



This is an author manuscript post-peer-reviewing (accepted version) of the original publication. The layout of the published version may differ .

---

## Remarks on the complementizer layer of Standard Arabic

---

Shlonsky, Ur

### How to cite

SHLONSKY, Ur. Remarks on the complementizer layer of Standard Arabic. In: Research in Afroasiatic Grammar. Lecarme, J., Lowenstamm, J. & Shlonsky, U. (Ed.). Amsterdam : Benjamins, 2000. p. 325–343.

This publication URL: <https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:83486>

# Remarks on the Complementizer Layer of Standard Arabic

Ur Šhlonsky

---

## 1. Introduction

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

- (1) a. kataba ʾal-walad-u ʾal-risaalat-a.  
wrote the-boy-NOM the-letter-ACC  
'The boy wrote the letter.'
- b. \* zaʾamtu ʾanna kataba ʾal-walad-u ʾal-risaalat-a.  
(I) claimed that wrote the-boy-NOM the-letter-ACC  
'I claimed that the boy wrote the letter.'
- c. zaʾamtu ʾanna ʾal-risaalat-a kataba-ha ʾal-walad-u.  
(I) claimed that the-letter-ACC wrote-[3FEM.SG] the-boy-NOM  
'I claimed that the letter, the boy wrote.'

The main aim of the present paper is to explain the contrast between (1b) and (1c) by shedding some light on the syntactic properties of *ʾanna*. In the following section, the theoretical apparatus underpinning the discussion is briefly presented. Section 3 discusses two mechanisms by which constituents appear in preverbal position in SA,



The basic components of CP, according to FSLP, are the specifications of Force (interfacing either with a higher proposition or with discourse) and Finiteness (interfacing with IP). While both specifications are normally expressed by a single, syncretic head and thus project only a single maximal projection, CP is obligatorily split when topics, focalized constituents or other material are realized. This split is obligatory, since Force and Fin, the interface nodes, must occur on the higher and lower margins of CP, respectively. The fully articulated structure of Comp, argued for in FSLP, is given in (3). Since FinP has little or no bearing on the themes of this paper, I will disregard its presence in what follows.

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

### 3. Topicalization and Focalization in SA

#### 3.1. Topicalization

SA employs a strategy of left-dislocation which several authors have subsumed under the term Topicalization (see e.g. Ayoub 1981, Bakir 1980, Moore 1988).<sup>1</sup> Confining the discussion throughout to argument Topicalization and for now to root clauses, take note of the following observations. First, a direct object manifests accusative Case when occurring clause-internally, as in (4a), but it bears nominative Case when appearing clause-peripherally, as shown in (4b). Second, a dislocated direct object must be associated with a clitic on the verb. Finally, the dislocated DP cannot be a non-specific indefinite nominal expression, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (4c).

- (4) a. kataba 'al-walad-u 'al-risaalat-a.  
wrote the-boy-NOM the-letter-ACC  
'The boy wrote the letter.'
- b. 'al-risaalat-u kataba-ha 'al-walad-u.  
the-letter-NOM wrote-[3FEM.SG] the-boy-NOM  
'The letter, the boy wrote it.'
- c. \*risaalat-un kataba-ha 'al-walad-u.  
letter-NOM+INDEF wrote-[3FEM.SG] the-boy-NOM  
'A letter, the boy wrote it.'

Following the treatment of Romance Topicalization in FSLP, I take it that the dislocated object in (4b) occupies SpecTop and is associated with a resumptive pronoun.<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> I put aside the question of whether the object is moved to Topic position or merged in that position. See Browning (1996), Cecchetto (1995).

The semantic restriction observed by topics is typical of left-dislocated or topicalized arguments (see, e.g. Cechetto 1995 on Italian CLLD). Nominal topics must have an individual or group interpretation and can therefore only be names, definite descriptions or non downward-entailing quantifiers.

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

- (5) a. hind-un saalim-un taḍribu-hu. (Bakir: 4.39)  
 Hind-NOM Salim-NOM (she) hit-3MASC.SG  
 'As for Hind, she beats Salim.'  
 b. saalim-un hind-un taḍribu-hu.  
 Salim-NOM Hind-NOM (she) hit-3MASC.SG  
 'As for Hind, she beats Salim.'

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

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

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

Gianni la mela l'ha mangiata.  
 Gianni the-apple it-has eaten  
 Lit. 'Gianni, the apple he ate.'

of subjects (definite, indefinite, specific, generic, existential, referential, expletive etc.) occupy distinct positions within the clause. It is also quite clear that the distinction between VP-internal and VP-external subjects is not sufficiently refined to capture the full range of syntactic and interpretative differences among different types of subjects.

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

### 3.2. Focalization

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

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

<sup>4</sup> See Shlonsky (to appear) for discussion of different subject positions in Hebrew.

<sup>5</sup> More precisely, a resumptive clitic is optional in Focalization, so that e.g., (6a) can also be rendered as (i).

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

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

- (ii) a. \*Zayd-an raʔayta ʔal-rajul-a llaḏii ɖaraba-(hu). Ayoub: ch. 2, 34a  
Zayd-ACC (you) saw the-man-ACC that hit-{3MSI}  
'ZAYD, you saw the man who hit (him).'
- b. Zayd-un raʔayta ʔal-rajul-a llaḏii ɖaraba-hu. Ayoub: ch. 2, 20a  
Zayd-NOM (you) saw the-man-ACC that hit-{3MSI}  
'Zayd, you saw the man who hit him.'

These facts suggest that the trace of focalization is formed through movement and is then optionally spelled-out as a resumptive pronoun (see Georgopoulos 1991, Tellier 1991).

A further difference between the two strategies is that the focalized DP must be immediately followed by the verb. In other words, if both a topic and a focus are realized, the order of constituents is Topic > Focus > verb. The relevant examples appear in (7).

- (7) a. faatimat-u l-wardat-a 'aṭaa-ha saalim-un. (Bakir: 3.18a)  
 Fatima-NOM the-flower-ACC gave-[3FEM.SG] Salim  
 'It is a flower that to Fatima, Salim gave.'  
 b. \*ʔal-wardat-a faatimat-u 'aṭaa-ha saalim-un. (Bakir: 3.18b)  
 the-flower-ACC Fatima-NOM gave-[3FEM.SG] Salim  
 'It is a flower that to Fatima, Salim gave.'

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

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

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

- (8) a. zayd-un 'ayna qaabal-tu-hu?  
 Zayd-NOM where (I) met-[3MASC]  
 'Zayd, where did I meet him?'  
 b. zayd-un hal qaabal-tu-hu?  
 Zayd-NOM O (I) met-[3MASC]  
 'Zayd, did I meet him?'  
 c. \*'ayna zayd-un qaabal-tu-hu?  
 where Zayd-NOM (I) met-[3MASC]  
 'Zayd, where did I meet him?'

<sup>6</sup> The absence of the order  $Foc > V > Top$  can be attributed either to the absence of a TopP below  $FocP$  in SA or to the impossibility of  $Top^0$  to  $Foc^0$  movement, as argued below in §4 (see also FSLF).

- d. \**hal zayd-un qaabal-tu-hu?*  
 Q Zayd-NOM (I) met-{3MASC}  
 'Zayd, did I meet him?'

Bakir clearly demonstrates that focalization and question-formation are mutually incompatible. Where focalization takes place, question-formation cannot and vice-versa. (9a,b) are examples of *wh*-movement and focalization, (9c,d) illustrate that both operations cannot be applied in the same clause.

- (9) a. *ʔayna qaabala xaalid-un saalim-an?*  
 where met Khalid-NOM Salim-ACC  
 'Where did Khalid meet Salim?'  
 b. *saalim-an qaabala xaalid-un fi-l-ḥadiiqat-i.*  
 Salim-ACC met Khalid-NOM in-the-garden-GEN  
 'It was Salim that Khalid met in the garden.'  
 Lit. 'SALIM, Khalid met in the garden.'  
 c. \**ʔayna saalim-an qaabala xaalid-un?* (Bakir: 3.19)  
 where Salim-ACC met Khalid-NOM  
 'Where was it Salim that Khalid met?'  
 d. \**saalim-an ʔayna qaabala xaalid-un?*  
 Salim-ACC where met Khalid-NOM  
 'Where was it Salim that Khalid met?'

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

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

- (10) ...TopP\* > FocP ....I<sub>IP</sub>

#### 4. The Complementizer *ʔanna*

In this section, I turn to the syntax of the complementizer *ʔanna* and its interaction with the other components of the Arabic Comp system.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Khalaily (1994) argues that *ʔanna* is composed of two incorporated heads *ʔan* and *na*, the former responsible for the assignment of accusative Case, the latter for the expression of assertive force. Very similar conclusions are reached in the present paper.



### 4.1. Properties of *ʔanna*

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

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

- (11)      *zaʔamtu ʔanna ʔal-walad-a kataba ʔal-risaalat-a.*  
 (I) claimed that the-boy-ACC wrote the-letter-ACC  
 'I claimed that the boy wrote the letter.'

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

- (1)      a.      *kataba ʔal-walad-u ʔal-risaalat-a.*  
              wrote the-boy-NOM the-letter-ACC  
              'The boy wrote the letter.'
- b.      *\*zaʔamtu ʔanna kataba ʔal-walad-u ʔal-risaalat-a.*  
              (I) claimed that wrote the-boy-NOM the-letter-ACC  
              'I claimed that the boy wrote the letter.'

Superficially, the accusative case associated with the subject of the embedded clause in (11) resembles *Exceptional Case Marking* (ECM). In ECM constructions, accusative Case is assigned or checked by a higher verb, while in the case at hand, it is associated with a complementizer. An accusative-marked subject of a non-finite complement clause to *believe*-type verbs becomes, by way of ECM, a *derived* direct object: It can be passivized or raised to the higher clause.<sup>8</sup> Yet it is not clear what the derived function is of an accusative-marked DP following *ʔanna*. Additionally, ECM predicates are optional Case-assigners: They can take either a full clausal complement headed by a complementizer or a non-finite clause, the subject of which is accessible to Case-marking by the ECM predicate. *ʔanna*, on the other hand, *requires* an accusative-marked constituent.

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

<sup>8</sup> SA also possesses a variant of classical ECM in which a governing verb of the *think/believe* class takes a complement clause not headed by a complementizer and the embedded subject is assigned accusative Case, it can be passivized, raised, etc.

happens to have same phonetic realization as accusative Case. This feature is *not* a structural Case feature.<sup>9</sup>

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

- (12) a. zaʿamtu ʾanna ʾal-walad-a ʾal-risaalat-u kataba-ha.  
(I) claimed that the-boy-[+F] the-letter-NOM wrote-[3FEM.SG]  
'I claimed that the boy, the letter he wrote it.'  
b. zaʿamtu ʾanna ʾal-risaalat-a ʾal-walad-u kataba-ha.  
(I) claimed that the-letter-[+F] the-boy-NOM wrote-[3FEM.SG]  
'I claimed that the letter, the boy wrote it.'

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

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

<sup>9</sup> Ayoub notes cases where ʾanna is followed by a locative PP, as in (i). She considers these examples marginal: "Ces structures sont, toutefois peu productives; leur acceptabilité decline rapidement dès que le syntagme prépositionnel s'allonge. Elles sont totalement inacceptables avec des circonstanciels phrastiques." (Chapter 1, note 43.)

(i) ...ʾanna ʾinda-ka yanaamu zayd-un.  
...that chez-toi sleeps Zayd-NOM  
'...that Zayd sleeps at your place.'

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

(ii) ʾaḏunnu ʾanna fii baydaada ḥasala ʾal-ittifaaq-u.  
(I) think that in Bagdad intervened the-agreement-NOM  
'I think that in Baghdad, the accord was produced.'

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

(iii) a. ʔI consider under the table to be a good place to hide.  
b. Under the table is considered to be a good place to hide.

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

(iv) ...ʾanna ʾan ta-ṣuumuu xayr-un la-kum.  
...that that (you-PL) fast-SUBJUNCTIVE good-NOM for-[2MPL]  
'...that for you to fast is good.'

examples in (13), a clitic is attached to *ʔanna*. The role of this clitic will be clarified below. For now, it is sufficient to note that in each of the examples below, the clitic is associated with a different type of phonetically-null nominal expression, neither one of which is or can be a topic. In (13a), the clitic marks a referential null subject, in (13b) a non-referential null subject (of an impersonal passive) and in (13c), the nominal associated with or resumed by the clitic is a *wh*-trace.

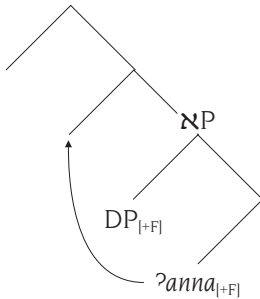
- (13) a.    *zaʕamtu ʔanna-hu kataba ʔal-risaalat-a.*  
          (I) claimed that-3MASC.SG wrote the-letter-ACC  
          ‘I claimed that he wrote the letter.’  
       b.    *zaʕamtu ʔanna-hu niima fi ʔal-sariir-i.*  
          (I) claimed that-3MASC.SG slept in the-bed-GEN  
          ‘I claimed that it was slept in the bed.’  
          (adapted from Mohammad 1990, ex. (33a))  
       c.    *man zaʕamta ʔanna-hu qaraba Zayd-an?*  
          who (you) claimed that-3MASC.SG hit Zayd-ACC  
          ‘Who did you claim that hit Zayd?’

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

#### 4.2. The Derivation of Sentences with *ʔanna*

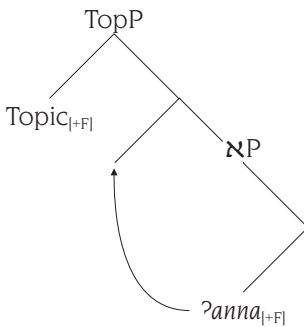
In this subsection, I would like to argue that there is a step in the derivation of sentences with *ʔanna*, in which a DP<sub>[+F]</sub> is in Spec**XP**. Further movement of *ʔanna* to a higher head in the Comp system destroys this configuration and yields the order *ʔanna* > DP. The proposal is diagrammed in (14).

(14)



The next task is to determine where in the schema (3) of the Comp layer  $\mathbf{XP}$  appears and where  $\text{'anna}$  raises to in (14). When  $\text{'anna}$  is satisfied by a topic, that is, by an element in SpecTop, then it is raised and incorporated to  $\text{Top}^0$  and  $[+F]$  is checked in TopP, as diagrammed in (15).

(9)



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

(16) ...TopP >  $\mathbf{XP}$  > TopP\*...

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

Suppose, on the contrary, that  $\mathbf{XP}$  were configured above the entire topic field. The immediate advantage of such a hierarchy is that it would permit us to maintain the notion of an uninterrupted recursive topic field. The highest topic, marked  $[+F]$ , would raise into Spec $\mathbf{X}$  to check  $\text{'anna}$ 's feature. However, we would then be led to the conclusion that the Topic Criterion can be satisfied derivationally, so that a topic could meet the criterion and then raise higher to check some other feature. This

conclusion is at odds with the basic characteristic of the various criteria, which distinguishes them from morpho-syntactic feature checking. The empirical evidence for criteria such as the *wh*-criterion, Neg-Criterion, Focus-Criterion clearly shows that they are stated on representations and *may not* be satisfied derivationally.<sup>10</sup>

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

- (17) a. ʔal-risaalat-a kataba ʔal-walad-u.  
the-letter-ACC wrote the-boy-NOM  
'THE LETTER, the boy wrote.'
- b. \*zaʔamtu ʔanna ʔal-risaalat-a kataba ʔal-walad-u.  
(I) claimed that the-letter-ACC wrote the-boy-NOM  
'I claimed that THE LETTER, the boy wrote.'
- c. zaʔamtu ʔanna ʔal-risaalat-a kataba-ha ʔal-walad-u.  
(I) claimed that the-letter-[+FEM] wrote-[3FEM.SG] the-boy-NOM  
'I claimed that the letter, the boy wrote it.'

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

Let us reconsider the derivation diagrammed in (15). *ʔanna* raises to Top<sup>0</sup> and [+F] is checked. However, in the surface string, *ʔanna* invariably precedes the topic. It must, then, be the case that *ʔanna* must raise from Top<sup>0</sup> to yet another Comp position.

#### 4.3. *ʔanna* and Force

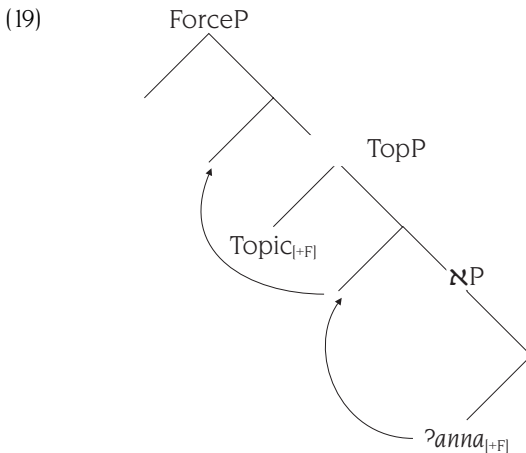
There are two contexts where instead of *ʔanna*, SA uses the formative *ʔinna*. These contexts are root and embeddings under the verb *qaala* 'say'. When appearing in root contexts, *ʔinna* has the force of a strong affirmation or assertion (see Khalilily 1994), translated by the English adverb *verily*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

<sup>10</sup> For a comparison of feature-checking and criteria satisfaction, see Shlonsky (1997), chapter 8.

force is already contained in the meaning of the verb *say*. The contexts in which *inna* is used are illustrated in (18).

- (18) a. *inna* *'al-risaalat-a* *kataba-ha* *'al-walad-u*.  
 that the-letter-[+F] wrote-[3FEM.SG] the-boy-NOM  
 'Verily (Fr. Certes) the boy wrote the letter.'  
 b. *qultu* *inna* *'al-risaalat-a* *kataba-ha* *'al-walad-u*.  
 (I) said that the-letter-[+F] wrote-[3FEM.SG] the-boy-NOM  
 'I said that the boy wrote the letter.'

The difference between *'anna* and *inna* can thus be stated in terms of force: The latter is assertive or affirming, while the former is neutral. This being the case, it follows that these Comp heads are endowed with a force specification or, in configurational terms, that in addition to possessing the formal feature [+F], they contain Force<sup>0</sup> features. Syntactically, this has the consequence of requiring both *'anna* and *inna* to raise to Force<sup>0</sup>. In so doing, these heads attain a position in the structure which is higher than TopP, as diagrammed in (19).



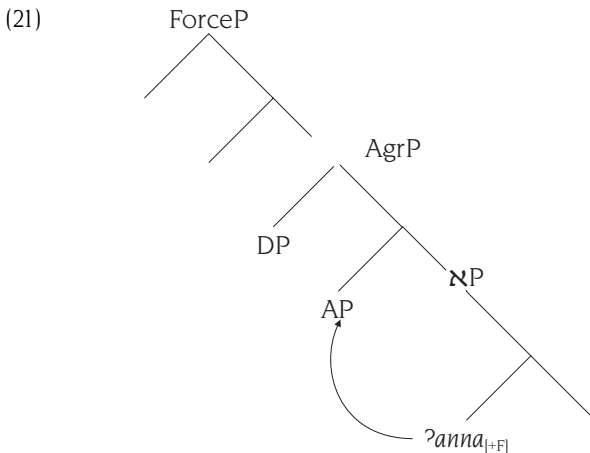
#### 4.4. *'anna* and Agreement

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

I have hitherto labeled this agreement suffix 'clitic' but it should be made clear that it is not a (Romance-like) reduced pronoun but the head of an agreement projection, dominating *'anna*. Indeed, such enclitic particles are found on all major heads in Semitic, verbs, nouns, prepositions and complementizers, as illustrated in (20).

- (20) a. qaabaltu -hu  
meet(PERF)-1S [3MASC.SG]  
'I met him.'
- b. bayt-u -hu  
house-NOM [3MASC.SG]  
'his house'
- c. qabla -hu  
before [3MASC.SG]  
'before him'
- d. ʔanna -hu  
that [3MASC.SG]  
'that him'

In Shlonsky (1994b), (1997) and Roberts and Shlonsky (1996), it is argued that these suffixes head agreement projections to which the substantive head, ʔanna in the case at hand, raises and (left)-adjoins. The specifier of this agreement projection is an A-position and contains an agreeing nominal expression, e.g., *pro*. The Comp layer of the examples in (13) should therefore be taken to contain an AgrP above  $\mathbf{xP}$  into which  $\mathbf{x}^0$  raises. This is diagrammed in (21).



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

- (22) kataba ʔal-risaalat-a.  
wrote the-letter-ACC  
'He wrote the letter.'

However, a null subject cannot be licensed following ʔanna/ʔinna, as noted by Mohammad (1990) and shown in (23).

- (23) \*inna pro kataba 'al-risaalat-a.  
 that wrote the-letter-ACC  
 'Verily, he wrote the letter.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- (26) a. za'amtu 'anna-hu jaa'a 'al-rijaal-u.  
 (I) claimed that-[3MASC.SG] came the-men-NOM  
 'Ahmad claimed that the men came.'  
 Lit. 'Ahmad claimed that it the men came'
- b. za'amtu 'anna-hu niima fi 'al-sariir-i.  
 (I) claimed that-[3MASC.SG] slept in the-bed-GEN  
 'I claimed that it was slept in the bed.'
- c. za'amtu 'anna-hu yabduu 'anna 'al-banaat-a saafarna.  
 (I) claimed that-[3MASC.SG] seems that the-girls traveled  
 'The man claimed that it seems that the girls traveled.'



In these three examples, *pro* is non-referential and is invariably associated with impersonal agreement (identical in form to [3MASC]), see Bloch (1990). This pronoun serves the same role in relation to *ʔanna* as non-referential *there*, *it* or *pro* serve in languages where a functional head has a strong feature which must be checked. In English, this is a feature of  $T^0$  or  $AgrS^0$ . The strength of this feature forces a DP to appear in the Spec of the head bearing it. Some authors, notably Chomsky (1995), chapter 4, takes this to be the content of the *Extended Projection Principle* (EPP). Verb-second languages like German require that the Spec of the highest C projection be filled. In examples such as *Es kam ein Mann in die Stadt*, the non-referential pronoun *es* fulfills this function. Like English  $T^0$  and German  $C^0$ , Arabic  $\mathfrak{X}^0$  has a strong feature which requires overt checking. In the absence of a topic or a referential *pro*, a dummy pronoun can serve this purely formal function.

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

- (13) c.    man zaʔamta        ʔanna-hu        ɖaraba Zayd-an?  
           who (you) claimed that-[3MASC.SG] hit        Zayd-ACC  
           ‘Who did you claim that hit Zayd?’

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

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

- (27)        \*man zaʔamta        ʔanna ɖaraba Zayd-an?  
               who (you) claimed that    hit        Zayd-ACC  
               ‘Who did you claim that hit Zayd?’

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

## 5. Conclusion

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

(28) ForceP > TopicP > AgrXP > XP > TopicP\* > FocusP...

## Acknowledgments

This paper is a revised version of a talk presented at the Third Colloquium on Afroasiatic Linguistics. An earlier draft has appeared in the Geneva Generative Papers 4.1. Thanks to L. Rizzi for discussion of some of the issues.

## References

- Aoun, J. (1981). ECP, move alpha and subadjacency. *Linguistic Inquiry* **12**, 637–645.
- Ayoub, G. (1981). *Structure de la phrase verbale en Arabe standard*. Thèse de doctorat de troisième cycle. Université de Paris VII.
- Bakir, M.J. (1980). *Aspects of clause structure in Arabic*. Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University.
- Benmamoun, E. (1992). *Functional and inflectional morphology: Problems of projection, representation and derivation*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California.
- Bloch, A. (1990). Damir al Ša'n. *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* **21**, 30–39.
- Brody, M. (1990). Some remarks on the focus field in Hungarian. *University College of London Working Papers* **2**, 201–225.
- Browning, M.A. (1996). CP recursion and that-t effects. *Linguistic Inquiry* **27**, 237–255.
- Cecchetto, C. (1995). Clitic left dislocation and scrambling: Towards a unified analysis. *Atti del XX Incontro di Grammatica Generativa*. Padova: Unipress.
- Chomsky, N. (1986). *Knowledge of language: Its nature, origin and use*. New York: Praeger.
- Chomsky, N. (1995). *The minimalist program*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

- Cinque, G. (1990). *Types of A' dependencies*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Culicover, P. (1992). Topicalization, inversion and complementizers in English. *Going romance and beyond*, edited by D. Delfitto et al. University of Utrecht.
- Demirdache, H. (1988). *Nominative NPs in Modern Standard Arabic*. General Paper, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Doron, E. (1996). The predicate in Arabic. *Studies in Afroasiatic Grammar*, edited by J. Lecarme, J. Lowenstamm & U. Shlonsky, 77–87. The Hague: Holland Academic Publishers.
- Doron, E. & C. Heycock. (1996). Filling and licensing multiple specifiers. Oral communication. *Specifiers Conference*. York.
- E. Kiss, K. (1987). *Configurationality in Hungarian*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Fassi-Fehri, A. (1982). *Linguistique arabe: forme et interprétation*. Rabat: Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines.
- Fassi-Fehri, A. (1993). *Issues in the structure of Arabic clauses and words*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Georgopoulos, C. (1991). *Syntactic variables: Resumptive pronouns and A' binding in Palauan*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Horváth, J. (1976). Focus in Hungarian and the X' Notation. *Linguistic Analysis* **2**, 175–197.
- Horváth, J. (1986). *FOCUS in the theory of grammar and the syntax of Hungarian*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Khalaili, S. (1994). On the relevance of the split complementizer hypothesis. *Proceedings of CONSOLE II*.
- Koster, J. (1978). Why subject sentences don't exist. *Recent transformational studies in the European languages*, edited by S. J. Keyser, 53–65. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- McCloskey, J. (1992). *Adjunction, selection and embedded verb second*. Working paper LRC-92-07. Linguistics Research Center, University of California Santa Cruz.
- Mohammad, M. (1989). *The sentential structure of Arabic*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Southern California.
- Mohammad, M.A. (1990). The problem of subject-verb agreement in Arabic: Towards a solution. *Perspectives on Arabic linguistics I: Papers from the First Annual Symposium on Arabic Linguistics*, edited by M. Eid, 95–126. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Moore, J. (1988). Word order and case assignment in Modern Standard Arabic. *Proceedings of the Chicago Linguistics Society*, 283–294. Chicago.
- Motapanyane, V. (1995). On subjunctive morphology and its interaction with syntax. *Probus*.
- Müller, G. & W. Sternefeld. (1993). Improper movement and unambiguous binding. *Linguistic Inquiry* **24**, 461–507.
- Ouhalla, J. (1991). *Functional categories and parametric variation*. London: Routledge.

- Ouhalla, J. (1994). Verb movement and word order in Arabic. *Verb Movement*, edited by N. Hornstein & D. Lightfoot. Cambridge University Press.
- Puskas, G. (1992). The Wh-Criterion in Hungarian. *Rivista di Grammatica Generativa* **17**, 141–186.
- Reinhart, T. (1982). A second Comp position. *Theory of markedness in generative grammar*, edited by A. Belletti, L. Brandi & L. Rizzi, 517–557. Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore.
- Rivero, M. L. (1994). Clause structure and V-movement in the languages of the Balkans. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* **12**, 63–120.
- Rizzi, L. (1990). *Relativized minimality*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Rizzi, L. (1991). *The Wh criterion*. Technical Report. Département de linguistique générale et française. Université de Genève.
- Rizzi, L. (1997). The fine structure of the left periphery. *Elements of Grammar: A Handbook of Generative Syntax*, edited by L. Haegeman, 281–337. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Roberts, I. & U. Shlonsky. (1996). Pronominal enclisis in VSO languages. *The Syntax of the Celtic Languages*, edited by R. Borsley & I. Roberts, 174–199. Cambridge University Press.
- Shlonsky, U. (1994a). Agreement in Comp. *Linguistic Review* **11**, 351–375.
- Shlonsky, U. (1994b). Semitic clitics. *Geneva Generative Papers* **2**, 1–11.
- Shlonsky, U. (1997). *Clause structure and word order in Hebrew and Arabic: An essay in comparative Semitic syntax*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shlonsky, U. (to appear). Subject positions and copular constructions. *Interface Strategies*, edited by H. Bennis, M. Everaert & E. Reuland. The Hague: HAG.
- Tellier, C. (1991). *Licensing theory and French parasitic gaps*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Terzi, A. (1992). *PRO in finite clauses. A study of the inflectional heads of the Balkan languages*. Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York.
- Tsimpli, I-M. (1990). The clause structure and word order in Modern Greek. *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics* **2**, 226–255.
- Turano, G. (1994). Subjunctive constructions in Arbëresh and standard Albanian.