Remarks on the complementizer layer of Standard Arabic

SHLONSKY, Ur


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Ur Shlonsky

1. Introduction

It is well-known that in Standard Arabic (SA), the verb occurs clause-initially and the unmarked order of constituents is VSO. There is one context, however — and hardly a marginal one — where VSO order is plainly ungrammatical. The indicative complementizer *'anna cannot be directly followed by the verb. (1a) illustrates VSO word order in a root clause. (1b) demonstrates that this order is not possible in a clause embedded under *'anna. (1c) exemplifies one of several grammatical outputs: *'anna is not followed by the verb, but by a topicalized direct object.

(1) a. kataba 'al-walad-u 'al-risaalat-a.
   wrote the-boy-NOM the-letter-ACC
   'The boy wrote the letter.'

   (I) claimed that wrote the-boy-NOM the-letter-ACC
   'I claimed that the boy wrote the letter.'

   c. za'amtu *'anna 'al-risaalat-a kataba-ha 'al-walad-u.
   (I) claimed that the-letter-ACC wrote-[3FEM.SG] the-boy-NOM
   'I claimed that the letter, the boy wrote.'

The main aim of the present paper is to explain the contrast between (1b) and (1c) by shedding some light on the syntactic properties of *'anna. In the following section, the theoretical apparatus underpinning the discussion is briefly presented. Section 3 discusses two mechanisms by which constituents appear in preverbal position in SA,
namely, Topicalization and Focalization. Section 4 studies the rather elaborate configuration of the complementizer system of SA as well as the function and properties of \textit{anna}.

2. Framework and Assumptions

Different kinds of elements can appear alone or together in the periphery of the clause, to the left of IP. A partial list includes the following: subordinating and relative complementizers, operators, \textit{wh}-expressions, quantifiers, topics, scrambled arguments and focalized constituents. To give just a simple example, (2) includes the complementizer \textit{that} followed by an adverbial expression and a fronted direct object.

(2) She told me \textit{that} in her class, \textit{this book}, students would never read.

In recent years, a large number of proposals have been put forth in favor of a more elaborate configuration of the left periphery. Many studies have attempted to integrate into the CP system more structure than permitted by a single X-bar projection. Some of this research has opted for the idea that left-peripheral XPs are adjoined to, e.g., IP (see, for example, McCloskey 1992). A different path has been pursued in works such as Brody (1990), Culicover (1992), Müller and Sternefeld (1993) and Shlonsky (1994a). These studies have either implicitly or explicitly assumed that the X-bar schema does not (at least in the general case) permit adjunction and that ordering restrictions among IP-peripheral elements are best treated by a ‘split CP’, in which this material is assigned to designated positions. The CP-recursion analysis of multiply-filled Comps can be seen as a less explicit version of the split-Comp idea. Arguments based on boundedness, (Müller and Sternefeld 1993, Reinhart 1982) and proper government (Rizzi 1990, 1996) have also been evoked in support of the hypothesis that the Comp domain is endowed with a rich and articulate structure.

The present study is couched in the terms of this research program. In particular, I assume the proposal for a split CP recently developed in Rizzi (1997) (henceforth FSLP). I also adhere to the view that adjunction (to IP or CP) is not admissible, being empirically inadequate to account for ordering restrictions among clause-initial XPs and theoretically unappealing because unconstrained. I assume that Comp material is accommodated as Specs and heads of labeled projections and that these heads and Specs are related either by agreement in features (quasi-morphological feature checking) or by means of the satisfaction of a criterion (in the sense of Rizzi 1991).

Lastly, I carry over from my own previous work the idea that agreement (in phi features) signals the presence of an AgrP and that AgrPs have the status of ‘associates’, in the sense that they can be generated in positions dominating all substantive (functional) projections (see Shlonsky 1994a, b, 1997).
The basic components of CP, according to FSLP, are the specifications of Force (interfacing either with a higher proposition or with discourse) and Finiteness (interfacing with IP). While both specifications are normally expressed by a single, syncretic head and thus project only a single maximal projection, CP is obligatorily split when topics, focalized constituents or other material are realized. This split is obligatory, since Force and Fin, the interface nodes, must occur on the higher and lower margins of CP, respectively. The fully articulated structure of Comp, argued for in FSLP, is given in (3). Since FinP has little or no bearing on the themes of this paper, I will disregard its presence in what follows.

(3) ForceP > TopicP* > Focus > TopicP* > FinP

3. Topicalization and Focalization in SA

3.1. Topicalization

SA employs a strategy of left-dislocation which several authors have subsumed under the term Topicalization (see e.g. Ayoub 1981, Bakir 1980, Moore 1988). Confining the discussion throughout to argument Topicalization and for now to root clauses, take note of the following observations. First, a direct object manifests accusative Case when occurring clause-internally, as in (4a), but it bears nominative Case when appearing clause-peripherally, as shown in (4b). Second, a dislocated direct object must be associated with a clitic on the verb. Finally, the dislocated DP cannot be a non-specific indefinite nominal expression, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (4c).

(4) a. kataba ʿal-walad-u ʿal-risaalat-a.
    wrote the-boy-NOM the-letter-ACC
    'The boy wrote the letter.'

   b. ʿal-risaalat-u kataba-ha ʿal-walad-u.
    the-letter-NOM wrote-[3FEM.SG] the-boy-NOM
    'The letter, the boy wrote it.'

   c. *risaalat-un kataba-ha ʿal-walad-u.
    letter-NOM+INDEF wrote-[3FEM.SG] the-boy-NOM
    'A letter, the boy wrote it.'

Following the treatment of Romance Topicalization in FSLP, I take it that the dislocated object in (4b) occupies SpecTop and is associated with a resumptive pronoun.  

1 There are a number of striking similarities between SA Topicalization and Romance Clitic Left Dislocation, on which see, in particular, Cinque (1990).

2 I put aside the question of whether the object is moved to Topic position or merged in that position. See Browning (1996), Cecchetto (1999).
The semantic restriction observed by topics is typical of left-dislocated or topicalized arguments (see, e.g. Cechetto 1995 on Italian CLLD). Nominal topics must have an individual or group interpretation and can therefore only be names, definite descriptions or non downward-entailing quantifiers.

The number of topics in a clause is unlimited (there are, naturally, pragmatic restrictions which apply). The sentences in (5) include two topics appearing in either order. The asterisk denoting the recursion of TopP in the schema in (3) expresses this observation.

(5) a. hind-un saalim-un tadribu-hu. (Bakir: 4.39)
   Hind-NOM Salim-NOM (she) hit-[3MASC.SG]
   ‘As for Hind, she beats Salim.’

   b. saalim-un hind-un tadribu-hu.
   Salim-NOM Hind-NOM (she) hit-[3MASC.SG]
   ‘As for Hind, she beats Salim.’

The view that a left-peripheral DP, associated with a resumptive pronoun, is a Topic is widely accepted. However, it has not gone unchallenged. The challenge has been most persistent with respect to preverbal subjects which trigger full agreement on the verb. While some authors take verbal agreement to have the same function as a resumptive clitic, i.e., to identify an IP-internal A-position (see e.g. Demirdache 1988), others have argued that preverbal subjects are not (or do not have to be) topics, but are subjects, i.e. they occur in the highest Spec in IP, where agreement is checked (Benmamoun 1992, Mohammad 1989, 1990 and Ouhalla 1991, 1994). Fassi-Fehri (1993) argues that preverbal subjects are, in principle, ambiguous between subjects (Specs of AgrSP) and Topics (adjoined to CP). Doron (1996) and Doron and Heycock (1996) go further and argue that even topicalized direct objects are subjects of a sort, predicated of a clause (which is taken to be a property and not a proposition).

The question of the nature of clause-initial DPs in Arabic, whether thematic subjects or not, entails a more general cluster of issues concerning subjects. It is fairly clear that clausal architecture distinguishes several subject positions, associated with different interpretations, distinct sets of morpho-syntactic features and so forth. There is mounting evidence that the grammatical function subject is not associated with a unique position but is distributed among several positions and that different types

3 Doron (1996) and Doron and Heycock (1996) claim that an agreeing subject cannot precede a topic, so that examples such as (5a) are ungrammatical. Indeed such a restriction would be extremely surprising since SA is a null-subject language and a representation wherein a subject is topicalized and associated with pro in SpecAgrS cannot prima facie be ruled out. Note that subject topics can precede object topics in Italian.

Gianni la mela l’ha mangiata.
‘Gianni the-apple it-has eaten
Lit. ‘Gianni, the apple he ate.’
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of subjects (definite, indefinite, specific, generic, existential, referential, expletive etc.) occupy distinct positions within the clause. It is also quite clear that the distinction between VP-internal and VP-external subjects is not sufficiently refined to capture the full range of syntactic and interpretative differences among different types of subjects.

In this paper, I remain largely aloof of this thicket of issues. As I will shortly demonstrate, there is clear distributional evidence that there is a topic position in Arabic — in both root and embedded clauses— and that DPs may surface in that position, giving rise to the cluster of properties discussed above. Whether or not the same set of properties or a similar one characterizes a particular type of subject is a distinct issue which I shall not address.4

3.2. Focalization

According to Bakir (1980), focalization (or Topicalisation par mouvement, Ayoub 1981) is distinguished from topicalization in that the focalized constituent retains its original case, that it is associated with a gap and not with a clitic and that it obeys no definiteness or specificity restriction.5 Contrast focalization in (6) with topicalization in (4b,c).

(6) a. 'al-kitaab-a wajada muhammad-un.
    the-book-ACC found Muhammad-NOM
    'THE BOOK, Muhammad found.'

b. kitaab-an wajada muhammad-un. (Bakir: 3.1a)
    book-ACC+INDEF found(3MASC) Muhammad-NOM
    'A BOOK, Muhammad found.'

4 See Shlonsky (to appear) for discussion of different subject positions in Hebrew.
5 More precisely, a resumptive clitic is optional in Focalization, so that e.g., (6a) can also be rendered as (i).

(i) 'al-kitaab-a wajada-hu muhammad-un.
    the-book-ACC found-[3MASC.SG] Muhammad-NOM
    'THE BOOK, Muhammad found it.'

It has often been noted, however, that Focalization is sensitive to Island constraints, even when associated with a clitic, while Topicalization is not. Compare Ayoub’s (1981) chapter 2 examples in (ii), the first illustrating Focalization and the second Topicalization.

    Zayd-ACC (you) saw the-man-ACC that hit-[3MIsl]
    ‘ZAYD, you saw the man who hit (him).’

    Zayd-NOM (you) saw the-man-ACC that hit-[3MIsl]
    ‘Zayd, you saw the man who hit him.’

These facts suggest that the trace of focalization is formed through movement and is then optionally spelled-out as a resumptive pronoun (see Georgopoulos 1991, Tellier 1991).
A further difference between the two strategies is that the focalized DP must be immediately followed by the verb. In other words, if both a topic and a focus are realized, the order of constituents is Topic > Focus > verb. The relevant examples appear in (7).

(7) a. faatimat-u l-wardat-a ’a’taa-ha saalim-un. (Bakir: 3.18a)
   Fatima-NOM the-flower-ACC gave-[3FEM.SG] Salim
   ‘It is a flower that to Fatima, Salim gave.’

   b. *al-wardat-a faatimat-u ’a’taa-ha saalim-un. (Bakir: 3.18b)
   the-flower-ACC Fatima-NOM gave-[3FEM.SG] Salim
   ‘It is a flower that to Fatima, Salim gave.’

Left-adjacency of a focus to a verb is familiar from focus-movement languages such as Hungarian (see Brody 1990, Horváth 1976, 1986, E. Kiss 1987 and Puskas 1992). Brody (1990) analyzes Focus-movement as movement of a [+FOCUS] constituent to SpecFoc, combined with the raising of I, to Foc\textsuperscript{0}. the drive for this movement is most likely the need to satisfy overtly a Focus Criterion by bringing a [+FOCUS] constituent and an I\textsuperscript{0} (or Fin\textsuperscript{0}) which is marked [+FOCUS] into a Spec–Head configuration. This analysis can be unproblematically extended to SA.\textsuperscript{6}

Sentences such as (7a) constitute the sort of evidence which we need to establish the presence of a Topic position in the CP domain of SA, as distinct from (or in addition to) a second subject position. This is so because the topic is separated from the left-edge of IP by the focus and the raised verb. See also (8a,b).

FocusP is also the node in which wh-elements and interrogative particles are rendered legitimate (through the Wh or Q-Criterion). If sentence (7a) shows that a topic precedes the focus, those in (8a,b) show that topics can also precede wh-expressions. The ungrammaticality of (8c,d) demonstrates that topics cannot follow wh-expressions, suggesting that the verb obligatorily moves to the Comp head of which the wh-expression is the Spec.

(8) a. zayd-un ’ayna qaabal-tu-hu?
   Zayd-NOM where (I) met-[3MASC]
   ‘Zayd, where did I meet him?’

   b. zayd-un hal qaabal-tu-hu?
   Zayd-NOM Q (I) met-[3MASC]
   ‘Zayd, did I meet him?’

   c. *’ayna zayd-un qaabal-tu-hu?
   where Zayd-NOM (I) met-[3MASC]
   ‘Zayd, where did I meet him?’

\textsuperscript{6} The absence of the order Foc > V > Top can be attributed either to the absence of a TopP below FocP in SA or to the impossibility of Top\textsuperscript{0} to Foc\textsuperscript{0} movement, as argued below in §4 (see also FSLF).
Bakir clearly demonstrates that focalization and question-formation are mutually incompatible. Where focalization takes place, question-formation cannot and vice-versa. (9a,b) are examples of wh-movement and focalization, (9c,d) illustrate that both operations cannot be applied in the same clause.

(9) a. `ayna qaabala xaalid-un saalim-an?
   where met Khalid-NOM Salim-ACC
   ‘Where did Khalid meet Salim?’

   b. saalim-an qaabala xaalid-un fi-l-
   Salim-ACC met Khalid-NOM in-the-garden-GEN
   ‘It was Salim that Khalid met in the garden.’
   Lit. ‘SALIM, Khalid met in the garden.’

   c. *`ayna saalim-an qaabala xaalid-un?
      where Salim-ACC met Khalid-NOM
      ‘Where was it Salim that Khalid met?’

   d. *saalim-an `ayna qaabala xaalid-un?
      Salim-ACC where met Khalid-NOM
      ‘Where was it Salim that Khalid met?’

The incompatibility of focus and question-formation is not unique to Arabic but is familiar from languages such as Hungarian and Italian (see FSLP). The reason for this is clear: Question-formation is a subclass of focalization and a focus cannot be embedded under another focus.

To conclude Section 3, we can establish that the SA Comp layer includes distinct positions for topics and foci, hierarchically ordered as in (10).

(10) …TopP* > FocP …ip

4. The Complementizer ʿanna

In this section, I turn to the syntax of the complementizer ʿanna and its interaction with the other components of the Arabic Comp system.7

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7 Khalaily (1994) argues that ʿanna is composed of two incorporated heads ʿan and na, the former responsible for the assignment of accusative Case, the latter for the expression of assertive force. Very similar conclusions are reached in the present paper.
4.1. Properties of *anna

The relevant properties of the indicative complementizer *anna are the following:

a. It takes a finite clausal complement.
b. It cannot be followed by a verb.
c. It is typically followed by a DP (see note 9.)
d. This DP manifests accusative case.

(II) 
za’amtu *anna al-walad-ä kataba al-risaalat-a.
(I) claimed that the-boy-ACC wrote the-letter-ACC
’I claimed that the boy wrote the letter.’

The upshot is that the unmarked constituent order of SA, VSO, is impossible in embedded finite clauses, as the contrast between (1a) and (1b) demonstrates.

(1) a. kataba al-walad-ä al-risaalat-a.
   wrote the-boy-NOM the-letter-ACC
   ’The boy wrote the letter.’

   (I) claimed that wrote the-boy-NOM the-letter-ACC
   ’I claimed that the boy wrote the letter.’

Superficially, the accusative case associated with the subject of the embedded clause in (II) resembles Exceptional Case Marking (ECM). In ECM constructions, accusative Case is assigned or checked by a higher verb, while in the case at hand, it is associated with a complementizer. An accusative-marked subject of a non-finite complement clause to believe-type verbs becomes, by way of ECM, a derived direct object. It can be passivized or raised to the higher clause. Yet it is not clear what the derived function is of an accusative-marked DP following *anna. Additionally, ECM predicates are optional Case-assigners: They can take either a full clausal complement headed by a complementizer or a non-finite clause, the subject of which is accessible to Case-marking by the ECM predicate. *anna, on the other hand, requires an accusative-marked constituent.

Perhaps more generally, structural Case can be taken to be a feature identifying an A-chain the assignment of which is constrained by some version of Chomsky’s (1986) Chain Condition. A distinction therefore must be drawn between structural accusative Case, which is assigned to direct objects or to embedded subjects in ECM constructions, and the feature associated with a DP following *anna. Let us take the post-*anna DP to be endowed with a morphological feature, [+F], a nominal feature, which

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8 SA also possesses a variant of classical ECM in which a governing verb of the think/believe class takes a complement clause not headed by a complementizer and the embedded subject is assigned accusative Case, it can be passivized, raised, etc.
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happens to have same phonetic realization as accusative Case. This feature is not a structural Case feature.\(^9\)

The claim that \([+F]\) is not the same formal feature as \([\text{ACC}]\) is supported by the fact that it can be assigned to topics. If there is some question as to whether the embedded subject in (11) is in subject or topic position (cf. the discussion in §3.1 above), it is clear that the DPs bearing \([+F]\) in the examples in (12) are topics.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(12) a. } & \text{za’amtu ʿanna ʿal-walad-}a ʿal-risaalat-u kataba-ha.} \\
& \text{(I) claimed that the-boy-[+ F] the-letter-NOM wrote-[3FEM.SG]} \\
& \text{‘I claimed that the boy, the letter he wrote it.’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{b. } & \text{za’amtu ʿanna ʿal-risaalat-}a ʿal-walad-u kataba-ha.} \\
& \text{(I) claimed that the-letter-[+ F] the-boy-NOM wrote-[3FEM.SG]} \\
& \text{‘I claimed that the letter, the boy wrote it.’}
\end{align*}
\]

In (12a), the first of the two topics manifests accusative case, namely \([+F]\), while the second shows up with nominative Case, the Case manifested by topics.

It thus transpires that the Arabic Comp layer contains a head, associated with indicative mood and finite tense and that this head is responsible for assigning or checking a formal feature. The examples discussed up till now might give the impression that ʿanna is uniquely associated with topics, and that perhaps ʿanna is, or incorporates Top\(^0\). This, however, is not a valid conclusion, since there are constituents which satisfy ʿanna--by checking \([+F]\)--which cannot be taken to be topics. In the

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{9 Ayoub notes cases where ʿanna is followed by a locative PP, as in (i). She considers these examples marginal: “Ces structures sont, toutefois peu productives; leur acceptabilité decline rapidement dès que le syntagme prépositionnel s’allonge. Elles sont totalement inacceptables avec des circonstanciels phrasaux.” (Chapter 1, note 43.)}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(i) } & \text{…ʿanna ʿinda-ka yanaamu zayd-}un.} \\
& \text{…that chez-toi sleeps Zayd-NOM} \\
& \text{‘…that Zayd sleeps at your place.’}
\end{align*}
\]

Fassi-Fehri (1982) cites (ii) and remarks that: “…PPs peuvent être topicalisés dans les déclaratives enchâssées sans problème.” (p.45)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(ii) } & \text{ʿadunnu ʿanna fii ba} \text{g daada} ʿal-ittifaaq-u.} \\
& \text{(I) think that in Bagdad intervened the-accord-NOM} \\
& \text{‘I think that in Baghdad, the accord was produced.’}
\end{align*}
\]

To account for these cases, assume that under certain circumstances and perhaps only marginally, locative PPs can qualify as \([+F]\) bearers (\([+F]\) remaining phonetically unexpressed) and can thus satisfy ʿanna. Note that certain locatives can (at least marginally) enter into the ECM configuration:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(iii) a. } & \text{…that under the table to be a good place to hide.} \\
\text{b. } & \text{Under the table is considered to be a good place to hide.}
\end{align*}
\]

Finally, Khalaily (1994) notes that ‘intraposed’ or ‘satellite’ CPs [in the sense of Koster 1978] can also satisfy ʿanna, as in his (17). Assume that such CPs occupy SpecTop and bear the feature \([+F]\).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(iv) } & \text{…that that (you-PL) fast-SUBJUNCTIVE good-NOM for-[2MPL]} \\
& \text{‘…that for you to fast is good.’}
\end{align*}
\]
examples in (13), a clitic is attached to ʾanna. The role of this clitic will be clarified below. For now, it is sufficient to note that in each of the examples below, the clitic is associated with a different type of phonetically-null nominal expression, neither one of which is or can be a topic. In (13a), the clitic marks a referential null subject, in (13b) a non-referential null subject (of an impersonal passive) and in (13c), the nominal associated with or resumed by the clitic is a wh-trace.

(13) 

(a) zaʾamtu ʾanna-hu katabaʾal-risaalat-a.
(I) claimed that-[3MASC.SG] wrote the-letter-ACC
'I claimed that he wrote the letter.'

(b) zaʾamtu ʾanna-hu niima fiʿal-sariir-i.
(I) claimed that-[3MASC.SG] slept in the-bed-GEN
'I claimed that it was slept in the bed.'

(c) man zaʾamtu ʾanna-hu »daraba Zayd-an?
who (you) claimed that-[3MASC.SG] hit Zayd-ACC
'Who did you claim that hit Zayd?'

(adapted from Mohammad 1990, ex. (33a))

In summing up the properties of ʾanna several paragraphs above, I noted that this complementizer is associated with indicative mood, finite tense and the feature [+F]. The features of finiteness and mood can be stripped away from ʾanna since there is independent evidence that there are distinct (perhaps phonetically unrealized) heads associated with these features (Fin0, see FSLP and plausibly Mood0, viz. e.g., recent work on the Balkan languages: Motapanyane 1995, Rivero 1994, Terzi 1992, Tsimpli 1990, Turano 1994). What remains is the formal feature [+F]. Let us therefore assume that, minimally, ʾanna occupies the head position of a Comp projection, labeled ːP and that 0 is marked [+F].

4.2. The Derivation of Sentences with ʾanna

In this subsection, I would like to argue that there is a step in the derivation of sentences with ʾanna, in which a DP [+F] is in SpecR. Further movement of ʾanna to a higher head in the Comp system destroys this configuration and yields the order ʾanna > DP. The proposal is diagrammed in (14).
The next task is to determine where in the schema (3) of the Comp layer \( \mathbf{P} \) appears and where \( `\text{anna} \) raises to in (14). When \( `\text{anna} \) is satisfied by a topic, that is, by an element in SpecTop, then it is raised and incorporated to Top\(^0\) and \([+F]\) is checked in Top\( P \), as diagrammed in (15).

\[
\text{(14)}
\]

In order to account for the fact that only the highest topic is \([+F]\) and enters into a Spec–Head configuration with \( `\text{anna} \), I suggest that \( \mathbf{P} \) is generated below a non-recursive Topic\( P \). The recursive Topic\( P \) optionally appears below \( \mathbf{P} \). We thus arrive at (16).

\[
\text{(16)} \quad \ldots \text{Top}\( P \) \succ \mathbf{P} \succ \text{Top}\( P^* \) \ldots
\]

The proposal sketched above affirms that there is no intrinsic connection between \( `\text{anna} \) and topics. A topic may satisfy \( `\text{anna} \) not only because it can be marked \([+F]\)–this feature may, in principle, occur on any category — but crucially because Top\( P \) is configured above \( \mathbf{P} \), permitting \( \mathbf{P}^0 \) to raise to Top and check \([+F]\) in Top\( P \).

Suppose, on the contrary, that \( \mathbf{P} \) were configured above the entire topic field. The immediate advantage of such a hierarchy is that it would permit us to maintain the notion of an uninterrupted recursive topic field. The highest topic, marked \([+F]\), would raise into Spec\( \mathbf{P} \) to check \( `\text{anna} \)'s feature. However, we would then be led to the conclusion that the Topic Criterion can be satisfied derivationally, so that a topic could meet the criterion and then raise higher to check some other feature. This
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conclusion is at odds with the basic characteristic of the various criteria, which distinguishes them from morpho-syntactic feature checking. The empirical evidence for criteria such as the wh-criterion, Neg-Criterion, Focus-Criterion clearly shows that they are stated on representations and may not be satisfied derivationally.10

Additional support for this way of seeing things comes from the observation that focalized constituents cannot satisfy 'anna (17a) is an example of direct object focalization. The focus is marked with accusative case and is not associated with a clitic on the verb. Although the embedded IP-peripheral direct object in (17b,c) is also suffixed with -a, this suffix should not be conflated with the (retained) accusative Case of the fronted direct object, but as a manifestation of 'anna-related [+F], as argued above. More importantly, the contrast between (17b) and (17c) demonstrates that the embedded verb must host a resumptive clitic, the obligatory presence of which is characteristic of topics and not of focus.

(17) a. 'al-risaalat-a kataba 'al-walad-u.
   the-letter-ACC wrote the-boy-NOM
   'THE LETTER, the boy wrote.'

   b. za'amtu 'anna 'al-risaalat-a kataba 'al-walad-u.
      (I) claimed that the-letter-ACC wrote the-boy-NOM
      'I claimed that THE LETTER, the boy wrote.'

   c. za'amtu 'anna 'al-risaalat-a kataba-ha 'al-walad-u.
      (I) claimed that the-letter-[+ FEM] wrote-[3FEM.SG] the-boy-NOM
      'I claimed that the letter, the boy wrote it.'

This pattern in (17b,c) can be handled by assuming that F P is higher than FocusP and that the application of the Focus-Criterion blocks further movement of the focalized object. Specifically, raising from SpecFoc to Spec F is not possible. This reasoning carries over to topics, so that the alternative of generating F P above the topic field should be ruled out.

Let us reconsider the derivation diagrammed in (15). 'anna raises to Top0 and [+F] is checked. However, in the surface string, 'anna invariably precedes the topic. It must, then, be the case that 'anna must raise from Top0 to yet another Comp position.

4.3. 'anna and Force

There are two contexts where instead of 'anna, SA uses the formative 'inna. These contexts are root and embeddings under the verb qaala 'say'. When appearing in root contexts, 'inna has the force of a strong affirmation or assertion (see Khalalily 1994), translated by the English adverb verily or the French certes. When occurring under say, there is usually no need to add the adverb of affirmation, presumably because its

10 For a comparison of feature-checking and criteria satisfaction, see Shlonsky (1997), chapter 8.
force is already contained in the meaning of the verb say. The contexts in which 'inna is used are illustrated in (18).

(18) a. °inna al-risaalat-a kataba-ha al-walad-u.
   'Verily (Fr. Certes) the boy wrote the letter.'

   b. qultu °inna al-risaalat-a kataba-ha al-walad-u.
   '(I) said that the boy wrote the letter.'

The difference between 'anna and 'inna can thus be stated in terms of force: The latter is assertive or affirming, while the former is neutral. This being the case, it follows that these Comp heads are endowed with a force specification or, in configurational terms, that in addition to possessing the formal feature [+F], they contain Force0 features. Syntactically, this has the consequence of requiring both 'anna and 'inna to raise to Force0. In so doing, these heads attain a position in the structure which is higher than TopP, as diagrammed in (19).

(19)

4.4. 'anna and Agreement

Let us now turn to the other elements which satisfy 'anna, namely, referential and non-referential null subjects and subject wi-traces (recall the example sentences in (13).) All three elements are phonetically unexpressed and all three trigger an agreement suffix on 'anna.

I have hitherto labeled this agreement suffix 'clitic' but it should be made clear that it is not a (Romance-like) reduced pronoun but the head of an agreement projection, dominating 'anna. Indeed, such enclitic particles are found on all major heads in Semitic, verbs, nouns, prepositions and complementizers, as illustrated in (20).
In Shlonsky (1994b), (1997) and Roberts and Shlonsky (1996), it is argued that these suffixes head agreement projections to which the substantive head, ʾanna in the case at hand, raises and (left)-adjoins. The specifier of this agreement projection is an A-position and contains an agreeing nominal expression, e.g., pro. The Comp layer of the examples in (13) should therefore be taken to contain an AgrP above X\(^0\) raises. This is diagrammed in (21).

SA is a null subject language, as shown in many of the examples above and in (22) below.

(21)

```
ForceP
   AgrP
     DP
       NP
         AP
           ?anna[+F]
```

(22) kataba ʾal-risaalat-a.
wrote the-letter-ACC

‘He wrote the letter.’

However, a null subject cannot be licensed following ʾanna/ʾinna, as noted by Mohammad (1990) and shown in (23).
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(23) *\(\text{inna pro kataba 'al-risaalat-a.}\)
    \(\text{that wrote the-letter-ACC}\)
    'Verily, he wrote the letter.'

The ungrammatical sentence in (23) should be compared to the fully acceptable one in (24), where the direct object is a topic satisfying 'anna and pro is licensed in the highest IP Spec, as in (22).

(24) \(\text{\textquoteleft inna 'al-risaalat-a [IP pro kataba-ha.\textquoteright]}\)
    \(\text{that the-letter-[+FEM] wrote-[3FEM.SG]}\)
    'Verily, the letter he wrote.'

This set of sentences has implications for the debate over the nature of preverbal subjects in Arabic, see §3.1 above. If 'anna could be satisfied by a subject in its canonical position internal to IP, then (23) should be grammatical. It is ungrammatical because 'anna cannot be satisfied by a subject but only by an element in the Comp layer and pro in SA is not licensed in Comp, but only in SpecAgrSP where its content is identified by subject agreement. The consequence we should therefore draw is that subjects satisfying 'anna, as in e.g., (11), are in the Comp domain and not in IP (the same point is reached on the basis of the multiple topic example in (12a.).)

There exists, nonetheless, a strategy for saving sentences such as (23), with pro in Comp. Consider (25).

(25) \(\text{\textquoteleft inna-hu kataba 'al-risaalat-a.}\)
    \(\text{that-[3MASC.SG] wrote the-letter-ACC}\)
    'Verily, he wrote the letter.'

In this sentence, 'inna comes to be associated with an AgrP by adjoining to its head. Pro appears in SpecAgr where its content is fully recoverable. The null subject in (25) is referential: it raises from a theta-position inside IP, through SpecAgrS where it checks agreement on the verb and nominative Case. It then raises to SpecAgr in Comp where [+F] is checked with 'inna.

A non-referential (impersonal) pro can also satisfy 'anna/\textquoteleft inna. Mohammad (1990) notes the following cases (his (35a), (33a) and (19a) are adapted as (26a-c) below.)

(26) a. za'amtu 'anna-hu jaa\textquoteright a 'al-rijaal-u.
    \(\text{(I) claimed that-[3MASC.SG] came the-men-NOM}\)
    \text{'}Ahmad claimed that the men came.'
    Lit. 'Ahmad claimed that it the men came'

b. za'amtu 'anna-hu niima fi 'al-sariir-i.
    \(\text{(I) claimed that-[3MASC.SG] slept in the-bed-GEN}\)
    \text{'}I claimed that it was slept in the bed.'

c. za'amtu 'anna-hu yabduu 'anna 'al-banaat-a saafarna.
    \(\text{(I) claimed that-[3MASC.SG] seems that the-girls traveled}\)
    \text{'}The man claimed that it seems that the girls traveled.'
In these three examples, pro is non-referential and is invariably associated with impersonal agreement (identical in form to \[3MASC\]), see Bloch (1990). This pronoun serves the same role in relation to ‘anna as non-referential there, it or pro serve in languages where a functional head has a strong feature which must be checked. In English, this is a feature of T\(^0\) or AgrS\(^0\). The strength of this feature forces a DP to appear in the Spec of the head bearing it. Some authors, notably Chomsky (1995), chapter 4, takes this to be the content of the Extended Projection Principle (EPP). Verb-second languages like German require that the Spec of the highest C projection be filled. In examples such as Es kam ein Mann in die Stadt, the non-referential pronoun es fulfills this function. Like English T\(^0\) and German C\(^0\), Arabic \(\mathfrak{K}\)\(^0\) has a strong feature which requires overt checking. In the absence of a topic or a referential pro, a dummy pronoun can serve this purely formal function.

In (13c), repeated below, ‘anna is satisfied by a wh-trace.

(13) c. man za’amta ‘anna-hu daraba Zayd-an?
    who (you) claimed that-[3MASC.SG] hit Zayd-ACC
    ‘Who did you claim that hit Zayd?’

The derivation of (13c) proceeds as follows. The subject wh-element is first raised to SpecAgr above \(\mathfrak{K}\)P, where ‘anna is satisfied. It then undergoes A’-movement to SpecFoc in the matrix clause where the Wh-Criterion is satisfied. Since SpecAgr \(\mathfrak{K}\) is an A-position, only subjects can proceed through it (A-movement of an object to this position, over the subject, would violate Relativized Minimality, see Rizzi 1990).

Let us now ask why Agr \(\mathfrak{K}\) must be projected in (13c), i.e., why (27) is ungrammatical.

(27) *man za’amta ‘anna daraba Zayd-an?
    who (you) claimed that hit Zayd-ACC
    ‘Who did you claim that hit Zayd?’

In other words, what prevents direct movement of the wh-element through Spec \(\mathfrak{K}\), satisfying ‘anna? I believe that the answer here lies with the Empty Category Principle (ECP). Consider the derivation of (27). Abstracting away from FinP — as I have done throughout this paper — the subject trace under ‘anna, in SpecAgrS, must be properly head-governed. ‘anna, the closest governing head is, in and of itself, not a proper head governor. Thus, (27) gives rise to the familiar Comp-trace effect, as argued originally by Aoun (1981). ‘anna can become a legitimate head-governor when it is endowed with a specification of agreement (cf. Rizzi 1990). Indeed, in the grammatical (13c), Agr/\(\mathfrak{K}\) is projected, ‘anna is transformed into a proper head-governor and subject wh-movement proceeds through SpecAgr \(\mathfrak{K}\) (via Spec ‘anna) checking agreement. Further raising of ‘anna to Force\(^0\) insures that the trace in SpecAgr \(\mathfrak{K}\) is properly-governed.
5. Conclusion

This paper has been concerned with the syntax of the Arabic Comp layer, with topics, focalized expressions and in particular, with a unique ‘EPP’-like head which combines the features of Force with a formal feature [+F]. The explicit configuration of this complementizer within the Arabic Comp system allows for a straightforward explanation of its interaction with topicalization, focalization and wh-movement. In addition, the particular way in which the feature [+F] is satisfied permits the drawing of an otherwise mysterious generalization ranging over topics, referential and non-referential pro and wh-traces. Finally, I hope to have shown that the complementizer layer of SA is maximally configured as in (28) (FinP disregarded).

(28) ForceP > TopicP > AgrR > R P > TopicP* > FocusP...

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References


