

ON MULTIPLE  
COORDINATED  
QUESTIONS IN  
SYRIAN ARABIC



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# Syrian Arabic (SA)



Levantine variety of Arabic  
spoken by 23 million speakers.

# I– Introduction

Suleiman (2016):

In-situ WH questions are marginal and in-situ adverbial WH questions are illicit.

- ❖ 2 empirical findings revealed by our survey (with 12 native informants):
  - In-situ nominal as well as adverbial WH questions are available in SA.
  - Multiple fronted coordinated WH questions (MCQ) are available in SA.

*‘Who and what solved?’*

Coordination Pattern (with selected arguments) was long said to be restricted to multiple WH fronting languages (Gračanin-Yuksek (2007), Haida et Repp (2011), Ratiu (2011), Moro (2011), Citko et Gračanin-Yuksek (2013), and others).

This hypothesis is contested by SA: a non multiple WH fronting language

## II- MCQ strategies: a Rough Typology

- Multiple WH Fronting (FM) languages. Romanian :

(1)- cine și ce a descoperit in 1497? (Ratiu 2011)

who and what aux. discovere.3.SG in 1497

Lit. ' who and what discovered in 1497?

- Coordinated argument WHs in in-situ languages also attested. Korean:

(2)- Ne-nun mwues-ul kuliko nwukwu-eykey cwu-ess-ni? (Jung 2018)

you-Top   what-Acc   and   whom-to   give-Pst-Q

Lit. 'What and to whom did you give?'

## II- MCQ strategies in SA: a Rough Typology

► SA also has 3 strategies to form MQ involving coordination:

(3)- l-mīn     ū     šū     ʔtā                             ʔlī?

MF coordinated WHs, Slavic Type!

to-who and what give.3G.M.PAST Ali

Lit. 'to whom and what did Ali give?'

(4)- ʔlī ʔtā                             šū     ū     l-mīn     anbārḥ?

In-situ coordinated on the surface, In-situ Type!

Ali give.3.SG.M.PAST what and to-who yesterday

Lit. 'Ali gave what and to whom yesterday?'

(5)- šū     ʔlī     ʔtā                             ū     l-mīn?

Not mentioned in the literature, the Syrian Type!

what Ali give.3.SG.M.PAST and to-who

Lit. 'What did Ali give and to whom?'

### III- The analysis of MCQ in SA : MD vs Ellipsis

Would an ellipsis analysis be able to accounting for the full range of patterns in MCQ In SA?

(Giannakidou and Merchant (1998), Chung et al. (1995), Gračanin-Yuksek (2007) and others)

- Sluicing would be free to target 1st or 2nd conjunct & would be completely optional

(6)- l-mīn      ʔṭā                                      ʔlī    ū      šū      ʔṭā                                      ʔlī? → Both conjuncts pronounced  
to-who give.3.SG.M.PAST Ali      and what give.3.SG.M.PAST Ali  
Lit. 'to whom did Ali give and what did Ali give?'

(7)- l-mīn    ʔṭā                      ʔlī    ū       šū ?                      →     1st conjunct pronounced  
to-who give.3.SG.M.PAST Ali and what  
Lit. ‘to whom and what did Ali give?’

(8)- l-mīn     ū     šū     ʔṭā     ʔlī?     →     2ed conjunct pronounced  
          to-who   and   what   give.3.SG.M.PAST   Ali  
 Lit. 'to whom and what did ali give?'

## Can we derive these structures in terms of ellipsis?

### III- The Analysis of MCQ: Ellipsis (LF Copying)

- Consider the derivation of (9) on a sluicing account:

(9)- šū      ʔlī ʔtā                      ū      l-mīn?  
what Ali give.3.SG.M.PAST and to-who  
Lit. 'what and to whom did Ali give?'

(10)-LF: šū<sub>i</sub> [IP1 ʔlī ʔtā t<sub>i</sub> ]                      ū      l-mīn [IP2 ʔlī ʔtā t<sub>i</sub>] ? (IP1 is copied in IP2)  
what Ali give.3.SG.M.PAST and to-who Ali give.3.SG.M.PAST

- Ellipsis is problematic for independent reasons ! 'Give' is an obligately ditransitive verb : in each IP there is a missing argument (& we can't 'Sprout' missing selected argument at LF (Chung et al. 1995: 248)). So (10) should be filtered by the grammar.

### III- The Analysis of MCQ: DP Ellipsis (at PF)

➤ DP Ellipsis is also problematic for independent reasons !

➤ (Duguine (2014) applying Fox (2000) NP- parallelism condition on ellipsis)

(11)- šū [IP1 ʔlī ʔtā ] ū l-mīn [IP2 ʔlī ʔtā t ] ?  
what Ali give.3.SG.M.PAST and to-who Ali give.3.SG.M.PAST

PF of (11):[IP1 šūi ʔlī ʔtā ti l-mīnj] ū [IP2 l-mīnj ʔlī ʔtā šūi tj]?  
what Ali give.3.SG.M.PAST ~~to-who~~ and to-who Ali give.3.SG.M.PAST ~~what~~

Each WH has the referential value of its antecedent in the other conjunct: deletion is licensed.

But SA is not an object *pro*-drop language!

(12) ʔlī šlḥ sīāra ū' anā kmān šlḥt \*(sīāra)  
Ali fixed a car and me too fixed \*(a car)



# III- The Analysis of MCQ: Multidominance

## Multidominance (MD)/ Sharing:

(Ratiu (2011), Citko (2013), Citko and Gračanin-Yuksek (2013))

Every node (terminal or non-terminal) can be shared by two mother nodes, and must be pronounced only one time, on the right of the structure otherwise filtered (Gračanin-Yuksek (2007)).

As in 'Right Node raising':

(13a)- John wrote [ ] and Max read [ **a paper on MD**].

(13b)- \*John wrote [ **a paper on MD**] and Max read [ ].

### III- The Analysis of MCQ: Multidominance

- Mutidominance/ Linearization algorithms correctly predict that only the second/rightmost conjunct is pronounced
- Thus, deriving the Slavic Pattern :

(14)- Cine și ce [IP2 a descoperit ]? (Romanian)  
who and what aux. discover Ratiu (2011)  
Lit. ' who and what discovered in 1497?'

(15)- \* Cine [IP1 a descoperit] și ce [IP2 ] ?  
who aux discover and what

MD correctly predicts the asymmetry in (14/15)

### III- The Analysis of MCQ: MD, Back to SA

➤ But in SA either conjunct can be pronounced!

(16)- mīn ū aī su'āl ḥal?

who and which exercise do

Lit. 'who and which exercise do?'

(17)- l-mīn ʔtā ʔlī ū šū ?

to-who give.3.SG.M.PAST Ali and what

Lit. 'to whom and what did Ali give?'

→ WH1 fronted & WH2 coordinated (Syrian Type)

(18)- ʔtā ʔlī šū ū l-mīn? → WH1 in situ & WH 2 coordinated (Korean/Japanese Type)

give.3.SG.M.PAST Ali what and to-who

Lit. 'to whom and what did Ali give?'

## IV- Open Questions

3 unpredicted coordination patterns attested in SA: unpredicted because they involve selected WH arguments

I- Why are these structures available in SA?

II- What is the syntax of MCQs ? since both MD and ellipsis accounts are problematic.

III- What are the semantics of MCQs in SA?

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THANK YOU!

# APPENDIX

The derivation of (14)

