

Canonical Objects and Other Objects in Arabic

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Abstract : The grammatical relation object has not attracted the same attention in the literature as subject has. Where there is a clearly monotransitive verb such as kick, the criteria for identifying the grammatical relation may converge. However, the term object is also used to refer to phenomena that do not subsume all, or even most, of the recognized properties of the canonical object. Instances of such phenomena include non-canonical objects such as the ones in the so-called double-object construction i.e. the indirect object and the direct object as in (He bought his dog a new collar). In this paper, it is demonstrated how criteria of identifying the grammatical relation object that are found in the theoretical and typological literature can be applied to Arabic. Also, further language-specific criteria are here derived from the regularities of the canonical object in the language. The criteria established in this way are then applied to the non-canonical objects to demonstrate how far they conform to, or diverge from, the canonical object. Contrary to the claim that the direct object is more similar to the canonical object than is the indirect object, it was found that it is, in fact, the indirect object rather than the direct object that shares most of the aspects of the canonical object in monotransitive clauses.

Keywords : canonical objects, double-object constructions, cognate object constructions, non-canonical objects

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