

**The role of iw
in the adverbial sentence
in Middle Egyptian
Dr. Zeinab Mahrous***

Abstract: The ancient Arab grammarians believed that the adv.phrase on its own couldn't be considered in Arabic as a predicate in the so-called sentence with adv. Predicate , since it needs to be related to a verb or a verbal paradigm indicative to the absolute or universal being or existence الكون أو الوجود التام. They called this verb “element”. This paper is a comparative study between the function of iw in the adverbial sentence as an independent statement in M.E.and this “element”.

Although iw is very common in the M.E. adverbial sentences in which the predicate consists of an adverb propre or a prepositional phrase (preposition +noun or pronoun), Egyptologists still debate about its exact meaning , and no one has yet come up with a full explanation of why Egyptian used it in some cases but not in others¹. This word is used before a nominal subject or a demonstrative pronoun or with the suffix pronoun where in the last case its presence is obligatory .

There are many interpretations concerning its function in such kind of sentences :-

1-“The effect of placing iw before the nominal subject is to give to it the importance of a more or less independent assertion , This role does not necessarily hold when the subject is a suffix pronoun .The suffixes must lean on some preceding word , and iw is the word most commonly used to support the suffixes² “.

2- “iw with nominal subject serves to introduce some statements, often a description of outstanding interest, when it is omitted ,the statement or description becomes less obtrusive³”.

* مدرس بقسم الآثار المصرية - كلية الآثار - جامعة القاهرة.

¹ J.P.Allen, Middle Egyptian . An introduction to the language and culture of Hieroglyphs, Cambridge 2000, 10 .5.

² A. Gardiner, EG, § 37.

³ Ibid. , § 117,1.

3- *iw* is “un outil grammatical” as a copula links between the subject and the predicate like *v. to be* or *v. être*⁴, but the expression of this copula was not indispensable in Egyptian. Many languages also don't have such a verb including modern Arabic. In such languages it is possible to make a sentence without any verb at all⁵.

4-Indicateur d'énonciation. The relation of situation which is implied in the sentence with *adv. Predicate* has a spatial and temporal reference, *iw* serves to show that this reference coincides with time and the place of the enunciation (here and now) from the point of view of the speaker⁶.

5-One of the uses of *iw* has to do with the difference between statements that are generally valid and those that are only temporarily true, in sentences with *adv. Predicate iw* generally marks a statement that is only temporarily true or one that is true in specific circumstances⁷.

6-*iw* is a proclitic particle, its semantic scope can be defined as an overt assertion of truth (“truly”, “indeed” and the like)⁸ as the explicit positive counterpart to a negative statement.

The syntax of the sentence with adverbial predicate in M.E. resembles very much its equivalent in the Arabic language, in which it consists also of a subject and adverbial predicate (adverb or prepositional phrase) ex. أحمد في المنزل *Ahmed fi elmanzel* * “Ahmed, in the house”, whereas *Ahmed* is the subject and *fi elmanzel* is considered as the predicate, but the ancient Arab grammarians believed that the prepositional phrase or adverb in this kind of sentences couldn't be considered as the real predicate and that for two reasons⁹ :-

1-The adverb or *adv. ph.* is meaningless by itself, it needs an “element” before it to modify, this “element” couldn't be the subject¹⁰, it must be a

⁴G.Lefebvre, Grammaire de L'Égyptien classique, Le Caire 1955, § 310,601. ;A. Gardiner, Ibid. , § 116.

⁵J.P.Allen, Ibid. ,7.1.

⁶P.Grandet, B.Mathieu, Cours d'égyptien hiéroglyphique. ,Khéops 1998,p.45.

⁷J.P.Allen, Ibid. ,10.3,11.3.

⁸A.Loprieno, Ancient Egyptian. ,A Linguistic introduction, Cambridge 1995, p. 166.

⁹عباس حسن، النحو الوافي، دار المعارف، الطبعة الثالثة عشر، 1996، الجزء الأول، صفحة 475، حاشية

(2)
¹⁰المبتدأ سواء كان اسماً أو ضميراً فهو عبارة عن كلمة تدل بذاتها عن شيء محسوس ولا معنى له، عباس حسن، نفس المرجع، صفحة 26-28.

verb¹¹ or a verbal paradigm indicative to the absolute or universal being or existence, (كان التامة او أحد مشتقاتها مثل استقر أو حدث أو وقع أو ثبت أو وُجِدَ أو كائن أو، existence, so the predicate in this case consists of the “element” indicative to the absolute being or existence + the adv. or adv. ph. ,thus when we say *Ahmed fi elmanzel* ,it may mean, “Ahmed is in the house” or “Ahmed being in the house” or “Ahmed exists in the house”, etc....

They added that this “element” being implicitly understood does not need to be mentioned, moreover its indication is implied in the sentence by the adv. or adv. ph.

2-In the non verbal sentences with nominal predicate or adjectival predicate (sentences of identity and quality), the predicate is equivalent to the subject in meaning(they both can replace each other), ex. *Ahmed telmezun* “Ahmed(is) a student”, this means also that the student is Ahmed, ex. *Ahmed momtaz* “Ahmed (is) excellent”,this also means that the excellent one is Ahmed, but this couldn’t be applied on the sentence with adv. predicate(sentence of location) ex. *Ahmed, in the house, in the house couldn’t replace Ahmed, because the meaning in each one of them is completely different, unless the adv. ph. is related to another “element” apart from the subject, this “element” is indicative to the absolute being or existence, in this case the predicate will be is in the house, instead of only in the house¹³.

Even though the ancient Arab grammarians assert the omission of the verb or the verbal paradigm indicative to the absolute being or existence in this kind of sentences , on research of identical examples in Arabic language ,several cases were found out in which a verbal paradigm¹⁴ indicative to the absolute being or existence was mentioned as follow exs.

The subject is being talked about, whither it is a noun or a pronoun, both have no meaning on their own, but both are to designate things .

¹¹The verb describes an action and has a tense and mood. The adverb modifying a verb, an adjective, or another adverb;G.Englund, Middle Egyptian. An Introduction.Uppsala1988,p.130.

¹² الزمخشري، الفصل في النحو، صفحہ 119.

¹³ عباس حسن، نفس المرجع، صفحہ 475، حاشية(2)، و يقول ابن مالك وأخبروا بظرف أو بحرف جر

ناوين معنى كائن أو استقر . المرجع السابق، صفحہ 479، حاشية (1)

The previous line is a verse from a poem composed by Ibn Malek (1000 verse) dealing with all the rules of Arabic grammar, he says in this verse “they predicate with an adv. or a preposition, intending the meaning of being or settled” , even in English the term predicate ought, in grammar, strictly to include the copula (is, are etc) .

¹⁴In our colloquial Arabic in Egypt , we incline to use the pseudo verbal constructions rather than the verbal sentences which we use only with the aux. verbs like **قعد, قام, راح, جه**.

- جميع البساتين و الجنائن الكائنة بمصر و بولاق و مصر القديمه¹⁵.
التي كانت موجودة تحت بيوت الأعيان¹⁶.
فقتلهما الإنكشارية لكون الغريم أرثووديا من جنسهما¹⁷.
و في ذلك اليوم احترق جامع قايتباى الكائن بالروضه¹⁸.
بحيث انه موجودة شواهد أو بحيث انه موجودة عليه شواهد¹⁹.

In addition to that, if we want to express a situation in the past or in the future we have to use an existential verb or a verbal paradigm of verb *kāna* in the sentence, exs. (present) *ana fi elbet **”I , in the house” or *ana mawgoudh fi elbet* , lit. “I am existing in the house” , (future) *bukrh ha akoun mawgoudh fi elbet* , or *bukrh ha akoun fi elbet* , lit. “tomorrow I will be in the house”, (past) *embareh kunt fi elbet* , “yesterday , I was in the house”.

This was the same case in the classical Egyptian, when, however it was desired to convey more explicitly some temporal or modal distinction of meaning, its overt expression is delegated to verbal sentence with a *sDm.f* form of the verb *wnn* as predicate²⁰, ex. iw. k nTr wnn.k m nTr²¹. “you are divine and you will be divine”.

iw can play the role of a verb indicative to the absolute being or existence in the adverbial sentence for many reasons :-

- 1- *iw* can be a predicate of a subject of an absolute existential sentence

ex.

iw Ssp Dd N iw knH Dd N²².

“There is light (or the light exists), says the Deceased; There is darkness (or the darkness exists), says the Deceased”.

¹⁵ المختار من تاريخ الجبرتي , الحمله الفرنسيه فى مصر , مكتبة الأسرة 1998, صفحة 142.

¹⁶ المرجع السابق , ص134.

¹⁷ المرجع السابق , ص179.

¹⁸ المرجع السابق , ص186.

¹⁹ المرجع السابق , ص26.

²⁰ A. Loprieno, op cit. , p.122 f .

²¹ CT I 55 b . ;A. loprieno, Ibid .

²² CT IV 29e

iw Sw m aq-ib²³.

“ There is a lack of close friends” يوجد شح في اللي يدخل القلب .

Here iw is an existential predicate , I think as a verb, not as a particle introducing a nominal pattern²⁴ , but this verb was unfit to express time .

The negative counterpart of these statements uses nn which is used to negate the existence and the adv. sentences²⁵. Ex. nn mAatiw²⁶ “There are no righteous men”, nn tms Hr .s²⁷ “There is no redness on it” , nn mwt.k Hna.k²⁸ “Your mother is not with you”.Whereas the negative word before iw is extremely rare , ex. n iw.k m pt²⁹ “you are not in heaven”.Being understood, iw is always omitted in the case of negation.

2-The origin of iw is uncertain, some connect it with the Hebrew hwy “ to be” , but a more likely view is that it is merely the Egyptian verb iw “come” specialized for use as the copula³⁰. There is a relationship between coming and existence, the existence is the result of coming, even the Libyco – Berber copula – ga- might be borrowed from Arabic gā` “came” that after implies “become, be”³¹.

Loprieno believes that the origin of iw has to be sought in a verbal lexeme indicating existence “there is, it happens that,” and the like. This lexeme was grammaticalized as a complementizer already in the formative period of the language, leaving only sporadic instances of its earlier, semantically fuller use³².

3-In many cases, the subject after iw is omitted³³ when it is clear from the context or when it doesn't refer to anything in particular, in this case the adv. predicate comes after iw directly, this means that it depends upon it,

²³Dispute between a Man and his Ba 123-124.

²⁴A. Loprieno, op.cit., p. 122 .

²⁵J.P.Allen,op. cit.,p. 121.

²⁶Leb.122.

²⁷J.P.Allen, Ibid.

²⁸M.u.K.verso 2,3 ; Ibid.

²⁹A. Gardiner, op. cit, §120.

³⁰A.Gardiner, Ibid., § 461.

³¹E. Lipinski, Semitic languages . Outline of a comparative grammar, OLA 80,1997,p.479 .

³²A. Loprieno, op. cit. P. 167f .

³³P. Grandet, B. Mathieu, op. cit. , p. 58 .

ex. iw mi sxr nTr³⁴. “it was like the plan of god”. Even the adverb (m)min could stand between iw and the subject, it modifies iw here,
ex. iw (m)min bAk Xr nht “today, the servant is under the sycamore”³⁵.

From all what we have previously said, we find that the function of iw in the adverbial sentence could be interpreted as the morpheme indicative to the absolute or universal being or existence . Whither this morpheme is mentioned or not, it doesn't make any difference, because it is understood,
ex. iw Xnw m sgr ib.w m gmw³⁶. “The residence was in silence ; the hearts were in grieve”.

iw dAbw im.f Hna iArirt.... dqrw nb Hr Xt.w.f
...iw it im Hna bdt³⁷ “figs were in it, and also grapes.....,all kinds of fruit were on its trees.....,barley was there and emmer”.

rm.w im Hna Apd.w³⁸ “fishes were there together with birds”, its omission from the sentence resembles the omission of the “element” indicative to the absolute being or existence in the adverbial sentence in Arabic, but its presence, is syntactically more correct .

If the last explanation is accepted nothing prevents it (iw) to be used in some places as a copula especially with the suffix pronouns .But this is not the only copula used with the personal pronouns .

Various Semitic languages employ the personal pronoun as a kind of substitute for copula. While South Ethiopic and Tiger make use of two particles viz . n and nt > tt > t both of which have an Afro-Asiatic background³⁹.

The element – nt- and its construction with pronominal suffixes⁴⁰ are exactly paralleled by Egyptian and Tuareg independent pronouns⁴¹ :

³⁴Sin. B 43.

³⁵P. Grandet, B. Mathieu, Ibid. , p.52, note 2 .

³⁶Sin. R 8-9 .

³⁷Sin. B81,83,84.

³⁸Sh. S.50-1.

³⁹E. Lipinski, op. cit, p. 476 .

⁴⁰On the other interpretations of the morphology of the independent pronouns which connect it with the particle in , see, A.Loprieno, op. cit, p. 64f .The OK form of the independent pronoun for second person and third person singular are displaying an element t following the corresponding form of the enclitic pronoun 2per. m. s. Twt , f. Tmt , 3per. m. s. swt , f. stt .
Ibid.

| | | | | |
|----------|--------|--------|-------|--------------|
| Egyptian | Tuareg | Harari | Gafat | Tiger |
| nt-s | nt-a | int-a | tt-a | t-a “she is” |

The n- copula is used with pronominal suffixes of the verb in all South Ethiopian languages, except Harari. This copula is related to the Tuareg and Cushitic pronominal element n (Tuareg n-ɔk “ I ”) and to the Egyptian in (ink “ I “)⁴².

The same thing could be applied on the initial element tw of the first and second persons of the pronominal compound⁴³ (it is also called the proclitic pronoun of L.Eg⁴⁴.and the subject form of the personal pronouns⁴⁵), it is related to the copula t- of Tiger.

So, it is clear that the copula is implied in these pronouns . The same could be said about the relationship between iw and the suffix pronouns, i.e.all these pronouns have their own copula.

⁴¹E.Lipinski, Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Its paradigm consists of the element tw plus the suffix pronouns for the first and second person, and dependent pronouns for the third person .This form is used only as subject in a sentence with adverbial predicate, it always stand first in the sentence and is not used after particles .; J P Allen, op. Cit.,p. 115. Loprieno believes that tw < Ti < sT (the conjunctive “while”), A.Loprieno, Ibid. p.67(c) .

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵J.P.Allen, Ibid.