future as in the following ayah:

﴿وَيَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَفَرَجَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَكُلُّ أَتَوُّهُ دَاخِرِينَ﴾ [سورة]

[النمل: ٨٧]

And (remember) the Day on which the Trumpet will be blown – and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth, will be terrified except him whom Allah will (exempt). And all shall come to Him, humbled.

In this ayah the perfect form *fazi'a to be terrified* is used instead of the imperfect to allow listeners and readers to picture what happens in the future. The purpose is to produce a rhetorical effect emphasizing that such a feeling will definitely be felt in the future (Hussein 1984:288). Examples of the opposite, that is, Qur'ānic ayahs using the future to express an event in the past are also found. An example is found in ayah 102 of sūrat al-Şāffāt:

﴿فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَبْنَؤُا إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَأَنْظِرْ مَاذَا تَرَى ۗ قَالَ يَتَّبِعُكَ أَفْعَلُ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ﴾ [سورة الصافات: ١٠٢]

And, when he (his son) was old enough to walk with him, he said: O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you (offering you in sacrifice to Allah). So look what you think! He said: “O my father! Do that which you are commanded, *Inshā'* Allah (if Allah wills), you shall find me of *aş-Şābirīn* (the patient)”. The tense used to speak about the vision which obviously took place prior to the father, prophet Ibrāhīm, speaking to the son is the imperfect *ʔarā* that is, (*I see or view* not the perfect *raʔaytu*, i.e. (*I saw*). The imperfect here denotes that the vision is still clear and present in the mind of the speaker Prophet Ibrāhīm (Hussein 1984: 290). This type of *Shift* is also employed to show how vivid the vision is in the mind of the speaker.

The fourth type is *Shift* in grammatical structures, that is, the shift from the use of one grammatical category to another. An example is found in the following ayah:

﴿الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَسْطِ وَالْعَظِيمِ الْعَظِيمِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ [سورة آل عمران: ١٣٤]

Those who spend (in Allah's Cause) in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger, and who pardon men; verily, Allah loves *al-Muhsinūn* (the good doers) (Sūrat Al'Imrān: 134). The ayah involves a shift from the use of a verb *yunfiqūn*, i.e. *to spend*, to present participle

kāzīmīn, i.e. (those) repressing their anger and *ʿāfīn*, i.e. (to those) who pardon others to single them out as two of the most outstanding qualities in people (Tabl 1998: 86).

Other subtypes of *Shift* in grammatical structure involve a shift from the passive to the active as in the following ayah:

﴿وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدُ بِمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا﴾ [سورة الجن: ١٠]

And we know not whether evil is intended for those on earth, or whether their Lord intends for them a Right Path (Surat al-Jinn: 10). In this ayah evil is brought on earth by Allah, the Almighty as a form of punishment. Out of politeness to Allah the agent is not mentioned explicitly. Instead the passive form of the verb *urīda*, i.e. *to be intended* is used to indicate that evil is brought on earth by an agent that is not explicitly mentioned in the ayah. In other words, the shift from the passive in the first part of the ayah *urīda*, i.e. *to be intended* to the active form of the verb *arāda*, i.e. (He) *willed*, (He) *wanted*, in the second part of the ayah fulfills the function of politeness. Another manifestation of this type of *Shift* is found in declension. For instance, in the following ayah:

﴿لَكِنِ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أُولَئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾ [سورة النساء: ١٦٢]

But those among them who are well-grounded in knowledge, and the believers, believe in what has been sent down to you Muhammad (ﷺ) and what was sent down before you; and those who perform *aṣ-Ṣalāt*, and give *Zakāt* and believe in Allah and in the Last Day, it is they to whom We shall give a great reward. Note that *al-muqīmīn*, i.e. *those who perform (prayers)*, is in the accusative case as indicated by the accusative case *-īn* though it is in coordination with the former noun *al-muʾmin-ūn*, i.e. *the believers*, which is in the nominative case as denoted by *-ūn*. The fact that this noun is in the accusative case unlike the other nouns in the rest of the ayah is an indication that it is separated from the first part of the ayah. The purpose is to emphasize its significance and that is why it has been made to stand out from the

rest (Tabl 1998:154). Such a significance¹ has been denoted by *Shift* in declension.

The fifth type is *Shift* in the use of particles. An example is found in the shift from one conditional to another as in Qur'ānic ayah (28) of Sūrat Al-Mā'idah:

﴿لَئِنْ بَسَطْتَ إِلَىٰ يَدِكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَنَّكَ إِنَّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ [سورة المائدة: ٢٨]

If you stretch your hand against me to kill me, I shall never stretch my hand against you to kill you: for I fear Allah, the Lord of the *Ālamīn* (mankind, jinn, and all that exists). The Qur'ānic ayah involves a shift from the conditional *li'an* i.e. *if* to the negative particle *mā* i.e. *never*. This *Shift* marks a shift from a statement of conditional verbal sentence to a nominal sentence negated with *mā* to emphasize the negation (al-Zawba'ī 1996:159).

The last type of *Shift* is that of shift in lexical items. Though it was not included within *Shift* by early rhetoricians, it was considered as a separate type of *Shift* by Tabl (1998:159). It is defined as a shift from the use of one lexical item to another which has the same basic meaning but differs from it in its connotations (1998:159). Examples include ayah 14 of Surat al-²Ankabūt:

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا خَمْسِينَ عَامًا فَأَخَذَهُمُ الطُّوفَانُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ﴾

[سورة العنكبوت: ١٤]

And indeed We sent Nuh (Noah) to his people, and he stayed among them a thousand years less fifty years (inviting them to believe in the Oneness of Allah, and discard the false gods and other deities); and the Deluge overtook them while they were *Zālimūn* (wrongdoers, polytheists, disbelievers). The ayah involves a shift from the use of the lexical item *sanah* i.e. *year* to ³*ām*, i.e. a *year* which is similar to it in its basic denotation of a calendar year consisting of twelve months but differs from it in its contextual meaning. The former is used in the

1 According to Hasan (1984:405), al-Ṭabarī (1985: 20) and al-Qaysī (1985:22), and al-Rajhī (1986: 76) using a different case, the accusative case, Allah, the Almighty, sets apart and commends those who perform prayers, so as to encourage people to follow suit and perform prayers regularly.

context of drought and poverty, whereas the latter is associated with the context of productivity and welfare¹ (Tabl 1998:160).

The above section was an exploration of *Shift* in the Ever-Glorious Qurʾān. It revealed a difference and a similarity between old and recent studies of *Shift*. The difference between the two types of study is in their classification of *Shift* sub-classifications. Early studies identified *Shift* as being only in two specific grammatical categories, namely: pronoun and number occurring within the same sentence. Recent studies by Hussein (1984), Abdel Haleem (1992), Fayūd (1992), al-Zawbaʿī (1996) and Tabl (1998), on the other hand adopted a broader definition of *Shift* as being from one of six grammatical patterns to another within or between several sentences. On the basis of such a definition a six-type classification of *Shift* comprising shift in: pronoun, number, verb, grammatical, structure, particle and lexicon, was set up. The similarity between early and recent studies lies in their approach. Both types of study view *Shift* as a unique stylistic feature of the Ever-Glorious Qurʾān which is used to produce certain rhetorical and semantic effects. It was therefore studied only within rhetoric and semantics, but not within syntax. Though *Shift* in number and gender² appear to be similar to ‘*adam al-muṭābaqah*, i.e. ‘partial agreement’ in number and gender, none of the former was studied in grammar. Hence, the need for an investigation of this type of *Shift* in relation to agreement in Arabic. The second section of the introduction is a survey of studies on agreement in Arabic.

1 A similar distinction in meaning is found in ayah 49 of Sūrat Yūsuf:

﴿رُبَّمَا تَرَى مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامًا فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يُعْصِرُونَ﴾ [يوسف: ٤٩]

Then thereafter will come a year in which people will have abundant rain and in which they will press (wine and oil). In the context of this ayah which denotes productivity and welfare, the lexical item *ām* is used.

2 It should be noted that shift in gender has not been classified by early and modern linguists as a separate grammatical category of *Shift* as illustrated in the introduction. It is regarded as part of *Shift* in pronoun where it may involve a shift from singular masculine or feminine to dual masculine or feminine, etc. In order to fulfill the purpose of the present paper which looks into *Shift* in relation to ‘partial agreement’ in both number and gender, it has been included as a separate type of *Shift*.

1.2. *ālmuṭābaqah*¹ i.e. Agreement in Arabic:

Arabic is a language characterized by rich agreement. Classical Arabic displays a detailed system of agreement in person, number, gender and case between different grammatical categories, e.g. nouns pronouns, nouns *adjective* adjectives, verbs, *ḥāl* i.e. adverb and *ṣāḥib al ḥāl*, i.e. adverb antecedent. However, exceptional cases where for instance, the *fā'il* subject verb or noun adjective do not display full agreement are also found. These cases have been referred to as cases of 'adam al-*muṭābaqah* or 'partial agreement'². For the limited scope of the present paper, discussion will focus only on cases of 'partial agreement' in number and gender between the *fā'il*³ and verb in VS order and the *mubtada'* (i.e. *theme*) or *preverbal noun phrase* and its verbal predicate in SV order.

The grammatical phenomenon of agreement and 'partial agreement' has caught the attention of both Arab and non-Arab grammarians resulting in an abundance of studies. Studies carried

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- 1 It should be noted that the Arabic term *al-muṭābaqah* does not have an exact equivalent in English. For the Arabic term denotes full agreement between two grammatical categories in person, number, gender and case. Similar full agreement or even concordance does not exist in English. The terms *agreement* and *concordance* in English may denote agreement in number but not in gender or case or person because English is losing a lot of its gender affixation. Because of the lack of an exact equivalent, the term *agreement*, therefore, is used throughout the paper as the nearest possible equivalent of the Arabic term.
 - 2 The term 'partial agreement' is placed between two inverted commas throughout the paper till section 2.2. of the second part of the paper. This is due to the fact that the paper investigates whether the concept denoted by the term exists in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān so as to determine whether or not *Shift* in number and gender are cases of 'partial agreement'.
 - 3 A note regarding the terminology used to designate the noun or noun phrase NP preceding the verb and the one occurring in a postverbal position is in order. Arab grammarians refer to the former as *mubtada'*, that is, theme with a verbal predicate which should agree with it in gender and number. The latter is referred to as subject whose verb does not agree with it in number in some Arabic dialects. Some modern Arab syntacticians do not make such a distinction and consider both as subject. Others make such a distinction and use it to explain cases of 'partial agreement in number'. In the present paper, the term *mubtada'* or theme is used to refer to preverbal noun phrase, that is, the noun phrase preceding the verb, whereas the term *fā'il* subject is used to refer to the postverbal noun phrase or noun phrase occurring after the verb.

out on agreement may be divided into three groups. The first group includes traditional studies of subject and verb agreement in Arabic by both Arab and non-Arab grammarians. The second group includes studies conducted by Arab and non-Arab syntacticians into subject and verb agreement within minimalism; and the third group includes studies that adopt either a semantic or pragmatic approach to subject and verb agreement in Arabic, each of which is discussed below.

1.2.1. Traditional Studies of Agreement in Arabic:

The term traditional studies of *al-muṭābaqah* is used to refer to those studies conducted by foreign and Arab traditional grammarians who did not adopt a particular syntactic framework in approaching this topic. It has been rightly noted by *al-Sāmarrāʿī* (2005) that though this grammatical phenomenon has been studied extensively by early and modern Arab grammarians, no definition has been provided for it. Literally speaking, *al-muṭābaqah* means similarity and equality between objects. Linguistically speaking it refers to similarity and equality between grammatical categories in certain grammatical features such as in declension, case, definiteness, gender and person (*al-Sāmarrāʿī* 2005:13). In such a grammatical phenomenon, a member of a grammatical category such as a *fāʿil* (subject) copies its number and gender features onto another member, e.g. the verb. The copying process is demonstrated in the cliticisation of morphemes showing agreement between the verb and the subject in gender and number. Agreement between subject and the verb in Arabic is debatable and displays two different patterns: the first is of full agreement, that is agreement in number and gender, and the second is of 'partial agreement' in which the verb displays agreement in gender only but not in number. Both patterns of agreement are explained below.

The first pattern of subject-verb agreement is that of full agreement. Early Arab grammarians (as indicated by Hasan (1981:453-458) and *al-Rājhī* (1986:186-187) point out that full agreement between the noun phrase and the verb depends on word order. So that cases where the overt noun phrase precedes the verb full agreement or what Badawī refers to as "regular agreement" (2004:309) between the *mubtadaʿ* (theme) and the verb, obtains. This is demonstrator in the following sentences:

First, unless the verb has a pronominal suffix that agrees with the subject in number and gender, the sentence would be incoherent. For if the sentence contains several noun phrases it will not be clear which theme or preverbal subject is in agreement with the verb. In this case agreement between the verbal clause and theme in number and gender indicates which noun or noun phrase the verb agrees with. Second, grammarians have pointed out that, in cases where the noun or noun phrase occurs initially in the sentence, it may be followed by a verbal clause. Such a clause must consist of a verb and a noun which is a pronominal subject suffixed to the verb that refers anaphorically to the theme and agrees with it in number and gender. In this case the pronominal suffixation showing agreement is obligatory so as not to create an ungrammatical or incoherent sentence (*Hassan* 1981:458; *al-Rājhī* 1986:186–187).

The second pattern is that of 'partial agreement'. This is the case referred to by Arab and non-Arab grammarians as '*adam al-muṭābaqah*', i.e. literally absence of agreement or zero agreement¹ (*Hassan* 1981; and *al-Rājhī* 1986). This type of agreement obtains when the verb precedes its subject. In this case the verb and the subject agree in gender but not in number, that is why it is referred to as 'partial agreement'; though other grammarians point to other cases where even gender agreement between the verb and its post-verbal subject does not obtain— as will be seen in some Qur'ānic ayahs in 2.2. Therefore two subtypes of 'partial agreement' are identified. The first is that of 'partial agreement' in gender and the second is in number, both of which are discussed below.

The first subtype of 'partial agreement' is that of gender. According to Arab traditional grammarians, the verb agrees with its subject in gender whether it occurs in pre- or post-verbal position (*Hassan* 1981: 458; *al-Rājhī* 1986: 188). However, there are cases where the verb does not agree with its subject in gender. Arab traditional grammarians

1 A distinction is made here between the terms absence of agreement and disagreement. The former is used to refer to cases where no grammatical relations exist to force two grammatical categories to show agreement in person, number or gender; whereas the latter is used in the present paper to denote cases where grammatical relations exist yet no agreement takes place between the two grammatical categories, such as subject and verb (*Chomsky* 1995:23).

set down certain syntactic conditions under which no agreement in gender between verb and its subject obtains. The first case, is when the subject is a real feminine noun phrase which is separated from its verb by a pronoun as in the following Qur'ānic ayah:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ﴾ [سورة الممتحنة: ١٢]

O Prophet when believing women come to you (Surat al-Mumtaḥanah: 12) where the verb *jāʾak* i.e. (came to you) is not inflected for the feminine gender pronoun *-jāʾatka* to agree with the feminine plural subject *al-muʾmināt* (the female believers) because the verb is separated from its subject with the pronoun *-ka*.

The second case is related to the type of the noun with which the verb agrees. When the subject is a real feminine noun or noun phrase which is immediately adjacent to the verb and refers to a whole genre rather than to a specific individual then agreement in gender may or may not obtain. Consider the following example: *niʿma al-umm* (blessed.3rd.per.sing.masc. (be) (she) mother) and *niʿm-at al-umm* (blessed.3rd.pers.sing.fem), where in the first case the verb may or may not refer to a particular mother, thus gender agreement may or may not obtain, while in the second example, where the noun refers to a particular mother, the verb shows gender marking to agree with the subject.

The third, fourth and fifth cases are related to the morphology of the noun with which the verb agrees. Agreement in gender may or may not obtain when the subject a broken plural, *jamʿ taksīr*; feminine or masculine which has a singular masculine animate noun from its root. In this case, the verb may either be suffixed for plural masculine or singular feminine as in the following example: *jāʾ al-rijālu* (came-3rd.person masc.sing. the men-3rd.pers.masc.plural) and *jāʾat al-rijālu* (came-3rd.pers.fem.sing. the men-3rd.person plural masculine) (Hassan 1981: vol.1:264). In this case, the subject is a broken plural masculine *al-rijālu* (the men) which has a singular noun from its own root *rajul* a man, so the verb may or may not be suffixed for gender to agree with it. Arab grammarians give a syntactic and a semantic account of this specific case of 'partial agreement' in gender. They point out that absence or presence of gender marking on the verb

is due to the fact that the verb in this case is in agreement with one of two implicit annexed to nouns *jam*^c (3rs.person.singular masculine noun group) or *jamā*^c*ah* (3rd.person singular feminine noun group–feminine suffix). Absence of the gender marker means that the verb agrees with the former annexed to noun. In this case, the underlying structure would be *jā*^a (*jam*^c) *al-rijālu*, i.e. came (group–3rd.pers. masc.sing. of) men, where both the annexed to noun and the verb show no gender marking; while the presence of the gender marker means that the verb is in agreement with the second annexed to noun and the underlying structure in this case would be *jā*^a*at* (*jamā*^c*at-u*) *al-rijāli*, i.e. came (group–3rd.pers.fem.sing.) (of) men, where both the annexed to noun and the verb show the gender suffixation *-at*. Such an account is an indication that Arab traditional grammarians have taken into account semantic information in approaching the question of agreement in Arabic.

The fourth case is a morphological case. When the subject is a plural inanimate noun which has a singular masculine inanimate noun from its own root, the verb may not agree with it in gender¹. So for example in a sentence where the subject is a plural inanimate noun like *kutub* books, it is preferable for the verb to be suffixed for a singular feminine noun as in *al-kutub dā*^c*at*, (The books (were) lost–3rd.person singular feminine) as indicated by the third person singular feminine *-at* suffixed to the verb instead of a third person plural feminine pronoun *-na* as in *al-kutub dī*^c*na* (The books (were) lost–3rd.person plural feminine). However, there is a semantic aspect to this case of ‘partial agreement’. For if the broken plural denotes a small group of

1 This is only true for inanimate broken plurals. Evidence to this is found in the ayah (36) of Surat at–Tawbah:

﴿إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ ذَلِكَ اللَّيْلُ الْقِيَامُ فَلَا تَصَلُّوا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَصْلُوا فِيهَا فِئْتِمًا﴾ [التوبة: ٣٦]

Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve months (in a year), so was it ordained by Allah on the day when He created the heavens and the earth; of them four are sacred (i.e. the 1st, the 7th, the 11th, and the 12th months of the Islamic calendar). That is the right religion, so wrong not yourselves therein. In this ayah the inanimate noun *shahran* is referred to once as singular feminine as indicated by the *-hā* in *minhā* and second as 3rd.pers.plural.feminine indicated by the suffix *-hunna* in *fihinna*.

nouns, then the verb is suffixed for plural feminine as in the following example: *qaḍaytu fil qāhīrah ayyāman khalawna* ((I) spent in Cairo a few days (that have) passed–3rd.person plural feminine) where the verb is suffixed with a plural feminine pronoun *-na* to denote that the speaker had spent a few days. Whereas the sentence *qaḍaytu fil qāhīrah ayyāman khalat*. (I spent in Cairo several days (that have) passed–3rd.person singular feminine) suffix *-at* to denote that the speaker spent several days in Cairo (Hassan 1981: 265). ‘Partial agreement’ between the verb and the subject in gender is not determined solely by morphological factors, but by semantic factors as well.

The fifth case of verb–subject ‘partial agreement’ in gender is similarly due to morphological factors. This is the case when the subject is a plural collective noun that has no singular form of its root, e.g. *rakb* (caravan), or *rahl* (saddle bags), *qawm* (tribe or group of people), or *jamā‘ah* (group). In this case, it is possible to say *al-rakb sāfarū* (the caravan traveled–3rd.person plural masculine) or *al-rakb sāfara* (the caravan traveled–3rd.person singular masculine) (Hassan 1981: v.2.: 76–81). ‘Partial agreement’ between the verb and post-verbal noun or noun phrase subject in gender is not determined solely by morphological factors, but by semantic factors as in the third and fourth cases above.

Modern non-Arab linguists, e.g. (Holes (1995) and Brustad (2000) view this type of ‘partial agreement’ as pragmatically rather than syntactically based. According to Holes, this type of agreement “varies according to the speaker’s perception of the individuated versus generic, collective reference of the noun. So the more individuated, particularized and countable the reference, the more likely the noun is to require strict (i.e. full agreement) (Holes 1995:166). Holes explains that where reference is to a countable noun or otherwise previously specified group of individuals strict agreement with masculine plural obtains. But where the noun and the other collective nouns denote human groups or “people in general”, the verb has ‘deflected’ agreement (ibid.).

Brustad (2000) refers to this type of agreement as “agreement neutralization”. By this, she meant “the absence of gender (feminine) or number (plural) grammatical agreement marking on verbs and adjectives whose subjects or head nouns are feminine or plural”

(Brustad 2000: 62). Pragmatically speaking, cases where the verb takes singular feminine ending are cases in which the “subject is often indefinite, non-specific, or non-human”, whereas cases in which the subject is “individuated”, that is, “the reference is to a particular or a specific group, the verb takes masculine plural suffixation” (ibid.). The question of whether such grammatical or pragmatic explanations can adequately account for cases of *Shift* in number in Qur'ānic ayahs shall be discussed in the second part of the present paper. It can be concluded then that Arab grammarians adopted an approach that is partly syntactic partly semantic in accounting for the issue of ‘partial agreement’ in gender between the subject and the verb.

The second subtype of ‘partial agreement’ is that of verb–subject ‘partial agreement’ in number. Arab grammarians agreed that this type of ‘partial agreement’ obtains when the verb precedes its subject. Though it has been pointed out above that while cases where verb and postverbal nouns agree in number are common and found in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān, some grammarians deny their existence¹. Both (1981: 76–81) and (1986:200) rightly point out that some Arabic

1 It should be noted that this case of ‘partial agreement’ in number between the verb and its post-verbal subject is controversial. While it is lacking in some modern Arabic dialects, it has been found to exist in other Arabic dialects (e.g. in Alexandrian dialect in Egypt e.g. *nurūhū ihnā wil 'iyāl* (go–1st.pers.plural we and the kids go where the preceding verb *nurūhū* is affixed with the plural prefix *nu-* to agree with its plural subject *ihnā wil 'iyāl*). It is also found in some ayahs as in ayah 3 of Surat al-Anbiyā:

﴿وَأَسْرُوا النَّجْوَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا﴾ [الأنبياء: ٣]

Those who do wrong, conceal their private counsels

and in ayah 71 of Surat al-Mā'idah:

﴿فَوَعَدُوا صَوْمًا فَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُنْجِبُونَ﴾ [المائدة: ٧١]

Yet again many of them became blind and deaf. In these ayahs, the verbs *asarrū*. (*conceal*) in the first ayah, and *'amū wa-šammū*. (*became blind and deaf*) in the second ayah precede the plural subject *alladhīna*. (*they*) in the first ayah and *kathīrun* (*many*) in the second ayah, and yet full agreement obtains as indicated by the 3rd.person plural suffix *-ū* attached to the verbs. Hasan (1981), al-Rājhī (1986) and Tabl (1998) used the above Qur'ānic ayahs as evidence that verb and post-verbal subject agreement in number is the default situation and that the opposite, that is, cases where number agreement does not obtain between the verb and the post-verbal subject are incorrect even though they are common in most Arabic dialects =

dialects deny the existence of full agreement in number between a post verbal subject and its verb, though neither give a full syntactic account to explain why.

Non-Arab grammarians also provide a pragmatic account of verb and subject 'partial agreement' in number. Holes (1995: 487) first distinguishes between "event-oriented" i.e. verb-first sentences and "entity-oriented" or subject-first sentence types in terms of how verb-subject agreement in number works. He goes on to explain that "event-oriented" sentences where the verb shows no agreement in number with its subject, "the absence of number marking" is the result of the "event" rather than the "entity" being the focus of attention. As such the verb is in a "morphologically simple form" because "the nouns are obligatorily marked as such if they are dual or plural, and the principle of word order already stated obviates any potential ambiguity concerning which of the following nouns are subject." (ibid. :213). Note that Holes (1995) is giving a pragmatic account based on grammatical information of word order to explain this type of 'partial agreement'. However, he does not give a full syntactic account for it.

This line of argument which bases 'partial agreement' in number between verb and subject on word order continues in studies by contemporary Arab grammarians. Like early Arab grammarians, Mahfoudhi (2002) simply points out that agreement in Classical Arabic is related to word order. He argues that full agreement does not take place in VS order because "the verb is pronounced first and the noun has the number feature that the verb lacks and which clarifies any ambiguity in the sentence". However, in SV order "agreement is important, because the absence of agreement after uttering the subject will very likely lead to a problem of processing" (Mahfoudhi 2002: 24). In other words, without such agreement it will not be clear which subject the verb agrees with. This in its turn will be confusing for the reader. According to Abdel Hāfiz (2005), the problem with Mahfoudhi's account (2002) is that it does not transfer to other Arabic dialects such as Tunisian Arabic. In Tunisian Arabic the verb agrees with the subject

= nowadays. Recent Arab syntacticians ((Mohammad 1989; Bahloul and Harbert 1992 & 2002; Benmamoun 2000; Benmamoun Lorimor 2006), have not accepted this and use examples from current Arabic dialects to argue against verb and post-verbal subject agreement in number.

whether it occurs in preverbal or post-verbal positions; a fact which Mahfoudhi's (2002) account fails to explain (Abdel Hāfiz 2005: 113).

Another final account of 'partial agreement' in number that which is based on syntactic grounds of sentence structure and borrows from Arabic traditional grammarians' concepts of word order is provided by Abdel Hāfiz's theory of 'topicalization' (2005). He first notes that there are two different word orders in Arabic: VS and SV, which are based on whether the subject in the SV is a *fā'il* (subject) that is, it occurs in a post-verbal position or is a *mubtada'* (a theme) occurring in a preverbal position. He then goes on to explain full agreement in SV and VS order in the light of such word order. Contrary to traditional grammarians, the preverbal noun/noun phrase in the SV is not a theme but rather a subject because indefinite nouns cannot occur in such a position—though they may do in certain cases. So while the sentence *al-mudarrisu kharaja*. (the teacher left), in which the definite noun is a dislocated theme, is grammatical while the second sentence *muddarrisun kharaja* ((a) teacher left) in which the topic (i.e. the theme) is an indefinite noun, is ungrammatical in Classical Arabic. However it could be grammatical, though with a difference in meaning as in the following instances; *mudarrisun kharaja* ((a) teacher left) or *mudarrisun qutula* (a) teacher was killed). These two sentences could be grammatical sentences in answer to the question *mādhā ḥadatha* (what happened?) especially in dialects where topicalization is used. In the VS order where the "postverbal subject is not prototypical" the verb requires partial agreement; whereas in SV in which the "preverbal subject is a prototypical subject occupying initial position in the sentence", then full agreement with the verb must take place" (Abdel Hāfiz 2005:117). Though he provides an explanation of 'partial agreement' based on word order and topicalization, he does not provide a complete syntactic account of how and why 'partial agreement' takes place in VS order while full agreement takes place in SV.

To conclude, traditional and modern studies of *al-muṭābaqah* by both Arab and non-Arab grammarians base their accounts of subject-verb agreement on morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic information. None, however, attempts to give a syntactically-based account of this type of agreement in relation to *Shift*. It is these syntactic studies that are discussed below.

1.2.2. Syntactic Studies of Agreement in Arabic

This section reviews studies adopting syntactic accounts of verb–subject agreement. Unlike Arabic traditional grammarians’ studies, this type of study adopts a solely syntactic approach that does not take into consideration the semantic or pragmatic aspects of agreement. Though the approaches discussed below adopt a syntactic framework on agreement, they differ in two aspects: their conception of agreement, and the structural configuration within which agreement takes place, that is, within “government” or within “Spec–Head configuration”. On the basis of these two aspects, three syntactic approaches to agreement are discussed below: those that look at agreement as taking place within government¹; those that adopt the view that agreement takes place only within a Spec–Head configuration of minimalism²;

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- 1 The main application of the government relation concerns the assignment of case. Government is defined as follows: A governs B if: (i) A is a governor, that is, a head of a lexical category (V,N,A,P) and tense I (T) and (ii) A m–commands B and if (iii) no barrier intervenes between A and B. A m–commands B if A does not dominate B and B does not dominate A and the first maximal projection of A dominates B. The maximal projection of a head X is XP.
 - 2 Minimalism as advanced by Chomsky (1995) is a new approach towards linguistic description which is based on the rejection of all devices and constructs except those that are absolutely necessary on conceptual grounds. There are two distinct minimalist aspects. First, derivations be minimal; no extra steps in derivations and no extra symbols in representations are allowed. Second, the theory itself has developed in the direction of minimality. Thus a variety of earlier transformations are replaced by affect Alpha; conditions on transformations and representations avoid redundancy by not overlapping in their effects, etc. This minimalist program is carried still further with specific proposals about (i) reducing levels of representation to the two minimally necessary ‘interface levels’ of phonetic form (PF) and logical form (LF) which provide instructions for the articulatory perceptual and conceptual intentional performance systems, (ii) reducing X–bar theoretic relations to the primitives of Specifier, Head and Complement, and (iii) reducing syntactic movement to the elementary operations of copy and delete. Apart from LF and PF, the fundamental concepts in minimalist syntax are features, full interpretation and economy. Features is the most important component of minimalism. There are several types of features. There are formal informal, interpretable uninterpretable features. The formal ones are relevant to syntax, while the interpretable ones are relevant for interpretation at LF and include categoral and nominal phi–features. They are not deleted or erased after they are checked because they are relevant to the interpretive component. Non–interpretable features are deleted and they involve the case features of NPs and verbs and the phi–features of verbs. The last component of minimalism is =

and those that look at agreement within neo-minimalism. Each of these accounts is discussed below.

1.2.2.1. Government-based Studies of agreement in Arabic

Studies based on agreement within government build on the notion that just as case can be assigned by government then so can agreement in number and gender. Such studies attempted to explain 'partial agreement' within the government agreement constraint. A study based on agreement within government was advanced by Bahloul & Wayne (1992). They first differentiate between inherent features, e.g. the gender feature and grammatical features like number and definiteness. The inherent features are associated with the bottom layer of the projection and are marked to the noun by lexical affixation and that is why they are visible for agreement in government. While in the latter, the grammatical features of number and definiteness are associated with the higher level of the functional heads in the projection system and are therefore invisible for agreement in government (Bahloul & Wayne 1992: 25). The approach offers an explanation for 'partial agreement' but not for full agreement.

Another two studies of subject-verb agreement in Arabic are those of the expletive hypothesis (Mohammad 1989) and the incorporation analysis (Fassi Fehri 1993). The first account is the Expletive Hypothesis advanced by Mohammed (1989). The claim of the hypothesis is that to account for verb and subject 'partial agreement' an assumption is made whereby a "VSO sentence in Arabic is said to contain two subjects: the real subject located in Spec VP and an expletive subject located in Spec TP. It is this "expletive subject" pronoun that "dictates" the agreement features and is responsible for the default third person masculine singular agreement in expletive clauses, as well as the default singular agreement in VSO clause (Mohammad 1989:113). This can be illustrated by the following sentencet:

= economy. In describing a grammar as economical, it means that it tries to do less if it can get away with less, suppose further that over movement is "costly" operation. It follows then that the most economical derivation is one with required movements only, that is, only those needed to get rid of strong features checking of weak features can be done later for economy reasons, then this idea is formulated as a principle called procrastinate, i.e. a movement is delayed whenever possible (Chomsky 1995: 24-30).

inna-hu zāranī thalāthatu shu'arā' (that) visited-me three poets- 3rd. person plural masculine gender

Under this hypothesis, the verb *zāranī* (visited-me) is marked by a 1st.person singular to agree in number with the 3rd.person singular pronominal form *-hu* suffixed to the complementizer *inna* i.e. that rather than with the plural masculine subject *thalāthu* (three).

The Expletive approach has been criticized on different grounds by Bahloul & Harbert (1992), Aoun *et al* (1994), Benmamoun (2000) and Nassu (2002). First, it has been argued that when the subject is a pronoun it should agree with the verb regardless of whether it occurs pre-verbally or post-verbally because a pronoun's phi-features¹ are intrinsic². However, a sentence like *jā'a anā* (came (I)-1st.person singular) where the verb agrees with the post-verbal pronominal acting as the subject, is ungrammatical while the sentence *jī'tu anā* (came -1st person singular masculine I-1st.person singular) where the verb does not agree with the subject pronominal *ana* in person is grammatical. The above data seems to violate the expletive hypothesis. (Bahloul & Harbert 1992:20). Second, the Expletive Hypothesis does not carry on to other Arabic dialects. An illustration is taken from the behaviour of the modal *umrī* (never). In Moroccan Arabic, cases where the subject occurs in a pos-verbal position, it is expected-according to the Expletive Hypothesis- that the expletive should occur and cliticize on the modal *'umrī*, (never). However, the expletive pronoun does not appear as indicated in the following example *'umrī mā mishūt* (never (have) I walked (left)). For if it does, the result will be an ungrammatical sentence as follows: * *'umru mā mishū il-awlād* (never-3rd.person expletive pronoun (have) walked the children) where the cliticization of the expletive pronoun onto the modal *'umrī* results in an ungrammatical sentence (Aoun *et al* 1994: 198).

1 "Phi-features" is the term used in minimalism to denote features such as gender, number and person (Chomsky 1995: 45).

2 "Intrinsic features" is the term used in minimalism to denote features that are listed explicitly in the lexical entry or strictly determined by properties so listed and include categorical features such as the case assigning features of the verb and the person and gender features of the noun (Chomsky 1995: 31).

The third argument is that pronouns of forms other than the third person singular expletive appear in sentences which are grammatically correct. Examples are *hum ljunūdu*. (they 3rd.person plural masculine (are) the soldiers), and *hunna n'nisā'u*. (they-3rd person plural feminine (are) the women) where forms other than the expletive third person singular –such as the third person masculine and feminine plural pronouns – appear in each sentence. The appearance of those forms is due to agreement between the pronoun and the following noun phrase. The fact that each of these sentences is grammatical even though a pronominal different from the expletive 3rd.person singular appears in all of them refutes the null expletive hypothesis.

For Mohammad's expletive principle to account for the grammaticality of the above data which display agreement with different genders, it will have to posit two different pro elements in standard and dialectal Arabic. The other form will have to bear a feminine gender feature. The fact that Mohammad (1989) bases most of his argument on the idea that the expletive elements in Arabic are the same uniformly, renders the hypothesis incapable of accounting for this data (Benmamoun 2000: 110). Mohammed, later on, modifies the Expletive Hypothesis so as to take into account such a counter-argument. He points out that while the expletive has an inherent singular number feature, its gender feature is variable and it can change to feminine if followed by a feminine subject as in Lebanese Arabic (Mohammed 2000: 144). So in the following example: *qultu inna-hā jā'at al-banātu* (said I that it-3rd.person fem.sing. came the girls-3rd.person feminine plural) where the verb has a 3rd.person feminine singular –*at* pronoun to agree with the third person singular feminine suffixed to *inna* (that) not with the third person plural feminine *al-banātu* (the girls) acting as the subject.

A final counterargument to the expletive hypothesis is advanced by Nasu (2002) on the basis of the following example: *idda'ā aḥmadu annahu al-awlādu jā'ū* (claimed Ahmed that-it 3rd.person sing.masc. the boys-3rd. person plural masc. came-3rd). Note that the sentence is grammatical even though the verb *jā'ū*. (came) does not agree with the third person singular null expletive pronoun. This, according to Nasu (2002:143) not only refutes the null expletive hypothesis but proves

that verb–subject asymmetry is not a case of “default third person singular form” but is a case of ‘partial agreement’. Finally, it should be noted that a modified version of Mohammad’s expletive hypothesis (1989) continues to form the basis of recent syntactic studies of ‘partial agreement’ in Arabic such as Tucker (2007).

The second study of agreement in Arabic is Fassi’s “incorporation analysis” (1993) which is based on Baker’s (1988) principle that for an element to be incorporated it has to be governed by the host. The analysis provides an account only of ‘partial agreement’ not of full agreement as well. ‘Partial agreement’ in the incorporation analysis is based on the assumption that a null pronominal element is generated in the lower projections in SV position of the subject as a result of the subject’s left dislocation (LD) (Fassi 1993:113–118). This pronoun is then incorporated onto the governing verb with which it agrees. This can be illustrated by the following examples.

- (1) *jāʾa al-awlādu* came–3rd.person singular masc.the boys–3rd.person plural masc.
- (2) *jāʾū hum* came they–3rd.person plural masculine.

In the first example, the verb which is a 3rd–person masculine singular shows no agreement in number with the subject *al-awlādu*. (the boys) which is a lexical noun phrase occurring in a post–verbal position. However, in the second sentence where the subject is a pronoun *-hum* the agreement marker of the 3rd.person masculine is cliticized onto the verb to show full agreement in number and gender. According to the incorporation analysis (Fassi 1993:13), full agreement obtains with a pronominal but not with a post–verbal lexical noun phrase and a verb whether the pronominal occurs in pre–verbal or post–verbal positions.

However, the incorporation analysis, according to Benmamoun (2000) suffers several shortages. First, given the fact that the verb agrees with the pronoun incorporated onto it, it is not clear why in the following sentence: *kānat al-fatayātu taʾkul-na* (was–3rd.person sing. fem. the girls eating–3rd.person.feminine.plural eating–3rd.person.feminine plural) the lexical verb *taʾkul-na*. ((to) eat–3rd.pers.plural.feminine) agrees with the noun phrase *al-fatayātu* rather than with the

3rd.person.feminine.singular pronoun *-t* cliticized on the auxiliary verb *kānat*. In other words, the incorporation analysis fails to account for all Arabic data (Benmamoun 2000: 110).

Another account of verb subject 'partial agreement' is given by Bahloul and Harbert (1992). According to Bahloul and Harbert (1992), the failure of the verb to agree with the post-verbal subject in number is due to the fact that "under certain circumstances, number is suppressed while the other features are not" (Bahloul and Harbert 1992:30). However, such an account still remains empirically inadequate for two reasons. First, it does not identify those reasons that cause the number feature to be suppressed. Second, according to Mohammad (2000), it fails to explain Arabic data in which the person feature – rather than the number or gender features – is the one which is suppressed. This is illustrated in the following examples:

1. *antunna hunna al-ṭālibāt-u* you-2nd.person plural feminine are-3rd.person plural feminine the students.
2. *antum hum al-ṭalabah* you-2nd.person plural masculine are-3rd.person plural masculine the students-3rd.person plural masc.
3. *anti hiya al-ṭālibah* you-2nd.pers.singular fem are-3rd.person singular feminine the student-2nd.person.sing.fem.

In all of the above mentioned examples, the pronoun of separation agrees with its subject in number and gender but not in person. In other words, the only feature which is suppressed in all of these contexts is that of person (Mohammad 2000:123)

1.2.2.2. Minimalist Spec-IP¹ based accounts of agreement in Arabic

More recent minimalist accounts have done away with agreement in government and instead adopted the notion of agreement within a Spec-Head configuration. The rule is that:

1 "When Chomsky developed his model of transformational grammar, he returned to the issue of the traditional parts of speech (S, NP, VP, Adj P, AdvP, PP) The problem with the traditional parts of speech was that it did not have a category higher than that of the sentence or one that was intermediary between the word and the phrase. As such new parts of speech were set were IP stands for inflection phrase that can occur higher than S (sentence), TP for Tense Phrase which stands between word and phrase and S for specifier that can be head of a phrase. (Chomsky 1995: 55)

If Y agrees with XP, then XP and Y are or have been in a Spec-Head relation in the course of the derivation (Koopman 2006: 166). One of the studies that stresses the centrality of agreement within Spec-Head configuration in Arabic is a study by Aoun *et al* (1994). The authors first start by embracing the notion of Spec-Head agreement without totally rejecting agreement in government then conclude with counterarguments to agreement in government. The authors first argue that agreement in gender can obtain in government and in Spec-Head configuration while agreement in number takes place exclusively in Spec-Head configuration. They go on to provide a syntactic account of “partial agreement” in VS order and “full agreement” in SV order as follows. In VS order, the verb is raised to I or TP to check tense and is not c-commanded by the subject which stays in Spec-Head. So that when the verb looks down to check certain features, it does not find features except those that have been sent to PF. This explains why only gender feature obtains in VS order which has been referred to as “partial agreement” This is illustrated in the following diagram showing verb raising in VS order.

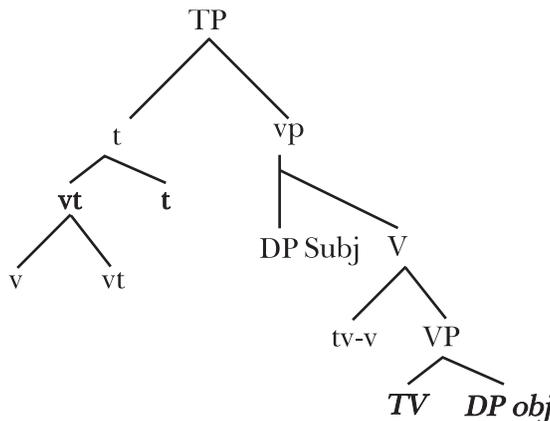


Figure no. 1

In contrast, the SVO order manifests subject verb full agreement because the subject lowers from I to V. It is, therefore, c-commanded by the subject in spec-VP thus copying its gender and number features to the verb as illustrated in the figure below.

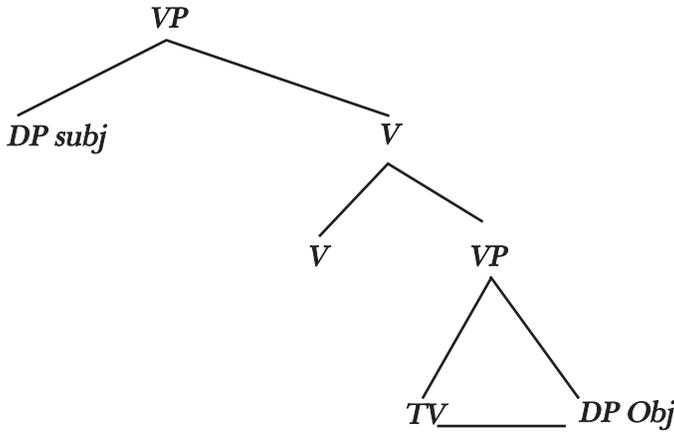


Figure no. 2

They finally argue against agreement in government on the basis of coordinate subject noun phrases. In the following data taken from Aoun *et al*—from Lebanese Arabic: *nāmā huwa wa hiya bil-bayti* (slept—3rd.dual masculine he—3rd.pers sing.masc. and she—3rd.pers.sing. fem. in the house) the verb does not agree with the post-verbal subject pronoun *huwa* (whereas within government full agreement in number and gender with the verb should obtain), thus violating agreement in government (Aoun *et al* 1994:210).

For the relevance of the coordinate subject noun phrase¹ to the data in the second part of the present paper, further arguments for and against first conjunct agreement is elaborated below. Munn (1999: 644–646) refutes this approach under the argument that the coordinate noun phrase is semantically plural but syntactically singular. Aoun *et al.* counter-argue Munn’s (1999) hypothesis under the analysis of reduction clausal conjunction. The analysis goes like this: first two clauses, each with their own sentential subjects are conjoined together. Right-node-raising² then applies to raise the predicate direct object

1 A coordinate noun phrase is a phrase consisting of two nouns with coordination such as *wa* e.g. الله ورسوله Allahu wa rasūluhu (Allah and His Messenger).

2 Right-node-raising in syntax is an operation of reduction on coordinated clauses whose right most constituents are identical. Example: RNR derives the structure in i(b) from the underlying structure in (i) a by adjoining one copy of the identical constituents (the book) to the right of the sentence, and deleting the identical originals (indicated by ei). =

out of both clauses and gap the verb from both conjuncts. The final product of the derivation is a sentence with two subjects, a conjunction, a predicate direct object and a verb (Aoun *et al* 1994: 210). So in the above sentence where the verb takes a dual marking denies the existence of a first conjunct agreement. Soltan (2006: 242) has used the same data of coordinate noun phrases in which the verb agrees partially only with the first noun instead of the entire coordinate noun phrase to adduce compelling arguments against a Spec–Head approach to agreement in Arabic. For if the post–verbal subject were at some point in a Spec–Head relationship with the verb, then there would be no straightforward way to have it only agree with the first conjunct. The examination of Qur'ānic ayah in section 2.1.1. will prove which of these arguments are tenable.

1.2.2.3. New Minimalist Studies of agreement in Arabic

In the early part of 2000, Arab and foreign grammarians adopted Merging¹ of new Minimalism in their approach to agreement in Arabic. Benmamoun's merging (2000) is one of the approaches based on new minimalism. According to Benmamoun, none of the previous approaches to agreement which “relied on purely syntactic conditions” proved to “have been empirically adequate” (2000:106). Adopting merging, he explains that the reason why full agreement does not obtain in VS order is because of the merging of the verb with the lexical noun phrase subject. Within such a merger, the verb and lexical noun phrase subject form a single unit in which the verb is “endowed with the number feature” and since number is already an intrinsic feature of the NP, that “would preclude the spell out of the number feature on the verb by an affix; otherwise, number would be spelled out twice which would be redundant” (Benmamoun 2000:113). In other words, merging between the verb and the subject occurs as a result of their

= (a) [[John saw the book] and [Bill bought the book]]

(b) [John saw ei] and [Bill bought ei] the booki

1 Merge is one of the basic operations in the minimalist program, a leading approach to generative syntax, when two (adjacent) syntactic objects make up a new syntactic unit. Essentially, it is a manifestation of recursion, which many scholars claim to be a fundamental characteristic of language and mind in general, or, as Chomsky puts it, “Merge is an indispensable operation of a recursive system...which takes two syntactic objects A and B and forms the new object $G = \{A, B\}$ ” (Chomsky 1995: 2).

being adjacent, with the result that number whose exponent feature occurs in the noun, may not occur again on the adjacent verb because of economy reasons.

However, Benmamoun's merging is not without its theoretical problems. For it fails to account for the following data: *al-awlādu ḍarabtuhum*. (the) kids I hit-them 3rd.person plural masculine, where the verb is marked for number rather than being suppressed for it, though it is adjacent to the noun. Merging does not explain what it is that blocks such a "topicalized subject" and a verb that is also adjacent to it "from undergoing a process of merging" (Ackema and Neeleman 2003:24). Nor can merging explain the following examples: *akala al-tuffāḥata la-awlād-u* (ate-3rd.person sing.masc. (the)apple (the) children-3rd.person plural masc). and *iltaqā bi l-mu'allimi al-ṭullābu* (met-3rd.person sing.masc. with (the) teacher (the) students -3rd.per. plural masc). The problem, according to Tucker, with these data is that the merger process seems to have taken place between the verb and subject over an intervening nonadjunct, which in the first case is the object *al-tuffāḥata*. (the apple) and in the second it is *bi l-mu'allimi*. (with (the) teacher) (Tucker 2007: 19). To account for this data, Benmamoun and Lorimor (2006) modify their view of merging as happening over two steps: first through excorporation, then allowing the overt subject to merge with the null-PF copy of the verb left behind after its movement. Such a counterargument is still untenable because "copies which lack phonological realization have never been licit for derivation". (Tucker 2007:19).

Arguing for a similar approach to agreement is Ackema and Neeleman's (2003) account of "context-sensitive allomorphy rule" of pro drop which states that a "feature of a prosodic terminal may be deleted" in a certain context. By context, they mean "whether or not the verb is realized in the same prosodic phrase as the subject and provided that nothing separates them" (2003:690-703). Modern Standard Arabic is a VSO language in which the VS order is derived by the fronting of the verb to some functional head. In which case, the verb and the subject would form one prosodic unit, and with nothing separating them the number feature is dropped resulting in what they refer to as "weak agreement" in which the verb agrees with the noun in gender but not in number. This may be illustrated as follows;

- a. VSO [FP [F V O][TP Subj tv[vp tv object]]]
- b. {V subj} – {Object}

Here FP stands for functional projection of an unknown head. The SV order, on the other hand, results from the movement of the subject to Spec FP leaving a pronoun in co-reference with the dislocated nominative DP or noun phrase. Thus the noun and the verb would be separated from each other by a pronoun. In other words, the subject and the verb would not be contained within the same intonational phrase as the verb and this would block the application of the “pro drop” rule resulting in what they call “strong agreement” in which the verb agrees with the subject both in number and gender as follows:

- a. SVO [FP SUBJ][F V O] TP SUBJ tv [vptv Object]]]
- b. {Subj} – {V Obj}

An important counterargument to Ackema and Neeleman (2003) is posited by both Benmamoun and Lorimor (2006). According to the authors, Ackema and Neeleman (2003)’s analysis fails to account for the grammaticality of the following example: *jāʿa al-awlādu alladhīna nazahū* (came-3rd.person.sing.masc. (the)children-3rd.pers.plural.masc. who-3rd.person.plural masc. (were) evacuated-3rd.pers.plural.masc.in) which the verb *nazahū* taking third person plural masculine agrees with its relative plural pronoun *alladhīna* though they are both within the same phonological phrase; as well the ungrammaticality of the sentence **jāʿa al-awlādu alldhīn nazaha* (came-3rd.pers.sing.masc. (the) children -3rd.pers.plura..masc). who-3rd.pers.plural.masc. evacuated-3rd.pers.sing.masc. in which weak agreement takes place, though the sentence remains ungrammatical. The inadequacy of the above data questions the nature of the phonological phrase (Tucker 2007:17). As such Ackema and Neeleman’s account (2003) thus cannot be accepted.

A final account of subject-verb ‘partial agreement’ in Arabic as taking place at PF, is that of Soltan’s (2004). According to Soltan, the preverbal subject is actually generated in Spec TP as a result of its left-dislocation leaving behind a null pronoun in Spec VP which must be identified at PF to fulfill the “pro identification requirement” where identification means that a full set of phi-features of gender, person

and number must be associated with the null pro. Soltan, therefore, notes that rich agreement is obtained only when the subject is (or includes) an overt or a null pronominal – whether it occurs in preverbal or post-verbal positions. Consider the following examples

- a. *jī[?]-tu anā wa Hind-un.* (came-1st.per.sing.masc I and Hind).
- b. *jī[?]-na hunna wa-abā[?]-u-hunna* (came-3rd.per.plural fem. They-3rd.per.plural feminine and their fathers).

Here which the verb agrees with the first post-verbal noun of the coordinate noun phrase which in both sentences is a pronoun, though in the first sentence it is null and in the second it is overt. According to Soltan (2004), rich agreement is due to the principle of “pro-identification requirement” in which “a null pronoun” must be identified with all phi-features at the interface. On the other hand, cases where “the subject occurs post-verbally and is neither a pronominal nor includes a pronoun, there will be no need to fulfill the above requirement and therefore rich agreement does not take place” (Soltan 2004:4).

The above was a review of some syntactic accounts of agreement in Arabic. Two disadvantages of these studies can be pointed out. First, they are based on the idea that only one type of ‘partial agreement’ – namely ‘partial agreement’ in number – exists in the data. They fail to account for cases where even ‘partial agreement’ in gender does not obtain as in the Qur’ānic ayahs data in the second part of the present paper. Second, unlike the studies reviewed in 1.2.2.above, these syntactic studies adopted a grammatical configuration without taking into account semantic information. It is this third group of approaches to agreement which are based on semantic information that are discussed below.

1.2.3. Semantic Studies of Agreement in Arabic

A number of accounts have abstracted away from syntactic approaches to agreement and adopted only a semantic or pragmatic basis to agreement. Three of these accounts are discussed below briefly. These are Barlow’s (1999), Kim’s (2003) and al-Sāmarrā’ī (2005). Realizing that syntactic approaches to agreement in any language encounters several problems, Barlow proposes to replace

the morpho-syntactic approach based on “feature matching in the domain of morphosyntax” with a “discourse-based” approach based on “compatibility of properties” or rather “consistency of properties in linked or complex discourse referents” (Barlow 1999: 13). To illustrate the difference between both approaches and to prove the adequacy of the pragmatic-based approach in accounting for agreement in Arabic, Barlow uses the example of the collective plural noun *al-jimāl* (the camels) in Modern Standard Arabic¹. This noun can either take a plural masculine ending as in 1 below or a singular feminine as indicated in 2 below:

- (1) *al-jimālu nāmū* (The camels-3rd.pers.masc.plural slept-3rd.pers.masc.plural)².
- (2) *al-jimālu nāmat* (The camels-3rd.pers.masc.plural slept-3rd.pers.fem.sing).

While the morph-syntactic view of agreement as feature copying can adequately explain the first example in which the third person masculine plural features of the noun are copied on to the verb as indicated from the third person plural masculine suffix *-ū* attached to the verb, it fails to account adequately for the second example in which the same noun copies the third person singular feminine features to the verb – as indicated from the third person singular feminine suffix *-at* marked on the verb. In other words, the morpho-syntactic approach involves a contradiction of information as illustrated from the second example.

The pragmatic-based approach, however, involves no such contradiction and can adequately explain both examples. In the pragmatic-based approach suggested by Barlow (1999), language users “link primary with second discourse referents on the basis of certain properties”. When the properties associated with the secondary discourse referent are compatible or consistent with those of the primary discourse referent, a link is established and agreement based on consistency of properties is obtained” (Barlow 1999:12). The

1 It should be noted that both sentences are grammatical even in some Arabic dialects as in Cairene dialect.

2 This is not grammatical in Classical Arabic. (Editor).

morphological form of the noun *al-jimālu* (the camels) is polysemous in Arabic in the sense that it could take either a 3rd.per.plu.masc.most cases or 3rd.pers.sing.fem only in a few cases. When used as a primary discourse referent denoting a group of individuals, the noun takes a third person plural masculine and its properties can be mapped as follows:

N [MASC,PL]à 'IN-MASC-CLASS', 'COMPOSED-OF-INDIVIDUALS'

In such a case, the noun agrees with the verb as in example (1). In other cases, it could either denote a human or a non-human in which case it would take a third person singular feminine. This can be mapped as follows:

[FEM,SG]à 'IN-FEM-CLASS', 'INDIVIDUAL'

[FEM,SG]-à'COMPOSED-OF-INDIVIDUALS', 'NON-HUMAN'

Selecting the plural masculine referent as in the first example in which the verb is marked for a third person plural masculine is therefore an indication that the discourse referent is associated with the property of human. This is in violation to the real fact which is that the discourse referent *al-jimālu* (the camels) is non-human. So while the first case in which the first noun features of the third person plural masculine are copied to the verb within the morphosyntactic approach are syntactically adequate, they are pragmatically inadequate. In the second case, the choice of the singular feminine suffix denoting that *al-jimālu* (the camels) is a singular non-human referent is compatible with the feature of the singular feminine pronoun suffixed to the verb and is pragmatically adequate but syntactically inadequate (Barlow 1999: 14). This is supported by grammatical evidence from anaphoric reference to non-human plural nouns. For it is the rule that the third-person singular feminine pronoun *hiya* i.e.she is the pronoun used to refer anaphorically to any non-human plural nouns such as *al-jimālu* (the camels) above. For example, *inna al-jimāla nāmat kamā annahā akmalat sayrahā laylan.* ((that) the camels 3rd.pers.fem.sing. slept and that-she continued traveling through the night) where a 3rd-person singular feminine *-hā* is used to refer anaphorically to the plural noun camels.

A similar case is found in the following ayah 29 from Sūrat al-Baqarah:

﴿فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾ [البقرة: ٢٩]

And made them seven heavens. In this ayah the object plural inanimate noun *samawāt* i.e.heavens, is referred to as feminine plural by the suffix *hunna* in the verb *fasawwā*– which is pragmatically adequate because the context emphasizes the importance of the *samawāt* and therefore are dealt with as if animate human (al-Sāmarrā'i 2005: 98). The second part of the present paper will investigate whether or not Barlow's account of "feature compatibility" can adequately account for *Shift* in Arabic as demonstrated in some Qur'ānic ayahs data of the present paper.

The second semantic-based approach to agreement is proposed by Kim (2003). He argues against a purely syntactic or a purely semantic account of agreement and instead proposes a "hybrid" or "Index agreement". By "hybrid agreement", he meant a mixture of morphology and syntax (Kim 2003:66) as follows: a. English determiner–noun agreement is morpho–syntactic. The head and its specifier have an identical NUM(BER) value, which is specified in the head's lexical entry; b. Subject–verb and pronoun–antecedent agreement are "semantic": The subject's semantic index value, not its morphosyntactic features, is the determinant of the agreement feature values of the verb; c. The HEAD: Agr's features (or formal features) may be different from its CONT: INDEX's features. This is illustrated as follows:

a.[NP this government]

this: HEAD: det, AGR '1': NUM – P1

government: HEAD: noun, AGR '1': NUM– P1

SPR: 'DetP: AGR '1'

CONT: INDEX '1': NUM–P1 (or INDEX '2':
NUM P1)

Kim's idea is that the semantic content of the noun may have a different variable index which may introduce an agreement feature value different than that of its head or specifier. However if the verb combines with a subject of incompatible index value, the result would

be an ungrammatical sentence. Kim's approach (2003) like that of Barlow (1999) sheds light on the semantic and contextual information of agreement. However, it still does not clarify other cases of 'partial agreement'. Nor is it clear whether or not such the "hybrid agreement" approach can account for the issue of *Shift* found in the Qur'ānic ayahs data of the present paper.

A last study, which is the most comprehensive studies of 'partial agreement' or '*adam al-muṭābaqah*' in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān, is a study by al-Sāmarrā'ī (2005). In dealing with all types of agreement in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān, he concludes that word order is not the reason for 'partial agreement'. For there are cases where the verb precedes the noun, yet gender agreement does not obtain. Instead, he explains that this is due to semantic and contextual factors. The validity of such an approach in accounting for *Shift* in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān is investigated in the second part of the present paper.

To conclude, the first part of the present paper was a survey of the previous studies conducted on two issues: first *Shift* with a special focus on *Shift* in number and gender; second, agreement in Arabic or with its various types. Studies on 'partial agreement' in Arabic were divided into three groups. The first group surveyed the traditional studies of agreement in Arabic conducted by both Arab and non-Arab syntaticians. Some (Hasan 1981; al-Rājhi 1986) gave semantic, syntactic and morphological factors for 'partial agreement'; others (Holes 1995; Brustad 2000) explained that 'partial agreement' is due to pragmatic factors; while (Mahfoudhi 2002) cited "processing" and Abdel Hafiz (2005) cited "topicalization" as reasons for 'partial agreement'. They did not provide a syntactic framework of 'partial agreement' that can account for *Shift* in number and gender in the Qur'ānic ayahs.

Unlike the first group, the second group dealt with agreement in Arabic within different syntactic frameworks. Mohammad's expletive hypothesis (1989–2000) accounted for verb–subject 'partial agreement' on the basis of the presence of a third person singular pronoun incorporated within the governed verb or a null expletive pronoun that is co-indexed with the subject at PF. Some (Harbert & Bahloul:1992) and Fassi (1993)'s Incorporation Analysis looked at agreement as obtaining within government. While Aoun *et al* (1994)

argued against agreement within government and embraced the notion of agreement within Spec-Head configuration. Benmamoun's new minimalist approach (2000) envisages of 'partial agreement' as a case of "merging" of the NP and the verb. Adopting a similar approach but within prosody is that of Ackema and Neelman (2003). One final study argued against agreement within spec TP (Soltan: 20004). Though varied and several, none of the syntactic approaches provide a syntactic explanation that can account for all cases of 'partial agreement' in Arabic; nor attempted to investigate *Shift* within any of their syntactic frameworks.

The third group provided a semantic approach to agreement. This included studies by Barlow (1999), Kim (2003) and al-Sāmarra'ī (2005). Barlow (1999) attempted a pragmatic analysis of agreement which is based on the compatibility of features between discourse referents rather than on feature copying, while Kim (2003) proposed a "hybrid agreement" approach. Basing his work on Arab grammarians and rhetoricians' views of contextual information, al-Sāmarra'ī (2005) looked at agreement within semantics, yet provided no semantic framework for full agreement or *'adam al-muṭābaqah* in Arabic. The significance of these three approaches lies in their focus on an important aspect of agreement that has hitherto been ignored, that is, the semantic aspect of agreement.

The second part of the present paper looks more closely into *Shift* in number and gender features in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān. The purpose of the investigation is to examine the nature of *Shift* to determine whether it is a case of 'partial agreement', 'default' or 'zero agreement'; examine whether or not morphological factors, e.g. morphology of noun, syntactic factors e.g. linear word order, semantic information; contextual information ¹contribute to *Shift*; and accordingly determine which of the above approaches can adequately account for these types of *Shift*. If none of these approaches are viable for *Shift* in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān, a framework that can adequately account for *Shift* is suggested. To answer these questions a data of 30 Qur'ānic verses representing various cases of *Shift* in number and

1 Context is used in the present paper to refer to the background information in the ayah based on the exegesis and interpretation of the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān by al-Qurṭubī (1957)

gender are investigated in the second part of the paper. The data is divided into two groups: the first group presents two different cases of in number. The first is: the case of SV order where the subject is a coordinate NP symbolized by ConjDP or a single noun/noun phrase; the second case is SV where the subject is *ism mawṣūl* (relative pronoun) *man*. The third group is that of *Shift* in gender in VS order. Each of which is discussed below.

2.1. *Shift* in number

2.1.1. SVO cases where S is a preverbal coordinate noun phrase or a single noun/noun phrase

The first section investigates *Shift* in number in SV order. It is further subdivided into two sections. The first looks into *Shift* in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān first case where the *mubtada'* theme or preverbal noun phrase is a coordinate noun phrase, while the second looks in cases where the subject is a single noun/noun phrase. The first section below investigates whether Aoun *et al's* (1999) 'clausal reduction' in Spec-Head or Munn's (1999) argument can account for this type of *Shift* in number; while the second attempts to determine which of the syntactic accounts above can adequately account for this type of *Shift*. Consider the first group of examples:

﴿وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ﴾ [سورة النور: ٤٨]

- 1) And when they are called to Allah (i.e. His Words, the Quran) and His Messenger to judge between them, lo ! a party of them refuses (to come) and turns away. (Sūrat al-Nūr: 48)

﴿إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

[سورة النور: ٥١]

- 2) The only saying of the faithful believers, when they are called to Allah (His Words, the Quran) and His Messenger, to judge between them, is that they say: "We hear and we obey": And such are the successful (who will live forever in Paradise). (Sūrat al-Nūr: 51)

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِحَوْلِ بَيْتِ الْمَرْءِ

وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾ [سورة الأنفال: ٢٤]

- 3) O you who believe! Answer Allah (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life, and know that Allah comes in between a person and his heart (i.e. He prevents an evil person to decide anything). And verily, to Him you shall (all) be gathered (Sūrat al-Anfāl: 24)

The above group of examples display a unique pattern of *Shift* in number. For the theme is a coordinate noun phrase, yet the verb appears to agree with only one of the two coordinate nouns. The first and second Qur'ānic ayah both have an implicit third person singular masculine pronoun *-huwa* in *liyāḥkuma-* (to judge) in the first and second Qur'ānic ayahs. It is unclear to which of the two nouns does the pronoun refer to, that is to the remote or to the adjacent noun. Commenting on these two Qur'ānic ayahs, Tabl (1998: 95) had pointed out that the contextual information of the verb *yāḥkum* (to judge) may refer to both nouns of the coordinate NP or to the fact that in applying the rules of Allah, the Almighty, the Prophet (ﷺ) would be the one judging in accordance to these rules. So that the pronoun can either refer to either Allah, the Almighty, only or the Prophet (ﷺ) only. That explains why the verb is suffixed with a third person singular pronoun. In the third ayah the context of situation is different from the first and second ayahs. According to al-Zarkashī (2004 vol.4: 23) the act of calling is done by Allah, the Almighty and the Prophet (ﷺ) in accordance to a command given to him by Allah, the Almighty. This explains why the implicit third person masculine pronoun in the verb *liyāḥkuma* (to judge is 3rd.person singular).

From the above discussion two arguments can be made, each of which is discussed below. The first argument regards the syntactic framework which can adequately account for this type of *Shift* in number. The above ayahs show that *Shift* in number can be explained by one of three accounts: either by Aoun *et al's* 'clausal reduction analysis' (1999), or the Spec-Head configuration, or Munn's (1999) argument for agreement within government. Aoun *et al.* (1999) had acknowledged that first conjunct agreement may exist in SV position but did not provide an explanation (1999: 680). The above Qur'ānic ayahs defy agreement in government. For within government, the subject NP will be considered as syntactically plural in which case a third person masculine plural should cliticize onto the verb

– something that is not evident in any of the above Qurʾānic ayahs. Nor can the Spec-Head be the configuration within which this type of *Shift* in number takes place. For even if the whole coordinate NP (ConjDP) was in Spec-Head configuration with the verb then there is no reason why only one of the two coordinate noun phrase should agree with the verb. It seems that Munn's (1999: 644) argument that the coordinate NP is semantically plural but syntactically singular is sound. The exegesis above shows that in all three cases – the Prophet (ﷺ) is the instrument through which the commands of Allah, the Almighty, are carried out. From this a second argument can be made. It could be inferred that if the two nouns constituting the coordinate NP in preverbal position are animate nouns then the coordinate NP could be considered syntactically singular¹. In other words, the type of the noun plays a role in the process of *Shift* in number.

The second subgroup looks at another type of *Shift* in number in SV order where the subject is a single noun. Consider the following Qurʾānic ayahs.

﴿وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ نَبَأُ الْخَضِرِ إِذْ سَوَّرُوا الْيَحْرَابَ﴾ [سورة ص: ٢١]

- 1) And has the news of the litigants reached you? When they climbed over the wall into (Dawood's) Miḥrāb (a praying place or a private room) (Sūrat Sād: 21):

﴿وَأَطْفَالٍ الَّذِينَ لَوْ يَطَّهَّرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ﴾ [سورة النور: ٣١]

1 However, this is not always the case in the Ever-Glorious Qurʾān. In ayah (62) of Sūrat at-Tawba:

﴿وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرَاضُوا﴾ [التوبة: ٦٢]

But it is more fitting that they should please Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ); and

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يُمْسِكُونَهَا﴾ [التوبة: ٣٤]

And those who hoard up gold and silver. Note that in these two ayahs the pronoun suffixed to the verbs *yurāḍhu* (to please Him) in the first ayah and *yumifqūnahā* in the second ayah are third person singular masculine and feminine, respectively, which is an indication that the pronoun refers anaphorically to one of the coordinate nouns of the noun phrase. It should be pointed that in the first and second ayahs, the postverbal noun phrase are object nouns and verb object agreement in number is beyond the scope of the present paper.

- 2) or small children who have no sense of feminine sex. (Sūrat al-Nūr: 31);

﴿فَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ إِنَّ هَذَا عَدُوٌّ لَكَ وَزَوْجِكَ فَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّكَ مَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَى﴾ [سورة طه: ١١٧]

- 3) Then We said: “O Adam! Verily, this is an enemy to you and to your wife. So let him not get you both out of Paradise, so that you will be distressed (Sūrat Ṭāhā:117);

﴿هَذَا نَحْنُ وَهَذَا نَحْنُ﴾

﴿الحجيم﴾ [سورة الحج: ١٩]

- 4) These two opponents (believers and disbelievers) dispute with each other about their Lord (Sūrat al-Ḥajj: 19);

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ فَإِذَا هُمْ فَرِيقَانِ يَخْتَصِمُونَ﴾ [سورة النمل: ٤٥]

- 5) And indeed We sent to Thamud their brother Salih (Salih), saying: Worship Allah (Alone and none else). Then Look! They became two parties (believers and disbelievers) quarrelling with each other (Sūrat al-Naml: 45);

﴿وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا﴾ [سورة الحجرات: ٩]

- 6) And if two parties or groups among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both (Sūrat al-Ḥujurat: 9).

The Qur'ānic ayahs in this group display three different patterns of *Shift* in number. The patterns in ayahs 1 and 2 show a shift from singularity in the *mubtada'* (theme) or preverbal noun phrase to a third person masculine plural marking on the verb, whereas ayah 3 shows a shift from the dual in the noun phrase to the singular in the verb. The preverbal noun phrase *khaṣm* (litigant) and *ṭifl* (small children) in Qur'ānic ayah 2 are singular while the verbs *tasawwarū*. ((they) climbed over the wall) in ayah 1, and *yazharū* (who have no sense of) in ayah 2 have third person masculine plural suffixes. According to al-Zamakhsharī (2004 vol.8:242) and al-Sāmarrā'ī (1989: 24), the two nouns in ayahs 1 and 2 are *maṣadir* (deverbal nouns) which in Arabic are not marked for number. The fact that the verbs in these two ayahs show a different number feature is an indication that these verbs do not agree with these surface subjects but with other noun phrases

which copies onto them their number feature. A look into the exegesis explains what these other subject noun phrases are. According to the exegesis, the subject *khaṣm* (litigant) in the first ayah consists of only two persons. But the fact that each litigant has his own supporters renders each as two large groups not just two mere individuals. In other words, the semantic referent (henceforward SR) underlying the surface syntactic subject (henceforward SS) is a plural noun. The fact that the verb has a third person plural pronominal suffix denoted by *-ū* in the verb *tasawwar* (climbed over the wall), means that it agrees with this semantic referent rather than with the surface syntactic subject.

The contextual information also accounts for the second pattern of *Shift* in number in the second Qur'ānic ayah. According to al-Sāmarrā'ī (1989: 178), the noun *ṭifl* (small children) has different usages depending on the context within which it occurs. Where the context makes reference to a whole generic class, it is used as a deverbal noun; and where the context refers to a specific individual, it is used as a singular countable noun. In the above mentioned ayah, the noun is used as a *maṣḍar* (a deverbal noun), referring to a whole generic class of the *ṭifl* i.e. small children to whom the idea of entering into women's place without prior permission is religious. The semantic referent (SR) underlying the noun is the whole generic class of women. The fact that the verb is suffixed for a third person plural feature predicts that the verb agrees with the semantic referent (SR) of the noun *ṭifl* (small children). This shows that the morphology of the noun¹ – as deverbal nouns – contributes to the process of *Shift* in number.

In the third ayah, Allah, the Almighty, addressing Adam states that *iblis* i.e. (Satan) is an enemy to both Adam and Ḥawwā' (Eve). Therefore, following in his steps will lead to their being expelled out of Eden. Note that the ayah is addressed to both Adam and Hawwā'. However, the subject of the verb *tashqā* (toil and work hard) has an implicit third person singular pronoun *huwa* that refers only to Adam, not to both Adam and Hawwā'. Commenting on this type of *Shift* from the dual to the third person singular, al-Zarkashī (2004 vol.2: 150) says

1 Morphology of the noun in the present paper focuses on the type of noun—concrete or abstract, type of *maṣḍar*—deverbal noun or its paradigm, singular or plural, etc.

it is due to the contextual meaning of the verb. It is understood that the act of toiling and working hard to sustain a living as referring to Adam. In other words, the semantic referent (SR) with which the verb agrees is a third person masculine singular. This accounts for the third person masculine singular suffixation of the verb. In other words, the verb agrees with one of the two nouns of the coordinate noun phrase and not to both Adam and Hawwā'. and it is the contextual meaning of the verb that determines which of the two coordinate nouns the verb agrees with.

The fourth, fifth and sixth ayahs show another pattern of *Shift* in number—from the dual to the plural. The noun acting as the preverbal noun phrase or theme is the dual noun *khaṣmān* (the two) litigants in Qur'ānic ayah 4, *fariqān*(the two) (parties) in ayah 5, and *tā'ifatān* (the two) (parties) in ayah 6 whereas the verbs in all three ayahs take a third person masculine plural suffixation —ū in *ikhtaṣamū* (dispute with each other) and *yakhtaṣimū* (quarrel with each other) in ayah 5 and *iqṭatalū* (to fight each other) in ayah 6. The nouns used in the fourth, fifth and sixth ayahs are all dual; but according to al-Zamakhsharī (2004 vol.2: 268) the fact that the two groups are in dispute as in the fourth and fifth Qur'ānic ayahs or are fighting as in the sixth ayah ultimately causes them to further split into several myriads subgroups. Thus instead of being only two groups, they are myriads of subgroups. In other words, the underlying semantic referent (SR) of the noun in all three ayahs is a plural noun. This explains why a third person masculine plural pronoun rather than a dual pronoun is suffixed to the verbs in these three ayahs. In other words, the verbs in both ayahs agree with the semantic referent (SR) underlying the surface syntactic subject (SS) rather than with the syntactic subject (SS) itself. The implication is that the contextual information of the verb also plays a role in controlling *Shift* in number. It can be confirmed, therefore, that *Shift* in number is determined by the context.

Having confirmed that *Shift* is determined by context, the question is to determine whether it can be accounted for by any of the syntactic accounts described in 1.2.2. above. Note that this type of *Shift* defies a Spec-Head configuration. For the above Qur'ānic ayahs, the subject noun phrase and verb fulfill the locality requirement of a Spec-Head configuration with the subject c-commanding the immediately adjacent

verb, yet it is the underlying semantic referent (SR) rather than the surface subject (SS) that copies its phi-features to the verb as evident from the agreement morphemes suffixed onto the verb. Two explanations are plausible as follows: First, a Spec-Head configuration licenses agreement with the surface syntactic subject (SS) but for some reason the agreement is not spelled-out morphologically. This, however, does not explain how the verb acquires different agreement markings.

The second hypothesis runs as follows: something is blocking Spec-Head agreement with these surface syntactic subjects (SSs) while allowing agreement with the underlying semantic referents (SR) alluded to in the exegesis of the above mentioned Qur'anic ayahs. This may be explained as follows: the semantic information of the verb triggers a certain selection restriction feature for the verb symbolized as SR(Fv-) that renders it "compatible" – in Barlow's terms (1999) – to the underlying semantic referent (SR) of the surface syntactic subject; or that the verb has an unvalued selection restriction feature SR(Fv-) that has to be checked by the selection restriction feature of the underlying semantic referent SR(Fn+), thus licensing agreement between them. It can be confirmed, therefore, that al-Sāmarrā'i's study (2005) in which *Shift* is based on semantic and contextual information is sound. It may be said that *Shift* is a case of "semantic agreement" in which the selection restriction feature of the verb SR(Fv-) triggered by the context licences its agreement with the underlying semantic referent (SR) whose phi-feature of number is different from that of the surface syntactic subject (SS), thus producing *Shift* in number.

This shows then that the hypothesis made above regarding the roles played by the semantic information of the verb and the context in determining *Shift* and that *Shift* in number is a type of "semantic agreement" between the verb and the underlying semantic referent (SR) triggered by context is sound. This poses a dilemma for minimalism. For a minimalist account to adequately account for the above cases, it is hypothesized that two alternations be made to minimalism: the first is that context be incorporated within a new approach referred to as "neo-Minimalism" prior to PF as the level at which "semantic agreement" takes place between the verb and the underlying "semantic referent"; second, a selection restriction feature for both the underlying semantic referent SR (Fn+), the surface syntactic subject SS(Fn-) and the verb

SR(Fv-) be set up to explain how agreement between the verb and the underlying semantic referent (SR) is licensed. Such a hypothesized account when proven sound is described in 2.1.3. below.

From the above, three hypotheses are made: first, while Munn's (1999) account for agreement under government succeeds in explaining some cases of *Shift* in number, Spec-Head configuration fails to explain other types of *Shift* in number; second, *Shift* in number is not a case of "partial agreement" or "zero default agreement". Instead, it is a type of full "semantic agreement" in which the context and morphology play a role and in which a selection restriction feature (SRF) attracts the verb to the underlying semantic referent (SR) allowing it to copy its phi-feature of number onto it. third, a newly modified minimalist configuration that can adequately account for *Shift* in number need be set up.

2.1.2. SVO cases where S is *ism mawṣūl* (Relative Pronoun)man

The section below looks into another type of *Shift* in number. It consists of Qur'ānic ayah involving *ism al-Ṣilah* i.e. relative pronoun *man*. *Man* shows two different patterns of *Shift* in number as indicated by the two groups of examples below. The purpose of investigating this type of *Shift* in number demonstrated by *man* is to determine whether or not the hypothesis made in 2.1.1. regarding the role played by context in *Shift* in number is sound; whether the syntactic factor such as word order impinge on *Shift* as it does in morpho-syntactic agreement; and whether Spec-Head configuration can account for *Shift* or does the need for a newly modified version still holds. Consider the following examples:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَجِّهْهُ بِلِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾ [سورة

البقرة: ١١٢]

- 1) Yes, but whoever submits his face (himself) to Allah (i.e. follows Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism) and he is a Muhsin then his reward is with his Lord (Allah), on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (Sūrat al-Baqarah: 112).

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّالِينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ

عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾ [سورة البقرة: ٦٢]

- 2) Verily those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians, and Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does righteous good deeds shall have their reward with their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (Sūrat al-Baqarah: 62).

﴿فَمَنْ أَتَقَىٰ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾ [سورة الأعراف: ٣٥]

- 3) Then whosoever becomes pious and righteous, on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve (Sūrat al-A'raf: 35).

﴿مَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا نَفْسٍ بِهِ يَمْهُدُونَ﴾ [سورة الروم: ٤٤]

- 4) Whosoever disbelieves will suffer from his disbelief, and whosoever does righteous good deeds (by practicing Islamic Monotheism), then such will prepare a good place (in Paradise) for themselves (and will be saved by Allah from His Torment) (Sūrat al-Rūm: 44).

﴿وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا﴾ [سورة النساء: ١٢٥]

- 5) And who can be better in religion than one who submits his face (himself) to Allah (i.e. follows Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism) and he is a *Muhsin* (a good-doer). And follows the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham) *Hanif* (Islamic Monotheism – to worship none but Allah Alone) (Sūrat al-Nisā': 125).

﴿وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾

[سورة النساء: ١٠٠]

- 6) And whosoever leaves his home as an emigrant unto Allah and His Messenger, and death overtakes him, his reward is then surely, incumbent upon Allah. And Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (Sūrat al-Nisā': 100).

﴿يُدْنِسَةَ النَّبِيِّ مَنِ بَاتَ مِنْكُمْ يَفْحَشَةً مُبِينَةً يُضَعَفُ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا * وَمَنْ يَفْتَنُ مِنْكُمْ لَللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَنَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُؤْتِيهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ رِقَابًا كَثِيرًا﴾ [سورة الأحزاب: ٣١ - ٣٠]

[٣١ - ٣٠]

- 7) O Wives of the Prophet! Whoever of you commits an open illegal sexual intercourse, the torment for her will be doubled, and that is ever easy for Allah. And whosoever of you is obedient to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), and does righteous good deeds, We shall give her, her reward twice over, and We have prepared for her *Rizqan Karim* (a noble provision – Paradise) (Sūrat al-Aḥzāb 33: 30–31).

The above ayahs show that *man* that or who displays one pattern of *Shift* in number with one of the verbs associated with it. This is in accordance with traditional Arabic grammarians' account of *man*. According to Arab grammarians, the verb adjacent to *man* agrees with it grammatically, that is, in form and is marked for a third person singular masculine, while the remote verb agrees with it in meaning only but not grammatically and may be suffixed for any other number (al-Zarkashī: 2004 vol.3: 237), though in all the above ayahs they are suffixed for a third person plural masculine. In the first ayah, the adjacent verb *aslama*. (submit his (face) or himself to Allah), has a third person singular masculine to agree grammatically with *man*. Such a pattern of full agreement with *man* continues in the first part of the ayah as indicated in *huwa muḥsinun* (he is muḥsinun), and the third person singular pronoun suffixed to *ajru-hu*. ((his) reward). While a shift from the third person singular pronoun to a different pronoun suddenly occurs in the last part of the ayah as evident in *‘alay-him* (for them) and *-hum* (they) as it makes a statement running as follows: that any and all Muslims who submit themselves to Allah, the Almighty, shall feel neither grief nor fear for themselves (al-Qurṭubī 1957, vol.4: 24)

In the second ayah, the verb adjacent to *man*, *‘āman* (to believe) and *‘amila* (perform or do righteous and good deeds), agree with *man* grammatically with a third person singular masculine while the remote verb *yahzanūn* (to grieve) takes third person plural masculine *-ūn* to agree with *man* in meaning. According to exegetes, the ayah is stating that whoever of the Jews, Christians or Sabians — generally speaking — believes in Allah, the Almighty shall be rewarded by Allah, the Almighty (al-Qurtobi 1957, vol 4: 224)

In the third ayah, the most adjacent verb *ittaqā* (become pious) and *‘amila* (perform a righteous deed) take a third person singular while the remote verb *yahzanūn* (to grieve) is inflected for third person plural masculine as denoted by the *waw* and *-ūn*. The reason is because the ayah is making a general statement that whoever performs good deeds will be rewarded by Allah, the Almighty (al-Qurṭubī 1957 vol.6: 18)

In the fourth ayah, the pattern shifts from an agreement in number between *man* and the adjacent verb which takes an implicit third person singular masculine pronoun in *kafara* (disbelieves) and *‘amila* (does or performs a deed), to a shift in number in the remote verb marked by a third person plural masculine pronoun *-ūn* in *yamhadūn* (to prepare a good place in Paradise for themselves). Like the above mentioned ayah, this one is making a general statement that each and every person who disbelieves shall receive an equal punishment (al-Qurṭubī 1957, vol.4:206). Note here that the ayahs where the verb is marked with a third person masculine plural, the context is one of a general statement.

In the fifth ayah, both the adjacent verb *aslama* (to submit himself or face to Allah), the Almighty, and the remote verb *ittaba‘a* (to follow) take an implicit third person singular masculine as indicated from the implicit third person singular masculine pronoun which refers to Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (al-Qurṭubī 1957, vol.6:200).

In the sixth ayah, both verbs *yakhruj* (leaves his home) and *yudrikhu* ((death) overtakes him) are suffixed for the third person singular masculine pronoun as denoted by the pronoun *-hu*. The ayah refers to Ḍamrah ibn Jundub. (al-Qurṭubī 1957, vol.5:206).

The last ayah is different from the above. For the adjacent verb can be read as *yaqnut* or *taqnut* (to be obedient), that is, with either the masculine pronoun *ya-* or feminine pronoun indicating the *ta-* for the imperfect tense of the verb, like the second verb *ta‘mal* (to do (good)). In this case, the ayah is specifically referring to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ). Note that unlike ayahs one to four, the last three verses— in which the remote verb takes a third person singular masculine or feminine markings — make reference to specific entities or people.

Having investigated the two different patterns of *Shift* in number, the question posed then is whether or not minimalist account can account for it. Note that the minimalist account of agreement within Spec-Head configuration does not uniformly account for the different patterns of *Shift* demonstrated by *man* in the above ayahs. For the agreement of the verb adjacent to *man* with it wherein the

verb acquires its third person singular masculine marking can be accounted for within a spec head configuration. For in all these cases *man* merges with the adjacent verb it c-commands, thus copying its third person singular masculine phi-features onto this verb. However, the spec head configuration fails to explain how the remote verbs in each of these ayahs acquire the different markings it takes as follows: the third person plural masculine as in ayahs 1 to 4, then the third person singular masculine as in ayahs 5 and 6, and a third person singular feminine as in ayah 7. It also fails to explain which controlling nouns these verbs agree with. This calls for a reconsideration of other syntactic configurations to determine which of them can account for this type of *Shift* in number.

Other syntactic hypotheses can be postulated to account for this type of *Shift* in number, though each runs into a theoretical problem. First, it may be hypothesized that *man* is a relative pronoun which is indeterminate for number and gender and therefore checks any number or gender feature for the verb. However, such a hypothesis is not tenable. For it assumes that agreement with the remote verbs takes place over non-adjuncts. This assumption is, however, unacceptable in Minimalism (Tucker 2007: 19). To overcome the problem of agreement over non-adjunct, it could be assumed that the relative pronoun moves to check the remote verb leaving its trace to check the adjacent verb. This also violates the assumption that traces are not licit for agreement or for derivation (Tucker 2007:19). A plausible hypothesis would be to assume that *Shift* in number is due to agreement between the remote verb and a semantic referent (SR) other than the relative pronoun *man*. The question then is to explain where the semantic referent is originating from, where such an agreement takes place in the derivation and how such a hypothesis can be incorporated within minimalism to account for *Shift* in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān.

Possible answers to the above questions lie in the context as indicated from the exegesis of the above Qur'ānic ayahs. An investigation of the exegesis above shows that the context plays a role in deriving the underlying the semantic referent (SR) with which the verb agrees; thus explaining how the verbs in each of these ayahs acquire their number

marking which is different from that of the *man*. The first, the second and third ayahs make general statements that apply generally to any and all believers who do good, not to a specific believer. In this case the underlying semantic referent (SR) in the second part of each of these ayahs with which the remote verbs agree is a third person plural masculine referents. The exegesis of the fifth, sixth and seventh ayahs indicates that the context refers to a specific referent which is either a third person singular masculine: as to Abu Bakr ElSeddiq in ayah 5, Dumrah Ibn Junub in ayah 6, or to a third person singular feminine as in ayah 7 which makes reference to all wives of the Prophet (PBUH). In other words, the underlying semantic referent (SR) with which the remote verb agrees is a third person singular masculine/feminine. This explains then how the verb gets its third person masculine feminine singular meaning. This corroborates with Arab grammarians' principle of *al-ḥamlu 'alā al-ma'nā* which states that remote verbs agree with the underlying referent of *man* as indicated by the context. Since the *jawābu al-shart* is controlled by *man* and *man* cannot move for the above mentioned reasons, it will be hypothesized that the semantic referent is originated by the context in place of *man* in an immediately adjacent position to the remote verb thus acquiring its number feature which is different from that of *man*.

To further explain how the verb agrees with the semantic referent (SR) underlying *man* rather than with *man*, a resort to the hypothesis made in 2.1.1. above regarding the selection restriction features of both the verb SR(Fv-) and the noun SR(Fn+) is necessary. It is hypothesized then, that the selection restriction feature of the verb SR(Fv-) is checked against that of the underlying semantic referent SR(Fn+), originated by the context, thus licensing their agreement while blocking agreement between the verb and the surface syntactic subject (SS). The hypothesis, then, made above regarding the need for the 'neo-Minimalist' account to explain *Shift* in number is sound. It further confirms that *Shift* is not determined by word order, but rather by context. Context plays an important role in deriving an underlying semantic referent (SR) – whose phi-features are different from those of the surface syntactic subject (SS) in its phi-features – thus producing *Shift* in number.

2.2. Shift in gender

The following section looks into another type of *Shift* which is *Shift* in gender. The purpose of this section is to investigate the nature of *Shift* in gender to determine whether it is 'partial agreement' or 'default' or 'zero agreement', identify other factors that can contribute to this type of *Shift* and determine whether or not the syntactic framework proposed to account for *Shift* in number can equally account for *Shift* in gender. Consider the following examples:

﴿وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرْوَدُ فَتَلْهَىٰ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ﴾ [سورة يوسف: 30]

- 1) And women in the city said: "The wife of al-^ʿAzīz is seeking to seduce her (slave) young man" (Sūrat Yusuf: 30);

﴿قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا﴾ [سورة الحجرات: 14]

- 2) The bedouins said: "We believe" (Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt: 14);

﴿فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ﴾ [سورة الحجر: 30]

- 3) So the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together (Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 30);

﴿فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ﴾ [سورة آل عمران: 39]

- 4) Then the angels called him, while he was standing in prayer in al-Miḥrab (a praying place for a private room) (Sūrat Āl-ʿImrān: 39);

﴿فَرِيقًا هَدَىٰ وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلَالَةُ﴾ [سورة الأعراف: 30]

- 5) A group He has guided, and a group deserved to be in error; (Sūrat al-Aʿrāf: 30)

﴿فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ﴾ [سورة النحل: 36]

- 6) Then of them were some whom Allah guided and of them were some upon whom the straying was justified (Sūrat al-Naḥl: 36);

﴿وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا فَأَنْظَرِكَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ﴾ [سورة الأعراف: 84]

- 7) And we rained down on them a rain (of stones). Then see what was the end of the *Mujrimūn* (criminals, polytheists, sinners) (Sūrat al-Aʿrāf: 84);

﴿وَمَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ رِجَابُ الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾ [سورة القصص: ٣٧]

- 8) Musa (Moses) said: “My Lord knows best him who came with guidance from Him and whose will be the happy end in the Hereafter. Verily, the *Zālimūn* (wrongdoers, polytheists and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) will not be successful (Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ: 37).

Some of the Qurʾānic ayahs above appear to steer away from the assumption made by Arab and non-Arab grammarians that subject verb agreement in gender obtains in both SV and VS orders. In the examples above, ayahs 1, 3, 5 and 7 show a VS order in which the noun is feminine, yet the verbs show no feminine suffixation for gender. In the first ayah, the subject is a broken feminine plural *niswatun* (women) yet the verb *qāla* ((He)) said shows no suffixation for gender. In the second ayah, the same verb takes the feminine gender *qālat* ((she) said) to agree with the countable collective noun *al-aʿrāb* (the Bedouins). In the third and fourth Qurʾānic ayahs, the subject is the plural noun *al-malāʾikah* (the Angels) while the verb in the two ayahs show different patterns: one of agreement in gender in 3 and the other is of *Shift* in gender in 4. In the third ayah, the verb *sajada* ((they) prostrated themselves) is not suffixed for gender while in the fourth ayah it does, as denoted from the *-ta* suffixed to the verb *nādathu* (called him). In ayahs 5 and 6 the same subject noun phrase *al-ḍalālatu* (to be in error) occurs with the same verb in both ayah, yet in the fifth ayah, the verb is not suffixed for gender while in the sixth ayah, it is – as denoted by the highlighted pronoun *-at*. Likewise, the auxiliary *kāna* does not agree with the inanimate feminine noun *āqibah* in ayah 7, while it is prefixed for gender in the eighth ayah as shown by *ta-* in *takūn* ((she) or (it) to be).

The fact that in some ayahs as in 2, 4, 6 and 8 the verb agrees with the subject in gender but does not agree with it in gender in the other ayahs as in 1, 3, 5 and 7 poses three questions. The first is why verb-subject agreement in gender obtain in some cases while it does not in

others; the second is whether *Shift* in gender is “partial”, “default” or “semantic agreement”, and therefore determine the morphological, semantic and syntactic factors that contribute to this type of *Shift*; and the third is which syntactic approach can account for this type of *Shift* and whether or not the ‘neo-Minimalist’ account suggested above for *Shift* in number can also account for *Shift* in gender. The answer to these questions is followed by a suggested syntactic framework that can incorporate such factors and therefore adequately account for *Shift* in gender and number.

The answer to the first question requires a look into the exegesis of each ayah the semanticity of the verb¹ and the morphological features of the subject. In the first and second ayah the same verb shows two different markings for gender. The context of the first ayah as indicated from the exegesis shows that the subject *niswatun* was a small group of women. The rule in Arabic morphology is that for broken feminine plural to indicate a small group of people, the verb should take a masculine feature. The opposite is found in the second ayah. In this verse, the noun *al-a'rāb* (the bedouins) is a collective noun denoting a large group of bedouins. According to Arab grammarians, collective plural nouns combined with a verb with a feminine suffix denote a large group of the noun in question. Arab grammarians' traditional rule that the absence and presence of gender marking in VS order is due to the existence of an annexed to noun namely *jam^ε* (group) or *jamā'ah* (group-feminine suffix) with which the verb agrees, can be resorted to here. In Qur'ānic ayah 1 the where the verb takes no gender marking is an indication that it agrees with the annexed to *jam^ε* group. In the second case where the verb is suffixed for gender, is an indication that it agrees with the noun *jamā'ah* (group-gender suffix). In other words, the context, the morphology and the rule of the underlying semantic referent contribute to *Shift* in gender.

The third and fourth ayahs show a contrasting case of *Shift* in gender. In both ayahs, the subject noun phrase is the same *al-malā'ikatu* (the Angels) yet the verb agrees with its subject in gender in the fourth ayah but not in the third ayahs. A look into the exegesis, shows that when

1 The semanticity of the verb as used in the present paper refers to its denotation, connotation and its selection restriction feature.

the verb is in a command mood denoting an order to be performed, e.g. the verb *fasajadū* (to prostrate themselves) does not agree with the subject in gender, while in the second case in which the verb denotes an act to be carried out as a good omen, it agrees with the subject noun phrase or noun in gender al-Sāmarrāʿī (2005). This can be interpreted syntactically as the verb agreeing with either *jam^ʿ* (group) or *jamāʿah* (group–feminine suffix). In ayah 3, the verb agrees with the former noun *jam^ʿ* (group) and as such takes no gender marking; while in ayah 4 where the verb acquires a gender marking, because it agrees with the noun *jamāʿah* (group–feminine suffix). This shows that it is the semantic information of the verb determines whether or not the verb agrees with the subject noun phrase in gender.

In the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth ayahs, the subject noun phrase is an inanimate feminine noun *al-ḍalālu* (to be in error) in 5 and 6 and *al-ʿāqibatu* ((the) end) in 7 and 8. In these cases, the noun according to traditional Arab grammarians requires a feminine pronoun to be suffixed to the verb. Yet, the verb shows no gender marking in Qurʾānic ayah 5 while it shows such a marking in ayah 6. The exegesis shows that the subject noun *al-ḍalālah* (to be in error) in ayah 5 refers to torture which is *ʿadhāb* which has a masculine ending in Arabic in the Hereafter and the subject noun and *al-āqibatu* (the end) in ayah 7 denotes torture. It appears then that the verb agrees with the underlying semantic meaning of *al-ḍalālah* in ayah 5 and *al-āqibatu* in ayah 7. This explains why the verb shows no gender marking in this case. The case is different in the sixth and eighth ayahs in which the verb agrees with their subjects in gender. The context shows that *al-ḍalālah* (to be in error) here refers to punishment in worldly life in ayah 6 while *al-ʿāqibatu* (the end) in ayah 8 denotes good reward or paradise *jannah*. In other words, the verb agrees with *ʿuqūbah* (punishment) in the worldly life, that is, the underlying semantic meaning of the nouns *ʿuqūbah* in ayah 6 and *jannah* in ayah 8 which copy onto the verbs their gender marking. In other words, morphology both contribute to *Shift* in gender—just as it contributes to *Shift* in number. It also confirms the hypothesized agreement principle between the verb and an underlying semantic referent (SR) triggered by the context as shown in the exegesis.

The above discussion provides an answer to the second question posed above regarding the nature of *Shift* in gender. For the fact that the context of the Qur'ānic ayah as well as the morphology of the subject noun phrase determine *Shift* in gender, is an indication that this type of *Shift* is a type of full 'semantic agreement'—licensed by the 'morphology of the noun – between the verb and the underlying semantic referent (SR) triggered by the context. It is not, therefore, a case of 'partial', 'default' or 'zero agreement'. It also shows that unlike 'partial agreement', word order and adjacency do not impinge on *Shift* in gender. In other words, *Shift* in gender and number are both equally determined by context, semantic and morphological factors. They are both different from 'partial agreement' in that the syntactic factors of word order and adjacency do not impinge on them.

This then leads to the third question on what would be the syntactic framework within which *Shift* in gender can be said to obtain. The choice of such a syntactic framework is based on the implication drawn from the nature and properties of *Shift* in gender described above. The first property is that word order does not impinge on *Shift* in gender. It follows then that neither Holes' (1995) event-oriented account, nor Mahfoudhi's (2002) view of correct processing of information, nor Abdel Hafiz's (2005) principle of "topicalization" can account for *Shift* in gender in the above mentioned Qur'ānic verses. Note that neither agreement within government nor the Spec-IP configuration, nor Benmamoun's (2000) merging, nor Ackema and Neeleman's account (2003) of agreement at PF can be said to be the syntactic configuration within which *Shift* in gender takes place. Agreement within government is based on the assumption that verb-subject agreement in gender obtains because the gender feature is associated with the bottom layer of the projection and is therefore visible for agreement (Harbert & Wayne 1992). Neither does a Spec-Head configuration in which merging (Benmamoun 2000) takes place can account for this case of *Shift* in gender; for merging between the verb and the immediately adjacent subject noun involves the dropping of number feature already spelled out by the noun for economic reasons (Benmamoun 2000). Furthermore, VS order does not manifest agreement in number because the verb rises to I to check T, it is not c-commanded by the subject in a spec head configuration

thus preventing number agreement while allowing gender agreement. However, this fails to account for those cases above where even gender agreement fails to obtain in VS order. Ackema and Neeleman's (2003) prosodic account of verb–subject “partial agreement” points to the fact that the failure of full agreement to obtain between verb–subject in VS order is due to the existence of the verb and noun in the same prosodic unit which results in a pronoun denoting number agreement. However, the above mentioned Qur'ānic ayahs in which agreement in gender obtains between the verb and subject regardless of both being separated by a pronoun is an indication that agreement in gender is not sensitive prosodically to the separating pronouns or to any other grammatical structure. This, on the other hand, is an implicit indication that the pronouns separating the verb from the noun are not the reason blocking agreement in gender in the other ayahs.

Several attempts can be made to alter minimalism so that it would adequately account for *Shift* in gender, though each has its own theoretical problems. First, an assumption can be made whereby Agree relation could hold between T and DP, that is the subject noun phrase, but never be morphologically realized. However, this is at best unsatisfactory for several reasons. First, there is simply no morpheme that ever corresponds to subject agreement in VSO clauses, and this is true across all verb declensions and all persons, numbers, and genders of the subject. Second, “It is suspicious for a licit agreement relation to never surface across many different morphological variables” (Kramer 2006:17).

A second hypothesis would be to assume the following: just as T is indeterminate for number as argued by Abdel Hafiz (2005:110) in his theory of VS order as “zero number agreement”, that is, T would be considered as either compatible with a singular or plural third person subject, it is likewise indeterminate for gender, that is, it is compatible with either a masculine or feminine feature. But then this would involve a syntactic paradox. For if gender feature is spelled out in some of the above Qur'ānic ayahs indicating it is an uninterpretable feature, then its absence in the other Qur'ānic ayahs would indicate that it is interpretable. How can the same feature be interpretable in some cases and be uninterpretable in other cases within the same language?

The solution to such a dilemma might lie in the morphology of the noun. For gender in all the above ayahs is not real feminine feature. It is the rule in Arabic grammar that in cases where the gender feature is metaphorical feminine, the verb may or may not agree with the noun in gender (Hassan 1981: 76–81). This shows that minimalism's binary division of features into interpretable and uninterpretable features is insufficient. What is required is a third category to designate this type of feature which will be termed the 'indeterminate feature' category. By 'indeterminate', it is meant all those features that may or may not be checked and which do not cause the derivation to crash even if they remain unchecked after spell-out. Such a feature should be incorporated within any configuration set up to account for *Shift* in gender in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān.

To sum up, several conclusions can be drawn from the above section. First, *Shift* in gender like *Shift* in number is neither a case of 'partial agreement', nor 'zero' nor 'default agreement'. It is a complex process of 'semantic agreement' in which a number of factors including the context, the semantic properties of the verb, and the morphology of the noun come to play a role. Second, full agreement takes place between the verb and the underlying semantic referent (SR) in *Shift* in gender similar to the case of *Shift* in number. The gender feature of the underlying semantic referent (SR) is different from that of the surface syntactic subject (SS) copied to the verb, thus producing *Shift* in gender. Third, none of the syntactic approaches to 'partial agreement' can either account for either types of *Shift* in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān. Just as in the case of *Shift* in number, a syntactic account of *Shift* in gender should incorporate the two concepts: of an underlying semantic referent with its selection restriction feature (SR (Fn+)), as well as that of an 'indeterminate phi-feature', as well. A complete description of the suggested syntactic framework within which the two types of *Shift* in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān take place is given below.

2.1.3. The Suggested Approach

Based on the above, an approach referred to as a 'neo-Minimalist' account that captures the nature of *Shift* as a type of full 'semantic agreement' between the underlying semantic referents (SR) and the

verb with their selection restriction features, that is, SR(Fn+) and SR(Fv-) respectively – which takes place twice in the following order: first prior to PF at the contextual level, and second after spell out at LF, and which is determined by context, the semantic properties of the verb, and the morphology of the noun, is suggested below:

- (1) In the SV order, the subject – be it a coordinate noun phrase or a single noun phrase referred to as the surface syntactic subject (SS) with its selection restriction (SSF_n-) and phi-features – comes to the derivation with an underlying semantic referent with its unique selection restriction and phi-features (SRF_n+);
- (2) The verb comes to the derivation with an unvalued selection restriction feature (SRF_v-) that has to be checked by either the selection restriction feature of the surface syntactic subject (SSF_n-) or that of the underlying semantic referent (SRF_n+);
- (3) When the context is established it plays different roles. If it involves no underlying meaning, then the underlying semantic referent (SR) and the surface syntactic subject (SS) are one and the same referent, thus licensing syntactic agreement as in some cases of SV order (e.g. when S is a ConjDP) and in the case of *man* with the verb immediately adjacent to it. In the former, the context causes the two conjunct noun phrases of the DP to coalesce into one unit that c-commands the verb falling within its locality area. Once in a Spec-Head configuration, agreement which is a morphosyntactic process obtains between the verb and the DP as a single masculine noun/noun phrase NP. In the latter case, *man* and the first adjacent verb are in a Spec-Head configuration, thus licensing syntactic agreement. In this type of agreement, the phi-features of the surface syntactic subject (SS) which in the former is the DP and in the second case *man* are copied onto the verb as follows:

Agree

N a,b ————— Agree ————— V a,b

Where a,b stand for the noun's phi-features of number and gender which are then copied to the verb within the morpho-syntactic process of agreement.

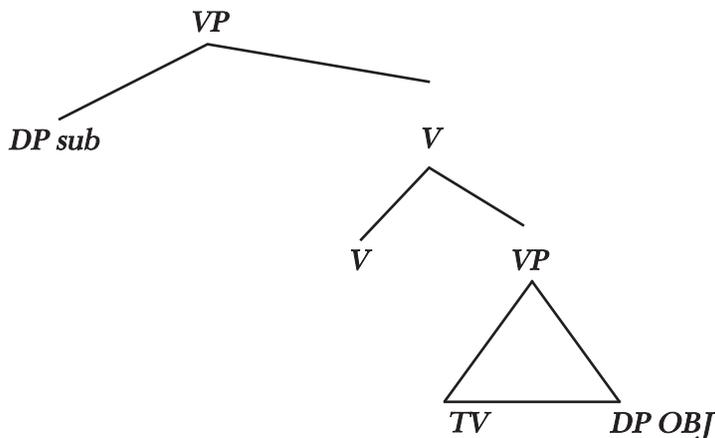


Figure no. 3

- (4) In other cases, the context narrows the meaning of the verb limiting its scope so that it becomes compatible with only one noun of the ConjDP. It is then attracted – by means of its selection restriction feature (SRFv-) – to namely one of the nouns that has a matching selection restriction feature, that is, either (SRFn1+) or (SRFn2+) thus licensing agreement with this particular noun only.

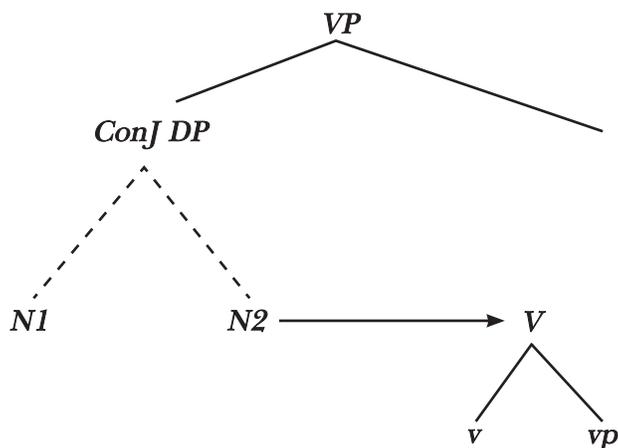


Figure no. 4

- (5) In other cases, the context shows an additional meaning thus activating the underlying semantic referent (SR) of the surface syntactic subject (SS), rendering its selection restriction feature

(SRFn+) compatible with that of the verb, and allowing it to check the verb's unvalued selection restriction feature (SRFv-) while blocking its agreement with the surface syntactic subject (SS). The interpretable phi-features of the semantic referent (SR) are copied onto the verb before it rises to PF. Note, that the phi-features of the underlying semantic referent are different from those of the surface syntactic structure (SS) thus producing *Shift* in number and gender. This may be diagrammed as follows:

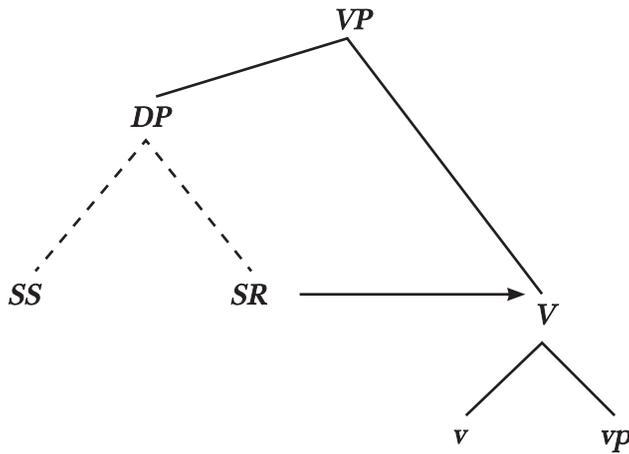


Figure no. 5

- (6) One theoretical problem however, remains. This centers around how do the unchecked phi-features of the surface syntactic subject (SS) remain visible after spell-out without causing the derivation to crash, while the checked features of the underlying semantic referent (SR) are rendered invisible after spell-out? A two-folded solution to this problem is provided. First, it is hypothesized that the semantic referent (SR) lacks the case feature which is interpretable at the PF and which allows it to rise to PF. Thus once it checks the unvalued selection restriction feature of the verb (SRFv-), it fails to rise to PF. Second, it is hypothesized that some of the phi-features of the surface syntactic subject (SS) have been rendered indeterminate by the morphology – e.g. number in the case of deverbal nouns and gender in the case of figurative feminine noun – and so would remain visible after spell-out

without causing the derivation to crash; while its case feature remains indeterminate and thus allows it to rise to the PF to the second landing site for agreement at T – where it acquires the nominative case. This may be diagrammed as follows:

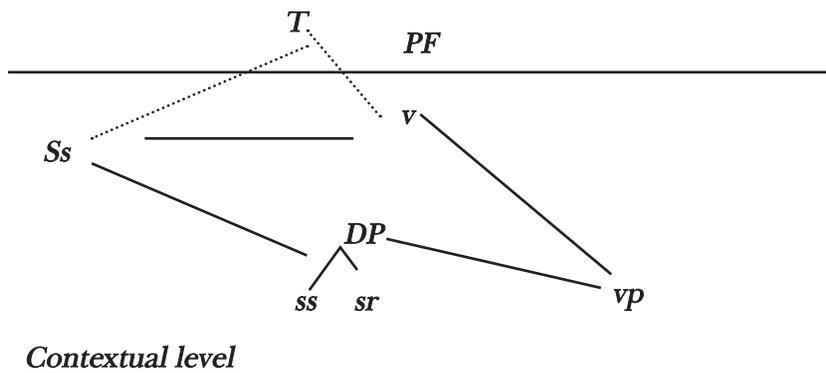


Figure no.(6)

Conclusion

The present paper is a linguistic study of two types of *Shift*– namely *Shift* in number and *Shift* in gender – in the Ever–Glorious Qurʾān. The purpose is to determine the nature of *Shift* and arrive at a syntactic framework that can adequately account for *Shift* in Qurʾānic ayahs. To that end, three hypotheses were made. First, that *Shift* is rhetoric and semantic in nature; second, *Shift* and ‘partial agreement’ are grammatically identical; third, syntactic approaches to ‘partial agreement’ in Arabic can similarly account for *Shift* in gender and number. To investigate the first hypothesis, the introductory part of the paper surveyed early and modern Arab studies of *Shift*. The survey showed two things: first both old and modern studies regarded *Shift* as a discipline of semantics and rhetoric – though they differed in how many types *Shift* can be subdivided into; second, though it was a rhetorical phenomenon which involved a shift in grammatical categories, *Shift* was not studied within grammar.

To test the second hypothesis of whether *Shift* is identical to or a type of ‘partial agreement’, the literature of Arab and non–Arab studies on ‘partial agreement’ in Arabic was surveyed. The survey showed that these studies fell into three groups. The first group studied *al-muṭābaqah* within

the principle of traditional grammar and looked into its nature and reasons without providing a syntactic framework to explain how and why 'partial agreement' obtains specially in VS order. As such, some studies distinguished "full" agreement or "regular" agreement (Badawi 2004) which obtains in SV order where the noun or noun phrase subject copies its gender and number features to the verb; and 'partial agreement' which obtains in VS order where the verb fails to agree with the subject either in number only or in both gender and number. Accordingly, they identified two types of 'partial agreement': 'partial agreement' in gender and 'partial agreement' in number. They then outlined several grammatical, syntactic and semantic reasons to account for 'partial agreement' in gender and number (Hassan 1981; al-Rājhi 1988). Other studies resorted to pragmatics to explain the phenomenon of 'partial agreement' in number and gender (Holes: 1995; Brustad 2000). Another two studies set up "processing problem" (Mahfoudhi 2002) and "topicalization" (Abdel Hafiz: 2005) to explain 'partial agreement' in number. The studies had enumerated semantic and pragmatic factors that contribute to 'partial agreement', though none provided a syntactic configuration to explain how and why it obtains.

The second group of studies included studies that looked into agreement within Minimalism. Minimalist studies were shown to vary and were subdivided on the basis of the point of derivation at which agreement takes place and within which structural configuration agreement obtains. The first subgroup, early minimalist studies looked at agreement as taking place within government. A study by Harbert & Wayne (1992) argued that the gender feature was associated with the bottom layer of the projection while number is associated with the higher level of the projection so when the verb looks down, it only finds the gender feature resulting in 'partial agreement' in VS order. Two studies treated 'partial agreement' as an incorporation of a null pronominal element (Mohammad 1989) and (Fassi: 1993). The driving idea behind these two accounts is that a null-PF pronoun exists in [Spec,TP] position in Arabic VS clauses triggering a default third person masculine singular agreement in expletive clauses, as well as the default singular agreement in regular VS clauses. Denying the principle of first conjunct agreement whereby the verb agrees with one noun only of the two coordinate nouns, Aoun *et al* (1994) argue against agreement within government and instead advance the

idea of agreement within a Spec-Head configuration. Another two studies also used first conjunct agreement to argue against agreement within a Spec-Head (Munn 1999) and Soltan (2004). Soltan's (2004) configuration of agreement is based on the principle of 'a pro-identification requirement' wherein a null pronoun is base-generated in subject position whose full phi-features must be required, thus resulting in 'rich agreement' in SV order. While the absence of such a pronoun in VS order gives no reason for the fulfillment of its phi-features and thus results in 'weak agreement'

The second subgroup looked at agreement as obtaining at the PF level. First, Benmamoun (2000) argues for a process of PF-merger between the subject and verb in VS clauses which renders the spelling-out of the number feature on the verb redundant. Ackema and Neeleman (2003)'s analysis on the other hand proceeds from a realization that prosodic word construction in Arabic matrix clauses produces a different constituency based on whether the clause is SV or VS ordered. In SV locuses, the verb is not contained within the same intonational phrase as the subject thus licensing strong or full agreement; whereas the opposite obtains in VS order thus licensing 'weak' or 'partial agreement'. Though the above mentioned studies differed in their syntactic approach to agreement, they all have two things in common. First, they are not without their theoretical problems, and where they account for some cases of 'partial agreement', they fail to account for all cases of 'partial agreement' in Arabic data. Second, they outline two factors that lie behind 'partial agreement' namely: adjacency and word order.

The third group of studies adopted a semantic approach to agreement in Arabic. Three analyses stand out in the literature: Barlow (1999), Kim (2003) and al-Sāmarra'ī (2005). Instead of feature copying – as in government-binding – or feature checking – as in new minimalism, Barlow (1999) advances the notion of 'feature compatibility' between discourse referent; while Kim (2003) adopts the notion of 'semantic index-value' to account for 'partial agreement' in Arabic. Finally, al-Sāmarra'ī (2005) provides an extensive study on the semantic aspects of *al-muṭābaqah* and *'adam al-muṭābaqah*. in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān. However, none of these accounts provide an adequate syntactic account to investigate *Shift* in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān.

Having shown that no previous studies has attempted to study *Shift* grammatically, the second part of the paper then proceeded to test the second and third hypotheses made in the paper regarding the nature of *Shift* in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān and the choice of the syntactic account that can adequately describe it. The second part was further subdivided into two sections. The first looked into *Shift* in number in SV order and the second investigated *Shift* in gender in VS order. The first looked into two subtypes of *Shift* in number. To determine whether *Shift* in number is a case of 'default agreement', the semantic and morphological factors that contribute to it, and which syntactic account can adequately account for this type of *Shift*, the first subsection looked at the first type of *Shift* in number where the preverbal noun phrase is a coordinate or single noun phrase.

The second subsection looked at another type of *Shift* in number as displayed by the two verbs of *ism maʿwūl* (relative pronoun) *man* who—that, where the adjacent verb shows agreement in number and gender with *man*, while the remote verb shows two cases of *Shift* in number and gender: one from the singular masculine to the plural masculine in subsection A, and the second from the singular masculine to the singular feminine singular masculine.

The examination of the Qur'ānic ayahs in these two sections showed that the syntactic configuration of Spec-Head within which full SV agreement takes place does not cover the other cases of *Shift* in number where the preverbal subject is a Conjunct DP. It proved that the Arab grammarians' rule that when a Conjunct DP precedes the verb, the verb agrees with one of the two coordinate nouns is sound thus confirming Munn's (1999) argument of first conjunct agreement. It also proved that this type of *Shift* in number is different from 'default' or 'zero agreement. Instead, *Shift* in number proved to be a type of full 'semantic agreement' in which either the semantic properties of the verb determine which of the two coordinate nouns it agrees with; or that both coalesce into one unit acting as if they were syntactically singular; or the verb was agreeing with an underlying 'semantic referent' produced by the context which renders its selection restriction feature (SRFn+) compatible to that of the verb (SRFv-). In this case, agreement is a morpho-syntactic process wherein the

underlying semantic referent's number feature is copied onto the verb. Since the underlying semantic referent's number feature is different from that of the surface syntactic subject (SS), the process results in *Shift* in number. In cases where the preceding subject was a single noun phrase, it was found that though the subject and verb were adjacent, full agreement did not take place. The prediction is that *Shift* in number is not determined by the syntactic factors of adjacency or word order. This in turn is an indication that current minimalist approaches fail to capture all aspects of *Shift* in number and thus cannot account for it. A suggested neo-Minimalist account based on the unique nature of *Shift* in number, and that incorporates the contextual level at which 'semantic agreement' takes place and the selection restriction features of both the underlying semantic referent (SRFn+) and the verb (SRFv-) is hypothesized.

The last subsection looked at the last type of *Shift* which is *Shift* in gender. Its data consisted of a group of Qur'ānic ayahs demonstrating a shift in gender between the verb preceding the noun and the subject noun/noun phrase. The data refuted all syntactic accounts which assumed that verb-subject agreement in gender obtained even in VS order. It also called for a reconsideration of the notion of interpretable and uninterpretable features. For the binary division of features was not sufficient to account for all types of features. In addition to these two categories it set up a third category referred to as the 'indeterminate feature' category to include gender or number feature that may remain visible after spell-out but do not cause the derivation to crash. The section corroborated the assumption hypothesized in the previous sections regarding the role played by semantic properties of the verb, the morphology of the noun phrase, and the context in producing *Shift* in gender. Thus showing *Shift* in number and gender to be similar in their nature. It also proved that like *Shift* in number, *Shift* in gender was neither determined by word order nor by adjacency. Consequently neither pragmatic accounts (Holes 1995; Brustad 2000), nor syntactic accounts that advanced that agreement was based on word order (Mahfoudhi 2002; Abdel Hafiz 2005), nor accounts based on merging (Benmamoun 2000, Ackema & Neeleman 2003) adequately accounted for this type of *Shift* in number. It finally shed light on the nature of *Shift*. Instead of being a case of 'partial agreement', *Shift* in gender was

a case of 'full semantic agreement' between the underlying semantic referent (SR) and the verb onto which are copied the former's phi-features which are different from those of the surface syntactic subject (SS) thus producing *Shift* in number and in gender. *Shift* in gender involved an intertwining of contextual, semantic and morphological factors thus confirming al-Sāmarrā'ī's (2005) and traditional Arab grammarians' view of semantics being an important aspect of the two types of *Shift*. Finally, the "neo-Minimalist' account hypothesized to account for *Shift* in number proved to be equally viable for accounting for *Shift* in gender in the Ever-Glorious Qur'ān.

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