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On the Syntax of Sentential Negation in Yemeni Arabic

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Abstract

In this paper we explore the system of negation in modern Arabic dialects with a particular focus on Yemeni Arabic (Raymi dialect). The data observed in this dialect incorporate important and novel facts related to the syntax of sentential negation in Arabic. This includes the distribution of negation patterns and the interaction between negation and negative polarity items, which challenges the two widely adopted analyses for sentential negation in Arabic: The *Spec-NegP* analysis and the *discontinuous Neg* analysis. In this paper we argue that neither analysis can provide an adequate account of Raymi Arabic facts. Instead, a more recent analysis, the *Spilt-Neg* analysis, can accommodate them. In addition, in the study we provide empirical evidence in support of the *Higher-Neg* analysis, wherein Neg is projected higher than T in the derivation.

Keywords: Arabic dialects, discontinuous negation, negative polarity items, non-discontinuous negation, Raymi dialect, sentential negation, Yemeni Arabic

1. Introduction

The syntax of negation in Arabic is as extremely diverse as the varieties of the language themselves. Negation can be expressed in various ways that use different patterns across the varieties of Arabic (note 1). Negative constructions in these varieties range from those containing a single negative marker, such as Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth, MSA) as in (1), Gulf Arabic, Hijazi Arabic and Syrian Arabic, to those containing two negative markers (bipartite negation), such as Moroccan Arabic as in (2) (note 2), Egyptian Arabic, Palestinian Arabic, Yemeni Arabic (henceforth, YA) and so forth.

(1) a. **maa** kataba Ali-un r-risala-t-a. (MSA)
NEG wrote.3.M.SG Ali-NOM DEF-letter-3.F.SG-ACC
'Ali did not write the letter.'

b. **maa** Ali-un fi d-daar-i.
NEG Ali-NOM in DEF-house-GEN
'Ali is not in the house.'

(2) a. Omar **ma**-ktəb-**š** lə-bra (Moroccan Arabic)
Omar NEG-wrote.3.M.SG-NEG DEF-letter
'Omar did not write the letter.'

b. Omar **ma-ši** mriD
Omar NEG-NEG sick
'Omar is not sick.' (Benmamoun, 2000, p. 7)

Most modern Arabic varieties that have bipartite negation use the negative markers *ma(a)* and *-š(i)* (note 3), which can be realised discontinuously or non-discontinuously. In the context of verbal predicates, sentential negation is realised by the discontinuous negative elements *ma-V-š(i)*, where *ma-* appears as a proclitic and *-š as* an enclitic as in (2a) above and (3) below. In the context of non-verbal predicates, sentential negation is realised by the non-discontinuous negative elements *ma-ši* or by their variants *mi-š* and *mu-š* as in (2b) above and (4) below.

(3) a. **ma**-rafaʕtə-**š** ʔiid-i (Egyptian Arabic)
NEG-raised.1.SG-NEG hand-my
'I did not raise my hand.' (Brustad, 2000, p. 284)

b. l-walad **ma**-ʔara-(**š**) l-kteeb (Lebanese Arabic)
DEF-boy NEG-read.3.M.SG-(NEG) DEF-book
'The boy did not read the letter.' (Aoun et al., 2010, p. 96)

c. l-walad **ma**-nami-**š** (Jordanian Arabic) (note 4)
DEF-boy NEG-slept.3.M.SG-NEG
'The boy did not sleep.' (Al-Momani, 2011, p. 484)

d. **ma**-ʔatiina-hum-**š** ħaqqana s-syarah (YA-Adani dialect)
NEG-sgave.3.M.SG-3.M.PL-NEG our DEF-car
'We did not give them our car.' (Mansoor, 2012, p. 55)

(4) a. huwa **miš** Hna (Egyptian Arabic)
he NEG here
'He is not here.' (Brustad, 2000, p. 283)

b. huwwa **miš** Hina (Lebanese Arabic)
he NEG here
'He is not here.' (Aoun et al., 2010, p. 97)

c. huu **miš** fi l-bayt (Jordanian Arabic)
he NEG in DEF-house
'He is not at home.' (Al-Momani, 2011, p. 484)

d. al-bayt **muš** kabiir (YA/Adani dialect)
DEF-house NEG big
'The house is not big.' (Mansoor, 2012, p. 39)

These are almost the negation paradigms observed in many modern Arabic varieties. However, we have come across interesting data from a dialect spoken in Yemen, known as Raymi dialect (note 5), in which the negation paradigm is somehow different. Consider the following examples:

(5) a. **maa**-katab-**ši** Ali r-risalah. (YA/Raymi dialect)
NEG-wrote.3.M.SG-NEG Ali DEF-letter

b. **maa-ši** katab Ali r-risalah.
NEG-NEG wrote.3.M.SG Ali DEF-letter
'Ali did not write the letter.'

(6) a. **maa**-huu-**ši** bi-lbayt.
NEG-he-NEG in the house

b. **maa-ši** huu bi-lbiyat.
NEG-NEG he in the house
'He is not in the house.'

Contrary to the negation patterns observed in most other modern Arabic varieties, YA (Raymi dialect) employs both the discontinuous negative elements *maa*-x-*ši* and the non-discontinuous negative elements *maa-ši* to negate sentences containing verbal predicates (5) and non-verbal predicates (6). This raises the question of whether or not previous analyses of negation in modern Arabic dialects can accommodate these data. Thus, this paper is an attempt to explore the syntax of negation in YA with particular reference to Raymi dialect, with the aim of providing a thorough description of its properties and a preliminary analysis within minimalist syntax.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In section 2, we investigate the properties of the negative

construction *maa…ši* in YA, focusing on Raymi dialect, before considering the equivalent constructions in other varieties of Arabic. In section 3, we look at the previous analyses of negation in Arabic to determine whether or not they can accommodate the facts related to negation in YA (Raymi dialect). We then, in section 4, discuss the categorial and functional status of *-ši* to determine its position in the clausal structure. In section 5, we provide a preliminary analysis along the lines of Soltan's (2011, 2014) *Spilt-Neg* analysis. Finally, we conclude the paper in section 6.

2. The Data

2.1 Negation in Raymi Dialect

Although few studies have been conducted on negation in YA (see, e.g., Mansoor, 2012; Simeone-Senelle, 1996; Vanhove, 1996), to the best of our knowledge, none have been conducted on the syntax of negation in Raymi dialect (note 6). Negation in this dialect is expressed by either the discontinuous negative form *maa… ši* or the non-discontinuous negative form *maa-ši*, which can both be used to negate sentences containing verbal, nominal, adjectival and prepositional predicates as examples (7–10) illustrate, respectively.

(7) a. **maa-**šik-**ši** ġada. (YA-Raymi dialect)
NEG-want.1.SG-NEG lunch
b. **maa-ši** šik ġada.
NEG-NEG want.1.SG lunch
'I don't want lunch.'

(8) a. **maa-**hum-**ši** Tullaab.
NEG-they-NEG students
b. **maa-ši** Hum Tullaab.
NEG-NEG They students
'They are not students.'

(9) a. **maa**-ni-**ši** mariiD.
NEG-1.SG-NEG ill
b. **maa-ši** ana mariiD.
NEG-NEG I ill
'I am not ill surely.'

(10) a. **maa-**hi-**ši** bi-suuq.
NEG-3.F.SG-NEG in the market
b. **maa-ši** hi bi-suuq.
NEG-NEG she in the market
'She is not in the market.'

As the above examples demonstrate, both the discontinuous negative elements *maa*-x-*ši* and the non-discontinuous negative elements *maa-ši* are used to negate all types of predicates. This is not the case in other Yemeni dialects and in most Arabic varieties, as will be discussed shortly. In addition, there is no semantic or pragmatic difference between the two configurations *maa-ši* and *maa…ši* in (7–9) above (note 7). However, the second negative marker *-ši* can sometimes appear at the end of the clause, but this seems to be restricted to the context of oath only, as illustrated by the following examples:

(11) a. wa-allah **maa-**šik ġada **ši**. (YA-Raymi dialect)
by-ALLAH NEG-want.1.SG lunch NEG
'I swear by ALLAH, I don't want lunch.'
b. wa-allah **maa-**hum Tullaab **ši**.
by-ALLAH NEG-they students NEG
'I swear by ALLAH, they are not students.'

c. wa-allah **maa** ana mariiD **ši**
by-ALLAH NEG I ill NEG
'I swear by ALLAH, I am not ill surely.'

d. wa-allah **maa** Hi bi-suuq **ši**
by-ALLAH NEG she in the market NEG
'I swear by ALLAH, she is not in the market.'

Like other Arabic varieties, the negative elements *maa* and *ši* occur in present, past and future tense sentences in both VS and SV orders. Consider the following:

(12) a. Saleh **maa**-šaa-**ši** ġada. (YA-Raymi dialect)
Saleh NEG-want.1.SG-NEG lunch

b. **maa-ši** šaa Saleh ġada.
NEG-NEG want.1.SG Saleh lunch
'Saleh does not want lunch.'

(13) a. Saleh **maa**-atta-**ši.**
Saleh NEG-came.3.M.SG-NEG

b. **maa-ši** atta Saleh.
NEG-NEG came.3.M.SG Saleh
'Saleh did not come.'

(14) a. Salwa **maa**-it-siir-**ši** s-suuq.
Salwa NEG-FUT-go.3.F.SG-NEG DEF-market

b. **maa-ši** it-siir Salwa s-suuq.
NEG-NEG FUT-go.3.F.SG Salwa DEF-market
'Salwa will not go to the market.'

Clearly, neither tense nor agreement affects the negative particles *maa* and *ši*.

In the context of yes/no questions, *maa* and *ši* also appear. It is common in Raimi dialect, as in other Yemeni dialects, that yes/no questions are constructed as declarative sentences with rising intonation at the end. Consider the following examples:

(15) a. **maa**-šimihk-**ši** l-qamar ams alaši (YA-Raymi dialect)
NEG-saw.2.SG-NEG moon last night
'Didn't you see the moon last night?'

b. **laa**, **maa**-šimihk-oh **ši**
NEG NEG-saw.1.SG -3.M.SG NEG
'No, I did not see it.'

2.2 Maa…ši in Other Dialects and Varieties of Arabic

Watson (1993, pp. 121, 226) reported some examples from YA (SanʕaniI dialect) where the non-discontinuous negative elements *maa-ši* are used in two cases: first, to provide a negative answer to yes/no questions as in (16), and second, in elliptical contexts as in (17).

(16) a. zawji-š yi-safir ʔal-yaman? (YA-SanʕaniI dialect)
husband-3.F.SG travel.3.M.SG DEF-Yemen
'Will your husband travel to Yemen?'

b. **maa-ši**, (maa-ysaafur-š ʔal-yaman.)
NEG-NEG NEG-travel.3.M.SG- NEG DEF-Yemen
'No, he will not travel to Yemen.'

(17) bih naas yšillu l-jild u-naas **maa-ši.**
there people take off.3.PL DEF-skin and-people NEG-NEG
'There are people who take off the skin and some people who don't. (Watson, 1993, pp. 121, 226)

This is very much the situation in a southern dialect in Saudi Arabia (henceforth, SA) known as Zahran dialect. The non-discontinuous negative elements *maa-ši* appear in negative answers to yes/no questions. Interestingly, *ši* can appear in positive answers to yes/no questions as well. Consider the following examples:

(18) a. **maa-ši** rajjaal fii-lbayt? (SA/Zahran dialect)
NEG-NEG man in the house
'Isn't there any man in the house?'

b. **maa-ši** ħad.
NEG-NEG one
'No, there is no one at all.'

c. **ši** waħid.
there one
'There is one.'

Note that the non-discontinuous negative elements *maa-ši* are also attested in this dialect to deny the existence of someone or something, as in (19).

(19) a. **maa-ši** rajjaal fii-lbayt. (SA/Zahran dialect)
NEG-NEG man in the house
'There is no man in the house.'

b. **maa-ši** wala ši / waħid
NEG-NEG even thing / one
'There is nothing/no one.'

In addition, Mansoor (2012, p. 39) provided examples from YA (Abyani dialect) where the non-discontinuous negative elements *maa-ši* appear with non-verbal predicates, specifically to negate prepositional predicates.

(20) **maa-ši** maʕ-hum ħata Riyal (YA/Abyani dialect)
NEG-NEG with-3.M.PL even Riyal
'They don't have even a riyal.'

Vanhove (1996, pp. 4, 7) explored negation in YA (YaafiʕI dialect) and provided examples where the non-discontinuous negative elements *maa-ši* are used to negate sentences with verbal predicates and non-verbal predicates, as shown below (note 8).

(21) **maa-ši** axalli ħadd (YA/YaafiʕI dialect)
NEG-NEG leave.1.SG nobody
'I shall let nobody.'

(22) qulak **maa-ši** ʕaaši ʔidduuk-haa l-masaakiin
said.1.SG NEG-NEG dinner gave.1.SG-3.F.SG DEF-poor.PL
'I said: There is no dinner, I gave it to the poor people.'

(23) **maaši** huu bani-š
NEG he son-2.F.SG
'He is not your son.' (Vanhove, 1996, pp. 4, 7)

Vanhove (1996, p. 4) noted that *ši* is used in association with *maa* in the YaafiʕI dialect to serve specific purposes, among which is denying existence. She termed *maaši* 'the negative marker of existence'. Furthermore, she noted that the negative elements *maa-ši* in all the examples she recorded are placed either before an indeterminate noun (23) or after a determinate noun (24) or a demonstrative pronoun (25).

(23) wuSul u r-raas **maa-ši**
arrived.3.M.SG and DEF-head NEG-NEG
'He arrived and there was no head.'

(24) un ðii **maa-ši**
and this NEG-NEG
'And there was nothing.' (Vanhove, 1996, p. 4)

Note that in Sanʕani, Abyani and Yaafiʕi dialects, the negative particles *maa* and *ši* are realised only as non-discontinuous elements, in contrast to the data from Raymi dialect shown earlier. However, Vanhove (1996, p. 2) observed that *maa-ši* can occur discontinuously in Yaafiʕi dialects when the non-clitic *ši* means 'nothing', as illustrated by the following example.

(26) **maa** ʔasuuk **ši**
NEG found-1.SG nothing
'I did not find anything.' (Vanhove, 1996, p. 2)

The negative elements *maa-ši* are also attested in other Arabic varieties such as Moroccan Arabic, in which sentential negation is marked with both the non-discontinuous form *ma-ši* (with short vowels) in the context of non-verbal predicates and the discontinuous form *ma*-v-*ši* in the context of verbal predicates, as noted in (2). This is different from the case in YA (Raymi dialect), as discussed earlier. However, Ouhalla (2002, p. 304) reported some examples of negative clefts in Moroccan Arabic, in which the non-discontinuous form *ma-ši* is used to negate sentences containing verbal predicates such as the following:

(27) **ma-ši** qrat Nadia l-ktab.
NEG-VAR read Nadia the-book
'It is not the case that Nadia read the book.'
* 'Nadia did not read the book.'

Note that the interpretation here is semantically different. The example in (27) does not negate a statement but corrects it by letting the listener suppose the unsaid, that Nadia bought, borrowed, threw or wrote the book. However, similar examples of such readings are not found in the Yemeni dialect of Riamah.

As for MSA, the equivalent construction would be the one introduced by a single negative particle *maa*, which can be used to negate in a wide range of contexts. Thus, it can negate sentences with verbal predicates in the past and present (habitual only) tenses, as shown in (28a) and (28b), respectively. It can also negate sentences with non-verbal predicates, namely nominal as in (27c), prepositional as in (28d) and adjectival phrases as in (28e).

(28) a. **maa** kataba Ali-un r-risala-t-a. (MSA)
NEG wrote.3.M.SG Ali-NOM DEF-letter-3.F.SG-ACC
'Ali did not write the letter.'

b. **maa** yaʔkulu Ali-un ʔilla šayʔ-an yasiir-an
NEG said.3.M.SG Ali-NOM except thing-ACC little-ACC
'Ali eats nothing, but little / Ali eats only very little food.'

c. **maa** Ali-un muʕalim-un.
NEG Ali-NOM teacher-NOM
'Ali is not a teacher.'

d. **maa** Ali-un fi d-daar-i.
NEG Ali-NOM in DEF-house-GEN
'Ali is not in the house.'

e. **maa** Ali-un Tawiil-un.
NEG Ali-NOM tall-NOM
'Ali is not tall.

Negative constructions that use the single negative marker *maa* or its variant *muu* are also attested in many Arabic varieties such as Saudi Arabic, Syrian Arabic, Kuwaiti Arabic and almost all the dialects spoken in the Arabian Gulf Region. To illustrate this, some examples are given below.

(29) a. **maa** katab Ali r-risala-h (Saudi Arabic)
NEG wrote.3.M.SG Ali DEF-letter-3.F.SG
'Ali did not write the letter.'

b. al-bayt **muu/maa-**hu kabiir
DEF-house NEG / NEG-3.M.SG big
'The house is not big.'

(30) a. **maa** ħabbiit-a (Syrian Arabic)
NEG loved.1.SG-3.F.SG
'I did not love her.'

b. al-bayt **muu** kibiir
DEF-house NEG big
'The house is not big.' (Based on Brustad, 2000)

(31) a. **maa** bityi (Kuwaiti Arabic)
NEG will.come.3.F.SG
'She won't come.'

b. s-sayara-h **muu/maa-**hi kabiir-h
DEF-car-3.F.SG NEG / NEG-3.F.SG big-3.F.SG
'The house is not big.' (Based on Brustad, 2000)

The preceding discussion is summarised in Table 1, which focuses only on the use of the negative marker *maa* and its variants *maaši*, *ma-ši*, *ma-š*, *mi-š*, *muš, muu* and so forth in the varieties of Arabic.

Table 1. Patterns of negation in Arabic

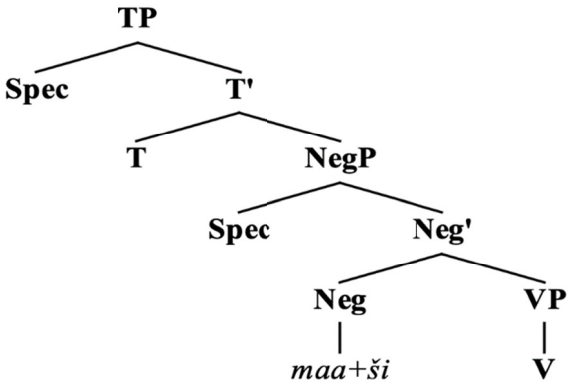
Variety/Dialect		Verbal Predicates	Non-verbal Predicates
Modern Standard Arabic		*maa* +V	*maa*+ DP/AdjP/PP
Saudi Arabic	Southern dialects	*maa*+V	*maaši / muu*+ DP/AdjP/PP
	Other dialects	*maa*+V	*muu*+ DP/AdjP/PP
Yemeni Arabic	Raymi dialect	*maa ši*+V	*maa*+*ši*+ DP/AdjP/PP
		maa +V+*ši*	*maa* DP/AdjP/PP+*ši*
		maa +V+XP +*ši* (oath context)	
	YaafiʕI dialect	*maaši*+V	*maaši*+DP, AdjP, PP
	SanʕaniI	*maa*+ V-*š*	*maaši* (yes/no question/elliptical context)
	Abyani dialect	*miš*+V	*maaši /miš*+DP/AdjP/PP
	Adeni dialect	*maa*+ V-*š*	*Muš*
Moroccan Arabic		*ma*+ V-*š(i)*	*maši*+ DP/AdjP/PP
Egyptian Arabic		*ma*+ V-*š(i)*	*miš*+ DP/AdjP/PP
		ma+ V-*(š)* (with some NPIs)	
Lebanese Arabic		*maa*+V -*(š)*	*miš*+ DP/AdjP/PP
Syrian Arabic		*maa*+V	*muu*+ DP/AdjP/PP
Jordanian Arabic		*maa*+ V-*š / maa*+ V	*miš*+ DP/AdjP/PP
Palestinian Arabic		*maa*+ V-*(i)š / maa*+ V	*miš*+ DP/AdjP/PP
Kuwaiti Arabic + varieties in the Arabian Gulf Regions		*maa*+V	*muu*+ DP/AdjP/PP

To sum up, in YA (Raymi dialect) the negative elements *maa-ši* are used continuously and discontinuously to negate all sorts of sentences. Furthermore, they are realised as two negative elements and not as a single complex form consisting of two parts: *maa* + *-ši*. Moreover, the second negative marker *-ši* can appear in pre-predicate position and in post-predicate position. The question that arises here is how these facts related to negation in YA can fit within previous analyses of negation in Arabic. Let us now consider these analyses to determine whether they can accommodate these facts.

3. Previous Analyses

One of the earliest analyses proposed to explain sentential negation in modern Arabic dialects along the lines of Chomsky's (1995) *minimalist program* is Benmamoun's (2000), which has since been widely adopted (see, e.g., Aoun et al., 2010). He argued that the two-part negative marker is a complex head generated in Neg, which is located between TP and the predicate as in (32).

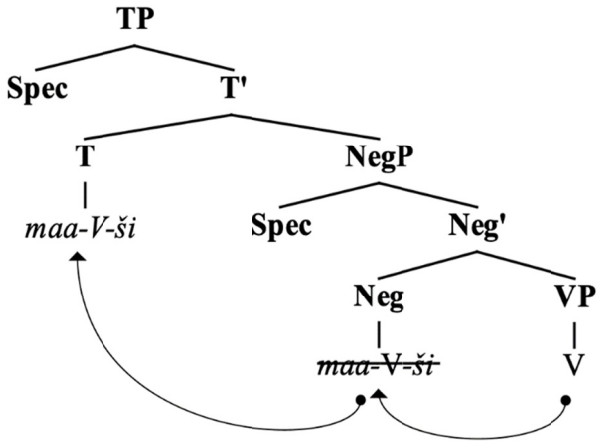
(32)



Benmamoun (2000, p. 76)

Benmamoun's (2000) assumption is that *maa-ši* forms a single unit made up of a proclitic and enclitic and that the distribution of sentential negation depends on whether some lexical head has moved to the head position of NegP or through it. Thus, if movement occurs, negation is realised with the circumfixal pattern (discontinuous *maa…ši*). On the other hand, if movement does not occur, the complex negative head is realised as one single non-discontinuous element *maa+ši*. In fact, this analysis depends to a large extent upon the distinction he made between past tense and non-past tense with respect to the features they carry. He proposed, based on a number of interesting facts he observed in MSA and Arabic dialects, that past tense in Arabic is specified for both a categorial [+D] and [+V] feature, whereas present tense is specified only for a categorial [+D] feature. The [+D] triggers the movement of the subject to the specifier position of TP (i.e., EPP feature), and the [+V] triggers the movement of V to T. Thus, when the [+V] feature on T in (31) triggers the movement of the past verb, which is placed under NegP, this movement will apply in a successive-cyclic fashion. This means that the verb moves first from V to Neg and then from Neg to T in accordance with the *Head Movement Constraint* (note 9) as shown in (33) below.

(33)



However, it is not clear how this approach can accommodate the aforementioned facts concerning the distribution of sentential negation in Raymi dialect. First, recall that this dialect employs both forms of negation—the discontinuous *maa…ši* and the non-discontinuous *maa-ši*—to negate all sort of sentences, including ones with past and non-past tense. Benmamoun (2000) claimed that verbs in past tense sentences always merge with the negative element *maa…ši* on its way to T but not in present tense sentences. Furthermore, Aoun et al. (2010), who built on Benmamoun's analysis, claimed that there are no dialects of Arabic where this is not the case. To this general claim, however, YA is one exception; otherwise sentences such as (5b) and (7a) above would be unacceptable (note 10). In fact, such examples clearly cast doubt on Benmamoun's analysis in (32, 33) and on his general distinction between past tense and non-past tense in Arabic with respect to movement. Second, recall also

that in Raymi dialect the first particle *maa* always precedes the predicate, whereas the second particle *ši* appears in different positions. This suggests that the negatives *maa* and *ši* are two independent markers occupying different positions and not a single complex form consisting of two parts (the prefix *maa-* and the suffix *-ši*) generated in Neg°. Finally, Benmamoun's analysis faces problems accounting for negation in future tense sentences in some Arabic dialects. In fact, this issue was first observed by Soltan (2007, p. 185) in Egyptian Arabic, where the negative marker *miš* precedes the future tense marker as in (34) below. The situation in Raymi dialect is slightly different, as the examples in (35) illustrate. We will return to this later.

(34) xalid **miš** (f-əl-ġaalib) ħa-yə-ʔra l-kitaab (Egyptian Arabic)
Khalid NEG (probably) FUT-IMPER.read.3.M.SG DEF-book
'Khalid probably won't read the book.'

(35) a. Saleħ **Maa** ša-siir **ši** s-suuq. (YA-Raymi dialect)
Saleh NEG FUT-go.3.M.SG NEG DEF-market
b. **maa** **ši** ša-siir Saleħ s-suuq.
NEG NEG FUT-go.3.M.SG Saleh DEF-market
'Saleh will not go to the market.'

Given that tense markers are normally placed under T, then the NegP is expected to occupy a position higher than TP, otherwise the derivation will crash. A similar issue has been noted in Moroccan, Levantine and Gulf Arabic (Benmamoun et al., 2013), where the negative morphemes are realised on the future modal and not on the main verb, as the examples in (36–38) illustrate, respectively.

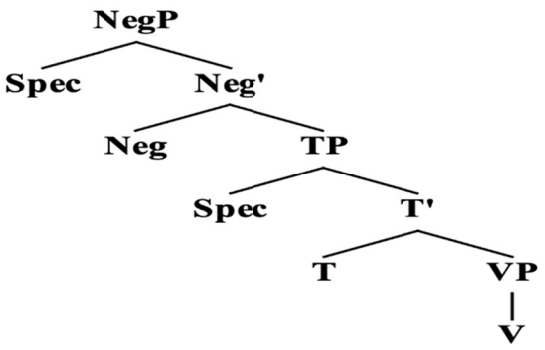
(36) a. Mohammed **ma-**ġadi-**š** y-aʕqəl ʕlik (Moroccan Arabic)
Mohammed NEG-FUT-NEG remember.3.M.SG on.you
'Mohammed will not remember you.'
b. *Mohammed ġadi **ma-**y-aʕqəl-**š** ʕlik (Moroccan Arabic)
Mohammed FUT NEG-remember.3.M.SG-NEG on.you
(Benmamoun et al., 2013, p. 91)

(37) a. ʔana **ma-**raħ ʔaxud-ha (Levantine Arabic)
I NEG-FUT take.1.M.SG.it
'I will not take it.'
b. *ʔanaraħ **maa-**ʔaxud-ha
I FUT NEG-take.1.M.SG.it

(38) a. **ma-**raħ ʔaguul lak ʔana man (Gulf Arabic)
NEG-FUT say.1.M.SG to.you me who
'I will not tell you who I am.'
b. *raħ **maa-**ʔaguul lak ʔana man
FUT NEG-say.1.M.SG to.you me who
(Based on Benmamoun et al., 2013, p. 97)

It can be inferred from the preceding discussion that Benmamoun's (2000) analysis, referred to in the literature as *Low-Neg Analysis*, cannot account for all the facts related to sentential negation in Modern Arabic varieties. There is, however, an alternative analysis to *Low-Neg Analysis* proposed by Soltan (2007), where NegP is located in a position higher than a TP, along the lines suggested by Fassi Fehri (1993) and Shlonsky (1997). This analysis is referred to as *High-Neg Analysis* (Soltan, 2011) and is sketched in (39) below. Ample empirical evidence from different Arabic varieties supports *High-Neg Analysis* over *Low-Neg Analysis* (see Benmamoun et al., 2013; Soltan, 2011 for more information).

(39)



4. More on the Negative Element *ši*

There is no doubt that *maa* is a negative marker because it is widely used in almost all Arabic varieties/dialects. However, researchers have called into question the syntactic and semantic nature of the particle *ši*, which appears in some varieties/dialects and is absent from others. It seems that *ši* is derived from the word *šayʔ* 'thing' in MSA, as observed by Benmamoun (2000) and Ouhalla (2002). However, the grammatical category and function of *šay'* in MSA differs from those of *ši* in the Arabic varieties/dialects. It is a noun and can have different syntactic and semantic functions. Consider the following examples from MSA.

(40) qaala ʔal-ustaað-u **šayʔ-an** muhim-an jidd-an. (MSA)
said.3.M.SG DEF-teacher-NOM thing-ACC important-ACC very-ACC
'The teacher has said something very important.'

(41) maa qaala Ali-un **šayʔ-an.**
NEG said.3.M.SG Ali-NOM thing-ACC
'Ali did not say anything.'

(42) hal qaala Ali-un **šayʔ-an**?
QUE said.3.M.SG Ali-NOM thing-ACC
'Did Ali say anything?'

(43) hum ʔaxaðuu kul-a **šayʔ-in**
they took.3.M.PL every-ACC thing-GEN
'They have taken everything.'

(44) ʔinna l-laah-a la yaðˤlimu n-naas-a **šayʔ-an** …
indeed DEF-Allah-ACC NEG wrong.3.M.SG DEF-people-ACC thing-ACC
'Indeed, ALLAH does not wrong the people at all ...' (The Holy Qurʔan, Chapter 10, verse 44)

The noun *šayʔan* functions syntactically as a direct object in (40–42) but not in (44). According to traditional Arab grammarians (see, e.g., Darwish, 2002), *šayʔan* in (44) has two possible functions: either a cognate/accusative object (note 11) or a second object. According to Badawi, Carter and Gully (2004, p. 147), the cognate/accusative object in Arabic 'can be replaced by an explanatory term,' which is not related to the verb morphologically. Thus, the cognate object in (44), which might be recognised as *ðˤulman*, is assumed to be elided and replaced by *šayʔan*, which gives more emphasis to the verb. On the other hand, *šayʔan* can function as a second object if the verb *yaðˤlimu* is interpreted as a ditransitive verb denoting the meaning of 'take away from/deprive of' (note 12). Semantically, *šayʔan* can function as an existential quantifier as in (40), as a negative polarity item (henceforth, NPI) as in (41, 42, 44) or as a part of a universal quantifier phrase as in (43). The counterparts of these examples in YA (Raymi dialect) are shown below. Note that the word *ħaajah*, which also means 'thing', can be substituted for *ši* in all the examples.

(45) qaal ʔal-ustaad **ši** / ħaajah mihim / mihimh. (YA/Raymi dialect)
said.3.M.SG DEF-teacher thing important
'The teacher has said something important.'

(46) **maa-ši** qaal Ali **ši** / ħaajah
NEG-NEG said.3.M.SG Ali thing
'Ali did not say anything.'

(47) qaal Ali **ši** / ħaajah?
said.3.M.SG Ali thing
'Did Ali say anything?'

(48) Hum bazzu kul **ši** / ħaajah.
They took.3.M.PL every thing
'They have taken everything.'

(49) ʔal-laah maa yaðˤlim n-naas **ši**.
DEF-Allah NEG wrong.3.M.SG DEF-people thing
'ALLAH does not wrong the people at all.'

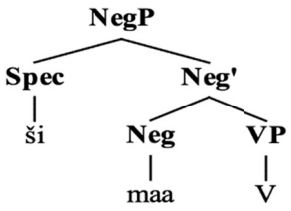
In some other varieties of Arabic such as Moroccan Arabic, *ši* can function as a non-specific indefinite, as illustrated in (49) below (Ouhalla, 2002, p. 302).

(50) (Nadia) qrat **ši** ktab. (Moroccan Arabic)
(Nadia) read.3.F.SG some book
'Nadia read some book (or other).'

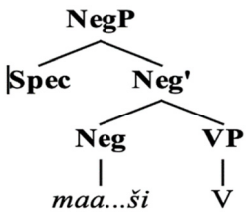
As shown above, *šayʔ* or its counterpart *ši* can appear in affirmative and negative sentences. Moreover, as discussed in section 2, *ši* can be used in some dialects such as the Saudi southern dialects and the Yemeni dialect of Yaafiʕ to confirm or deny the existence of something. However, the question that arises here is what syntactic category *ši* belongs to. Aoun et al. (2010) pointed out that *š* and its cognates *ši*, used in vernacular Arabic, seem to have evolved recently from *šayʔ* to reinforce the negative marker *maa.* In addition, Roberts and Roussou (2003), Lucas (2007, 2010) and Lucas and Lash (2010) discussed extensively the historical development of *ši* and its cognates *š* in some Arabic varieties and pointed out that it has undergone historical changes to become a negative marker. However, example (46) is crucial for the answer to this question. The word *ši* appears twice in (46), which provides sufficient evidence that the first *ši* must be treated as a negative marker. Thus, doubts about *ši* being anything other than a negative marker are removed, at least for Raymi dialect.

Let us now look at the position of *ši* and how it fits in the analysis. There are three viewpoints in the literature with regard to the position of *ši*: First, *ši* originates in the specifier position of Neg, which is headed by *maa* as in (51) (cf. Ouhalla, 1990); second, it is generated with *maa* under Neg as in (52) (cf. Aoun et al., 2010; Benmamoun, 2000); third, *maa* and *ši* originate as two separate heads as in (53) (cf. Soltan, 2011, 2014).

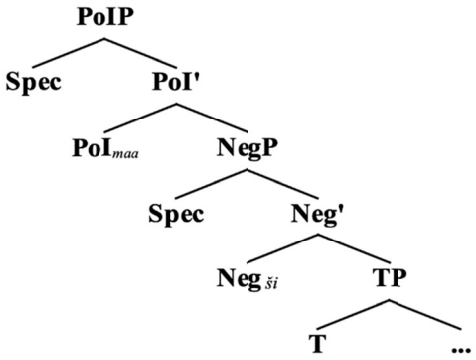
(51)



(52)



(53)



One of the key arguments in favour of the *Spec-NegP* analysis in (51) comes from the fact that it can easily account for the complementary distribution attested in some Arabic dialects between NPIs and the negative element *-š*. For example, it has been attested in Moroccan Arabic that NPIs are in complementary distribution with the negative element *-š*. Consider example (54), where the negative *-š* disappears when there is an NPI present.

(54) a. **ma**-qrit ħatta ktab (Moroccan Arabic)
NEG-read.3.F.SG even book
'I didn't read any book.'

b. ***ma**-qrit-**ši** ħatta ktab
NEG-read.3.F.SG-NEG even book
(Benmamoun, 2006, p. 143)

This can be explained under the *Spec-NegP* analysis if one assumes that an NPI and *-š* compete for the specifier position of NegP. This fact is quite difficult to explain under the *discontinuous Neg* analysis in (52) (note 13).

However, this is not the case in Egyptian Arabic because the negative marker *-š* does not disappear when an NPI appears, except in the case of the NPI *ʕumr* 'ever' when it precedes the negative marker *maa*. The following examples from Soltan (2014, p. 102) illustrate this:

(55) a. Mona lissah **maa**-safirit-***(š)**
Mona yet NEG-travelled.3.F.SG-*(NEG)

b. Mona **maa**-safirit-(***š**) lissah
Mona NEG-travelled.3.F.SG-*(NEG) yet
'Mona has not travelled yet.'

(56) a. ʔanaa **maa**-šufti-***(š)** ʔayy ħaaga
I NEG-saw.1.M.SG-*(NEG) any thing
'I didn't see anything.'

b. ʔanaa **maa**-šufti-***(š)** ħaaga xaaliS
I NEG-saw.1.M.SG-*(NEG) thing at all
'I didn't see anything at all.'

(57) a. ʕumr-ii **maa**-safirt(***-š**) masr
ever-1.SG NEG-travelled.1.M.SG-(*NEG) Egypt

b. **maa**-safirt-***(š)** masr ʕumr-ii
NEG-travelled.1.M.SG-*(NEG) Egypt ever-1.SG
'I have never travelled to Egypt.'

Based on these facts, Soltan (2011, 2014) argued against the *Spec-NegP* analysis and proposed the *Spili-Neg* analysis in (52) along the lines suggested by Zeijlstra (2004, 2008) for negative concord constructions.

Let us now consider the analysis of negation in YA (Raymi dialect) within these approaches.

5. The Analysis

The negation patterns attested in YA (Raymi dialect) suggest that the projection of Neg must be in a position higher than T in the course of the derivation. Furthermore, the interaction between NPIs and the negative element *-ši* in this dialect is quite similar to that observed in Egyptian Arabic, as (58–60) show.

(58) a. **maa-**ʔada-l-i-***(ši)** ħatta riyal
NEG-gave.3.M.SG-to-2.SG-NEG even Riyal

b. **maa-***(**ši**) ʔada-l-i ħatta riyal
NEG-NEG gave.3.M.SG-to-2.SG even Riyal
'He didn't give me any money.'

(59) a. ʕumr-ii **maa-**sirk(***-ši**) Sanʕa
ever-1.SG NEG-travelled.1.M.SG Sana'a

b. **maa-**sirk-***(ši**) Sanʕa ʕumr-ii
NEG-travelled.1.M.SG NEG Sana'a ever-1.SG

c. **maa-***(**ši**) Sirk Sanʕa ʕumr-ii
NEG-NEG travelled.2.M.SG Sana'a ever-1.SG
'I have never travelled to Sana'a.'

(60) a. ʕaadu-h **maa-**ata-***(ši**)
yet-3.M.SG NEG-came.3.M.SG-NEG

b. ʕaadu-h **maa-***(**ši**) Ata
yet-3.M.SG NEG-NEG came.3.M.SG
'He has not come yet.'

These examples demonstrate that NPIs in YA (Raymi dialect) are not always in complementary distribution with the negative element *-ši.* This suggests that neither the *Spec-NegP* analysis nor the *discontinuous Neg* analysis can provide a straightforward account of them. In fact, these examples strengthen the argument in favour of the *Spilt-Neg* analysis.

As noted above, the distribution of the negation patterns within this dialect does not follow from the contrast observed in many other Arabic dialects between verbal and non‐verbal predicates or between past and non-past tense sentences. It seems that there is no restriction on the contexts in which the discontinuous *maa…ši* and the non-discontinuous *maaši* patterns occur (note 14). Thus, we argue that a modified version of the *Spilt-Neg* analysis can account for the distribution of the negation patterns in this dialect.

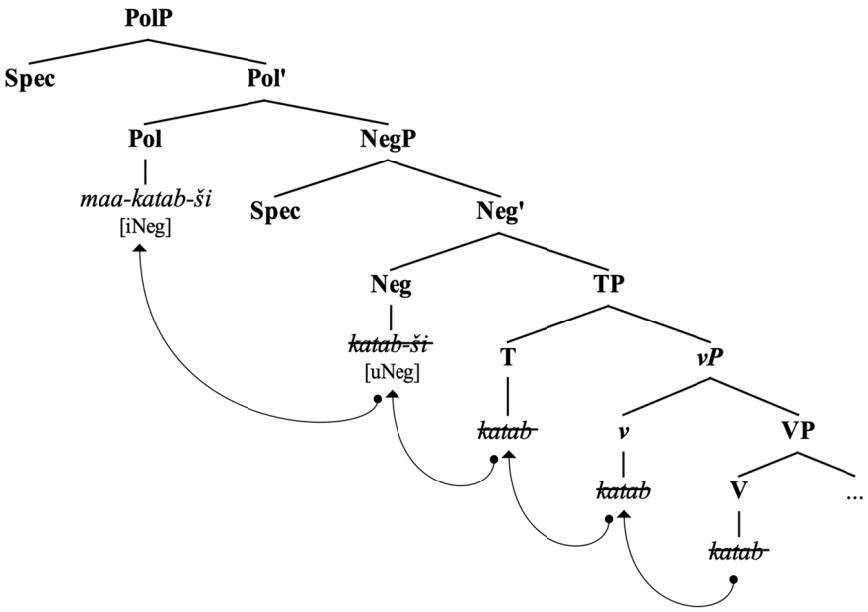
Soltan (2011, 2014) assumed that the negative marker *maa* is semantically negative, whereas *-ši* is formally negative because it developed diachronically from the adverbial usage of the noun *šayʔ* 'thing'. Thus, under this analysis *maa* is treated as a polarity head that originates in Pol and carries the interpretable negative feature [iNeg], whereas *-ši* is treated as a negative head that originates in Neg and carries an uninterpretable negative feature [uNeg] (note 15). Soltan (2014) pointed out that the uninterpretable negative feature on Neg is valued via a modified version of *Agree* (Chomsky, 2000, 2001) between Pol and Neg. Furthermore, he argued that negation patterns are better dealt with as the result of morphological head movement and that ‐*š* can be deleted under certain conditions. He proposed the following head movement algorithm, which applies in the mapping from syntax to morphology (i.e. a post-syntactic rule):

(61) a. In contexts where Neg is adjacent to a hosting head *H*, *H* moves to Neg and then to Pol, and the circumfixal *maa* ‐ *H* ‐ *š* pattern arises.

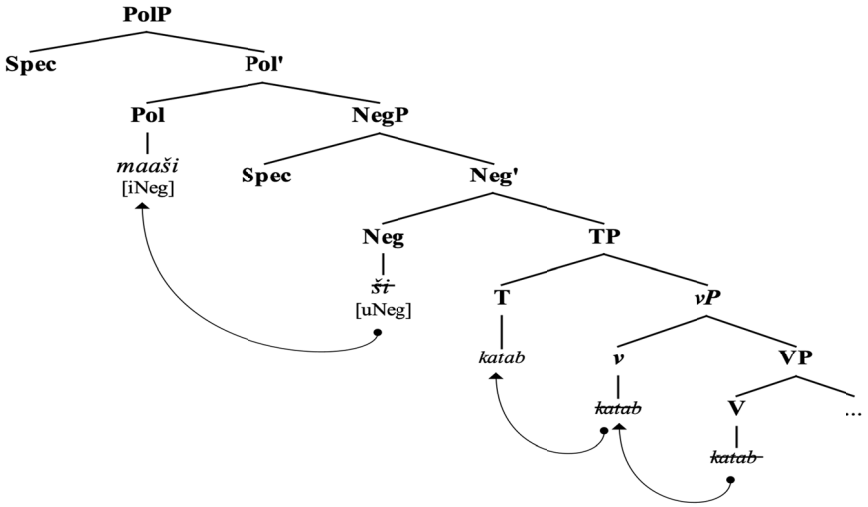
b. Otherwise, Neg incorporates into Pol, giving rise to the *miš* ‐ pattern. (Soltan, 2014, p. 104)

A modified version of this algorithm can be adopted to account for the negation system in Raymi dialect. We assume that both steps in (61) are available for the negation patterns in this dialect. Thus, the discontinuous *maa…ši* pattern (cf. the example in 5a) is derived under step (a) as illustrated in (62), whereas the non-discontinuous *maa-ši* pattern (cf. the example in 5b) is derived under step (b) as illustrated in (63).

(62)



(63)



According to Soltan (2012, 2014), the *Spilt-Neg* analysis should allow us to account for the interaction observed in (58–60) above between NPIs and the negative element *-ši*. He pointed out that the solution to the puzzle of *-š* deletion in Cairene Egyptian Arabic has to do with whether or not an NPI is marked for 'formal negativity'. He used two diagnostic tests to distinguish NPIs that are formally marked as negative from those that are not. The first test has to do with whether or not an NPI occurs in non-negative contexts such as interrogative or conditional sentences, and the second has to do with whether or not it occurs as a fragment answer. Let us apply these tests to the NPIs *ʕumr* 'ever' and *ʕaad* 'yet' in Raymi dialect. Consider the following examples:

(64) a. ʕumr-ak sirk SanʕaPʔ
ever-2.SG travelled.2.M.SG Sana'a
'Have you ever travelled to Sana'a?'

b. ʔiða ʕumr-ak Sirk SanʕaPʔ laazim tisiir bab l-yaman
if ever-2.SG travelled.2.M.SG Sana'a must go. 2.M.SG gate DEF-Yemen
'If you ever travel to Sana'a, you must visit the gate of Yemen.'

(65) a. Ali ata *(illa) ʕaadu-h?
Ali came.3.M.SG or.not yet-3.M.SG
'Has Ali come or not yet?'

b. *ʔiða ata Ali ʕaadu-h, laazim tuquul-li
if came.3.M.SG Ali yet-3.M.SG must say.3.M.SG-to.me
'*If Ali has come yet, you have to tell me.'

(66) a. Qad Sirk SanʕaSana'a min qabl?
have travelled.2.M.SG before
'Have you travelled to Sana'a before?'

b. ʕumr-ii
ever-1.SG
'Never.'

(67) a. Ali Ata *(illa) ʕaadu-h
Ali came.3.M.SG or.not yet-3.M.SG
'Has Ali come or not yet?'

b. ʕaadu-h
yet-3.M.SG
'Not yet.'

As expected, only the NPI *ʕumr* appears in non-negative contexts such as questions and conditionals (64) and as a fragment answer (66b), whereas the NPI *ʕaad* does not. This suggests that the NPI *ʕumr* is non-negative and that the NPI *ʕaad* is lexically negative.

Based on Soltan's (2012, 2014) analysis, the overt realisation of *-ši* depends on the availability of formal negativity. Thus, *-ši* disappears only in the presence of a non-negative NPI like *ʕumr* but not in the presence of a negative NPI like *ʕaad*. As for the contrast between (59a) and (59b), it can be explained in terms of 'locality'. This means that *-ši* disappears only if the NPI *ʕumr* originates within the local domain (i.e. 'close by' as in 59a) but not when it originates outside the local domain (i.e., in a distant position as in 59b) (cf. Soltan, 2014).

6. Conclusion

In this paper we discussed negation in Raymi dialect (a variety of YA), which has not been explored prominently before. The aim was to broaden the discussion about the syntax of sentential negation in Arabic. The distribution of the negation patterns observed in this dialect is somehow different from those attested in other Arabic varieties. Both the discontinuous negative pattern *maa*-x-*ši* and the non-discontinuous negative pattern *maa-ši* are used to negate sentences containing verbal predicates and non-verbal predicates. Unlike the situation in many Arabic varieties, there is no contrast between verbal and non‐verbal predicates or between past and non-past tense sentences with respect to the distribution of the negation patterns in Raymi dialect. In addition, NPIs are not always in complementary distribution with the negative enclitic *-ši*; it is not always omitted when an NPI occurs. These facts, among others, have posed challenges to the *Spec-NegP* analysis and the *discontinuous Neg* analysis, which have been widely adopted for negation in Arabic. We provided some empirical evidence to strengthen the argument in favour of the *Higher-Neg* analysis, whereby the Neg projects in a position higher than T. Finally, we showed that a morpho-syntactic analysis such as the *Spilt-Neg* analysis is the best candidate to account for most of the facts related to negation in this dialect.

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Notes

Note 1. See, e.g., Aoun, Choueiri and Benmamoun (2010), Benmamoun (1996, 2000, 2006), Benmamoun, Abunasser, Al-Sabbagh, Bidaoui and Shalash (2013), Brustad (2000), Fassi Fehri (1993), Ouhalla and Shlonsky (2002), Shlonsky (1997), Soltan (2007, 2011) and Vanhove (1996).

Note 2. An anonymous reviewer has pointed out that *ma-mriD-š* is also possible in Moroccan Arabic. The enclitic ***–š*** is optional with verbal and nominal predicates in some regions in Morocco.

Note 3. Note that the proclitic *ma-* and the enclitic *-š* may sometimes be pronounced in some Arabic dialects as *maa-* and *-ši*.

Note 4. The negation system in Palestine Arabic is quite similar to that of Jordanian Arabic. Note that sometimes an optional vowel (*i*) is inserted before the second negative particle *š* (see Al-Shurafa, 2006; Shlonsky, 1997).

Note 5. The governorate of Raymah is in the middle of the western mountains. It is bordered by the Sana'a governorate to the north and east, by Hudaydah to the west and by the Dhamar governorate to the south. It is administratively divided into six provinces, and the town of Al-Jabeen is the centre of the governorate. Most of the people of Raymah still have some phonetic characteristics of the old dialect of Hamriya, where the sound (q) is dark and the letter (k) is added to the verb of the first and the second person. The area of the province of Raymah is about 2000 km^2, and the population is around 600,000. Raymi dialect is named after the governorate of Raymah, where it is mainly spoken, although it is also spoken in some other nearby areas such as Otomah and Wesab.

Note 6. Watson's (1985) study might be the first to explore Raymi dialect. It is concerned with phonological aspects, not syntactic ones.

Note 7. An anonymous reviewer has pointed out that in Moroccan Arabic, there is a difference between the continuous and non-continuous forms. The first carries an extra meaning of contrastive focus with a correcting function, but not the second. The second is limited to negating a statement. Consider the following example he/she provides:

(i)	Ali	**ma-ši**	mriD	ɣir ʕiyyan
	Ali	NEG- NEG	sick	only tired

'Ali is not sick, he is only tired.'

However, this is not the case in Raymi dialect as mentioned above.

Note 8. It is worth mentioning that Vanhove's (1996) work does not provide any formal syntactic analysis but rather a syntactic and semantic description of the data.

Note 9. The Head Movement Constraint:

An X° may only move into the Y° that properly governs it (Travis, 1984, p. 131).

Note 10. In addition, Mansoor (2012, p. 34) pointed out that verbs in YA (Abyani dialect) do not merge with negation at all. The negative marker is always realised as a non-discontinuous element *miš* as shown below.

(i) ***mi-š*** indina-hum as-siyarah ħaqqana
NEG- NEG gave.1.PL-them DEF-car ours
'We did not give them our car.'

Note 11. The cognate accusative/object is referred to in the Arabic literature as *al-maffʕuul al-muTlaq* 'the absolute object,' which is defined as 'an accusative noun phrase that takes the form of its maSdar (*nomina verbi* or infinitives) or its substitute. It is used to emphasise the action of its governor (the verb or its substitutes), its kind or number" (Ar-raajiħi, 1988, p. 277, cited in Homeidi, 2008, pp. 455–461). See also Ryding (2005, p. 285).

Note 12. Lucas (2010) considered the example in (44) above, discussing only the second possibility and ignoring the first.

Note 13. An anonymous reviewer has pointed out that this is possible if we stipulate that the phonetic realisation of -*š* is done at PF, as suggested for the realisation of the partial verbal agreement in SA.

Note 14. In the context of oath, a special negation pattern is employed where the negative element □*š* is placed at the end of the clause. However, we will not discuss the analysis of this pattern because it needs further investigation to explore its syntactic and semantic features.

Note 15. Soltan (2014) points out in footnote 15 that "nothing hinges on the labels assigned to the two heads here" and that he follows Zanuttini (1997) "in assuming that negation is expressed via a polarity Phrase". Thus, it should be noted that the term 'polarity' does not refer to NPIs, but it simply refers to the affirmative-negative contrast (see e.g., Zeijlstra, 2004, 2008).