

## NegP Located Above TP: Evidence from Standard Arabic (SA) and Saudi Northern Region Dialect of Arabic (SNRDA)

Mustafa Ahmed Al-humari<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Languages and Translation, Faculty of Arts and Science-Rafha, Northern Border University, Arar, Saudi Arabia

Correspondence: Mustafa Ahmed Al-humari, Office No. 101, Teaching Staff Building, Faculty of Arts and Science, Northern Border University, Rafha Campus, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: Mustafa.Alhomari@nbu.edu.sa

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### Abstract

The paper examines the properties of sentential negation in Standard Arabic (henceforth SA) and Saudi Northern Region Dialect of Arabic (henceforth SNRDA), focusing on similarities and differences in use and distribution (Note 1). In this paper, I propose that the sentential negation facts of standard and dialectal versions of Arabic receive a unified account despite their apparent differences. I provide some empirical and conceptual evidence of the workability for the Neg-Above-T analysis over the Neg-Below-T analysis. NegP cannot remain lower than TP in Standard Arabic as the language employs V-to-T raising to drive the VSO from SVO word order. NegP in SNRDA should be higher than TP as it precedes non-verbal predicates (nominals, adjectivals, prepositionals, and adverbials) and some TP/CP located elements (expletive/ (indefinite) pronominal subjects and the future tense expressing element *raaḥ*, and adverbials hosting pronoun subject clitics like *ʕumri/uh*).

**Keywords:** predicate, merger, verbal negation, tensed negatives, nonverbal negation

### 1. Introduction

Negation is a crosslinguistic phenomenon that renders the statement negative by adding negative particles. Bloom (1970) claims that children during language acquisition learn how to produce and distinguish between two basic sentences: the affirmative and the negative. Negation has attracted more attention from the scholars in linguistics over the last few decades owing to the fact that languages exhibit a range of variation in terms of the negation pattern, the negation status, and the position in the clausal structure. The current study has come in line with growing research attempts towards developing a syntactic/morphosyntactic account to capture the facts of sentential negation patterns across languages, such as French (Rowlett, 1998), Dutch (Zeijlstra, 2004), Standard Arabic (Bahloul, 1996; Benmamoun, 2000; Eid, 1991; Fassi Fehri, 1993; Ouhalla & Shlonsky, 2002) extended to modern dialects of Arabic like Moroccan Arabic (Benmamoun, 2000), Egyptian Arabic (Soltan, 2014, 2017), Kuwaiti Arabic (Alsalem, 2012; Brustad, 2000), Yemeni Arabic (Ahmed, 2012; Benmamoun & Al Asbahi, 2014; Qafisheh, 1996), Libyan Arabic (Algryani, 2016), and Jordanian Arabic (Alsarayreh, 2012), Hijazi Arabic (Alzahrani, 2015); Najdi Arabic (Binturki, 2015), among others.

The data used in this study were of two types: primary data and secondary data. The primary data were collected from native speakers of Arabic from the northern region of Saudi Arabia, particularly from Rafha and its neighboring towns like Arar, Hafar Al-Batin, Aluwayqilah and Sakaka. The secondary data were collected from the reference grammar books of Standard Arabic (Haywood & Nahmad, 1965; Wright, 1995; Ryding, 2005). Standard Arabic is the uniform variety of Arabic which is used all over the Arabic speaking world in literary works, as well as in the media, viz. magazines, newspapers, radio and television broadcasts, business, personal letters and in some songs.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the competing proposals available in the literature for positing NegP in the clausal structure, namely Neg-below-T and Neg-above-T, highlighting the merits and demerits of each proposal. Section 3 discusses how Neg-above-T analysis gains more empirical and theoretical support from SNRDA and other Arabic dialects. Section 4 concludes the paper. In the remaining part of this introduction, I examine the distribution and the use of negative elements in Standard Arabic and SNRDA and also demonstrate that the differences between the two versions of Arabic are superficial and apparent.

### 1.1 Distribution of Sentential Negation in Standard Arabic

SA uses five different particles to express sentential negation: the invariant particle *maa*, the particle *laa* and its tense-inflected counterparts *lam*, *lan* and the agreement-inflected particle *laysa*. The inflected tensed particles *lam* and *lan* always indicate the past tense and the future tense interpretations respectively. The particle *laysa* is marked only for subject agreement. Following the previous studies on negation of Standard Arabic (Benmamoun, 2000; Ouhalla & Shlonsky, 2002), the negative elements in SA can be divided in terms of their morphosyntactic properties into three groups: (1) negation with *laa*, *lam* and *lan*; (2) negation with *maa*; and (3) negation with *laysa*.

#### 1.1.1 First group: *laa*, *lam*, *lan*

Putting the negatives *laa*, *lam* and *lan* under one group follows from Benmamoun's (2000) assumption that *laa* is a default form from which *lam* and *lan* are derived. All these negative forms co-occur only with imperfective forms of verbs; *laa* carries the present tense (1), *lam* the past tense (2), and *lan* the future tense (3).

- |    |                                               |                      |                          |
|----|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) | at-tulaab-u                                   | laa/*lam/*lan        | ya-drus-uun              |
|    | the-students-nom                              | Neg/neg.past/neg.fut | 3M-study.IPFV.3MPL-IND   |
|    | 'The students do not study/are not studying.' |                      |                          |
| 2) | at-tulaab-u                                   | *laa/lam/*lan        | ya-drus-uu               |
|    | the-students-nom                              | Neg/neg.past/neg.fut | 3M-study. IPFV.3MPL.JUSS |
|    | 'The students did not study.'                 |                      |                          |
| 3) | at-tulaab-u                                   | *laa/*lam/lan        | ya-drus-uu               |
|    | the-students.NOM                              | Neg/neg.past/neg.fut | 3M-study. IPFV-MPL.SBJV  |
|    | 'The students will not study.'                |                      |                          |

The above examples show that the particles *laa*, *lam* and *lan* occur with verbal forms only in the imperfective and not with the perfective verb forms. *laa* appears with indicative imperfective to indicate the present tense and cannot be used for the future or past tense. *lam* occurs with the jussive imperfective and indicates the past tense. *lan* appears with the subjunctive imperfective and expresses the future tense. Thus, *lam* and *lan* are negative particles which carry temporal information, namely tense. Moreover, substituting imperfective verb forms (1–3) with perfective ones would lead to ungrammaticality as in (4).

- |    |                                       |                      |                |
|----|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 4) | * At-tulaab-u                         | laa/ lam/lan         | daras-uu       |
|    | the-students-nom                      | Neg/Neg.past/Neg.fut | study.PFV.3MPL |
|    | 'The students do/did/will not study.' |                      |                |

Moreover, the negative elements in this group must be adjacent to imperfective verb forms and that explains why the sentence in (5) is ungrammatical.

- |    |                              |                  |                        |
|----|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 5) | *laa                         | at-tulaab-u      | ya-drus-uu-n           |
|    | Neg                          | the-students-nom | 3M-study.IPFV.3MPL-IND |
|    | 'The students do not study.' |                  |                        |

In addition, *laa* has a special feature in that it negates the existence of something absolute, referred to as *absolute negation* (Ryding, 2005) as in (6).

- |    |                           |       |     |               |
|----|---------------------------|-------|-----|---------------|
| 6) | laa                       | aḥada | fii | al-bayit-i    |
|    | Neg                       | one   | in  | the-house-gen |
|    | 'No one is in the house.' |       |     |               |

#### 1.1.2 Second Group: *maa*

The particle *maa* negates both imperfective and perfective verb forms and does not inflect with any tense.

- |    |                                 |                                  |              |
|----|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| 7) | maa                             | ya-saafiru/saafara               | muḥammad-un  |
|    | Neg                             | travel.IPFV-3SGM/travel.PFV-3SGM | Mohammad-Nom |
|    | 'Mohammed does/did not travel.' |                                  |              |

The above example shows that *maa*, unlike *la* and its variants, can occur with both imperfective and perfective verb forms. In addition, the particle *maa*, unlike *la* and its variants, can occur with verbless sentences as illustrated in (8).

- 8) ... *maa*                      *haða*                      *bashr-an*  
       ... Neg                    this                      man-Acc  
                                   ‘*This is not a man.*’                      *Excerpted from the Holy Quran, Surat Yusuf [verse 31]*
- maa*                      *muhammad-un*                      *muhandis-un*  
       Neg                      Mohammed-Nom                      engineer-Nom  
                                   ‘*Mohammed is not an engineer.*’

### 1.1.3 Third Group: *laysa*

*laysa* is the only verbal negative element that can assign case in SA. *laysa*, like *laa*, occurs only with the imperfective verb forms and receives a present tense interpretation. However, it differs from *laa* and its variants in that it is not required to be adjacent to the verb, as shown in (9).

- 9) *laysa*                      *khalid-un*                      *ya-ktub-u*                      *aš-šiʿr-a*  
       neg.3MS                      Khalid-Nom                      3M-write.IPFV.3MSG                      the-poetry-Acc  
                                   ‘*Khalid does not write/is not writing poetry.*’

Moreover, the particle *laysa*, unlike other negative elements, has to agree with its subject as illustrated in paradigm (10).

10)

N&G	SG	DU	PL
1	<i>lastu</i>	-	<i>lasnaa</i>
2M	<i>lasta</i>	<i>lastumaa</i>	<i>lastum</i>
2F	<i>lasti</i>	<i>lastumaa</i>	<i>lastunna</i>
3M	<i>laysa</i>	<i>laysaa</i>	<i>laysuu</i>
3F	<i>laysat</i>	<i>laysataa</i>	<i>lasna</i>

*laysa* can occur with nonverbal sentences, namely verbless sentences, as it is the case with the negative particle *maa*. However, it differs from *maa* in that it assigns an accusative case to its predicate; the contrast is shown in example (11).

- 11) *laysa*                      *muhammad-un*                      *muhandis-an*  
       Neg.3MS                      Mohammed-nom                      engineer-Acc  
                                   ‘*Mohammed is not an engineer.*’
- maa*                      *muhammad-un*                      *muhandis-un*  
       Neg.3MS                      Mohammed-nom                      engineer-Nom  
                                   ‘*Mohammed is not an engineer.*’

Crucially, *laysa* differs from other negative elements excluding *maa* in that it can occur in both verbal and nonverbal sentences.

### 1.2 Distribution of Sentential Negation in SNRDA

SNRDA uses three negative particles: *maa*, *muu/mee*, and *laa*. The distribution of these elements is given as follows.

#### 1.2.1 The Negative Particle *maa*

First, the particle *maa* is often associated with verbal negation. It precedes the two types of verb forms: perfective verbs as in (12) and imperfective verbs as in (13). It also precedes the auxiliary expressing the future tense *raah* as shown in (14).

- 12) *at-tulaab*                      *maa*                      *ya-drus-uu-n*  
       the-students                      Neg                      3M-study.IPFV.3MPL-IND  
                                   ‘*The students do not study/are not studying.*’

- 13) at-tulaab                      maa                      daras-uu  
the-students                      Neg                      study.PFV.3MPL.JUSS  
*‘The students did not study.’*
- 14) at-tulaab                      maa                      raah                      yadrus-uu-n  
the-students                      Neg                      **Aux.fut**                      3M-study.IPFV-MPL.IND  
*‘The students will not study.’*

The above examples show that the particle *maa* in SNRDA can appear in all possible verbal contexts where the two groups of negatives (*laa*, *lam*, *lan*) and (*maa*) in SA can occur. It can appear in place of *laa* for the present tense interpretation, *lam* for past tense interpretation, and *lan* for future tense interpretation. However, it differs from those elements in SA in that it is never inflected with tense because the tense in SNRDA is expressed either on a verb or by an auxiliary element; past and present tenses appear on the main verb, but future tense by a separate element, namely *raah* ‘Aux.fut’.

Second, the negative particle *maa* can precede and host the pronominal subject as an enclitic. The paradigm given in (15) illustrates all possible mergers of Neg+Pronominal in SNRDA.

15)

Neg + Pronominal	Gloss
maani	Neg.I
mant	Neg.you.M
manti	Neg.you.F
maahu	Neg.he
maahi	Neg.she
maahna	Neg.we
maantum	Neg.you.PL
maahum	Neg.they.M
maahin	Neg.they.F

Third, the negative element *maa* can precede an adverbial hosting a pronoun as in (16).

- 16) *maa*                      *ʕumri*                      sawyt                      zay                      kiḏaa  
Neg                      ever-me                      did                      like                      this  
*‘I have not ever done like this.’*

### 1.2.2 The Negative Particle *muu/mee*

The particle *muu/mee* is used with nonverbal negation where the variant *mee* is restricted in use to a singular feminine form. However, *muu*, for native speakers of some modern dialects, is still an option to be used in the case of the singular feminine predicate (Note 2). Thus, the particle *muu/mee* negates verbless sentences such as nominal predicates as in (17), adjectival predicates as in (18), and prepositional predicates as in (19).

- 17) alwald                      muu                      šaaʕir  
the boy                      Neg                      poet  
*‘The boy is not a poet.’*
- 18) albint                      mee                      šaatʕirah  
the-girl                      Neg.F                      clever.F  
*‘The girl is not clever.’*
- 19) almudiir                      muu                      bi-almaktab  
the-manager                      Neg                      in-the-office  
*‘The manager is not in the office.’*

The above examples reveal that the particle *muu/mee* behaves like the particle *laysa* in SA in that they are associated with nonverbal negation, namely verbless sentences such as nominal, adjectival and prepositional predicates.

### 1.2.3 The Particle *laa*

The particle *laa* in SNRDA retains the main usage of *laa* in SA in that it is used for negating imperatives (negative command) as in (20).

- 20) a) *laa*            *tasakir*            *albaab*  
              Neg            close            the door  
              ‘Don’t close the door.’
- b) *laa*            *tasawi*            *kiðaa*  
              Neg            do            so  
              ‘Don’t do so.’

However, it differs from *laa* of SA in that it cannot be used to negate imperfective verbs expressing present interpretation and that is why (21) is ungrammatical or at least weird in SNRDA.

- 21) \*/? *attulaab*            *laa*            *yadrusun*  
              the-students            Neg            study/are studying  
              ‘Students do not study/are not studying.’

For the sentence (21) to be grammatical, the particle *maa* needs to be used instead of *laa*. The particle *laa* in SNRDA cannot negate the imperfective verb form with indicative mood as *laa* does in SA. It is restricted to negating the imperfective verb form with jussive (imperative) mood.

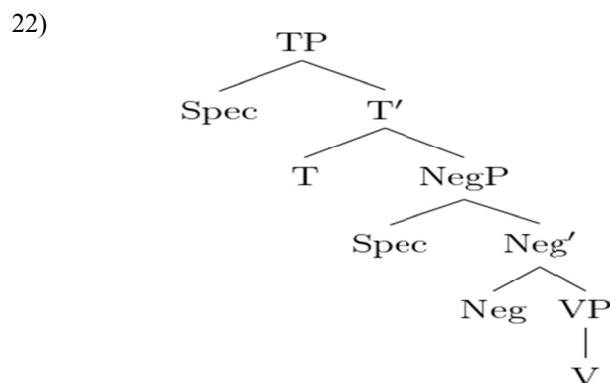
## 2. Location of NegP in Clausal Structure: Competing Analyses

There has been a consensus in the literature of sentential negation (Aoun et al., 2010; Benmamoun, 2000; Haegeman, 1995; Ouali & Fortin, 2007; Ouhalla, 1990; Pollock, 1989; Zanuttini, 1997) that a negative element shall head its own projection, i.e., Neg Projection (NegP) in the clausal structure. However, the position of NegP with respect to other projections in the clause structure remains a point of contention.

Two competing proposals on the location of NegP can be significantly identified for both standard and dialectal Arabic versions. The first proposal, advanced in (Aoun et al., 2010; Benmamoun, 2000; Ouhalla & Shlonsky, 2002), argues that Neg must be positioned lower than T. The second, advanced in (Diesing & Jelinek, 1995; Soltan, 2007; Zanuttini, 1997), argues that Neg must be positioned higher than T. The two proposals throughout the paper are referred to as Neg-below-T [NBT] analysis and Neg-above-T [NAT] analysis respectively.

### 2.1 Neg-Below-T Analysis [NBT Analysis]

The analysis (Aoun et al., 2010; Benmamoun, 2000; Ouhalla & Shlonsky, 2002) proposes that NegP occurs lower than TP, specifically between TP and the predicate (VP/NP/AP/PP) as structurally shown in (22).



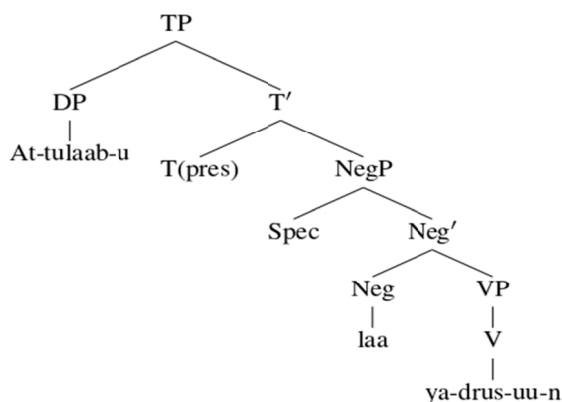
The proposal is mainly based on the assumption that a perfective verb form in SA carries the temporal/aspectual information, specifically tense, due to its capability to move to T for checking temporal features. By contrast, the imperfective verb form does not carry any temporal or aspectual features because of the blocking effects of an intervening head Neg, i.e., Neg blocks V-to-T raising, forcing the verb to appear in the imperfective (non-tensed) form (Note 3). Such blocking effect follows from locality-based theoretical considerations; Rizzi's (1990) Relativized Minimality, and Travis' (1984) Head Movement Constraints (Note 4). Aoun et al. (2010); Benmamoun, (2000); and Ouhalla and Shlonsky, (2002) further argue that the behavior of sentential negation in

Standard Arabic can be captured under the Minimalist Program if the NBT analysis is adopted. The perfective verb form raises to Neg head where it merges with the negative particle as a potential checker, valuing the [+D] feature of Neg. Then, the complex head [Neg-V] moves to T to have the verb feature [+V] checked against the head T. The postulation of the Neg projection between T and V follows from three conceptual and empirical arguments. The first argument is that negatives *lam* and *lan* in Standard Arabic carry the temporal information: past tense interpretation (23b) and future tense interpretation (23c) respectively.

- 23) a) at-tulaab-u                      laa                      ya-drus-uu-n  
          the-students-Nom           Neg                      3M-study. IPFV.3MPL-IND  
                                                  ‘The students do not study/are not studying.’
- b) at-tulaab-u                      lam                      ya-drus-uu  
          the-students-Nom           Neg.past                      3M-study.IPFV.3MPL.JUSS  
                                                  ‘The students did not study.’
- c) at-tulaab-u                      lan                      ya-drus-uu  
          the-students.Nom           Neg.fut                      3M-study. IPFV-MPL.SBJV  
                                                  ‘The students will not study.’

Since the default form of negative *laa* in (23a) occurs only in present tense interpretation, it is not assumed to involve V-to-T raising via Neg. Under the approach, example (23a) is structurally represented as in (24).

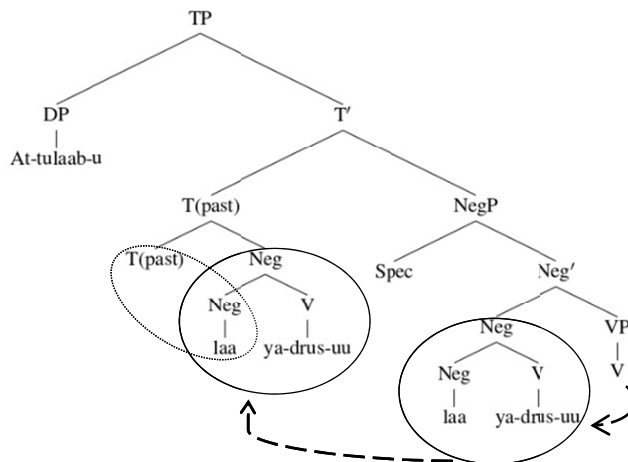
24)



By contrast, the negative *laa* gets tensed as a byproduct of V-to-T raising through Neg, resulting in negative expressing past tense *lam* or negative expressing future tense *lan*. The derivations of the tensed negatives *lam* in (23b) and *lan* in (23c) are roughly represented as in (25a) and (25b) respectively.

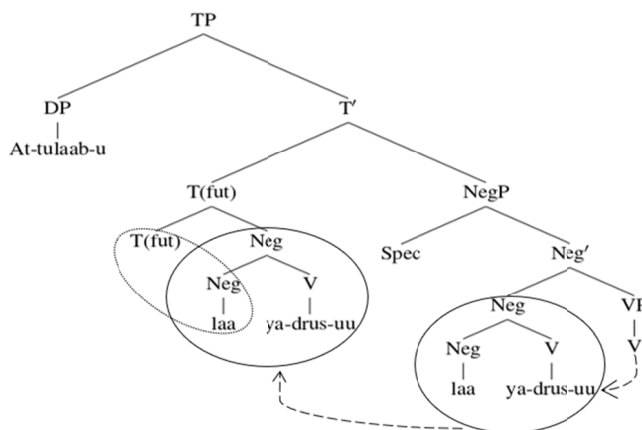
25)

a)



**Merger:** *laa*+T(Past) = *lam*

b)



**Merger:**  $laa + T(Fut) = lan$

Both structures (25a) and (25b) lead to the same conclusion that the default negative form *laa* is changed into a tensed negative; *laa* becomes *lam* when merged with T bearing past tense but becomes *lan* when merged with T bearing future tense.

The second argument in support of the NBT approach is based on empirical fact that the verb, particularly in the past tense, must merge with negation in some modern dialects of Arabic as illustrated in (26a) from Moroccan Arabic (MA) and (26b) from Levantine Arabic (LA).

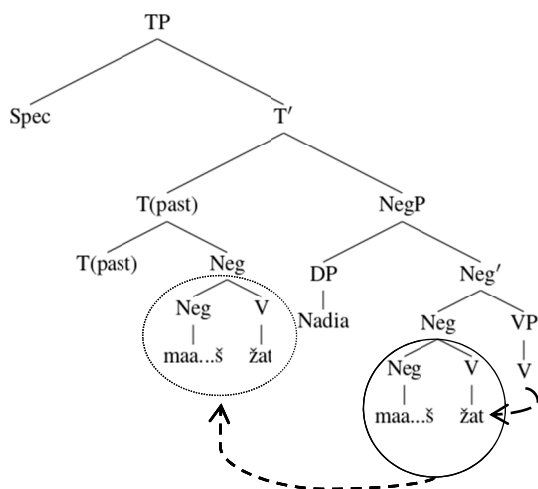
- 26) a) ma-žat-š                      nadia                      MA  
       Neg-come.3SGF.PFV      Nadia  
       b) ma-ʔižat(-š)            nadia                      LA  
       Neg-come.3SGF.PFV      Nadia

*‘Nadia did not come.’*

These examples show that negative particle *ma* is morphologically merged with the perfective verb form in both modern dialects of Arabic. The mere difference is the occurrence of negation enclitic morpheme *-š* is obligatory in MA, but optional in LA (Note 5). Under the NBT approach, the merger between the perfective verb form *ža* ‘come’ and *ma...š* is a byproduct of the movement of T to V, i.e., a movement motivated by the need of the verb to check its temporal features at T. To circumvent the minimality effects, the verb moves to Neg and then the complex V and Neg moves to T.

The T-Neg-V merger in example (26) from MA can be basically structured as in (27), ignoring for the time being the subject position and other irrelevant details.

27)



**Merger:**  $maa...š + žat = ma-žat-š$

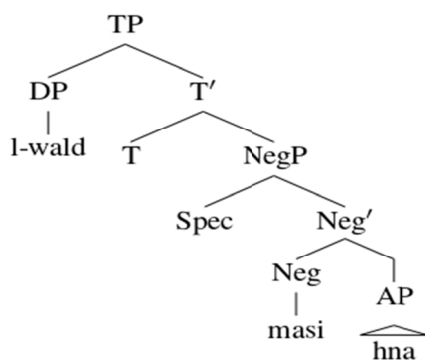
The third argument in support of the NBT is that the subject precedes sentential negation in some modern dialects of Arabic, specifically Moroccan Arabic as illustrated in (28) and Egyptian Arabic as in (29). Put simply, it is not possible to place Neg higher than the subject because the subject shall be located at Spec; TP.

- 28)        l-wəld            maši            hna            MA  
              the-boy        Neg            here  
              ‘The boy is not here.’
- 29)        ?il-waad        miš            hina            LA  
              the-boy        Neg            here  
              ‘The boy is not here.’

Source: Benmamoun et al., 2013, p. 94.

The above examples indicate that the Neg projection cannot be positioned higher than T. If it were higher than T, then the word order of Subject-Neg cannot be predicted. Therefore, the structure of Subject-Neg order, under NBT approach, might look like (30).

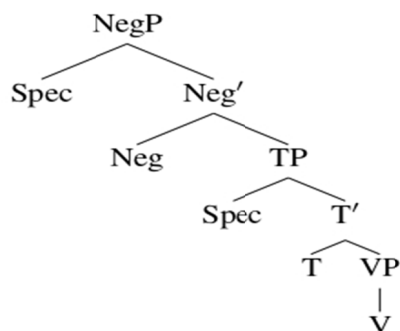
30)



## 2.2 Neg-Above-T Analysis [NAT Analysis]

The NAT analysis, which is advanced in Diesing and Jelinek (1995), Soltan (2007), Zanuttini, (1997) and supported by Benmamoun et al. (2013), proposes that NegP projection must be placed higher than TP as diagrammatically shown in (31).

31)



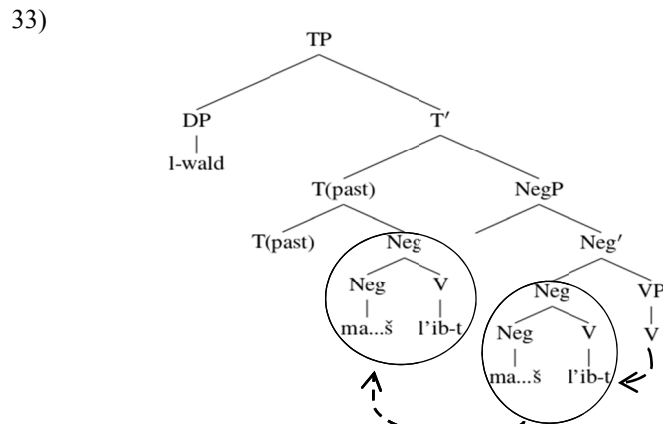
The approach is basically based on the traditional assumption (Ouhalla, 2003; Zanuttini, 1997) that the position of negative projection is parametric across languages: languages with postverbal negation such as Germanic languages have Neg lower than T while languages with preverbal negation such as Spanish, Italian and Arabic have Neg higher than T.

The NAT approach advocates raise serious doubts on the effectiveness of imperfective-perfective asymmetry underpinned the NBT's main argument that the perfective verb form (contrary to the imperfective verb) must raise to T for temporal feature requirements via Neg, hence, no perfective verb in standard/dialectal varieties of Arabic is predicted to appear above Neg. Soltan (2011) provides robust empirical evidence against the NBT analysis from Sharqeyyah Egyptian Arabic where negation occurs higher than the perfective verb, as illustrated in (32). Any raising for the perfective verb to T yields undesirable results. Therefore, this prediction is not borne out under NBT analysis.

- 32)       ʔanaa               miš               ləʕib-t  
           I               Neg               played.1SG  
           ‘I don’t play.’

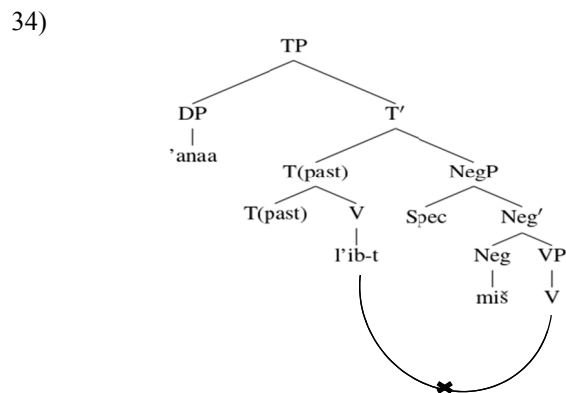
Source: Soltan, 2011, p. 262.

Under the NBT analysis where the perfective-imperfective asymmetry plays a great role, the perfective verb has to move to T and picks Neg on its way to T, resulting in discontinuous negation pattern *ma-ləʕib-t-š* as in (33) instead of independent negation.



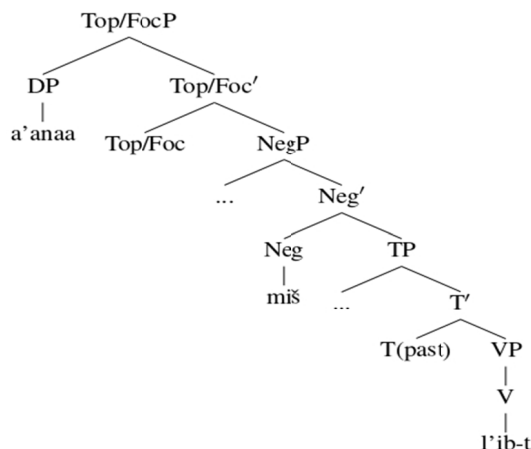
**Merger:** *maa...š + ləʕib-t = ləʕib-t-š*

Independent negation pattern in (32) cannot be derived if V does not skip over Neg to T, followed by Neg movement over the T-V complex, to generate the right word order as represented in (34).



However, both movements violate the HMC and RM constraints. Furthermore, Neg-movement over the T-V complex to some higher head, though improper, is not motivated. The theoretical issue arises from the difference between the ability of the same language to show two negation patterns: discontinuous negation *ma...š* and independent negation *miš*; the former needs to host the verb, but the latter does not. I argue that the two negation patterns are well predicted under the NAT based on whether a head, T in this context, is required to host negation or not. Moreover, the perfective verb can adjoin T without violating any head movement constraints, as shown in (35), because Neg in this proposed structure does not intervene between V and T.

35)



Positing Neg above T can allow the two negation patterns to appear within the same language without resorting to use more theoretical apparatus into the structure.

Another relevant piece of evidence in favor of NAT and against NBT, I assume, comes from speech of the Egyptian children. Omar (1973) observed that the children at the early acquisition of negation overgeneralize the use of the independent negation pattern *miš* as in (32), represented in (35), to all verb forms in Egyptian Arabic. If this observation is correct, then NBT analysis does not allow the shift from independent negation pattern to the discontinuous negation *ma... š* pattern or vice versa as it would have violations of HMC and RM or any related constraints. By contrast, the NAT can smoothly explain the children acquisition shift from one pattern to the other if children start pattern acquisition by assuming that Neg is nonaffixal and does not merge with the adjacent T specified for past tense. Later on, they realize, based on the primary linguistic data, that the head Neg has to merge with the head T specifying past tense, and thus the circumfixal negation pattern *ma...š* will replace the early utterances of the *miš* pattern.

A third piece of evidence in support of the NAT approach is related to the capacity of the negative particle *laa* in SA to assign Case to the subject.

- 36)      *laa*            *mudaris-an*            *yaʔib-un*  
              Neg            teacher-3SGM-acc      absent-3SGM-nom  
              ‘No teacher is absent.’

That the capacity of the negative element *laa* to assign an accusative case to the subject amounts to prove that the case assigner *laa* must be in a position higher than the subject, so that it can assign case downwards to the subject; perhaps in a way akin to the accusative case assignment of the matrix verb to the subject of an embedded clause in English Exceptional Case Marking constructions.

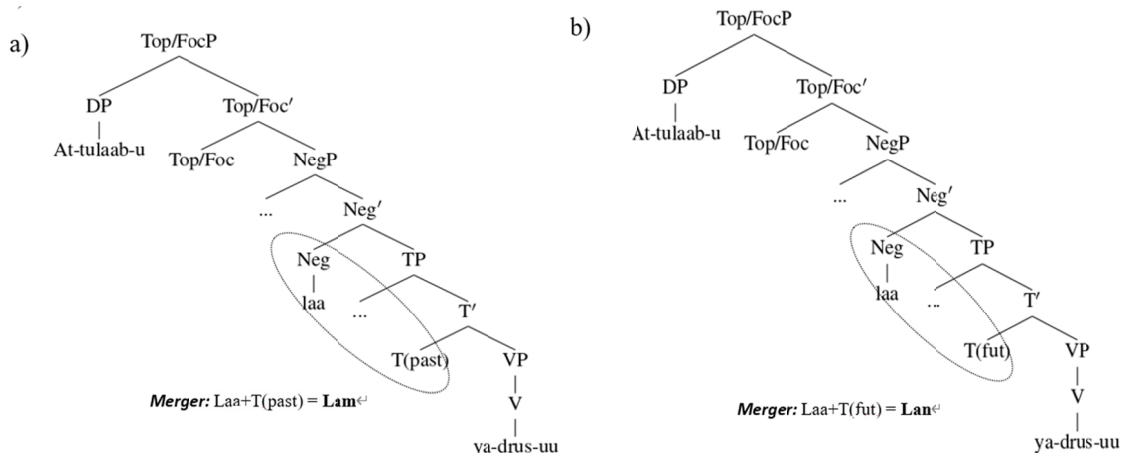
### 3. NAT Analysis over NBT Analysis: Discussion

I propose that both NBT and NAT analyses have a great deal of empirical facts to capture. However, the latter gains more weight than the former whose theoretical and empirical issues left unresolved. My argument remains consistent in that the behavior of negation in both dialectal and standard versions of Arabic, despite the variation attested in the number of negative elements, can be explained in a straightforwardly unified way.

Theoretically, it is not possible to assume that the intervention effect of Neg with respect to V-to-T movement works in a contradicting way; Neg allows V-to-T raising in the perfective, but precludes the same in the imperfective. If the perfective verb can move to T through Neg avoiding HMC or any minimality condition, then there is no way to claim the opposite takes place in the imperfective (Note 6). I argue that the location of Neg between T and V does not play any role in precluding the imperfective verb from raising to T as both verb forms, if motivated, can move to T without incurring minimality effects or violations of whatsoever movement related constraints. If the HMC and minimality effects are circumvented in the perfective verb form, then there is no logic to assume it is not the case in the imperfective. Similarly, if the location of Neg between T and V provides the adjacency required for T+Neg merger, bearing in mind the tensed negatives of SA (*lam* and *lan*) derived from *laa* by merging adjacent heads, then the location of Neg above T will serve the same; T is adjacent to Neg in the opposite direction. No evidence from SA is provided to assume the correct merger linearization either.

Under the NAT analysis, the derivation of the tensed negative *lam* and *laa*, if compared to the derivations (25a) and (25b) under the NBT analysis, can be proceeded up as in (37a) and (37b) respectively.

37)



In proposed structures (37a) and (37b), the Neg+T merger, regardless of its nature (syntactically or morphologically driven), is possible as the two heads Neg and T are adjacent to each other. It turns out to say that the adjacency requirement is fulfilled in the NAT in a way at least similar to that in the NBT. However, the nature of Neg+T merger (syntactic or morphological) might be a point of controversy. The NBT insisted that the Neg+T merger takes place in narrow syntax via head movement. However, the Neg-to-T movement does not have a motivation in such a way it targets the root of the tree for extension. There is a debate on legitimacy of head movement operation in the literature of generative syntax (Note 7). The NAT implicitly argues against the possibility of explaining the merger in the narrow syntax. It assumes that the morphological merger is a post-syntactic operation (PF component). Leaving the merger for postsyntactic component (i.e., Neg-T cliticization) seems more tempting and convincing, as it does not need to be syntactically motivated. It is imperative to point out that there is a dispute regarding the status of preverbal nominal in the literature of Arabic grammar/syntax. In traditional grammar, there had been two schools: the Basran and the Kufi schools of grammar (Note 8). The Basran grammarians consider preverbal nominals in Arabic to be topics (*mubtada*) that are co-indexed with a covert subject pronoun after the predicate (*xabar*), namely verb. The Kufi grammarians allow subjects in preverbal and postverbal positions. Such a disagreement on whether the preverbal nominals are genuine subjects or not is reflected in the works of generative syntax of Arabic. The modern followers of the Basran approach (Alazzawi, 1990; Soltan, 2007; Al-Horais, 2009; Al-Balushi, 2011; among others) argue that preverbal nominals are topics/left-dislocated nominals that are base-generated in a peripheral non-argument position. On the other hand, the modern followers of the Kufi approach (Mohammad, 1990; Fassi Fehri, 1993; Ouhalla, 1994; Benmamoun, 2008; Aoun et al., 2010; among others), consider nominals to be genuine subjects in Arabic, regardless of the position they appear: preverbally or postverbally (Note 9). The NAT analysis goes in tandem with the former view where preverbal nominals are based generated in Topic Phrase or left-dislocated to Topic Phrase from thematic positions. Therefore, all the preverbal nominals given in the paper are considered to be topics/topicalized subjects.

Empirically, there is a number of language facts brought from SNRDA in support to the NAT analysis. First, Negation in SNRDA can interact with categories other than tense in the clause. It can also interact with nominal, adjectival, and prepositional predicates.

38) a) *Negation with nominal predicate*

alwald            muu            šaašir  
the-boy           Neg           poet  
'The boy is not a poet.'

b) *Negation with adjectival predicate*

as-sayyara       mee            zeena  
the car.F       Neg.3SGF   good.Fem  
'The car is not good.'

- c) *Negation with prepositional predicate*  
 almudiir                  muu                  bi-almaktab  
 the-manager                  Neg                  in-the-office  
*'The manager is not in the office.'*
- d) *The preposition hosting pronoun*  
 maa                  ʕandi                  kitaab  
 Neg                  at-me                  book  
*'I do not have a book.'*

The above examples show that the negative element precedes nonverbal predicates such as the nominal predicate *ʕaaʕir* 'poet' in (38a), adjectival predicate *zeena* 'good.Fem', prepositional predicate *bi-almaktab* 'in-the-office' or preposition hosting a pronoun *ʕandi* 'at-me'. It suggests that determining the location of Neg on the basis of the interaction between the Verb and the Tense, namely the perfective-imperfective asymmetry, is not a viable mechanism as the negative element can interact with categories other than the verb and tense.

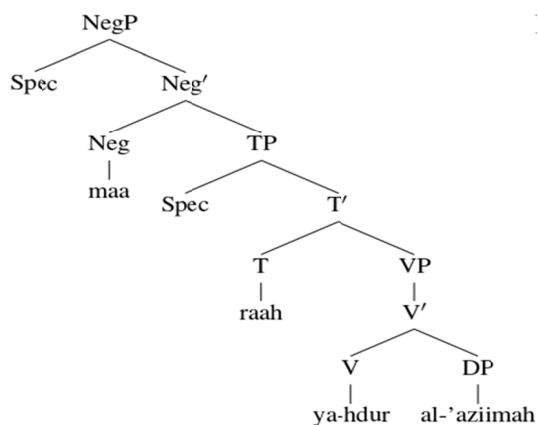
Second, a negative particle precedes some elements supposedly to occupy positions above the head T, i.e., TP or CP projections.

- Future tense expressing element *raah* 'will'

- 39) maa                  raah                  yaħd<sup>u</sup>ur                  Al-ʕaziimah  
 Neg                  Aux.fut                  attend.3SGM.IPFV                  the-party  
*'He will not/is not going to attend the party.'*

In example (39), the negative element *maa* precedes the auxiliary element *raah* 'will/going to' that SNRDA utilizes for expressing future tense. The position of Neg in relation to the head T expressing future of example (39) is shown in (40).

40)



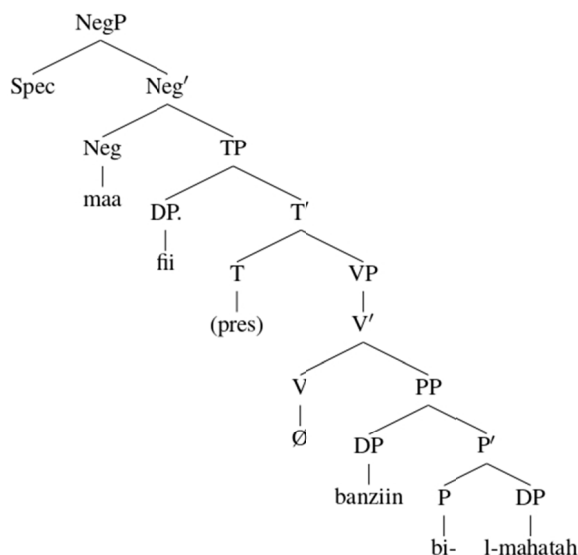
In (40), Neg head must be higher than the head T. Since the Arabic dialect, unlike SA, does not display tense on negatives, no morphological merger between Neg and T is required. It expresses past/present tense on verbs, but future tense by separate elements like *raah* 'will/going to'.

- Existential expletive subject *fii* 'there'

- 41) maa                  fii                  banziin                  bi-l-mahatah  
 Neg                  Expl                  petrol                  in the station  
*'There is no petrol in the station.'*

In (41), the negative element *maa* precedes the expletive subject *fii* 'there' and thus the negative *maa* needs to occupy a position no lower than TP as structured in (42).

42)



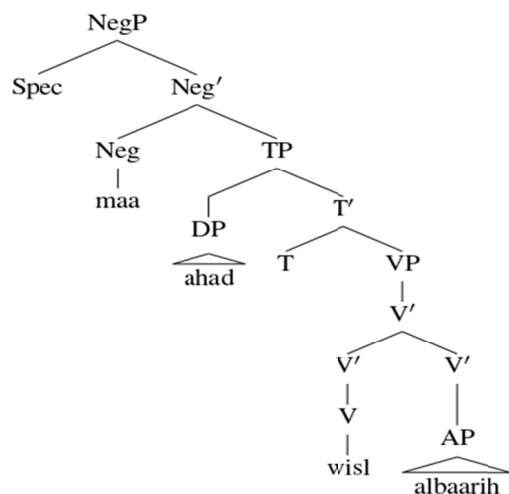
I argue that if the position of negative element *maa* in the proposed structure (42) were lower than TP, then there will be no simple way for deriving the correct word order where the negative precedes the subject.

- Indefinite pronominal subject *aḥad* ‘one’

43) Maa        aḥad        wiṣʿl        al-baarih  
       Neg       one        arrived       the-yesterday  
               ‘No one arrived yesterday.’

The indefinite pronominal subject *aḥad* in (43) must be base-generated at TP projection, namely at the specifier position of T as shown in (44).

44)



The above examples suggest that there must be a position higher than the subject to host the negative; otherwise there would be no motivation if we assume the Neg is base-generated below TP and move upwards. Moreover, the negative in SNRDA precedes not only the subject but also merge with it in some cases as illustrated in (45).

- 45) a) maani        musamiḥak  
       Neg-I        forgive.PART.1SGM.for.you  
               ‘I don’t/am not going to forgive you.’
- b) maahi        musafirah  
       Neg-she    travel.PART.SGF  
               ‘She isn’t travelling/going to travel.’

These above examples show that the negative element *maa* precedes and merges with the pronominal subject as *ani* ‘I’ in (45a). This empirical fact supports my argument that Neg must be located above TP, where the subject is occupying the specifier position of TP (Note 10). Due to their adjacency, the negative can host the pronominal subject as enclitic and this is in general a property of heads.

- It precedes adverbials like *ʕumr* hosting pronoun subject clitics as in (46).

- 46) a) *maa ʕumruh ʕatʕani xabar*  
       Neg ever-he gave.me news.SG  
       ‘*He has not ever given me a piece of information.*’
- b) *maa ʕumri sawyt zay kiðaa*  
       Neg ever-me did like this  
       ‘*I have not ever done like this.*’

The negative element *maa* in (46) should be higher than these adverbial elements which shall occupy nonthematic positions, i.e., outside of TP.

To sum, a negative element must occupy a position higher than TP/CP positioned-elements such as future expressing auxiliary element *raah* as in (39), existential expletive subject *fii* ‘there’ as in (41), indefinite pronominal subject *aħad* ‘one’ as in (43), and adverbials hosting pronoun subject clitic as in (46).

Finally, a related piece of evidence in favor of the NAT is that Neg projection can provide a slot for the topicalized subject, specifically specifier position of NegP as illustrated in (47).

- 47) a) *albanaat maa hin musafiraat*  
       the girls Neg they.fem travel.PART.3PLF  
       ‘*The girls, they are not travelling/going to travel.*’
- b) *alʕayaal maa hum ʕayliin ham*  
       the-boys Neg they.M take.PART.3PLM care  
       ‘*The boys, they are not caring.*’

Under the NAT analysis, the topicalized/left-dislocated subject will fill the specifier position of the Neg and this option is not possible under the NBT analysis.

#### 4. Conclusion

The paper presented comparisons and contrasts between SA and SNRDA in terms of the properties of sentential negation; SA uses five negative elements (*laa*, *ma*, *lam*, *lan* and *laysa*), but SNRDA uses three negatives (*maa*, *muu/mee* and *laa*). Despite the apparent differences, the negation pattern in both dialectal and standard versions of Arabic finds a unified morphosyntactic account under the NAT approach. In this paper, I investigated the theoretical and empirical motivations of the two existing approaches to the location of DP in the clausal structure and demonstrated that the NAT gains more empirical support than the NBT from both versions of Arabic. SNRDA allows negation to precede (and merging in some cases with) non-verbal predicates (nominals, adjectivals, prepositionals, adverbials) and some CP/TP positioned elements (expletive subject *fii* ‘there’, indefinite pronominal subject *aħad* ‘one’, future expressing element *raah* ‘will’). The study has concluded that the position of Neg above T is the most viable option to capture various facts of sentential negation in both standard and dialectal versions of Arabic. The proposed NAT-based analysis, I assume, can capture similar facts of negation in other Arabic dialects spoken in Gulf countries like Hijazi Arabic, Kuwaiti Arabic, and Bahraini Arabic, as they all share the same negation pattern with SNRDA. However, this tendency needs to be extensively investigated in the future.

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## Notes

Note 1. I have borrowed the coined abbreviation (SNRDA) from Alshammiry (2016); a study conducted on adverbs in the same dialect, i.e., a dialect that is spoken in the northern region of Saudi Arabia. However, Standard Arabic (SA) refers to the most widely used version of Arabic, especially in media, radio broadcasts, literary texts, speeches, debates etc.

The abbreviations used in the glosses of data are: 1, 2, and 3 = first, second and third person, respectively; N= number; G = gender; DU = dual; SG = singular; PL = plural; M = masculine; F = feminine; FUT = future; ASP = aspect; PFV = perfective verb; IPFV = imperfective verb; IND = indicative; JUS = jussive; SUB = subjunctive; PART = participle; NOM = nominative; ACC = accusative; GEN = genitive. T = tense; Neg = negation; EXPL = expletive.

Note 2. Alsalem (2012 and Brustad (2000) claim that *muu* in Kuwaiti Arabic does not agree in any feature with the predicate. By contrast, Alzahrani (2015) argues that there are two variants of *muu* in Hijazi Arabic *muu* and *mee* where the latter is used with the singular feminine predicate. SNRDA behaves like the latter in this regard.

Note 3. For more details on the claim that imperfective in SA is a nontensed default verb form, see (Benmamoun, 1999).

Note 4. Rizzi's (1990) Relativized Minimality (RM) stipulates that "in a configuration [ ...  $\alpha$  ...  $\gamma$  ...  $\beta$  ... ], where  $\alpha$  c-commands  $\gamma$  and  $\gamma$  c-commands  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$  blocks a relationship between  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  iff  $\gamma$  is of the same type as  $\alpha$ , where 'of the same type' is understood as: (a) if  $\alpha$  is a head,  $\gamma$  is a head; (b) if  $\alpha$  is a phrase in an A-position,  $\gamma$  is a phrase in an A-position; and (c) if  $\alpha$  is a phrase in an A'-position,  $\gamma$  is a phrase in an A'-position." Similarly, Travis (1984) Head Movement Constraint states that the Head movement may not skip intermediate heads.

Note 5. Soltan (2014, 2017) demonstrates that Cairene Egyptian Arabic, among others like Moroccan Arabic and Levantine Arabic, uses two patterns of sentential negation: (i) the discontinuous *ma...š* negation pattern where the predicate appears sandwiched between the two negative elements, forming one morphological unit as in (1a); and (ii) the independent *miš* pattern which is used in other contexts, mainly in nonverbal predicates without forming a unit with the predicate as in (1a) and (1b) from Cairene Egyptian Arabic.

- |                                                                              |                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) a) ma-ruḥ-t-i-š<br>Neg-go.PFV-1SG-E(penthic V(owel)-Neg<br>'I didn't go.' | b) ?anaa miš taṣbaan<br>I Neg tired<br>'I am not tired.' |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|

No space in the paper is given for discussion of the discontinuous negation *ma...š* pattern as both standard and dialectal varieties of Arabic, namely SA as well as SNRDA, do not utilize this pattern.

Note 6. There are certain properties on the imperfective Verb or the Tense, away from the intervention effect of the Neg, which might be responsible for such preclusion. However, this is not the concern of my current paper.

Note 7. Chomsky (2001) claims that head movement, apart from Baker's (1988) cases of incorporation, is phonological or morphological operation, i.e., it does not take place in the narrow syntax. Contra Chomsky's PF-based approach to head movement, see Donati (2006).

Note 8. For discussion on the status of preverbal nominals in Arabic grammars/syntax, see the works Eid (1975), Hassan (1975), Al-Kawari (2008), among others.

Note 9. For consistency purpose, the data provided from the dialectal and standard versions of Arabic throughout the paper are restricted to the SVO order where the nominal is preverbal.

Note 10. Similar pieces of evidence come from Sana'ani Arabic, which allows the pronominal subject to precede or follow the sentential negation. For the details on the argument, see Benmamoun and Al Asbahi (2014).

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