The aim of this study is to develop a model of the Arabic noun phrase from a minimalist perspective. It provides an analysis of many phenomena in the Arabic noun phrase, such as the construct state, adjectival agreement, definiteness inheritance, the formation of deverbal nouns and participles, etc.

Next to this discussion, the dissertation also focuses on a more theoretical aspect of syntax: linearisation. The Minimalist Program as developed by Chomsky (1995) and subsequent work provides the basis for a syntactic theory that uses as few primitive notions as possible. However, because the Minimalist Program is not a fully worked out theory, some aspects of it remain to be developed, and linearisation is one of them. This study argues that linearisation is an important part of syntax, in that it is responsible for certain word order variation. This idea challenges the notions developed by Kayne (1994), who argued that human language has a universal underlying word order. Contrary to Kayne’s model, the linearisation procedure developed in the current study is minimalist in nature. It starts out with the basic observation that any procedure that linearises a hierarchical tree structure needs to search the tree in order to find the terminal elements that are to be spelled out. By specifying how this search takes place, it is shown that we do not need to resort to additional mechanisms to account for word order. Instead, the linearisation procedure uses two parameters that guide the order in which branches of the tree are searched, which determines the order in which the terminal elements are found and spelled out.