PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE IN WRITTEN ARABIC
(A FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE
PERSPECTIVE STUDY)

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Abstract
The present study investigates paragraph structure in written standard Arabic, with regard to theme-rheme organization. It basically follows the Prague School approach, since this approach is not confined to the positional identification of the theme. The advantage of this approach is obvious for a language which has a relatively free word order like Arabic.

The assumption is that a paragraph is built around an original theme and the subsequent sentences may be linked with each other via themes or rhemes in various ways. These relationships will be studied in a narrative paragraph selected from a novel, Awlādu Ḥāratina (5th edition, Beirut, 1986) by the well known Egyptian novelist, Nagib Mahfuz. Before the text is analysed, something must be said about thematization in Arabic, which will be the subject of section 1. Section 2 will be devoted to the discussion of the text. The main points of the study will be summarized in section 3.

Keywords : organization – paragraph – rheme – structure – theme.

الملخص

لقد حاولت في هذا المقال دراسة وتحليل تركيب الفقرة العربية المكتوبة من وجهــــة تنظيـــم "المواضيع"و "المحمولات" (Theme-rheme organisation) ". ولقد نهجت لهذا الغــــرض نـــهج مدرسة براغ (Prague School) كون نظرية هذه المدرسة لا تقتصر على التعرف على موضـــــع الموضوع (Theme) فقط. ومن مزايا هذه النظرية أنها تناسب دراسة اللغات التي تتسم بحريـــــة ترتيب عناصر الجملة كاللغة العربية.

لقد انطلقت من فرضية أن الفقرة مبنية حول موضوع أصلي وترتبط الجمل التابعة بعضـــــها ببعض عن طريق مواضيع ومحمولات بطرق مختلفة. وسأقوم بتحصيل هذه العلاقات من خـــلال دراسة فقرة سردية من قصة" أولاد حارتنا "للكاتب الروائي نجيب محفوظ .وقبل تحليـــل النــــص سأقوم بالتعرض إلى إجراءات الموضعة (Thematization) في اللغة العربية وذلك فــــي الجـــزء الأول، وسأقوم بدراسة النص في الجزء الثاني، وسألخص النقاط الرئيسية لهذه الدراسة في الجزء الثالث.

الكلمات المفاتيح : المواضيع - المحمولات - التركيب - التنظيم – الفقرة.

Résumé

Le présent article se propose d'étudier la structure du paragraphe de l'arabe standard écrit du point de vue de l'organisation des Thèmes et Rhèmes. Dans mon étude, j'ai pratiquement suivi l'approche de l'école de Prague étant donné que cette approche ne se confine pas à l'identification de la position des Thèmes. L'avantage d'une telle approche est évident pour les langues dont l'ordre des mots est relativement libre tel que la langue arabe.

L'étude part de l'hypothèse que le paragraphe est construit autour d'un thème original et que les phrases subséquentes pourraient être reliées par des thèmes et des rhèmes de différentes manières. Ces relations seront étudiées à travers un paragraphe narratif sélectionné d'un roman «Awlādu Ḥāratina» du célèbre romancier Egyptien Nagib Mahfuz. Avant l'analyse du texte, la thématisation dans l'arabe a été abordée dans la section1. La section 2 comporte l'étude du texte. Les points principaux de l'étude ont été résumés dans la section 3.

Mots-clés : organisation – paragraphe – rhème – structure – thème.

Introduction

The horizon of linguistics has recently widened considerably. Most linguists no longer confine themselves to the study of the sentence, which was for a long time considered the largest grammatical unit. They have begun to investigate units larger than a sentence. The widening of linguistics scope is due to two reasons (Neubert 1981:132). First, many aspects of the sentence can only be explained by considering what precedes and what follows the sentence under investigation; secondly, units larger than a sentence show structural and functional properties of their own, which are more complicated than the structural properties of a sentence, but they are nevertheless worth investigating by a linguist.

Within this broad field of linguistics falls the study of the paragraph. A paragraph usually consists of a sequence of sentences, and has a structure of its own. One of the approaches to the analysis of a paragraph structure is by explaining how the theme and the rheme of the successive sentences are linked and merge into a macro-pattern. There are, however, a number of problems associated with delimiting the thematic and the rhematic elements of a sentence, which should be clarified first.

There are two main methods of identifying the theme of a sentence: the Hallidayian approach and that of the Prague theory. The former defines theme "as the point of departure of the message" (Halliday 1970:180). In English, this role is usually realized by the first element(s) of a sentence. Moreover, Halliday distinguishes theme-rheme and given-new as two different systems, the former belongs to thematization, the latter to information. In the unmarked pattern, theme is associated with given information and rheme with new information.

The Prague theory, on the other hand, defines theme on the basis of the communicative dynamism (CD) of the utterance, where CD means "the extent to which the sentences element contributes to the development of communication" (Firbas 1972:78). Thus, theme is the element that contributes least to the CD of the sentence. Furthermore, the Prague theory combines theme-rheme and given-new distinctions into one linguistic phenomenon. Thematic elements are usually associated with given information rheme with new information. A further element is often recognized linking theme with rheme, and is termed transition. The following examples from English will illustrate the difference between the two views.

(1)	Zayd	bought	a book
Halliday	Theme	Rheme	
Prague	Theme	Transition	Rheme
(2)	A rock	fell	from the cliff
Hall	Th	Rh	
Prag.	Rh	Tr	Th

The present study investigates paragraph structure in written standard Arabic, with regard to theme-rheme organization. It basically follows the Prague School approach summarized above, since this approach is not confined to the positional identification of the theme. The advantage of this approach is obvious for a language, which has a relatively free word order like Arabic.

The assumption is that a paragraph is built around an original theme and the subsequent sentences may be linked with each other via themes or rhemes in various ways. These relationships will be studied in a narrative paragraph selected from a novel, Awlādu Haratinā (5th edition, Beirut, 1986) by the well known Egyptian novelist, Naǧīb Maḥfūz. Before the text is analysed, something must be said about thematization in Arabic, which will be the subject of section 2. Section 3 will be devoted to the discussion of the text. The main points of the study will be summarized in section 4.

1.Thematization in Arabic

In identifying the theme, the rheme and the transition of an Arabic sentence I shall use the following four factors: grammatical and semantic relationships, context, purpose of communication and linearity (cf. Firbas 1972:81)

The semantic field provided by sentence predication is used as a basis for theme rheme arrangement. Arabic sentences are normally of two types: verbal and nominal. The former contains a verbal element (V) in its predication, as in (3), which has the pattern verb (V) Subject (S) Object (O)

> (3) Kataba (V) ṣadīqī (S) qaṣīdatan (O)
> wrote my friend a poem: My friend wrote a poem.

The second type consists of an adjective or a noun complement (C) predicated of another nominal element acting as subject (S), with no verbal copula.

> (4) Zaydun (S) ṣādiqun (C)
> Zayd honest: Zayd is honest.
> (5) Zaydun (S) muhandisun (C)
> Zayd engineer: Zayd is an engineer.

In the two-element verbal sentence, the verb normally carries primary stress in the unmarked interpretation and is therefore the rheme: the normal element (subject) acts as theme.

> (6) ǧā'a (Rh) Zaydun (Th)
> came Zayd: Zayd came.

In sentences comprising three or more elements, the verbal element is usually transitional, the grammatical subject theme and the rest of the sentence (object (O), adverbial (A) and complement (C)) rheme. Here too these general remarks are valid for the unmarked pattern.

> (7) 'ištara (V.Tr) ṣadīqī (S.Th) baytan (O.Rh)
> Bought my friend house: My friend bought a house.
> (8) ḍahaba (V.Tr) Zaydun (S.Th) ilā a-ssūqi (A.Rh)
> went Zayd to the market: Zayd went to the market.

In nominal sentences, the theme is associated with the subject of the sentence, the rheme with the complement, since these sentences are about the first nominal element of which the second is predicated.

> (9) Zaydun (S.TH) tilmīḍun (C.RH)
> Zayd is a student.

Nominal sentences normally have no transition when they indicate no particular time. However, a form of verb 'Kāna' may be used to indicate the past or the future. In these sentences, this verbal form of 'Kāna' usually functions as transition.

(10) Kāna (V.Tr) Zaydun (S.Th) tilmiḏan (C.Rh)

was Zayd student : Zayd was a student.

(11) Sayakūnu (V.Tr) Zaydun (S.Th) muhandisan.

Will be Zayd engineer: Zayd will be an engineer.

In all the examples above, it appears that theme is associated with the grammatical subject, transition with the verb, and rheme with the other elements (object, adverbial, etc). There is, however, no one to one correspondence between grammatical categories and thematization since the two are separate levels. Moreover, theme-rheme arrangement is determined by other factors besides the grammatical and semantic structure of a sentence.

In the examples discussed so far a neutral context is assumed, with minimal presupposed information (cf. Lyons 1977:505) as when they answer the question, 'What happened?'. Contexts however range from those with minimal presupposition to the marked ones where all the elements except one are presupposed. Context-dependent elements will normally be associated with theme, whereas context-independent elements are rhematic.

(12) Context: māḏa kataba Zaydun?

What wrote Zayd: What did Zayd write?

-kataba (Tr) Zaydun (TH) qaṣīdatan (Rh).

Wrote Zayd a poem: Zayd wrote a poem.

In (12) all the elements except the object 'qaṣīdatan', are context-dependent and hence given; In

(13) Context: man kataba al-qaṣīdata?

Who wrote-he the poem: who wrote the poem?

-Zaydun (Rh) kataba (Tr) al –qaṣīdata (Th).

Zayd wrote he the poem: Zayd wrote the poem.

The grammatical subject, Zaydun is context-independent and therefore rheme, the verb, kataba, transition, and the object, al-qasīda, theme.

In this context, Arabic permits a second word order where the object is placed in the initial position without changing the active voice of the sentence into the passive.

(14) al-qaṣīdatu (Th) kataba-(Th) hā Zaydun (Rh).

The poem wrote-it zayd: the poem was written by Zayd.

In sentences like (14) English normally uses the passive voice thematizing the grammatical object.

A sentence conveys a message and the purpose of the message is determined by the speaker. In (8), for example, the purpose of the message is to indicate the direction of the motion; this is considered information in spite of the definite article, which is an indication of a second mention of the word. Similarly (15), given an unmarked interpretation, has the grammatical object or the complementation of the verb as the purpose of communication. Here too this part is not completely new, as indicated by the definite article.

(15) fataḥa (Tr) al-ṭiflu(Th) al-bāba (Rh)

opened the child the door: the child opened the door.

The purpose of communication may be to indicate the agent of an action as in (13) above and in (16).

(16) al-baytu (Th) ištarāhu (Tr) ṣadīqī (Rh).

The house bought-it my friend: the house was bought by my friend.

According to the principle of linearity, thematic elements tend to occur earlier in the

sentence, while rhematic elements occupy the end position. This pattern, which is illustrated by (7)-(12) and (14)-(16) above, may be considered unmarked since it is the usual one in neutral contexts. The obvious exception is the two-element verbal sentence, which has Rh –Th organization in the neutral context, as in (6) above. It should be noted, however, that in a language like Arabic, where the word order is relatively free, it is not possible to tie thematization arrangement to any one fixed word order.

The discussion has so far been confined to statements (declarative sentences). Nothing has been said about the other type of sentences; interrogatives and commands. In Arabic, questions are of two kinds; information questions and yes-no questions. The former type asks for information about time, place, manner, agent, etc. and begins with a word, which points to the purpose of the message. The question word therefore functions as rheme, followed by transition, if there is any, and theme.

> (17) māda (Rh) ištara (Th) Zaydun (Th)?
>> What bought Zayd: what did Zayd buy?
>
> (18) man (Rh) ğā'a (Th)?
>> Who came-he: who came?
>
> (19) man (Rh) kataba (Th) a-rrisālata?
>> Who wrote-it the letter: who wrote the letter?

Yes-no questions begin with one of the two particles, 'hal'or 'a' (equivalent to the operator in English), which expresses polarity in interrogatives. Here polarity is the purpose of the message. The particle therefore is rhematic, the rest of the sentence thematic.

> (20) hal (Rh) ğā'a Zaydun (Th)?
>> Has come Zayd: Has Zayd come?
>
> (21) hal (Rh) ištara (Tr) Zaydun al-bayta (Th)?
>> Did buy Zayd the house: Did Zayd buy the house?

In commands, the process functions as rheme in the unmarked pattern (which has the primary stress on the verb)

> (22) iftah (Rh) al-bāba (Th).
>> Open the door.

The new information, however, may be carried by the object, in which case it is rheme and the verb is theme. Such sentences are marked and have contrastive stress on the grammatical object.

> (23) iftah (Th) al-bāba (Rh).
>> Open the door (not the window).

2.Analysis of the text

The text is presented in the Appendix. The sentences are numbered for easy reference. Section 3.1. summarizes the structure of the text; this is followed by a brief discussion of each sentence in section 3.2.

2.1.Structure of the text

The structure of the text may be summarized in the following table. Th (Th) indicates that a theme is related to another theme; Th (Rh) means that a theme is related to a rheme; Rh (Rh) refers to a rheme relating to another rheme. The figure to the right of the symbol refers to the number of the sentence in which the theme or the rheme occurs.

2.2. Discussion

The thematic organization of S1 is transition-theme-rheme. The transitional element is the semantically empty verb Kāna 'was', which serves as exponent of past time. The theme contains given information as indicated by the use of the possessive pronoun as determiner of definiteness. The rhematic element is indefinite carrying new information.

The theme of S2, the pronoun huwa 'it', refers to the theme of S1 and is therefore considered given. The rheme is an extended nominal construction carrying new information. The thematic arrangement, theme-rheme, is unmarked and basically the same as that of S1, with the exception of transition, which is not found in S2.

Table 1: **Structure of the text**

S1 : Tr1	Th1	Rh1
S2 : Th2 (Th1)		Rh2
S3 : Tr3	Th3 (Rh1)	Rh3
S4 : Tr4	Th4 (Rh3)	Rh4
S5 : Rh5	Tr5	Rh5 (Rh3)
S6 : Rh6	Th6 (Rh5)	
S7 : Tr7	Th7 (Th6)	Rh7
S8 : Tr8	Th8 (Th6)	Rh8
S9 : Tr9	Th9 (Rh8)	
S10 : Rh10	Th10 (Th9)	
S11 : Th11	Th11	Rh11
S12 : Tr12	Th12 (Rh3)	Rh12
S13 : Tr13	Th13 (Rh12)	Rh13
S14 : Tr14	Th14	Rh14 (Rh5)
S15 : Tr15	Th15 (Th6)	Rh15
S16 : Tr16	Th16 (Th6)	Rh16
S17 : Th17(Rh15)		Rh17
S18 : Th18 (Th6)		Rh18
S19 : Tr19	Th19 (Th5)	Rh19
S20 : Tr20	Th20 (Th5)	Rh20

The rheme of S1 is resumed as theme in S3. Here too the organization is unmarked: transition-theme-rheme. The transition is Kāna 'was' exponent of the past. The theme and the rheme are realized by nominal structures carrying given and new information respectively.

S4 begins with the verb Kāna 'was' functioning as transition, followed by the thematic elements, ṣūruhu al-kabīru al-'ālī 'its high big wall' which are related to the rheme proper, al-baytu al-kabīru 'the big house' in S3 the rheme introduces new, context independent elements. The unmarked organization, transition-theme-rheme is that found in the previous three sentences.

S5 introduces a marked pattern. The adverbial yawman 'one day' which normally occupies a position after the object in VSO pattern, is brought to the front position and is part of the rheme. This is followed by the transitional element, the theme and the rheme proper. Both the theme and the rheme are partly given. The theme links with the rheme of S3 via synonymy.

S6 is a verbal sentence; the verb in the initial place functions as rheme since it carries

new information. The rest of the sentence being context-dependent is thematic. The theme is related to the rheme in S5. The prepositional phrase occurring finally is complementation of the verb and as such is rhematic.

The theme of S6 is resumed as theme of S7, which being fully given is realized by a bound morpheme –ū 'they' attached to the verb. The verb in the initial position is transitional. The rheme is partly given is indicated by the determiner –hi 'his'; but since it fulfils the purpose of communication it may be considered new.

S8 shows the usual unmarked thematic arrangement: transition-theme-rheme. The theme is a bound morpheme –hum 'them' referring to the theme of S7. The remaining part of the sentence, a prepositional phrase, is complementation of the verb and functions as rheme.

The pattern of the previous sentence is repeated in S9, where the verbal element is transitional, followed by the theme and the rheme. The thematic element, which is identical with that of S8, is realized by a bound morpheme. The rheme is a prepositional phrase complementing the verb.

S10 uses as its theme the theme of S9, realized as a bound morpheme attached to the verbal element functioning as rheme. The rest of the sentence comprising the complementation of the verb is rhematic.

The theme of S11 is the adverbial elements ṭumma 'then', expressing chronological sequence. This is followed by transition, a verb whose subject being a fully given 3rd person singular pronoun is implied rather than explicitly realized. The rest of the sentence which expresses direction is new, and therefore rheme.

In S12 the theme is the given part, al-bābi al-kabīri 'the big door' which is related to the rheme of S3. The verb is transitional, and the rest of the sentence comprising the extended complementation of the verb is rhematic.

Part of the rheme in S12 becomes the theme of S13; it follows the transitional element forming an unmarked pattern. The rhematic elements occupy the end position, indicating the completion of the message conveyed by the sentence.

The thematic organization of S14 is similar to that of S13: transition-theme-rheme. The rheme is partly given in that it has the definite article, and occurs in the rheme of S5. Its rhematic status is, however, determined on the basis of the fact that it fulfils the purpose of the message.

S15 begins with the usual element, transition, followed by the theme which is linked to the theme of S6. The rest of the complex sentence, which comprises embedded clauses, functions as rheme.

The theme of S15 is repeated as theme of S16. It is realized as a bound morpheme attached to the verb, which occupies the initial position and functions as transition. The complementation (object) of the verb is realized by the noun phrase naḍaraatin mutasā'ilatin 'inquiring looks' which is indefinite carrying new information. It is therefore rheme.

The thematic part of S17 is introduced formally by the particle inna and is realized by the demonstrative pronoun hadha 'this' which refers anaphorically to the rheme of S15, especially to the information conveyed by qad nasiyahum 'had forgotten them' the rheme is the predicate of the demonstrative pronoun and its extention, the adverbial clause iḍa qarrara 'when he had decided'.

S18 links with S16 through their thematic elements, the bound morpheme which functions as the grammatical subject of the previous sentence and the object of the subsequent one. The reference of the pronoun forming the point of departure of the message is al-Iḫwatu 'the brothers'. The verb is not transitional, it is preceded by the particle ma used for restriction, and the restricted part, ma ... illa, is considered theme. The second part of the sentence is the focus of restriction annahum ... lašai'a they are ... nothing' and functions as rheme.

The theme of S19 is the definite noun al-raǧulu 'the man', which links with theme of S5. The verb is transitional, and its complement describing direction rheme.

S20 also begins with transition, followed by an expanded theme comprising embedded clauses. The new information as extensive rheme.

3. Conclusion

The recurrent patterns in the structure of the paragraph are : Th (Th), Th (Rh), variation of theme and rheme and Rh (Rh). The first two patterns are dominant, with Th (Th) slightly more common than Th (Rh).

The first pattern, Th (Th), means that a previous theme is employed as theme in the subsequent sentence. This arrangement, which accounts for 9 instances (45%), has two subtypes: either a number of subsequent themes are related immediately to a preceding theme, or the themes are linked to a previous theme, usually with intervening sentences.

Type two, Th (Rh), indicates that a previous rheme is resumed as the theme of the subsequent sentence. This pattern is slightly less frequent than the first one; it accounts for 8 instances (40%), and has two subtypes. A rheme may be repeated as theme in a number of successive sentences, or a rheme becomes theme, not in the immediately following sentence, but in a subsequent one with a number of intervening sentences.

The third pattern involves variation of theme and rheme. This amounts to using new themes and new rhemes in subsequent sentences, which gives the impression that the sentences are loosely linked and that the writer uses multiple ideas in one paragraph. However, this pattern is not very frequent; only 2 instances (10%) were attested, including the first sentence of the paragraph.

The last type, Rh (Rh), involves repetition of a rheme as the rheme of the following sentence. Linking via rheme does not seem to be frequent in the text; only one instance (5%) was attested.

These results may be compared with Newsham's for English and French reported by James (1980:115). Newsham states that Th (Th) is more common in French than in English.Th (Rh) is more common in English, and Rh (Rh) is found only in French. The results of this study seem to suggest that the structure of Arabic paragraphs is more like that of French paragraphs. However, Arabic allows more freedom in its paragraph structure in that it favours more than one pattern. If these results are validated by further research covering larger data and more varied material they would have interesting pedagogical implications. Arabic speaking students learning English or French as a foreign language would have to be trained to shift from the patterns of the mother tongue to those of the language. They will probably need less adjustment when learning French than learning English.

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Appendix

1. kāna (Tr) makānu ḥāratina (Th) ʿalā'i an (Rh) was site alley pure open space The site of our alley was an open space.

2. Fa huwa (Th) 'imtidādun li saḥrā'i al-Muqattami al-laḏī yarbidu fī al-'ufuqui (Rh). and it part of desert Muqattam which stood in the horizon. It was part of the desert of Muqattam mountain. Which stood high in the horizon.

3. Wa lam yakun (Tr) be al-ḥalā'i (Th) min qā'imin 'illā al-baytu al-kabīru al-laḏī šayyadahu al-Ǧabalāwī ka'annamā li yataḥaddā bihi al-ḥawfa wa al-waḥšata wa quṭāʿa al-ṭarīqi (Rh). and not was in open space any building except the house big that built-it Ǧabalāwī as to defy with it the fear, the loneliness and the highwaymen. There was no building in the open space except the big house that Ǧabalāwī had built as if to defy tear loneliness and highwaymen.

4. kāna (Tr) sūruhu al-kabīru al ʿālī (Th) yataḥallaqu misāḥatan wāsiʿatan, niṣfuhā al ġarbī ḥadīqatun, wa al ḥarqī maskanun mukawwanun min adwārin ṯalāṯatin (Rh) ' was wall-its big, high enclosed area large, half its eastern garden, the eastern house made up of storeys three. Its big, high wall enclosed a large area, the western hall of it was a garden and on the eastern half stood a house made up of three storeys.

5. wa yawman (Rh) daʿā (Tr) al-wāqifu (Th) abnā'ahu ilā maǧlisihi bi al-bahwi a-taḥtānī al-muttaṣili besalāmliki al-ḥadīqati (Rh). one day summoned the Master sons-his to presence-his in the drawing-room, opening on the terrace. One day, the Master summoned his sons to his presence downstairs in the drawing-room which opened on the terrace.

6. wa jā'a (Rh) al-abnā'u ǧamīʿan, Idrīsu wa ʿAbbasu wa Ridwānu wa Ǧalīlu wa Adhamu (Th) fī ǧalābībihim al-ḥarīriyati (Rh). and came the sons all. Idris and Abbas and Redwan and Jalil and Adham in smocks-their silk. All his sons came, Idris, Abbas, Redwan, Jalil and Adham. Wearing their silk smocks.

7. fa waqaf (Tr) ū (Th) bayna yadaihi wa hum min iǧlālihi la yakādūna yanḍurūna nahwahu illa ḥilsatan (Rh). And stood-they in front of him and they from respect not dare look towards him except stealthily. They stood in front of him with such respect that they

hardly dared look at him except stealthily'.

8. wa 'amara (Tr) –hum (Th) bi al Šul¹si (Rh). and told-them to sit. He told them to sit.

9. fa jalas (Tr) –ū (Th) 'alā al-maqā'idi min hawlihi (Rh). then sat-they on chairs round him. They sat down on the chairs arranged round him.'

10. wa rāha yatafahhaṣu (Rh) –hum (Th) hunaihatan bi 'aynaihi al-nnāfidataini ka 'aynai al-ṣṣaqri (Rh) .' and began to search-them for a while with eyes-his piercing like eyes the hawk. He began to search them for a while with his piercing eyes, which were like, the eyes of a hawk.'

11. Ṭumma (Th) qāma (Tr) muttaǧihan nahwa bābi al-salāmliki (Rh). then stood going towards door the terrace. Then he stood up and went towards the door opening on the terrace.'

12. wa waqafa (Tr) waṣata al- bābi al kabīri (Th) yanḍuru ilā al-hadīqati al mutarāmiyati al latti tuzāhimuhā ašjāru al mūfi al-ǧimmizi wa al-nnahīli, wa tarta'išu fī ǧanabātihā al-hinnā'u wa al yāsamīnu wa taṭibu fawqa ġuṣūnihā muzaqziqatan al-'aṣāfīru (Rh). And stood at the door big looking at the garden huge which crowded with trees mulberry and fig and palm' and climbed on every side-it's the henna and the jasmine and hopped on branches their chirping the buds. He stood at the big door looking at the huge garden, crowded with mulberry, fig and palm trees, on every side of which climbed henna and jasmine and on their branches hopped chirping birds.

13. Dāġat (Tr) al-hadīqatu (th) bi al-hayāti wa al-ġinā'i (Rh). abounded the garden with the life and the singing. The garden abounded with life and song.

14. 'ala hīnin sāda (Tr) al-ṣṣamtu (Th) bi al-bahwi (Rh). while prevailed the silence in the drawing-room. In the drawning-room there prevailed silence.

15. wa huiila ilā (Tr) al-ihwati (Th) 'anna futuwata al-halā'i qad nasiyahum wa huwa yabdu bi ṭūlihi wa 'ardihi halqan fawqa al-'ādamīna ka'annama min kawkabin habaṭa (Rh) and seemed to the brothers that master the desert forgot-them, and he appeared with height his. and breadth his creature surpassing human beings as beings as if from planet descended. It seemed to the brothers that the master of the desert had forgotten them, while he, with his great height and breath, appeared a creature surpassing human beings as if he had descended from another planet.

16. wa tabādal (Tr) –ū (Th) naḍarātin mutasā'ilatin (Rh). and exchanged-they inquiring looks. They exchanged inquiring looks.

17. 'inna haḍā (Th) ša'nuhu 'iḍā qarrara amran ḍā haṭarin (Rh). this habit-his when decided thing of importance. This was his habit whenever he made an important decision.

18. wa mā yuqliquhum (Th) illā annahu jabbārun fi al-bayti kamā huwa jabbārun fī al-halaa'i wa 'annahum hiyālahu lā šai'a (Rh). nothing worried-them except that he despotic in the house as he despotic in the desert and that-they in presence-his nothing. What worried them was that he was despotic at home as he was in the desert and that in his presence they were nothing.

19. iltafata (Tr) al rajulu (Th) nahwahum dūna an yabraha makānahu (Rh). looked the man towards-them without more from place-his. The man looked towards them without moving from his place.

20. wa qāla (Tr) bi ṣawtin hašinin 'amīqin taraddada bi quwwatin fi anhā'i al-bahwi al-laḍī tawārat ǧudrānuhu al-'āliyatu warā'a 'a-ssatā'ira wa 'a-tanāfisa (Th): arā mina al-mustahsani 'an yaqūma ġairī bi 'idārati al-waqfi (Rh). and said with voice rough, deep

echoed with strength in sides the drawing-room which disappeared walls-its high beneath tapestries and rugs: think-I from better that take someone else management the estate. He said with a deep, rough voice which echoed strongly in all sides of the drawing-room whose walls disappeared beneath tapestries an rugs: I think it will be best for someone else to manage the estate instead of me.'

Endnotes

An English translation of the novel available by Philip Stewart entitled Children of Ǧabalāwī, published by Heinemann. London, 1981.

The symbol ' represents a glottal stop: and the symbol ' which will be used later on, stands for a voiced pharyngeal fricative.

The Arabic text

1-كان مكان حارتنا خلاء. 2- فهو امتداد لصحراء المقتّم الذي يربد في الأفق . 3 - ولم يكن بالخلاء من قائم إلاّ البيت الكبير الذي شيّده الجبلاوي كأنما ليتحدى به الخوف والوحشة وقطّاع الطّريـــق .

4 - كان سوره الكبير العالي يتحلّق مساحة واسعة نصفها الغربي حديقة والشّرقي مسكن مكوّن من أدوار ثلاثة. 5 -ويوما دعا الواقف أبناءه إلى مجلسه بالبهو التّحتاني المتصّل بسلاملك الحديقـــة .

6 - جاء الأبناء جميعا ، إدريس و عباس ورضوان وجليل وأدهم فـــي جلابيبــهم الحريريـــة .

7 -فوقفوا بين يديه وهم من إجلاله لا يكادون ينظرون نحوه إلاّ خلسة. 8 - و أمرهـــم بــالجلوس.

9 - فجلسوا على المقاعد من حوله. 10- وراح يتفحّصهم هنيهة بعينيه النّافذتين كعيني الصقـــــر .

11 -ثم قام متّجها نحو باب السّلاملك . 12 -ووقف وسط الباب الكبير ينظر إلى الحديقة المترامية التي تزاحمها أشجار المفّ الجميزي و النّخيل وترتعش في جنباتها الحناء والياسمين و تثب فـــوق غصونها مزقزقة العصافير . 13-داجت الحديقة بالحياة والغناء. 14 -على حين ســـاد الصّمـــت بالبهو . 15 - و خيّل إلى الإخوة أنّ فتوة الخّلاء قد نسيهم و هو يبدو بطوله و عرضه خلــق فــوق الآدميين كأنما من كوكب هبط . 16 - و تبادلوا نظرات متسائلة. 17 -إنّ هذا شأنه إذا قرّر أمـــرا اذا خطر . 18 -وما يقلقهم إلاّ أنّه جبّار في البيت كما هو جبّار في الخلاء و أنّهم حيالـــه لاشـــيء. 19 -التفت الرّجل نحوهم دون أن يبرح مكانه. 20 -وقال بصوت خشن عميق تردّد بقوة في أنحــاء البهو الذي توارت جدرانه العالية وراء السّتائر و التنافس . أرى من المستحسن أن يقـــوم غـــيري بإدارة الوقف.