A note on phrasal movement in Modern South Arabian and its consequences

Shlonsky, Ur

How to cite

SHLONSKY, Ur. A note on phrasal movement in Modern South Arabian and its consequences. In: Brill's annual of Afroasiatic languages and linguistics, 2017, vol. 9, p. 247–267. doi: 10.1163/18776930-00901005

This publication URL: https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:93967

Publication DOI: 10.1163/18776930-00901005

BRILL

BRILL'S JOURNAL OF AFROASIATIC LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS 9 (2017) 247–264

BAALL

brill.com/aall

A note on phrasal movement in Modern South Arabian and its consequences*

Ur Shlonsky
University of Geneva
Ur.Shlonsky@unige.ch

Abstract

I argue that the predominance of clause-final negation and the ban on object cliticization on perfective verb stems with a subject agreement suffix in the Modern South Arabian languages (MSA) Mehri and Jibbali are both consequences of the fact that in these languages, a verbal projection rather than a verbal head is probed by T(ense) or by a higher functional head. As a result, this verbal projection moves to a position above T and *a fortiori* above negation. A corollary of verb-projection phrasal movement above T is that the affixal phi features of subject agreement are stranded, bereft of a suitable host. In face of this conundrum, MSA reanalyzes subject agreement as a weak pronoun that undergoes suffixation under adjacency to a verbal host, like a pronominal object suffix. This reanalysis has a price, however, in that only a single suffix is possible on a single host, since only one suffix is adjacent to it. Hence, object pronouns cannot occur as clitics on a verb with a weak pronominal subject suffix.

* This note is based on the grammatical descriptions of Mehri and Jibbali as well as on some very exploratory fieldwork. To further sustain the hypotheses developed in the following pages, the database needs to be substantially enriched.

I am very grateful to colleagues and friends in the OmanSam research group and especially to Sabrina Bendjaballah, Julien Dufour and Phillippe Ségéral for many helpful discussions.

Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the *Seconde journée d'études sur les langues sudarabiques modernes*, University of Paris 7, September 2014 and at *The form of structure, the structure of form* colloquium, University of Paris 7, January 2015. A careful and critical reading by a BJALL reviewer has helped improve this paper, I hope.

Research leading up to this study was partially funded by ANR research fund ANR-13-BSH2-0001.

 | DOI: 10.1163/18776930-00901005

Keywords

Mehri – Jibbali – phrasal movement – clause-final negation – agreement suffixes

1 Introduction

The subject matter of this contribution is one syntactic and one morphosyntactic property of the Modern South Arabian languages (MSA) Mehri and Jibbali. These are the post-VP, essentially clause-final position of clausal negation and the ban on pronominal object suffixation on perfective verb stems with a subject agreement suffix. These two superficially unrelated properties are argued to follow from a more abstract characteristic of MSA, encapsulated in (1).

(1) In MSA, a verbal projection rather than a verbal head, is probed by T(ense) or by a higher functional head. As a consequence, this verbal projection moves to a position above T.

Negation is linearized on the right of VP because VP is moved above negation.

A corollary of verb-projection phrasal movement above T is that the verbal head cannot move to T and consequently, the affixal phi features of subject agreement are stranded, bereft of a suitable host. In face of this conundrum, MSA reanalyzes subject agreement as a weak pronoun which undergoes suffixation under adjacency to a verbal host, like a pronominal object suffix.

This reanalysis has a price, however, in that only a single suffix is possible on a single host, since only one suffix is adjacent to it. Hence, object pronouns cannot occur as suffixes on a verb with a weak pronominal subject suffix.

In Arabic, differently from MSA, verbs *do* undergo head movement to T. In Arabic, negation is clause-initial or clause-medial and not clause-final and the combination of subject and object suffixes is well-formed.

2 Subject-verb agreement in MSA

Object pronouns in Mehri and in Jibbali are either suffixed onto the verbal stem, e.g., *-s* in (2a), or onto a dummy host, consisting of the consonant *t* and a vowel, *ī* in (3b).

(2) a. *wəzəm -s a-ktōb.*
give.perf.3ms 3fs det-book
'He gave her the book.' Bendjaballah & Ségéral (2014), based on Rubin (2010:37–41), citing Stroomer (1999:18.6).

b. **wəzəm tī -s a-ktōb.*
give.perf.3ms tī-3fs det-book
'He gave her the book.'

(3) a. **wəzəm -k -s a-ktōb.*
give.perf-1s/2ms 3fs det-book
'I/you (m) gave her the book.'

b. *wəzəm -k tī-s a-ktōb.*
give.perf-1s/2ms tī-3fs det-book
'I/you (m) gave her the book.'

Direct suffixation as in (2a) and indirect suffixation as in (3b)—to borrow Watson's (2012) terminology—are in strict complementary distribution in Omani Mehri (from which these examples are taken), and in Jibbali, Rubin (2010, 2014). Hence, neither (2b) nor (3a) are grammatical. Their distribution seems to be more flexible in other Mehri varieties, (Watson 2012), and requires further elucidation, as does the variation in the distribution of suffixes on the future participle.

Bendjaballah & Ségéral (2014) argue that the generalization over the distribution of direct suffixation of object pronouns in Omani Mehri (which they call *cliticization*) is (4) and propose to derive it from (5), which they conceive of as a templatic constraint.

(4) Cliticization applies whenever the verbal stem lacks a subject agreement suffix.

(5) There is a single (post-stem) attachment site for suffixes in MSA.

Thus, when this unique templatic site is occupied by a subject agreement morpheme, *-k* in (3a), the object suffix is bumped and ends up hosted by the dummy morpheme *tV*. Since no subject agreement suffix appears in (2a)—3ms lacks an exponent in the Mehri/Jibbali perfect paradigm—direct suffixation applies.

In the following paragraphs, I try to show that (5) gains in descriptive adequacy when construed not as a language-specific condition on templatic form but as a particular manifestation of a general requirement for adjacency between host and suffix, combined with a more explicit syntactic model of clitic suffixation in Semitic.

I first show that (5) is both too weak—its effects are clearly discerned in Arabic—and too strong—it impacts multiple suffixation of *objects* in Arabic, though not the combination of subject and object suffixes.

The constraint on multiple suffixation, (5), is arguably what rules out double object cliticization (in double object constructions) in Jibbali (Rubin 2014) and Mehri, but is not confined to MSA. It is operative in many varieties of Arabic (and manifests a clear tendency in Semitic, (Retsö 1987).) Lebanese Arabic (6), for example, illustrates the appearance of the 'support' particle *iyyā* whenever both the direct and indirect object pronouns compete for suffixation on the verbal stem. (6a) illustrates the suffixation of the direct object pronoun and (6b) exemplifies an indirect object suffix. When both complements of 'show' are pronominal, however, the indirect object is suffixed onto the verbal stem and the direct object to *iyyā*, (6d). Double suffixation, in any order, is ruled out, as in (6c) and (6c')).

(6) a. *farʒ-ī -ha ʔil-i!* Lebanese Arabic
show+JUSS-2S 3FS to-me
'Show it.f to me!'

b. *farʒ-ī -ni ṣ ṣūra!*
show.JUSS-2S 1S the photo.F
'Show me the photo!'

c. **farʒ-ī -ni -ha!*
show.JUSS-2S 1S 3FS
'Show me it!'

c'. **farʒ-ī -ha -ni!*
show.JUSS-2S 3FS 1S
lit. 'Show it me!'

d. *farʒ-ī -ni yyē -ha!*
show.JUSS-2S 1S *iyyā* 3FS
'Show me it!'

In Arabic, though, there is no impediment to suffixing an object pronoun onto a verb with a *subject* agreement suffix. Compare the ungrammatical Mehri (3a) and the Lebanese Arabic (6b). In the Arabic example, direct suffixation applies, despite the occurrence of the subject agreement suffix, *-ī*. In Mehri, the support particle *tī* is required in such circumstances; compare (3a) and (3b).

In other words, (5) is valid for Arabic, but not (4). The paradigm in (6) finds a natural expression if it falls under the purview of a weaker alternative to (4), ruling out suffixation onto a stem with an *object* suffix. But rather than postulating two different conditions on suffixation, one for MSA and one for Lebanese Arabic, I suggest that (5) should be supplemented by (7).

(7) Subject agreement in Jibbali/Mehri, but not in Arabic, is "like" an object clitic.

Two questions arise at this point:

(8) a. What does it mean to be *like an object suffix*?
b. Why does MSA subject agreement have this property?

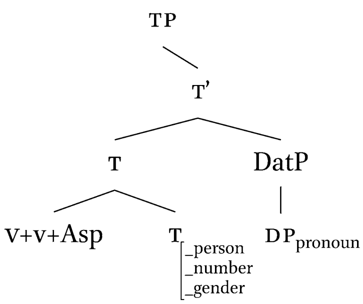
To answer these questions, let me first clarify my view of object suffixation. I assume that in Arabic/MSA, and perhaps elsewhere in Semitic, (weak) object pronouns are moved from their base position to become the specifiers of functional heads which, adapting the common view that accusative and dative case are not assigned by the verb itself but by functional heads, we might term ACC(usative) and DAT(ive). The pronouns are Case-licensed in this position and are subsequently suffixed onto a higher adjacent host under adjacency: No lexical material can intervene between the host and the weak pronoun.

Consider the derivation of the relevant part of Lebanese Arabic example (6b) *farʒ-ī-ni* (*ṣ-ṣūra*) '(you) show me (the picture)!', following fairly standard guidelines and assumptions (that I take the reader to be familiar with). (9) is a breakdown of the (relevant) derivational steps and (10) visually diagrams the representation at the output of (9f).

(9) a. The tri-consonantal root *frʒ* is merged with V and becomes a verb.
b. V raises to v and the external argument (the subject) is merged as its specifier.
c. V+v raises to Asp(ect), where it is associated with one of several aspectually-distinct templates.
d. DAT is merged and the pronominal object moves to its specifier. At this point, the object nominal's phi features are inactivated so that it fails to block probe for the subject by T (as in (g) below).

e. T is merged. T contains feature slots for subject agreement (person, number and gender).
f. T attracts Asp+v+V, which moves and adjoins to it.
g. T initiates a search procedure for phi features and those of the subject are copied and fill the feature slots on T.[1]
h. The subject nominal (here a null subject) can be either moved to Spec/T or not (whence the variation between SV and VS orders in the language).

(10)

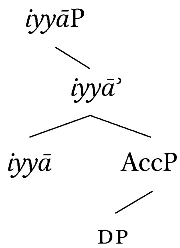


The values of the features of subject agreement fill slots on T and are realized as suffixes on the verbo-aspectual stem [V+v+Asp] incorporated to T. Object suffixes originate as the thematic objects themselves and are suffixed to [[V+v+Asp]+T]. In more familiar terminology, subject agreement is expressed by affixes whereas object pronouns are (perhaps phonological) clitics (viz. Nevins (2011 § 4.4) and references cited).

This way of looking at object suffixation provides the basis for understanding (5) and its manifestation in the illformedness of (6c, c'). In (10), $\text{DP}_{\text{pronoun}}$ meets the structural description for suffixation, as it is adjacent to the verbal complex in T. A second object in the specifier of a lower functional projection (e.g., AccP), however, would fail to meet this structural description, since it is not adjacent to the verbal complex. In (6d), a 'support', particle hosts the second object. I assume that this particle is the head of a phrase headed by *iyyā*, which selects AccP. The (second) object is in the specifier of this AccP and is suffixed onto the particle.

1 This implementation of agreement is based on Roberts (2010). (9f) and (9g) possibly apply in reverse order.

(11)



In Lebanese Arabic (6d), the indirect object (the beneficiary) is suffixed onto the verb and the direct object (the patient) onto *iyyā*. In Cairene Arabic, illustrated in (12), it is the direct object that appears suffixed to the verbal complex. The indirect object is suffixed to the (dative) preposition *l*, which selects a DativeP, rather than an AccP.[2] Although the order of the two objects is reversed in the two Arabic vernaculars, multiple suffixation to the verb is eschewed in both varieties.

(12) *wāri* *hu* *l-i!*
show+JUSS-2S 3ms to-1S
'Show it to me!'

Having rendered more explicit the differences between subject agreement and pronominal object suffixation, I turn to (8b) and ask why MSA subject agreement is not implemented by copying the subject's phi-features onto slots on T but rather as a weak pronoun, a (perhaps phonological) clitic. In other words, why does MSA subject agreement receive the treatment of an Arabic object rather than of a subject agreement affix?

My basic claim is that MSA adopts this implementation of subject agreement because the Asp+v+V complex in these languages does not raise to T.

(13) In Jibbali/Mehri, as opposed to Arabic, Asp does not raise to T (head movement). Rather, AspP raises to a specifier position above T (phrasal movement).

2 Classical Arabic employs both options, as Gensler (2003:203) notes,

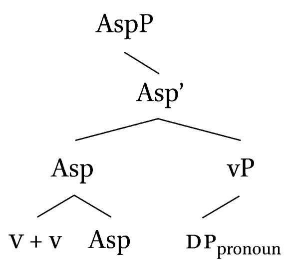
"Pronominal objects in Classical Arabic may also be expressed as independent words, in two ways: either by adding a pronominal suffix to the independent object base *iyyā*-, normally indicating a notional DO (thus *iyyā-ka* 'Obj-you'), or else, for IO, by adding a suffix to the preposition base *la*- 'to' (*la-ka* 'to you')."

There is substantial variation in the expression of double objects in the Arabic vernaculars, the subject of Hallman's (2017) comparative study.

AspP phrasal movement above T cannot yield adjunction or incorporation of the verbal complex to T, since a phrase cannot adjoin to a head. Hence, step (9f) in the derivation schematized above for Lebanese Arabic (6b) is not implemented in MSA. So how do subject agreement features come to be suffixed to the verbal stem in MSA?

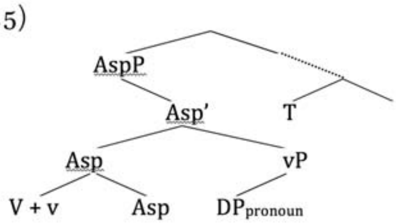
I propose that MSA re-analyzes subject agreement as a clitic, the suffixation of which parallels that of object clitics. Concretely, I assume that the environment for subject pronoun suffixation is as in (14), in which the pronominal subject DP is linearly adjacent to the verbal complex in Asp.

(14)



Recall that Asp is where the perfective template is merged. I assume that V+V (head)-moves and adjoins to Asp. Merge of T is followed by phrasal movement of AspP above T, yielding (15), in which AspP occupies a specifier position of a phrase above T (or, perhaps, Spec/T itself).[3]

(15)



By treating subject agreement *not* as features on T, as in Arabic, but as a pronominal DP in Spec/v, the MSA languages enable the suffixation of subject agreement to the verbo-aspectual complex by a different route. In other words,

3 I assume that the subject pronoun either is or is part of the actual thematic subject (as in the "big DP" hypothesis, originally proposed for object clitics in Romance).

the innovation of the MSA languages lies in extending the morphosyntax of object clitics to subject agreement suffixes.

Although this extension enables subject agreement suffixation, it comes under the purview of the ban on multiple suffixation, (5). Object suffixation is possible in (2a) because there is no lexical material in Spec/v. There is surely a trace (or a copy) of the thematic subject in Spec/v but this trace does not count as 'lexical' and is thus invisible to suffixation of a more distant element. In (3b), however, the 1s/2ms weak subject pronoun *k* is suffixed onto the verbal complex and the object clitic is consequently barred from doing so. In this respect, the combination of subject and object suffixes in MSA is subject to exactly the same constraint as double object suffixation in Arabic, illustrated in (6c, c') and discussed above. Like Arabic, MSA merges a 'dummy' preposition-like particle, in the form of *t*V. The object pronoun is suffixed onto it, in a configuration resembling (11), in which *t*V replaces *iyyā*.

The analysis presented in this section hinges on (13). The question, of course, is whether there is independent evidence for phrasal movement of AspP/vP, a matter I turn to in the following section.

3 Negation in MSA

Both Jibbali and Mehri manifest a postverbal negative word or particle *lā* (M), *lɔ* (J). It occurs to the right of the predicate, but takes scope over the whole sentence.

(16) a. *a ġayg məsōfər lā.* Mehri
the man travel.PARTICIPLE NEG
'The man will not travel/go.'

b. *ɔl ayəġad lɔ.* Jibbali
NEG go.IMPERF NEG
'He will not go.'

The Jibbali example in (16b) also exhibits the preverbal negative particle *ɔl*. This particle is obligatory but, as Rubin (2014) notes, rapid speech can lead to its phonetic reduction or non-pronunciation.[4] In Mehri, a preverbal parti-

4 Field notes taken by Julien Dufour (June 2014) suggest that phonological factors also impact the appearance of Jibbali preverbal *ɔl*.

cle *əl* is optional in some varieties—its occurrence is governed by a myriad conditioning factors, lexical, phonological, morphosyntactic as well as pragmatic (Watson (2012) and Watson & Rowlett (2012).) Rubin (2011:76) writes that "in OM [Omani Mehri], a phrase [...] is normally negated with the two elements *əl…lā*, though sometimes the preceding *əl* can be omitted. In ŠM [Šarqiyah (al-Ḥawf, southeast Yemen)], negation is marked only with the particle *lā*, which comes at the end of the clause." Watson (2012, 3) confirms and extends this observation, writing that "Mehreyyet [Omani Mehri] exhibits significantly more bipartite negation than Mahriyōt [al-Ḥawf], and Mahriyōt exhibits bipartite negation in contexts for which only monopartite post-negation is possible in western Yemeni Mehri."

3.1 *The postverbal negative particle*

Many authors have noted the resemblance of MSA bi-partite negation to French *ne … pas* but the resemblance encounters difficulties when the position of these particles, particularly the postverbal one, is considered in relation to elements other than the verb itself. I will attempt to show that these problems can be overcome: The difference between MSA and French negation reduces to the fact that in MSA a verbal projection and not the verb itself raises over negation.

Perhaps the most striking syntactic feature of Jibbali/Mehri negative clauses is that the postverbal particle follows not only the verb, but the entire VP, as illustrated in (17). Post-VP negation is fairly rare cross-linguistically and, within the Semitic family, confined to MSA.[5]

(17) a. *a ġayg məsōfər məskūt lā.* Mehri
the man travel.PART Muscat NEG
'The man will not travel/go to Muscat.'

b. *he dəskunk bə-ṣəlɔlət lɔ.* Jibbali
I live in-Salalah NEG
'I don't live in Salalah.'

5 For example, Dryer (2009) documents post-VP negation in some Central African languages which span several families. He considers it to be an areal as opposed to a typological feature. Reesink (2002) describes clause-final negation in Austronesian and Papuan languages and argues that it was borrowed from the latter group by the former through contact. It is clear that the existence of post-VP negation in MSA cannot be subsumed under these explanations.

Nkemnji's (1995) analysis of post-VP negation in Nweh (Grassfields Bantu, Niger- Congo) resembles mine in its use of VP pied piping. See also Teixeira de Sousa (2015) on Brazilian Portuguese.

A standard assumption in contemporary syntactic theory is that negation is syntactically expressed by a functional projection, Neg(ation)P, configured above vP and below T(ense)P.

(18) $\ldots[_{\text{TP}}\ \text{T}\ [_{\text{NegP}}\ \text{Neg}\ [_{\text{vP}}\ \text{v}\ldots]]]$

Emonds (1978) and Pollock (1989) argue that in tensed clauses in French, V (actually v) moves to (the left of) T over the non-clitic negative particle *pas* which sits in NegP. Under one implementation, the bound tense and agreement morphemes are generated in T and v incorporates to T, resulting in the suffixation of subject agreement and tense to the verbal stem, (Belletti 1990).

(19) $\ldots[_{\text{TP}}\ \text{T}\ [_{\text{NegP}}\ \text{Neg}\ [_{\text{vP}}\ \text{v}\ldots]]]$

Suppose that the postverbal negative particles in Jibbali/Mehri occupy the same position as *pas*, merged, that is, higher than AspP and lower than TP. If so, the Belletti/Emonds/Pollock analysis of French yields the wrong word order for MSA. The result of v+Asp movement to T would have the postverbal negative particle positioned between the verb and its complement and not, as illustrated in (17), to the right of the complement.

A conceivable path out of this difficulty would consist of claiming that NegP is not configured to the left of vP, as in (18), but to its right. A structure of this sort is found extensively in head-final languages, such as Japanese, illustrated in (20). Details aside, Japanese conforms to a head-final structure, as in (21), which, for the sake of the argument, we can take to be the mirror image of the head-initial one in (18).

(20) *John-ga ringo-o tabe -nakat -ta.*
John-NOM apple-ACC eat -NEG -PAST
'John did not eat the apple.'

(21) $\ldots[_{\text{TP}}\ [_{\text{NegP}}\ [_{\text{vP}}\ \ldots\text{v}]\ \text{Neg}]\ \text{T}]]]$

The Modern South Arabian languages, however, are head-initial and not head-final, so the problem of a VP-final negative particle remains.

The alternative I suggest we pursue, is to consider *lā* (M) and *lɔ* (J) as hierarchically configured in exactly the same position as that of French *pas*, namely in NegP above vP and below T. The difference between French and MSA does not lie in the position of negation but in the position of the vP.

The hypothesis in (13) actually provides a straightforward explanation of post-VP negation: (13) yields (15), in which the vP, contained in AspP, is raised above T. The negative particle correctly ends up on the right of VP, as in (22).

(22) … T [$_{\text{NegP}}$ Neg $\boxed{[_{\text{AspP}}\ \text{v + V.}]\ldots]}$]

Watson (2012, 318: her transcription and translation, my gloss), notes the ambiguity of (23).

(23) *ktab-k* *ḏa* *hōh* *sīrīta* *rabkūt* *lā.*
write.PERF-1S that I go.PART Rabkuut NEG
(i) 'I wrote that I wasn't going to Rabkuut.'
(ii) 'I didn't write that I was going to Rabkuut.'

When NegP appears in the embedded clause, to the right of the embedded VP, the derivation (in which, to simplify the schema, AspP is suppressed and vP is directly targeted by phrasal movement), is as in (24a) and when it occurs in the matrix, to the right of the matrix VP, the derivation is as in (24b). (23) is a typical case of structural ambiguity hinging on low or high attachment of a clause-final element (cf. the textbook example 'I saw the boy with the telescope.') In MSA, clause-finality is derivative: It is manifested when a constituent containing VP is raised above NegP.

(24) a. …[$_{\text{TP}}$ T $\boxed{[_{\text{vP}}\ \text{v}\ [_{\text{CP}}\ [_{\text{TP}}\ \text{T}\ [_{\text{NegP}}\ \text{Neg}\ \boxed{[_{\text{vP}}\ \text{V}\ldots]}]]]]}$]

b. …[$_{\text{TP}}$ T [$_{\text{NegP}}$ Neg $\boxed{[_{\text{vP}}\ \text{v}\ [_{\text{CP}}\ [_{\text{TP}}\ \text{T}\ \boxed{[_{\text{vP}}\ \text{V}\ldots]}]]]]}$]

Watson also notes that (23) is disambiguated when the preverbal negative particle *əl* (transcribed as *al* in her work) appears. This is shown in (25) with (*a*)*l* in boldface.

(25) a. ***al*** *ktab-k* *ḏa* *hōh* *sīrīta* *rabkūt* *lā.*
NEG write.PERF-1S that I go.PART Rabkuut NEG
'I didn't write that I was going to Rabkuut.'

b. *ktab-k* *ḏa* ***l*** *hōh* *sīrīta* *rabkūt* *lā.*
write.PERF-1S that NEG I go.PART Rabkuut NEG
'I wrote that I wasn't going to Rabkuut.'

The literature on Jibbali and Mehri cites examples in which postverbal negation does intervene between a verb and a following constituent. Julien Dufour kindly tested these observations with speakers of Jibbali and elicited the judgements reported below. In (26), speakers only accept clause final negation.

(26) a. *he* *dəskunk* *bə-ṣəlɔlət* *lɔ.*
I live in-Salalat NEG
'I don't live in Salalah.'

b. **he* *dəskunk* *lɔ* *bə-ṣəlɔlət.*
I live NEG in-Salalat

Although reluctant to accept clause-medial negation, speakers seem to accept sentences with lexical material following negation, on the condition that this material is separated from the rest of the clause by an intonational break and the post-negation material is interpreted as contrastive. As the translation of (27b) indicates, the locative PP 'in Salalah' is dislocated.

(27) a. *śin-k* *aġa-k* *bə-ṣəlɔlət* *lɔ́.*
see.PAST-1S brother-2MS in-Salalat NEG
'I didn't see your brother in Salalah.'

b. *śin-k* *aġa-k* *lɔ,* *bə-ṣəlɔlət.*
see.PAST-1S brother-2MS NEG in-Salalat
'In Salalah, I didn't see your brother.'

(27b) and, similarly (28b) are not incompatible with the analysis of AspP movement over NegP and I can suggest two options for analyzing them, both familiar from the literature on right dislocation.

(28) a. *ɔl niśzən ḳəhwét lɔ́*
NEG drink.PAST-1pl coffee NEG
'We didn't drink coffee.'

b. *ɔl níśzən lɔ́, ḳəhwét*
NEG drink.PAST-1pl NEG coffee
'Coffee, we didn't drink.'

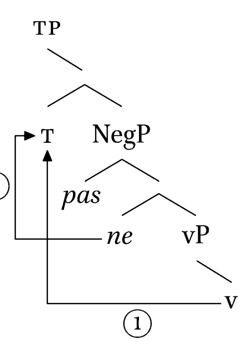
Under the first option, the 'dislocated' constituent is moved to a position above AspP and below NegP. AspP movement above NegP then strands this constituent, which ends up on the right edge of the clause. Concretely, one can imagine that the positions occupied by the PP in (27b) and the DP in (28b) are low topic and focus positions, of the sort that Belletti (2004) has proposed for Italian.

Under the second option, these constituents raise to (topic and focus positions in) the clausal left periphery and the remnant clause, up to and including the high negative head, is moved above them. Such an analysis has been proposed for right dislocation in Italian by e.g. Samek Lodovici (2006).

3.1 *The preverbal negative particle is a head, the postverbal one is a phrase*

If we pursue the analogy with French negation, which I believe is helpful, we need to incorporate into the discussion the preverbal negative particle. I take it to be syntactically active in both Mehri and Jibbali, even if phonologically null in some contexts, again on analogy with French. A common view holds that the French verb adjoins to T^0 crossing over NegP, following which, Neg^0 is moved and cliticized to the verbal complex in T. The specifier of NegP, lexicalized by *pas* does not move and ends up to the right of the verb (see Rowlett (1998) for an evaluation of the literature on this point and for discussion of alternatives).

(29)



In MSA, AspP raises above NegP, crossing over Spec/NegP, which then ends up to the right of the VP. The head of NegP, *əl* in Mehri, *ɔl* in JIbbali, is then moved above TP (perhaps stepwise through T) to a yet higher head. Thus, the preverbal negative particle in MSA is the moved head of NegP, while the specifier of NegP is the unmoved post-VP element.[6]

A remarkable difference between French (and Romance, in general), and MSA is that in the latter, the preverbal negative particle raises to a head position above T and thus, *a fortiori*, above the surface position of the clausal subject. Not only does it precede the subject in e.g., the embedded clause in (25b), but it licenses negative polarity items in subject position.[7]

Consider the following data from Rubin (2014:sec. 3.5) and from Julien Dufour's field notes. Indefinite expressions such as 'someone' and 'something', illustrated in (30), are interpreted as 'no one' and 'nothing' in (31), when they occur in the scope of negation (as well as in questions, see the examples in Rubin 2014 sect. 3.5.1, 3.5.2.) The use of indefinite expressions as polarity items under negation is widely attested cross-linguistically (whereas in English, for example, they are different lexical items, i.e., 'someone', 'something' and 'anyone', 'anything'.)

(30) a. *he ɬin-k de.*
I see.PERF-1S someone
'I saw someone.'

b. *he kis-k ɬe.*
I find.PERF-1S something
'I found something.'

(31) a. *ɔl ɬin-k de lɔ.*
NEG see.PERF-1S someone NEG
'I didn't see anyone.'

b. *ɔ tē-k ɬe lɔ.*
NEG eat.PERF-1S something NEG
'I didn't eat anything'

6 I am grateful to a BJALL reviewer for detailed comments on my treatment of negation in an earlier version of this paper. While adopting his or her suggestion to consider the preverbal negative particle as the negative operator, I adopt a 'single NegP' approach, rather than Ouhalla's (2002) 'two NegP' approaches, which the reviewer favors.

7 On pre-subject NegP in Arabic, see Soltan (2007) and Benmamoun et al. (2013).

2016215 [AALL-2017-9.1-2] 005-Shlonsky-proof-02 [version 20161109 date 20170524 16:49] page 262

Strikingly, the shift of polarity also characterizes subject indefinites.

(32) a. *ɔl ɬe ð- štēk lɔ.*
NEG something that fell NEG
'Nothing fell.'

b. *ɔl de zəḥam lɔ.*
NEG someone came NEG
'Nobody came.'

I conclude that bi-partite MSA negation is like French negation, the only difference between the two being the (higher) position targeted by the moved Neg^0. The fact that the negative particle occupying Spec/Neg is pronounced after the VP and not, as in French, only after the verb, is a result of phrasal movement of a category containing the VP (hence the verb and its complements), above NegP.

4 Conclusion

Direct evidence for phrasal VP movement is not easy to come by. Scrambling operations can empty a phrase of all but its head so that mere word order cannot distinguish head movement from remnant phrasal movement in which the phrase only contains its head.

Word order considerations do, however, militate in favor of phrasal movement in the Modern South Arabian languages, Jibbali and Mehri. These are head-initial languages with no scrambling. They manifest clause-final or VP-final negation which, I argue, is most straightforwardly accounted for in terms of AspP movement above T. The obligatoriness of phrasal movement and absence of verb raising set it apart from neighboring Arabic. AspP fronting has the consequence of blocking the attachment of subject agreement suffixes to the verbal stem in T. These languages resort to the strategy of merging these suffixes as weak pronouns which raise to the specifier of a functional projection below T and end up as clitic suffixes on the verbal complex. As such, they block object cliticization to the same host and give rise to the complex distribution of direct and indirect object suffixation on the MSA perfect stem.

References

Belletti, Adriana. 1990. *Generalized verb movement: Aspects of verb syntax*. Torino: Rosenberg et Sellier.

Belletti, Adriana. 2004. Aspects of the low IP area. In Luigi Rizzi (ed.), *The structure of CP and IP. The cartography of syntactic structures, volume 2*, 16–51. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bendjaballah, Sabrina & Philippe Ségéral. 2014. Le pronom objet en mehri d'Oman. *12èmes Rencontres du réseau français de phonologie*, Univ. Lille 3, 30/06–2/07/2014.

Benmamoun, Elabbas, Mahmoud Abunasser, Rania Al-Sabbagh, Abdelaadim Bidaoui & Dana Shalash. 2013. The Location of Sentential Negation in Arabic Varieties. *Brill's Annual of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics* 5(1). 83–116.

Dryer, Matthew S. 2009. Verb-object-negative order in central Africa. In Norbert Cyffer, Erwin Ebermann & Georg Ziegelmeyer (eds.), *Negation patterns in West African languages and beyond*, 307–364. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Emonds, Joseph. 1978. The verbal complex V'-V in French. *Linguistic Inquiry* 9(2). 151–175.

Gensler, Orin. 2003. Object ordering in verbs marking two pronominal objects: Non-explanation and explanation. *Linguistic Typology* 7(2). 187–231.

Hallman, Peter. 2017. Double Object Constructions in Syrian Arabic. Ms.

Nevins, Andrew. 2011. Multiple agree with clitics: Person complementarity vs. omnivorous number. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 29(4). 939–971.

Nkemnji, Michael Akamin. 1995. Heavy pied-piping in Nweh. UCLA PhD dissertation.

Ouhalla, Jamal. 2002. The structure and logical form of negative sentences in Arabic. In Jamal Ouhalla & Ur Shlonsky (eds.), *Themes in Arabic and Hebrew Syntax*, 299–320. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Pollock, Jean-Yves. 1989. Verb movement, universal grammar, and the structure of IP. *Linguistic Inquiry* 20(3). 365–424.

Reesink, Ger P. 2002. Clause-final negation: Structure and interpretation. *Functions of language* 9(2). 239–268.

Retsö, Jan. 1987. Copula and double pronominal objects in some Semitic languages. *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 137(2). 219–245.

Roberts, Ian G. 2010. *Agreement and head movement: clitics, incorporation, and defective goals*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Rowlett, Paul. 1998. *Sentential negation in French*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rubin, Aaron D. 2010. *The Mehri language of Oman*. Leiden: Brill.

Rubin, Aaron D. 2011. Mehri dialect studies: Omani and Šarqiiyah Mehri. *Zeitschrift fur arabische Linguistik* 54. 67–83.

Rubin, Aaron D. 2014. *The Jibbali (Shahri) language of Oman: grammar and texts*. Leiden: Brill.

Samek Lodovici, Vieri. 2006. When right dislocation meets the left-periphery. A unified analysis of Italian non-final focus. *Lingua* 116(6). 836–873.

Soltan, Usama. 2007. On formal feature licensing in minimalism: Aspects of Standard Arabic morphosyntax. University of Maryland PhD dissertation.

Stroomer, Harry (ed.). 1999. *Mehri texts from Oman: based on the field materials of T.M. Johnstone*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag.

Teixeira de Sousa, Lilian. 2015. Three types of negation in Brazilian Portuguese. *Lingua* 159. 27–46.

Watson, Janet C.E. 2012. *The structure of Mehri*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Watson, Janet C.E. & Paul Rowlett. 2012. Negation in Mehri, stages of Jespersen's cycle. In Domenyk Eades (ed.), *Grammaticalisation in Semitic*, 205–225. (Journal of Semitic Studies Book Supplement Series, Supplement 29). Oxford: Oxford University Press.